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K.C. BECK

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MONTHLY BULLETIN
FORESTRY, FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
PRATT, KANSAS
January, 1939

OUR WILDLIFE, A PUBLIC ESTATE

Wildlife of Kansas, entrusted by law to the State Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, constitutes a public estate in which every citizen has an equity. It is upon this important premise that the present policies of administration of this great trust have been based.

A HERITAGE AND LEGACY

Game laws were early sought in order to prevent complete annihilation of wildlife by the hunter, but primarily in the interest of the future supply for the hunter. More recently, however, wildlife has come to be viewed from the standpoint of the public rather than the hunter alone. The sportsman no longer buys a license to kill promiscuously. He pays a fee for the privilege of taking a certain number of specified species of game only where this is not contrary to public interest, and the fee paid is used in turn to replenish or increase the supply. Wildlife constitutes a natural heritage and public legacy.

VITAL TO AGRICULTURE

In evaluating the true worth of our natural resources, wildlife is now generally recognized as a vital part of the economy of civilization. The tremendous importance of wildlife, more especially birdlife, to agriculture and through agriculture, to the nation, can scarcely be over-estimated. From the biblical locust plagues to the more recent onslaughts by herds of grasshoppers and other insect pests, history abounds with the tragic accounts of what happens to nations when the fine balance of nature has been upset by the destructive practices of an encroaching civilization--and it must be borne in mind that such calamities occur after the conditions best suited for wildlife have been destroyed.

Nature populated the prairie with prairie chicken, the semi-brush covered regions with quail, and the timbered areas with turkey, and successfully coped with the insect herds. The great horned owl kept the crow in check, while the coyote was busy running down the jackrabbit. But, thoughtlessly, this fine balance in nature has been overturned and not alone by the hunter but by the plow, the axe and fire, and more especially by civilization's own lack of understanding the full extent to which it is dependent upon this great natural resource. The buffalo, antelope and the prairie chicken have been literally plowed under far beyond the economic balance point of the third row. Where

countless herds once thundered across the prairie, dust storms now roll over ghastly gullies to bury what shelter and food remain to the remnants of birdlife.

A FOOD SUPPLY

Unfortunately, the conditions which have brought about the dust storms and the decimation of wildlife on the prairies are likewise robbing the state of its most fertile top soil and silting the streams to the detriment of nature's process of fish propagation. Wildlife served as a principal source of food for the pioneer. Few, however, are aware of the potential value of this source as a present and future food supply. Some of the facts in this regard seem almost incredible. It is not generally known, that more food can be produced on an acre of ground under water than in any other manner. That continuous cropping of game is possible under modern game management is shown by the State of Pennsylvania which has had an annual open season on deer and one year alone permitted sportsmen to take 97,000 head from an area not as large as our state.

THE RECREATIONAL VALUE

The recreational values inherent in wildlife are too well recognized to need further emphasis to point out that more than a quarter million persons in the State of Kansas, from carefree country boys to nerve wracked people from all walks of life, turn to this source of recreation for relaxation and inspiration each year, and that the need for such opportunity will increase as the advance of civilization further encroaches upon the very source of wildlife today.

Our State Park north of Pittsburg has been called the botanical garden of Kansas with a wealth of flora to attract botanists from the State Teachers College at Pittsburg to spend endless hours searching for new specimens. A National Park Service representative once said that this park was the ace in the Kansas system because of its superlative natural vegetation. Its pools rival Yellowstone's and a canoe trip can be made which will remind one of the great swamps in Louisiana.

This office constantly receives requests for literature covering various phases of the work of the department. We have on hand a number of pamphlets covering fish culture, game bird propagation, and the like, which are available for free distribution. Pamphlets containing all statutes enacted for the protection of game, fish and fur-bearing animals in Kansas, are also available for free distribution.

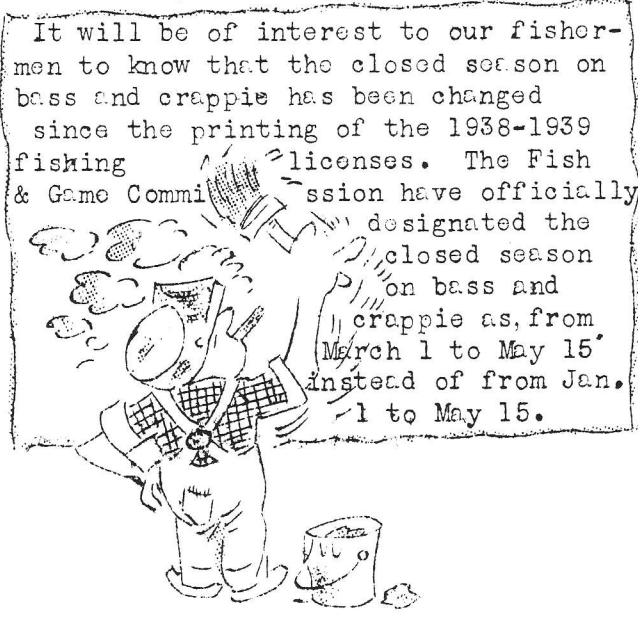
From reliable sources, we learn that the valuation of our State Parks, based on current construction costs, is approximately \$3,500,000.00.

In our State Park Planning, we try to abide by the proven axiom that any man-built development on a park is an obstruction and any character it may have is to be subjugated to that of the area rather than to express any individuality of itself. We have several hundred accumulative State Park years of experience of other states to cause us to try to hold all development to the very minimum and yet provide the public with access to the areas of heavy potential use. Wilderness areas are held at the maximum to give the greatest good to the greatest number of people. We feel that highway departments have spent billions for roads, and millions have been spent for amusement facilities, but the country has spent very little for that true deep recreation that comes from an appreciation of nature and the ability to drink of its goodness. Hence, we see no need of providing places of amusement for the pleasure seeker or roads for the speeder on what few acres we have and which have been dedicated to the true recreation seeker as exemplified by those who seek to learn nature for the general cause of conservation.

It is to be noted with gratification that the recommendations for the conservation of all land and water resources, that the basic principles underlying the present policy of the agricultural program, and that the soil erosion and water conservation programs, all point in the direction of the restoration of conditions more suitable for wildlife.

Recent land use surveys made by the various governmental agencies, and others interested in the future welfare of the nation, all point to the necessity of halting the advance of agricultural cultivation of land which is more economically suited for pasture and woodland. It is, also, to be noted that the complexity of the game, or rather wildlife problem, and the interrelation of the interests involved in the solution of these problems, has necessitated an increasing cooperative working relationship with the various agencies involved. While this has been somewhat of a strain upon the time of the present personnel of the Commission, it is gratifying to have had a part in the substantial progress made during the biennium. The department wishes to commend these governmental agencies which have made this progress possible, and particularly those in high authority who recognized the needs of wildlife while offering employment to suffering humanity. Otherwise, much of the progress made would not have been possible.

When you start out hunting, leave your gun at home--say the game wardens. That is, if you don't have your hunting license with you.



The preservation and conservation of the fur-bearing animals in Kansas is as much a matter for public attention as that of any other of our natural resources. While the furs of our state do not bring the prices of those of our northern states, nevertheless, the aggregate amount received from the furs trapped in our state would be surprising to those who have never given it a thought. While the laws as applied to our fur bearers, state that not only those trapping or selling furs must have a trapping license, which costs a resident trapper \$1.00, but that anyone buying furs must have a fur buyers license, cost of which is \$10.00, It further states that those having a fur buyers license must keep an accurate record of all furs bought by them.

While we have some red fox in the eastern part of our state, they are not plentiful. There is no record of any otter, which is one of our protected fur bearers, having been caught in Kansas for forty years. Occasional specimens of bob or wild cat are trapped in the south and southeastern sections of our state.

Mink are slowly but surely decreasing in Kansas. Opossum are showing an increase, this is possibly accounted for by the low prices prevailing for this fur, also, their prolificness. The same can be said of civet cat. The weasel or ermine never have been plentiful in this state.

Our engineer has made extensive study of the available records of the old Indian Pueblo which stood on what is now Scott County State Park. The New Mexico State Park Department has been consulted in connection with the proposed reconstruction. New shelter houses are being designed to carry out the pueblo motif.

The careless destruction of wildlife--plant and animal--is one of the unnecessary evils of modern business.--Wallace Gallagher.

A marker has been erected on the Finney County State Park in memory of Frank Kinney who donated almost all of the land enclosed in the park. This lake has never filled and as such acts one hundred percent as a flood control unit, nevertheless, its volume has gained each year since the depth of the drought and, no doubt, once filled, it will thereafter remain within a few feet of spillway elevation. It now supplies some real fishing sport for bull-head enthusiasts and the water itself is an attraction which draws admirers from many miles around, as well as thousands of migratory waterfowl all the way from the arctic circle.

J. N. "Ding" Darling, President of the National Wildlife Federation asks how many of you can answer the following questions:

Why are the fish which once inhabited our streams and lakes no longer plentiful?

What relation is the twelve million unemployed to the Dust Storms?

Where do the thousands of families go who are forced off the exhausted soils and denuded forests?

How much of our natural resources have we used up or wasted in our brief occupancy of this continent?

What makes the underground water supply continue to recede?

Who is responsible for the custody and conservation of our life giving resources?

Is there a remedy and how can it be accomplished?

Are we making a desert of our continent?

A CCC Camp, under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, is soon slated to reach the Meade County State Park. In this case, as in others, which must have National Park Service approval, low maintenance cost is the prime consideration after best public use. On this park, even after a development program requiring two years to fulfill, it is contemplated to reduce the maintenance cost from the present estimated logical figure.

District Conservation Officer: I understand you wish to leave the game law enforcement work to become an attendant in a lunatic asylum. What experience have you had?

Game Protector: Well, I've been here for three years.--Pathfinder.

There is room below the dam on the Leavenworth County State Park for three large fish rearing ponds and it looks like a proposition will soon be worked out between the local sportsmen and the W. P. A. whereby these can be constructed.

The skunk is our predominant fur bearer, followed closely by the opossum. The muskrat, while on the protected list the first half of this biennium, was allowed to be trapped during the last half and apparently are holding their own, excepting in those sections that have suffered from the extreme drought and the water area has decreased.

The coyote or prairie wolf, while not as plentiful as in the early days, are still with us in substantial numbers. While the racoon is still to be found in many parts of our state in fair numbers, a request has been made to the Commission by delegations from some of the organized Raccoon Hunters Organizations for racoon for restocking certain areas. There seem to be two factions in these organizations, some of the members wish to hunt them principally for the sport, the pelt being a secondary consideration. The other faction desire to trap and hunt them mainly for the fur value. The Commission has agreed to spend the sum of \$200.00 for racoon for restocking areas that shall be closed for a given period.

Some 15 years ago, five pair of beaver were secured from the State of Wyoming. These were placed in different sections in the northern part of the state. From a careful survey made in the months of November and December in 1937, their number at that time was conservatively estimated at 1,500. Most of these were located in the two northern tiers of counties, extending from the Colorado line east as far as Marshall and Pottawatomie Counties, although they have begun to spread farther east and south, but the section described above has the largest number. In the length of one mile on the Republican River in Cloud County, there were estimated to be 75 beaver. The department in the past four years have been receiving many complaints from farmers whose farms adjoin these streams as to the damage being done by these animals. Many of these complaints were found, upon careful investigation, to be based upon the idea of securing a permit to trap these beaver. In some instances, the department found it advisable to thin out these animals, some of them being trapped alive, while others were pelted. The increase in the number of these animals has been enormous. A realization of their true value has caused us to attempt their removal from sections where they are not desired, to other locations. We do believe, however, that continued protection should be given this valuable fur bearer and urge you to be against any attempt to repeal or amend the present law relating to beaver.

In the words of the true conservationist, the Indian, "He never took more than he needed!"

To the present generation the fact that Kansas at one time, which was but yesterday as the pages of history were written, was a wildlife paradise, seems a myth. For them to even try to comprehend that within the memory of men living today, our plains were covered with countless numbers of buffalo, antelope, and deer; our prairies the homes of millions of prairie chickens. Quail were everywhere, wild turkey were abundant in the wooded sections and in addition, migratory waterfowl, wild ducks, geese, swan, and crane would pass over our state twice annually, to their winter homes in the fall and to their nesting grounds in the spring, in such numbers as to almost darken the skies. In every stream beaver, mink, and otter were plentiful. Skunk, racoon, and other

fur bearers were that our state as the "trappers

That this have existed at like a fairy tale generation--as a it does not sound

So abundant were antelope, deer, and water fowl in state, that the

to be inexhaustable, little thought was



"Looks like a case for the G-men--no hunting license, no dog license, and no driver's license!"Kansas City Star.

in such numbers was looked upon heaven!"

condition should one time seems to the present matter of fact,

like good sense. buffalo, turkey, prairie chicken, their native

supply was thought and consequently, given to their

protection. Later as their numbers dwindled, game laws were passed to curb the professional hunter who had developed the slaughter of game on the scale of wholesale industry. Soon it was, also, thought necessary to restrict the amateur sportsman, and gradually steps were taken to not only conserve the game which remained but to assist in the matter of game propagation.

Naturally, the plains and prairies cannot be restored to the antelope and buffalo. This form of wildlife is permanently doomed except as the species is preserved as a living museum to remind us of a glory that has passed, and of the destruction wrought upon wildlife by the advance of civilization. The future of other forms of wildlife, however, is more hopeful.

NAME THEM YOURSELF

Sometimes one thinks
The world would profit
If certain persons
Now on, were off it.

--R. W. Armour

Proper distribution of fish that are produced at the hatchery at Pratt is as essential as their production. Every community has its problems in fish distribution, largely because of the lack of proper water in which to plant fish. This has been especially true in the past four years, on account of the droughty conditions that have prevailed in our state, when even some of our best fishing streams in the eastern half of the state, had records for low water, and in some cases ceased to flow at all. The problem of fish distribution in Kansas is very materially different from that in Oklahoma, Nebraska, Missouri, and most other states in the Union, and the difference lies in the fact that Kansas has but half the water area of its neighbors and much of this area is so shallow and uncertain that the planting of fish in it is a delicate procedure. During the biennium the State produced, at the Pratt hatchery, approximately 2,084,000 fish, consisting chiefly of large mouth bass, channel cat, crappie, and blue gill.

While our fish culturist, Seth Way, is continually conducting experiments with other species of fish that might be adapted to our Kansas streams and lakes, up to the present time, we feel that the four above named species will give our fishermen the most satisfactory results. Of course, there are modified exceptions as to new species being introduced. We take this opportunity to call attention to the drum or sheep head, as it is known in the northern states, although it cannot be classed as a game fish, it seems to be especially adapted to our deep waters, streams, and State Lakes, and apparently is in high favor with our fishermen as a table fish. While the production of the drum at the hatchery has been limited, they seem to be reproducing very satisfactorily in the waters that are suitable for them, specimens weighing upwards of 25 pounds having been caught in some of our lakes.

For a number of years there have been experiments made with the Ring Perch. The results were that while they seem to be able to adapt themselves to some of our waters, in others they have not been successful. While we feel that our fishermen appreciate the necessity of continued experimentation in the search of new species of fish that can be adapted to the waters of our state, the general opinion among those that fish our waters is that the channel cat, large mouth bass, crappie, and blue gill will always be favored by those with whom the gameness of the fish is the first consideration and the meat secondary.

We will, also, have to recognize our old friend the Bull Head. While looked upon with more or less contempt by our game fishermen, he is found in every part of our state, in every stream regardless of its size or condition, and is looked upon with respect by a large percent of our youth and others who have

not graduated to the status of game fishermen, possibly for the reason that our friend the Bull Head is the only species of fish to be found in their locality.

This dissertation would hardly be considered complete should we fail to mention that alien, the carp. Regardless of our opinion of this fish, and never having heard of any monument or tablets having been erected to the one who originally brought them to this country, it is agreed by all that our streams and waters are well stocked with carp and that he is here to stay! So it will be only just to mention the fact, that like the Bull Head, he is found all over Kansas and has many friends who do not despise him, as only too often a carp is their only chance to have a taste of fish.

One of the reasons we feel we have had such a splendid production is the fact that we have had plenty of water both seasons. We have, also, adopted the plan of letting the grass grow around the ponds the entire year without either mowing nor burning. By leaving this grass unmolested, the insect life has been more abundant, which gives the fish more food during the winter months. We feel that this has aided as the number of lily bulbs which were becoming far too numerous, have been greatly reduced, and then, leaving the ponds dry, also, has a tendency to sweeten the soil thus increasing the aquatic plants and giving the fish yet more food.

We have for the past few years confined our stocking to only public waters, our reason for this is that our Kansas streams and public lakes became considerably lower and many completely dry, due to our drought which started in 1934. As these streams and lakes have filled and started flowing again, there has been a great demand for fish. Since Federal assistance has been available a great number of State, County, and City Lakes, have been completed to which the general public is admitted. These have all demanded fish and have been stocked as long as our supply lasted. Private ponds have been built in large numbers using the recently offered Government aid. This department has been unable to stock these ponds, only in instances where the owner will agree to allow the general public to fish unrestricted have fish been distributed in private ponds.

Since this department is supported by the sale of licenses to the sportsmen of Kansas, and the money required to raise these fish is approximately \$20.00 per thousand, we feel that it is our duty to place these fish where they may be enjoyed by the largest number of license buyers. It is our hope within a short time to be able to stock not only public waters, but privately owned waters as well. If this every becomes possible, it will be our pleasure to do so.

Among the many thousands of mallards that are wintering on our State Lakes, there seems to be an extraordinary large number of Mergansers on some of the lakes, which cannot help but be detrimental to the fish, as they are exclusive fish eaters--and Mergansers are worthless for food.

A flock of fifty or more Barrows Golden Eye ducks were, also, seen on the Pratt County Lake. Both the Mergansers and Golden Eye are cold weather ducks and seldom range any farther south than Kansas excepting in the most extreme cold weather.

Duke, the large buffalo bull at the Pratt Hatchery, went berserk or possibly temporarily insane would be the more up to date term, Sunday night, December 18. Monday morning one of the attendants found that both the bull elk and cow, that were confined in the small pasture with Duke had been so badly gored that the State Fish and Game Warden, L. C. Webb, found it necessary to shoot both of the elk.

Teddy, the bull elk, had been confined in the same enclosure with Duke for the past year. The cow elk was a recent acquisition, having been donated to the department by the Bureau of Biological Survey from their herd in the Wichita Mountains Game Refuge, in Oklahoma.

The passing of species of birds that at one time were visitors in our state in large numbers but now are only seen as isolated specimens on rare occasions is truly a tragedy. I refer to the whooping crane, trumpeter swan, whistling swan, avocet, curlew and upland plover. Most of these species are so near extermination that it is doubtful if they can ever be brought back. For instance, the whooping crane is practically extinct. The Biological Survey in Washington, records only some 148 specimens of trumpeter swan. The whistling swan and the upland plover show a small increase. All of the species mentioned are protected by the Federal as well as the State governments.

Mr. Frank Salter, of Ottawa County, donated four large sacks of ear corn to the Ottawa County State Park for the geese there.

The department wishes to thank Mr. Salter for the fine spirit shown on his part and to assure him that the donation is highly appreciated.

Allowing native quail food and cover to grow has been proven more practical than artificial planting.

FINES INCLUDE COSTS.



Melvin Cox, Cherokee County, hunting and trapping without a license. Fined-\$20.70. Wardens Wayne Piggott and Fred Anderson.

Chas. Swain, Cherokee County, hunting without a license. Fined--\$17.65. Wardens Piggott and Anderson.

Fred Faber, Leavenworth Co., hunting without a license. Fined-\$13.50. Local Warden L. Parker.

Vernon Most, Rawlins County, illegal possession of furs. Fined-\$24.00. Warden Cy Graham.

John Kustanbarter and Orville Allison, Neosho County, hunting without license. Each fined-\$17.00. Warden Joe Gallivan.

W. E. Blevins, Rawlins County, illegal possession of furs. Fined-\$16.50. Warden Cy Graham.

Chris Koehler, Johnson County, hunting without a license. Fined-\$20.00. Wardens Teichgraeber and Parker.

Chas. Johns, Johnson County, shooting song bird. Fined-\$20.00. Wardens Gordon, Teichgraeber, and Dietrich. Johns is serving jail sentence.

Robt. Hodges, Kansas City, Mo., hunting without a non-resident license. Fine-\$20.00. Wardens Gordon, Teichgraeber, and Dietrich.

Ed. Cushing, Johnson County, hunting without a license. Fined-\$20.00. Warden O. A. Gordon.

Ira Johnson, Labette County, hunting without a license. Fined-\$19.00. Warden Joe Gallivan.

Louis Bell, Wabaunsee County, illegal purchase of furs. Fined-\$23.45. Wardens Teichgraeber and Parker.

Jake Brown, Douglas County, having hoop net in his possession. Fined-\$20.00. Wardens Teichgraeber and Parker.

Jack Hubberstey, Jim Jameson, Noble Houts, Greenwood County, hunting on posted premises. Hubberstey and Jameson each fined-\$15.00. Houts fined-\$17.55. Warden Merle Allen.

Albert Lynn, Franklin County, possession of gig. Fined-\$17.50. Wardens Low and Rezeau.

Jim Martin, Douglas County, illegal buying of furs. Fined-\$20.00. Warden Carl Teichgraeber.

Ralph Fulton, W. R. Stover, Chester Shores, Labette County, hunting without license. Each fined-\$19.00. Wardens Gallivan and Piggott.

Max Holler, Wabaunsee County, hunting and trapping without licenses. Fined-\$23.25. Warden Teichgraeber.

Joe Azamber, Crawford County, hunting without a license. Fined \$17.50. Warden Fred Anderson.

H. C. Young, Jewell County, illegal sale of furs. Fined \$22.65. Warden Byrne.

R. V. Pendergrass, Montgomery County, shooting quail out of season. Fined-\$22.25. Warden Joe Gallivan.

Mack Beach, Shawnee County, illegal selling and buying of furs. Fined-\$20.95. Warden Teichgraeber.

A. Stevenson and A. M. Stevenson, Allen County, hunting without license. Each fined-\$17.75. Warden Anderson.

Dick Smith, and G. D. Marsh, Cowley County, hunting and trespassing without permission. Fined-\$15.50. Under-Sheriff Williams.

J. E. Morris, Cherokee County, hunting without license. Fined-\$19.95. Serving jail sentence. Wardens Piggott and Gallivan.

The problem of game management in all its larger aspects is something that is attracting the serious attention of conservationists and public officials who are directly connected with the work of preserving and propagating game and fish. The public is generally becoming conscious as to the value of proper game management and in this connection Kansas surely needs the hearty support of the farmer and land owner and the many others interested in the preservation of our wildlife. Obviously, in such a small publication as this, space does not always permit extended articles bearing on the multiple activities necessary in this work.

The youth of our State are the sportsmen of tomorrow, and through the proper instruction in conservation, restoration, and codes of sportsmanship, they will not only be good sportsmen but good citizens and good trainers for the generations to follow.

It is hoped that in 1939 all prejudices which may have existed heretofore may be removed. We must believe and be guided by that great idea that we are one people working hand-in-hand for the advancement of the State of Kansas. For animosities and bickering, it is necessary that we substitute good will and fellowship, sportsmanship, and united efforts. Unity of action is the solution of many of our petty problems. --North Dakota Outdoors.

Most of us think of conservation as more birds, more animals, more trees and more flowers, but are we all taking an active part in protecting this greatest of all resources? The Fish and Game Department is anxious to protect the interests of true sportsmen and nature lovers through the suggestion and promotion of a means for making wildlife more plentiful, thereby preventing further depletion, which would eventually result in more stringent regulations and restriction of hunting and fishing.