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KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks Magazine



2020 Photo Issue | **WILD EATS**



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FRONT COVER A red-tailed hawk pauses inbetween bites to check its surroundings. Judd Patterson photo.

INSIDE FRONT COVER An icy pond holds hidden delicacies for this river otter. Danny Brown photo.

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Editorial Creed: To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

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The Photo Issue Theme: Wild Eats

Some call it the “circle of life,” or “nature’s food chain,” while others say it’s “predator versus prey.” Whatever phrase you choose to use, we’re all referring to a singular and very simple truth: things eat things.

Whether an organism’s diet consists largely of plant matter or meat protein, almost always the continued life of one organism means the death of another.

Wildlife are especially equipped for the job, too.

The razor-sharp talons on a red-tailed hawk – like the one pictured on the cover – equip this animal with the ability to quickly snatch up a meal and clutch onto it mid-flight.

A river otter’s tail – thick and muscly at the base and tapered towards the end – gives our table of contents animal the power and agility it needs to swim after an underwater bite.

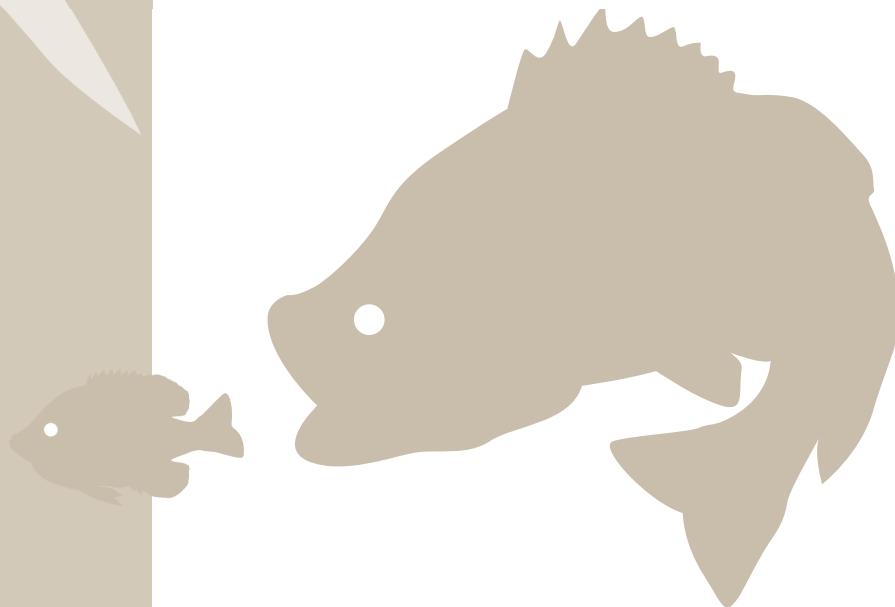
As you flip through this special issue, my hope is that you will appreciate how very rare many of these images are. And that you, too, see how talented these Kansas photographers are for bringing us such extraordinary images of very ordinary acts.

A very special “thank you” is due to all of the photographers who answered the call of “What’s for dinner?” The time and effort they put not only into capturing their images, but also into editing, formatting, and submitting their work, is immense. Regardless of which images made the final cut, we remain very proud to work with a great group of Kansas photographers who specialize in Kansas species. My unending gratitude to you all.

Though unrelated to this year’s photo issue theme, I also encourage you to pay special attention to the back of the magazine where we showcase the professional and budding photographers who placed in our 2019 Wild About Kansas photo contest.

And with that, I proudly present to you: Wild Eats. 

–Editor





RED FOX

The red fox feeds primarily on small- to medium-sized mammals, but birds, fruit, berries, and insects also make the list. **Danny Brown**



HAWK MOTH



A member of the *Sphingidae* family, hawk moths – also referred to as sphinx moths or hummingbird moths – feed on nectar. **David Seibel**

BALD EAGLE

Bald eagles often hunt live prey – such as coot or ducks – using quick, sideways attacks. **Tony Pianalto**





CATERPILLAR PARASITES

Even parasitoids need food, and this plump caterpillar serves as the perfect host. **Mike Blair**





BEAVER

Branches, bark from trees and shrubs, aquatic plants, green shoots, and willow leaves and twigs largely make up the beaver's diet. **Bob Gress**



BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON

Black-crowned night herons forage in water, mud and on land. They are most likely to grab a meal in the early evening or at night. [Dan Witt](#)





COOPER'S HAWK

Found near suburban areas, especially near bird feeders, the Cooper's hawk feeds primarily on small birds. [Judd Patterson](#)

AMERICAN BISON

The American bison gets its nutrients from grazing on prairie grasses and plants. But for now, this calf will stick to milk. [Judd Patterson](#)

BLACK-TAILED PRAIRIE DOG

Somewhat of an opportunistic eater, the black-tailed prairie dog's diet ranges from native grasses and plant material to animal material and insects. **Bob Gress**



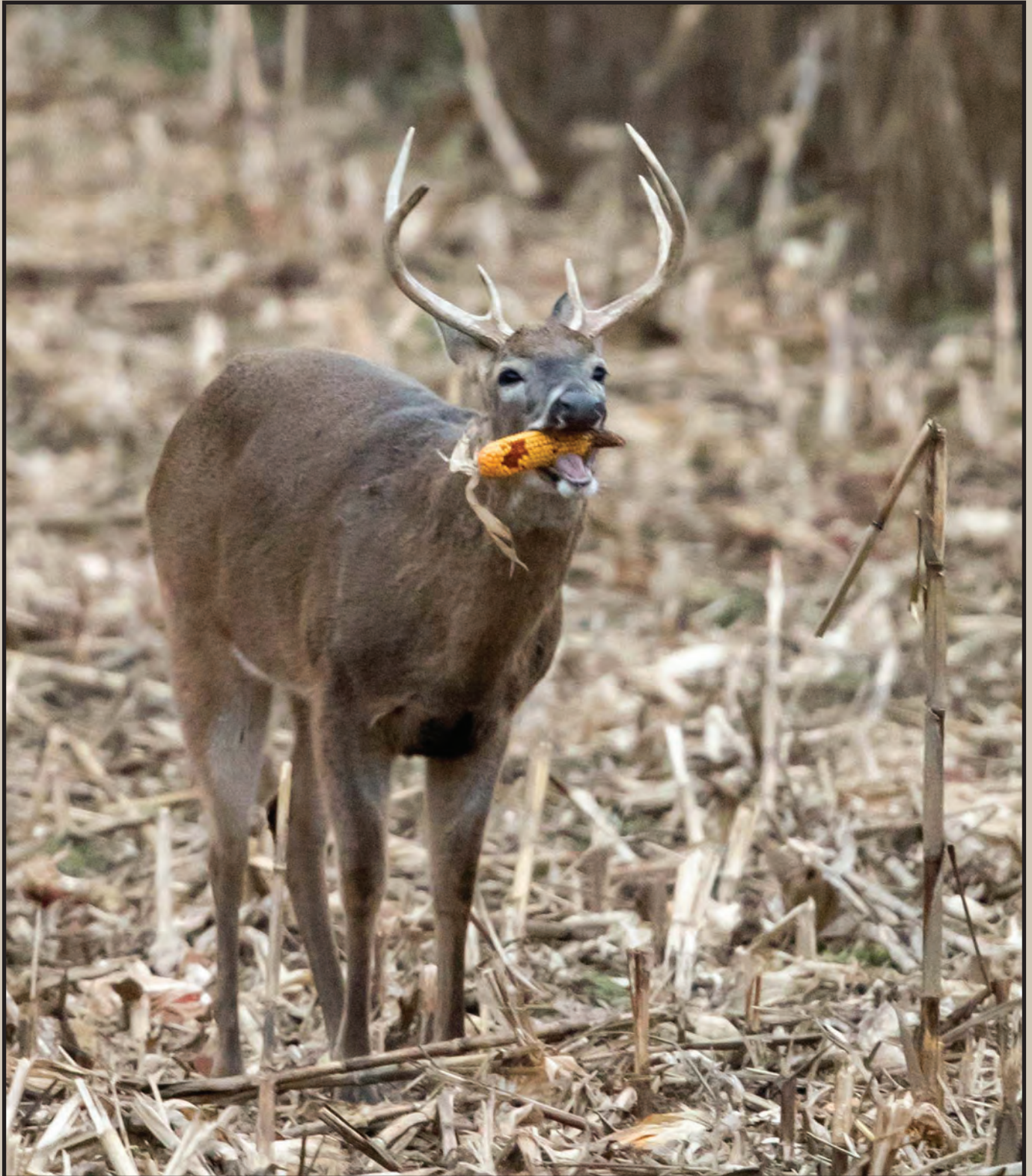


LEAST SHREW

Though they've been known to eat fruit and seeds, the least shrew prefers insects, earthworms, snails and carrion. **Bob Gress**

WHITE-TAILED DEER

No wildlife scene may be more quintessentially Kansas than a whitetail feeding in a field. Today's menu: corn. [Tony Pinalto](#)





SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER

The scissor-tailed flycatcher is aptly named since this long-tailed bird often catches its prey on-the-fly via aerial pursuits. **David Seibel**



WHEEL BUG

Named for its cogwheel-like crest, this member of the *Linnaeus* family kills its insect prey by injecting tissue-dissolving salivary fluids. **Mike Blair**

WOOD CHUCK

A woodchuck can be found nibbling on grasses, green plants, native tree foliage, and sometimes domestic crops. **Bob Gress**



BELTED KINGFISHER

Capturing its prey using splash-inducing dives, the belted kingfisher has an appetite for the fishy things in life. **Danny Brown**



GREEN HERON

Green herons are strategic eaters. This species has been known to “bait” fish using invertebrates. **Bob Gress**







MONARCH CATERPILLAR

In order for monarch caterpillars to survive, the species needs milkweed plants. **Greg Paulsen**

SANDHILL CRANE

Sandhill cranes gain nourishment from a wide variety of sources – from seeds and berries to reptiles and small mammals. **Bob Gress**





FOX SQUIRREL

Walnuts, acorns and hickory nuts are top food choices for the fox squirrel. Runnersup eats include fruit, buds, bark and seeds, among others. **Danny Brown**

CEDAR WAXWING

This striking bird favors getting fruit from trees, or flycatching. **Danny Brown**





LARK SPARROW

The lark sparrow targets arthropods, sometimes surprisingly large, by foraging on the ground. [Judd Patterson](#)

TURKEY VULTURE

The turkey vulture is no picky eater. Since this species never kills its own food, it scavenges on the remains left by others. [David Seibel](#)



MUSKRAT

Foods of choice for the muskrat include aquatic roots, bulbs, and stems, as well as clams, snails, fish and crayfish. **Bob Gress**



BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER

Feeding in shrubs approximately 5-10 feet above ground, the blue-gray gnatcatcher targets small insects and spiders. **David Seibel**





YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON

Though the yellow-crowned night-heron feeds almost exclusively on crayfish when inland, they'll also fill up on other water-dwelling creatures such as leeches, frogs, turtles and tadpoles. **Danny Brown**



AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN

Eating is a communal act for American white pelicans. The group will band together and collectively scoop up fish just below the water's surface. [Mike Folkerts](#)

BLUE JAY

A versatile eater, the blue jay will feed on just about anything. From nuts and seeds to small invertebrates, blue jays have even been known to capitalize on unguarded eggs and nestlings. **David Seibel**

EASTERN COTTONTAIL

Eastern cottontails are loyal to a diet of green vegetation most of the year, but tree bark is an alternate food choice in winter. **Danny Brown**





RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Hummingbird feeders, tube-shaped flowers, and insects are all top food choices for the ruby-throated hummingbird. **Tony Pinalto**





EARED GREBE

Eared grebes are adept underwater divers that largely pursue aquatic invertebrates and fish. **Jay Miller**





BOBCAT

On average, rabbits and hares make up nearly half of the bobcat's diet. Other food choices include young or injured deer, rodents, and birds.

Bob Gress

OSPREY

Picky eater? Perhaps. The osprey is America's only hawk that feeds almost exclusively on live fish. **Jay Miller**





BOBWHITE QUAIL

The Northern bobwhite quail typically sustains itself on a steady diet of seeds, leaves, and varying amounts of insects. **Tony Pinalto**

PORCUPINE

The inner bark of trees and evergreen needles are top food choices for porcupines. **Bob Gress**



KATYDID

Katydid, *Tettigoniidae* family, feed primarily on tree leaves, shrubs, and flower buds and petals. **David Butel**



BALD EAGLE

To complement their diverse diet, bald eagles will take their prey alive or as carrion. **Tony Pianalto**





APACHE JUMPING --- SPIDER

Unlike other spiders, apache jumping spiders don't build webs to catch their prey. As its name implies, it prefers an ambush attack. **Mike Blair**



2019 Contest Winners

About the Contest

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's annual "Wild About Kansas" photo contest showcases Kansas outdoors through the lens of amateur and professional photographers. Photographers may submit photos in any of the following categories:

- *Wildlife*
- *Other Species*
- *Landscapes*
- *Outdoor Recreation*
- *Hunting and Fishing*

Contest rules are as follows:

- Mailed entries and photos less than 1 MB will NOT be accepted.
- Participants may enter only/up to three (3) photos total for the contest, regardless of categories.
- Each photo is judged on creativity, composition, subject matter, lighting and overall sharpness.
- The contest is open to residents and non-residents, and there is no age limit.
- Photos must be the participants original work and taken in the state of Kansas.
- Photos from participants under the age of 18 will be placed in a youth division; all others will compete in the adult division.

For more on Wild About Kansas, visit ksoutdoors.com and click "Publications," then "Wild About Kansas' Photo Contest."

Shutterstock/cobalt88

Hunting & Fishing



1st Place
AJ Thomas



2nd Place
Donna Fletcher



3rd Place
Joe Lucas

Adult

Adult



**1st Place
Robin Dicks**

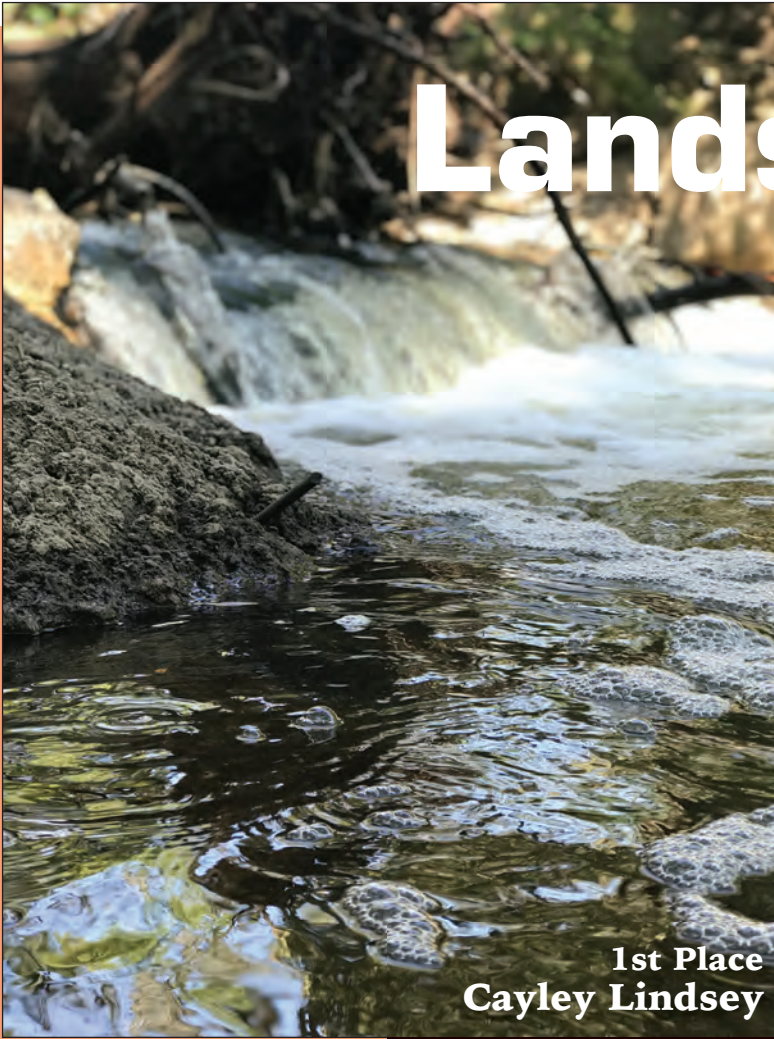


**2nd Place
AJ Thomas**



**3rd Place
Sheryll Marks**

Landscapes



1st Place
Cayley Lindsey

3rd Place
Max Callahan



2nd Place
Kylie Rankin



Youth

Adult



**1st Place
Mark Alexander**



**2nd Place
Mary Mejia**

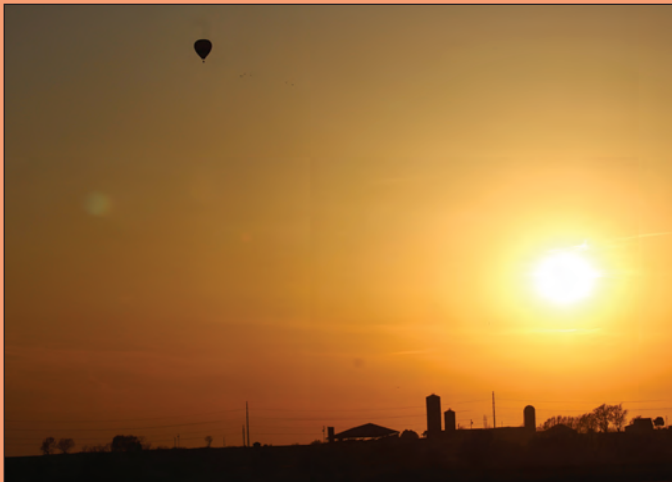
**3rd Place
Kelly Nachtigal**



Outdoor Recreation



1st Place
Nathan Knapp



2nd Place
Adria Nelson



3rd Place
Lucas Dedonder

Youth

Wildlife



**1st Place
David Birmingham**



**2nd Place
David Kiger**



**3rd Place
Marilyn Friesen**



**1st Place
Johanna Walker**



**2nd Place
Josie Parsons**



**3rd Place
Kylie Rankin**

Youth

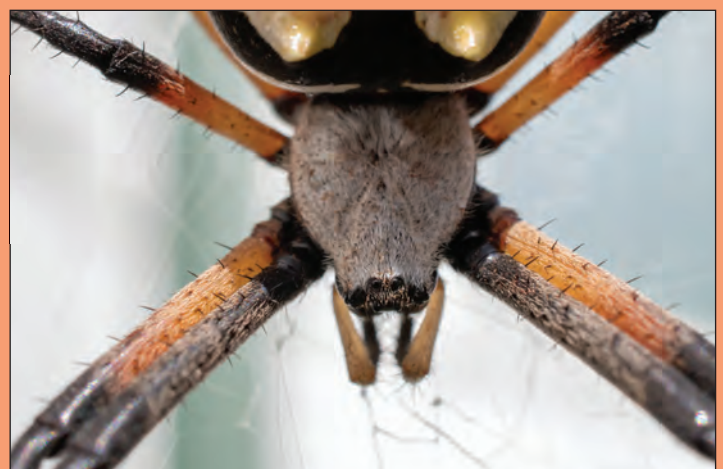


Other Species

1st Place
Jennifer Wagner



2nd Place
Mary Mejia



3rd Place
Chris Koster

**1st Place
Brea Carroll**



**2nd Place
Stephen Knapp**



**3rd Place
Dan Jones**

Youth

Kansas' Special Hunts program gives youth, hunters with disabilities, and others access to lands normally closed to hunting. It's just one more way the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is making access last.

MAKING IT LAST

