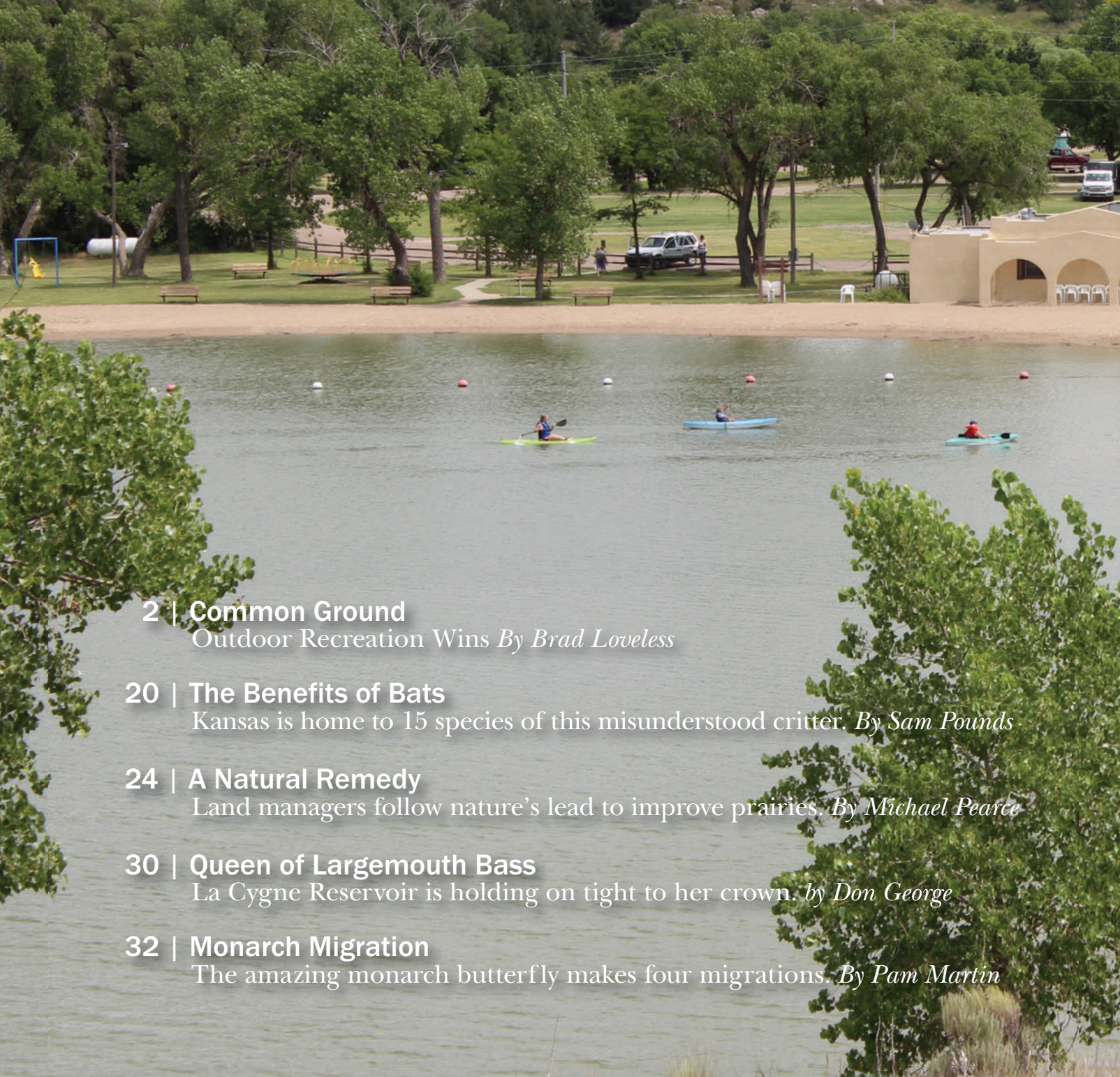


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# KANSAS

*Wildlife & Parks Magazine*





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**FRONT COVER** This tagged monarch butterfly could travel as far as 2,000 miles for the species' fall migration. Staff photo.

**INSIDE COVER** A sunny day at Historic Lake Scott State Park. Rick McNary photo.

**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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# COMMON GROUND

with Brad Loveless



## Outdoor Recreation Wins

**W**ith everyone's level of cynicism about legislative dysfunction peaking, I'm glad to report about a great existing program that just received an enormous boost from Congress. The Great American Outdoors Act passed the Senate earlier this year and passed on bipartisan vote in the House on July 22. Signed by President Trump, this Act permanently pays for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF has sent \$55 million to Kansas since 1964, funded by revenues from outer continental shelf oil and gas leasing, but congress had to act annually to move funds to states, leading to yearly battles and lots of nail-biting. This year's progress means much more dependable, predictable funding for needed recreation projects in Kansas' parks and communities!

Where have LWCF funds been used, and for what? I found out that some of these projects are right under my nose for facilities I, and probably you, have been using for years. Matched with 50 percent of local money or in-kind labor for a total value of \$110 million, 88 Kansas counties and hundreds of our communities have partnered with LWCF on a wide variety of recreation projects. I was surprised that Jones Park in Lyndon, where our family has spent thousands of hours practicing, playing and watching baseball, softball, soccer, and football, was an LWCF recipient to purchase land in 1975 and to build facilities in 1978. Grants are for all-inclusive play areas that offer accessible and safe outdoor activities such as ball fields, swimming pools, splash pads, campgrounds, pavilions, tennis courts and playgrounds.

To participate in the LWCF program, each state must have a managing entity which our Parks division performs for Kansas. In that role, we provide input nationally, legislatively and locally, working with communities on every aspect of the program to help them be successful. We are very fortunate to have two talented individuals to manage those areas. Linda Lanterman has been the director of our Parks division for 23 years and has been very active in leadership nationally for state parks. She has helped to craft policy recommendations


for LWCF and testified before the House of Representatives in 2017 to educate them about the workings of this valuable program. She has represented Kansas exceptionally well and has been honored nationally. You should be pleased, as am I, that we have such a passionate, well-informed leader in Linda.

If you have participated in LWCF on behalf of your community, you've probably had the pleasure of working with Katie Westerhaus, our LWCF grant coordinator. In this role, Katie promotes LWCF grant funding opportunities and guides communities through the application process. Once a community is successful in its application, Katie forwards

on the money and uses her experience to coach local administrators on how to maximize their funding's effectiveness. After project completion, Kati conducts periodic reviews to assure continued compliance with grant requirements and helps communities avoid potential conflicts with future development.

If you visit Katie about the LWCF program, it quickly becomes apparent how much she enjoys it and the people she has helped and gotten to know. She commented on the creativity of local citizens who know best the needs and opportunities in

their towns. "Many of the communities come together with local partners, volunteers, private donors and generous individuals to make up their 50 percent match. I have witnessed the gratitude and excitement of community members and especially enjoy the ribbon cutting ceremonies. I also like to swing by projects when I'm traveling just to see people enjoying what we've built together."

So, we in Kansas have plenty to be thankful for. From new, effective federal legislation giving dependable funding to communities for outdoor recreation, to enthusiastic, informed state leadership and hands-on program management to assure local success. This might add to your understanding when you see from the highway a distant ring of lights on a Friday night or bunch of kids in your community playing on a ball-field or zipping down a slide. Good things are happening here in Kansas. 



**LWCF MAKES POSSIBLE PROJECTS  
SUCH AS THE NEW PAVILION AT SAR-  
KO-PAR TRAILS PARK IN LENEXA.**

## KDWPT Supports New Signage Along Arkansas River National Water Trail

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism has awarded \$100,000 to the Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams to design, develop and install informational signage kiosks at 22 designated public access points along 192 miles of the Arkansas River. The river was designated by the National Park Service (NPS) as a National Water Trail in 2016. This designation increases access to outdoor recreation on the river. Providing clear signage at public access points will deliver a consistent message to boaters for their safety and enjoyment along the river trail.

The Arkansas River National Water Trail stretches from Great Bend to the Kansas/Oklahoma border. It is the second river in Kansas to receive this designation and one of only three rivers in Kansas that is legally navigable and accessible to the public. One of the U.S. National Park Service's goals is that National Water Trails will "increase access to outdoor recreation on shorelines and waterways."

"With most streams and rivers in Kansas being privately owned it is essential we increase awareness and access to the public on the rivers that are open," says Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism, Recreational Trails Program Coordinator, Cherie Riffey. "With that being said we are excited to provide funding to the Ark River National Water Trail to make these access points more informative for users. In turn we hope this will support the conservation and restoration of these rivers through public support."

When this project is complete, Arkansas River boaters and other users will be able to: locate legal public access points, use river maps for navigational decisions such as length of trip, know the laws and regulations for paddling and boating in Kansas, be aware of potential hazards, increase time outdoors and opportunities for nature based exercise, and deepen connection with Kansas' water resources.

"We are excited to partner with KAWS on this effort to help educate about valuable water resources," stated Jason Schwartz with the Every Green Team. "The intriguing part about this particular project is having

22 different locations where we can interact with various communities along the river corridor."

The mission of the Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams is Connecting the Waters, Land and People of Kansas. KAWS works with partners to protect and restore wetlands, streams, rivers, prairies, wildlife & riparian forests.

To learn more, visit [kaws.org](http://kaws.org)  
or contact:  
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(316) 617-9591



**"With most streams and rivers in Kansas being privately owned it is essential we increase awareness and access to the public on the rivers that are open."**

# BIRD BRAIN

## Pelicans in Kansas?

*with Mike Rader*



I am often asked about the identification of birds, ranging from little brown ones to big white ones, and everything in between. It's fun to steer folks in the right direction while they learn what birds can be observed here in Kansas. I normally go through the process of helping people help themselves by suggesting they use resources such as field guides, web-based identification apps and birding with more experienced people, but sometimes you just need to spill the beans on what they are seeing. I usually do this when we get Whooping Crane reports outside of their normal migration season through our state, which is usually April and again in October through November. While it isn't totally impossible to view them during a few other times, usually what folks are seeing are American White Pelicans.

Pelicans are sort of a novelty to those seeing them for the first time, or only occasionally on trips to other parts of the country. These magnificent birds are some of the largest we see, with birds weighing up to 20 pounds and wingspans from ranging from 8.5 to 9 feet. They stand over waist-high on an adult person and are easy to identify on the ground with a stocky body and massive yellowish bill with the pouch on the bottom. The problem in identification usually occurs when they are flying, as they are large white birds with black wingtips. Snow Geese are similar in wing pattern, but much smaller. Whooping Cranes are similar, but are

much thinner in the body, with necks and legs extended. Pelicans fly like herons, with their heads and neck pulled over their back, giving a shorter appearance.

Pelicans have been observed in every month of the year in Kansas, with most seen during spring and fall migrations. Several thousand can stay in the summer at large reservoirs and rivers, but these consist of non-breeding individuals that don't expend the extra energy to fly north. The closest breeding populations are probably in the Dakotas, with some in the Intermountain West. Otherwise, they fly to Canada for much of the breeding season. In fall, they come through by the thousands as well, with stopovers at the larger bodies of water, rivers and some smaller ponds. There are some birds that will stay all winter, typically in locations that do not totally ice over. These birds need open water to feed due to their diet consisting of mainly fish, with some crustaceans, salamanders and frogs to a lesser extent. Some birds that do stay the winter in Kansas may not be healthy enough to fly further south. Sick or malnourished birds usually do not survive, becoming food for Bald Eagles, coyotes and other predators.

American White Pelicans are an impressive and fairly common species that can be observed in Kansas in the right time of year. Mass gatherings of them at larger bodies of water occur in September through mid-October, so be sure to get out to see them - it's an awesome experience.



# LAW MATTERS

with Colonel Ott

## Don't "Fall" For These Violations

It has been a tough year leading into the 2020 hunting seasons, and that should make all of us feel blessed that they are quickly approaching. With the writing of this article, we are near the opening of dove, elk, deer and early teal seasons in Kansas. A few of the issues game wardens regularly see during the early hunting seasons are listed below.

During dove season, game wardens regularly come across hunters not having the required Harvest Information Permit (HIP) or plugs in their shotguns restricting round counts to three. They also see issues with over-limits of birds and hunters not using steel shot on required public hunting areas. Gun safety can be an issue during dove season, so please know the area beyond where you're shooting to alleviate "peppering" other hunters with shot.

The issues game wardens see during elk season relate to opportunistic hunting - hunters shooting an elk and buying the tag afterwards. Hunters trespassing on properties they do not have permission to hunt on and not wearing the required orange are also common issues.

During the muzzleloader and youth and disabled early deer hunting seasons, game wardens regularly see violations such as hunters not having the correct permit for the season they are hunting, trespassing on properties they do not have permission to hunt on and not wearing orange when required.

Early teal season has a unique issue - misidentification in flight. During early teal season, it is not uncommon for shoveler and wood ducks to be taken by accident, but still illegally. Game wardens also discover issues with over-limits and shotguns not being plugged properly to restrict the loaded ammunition to three rounds. Again, gun safety when teal hunting is critical to



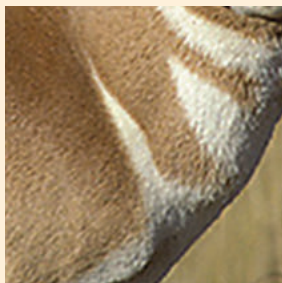
avoid "peppering" other hunters.

To make sure you aren't violating these, or any other hunting-related laws, please check [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com), the 2020-2021 Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary, call a KDWPT office or visit with your local game warden before you head out into the field.

We are all excited to get back in the field this fall. Stay safe and follow the law to make every interaction with a game warden a positive one. We appreciate your support of Kansas' natural resources as well as your Kansas game wardens.

## WHAT AM I? ID Challenge

Using only the image and clues below, see if you can figure out this month's mystery species!



### Clues:

1. I'm the fastest land animal in North America, reaching speeds of 60 mph.
2. I have "horns" while others have "antlers."
3. My eyes are large and set high on my head to quickly spot danger.

>>> See answer on Page 14.

# Game Warden Profile

Greg Salisbury - Ottawa and Saline counties

## What's the most memorable investigation you've worked on?

In the early 90s, we set up a roadblock on I-70 at the Goodland rest area. We stopped all eastbound traffic for three days. Wardens from several states were looking for illegal big game. Overall, we seized over 2 ½ tons of illegal game.

I also located a murder victim at Kanopolis State Park in July 1995. The victim was bludgeoned to death with an axe. The murderer was arrested eight months later in California. The "Box Car Murderer" was linked to over a dozen murders in seven states over a 15-year period. He was convicted in the Kanopolis case and received a life sentence without parole.

## If I wasn't a game warden, I would probably be:

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Ranger. I worked at Wilson Reservoir for the Corps in college; it was my first job after graduating from Ft. Hays State University. Go Tigers!

## What/Who influenced you to become a Kansas game warden?

My father was a very avid sportsman. He would always take me out hunting and fishing and our family loved to camp when I was young. Since my dad was an ethical sportsman, it was difficult to "think like a poacher" when I was a young game warden. I was also influenced by Dick Ryan, retired game warden from Lyndon - I actually did a college ride along with him. A Corps Ranger named Wayne Volkman was also a very positive influence.

## What's your favorite area in Kansas to hunt or fish?

When I was in college, I drew an antelope tag and hunted a friend's property in western Kansas. My friend, Jim McGuire, recently sold that property and it became Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park. That area and Arikaree Breaks in Cheyenne County are absolutely breathtaking.

## What's your most embarrassing moment while on duty?

Once, before social media, I forgot about the Free Fishing Weekend and wrote a ticket for fishing without a license. I ended up calling the guy at the end of the weekend and tearing up the ticket.

## What are the things about your patrol area that most people don't know?

Smoky Hill Weapons Range is a 34,000-acre bombing range in SW Saline County. Coronado Heights is also a famous Saline County landmark.



## From Greg:

*I was told that Glenn Cannizzaro and I are the only active game wardens hired under the old Kansas Fish and Game Commission. We have a few wardens senior to Glenn and me, but they started with the old State Park Authority.*

*I spent 32 years in the Kansas Army National Guard and the department was very supportive of my military career. I did not activate overseas, but I did spend two years on active duty in 2010.*

*I also appreciate the support from my now retired supervisor, Jerry Bump, when I contacted him on a Saturday night to inform him I was called to active duty. I was to lead the Kansas Airport Security Mission after 9/11. I reported that following Monday for what ended up being eight months of active duty.*





# BOAT KANSAS

## How to Winterize Your Boat

with *Chelsea Hofmeier*

With the colder months approaching, the less exciting part of boat ownership is lingering over our heads: winterizing boats. Winterizing your boat is important when it comes to protecting your boat's system, battery, engine and gear from freeze damage and idleness.

Since boats and storage methods vary, there are several things to consider when figuring out what steps to take when winterizing your boat. The first step would be to consult the winterizing/storage sections of your boat and motor owner's manual if you have one. Preparing a checklist of tasks that need to be done is also a great way to ensure you don't forget anything important.

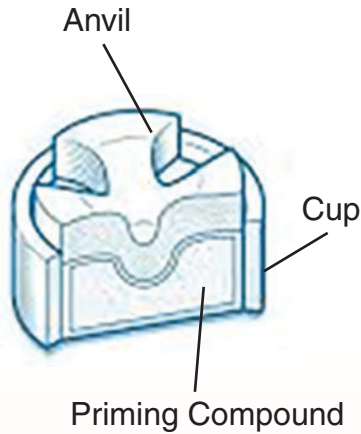
Although an entire magazine could be devoted to the different processes for winterizing boats, the basic steps recommended by watercraft experts are listed below.

Be sure to remove all loose items from your boat including electronics, life jackets, and fishing equipment and store them in a dry place. A final tip: procrastination does not pay off. The busiest time for boat mechanics is in the spring, so be proactive and take care of any problems and maintenance in the fall. When all else fails, if you are not sure about the winterizing process or any other boat maintenance concerns, it's safer to resort to a professional.

### WINTERIZATION CHECKLIST

1. Wash motor and hull to remove dirt and debris.
2. Cover boat with breathable cover.
3. Remove propeller and check for damage, and replace or service damaged propeller.
4. Clean propeller shaft and apply protective grease.
5. Install de-icing device if boat will be stored in water.
6. Clean and dry bilges.
7. Remove bilge drain plug and attach to steering wheel as a reminder to reinstall in spring.
8. Inspect and repair wiring.
9. Remove boat batteries and store on a smart charger in a cool, dry place.
10. While engine is warm, change crankcase and gearcase oil and run the engine.
11. Change oil filters.
12. Flush engine with fresh water and drain.
13. Circulate antifreeze through engine block and manifolds.
14. If you have a fuel-injected motor, use drain screw to drain fuel from vapor separator tank.
15. If you have a carbureted outboard motor, drain the carburetor float bowls.
16. If you have an inboard motor, change transmission fluid.
17. Spray fogging fluid into carburetors or throttle body throats.
18. Remove hoses from raw water pump.
19. Replace spark plugs and spray fogging fluid into spark plug ports.
20. Complete lubrication service on boat and motor.
21. Grease external engine fittings.
22. Apply anti-corrosion film to external engine parts.
23. Check motor for loose or missing fasteners and repair or replace.
24. Fill permanent fuel tanks with fuel and appropriate amount of fuel stabilizer.
25. Remove portable fuel tanks and drain attached fuel lines.
26. Drain portable plastic tanks and top off metal ones. Store in safe, well-ventilated area.
27. Don't forget to inspect the trailer too!

## Putting Together Primers



In the hunter education section at Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, we enjoy shooting firearms and discussing the mechanics behind it.

Of the four building blocks of the modern firearm cartridge – case, bullet, powder and primer – the primer is the least understood and most often overlooked. We study the best bullet design, agonizing over the mysteries of sectional density and ballistic coefficient. We compare powder types and search ballistic tables to find the best selection. We measure, inspect, polish, shine and lube the cases separating one manufacturer from all the rest because it serves our purposes the best. Yet, many use primer purchased on sale because, well, it was on sale.

When we ask what a primer actually does, we get a number of responses. Some are comparisons to lighting a match that sets fire to the powder in the cartridge, while others are a description of a spark plug igniting the air fuel mixture in an engine. The truth is, neither of these analogies would be accurate. Although the overall purpose of a primer is to ignite the propellant charge in a given cartridge, the how it does, is much more involved. John Snow describes “the how” as “a mini volcano or rocket engine that spews a potent mix of hot burning slag that mingles with the gunpowder contained within a

cartridge.” In a matter of microseconds, which is millionths of a second, this eruption creates a flame, molten metal and slag, and a gaseous pressure front that attempts to ignite every grain of powder in the case at the exact same instant. That is a tall order for such a small piece of equipment.

So, what are the parts of a primer? The three basic parts of a primer are the cup, the priming compound mixture and the anvil. The early priming mixture used the same fulminate of mercury that was used in 19th century percussion caps. Mercury fulminate was not well suited for use with smokeless powders as it decomposed in storage, which rendered it incapable of reliable ignition. Since the early 20th century, the mix has consisted of lead styphnate (main explosive), barium nitrate (oxidizer-adds oxygen to the reaction), and some additional fuels along with a sensitizer to help with ignition. When a firing pin compresses the priming compound against the anvil, the chemical reaction

begins that causes the gun to fire.

So, how is a primer made? A sheet of rolled copper-alloy is placed in a stamping press where multiple numbers of die sets produce dozens of caps with each stamp stroke. These caps are stamped in different diameters for different applications. The primer caps are shaken into a plate covered with hundreds of holes and the wet mixture of priming compound is hand rubbed over the surface to fill every cap. This step must be done while the compound is wet because the dry compound is very impact sensitive and is not easy to handle. The anvil is inserted into the cap where the priming compound can dry around the anvil tip leading to a more consistent ignition.

Army researchers have just developed a new non-toxic priming compound that is free of heavy metal compounds. We will see if this new primer can provide reliable ignition and be commercially produced while keeping us and the environment safe.

### **WAY** outside BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"GOOD JOB. NOW HAND OVER THOSE TEAL ...  
ALL THREE OF THEM!"



Tall plants with bright yellow-flowering spikes and clusters that bloom in late summer and fall distinguish goldenrod, known by the scientific name as *Solidago*. These plants are included in the sunflower/aster family and form tiny composite flowers. About 14 different species of goldenrod are native to Kansas with one or more species present in every county. The two most prolific species are Canada goldenrod and Missouri goldenrod, and each can grow 5 feet tall. As with many fall blooming plants, the stems and leaves are unremarkable in the spring, but when the heat of summer arrives, the plants begin major upward growth. The individual flowers are very small and attached to stems in masses that take the shape of a pyramid, rhomboid, spike or half dome. Blooms occur from July to October.

The plants are herbaceous - dying back to ground level each winter. Some species of goldenrod spread by rhizome and large populations of a single species can be seen in fallow fields or on disturbed soils. Plant stems remain upright over winter and allow seeds to be dispersed short distances by wind or much farther if attached to animal fur.

Goldenrod plants are a primary source of nectar and pollen for late summer and fall insects, after the spring and summer blooming plants are long faded. Monarch butterflies migrating south to Mexico seek out goldenrod, as do other butterflies, bees, wasps and beetles. Nectar and pollen can be easily accessed from the tiny flowers by smaller pollinating insects that cannot reach into deep tube shaped flowers.

Several moths use goldenrod as a host plant on which to lay their eggs and feed caterpillars.

While they do not offer much in terms of livestock forage, goldenrod may be grazed early in the spring while still tender. Wildlife may also browse the plant in minor amounts. Birds eat the small seeds in winter and early spring.

Goldenrod is often erroneously blamed for hay fever and late season allergies; however, goldenrod pollen is not distributed by wind. Ragweed plants produce large amounts wind-distributed pollen over several weeks in September, at about the same time goldenrod is observed in bloom.

Flowers from goldenrod can be used to dye fabrics in different ranges of yellow and gold utilizing different mordents. The word "Solidago" refers to making a body healthy or whole and the plant has been used extensively for medicinal aids and cures. The stems do not contain long lasting fiber and the plant is not used for making permanent products.

Gardening with goldenrod can be done by either transplanting rhizomes after bloom or collecting seed and planting in a large pot outdoors in a protected location to germinate over the winter. Missouri or Canada goldenrod would make colorful tall, late season, back-of-the-garden height plants for pollinators, while rigid goldenrod would make an intermediate height mid-garden plant. The plants emerge late in the spring and do not begin growing with gusto until June when hotter summer temperatures arrive.

**Monarch butterflies migrating south to Mexico seek out goldenrod, as do other butterflies, bees, wasps and beetles.**

# EVERYTHING OUTDOORS

## See You Later, Al E. Gator

with Marc Murrell

Dogs have a special place in the hearts of their owners. Whether simply a pet and companion, or a working member of the family on the farm or hunting, dogs make life better. Unfortunately, their time on earth is far too short, and the times we have to say goodbye happen far too often. It's gut-wrenching and emotional. The pain is made worse with the difficult yet often merciful decision of euthanasia.

His registered name was M&M's Al E. Gator in the black Labrador retriever category of the American Kennel Club. His friends called him Gator for short and he was born May 19, 2010. He was the spitting image of his old man, Magnum, another beloved family member.



My goal was to continue Magnum's legacy with a pick-of-the-litter puppy. Mag had been a once-in-a-lifetime retriever and if his offspring had even half his heart, desire and personality I'd be tickled.

My twin boys, Brandon and Cody, were 12 years old at the time and my daughter, Ashley, was finishing her senior year of high school. On several camping trips that summer, we'd sneak over to check on the litter of puppies. On the last visit, I made my pick and hauled Gator back to the lake with us at 7 weeks old for his first camping trip.

The next 10 years went by in the blink of an eye. We spent thousands of hours together training, hunting and just hanging out. Gator was indeed a chip off the old block talent-wise, but a little more self-centered than Magnum. Gator was a fine water-fowler and like his daddy, a conservation machine as most any duck or goose knocked down would get a slobbery escort back to the boat or blind.

I first noticed a hint of Gator's invincibility in 2019 as I discovered a tumor on his chest. He'd slowed considerably and wasn't as rambunctious. He had surgery to remove that tumor, which appeared benign.

In the subsequent year Gator gained nearly 20 pounds and his overall health deteriorated. Last spring, I noticed another tumor

on his neck and this one appeared different. The vet confirmed my fears - it was likely cancer. The tumor was roughly 3 inches by 6 inches and intertwined with his spinal column and trachea. Surgery wasn't a logical option so it was just a matter of making him as comfortable as possible.

I figured as long as he wasn't in pain, could get up and down on his own, wag his tail and take a poop every day, he was doing okay. We took Gator on a couple more family camping trips to start the summer and he enjoyed our company as we did his.

In July, Gator started to lose weight. He could drink, but eating was difficult, and he'd occasionally vomit afterwards. He'd have bouts where breathing was labored, and these episodes became more frequent and troubling. I knew the inevitable was near as I couldn't see him suffer. After one particularly bad bout late one evening I told my family it was time to say goodbye. My wife, Candace, Cody, and I sat on the floor as he took turns laying in our laps. He had a different look in his eyes, almost like he knew it was time as well. We all cried.

The next morning, it took me several hours to get the nerve to call the vet. Finally, at 10:30 a.m. I phoned and made the appointment. Cody went outside and got one of Gator's favorite tennis balls and rolled it just a few feet on the carpet for him to fetch. We'd gone through dozens of tennis balls in his decade of life and it seemed only fitting we'd play fetch with one, one last time. Gator's heart was still in it, but it was obvious his body was not.

The visit to the vet was a blur and I was a blubbering, slobbering, snotty mess made worse by wearing a mask. It was just Gator and I as I said my goodbyes. I thanked him for being a good boy all these years and told him I appreciated his efforts on my behalf.

I blundered teary-eyed towards the door. I was at peace knowing Gator was no longer in pain and could breathe easy. And I figured it wouldn't be long before he found ol' Mag and they'd both go splashing through the marshes in duck dog heaven.





## Writings from a Warden's Daughter

with Annie Campbell-Fischer

### If You See It, Say It

---



Each Kansas game warden is responsible for a large territory and since they can't be everywhere at once, assistance from citizens is critical to catching poachers. The following stories demonstrate that all it takes is moral obligation, careful observation and a phone call.

One of Dad's first deer cases occurred during the 1980 firearm season, and it was the direct result of observations made and forwarded to him by two local high school boys. Back then calling a game warden's home phone was the only direct contact available for the public, and Dad always checked messages when he arrived home from work. On this December evening, Dad listened to a message from a local high school student, stating he'd witnessed a deer shot from a vehicle. Dad returned the call immediately and took notes as the boy recalled the afternoon events that unfolded as he and his buddy arrived at a property, they had permission to hunt deer on in Wabaunsee County.

Dad listened as the young man described arriving at their hunting spot and seeing a jeep-like vehicle sitting in the middle of the roadway with a rifle barrel pointed at a white-tailed buck from the driver's side window. They boys saw of smoke puff from the rifle's muzzle, heard the boom of the shot and watched the buck drop. They watched a short, stocky man exit the vehicle and run out to the deer. Stunned, the high schoolers drove up to the vehicle, wrote down the license tag and then drove a safe distance away while watching the poacher load a deer that could have been theirs. It was 7 p.m. when Dad finished getting the details by phone, but he assured the young hunters he'd follow up.

Dad's next step was to confirm the tag number and vehicle description with the sheriff's office. He was given a name and address in Manhattan. In less than 30 minutes Dad drove to the address where he found the jeep-like vehicle backed up to a closed garage door. The vehicle's hatch was up and the tailgate was open. As he glanced inside, Dad observed blood and deer hair on a tarp and on a hunch he banged on the garage door and

was met by a short stocky man. Dad introduced himself and told the man he'd been observed by two high school boys shooting a buck. The man's eyes filled with tears. Overcome with remorse he admitted his crime. Dad issued him notices to appear and seized his rifle. A blank space requesting place of employment remained on the notice to appear, so Dad asked the man for his occupation and place of employment. In a quiet voice, the man said, "High school teacher."

A few years later, my cousin, who was about 11, and my grandpa were fishing from a boat anchored near a pier at a state fishing lake in Pottawatomie County. Another angler walked out on the pier and began casting and immediately landed a small largemouth bass. When my cousin watched the man place the undersized bass into a basket, he informed him that largemouth bass had to be 15 inches long to be kept. He also told the man that his uncle was the game warden and would be arriving soon. The man was unimpressed, kept the bass and continued fishing.

When Dad arrived 30 minutes later, my cousin immediately informed him about the undersized largemouth bass. Dad checked the man's fishing license and measured the one largemouth bass he had in possession. It measured 11 inches, which was too short. Dad explained the regulation and issued him a notice to appear. The man thought he should get a warning for having just one short bass. Dad told him he had already received his warning.

And the final story is about two 16-year-old Goddard high school students who were scouting local cornfields one evening for feeding mallards. When they found a field attracting ducks, they knocked on several doors before finding the landowner securing permission to hunt. Driving back by the field just after sunset, which was after legal shooting time, the boys could see the evening sky still full of mallards as they excitedly planned the next day's hunt.

Then they noticed a car parked alongside the field with two adult men standing behind it loading shotguns. Parking directly behind these men the boys got out and asked the men what they were doing.

"Shoot some ducks," they responded. In no position to stop these men, one of the boys still spoke up. "Okay, do what you want, but if you fire one shot into those ducks, we have your license tag number and I will turn you in." The men looked shocked. However, they immediately returned their shotguns to the trunk and drove away. It was Dad who spoke up and it was his first successful effort to protect our wildlife from poachers. Little did he know then, that it would turn into a 38-year career.

If you see illegal activity, don't confront the suspects. Gather as much information as you can, including vehicle descriptions, tag numbers, description of suspects, date, time and location. Then call your local game warden or sheriff's office. Game wardens' cell phone numbers with the counties they cover are listed in the Kansas Hunting Regulations Summary, or you can call the toll-free Operation Game Thief number: 877-426-3843.



## She Goes Outdoors! *with Tanna Fanshier*

### Stuck indoors? Try something new!

#### What's Inside

All boxes are jam-packed with supplies, recipes, helpful tips, apparel, and much more. By ordering an outdoor subscription box, you also earn access to exclusive learning opportunities like webinars, Q&A sessions with our game wardens and biologists, and even cooking and processing demonstrations.

#### How Often They Ship

Boxes are offered quarterly, with contents changing each season. The program kicked off with a pheasant hunting box containing accessories and information needed to hunt pheasants and process them for the table this fall; fun She Goes Outdoors branded items were also included!

#### Next Month's Theme

If you missed out on our pheasant box, that's no problem! Visit [sgooutdoors.com](http://sgooutdoors.com) to sign up to receive the birding box in November. Box contents will cover the basics of bird watching, with the supplies and information necessary to get started this winter. Also included is

information on how to contribute to the Christmas Bird Count - a great example of citizen science and the nation's longest-running community science bird project.

#### What They Cost

Boxes are priced at \$50, but include gear, educational resources, field guides, apparel, and memberships valued at over \$100. Supplies are limited, so sign up or gift a box to the outdoorswoman in your life today.

For other ways to stay connected, don't forget to visit the She Goes Outdoors website at [sgooutdoors.com](http://sgooutdoors.com), tune in to the She Goes Outdoors Podcast, and follow on Instagram at [@shegoesoutdoors](https://www.instagram.com/shegoesoutdoors).



### Get OUT with **She Goes Outdoors** Outdoor Learning Boxes!

#### What They Are

She Goes Outdoors Outdoor Learning Boxes were formed through a partnership between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Nebraska Game and Parks, and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism. Boxes are designed to encourage women to safely explore new and exciting opportunities in the outdoors.



## “Fishing” For a Feast

A fishing license may be all that is required to harvest bullfrogs, but gathering them is closer to hunting than fishing. Fighting bugs, and sometimes snakes, combined with getting extremely dirty doesn't seem like the best of times; however, once you commit to a frog hunt, you will have committed to one of the more fun ways of sourcing wild game.

Bullfrogs are easy to clean and cook, and once you've perfected your technique, catching them becomes “easy,” too. You can catch bullfrogs with a hook and line, bow and arrow, gig or, my favorite, at night by hand. All you need is a flashlight, mesh sack and quick hands to have a blast!

When it's time to clean your catch, begin with cutting the skin around the frog in front of the hind legs. Then, use a pair of pliers to grab the skin and pull it towards the back feet. Once the skin is removed, use a knife at the tail bone to

remove each leg. Next, fold the foot over at the ankle and cut it off. Rinse the legs in clean water and put them in a bowl of cold water with salt. Place the bowl in the refrigerator overnight. The limit in Kansas is eight bullfrogs per person, so if you and a buddy are lucky enough to catch a limit, you could have 32 legs on which to feast. Try the recipe below for a fun and unique way to “wow” those at your table.

## Caramelized Frog Legs

**2 lbs. frog legs, cleaned**  
**3/4 C Orange juice**  
**1/4 C Honey**  
**1 Tbsp Cumin**

**1 Tbsp Chili powder**  
**Salt to taste**  
**Pepper to taste**  
**1 Lemon**

Mix honey and orange juice in bowl. In a separate bowl or shaker, mix all dry ingredients. Place a sheet of aluminum foil on a baking sheet. Coat the legs with the orange juice/honey mix. Place legs on foil and sprinkle dry mix on all sides of legs. Close foil around the legs to seal. Bake at 400 degrees for 30 minutes. After 20 minutes, open foil up to allow legs to brown the remaining 10 minutes. Additional time may be needed to brown as desired. Once done, remove legs to a dish and squeeze lemon juice over the final product.

Shutterstock/Lena Ivanova





## Just Wastin' Time

with Daren Riedle

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One of my family's quarantine projects was to build a small garden pond. We placed a large boulder along one edge, and when the weather is nice, my son will often go outside to sit on the rock and watch the fish as he eats his dessert. The importance of these moments of introspection are often overlooked.

My colleagues and I frequently discuss the relationship of utilitarian and intrinsic value of wildlife. The utilitarian value refers to how we use wildlife, generally referring to hunting and fishing, and the use of wildlife for food. The concept of intrinsic value reflects the perspective that nature has value - independent of human uses.

I have previously written about the relevancy roadmap developed by many state natural resource agencies under the umbrella of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The purpose of the roadmap is to assist state fish and wildlife agencies in reaching broader constituencies. Major tenets of the road map are that different people use nature in different ways and that time in nature has both mental and physical benefits. There is something to be said for a nice, quiet walk in the woods. I would hazard a guess that even those who take a utilitarian approach to nature still relish their quiet time fishing or sitting in the woods waiting on a deer or turkey.

Thinking back to my son sitting on a rock while eating cookies made me realize that I have not been taking advantage of those moments for myself lately. Sometimes in our busy lives, it is hard to remember to take a moment and appreciate our surroundings. As an older father (pushing 50 with a 3 and 6-year-old), sometimes I am not sure I have the energy to get through the day.

Prior to writing this, the Otis Reading song "Sittin' on the Dock of the Bay" popped in my head, particularly the line "I'm sittin' on the dock of the bay, wastin' time." While the song itself, based on the time it was written, has much deeper meanings outside of just sitting on the dock, it still resonated with me. After staring at my computer for an hour or so trying to come up with something to write about and humming the Otis Reading tune, I hopped on my motorcycle and road to a nearby lake. I sat on the edge of the lake for about an hour eating my lunch and watching the herons, dragonflies, and the occasional turtle. Was I really wasting time? It might look like it to some. But watching the critters with the sun on my back was invigorating. Over the years, I have had some amazing wildlife watching experiences while just sitting quietly.

I think a challenge for many of us now is to get the uninitiated out in the field for similar experiences. Through the Chickadee Checkoff program, we have been able to fund wildlife viewing opportunities for a few schools, and it is my hope that we can continue to broaden these opportunities for all Kansans. We should all be able to find our own dock, rock, tree stump, or patch of ground where we can sit and waste some time.

"WHAT AM I?" answer: Pronghorn Antelope





## Kite-Hartwich Named 2020 Outstanding Project WILD Coordinator



The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, along with the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies proudly shares that Kansas Project WILD Co-Coordinator, Ashlyn Kite-Hartwich, has received the 2020 Outstanding Coordinator Award. Each year the Association honors one Project WILD coordinator with this award at the annual Project WILD Coordinators' Conference.

"We are so honored to be able to give Ashlyn this well-deserved award," said Elena Takaki, director of Project WILD with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. "Her work and leadership within Kansas and at the national level has moved conservation education forward and positively impacted the lives of adults and children alike."

Kite-Hartwich has been a Project WILD Co-Coordinator in

Kansas for thirteen years through her work at the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE). She has substantively transformed the way that Project WILD has been implemented in Kansas through her responsiveness to the needs of educators. She is also involved in the Kansas Green Schools program, where she facilitates the integration of Project WILD curricula into outdoor learning environments, including school gardens and wildlife habitats.

"The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism is in a long-standing partnership with KACEE to provide Project WILD here in our state and we are fortunate to have someone as special as Ashlyn serving in the co-coordinator role," said Mike Rader, wildlife education supervisor at KDWP and co-coordinator for Project WILD in Kansas. "Her energy, enthusiasm and professionalism have been obvious to those of us that work with her in Kansas, so it is fantastic that she has been selected for this prestigious award by a group of her peers at the national level. The dedication, innovative techniques and knowledge she brings to this program help us make it a tremendous success and something we can all be proud of."

The enthusiasm and quality that Kite-Hartwich brings to her work cause both educators and facilitators to seek out her expertise and collaboration time and time again.

"Ashlyn exemplifies the best of what Project WILD is and what environmental education is about," said Laura Downey, executive director at KACEE. "It's not just our staff who feel this way about Ashlyn—the teachers in her workshops always sing her praises."

The award was presented to Kite-Hartwich on July 28 as part of the 38th annual meeting of Project WILD coordinators, which took place virtually this year.

## Mural Completed at Cedar Bluff State Park

After the doors reopened from the pandemic-induced shutdown this spring, visitors to the Cedar Bluff State Park office were welcomed with a new view, in the form of a mural of the adjacent reservoir. Amber McLaughlin, Cedar Bluff State Park administrative specialist, painted the mural in the off-season as a way to show visitors the wide variety of features the state park has to offer as well as the reservoir's size.

Inspired by a painting at Bass Pro Shops in Kansas City, the 12-foot-long by 5-foot-tall mural displays an aerial view of the reservoir with the famous bluffs, including the locations of buildings, coves, and popular wildlife areas.

"It was a lot of thinking and planning," said McLaughlin. "I would just take a little time between phone calls and other tasks during the off-season to paint."

While she enjoys painting, McLaughlin admits even she wasn't sure of her talent level. She, along with park manager Brian Haug, had the understanding that if the mural didn't turn out as hoped, she would have to paint over it. Using the advice from a local art studio and a projector to outline the lake on the wall, McLaughlin completed the painting, surprising everyone at the state office – and even herself.

"Everyone at this office was great through the process. They humored me as I asked them 500 times, 'How does this look?'" said McLaughlin. "I'm thankful Brian let me complete my vision that I have wanted to do for years."





# 2020 Deadline to enter is Oct. 18!

Photo submissions for the 8th annual “Wild About Kansas” photo contest are being accepted now through Oct. 18, 2020. Divided into five categories, participants can submit photos related to:

-**Wildlife** (game and nongame animals, primarily mammals, migratory birds, furbearers, etc.)

-**Outdoor Recreation** (people participating in recreational activities outdoors, not hunting or fishing)

-**Landscapes** (scenery; wildlife may be present, but should not be the sole focus of the image.)

-**Other Species** (insects, reptiles, and amphibians)

-**Hunting and Fishing** (hunters and anglers; set-up shots following a hunting or fishing trip. Photos with dead game will be accepted, however, “action” shots, or photos taken during the activity will be given preference.)

## RULES

Photographers can submit up to three photos total. Photos must be taken within the state of Kansas and must be the entrant’s original work. The contest is open to both residents and non-residents of Kansas, and there is no age limit.

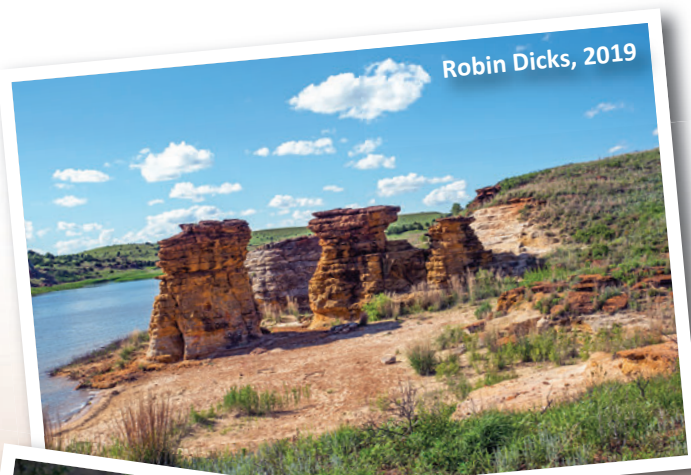
## JUDGING

Each photo will be judged on creativity, composition, subject matter, lighting, and the overall sharpness. Photographs from participants under the age of 18 will be placed in a youth division; all others will compete in the adult division. Winning entries will be featured in the 2021 January/February photo issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*.

## HOW TO ENTER

Entries must be submitted no later than **5 p.m. on Oct. 18, 2020**. Photo format should be JPEG or TIFF. All photos must be submitted electronically. Photos that do not meet the minimum file size requirements (1 MB) will NOT be accepted.

To enter, visit [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) and click “Publications,” then “2020 Wild About Kansas Photo Contest.”



Robin Dicks, 2019



David Birmingham, 2019



Brea Carroll, 2019

# Venison Hawaiian Sliders

by Michael Pearce

This recipe adds a taste of the tropics to Kansas venison burger. The sizes of the sliders make them perfect as snacks, appetizers or a main course.

In the past, I've made a double batch on the weekend and cooked as needed through the week. A George Foreman-style countertop grill will work in a pinch.

The hardest part of the recipe can be coming up with the pineapple preserves. They're hit-and-miss in small town grocers. I've consistently found them online and at most Walmarts.

## Ingredients

1 ¼ lb. venison burger  
1/4 Cup + 2 Tbs. pineapple preserves  
1/2 Cup mayonnaise  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/8 tsp. to 1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. onion powder  
1/4 tsp. black pepper  
6 slices pepper jack cheese,  
cut into quarters  
1-12 count package of Hawaiian rolls,  
or homemade version, toasted

## Instructions

Mix ¼ cup mayonnaise, 1/8 tsp. salt and ¼ cup pineapple preserves in a small bowl. Refrigerate until needed.

Mix venison with 2 tbs. pineapple preserves, ½ tsp. salt, garlic powder, black pepper and onion powder.

Preheat the grill to about 350 degrees, then divide the meat mixture into 12 equal-sized patties. Push a thumbprint into both sides to allow for swelling.

The small patties will cook very rapidly, so don't leave unattended. Grill to desired doneness. Don't overcook.

On last turn, place two squares of cheese on each patty so they soften. Serves well on rolls toasted on the grill, with a dab of the mayonnaise/pineapple sauce on top.



# White Bass & Wipers

by Rob McDonald, *Modern Wildman Blog*

White bass and wipers are predatory game fish that love to prey on schools of shad, minnows and smaller fish fry. As with many other fish, some of the best lures, jigs, and plugs for wipers and white bass imitate their natural forage.

## Mix-and-match Colors

Try plastic jig bodies in white, pearl, silver, blue or metallic translucent; these colors closely resemble shad and minnows. Jig heads with sharp hooks, stout enough to stand up to a good fight, are a must. Jig head colors including white, silver, black, pink and chartreuse are all great choices.

## Jig Your Own Way

Deciding between soft plastics and natural material jigs is up to individual preference. Choices often include bucktails, Marabou jigs, hair and feather. **TIP:** When throwing white, yellow, or chartreuse natural jigs bodies, consider slightly larger jigs from ¼ ounce all the way up to ½ ounce jigs.

## Baiting for a Bite

Opt for heavy gauge 1/0 hooks, and enough weight to get your bait down quickly depending on depth and current. Then, you can reel up to suspended fish for a bite. Consider baiting your hook with shad, night crawlers, or large minnows.

## Look for Feeding Schools

When casting into feeding schools of wiper or white bass chasing bait fish to the surface, consider throwing shad-like hard-bodied baits with stout treble hooks. Baits like rattle traps and chatterbaits give off a vibration meant to sound like schooling fish and can be extremely effective.

## Essential Tools

Develop a list of essential tools to help make your time fishing more productive and enjoyable. A good set of needle nose pliers, a heavy built landing net, and a sharp fillet knife are my go-tos.

# More Tips & Tricks

Pound for pound, wiper and white bass are arguably the sportiest fish in Kansas waters. When it comes to testing tackle and pulling drag, wiper and white bass will do just that!

**Bait and Tackle Considerations** – When targeting wipers, think strong fish that punch above their weight class. Medium action rod and reel combos fit the bill spooled with line rated between 8-12 lb. test. Opt for heavier hooks on crank baits and spoons, and tie on a heavier shanked hook when you're presenting live baits.

White bass anglers can opt for slightly lighter tackle, simply due to their smaller size. However, don't let their lighter weight fool you, white bass are strong swimmers and will test your tackle. Consider a light to medium action rod spooled with 6-10 lb. test line. Smaller jig presentations and live

bait are productive, but white bass will readily take baits that will barely fit in their mouths.

**Autumn Fishing** – As the days begin to shorten, and the water temperature cools, shad will move closer to the surface and into shallower water, the wipers and white bass won't be far behind.

Early in the morning, and during the evening hours, look for schools of shad being driven to the surface by predatory fish below. Cast shad-like crank baits, rattle traps, and soft plastic swim baits into the shad and let your bait drop into the hungry mouths below. Watch your line as it drops for any sign of a strike and be ready to tighten up.

Look for groups of shallow bait fish on the wind driven side of rocky points during this time of year. Fish will sometimes be found suspended on flats adjacent to creek channels and deeper structure and can be casted to from the bank or a boat.



Keep an eye on the sky for birds looking to make a meal of the schools of shad being pushed to the surface as an indicator for surfacing shad.

**Wintertime Fishing** – As the water temperature drops and bait fish move to deeper parts of the water table, the predators will follow. Concentrate your efforts on the deeper ends of points, channel edges and drop offs.

Learn to read schools of bait fish on boat electronics, find the bait fish and you will find the wipers and white bass.

## Wiper Fish Tacos

Prep: 30 min

Cook: 1 hour

Yield: 12 servings

4 Wiper fillets (appx. 2 fish)  
Kosher salt & fresh ground pepper  
3 Green onions, diced  
½ Head of green or red cabbage, chopped  
2 Avocados, sliced  
2 Ears of sweet corn  
1 C Crumbled queso fresco  
4 Fresh chilis of your choice

1 or 2 Fresh limes, wedged  
1 Pkg. Corn tortillas  
¼ C Mayo  
¼ C Sour cream  
1 tsp. Tajin seasoning  
1 Tbsp. Cumin  
2 tsp. Garlic powder  
2 tsp. Onion powder  
1 tsp. Salt

Turn your grill on medium high, start your charcoal, or preheat your oven to 425 degrees. I recommend the grill over the oven. In a small bowl, ramekin, or empty shaker, mix cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and salt. Lay the cleaned and dried wiper fillets, with all the red meat removed, on a cutting board and coat both sides liberally with the seasoning mixture.

Once the cooking heat is up to temperature, add the washed chilis to char, and the corn on the cob to cook. While the peppers and corn start to cook, it's time to make crema sauce. In a squirt bottle or bowl, add the juice of ½ lime, mayo, sour cream, and ½ the Tajin; mix to combine.

When the peppers and corn begin to soften on the grill, 8-10 minutes, it's time to add the fish. Grill the seasoned fish fillets over high heat for 3-4 minutes per side, until it begins to flake with a fork.

Remove the chilis, corn, and fish to a platter. Chop the grilled peppers and slice the grilled corn from the cob. Heat the tortillas on the grill, in the microwave, or in the oven. Now it's time to fix tacos!


Assemble your tacos in a buffet style adding fresh queso, veggies, and an extra sprinkle of Tajin, salt and pepper, a squirt of lime and plenty of crema sauce!





Sam Pounds photo

# THE BENEFITS OF BATS



Bats. When most people think of the nocturnal mammal, they think of Halloween and vampires. These misunderstood critters can sometimes be startling once spotted. Where do they come from? Where do they roost or live? Contrary to what many believe, bats do not only live deep in damp, dark caves.

By Sam Pounds, *KDWPT ecologist*

Deserts, woodlands, suburban communities, and even cities – bats are found in a variety of habitats throughout the United States. Since bats are the only mammal capable of sustained flight, they are able to migrate great distances and roost in a variety of habitats.

Bats in Kansas are no different. Home to 15 different species, Kansas provides a diverse selection of habitats for bats to roost. Access to water and food – arthropods such as insects and scorpions – are important for bats to thrive, and Kansas provides plenty of both.

While many people think that bats only roost in caves or buildings, they can also be found roosting in trees (mostly during warmer months), and rock crevices. Where they roost largely depends on the season and species. Some types of bats are solitary and prefer to roost in trees amongst themselves, while others prefer to live in colonies where hundreds – even thousands – gather in caves and buildings.

There are a handful of bats species in Kansas that primarily roost in caves year-round. These species include Townsend's big-eared bats, cave myotis, Brazilian free-tailed bats, tri-colored bats, and gray bats. Caves provide a protected shelter where bats can hang from the ceiling to be out of reach of most predators.

Eastern red bats, hoary bats, evening bats, and silver-haired bats, however, are commonly found roosting amongst the trees. Bats roosting in trees blend in very well to the surrounding area, whether that is hiding under tree bark, or behind branches and/or leaves.

Kansas also has a handful of bat species that

commonly roost in rock crevices throughout the year. Pallid bats, northern long-eared bats, western small-footed myotis, and Yuma myotis are typically found roosting in rock crevices. Typically spaces only a half-inch or less wide, bats press tightly into the rock crevice for temperature control and safety from predators.

Big-brown bats and little brown bats most commonly inhabit buildings but can also be found roosting in caves or trees. Buildings provide protection from predators and stable temperatures, making them an ideal safe shelter to rest and raise their young.

Each of these habitats provides bats a microhabitat – a specialized habitat within a larger habitat. Microhabitats include a stable environment with adequate temperature, humidity, safety from external factors such as predators and unstable conditions.

## A HELPFUL NEIGHBOR

With threats of health concerns such as COVID-19 and rabies, some may be inclined to discourage bats from living near their residence or workplace. Fortunately, the positives of having bats as neighbors far outweigh the perceived and known threats these misunderstood animals may have.

Large numbers of bats are capable of eating tons of insects such as mosquitoes each year, dwindling the risk of insect-spread viruses. Additionally, they feed on pests that might otherwise ruin crops.



Sam Pounds photo



Chloe Million photo



Sam Pounds photo



Chloe Million photo

**TOP:** A cluster of cave myotis bats hang from a cave's ceiling where they are protected from most predators.

**LEFT:** Eastern red bats can be commonly found roosting amongst the trees. Photo taken in 2019.

**MIDDLE:** Townsend's big-eared bats roost in caves year-round.

**RIGHT:** Hoary bats typically roost in trees to blend into the surrounding area. Photo taken in 2019.

## ATTRACTING BATS

Since bats are an important part of a functioning ecosystem and greatly reduces the insects around us, installing a bat house is a great way to provide a backyard habitat to encourage bats in the area.

Bat houses can be purchased online or easily built with the appropriate tools. Since bats cannot take flight from the ground, it is important they are placed 15 to 20 feet above the ground and 20 to 30 feet away from obstacles. Bat houses also need to be near a large water source and diverse or natural vegetation. If mounted to a building, the bat house will need to be in direct sunlight for six to eight hours a day, which means it will generally need to face south or east.

It can take three to five years for bats to occupy a bat house. In areas well-suited for bats, 90 percent are typically occupied within two years according to Bat Conservation International.

## BAT REMOVAL

There are times, however, where a bat becomes an unwanted roommate instead of a neighbor by entering homes through attics, chimneys, and crevices. Typically, this occurs in early spring when they have left their winter roost, mid-July to late-August when young bats are learning to fly, or late September to early November when bats are migrating to their winter roost to hibernate.

If you find a bat in your living space, never handle a bat with bare hands. Call the KDHE Epidemiology Hotline at 877-427-7317 to help determine if the bat needs to be tested for rabies. If you suspect your pet has come into contact with a bat, please contact your local vet.

For information on how to properly and safely remove a bat from your home, visit <https://ksoutdoors.com/Services/Wildlife-Damage-Control/Bats-in-Houses>.



# BUILD A BAT HOUSE

## SINGLE-CHAMBER BAT HOUSE (WALL-MOUNTED)

### Recommended tools

- Table saw or handsaw
- Variable-speed reversing drill
- Screwdriver bit for drill
- Tape measure or yardstick
- Caulking gun
- Paintbrushes
- Hammer (optional)
- Tin snips (optional)

### Materials (makes one house)

- 1/4 sheet (2' x 4') 1/2" AC, BC or T1-11 (outdoor grade) plywood
- One piece 1" x 2" (3/4" x 1 1/2" finished) x 8' pine (furring strip)
- 20 to 30 exterior-grade screws, 1"
- One pint dark, water-based stain, exterior grade
- One pint water-based primer, exterior grade
- One quart flat, water-based paint or stain, exterior grade
- One tube paintable latex caulk
- 1" x 4" x 28" board for roof (optional, but highly recommended)
- Black asphalt shingles or galvanized metal (optional)
- 6 to 10 roofing nails, 7/8" (if using shingles or metal roofing)

### Construction

1. Measure and cut plywood into three pieces: 26 1/2" x 24" 16 1/2" x 24" 5" x 24."
2. Roughen inside of backboard and landing area by cutting horizontal grooves with sharp object or saw. Space grooves 1/4" to 1/2" apart, cutting 1/32" to 1/16" deep.
3. Apply two coats of dark, water-based stain to interior surfaces. Do not use paint, as it will fill grooves.
4. Cut furring strip into one 24" and two 20 1/2" pieces.
5. Attach furring strips to back, caulking first. Start with 24" piece at top. Roost-chamber spacing is 3/4."
6. Attach front to furring strips, top piece first (caulk first). Leave 1/2" vent space between top and bottom front pieces.
7. Caulk all outside joints to further seal roost chamber.
8. Attach a 1" x 4" x 28" board to the top as a roof (optional, but highly recommended).
9. Apply three coats of paint or stain to the exterior (use primer for first coat).
10. Cover roof with shingles or galvanized metal (optional).
11. Mount on building (south or east sides are usually best).

*Instructions from batcon.org*





# A Natural REMEDY

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Kansas public land managers are going back to the roots by relying on grazing and burning tactics to improve prairie habitat - just as nature intended.

By Michael Pearce, *freelance outdoor writer*

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The calendar said 2020, but the prairie John Johnson walked in looked like 1820 or before.

Johnson, Woodson Wildlife Area manager, called off names of recognized native plants at an auctioneer's speed. An amazing 220 native plants have been recently identified on the area. Even an untrained eye spotted a dozen-plus species of forbs – also known as wildflowers – in various stages of maturity.

Butterfly milkweed was at its orange peak, complete with feeding monarchs. Purple coneflowers were down to a few dried petals. Johnson pointed to forbs with buds that would bloom in a few days, as well as those that would bloom in several weeks. An equally diverse selection of wild grasses filled in between the forbs.

Yet, as lush as the prairie looked as it rolled and bobbed in the wind, a look down showed a maze of open, bare soil paths winding beneath the greenery. From butterflies and moths holding on to dancing wildflowers, to tiny speck-like creatures on the soil, insects were thick. Dickcissels, kingbirds and several species of sparrow were about. So was a wild turkey hen, her poults probably too short to see. Quail whistled nearby. Johnson said the area's pastures of the popular public hunting area hold some of the best bobwhite densities in southeast Kansas.

The prairie is far healthier than it was eight years ago, when Johnson started management. Then, the prairie lacked many of the plants now so common. Wildlife, especially ground-nesting birds like bobwhites, weren't nearly as common.

Shutterstock/436251808

## RETURN TO THE WAYS OF THE BISON

The prairies have returned to such health, largely thanks to following Mother Nature's original plans.

"We're using cattle to mimic what bison did so well for all of those centuries," said Johnson. "History tells us we can't have healthy prairie without some kind of grazing ungulate. These plants evolved through thousands of years of intensive grazing. It's what they need to thrive."

Johnson is one of several wildlife area managers who rely on old-school grazing to keep grasslands as healthy as possible.

"We're finally learning that God knew better than we did," said Troy Smith, Byron Walker Wildlife Area manager for 27 years. "There's a reason he had all of those bison here."

Johnson and Smith largely manage their areas for bobwhites, a species in general decline across the eastern half of America for

over a century. Like in many states, previous Kansas land managers were taught improving quail habitat meant planting shelterbelts, assorted brush, food plots and non-native grasses. Grazing had been removed from many areas for decades. That was a mistake.

"Grazing does a multitude of things to help the prairie," said Johnson, who boasts extensive training in rangeland management and a degree in wildlife management. "One of the main things is that they keep things from getting too thick. Their ground disturbance (with their hooves) also helps the soil. They also help with seed dispersal."

Cattle can be introduced to public lands at an ideal time to hamper unwanted plants. At Pratt Sandhills Wildlife Area, manager Todd Gatton is able to use cattle to graze invasive cheatgrass, which outcompetes desirable plants for moisture and

space.

"Cattle are one of our better ways to manage (cheat grass) because it typically greens up first," said Gatton. "When it's just starting to green up, the cattle will really eat it. Once it matures, they won't touch it so it's our goal to get cattle on those areas early, like April."

Johnson grazes the privately-owned cattle on Woodson Wildlife Area much like the bison did 150 years ago. A dense population of ungulates graze most vegetation off an area in a few days and then move on.

"Cattle will only be on the wildlife area for a total of 90 days and they'll be moved several times," said Johnson. "Depending on the size of the pastures, it may only have cattle on it 11 or 12 days of the year. That's enough and how it would have been with bison."


At the time of the tour in June, he said one 218-acre pasture

Very high numbers of cattle grazing for a short period of time simulates how bison once grazed at what's now the Woodson Wildlife Area. It's improved the area to 220 native prairie plants and some of southeast Kansas' top bobwhite quail densities. **Michael Pearce photo**



Shutterstock/436251808





Biologist John Johnson checks prairie on the Woodson Wildlife Area. A good mixture of intensive grazing and timely burns helps give prairie the diversity they need to support optimal populations of bobwhite quail and other wildlife.

**Michael Pearce photo**

would be holding 295 steers for 33 days.

At Byron Walker, Smith prefers to graze longer times but with fewer cattle.

At Woodson, Johnson said heavy densities are crucial to get the cattle to eat all kinds of plants on a prairie.

“One of the greatest myths out there is that cattle will only eat grass and do well on grass,” said Johnson, as he pointed to where cattle had been browsing on forbs. “That’s just not true.”

Without competition, cattle will pick and choose what they graze. That can lead to a lack of plant diversity, something quail and most kinds of prairie wildlife need.

Johnson explained one of the biggest challenges in improving quail populations is getting the birds from hatchlings to old enough to feed on seeds. For many weeks, young quail feed almost exclusively on insects, which are attracted to flowering forbs. That means there needs to be enough plant diversity to have flowering forbs for the insects they attract for several months.

A good variety of grazed forbs also leaves a good mix of cover and open areas near ground level. Quail need both.

“It’s easy for pastures to get too thick for quail, especially chicks,” said Smith. “You look at their tiny size and you know they can have some mobility issues.”

Young quail also must have cover nearby for protection from the elements and predators.

## **FIRE – NOT JUST A SPRINGTIME TOOL**

For decades, experts have preached fire is good for the prairie. It’s why the Flint Hills, and some other prairie regions, are now annually alive with early spring fires.

While he approves of burning, Johnson said problems arise when that’s the only season burning takes place.

“One of the worst things is to do the same things year after year, the same way, because that puts the eco-system into a rut,” said Johnson. “You have to have variability, or you end up with mono-cultures for an eco-system. That’s not healthy for the prairie and it’s sure not healthy for wildlife.”

Johnson, like a growing number of rangeland man-

Biologist John Johnson checks prairie on the Woodson Wildlife Area. Purple prairie clover is one of 220 native prairie species that now grow on the healthy prairie.

Michael Pearce photo



agers, is a proponent of summer and early fall burning. The burns are more effective on controlling woody cover, like eastern red cedars and other invasive trees. Left unburned, Johnson said such species would take over the Woodson prairies in five years.

Late summer and early fall burnings are very effective at controlling sericea lespedeza – an invasive forb. For at least 30 years, land managers and ranchers have sprayed sericea with non-selective chemicals, like glyphosate. They've made little headway, but those non-selective herbicides kill all native prairie plants they contact.

"That's one of my biggest goals, is to manage all of this without chemicals," said Johnson. "After those later burns, we're getting some phenomenal success with forbs and grasses returning. It's really been impressive."

Research has also shown most grassland fires occurred during the summer or early fall pre-civilization.

"That shouldn't be a surprise," said Johnson. "Early spring fires are something man has introduced to the landscape."

Fire also caters to cattle, and all they bring into the picture. Smith uses fire to attract cattle to where he wants grazed, which includes a particular portion within a large pasture.

"We don't have interior fences," he said. "We go in, burn a part of a pasture that has cattle in it and as soon as that burned area starts to green up, the cattle will move to it."

But the best grazing and burn plans would be for naught, both biologists say, if Kansas prairies didn't get something of equal importance – rest from grazing and fire. It's also important they be rested and recovered for various lengths of time.

"We like to end up with maybe eight different plant succession levels," said Smith. "That way we have good habitat for quail every month of the year. We're providing whatever suits them."

After checking the process of grasses and forbs in one pasture, Johnson drove to another where cattle had their heads buried in greenery, packing on the pounds with impressive speed.

Though his main concern is good prairie management, Johnson hopes showing good gains for cattle on Woodson Wildlife Area will eventually bring more ranchers to try similar



Bobwhite quail are one of the many species that have benefitted from grazing and burning tactics used by KDWPT public land managers. **Michael Pearce photo**


management.

It's not uncommon for steers on the area to gain 2 ¾ pounds daily. That's a growth rate that'll hold the attention of any rancher.

That's a management program that can be a win for wildlife and agriculture.

As Johnson headed back towards his pickup two quail flushed nearby. The biologist predicted they were nesting amid the perfect habitat all around.

He still marvels at how quickly the current grazing and burning management program has created ideal habitat.

"When we first started, we were told it would take at least 20 to 30 years see vast improvement in prairie," Johnson later said. "I started here in 2012. It's come a long way in a short amount of time." 



# Queen of Largemouth

Most serious bass anglers know **La Cygne Reservoir** is the queen of big bass in Kansas.

Throughout the years she has earned her crown, and hasn't had to share the limelight much. Fisheries biologists like myself use electrofishing boats to sample the largemouth bass populations and we have found that more bass over 10 pounds have been sampled, weighed, measured and released than any other Kansas lake. The reason for this big bass reputation is based on some very simple components: the proper size forage, good shoreline and mid-depth habitat, warm water, and good Florida largemouth bass genetics.

For big bass to grow, they need to eat. Part of the reason bass thrive at La Cygne Reservoir is due to a good forage base. Bluegill sunfish and gizzard shad abound, a healthy population provides plenty of opportunities for largemouth bass to eat.


As predators, largemouth bass love ambush cover such as the abundant shallow growing water willow that covers several miles of lake shoreline. In addition to the ideal shoreline habitat, deeper water habitats have been improved by sinking hundreds of trees, wooden pallets, tires and Georgia cubes. Combined, these habitats provide largemouth bass the cover they need to effectively ambush their prey.

Perhaps what sets La Cygne Reservoir apart from other waterbodies in Kansas is the unusually warm water due to generation of electricity by Evergy, Inc. The warm water provides for a longer growing season and produces an ideal growing environment for the Florida strain largemouth bass.

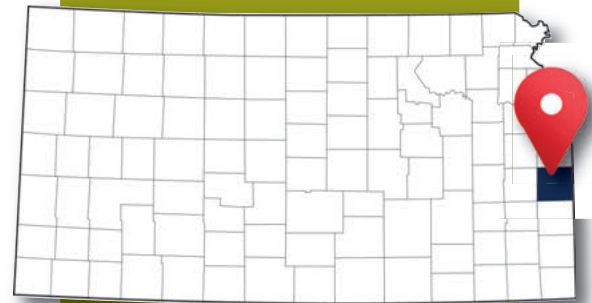
When La Cygne Reservoir was built by the Kansas City Power and Light, now known as Evergy, it did not

have any management influence by the Kansas Fish and Game. Somewhat later, the lake and numerous acres around it were leased by KDWPT to manage for a fishing and wildlife area and Linn County, which built a county park along the west side.

KDWPT did not stock largemouth bass in the reservoir until 1979. At that time, testing and the tracking of genetics was unheard of, but it was believed that a Florida strain of the species was stocked. Approximately 27,500 fish were stocked at that point – I can attest to this, as I was the one who drove the hatchery at Lake Hamilton near Hot Springs, Ark. to pick them up. Fast forward to 2019. Bass were collected and genetics tests were performed. Amazingly, from that one stocking, the largemouth bass population still contains about 27 percent Florida strain genes! Most fish are a genetic mix of northern and Florida alleles.

In June 2020, 26,500 fingerling-sized pure strain Florida largemouth bass were once again stocked into the impoundment. These fish were produced by the Texas Parks and Wildlife and transported by truck by Farlington Fish Hatchery manager Dan Mosier II. The fish from this stocking will spawn for many years; with their warm water loving genetics, they may potentially become future giants to add to this already spectacular largemouth population. Additional opportunities to catch giant largemouth bass should be produced and I can't wait to track the changes. If catching a big Kansas largemouth bass is on your bucket list, La Cygne Reservoir may be your best bet. 





## La Cygne Reservoir

**Surface Acres:** 2,600 acres

**Maximum Depth:** 40 feet

**Normal Lake Level:** 841 msl

**Lake Temperature:** Varies with the time of year; but lake rarely freezes over completely.

**Contact:** Don George  
KDWPT fisheries biologist

**Phone:** (913) 795-2218

# Bass

By Don George  
KDWPT Fisheries biologist

**TOP LEFT:** Largemouth bass such as these would help win any largemouth bass tournament in the country.

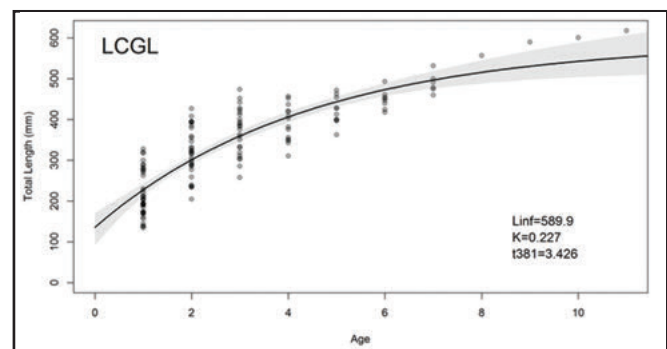
**TOP MIDDLE:** Habitat improvements has been a major management goal at La Cygne Reservoir for years. Georgia cubes like these attract many species of fish and will last a long time.

**TOP RIGHT:** Dan Mosier II, Farlington Fish Hatchery manager and biologist, Don George sort florida strain largemouth bass before releasing these fish into La Cygne Reservoir.

The 2019 Largemouth Bass Fishing Forecast Report is a summary of bass sampling efforts that placed La Cygne Reservoir among the top bass lakes in Kansas. This table shows the fish over 20 inches, the Lunker Size as 2.86 and the 3 years average for largemouth bass as 62.56.

WATERBODY	Density (>12")	Preferred (>15")	Lunker (>20")	Big Fish (LBS.)	Rating	3 yr avg (>12")
KIRWIN	52.94	3.53	0.00	4.00	E	18.27
LA CYGNE	48.00	30.86	2.86	6.70	E	62.56
SEBELIUS	45.88	12.94	0.00	4.45	E	50.13
WEBSTER	41.18	7.19	0.00	3.60	E	16.23
WILSON	32.85	15.71	0.29	5.90	E	21.79
BIG HILL	28.37	10.73	0.00	4.08	E	22.57
GLEN ELDER	10.38	7.96	0.00	3.65	G	15.98
CEDAR BLUFF	2.72	2.17	0.00	2.39	F	11.42
MILFORD*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	G	12.64
EL DORADO*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	F	9.26
HILLSDALE*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	F	8.96
PERRY*	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	F	7.72

This graph shows that largemouth bass at La Cygne live past 10 years, allowing them to reach their genetic potential and grow large. At 10 years of age, largemouth bass could be over 24 inches long or longer.



**TIPS** La Cygne Reservoir's shoreline angling is somewhat limited and fishing with a boat is probably the most productive. There is a one lane boat ramp in the upper end of the lake, and Linn County maintains another single lane ramp as well as a triple lane ramp at their county park facilities. This warm water reservoir rarely freezes over, so the boat ramps remain open much later into the season, providing angling access long after other area lakes are frozen over.

Linn County offers a marina, cabins, rv parking and some primitive camping for overnight anglers. The county park office can be reached at 913-757-6633 for reservations or more information.



# MONARCH MIGRATION

Text and photos by Pam Martin, *KDWPT Education specialist*

## **EPIC** **AMAZING** **MAGICAL**

No matter the words used to describe the monarch butterfly fall migration, the trek that spans over 2,000 miles is an amazing feat for an insect that weighs less than a feather and relies on environmental and hormonal prompts for guidance. Finding an overnight roost site of brilliant orange, black and white monarchs, witnessing thousands flying overhead or feeding on flower nectar, is an experience not long forgotten.

"About two years ago, at Botanica, they were hanging from the trees for two or three days. It was an incredible sight and they were feeding from the flowers at the children's garden," said Kate Sheppard, former Botanica, Wichita children's garden director. "It felt magical to have them that close."

Kansas is considered "monarch central" due to the Monarch Watch program. University of Kansas entomology professor and Monarch Watch director Orley "Chip" Taylor, PhD developed to recruit volunteers for tagging migrating monarchs. In 2020, he expects distribution of 300,000 tags. The recovery of tagged monarchs

provides information about the timing of the migration, direction of flight, speed and survival.

Most people are somewhat familiar with the monarch's fall migration, but there are actually four migrations monarchs make. After monarchs leave their overwintering sites in central Mexico's mountainous oyamel fir forests, they travel north, mating and laying eggs, reaching latitude 37 degrees and dying by the beginning of May. Their offspring go through a 30 to 36-day life cycle and again migrate north, recolonizing most of the area containing milkweeds by the first week of June.

For a period of six to seven weeks, there is no migration. Then, some, but not all monarchs, begin flying south or southwest into areas from Georgia to Texas. Not much is known about this midsummer migration. The fourth migration is the more well-known flight to Central Mexico that starts at the end of August.

Late summer monarchs emerge from their chrysalises in reproductive

# ARCH ATION



diapause – a pause in reproduction. Scientists don't fully understand what triggers diapause, but migrating monarchs remain in diapause until late February when mating begins again as they return north.

The migrating generation of non-reproductive monarchs are three to four generations removed from those who made the migration the previous year. Instead of living the typical two to five weeks of non-migrating monarchs, they live seven to nine months. The fall migration, which begins in Canada in August and progresses southward, takes two to two and a half months, with arrival of the first migrants in central Mexico at the end of October.

Migration hazards are many: storms, predators, vehicles, lack of

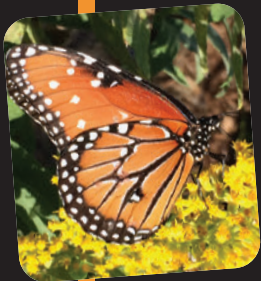
food and shelter, disease and parasites to name a few. So why take this risk when they could just stay in the warmth of the tropics? In a word, food!

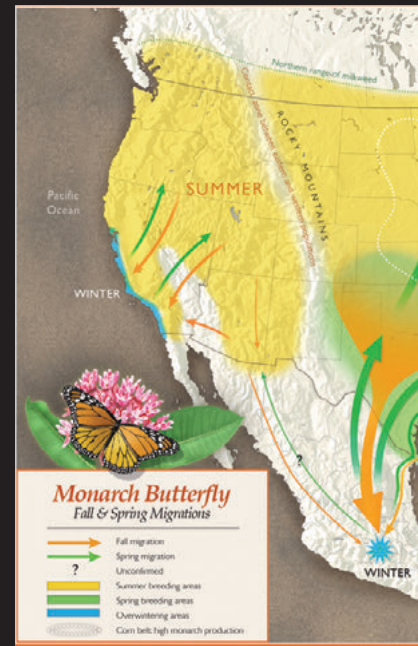
Monarch larva, or caterpillars, eat several species of milkweed that grow throughout North America. The northern most point of milkweed's range, southern Canada, is also the northern most point of the migration's progression. "They're exploiting a food resource and retreating," Taylor said.

As a tropical species, monarchs do

## DID YOU KNOW?

Queens are often confused with monarchs, but are another species entirely! While monarchs have white dots within their black borders, queens feature white dots within the black borders and on the forewings. The queens' forewings also lack the bold black lines that monarchs are known for.





**LEFT:** A female monarch sips nectar from showy milkweed, obtaining the amino acids she needs for egg development and lipids for food value. Monarchs are one of the few animals to gain weight during the migration.

**TOP:** In addition to providing larval food, milkweed also provides protection against predators through a chemical, cardiac glycoside, within milkweed that deters animals from eating it. The caterpillar’s characteristic white, yellow and black stripes serve as an avoidance warning to birds that eat them and become sick.

**BOTTOM:** Monarch Watch hosts tags monarchs to research the migration.

not have a mechanism for surviving winter like temperate zone butterfly species.

Scientists are learning more about how the monarchs know when to start the migration and how they navigate. “They have a time compensating sun compass,” Taylor said. “And that means they know what time of day it is and they’re making adjustments physiologically based on their perception of the time of day.”

They don’t actually follow the sun, but they do track it and make adjustments to remain at the direction toward the overwintering sites in Mexico. In a recently published scientific paper, Taylor found monarchs appear to use the sun’s angle to the Earth to start and maintain the migration.

Once they arrive in the transvolcanic range of central Mexico, they form clusters in the forests, which also contain streams for monarchs to drink during warm days, helping them metabolize stored fats to survive winter. Hundreds of millions of monarchs, overwintering in roosts in a semi-dormant state, sometimes break branches from their combined weight.

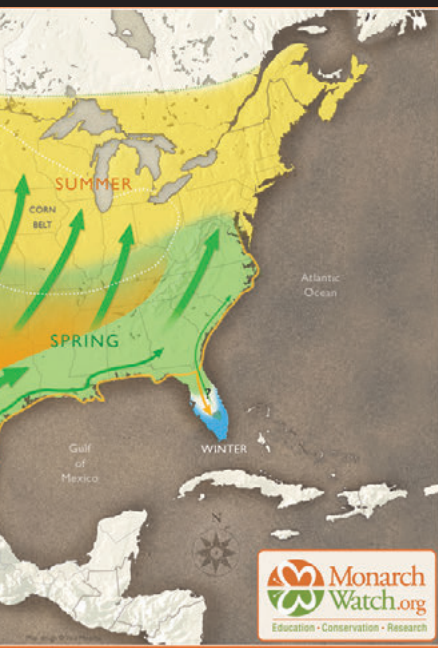
Canopy density protects the monarchs from winter storms and moderate temperatures, generally with highs no more than 65 degrees and lows no less than 30 degrees. Many monarchs do succumb however, falling to the forest floor where they

die. Taylor remembers the date when the immensity of the migration struck him – Nov. 17, 1997. Guides were pointing out big bags of monarchs roosting on branches.

“Then I heard this tinkle, tinkle in the undergrowth at our feet and I started to investigate it,” Taylor said, “and it got to be kind of very emotional, because what I found was a lot of dead and dying monarch butterflies. They had flown 1,000, 2,000 maybe as many as over 2,500 miles, to get there only to die within days after their arrival...but what it tells you is the drive to replicate, the drive to reproduce is extraordinary in nature and you can see it with monarchs better than with a whole lot of other species, because they’re undertaking this incredible migration.”

Millions of monarchs do survive to begin the northward migration in late February. They have adapted these behaviors over millions of years, but the migration is in danger due to rapid habitat loss and other factors. Numbers at roost sites have drastically declined over the past 15 years. Populations are measured in hectares, with an average of 9 hectares in the 90s and just 3.34 hectares from 2004-2016.

Kansas is at the forefront of attempts to save the migration through education, research and restoration planting of milkweed and native plants.



# HELP SAVE THE MIGRATION


**MAP:** In the fall, the monarch population west of the continental divide, mostly migrates to California, while the population east of the Divide migrates to central Mexico. The spring, or northern migrations, begin in late February as the overwintering monarchs begin mating and leaving the roosts, continuing to 37 degrees N before dying. Their progeny colonize most of the rest of the area containing milkweed.

KDWPT was the lead in coordinating development of the Kansas Monarch Conservation Plan, a 20-year objective to create pollinator habitat. A broad coalition of farming and ranching organizations and industry to conservation organizations and tribal nations hammered out the plan over a few years.

“We’re losing 2 million acres of habitat per year,” Taylor said. “We have to run as fast as we can just to stay in place.”

Multi-national efforts between the U.S., Canada and Mexico are essential, he said, but individuals can help too. Even small patches of milkweed and native nectar plants will draw monarchs. Monarch Watch encourages “monarch waystations,” providing milkweed plants and detailed instructions for plantings based on your geographic location.

Numbers at overwintering roost sites have increased from the low of just .67 hectares in 2013-2014. Some good news for those working to ensure the migration continues for future generations of monarchs and humans.

Take the opportunity this year and witness one of nature’s great migrations for yourself. Just look for masses of wildflowers. Many of the nature centers and parks have areas set aside for pollinators, where visitors can experience the magic of monarchs. 

Scientists estimate restoration of 1.8 billion milkweed stems are needed, along with native wildflowers, and encourage backyard plantings. Listed below are sources for milkweed plants and a list of native wildflowers specific for Kansas and liked by monarchs.

### Native nectar plants:

- Blacksamson and pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea*)
- Common buttonbush (*shrub - Cephalanthus*)
- Gayfeather (*Liatris*)
- Goldenrod (*Solidago*)
- Maximilian sunflower (*Helianthus*)
- Indian Blanket flower (*Gaillardia*)
- Ironweed (*Vernonia*)

### Milkweed sources:

- MonarchWatch.org – click “milkweed market”
- Dyckarboretum.org

HISTORIC

# Lake Scott

## State Park

By Rick McNary  
*freelance outdoor writer*

**A**s you travel on the plains along US-83, the Western Vistas Historic Byways that run from Scott City to Oakley then west to Sharon Springs, the turn off on K-95 north of Scott City to Historic Lake Scott State Park is like opening a door to secret treasures. In fact, while you're up on the ridge overlooking and over the top of the canyon, you can see over the top of the canyon and have no idea of the stunning beauty that waits below.

You will want to drive that road slowly because the landscape changes so rapidly in that short jaunt that you will wonder if you're still in Kansas. In fact, it's reminiscent of a scene out of an old Western movie as you dip down into Ladder Creek Canyon and 1,100 acres of a lush oasis.

Herbert Steele Home  
Rick McNary photo

Rick McNary photo

Although Lake Scott is one of the smaller lakes in the state park system with barely more than 100 acres, its unique beauty snuggled in a valley makes it one of the most inviting. It's as if the landscape cradles you into a protective and serene retreat as you drive into the canyon. That peaceful feeling of being protected and nourished draws visitors from far and wide to retreat to this tranquil spot.

Small, yet mighty, this state park offers an extraordinary level of intellectual intrigue for those who desire numerous learning opportunities as well as outdoor recreation activities to help people disconnect from busy lives and decompress.

## El Cuartelejo

In addition to Lake's Scott's beauty, the rich history of the area dates back centuries. Inside the park are the recreated ruins of the only known pueblo in Kansas built in the 1660s by Taos Indians fleeing Spanish rule. El Cuartelejo – Spanish for barracks – was built with a series of buildings and irrigation ditches connected to a local spring. It is the northernmost pueblo in the United States.

The last known occupation of El Cuartelejo was in 1727 when it was then abandoned to the forces of nature to erode it into a small mound with irrigation ditches. Then, more than 170 years later in the mid 1890s, Herbert Steele – settling into the area under the Homestead Act – used the irrigation ditches for his truck garden enterprise.

Steele discovered the pueblo ruins and contacted the University of Kansas who then sent archaeologists to excavate the site. Fast forward another 80 years, and the Kansas Historical Society excavated and restored the area, reconstructing its foundation so visitors can grasp the history.

The El Cuartelejo Museum in Scott City offers additional information about the history and surrounding area. You will also discover that Maria DeGeer, the first woman admitted to the Kansas Bar Association, founded the town in 1884.





Rick McNary photo

## Herbert Steele Home

Herbert Steele arrived in Scott County in 1888 to take advantage of the Homestead Act signed by President Lincoln in 1864. He set his stakes in the ground in the area which presently serves as the state park. He married Eliza Landon five years later and, like most early homesteaders, their first home was a dugout.

As time passed, they began building their four-room house using sandstone quarried from the nearby cliffs. The pristine Steele Home is preserved in its original condition and displays tools and furnishings used by the early settlers. There are various times of the year when period-actors welcome visitors into the home and recount the daily life of the Steeles.

The Steele's farm attracted many visitors interested in beauty of the area and activities like hunting and fishing. They wanted their homestead to become a public park and recreation area, so they sold their 640-acre farm in 1928 to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission. Across the road and up the hill from the home is the Steele Memorial.


## Friends of the Park

The Friends Group of Lake Scott State Park is an active group of volunteers who work hard behind the scenes to make the lake an enjoyable destination for those who love the outdoors.

One of the key supports is the Beach House near the swimming beach, a convenience store that rents kayaks, canoes and paddleboards as well as selling fishing licenses, tackle, bait, food and other camping items.

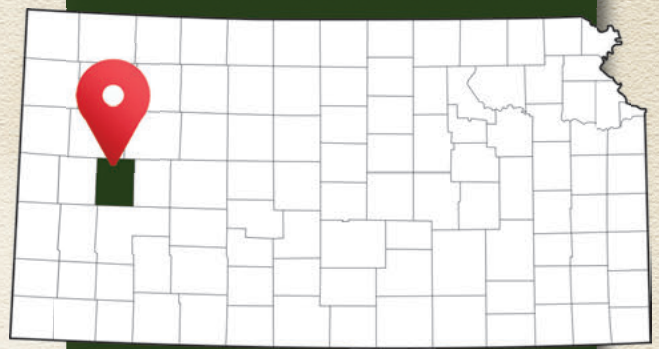
Like all state parks, Lake Scott relies heavily on volunteer groups to assist in activities and conveniences to accommodate more visitors. Since state parks receive no revenue from tax dollars, they rely on the sale of park passes, camping fees and licenses to keep the parks afloat.

COVID-19 related measures for social distancing are used at the Beach House. Plexiglass is in front of the checkouts and floors mark traffic flow with six-foot markers to ensure social distancing. No children are allowed inside and only one family member is permitted. The number of guests is limited, too.

In addition to signage, regular care is taken to wipe the kayaks, paddleboards and canoes down after each use and life jacket are sanitized. All of this work is done by volunteers who are committed to providing visitors the enjoyment of outdoor recreation. 



Lake Scott is one of the smaller lakes in the state park system with barely more than 100 acres; however, its unique beauty in a valley makes it one of the most inviting.



## *Must-sees while in the area*

### **Battle Canyon - Battle of Punished Woman's Fork**

The south of the entrance to Lake Scott is a 30-acre state and national historic site, the Battle of Punished Woman's Fork. It is the last encounter in Kansas between Native Americans and the Army.

### **Little Jerusalem State Park**

Little Jerusalem State Park is a short drive north of Lake Scott State Park and is also operated under the auspices of the park office. Little Jerusalem, thus named because of the unique rock features that resemble formations in Israel, is the newest of the Kansas State Park system as of 2019. Also known as the Badlands, this unique Niobrara chalk formation is a stunning geography nestled in the Smoky River Valley.



Little Jerusalem State Park  
Staff photo

## *Did you know?*

**National Geographic listed Historic Lake Scott State Park as a must-see in their Top 50 State Parks in America! This hidden gem, nestled down in a canyon on the plains, waits to surprise you with its beauty, history, archaeology, geology and family-like atmosphere.**

## *Historic Lake Scott State Park*

- 55 utility campsites, including some with 50-amp service and water hookups
- 2 modern cabins
- 2 modern shower buildings are situated near the utility sites
- 175 primitive campsites, an additional shower-building and several vault toilets are also located at the park
- Swimming beach and playground area
- Canoe and paddleboat rentals are also available seasonally to visitors
- Nature trails have been designed to accommodate hikers, horseback riders, and naturalists. These trails provide an excellent opportunity to observe wildlife in its natural habitat.
- Equestrian area with a watering facility and hitching post is the designated location for unloading trailers. Horses are required to remain on the trail.
- Public hunting is allowed on the wildlife area west of the park. Landowner permission is required to hunt on the nearby private land.
- Parks and public lands regulations are enforced at Historic Lake Scott State Park.

### **Park contact information:**

**Park Ranger:** Greg Mills  
**Address:** 101 West Scott Lake Drive  
Scott City, KS 67871  
**Phone:** (620) 872-2061



# The Milford Nature Center

By Pat Silovsky  
*Milford Nature Center director*

**Located in the Flint Hills, the Milford Nature Center sits below the dam at Milford Lake, right next to the Milford Fish Hatchery. Completed in 1988, the Milford Nature Center has become one of the premier nature centers in the state during its 32-year history.**

So, what can you see if you visit? A must see are the two large dioramas showcasing the plants and animals of the terrestrial and aquatic habitats of Kansas. Designed by Terry Chase, a world-class exhibit designer with projects located around the world, the dioramas present a life-like picture of the prairies, marshes and woodlands of Kansas in the terrestrial diorama and the reservoirs, streams and ponds in the aquatic diorama. If you look closely, you can find aquatic insect larvae, reptiles, amphibians, small stream fish, and large sportfish throughout the aquatic diorama. Overall, more than 63 animals and plants were replicated for this exhibit using the latest in fiberglass casting and other exhibit techniques.

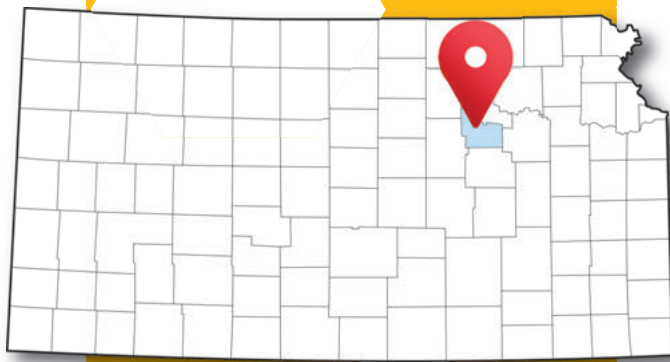
The terrestrial diorama is equally detailed but reminds you of a fall day in the upper reaches of the reservoir. The many animals depicted are taxidermy mounts but sometimes, when we just couldn't get a suitable specimen, the artists had to resort to painting in the animal. Trivia: This is the case with the red-winged blackbird painted on the wall!

Before coming to the hallways housing the dioramas, visitors first walk into the lobby. This area is full of hands-on exhibits to make animal tracks, identify animal skulls, or feel your favorite animal





fur. It is also home to many live animals on display in the nature center. Most of these are Kansas reptiles or amphibians, but you will also see a pair of Eastern screech owls in a corner display and the cockroach dollhouse for a fun take on where these critters might be found. Also on display is North America's most endangered mammal, the black-footed ferret. Rarity, our black-footed ferret, is a retired breeder from the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center in Colorado. The story of the comeback of the black-footed ferret is an important story we tell and we are proud to have an ambassador animal here to help us. Down the hallway and around the corner is the prairie dog display that also helps us tell the story of black-footed ferrets, prairie dogs, and the importance of prairie, in this case, shortgrass prairie, to the



## The Milford Nature Center

**Address:**

*3415 Hatchery Dr  
Junction City, KS 66441*

**Hours:**

*Year round:  
M-F 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.*

*April thru September:  
Saturdays and Sundays  
1 to 5 p.m.*

**Phone:**

*(785) 238-5323*

ecosystems of Kansas. Other building displays feature the waterfowl of Kansas, the sportfish of the state, and our renovated big brown bat display.

Visitors may walk around the outdoor raceways of the Milford Fish Hatchery during business hours. Guided hatchery tours are offered by appointments throughout the year and on Saturday and Sundays at 1:30 p.m. during the months of April and May. This is the best time of year to tour the facility for a behind the scenes look at the walleye hatching. September to June visitors can feed the feeder koi in the raceways by purchasing feed for a quarter.

Be sure and check out the seasonal Butterfly House operated from Mother's Day to Labor Day. Our desire is to showcase the importance of pollinators and the oft overlooked, "little guy" in the world of wildlife watching. Numerous host plants and nectar plants provide food for our target species of black swallowtails, monarchs, and painted ladies. Other species of butterflies can also be found in the garden along with a couple of resident box turtles who enjoy a free existence within the bound of the Butterfly House. Since the Butterfly House is not climate controlled, expect to find it closed if you visit in the winter.

Raptors are definitely our specialty, and no visit to the Milford Nature Center would be complete without taking a walk by the cages of our ambassador raptors. These birds have permanent homes at the nature center due to injuries or imprinting. They are some of our most popular program animals, visiting numerous classrooms throughout the year. The nature center is home to 12 species of raptors, everything from a bald eagle to a barn owl and my favorite, the turkey vulture. Next to the raptors are two resident bobcats that visitors also enjoy.

Milford has, on average, 15,000 program participants each year. Programs given include those that feature our hawks, owls, and eagles but other programs include reptiles and amphibians, prairie animals, butterflies and flowers, stream sampling, and the unhuggables to name a few. The Unhuggable Program is the only way to meet our resident skunk named Oreo! Programs are offered free of charge but must be scheduled in advance. All schools, youth groups, Scouts, 4-H, and other groups are welcome to schedule by calling 785-238-LEAF or by contacting us through Facebook or email. The nature center does out-



The prairie dog display tells the story of prairie dogs, black-footed ferrets, and the importance of shortgrass prairie to the ecosystems of Kansas.

reach programs and will come to you (during non-COVID-19 times), so be sure and contact us with your program needs.

A large picnic shelter sits adjacent to the nature playground and makes a nice place for parents to relax while the kids play or for the family to eat lunch. There are no grills at this shelter, but it has been used for birthday parties and other celebrations. It is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. The shelter is also at the beginning of the nature trail hugging the edge of the outlet pond and proceeding around through the prairie. Along the trail, you can see our beehives and check out several wayside exhibits.

Lastly, the Milford Nature Center is one of only a handful of certified wildlife rehabilitation facilities in Kansas. We intake between 400-600 animals a year with the goal of returning these animals to the wild. Most of the rehabilitation takes place behind the scenes, but much of it is headquartered in our Starbird Education Building. This building was added in 2009 and provides a multi-purpose room for our many classes and the office and hospital space for the wildlife rehabilitation efforts. The building is named in honor of Earlnor Starbird who dedicated her life to teaching in the pri-

mary grades at Dover Grade School. Her generous contribution to Wildscape helped make the education building possible.

Many volunteers are required for us to be successful and help is always appreciated in the form of donations of time and supplies. Becoming a Milford Friends member is a great way to support the many programs that are a part of the Milford Nature Center. The Friends group is also a vital part of the many successful programs we offer to the public like Monster Myths by Moonlight (our Halloween event) and Eagle Days. Check out the Milford Friends Facebook page or contact us directly if you would like to support the Milford Nature Center, our education efforts or our wildlife rehabilitation. Don't forget to visit this one of a kind nature center in the Outlet Park area of Milford Lake. You'll be glad you did! 🐃

## Species Profile

# Coyote



Cunning. Adaptable. Resilient. Because of these traits, the coyote can be found in nearly all habitats of North America, including the entirety of Kansas. With home ranges as large as 25 square miles, coyotes can live alone, in pairs or in packs. Shortly after nightfall, they may howl to indicate their location, claim their territory, reinforce social bonds or simply because they enjoy howling!

Skillful hunters, the coyote will feed on rabbits, mice, rats, squirrels and ground nesting birds, though it is not uncommon for them to eat fruits and berries. Dead livestock may be scavenged, and poultry, livestock, cats and small dogs may be preyed upon for food.

Litters of four to seven pups are born each spring, with some coyote pairs mating for life. They can live up to 10 years in the wild.

The ways in which wildlife species communicate fascinate me. From audible calls and visual indicators to the releasing of scents, it's truly amazing how information is passed along from one member of the wildlife family to another.

We're not so different in the sense that, we too, are a social species and we share methods of communication specific to us - methods that are only obvious and meaningful to fellow humans. We don't always get it right, and sometimes our true meaning or intent is lost in translation, but when we're effective, man it's a beautiful thing.

A recently-proposed regulation change got me and my staff thinking about how we might best communicate the proposal to our constituents in order to solicit public input prior to a vote. The regulation change, which ultimately passed, will allow hunters to use night vision equipment when hunting coyotes at night beginning January 2021, with restrictions. It was a proposal that, from the beginning, we knew could garner significant interest, but we didn't have a strong pulse on what our constituents' really thought about the matter. We could take a wait-and-see approach and allow those with strong opinions to reach out to us first, but that doesn't make for an informed vote if the feedback is collected after the fact. We could


attempt to gather folks' thoughts through an email, but who isn't already getting bombarded with those "We'd love to hear from you!" prompts? We could issue a news release (which we did), but that doesn't allow for two-way

ences not in your locale.

Not only did utilizing Facebook to promote this regulation change allow us to gather more public input than ever before, it also led to the highest attendance our virtual Commission meetings have seen to date. By getting the right message, to the right people, at the right time, in the right format - what started as a somewhat routine notice to the public blossomed into a communication professional's dream: there was dialogue and lots of it!

In less than 24 hours, our first coyote-related Facebook post reached more than 56,700 unique Facebook users, received 88 comments, and was shared 250 times. When we communicated the results of the vote, that post's results were even more astounding: It had reached more than 515,800 unique Facebook users, received 407 comments, and was shared a whopping 3,891 times!

While social media is just one tool in our species' communications toolbox, I find it to be one of our most fascinating. Now, social media doesn't compare with the likes of my black Labrador Retriever "Kota" and the look she gives me when she wants to communicate her disapproval of having to share retrieves with her siblings, but it's nearly as effective.

If it interests you, be sure to find us and follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. After all, you just might be the very person we need to hear from! 



communication... So, we chose invest our time on social media.

Social media is a profoundly unique and effective way to share information and engage with others, especially when you're seeking opinions and/or attempting to reach audi-





CampIt KS



HuntFish KS

