

AUTUMN 1970

KANSAS FISH & GAME



MERLE GARY HESKET

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Sportsman or Vandal?

This Autumn, an estimated one-half million hunters, both those with licenses and those exempt from license requirements, will trek to Kansas' fields and waters in search of their favorite game.

Most will conduct themselves faultlessly, but far too many will cast aside the responsibilities imposed upon them by hunting on private lands and as a result will incur the wrath of landowners, sportsmen and the general public.

How are you going to hunt this fall? Are you going to conduct yourself like a sportsman, or in a manner which will guarantee that you, or others, will never be welcomed again?

It's an important question and one which must be answered by every hunter. Regardless of the length of the hunt, every hunter will have to answer the question each time he goes afield. Either he will subscribe to the highest principles of sportsmanship which have made hunting such a great sport or he will cast himself with the other group—there is no gray area, no middle or neutral ground.

To be a true sportsman, one must have high regard for himself, his fellow outdoorsmen, the rights of others, the rights of landowners, and for our fish and wildlife resources. Good sportsmen hunt, fish, camp, and boat by the rules, and insist that all others do the same.

On the other hand, it's much easier to be a member of the other group—a "vandal." Since "vandalism" is commonly associated with property damage, most hunters who fail to subscribe to the high standards of sportsmanship appear unaware that they are, in actuality, really vandals.

While vandalism usually means committing irresponsible acts such as cutting fences, shooting signs, idle machinery, livestock and other property, breaking into vacant farmhouses and spooking cattle across fences, it also takes other forms which the average license holder probably fails to recognize.

This type of vandalism ranges from stretching the law—just a little bit—to various illegal methods of harvesting the natural resource. It includes shooting anything the hunter sees—including protected birds, such as hawks and owls, and animals. It is equally as devastating and costly as vandalism which involves loss of personal property.

In 1968, for instance, 17 deer were found shot during the opening week of the pheasant season in Norton and Decatur counties, although Kansas law specifically prohibits the shooting of deer except during open season and then only with a permit.

Hunter vandalism takes many forms. It includes the pheasant hunter who shoots quail out-of-season, the nocturnal deer poacher, the waterfowler who shoots at anything that flies over the marsh, and a host of similar infractions.

In all cases, the hunter who commits such acts of vandalism is the loser. But even more unfortunate is the fact that the law-abiding hunter and fisherman must also suffer.

Regulations are imposed on the harvest of fish and game for logical reasons. They are tools of modern wildlife management, a means of maximizing the harvest while protecting the supply of the harvestable resource.

Practically all hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts have committed, either knowingly or unknowingly, some infractions of laws and regulations. But to continue is a foolish practice which can only boomerang.

How are you going to hunt this fall?

We hope you will decide to hunt like a sportsman. If the honorable sport of hunting is to survive and if landowner-sportsmen relations are to be improved, your help is needed.—Leroy E. Lyon.

Cover Photo

Autumn is the hunters' season. This fall an estimated one-quarter million hunters will trample Kansas' fields and thickets and wade icy waters in search of highly-prized game.

These hunters, however, will not be alone for another group of hunters—Nature's winged patrol of hawks, eagles and owls—will also be afield.

It seems only proper, then, that this Autumn issue should provide a tribute to these all-important birds of prey which are extremely beneficial to both man and the land.

Game Protector, Gary Heskett, Man-kato, has provided the artwork for this issue's wrap-around cover which features a bald eagle on front and a great-horned owl on back.

We prefer to believe that this is the way it should be. The raptors—hawks, eagles and owls—should be given places of honor, not castigated as outlaws nor shot and displayed on fences.

Yes, Autumn is the hunters' season—a prime time to observe Nature's aerial patrol at work and a time to study and understand the raptors as they perform a most important function—that of helping maintain a healthy wildlife community.—Leroy E. Lyon

KANSAS FISH & GAME



Autumn, 1970

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Predation . . .

Bane or Blessing?

By VIC McLERAN

The old timer shifted his weight and leaned back against the barn.

"Don't tell me how beneficial those damned hawks and owls are," he grumbled. "I've been hunting and farming in Kansas for over 50 years and I've watched them kill quail and pheasants as well as my chickens. And what about rabbits? Between the hawks and owls, you can't find a rabbit anymore. I shoot every one I can," he said, referring to hawks and owls.

Attitudes like this, though fading, are still around. It's a shame, too, since raptors, as the birds of prey are called, play an essential part in Nature's scheme.

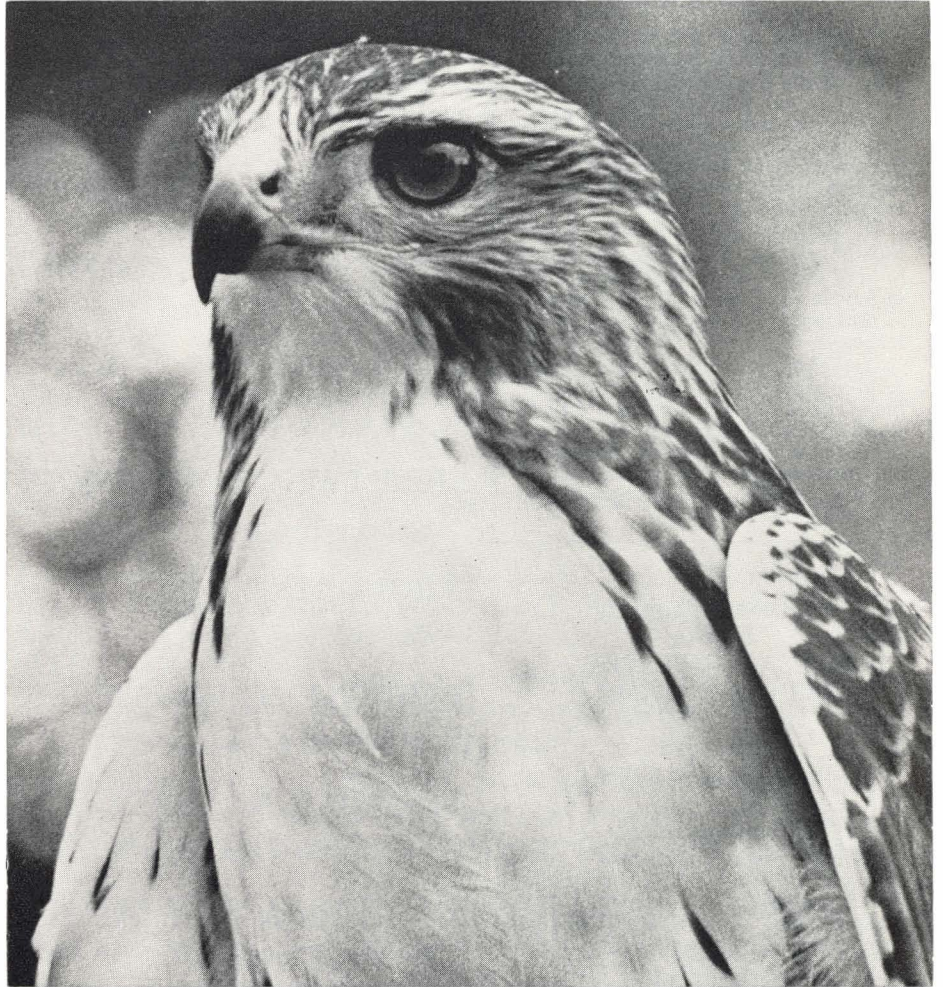
Let's examine these critters called predators and see if they're actually as bad as the old timer would have us believe.

Though speaking mainly of hawks and owls, the principles here apply to many of our so-called predators. It just seems that hawks, due to their conspicuous habits, are more often victimized by ignorant gunners.

Predation is really a misused term since any species which preys on another, is a predator. The robin which eats a worm, the Bobwhite that takes a grasshopper or the house cat which kills a mouse are predators in the truest sense of the word, since to prey means literally to seize and devour.

Anthropomorphism, which is ascribing human characteristics to non-human objects, must be eliminated in order to fully understand predation. Hawks often have been called murderers who enjoy killing. However, predators like hawks and owls don't kill for the joy of killing, but, having evolved as hunters, are merely acting in a natural manner.

Since many prey species, such as rodents, are endowed with tremendous reproductive potential, they



Designed for locating quarry, the eyes of a hawk have been called the most highly developed organs of vision in the world. So equipped, hawks see at least eight times as well as humans. (Photo by Vic McLeran.)

would soon overpopulate the environment if allowed to breed without control. Predators serve as one of the natural checks on this prolific threat.

It has been pointed out that one pair of meadow mice and their offspring could account for one million relatives within a year if their fertility were not controlled by predators. About 23 million pounds of grain and vegetable matter would be required to feed this army of rodents.

A classic example of what can happen if there are no predators to hold the prey species in check occurred

when rabbits were introduced in Australia. Being an imported species, the rabbits had no natural enemies and soon overran the country to a degree that raising crops was an impossibility. Australians are still fighting the rabbit problem.

A theory was introduced years ago, which has been called "The Survival of the Fittest." Basically, it means that only the strongest, quickest, smartest or otherwise most fit of any species survive, since the defective individuals, through disease, starvation, and predation, are eliminated.

The theory works both ways, since only the strongest, quickest and smartest predators are capable of taking the most defective prey. The notion that a hawk can take a pheasant or rabbit anytime it desires, is pure myth. If this were true, the predator would soon eliminate its own food supply.

Certain individuals within the prey population, by being defective in some manner, actually select themselves for predation. By the same token, the slow-flying hawk and the crippled coyote soon starve through their inability to capture prey species. Thus we see that only those which are most suited for survival, live to reproduce, and in doing so, insure that those traits or characteristics which suited them for survival will be transmitted to their offspring.

Availability, or the abundance of a given prey species within an area, is another key factor in predation. When prey populations are high, predators simply have more opportunities to capture prey species. When the populations are low, the predator generally turns to more numerous species.

Closely related is the fact that most predators are opportunistic. This means they prey (or attempt to) on "whatever" comes along, "whenever" it comes along. Naturally, the more numerous prey species will receive most of the predator's attention.

Biologists know many factors such as food, cover and weather affect animal populations with predation playing a minor role. When all these factors combine favorably, game populations will be higher than usual, but when conditions are adverse, the population suffers.

When speaking of the low rabbit population, chances are the old timer was witnessing a poor year in terms of rabbit production in his area. Blaming the scarcity of rabbits on predation alone is ridiculous.

Ecology, the study of inter-relationships between organisms and their environment, has revealed the necessity of predators for a well-balanced wildlife community. When man intervenes and tries to eliminate the predators, he is upsetting the natural balance.

A case in point is the mountain lion-mule deer relationship in Arizona. Some years ago, hunters there decided that if they killed the cougars, which they did, there would be more deer. Consequently, the deer herd, without benefit of the natural check which the cougars had provided, increased to a point where the available food supply would not sustain the large population. Starvation resulted and the woods were covered with rotting mule deer carcasses.

Biologists and enlightened sportsmen have known for years that the key to abundant wildlife is food and cover, not extermination of predators.

Although predators will occasionally prey on game species, the individuals taken are generally defective in some manner. By culling the defects, raptors actually assist sportsmen by helping to develop an improved strain of game, since only the healthy game survives to reproduce.

In many instances, hawks aid game species indirectly by controlling rodents such as the cotton rat, which preys upon the eggs and young of game birds.

According to most biologists, widespread and unrestricted persecution of hawks is unjustified. However, when an individual is damaging poultry or

livestock, control, on a local and temporary basis, may be necessary. If so, Kansas law provides for the disposal of the individual offender. Farmers who experience predator loss should contact the extension specialist in wildlife damage control, Cooperative Extension Service, Kansas State University, Manhattan.

For the past few years, biologists and conservationists have been attempting to educate the public regarding the importance of predators. Fruit of their labor is partially exemplified by the large number of states, including Kansas, which have abolished bounty systems on predatory species.

Ecologists tell us that what we do to one organism will affect other directly-related organisms. How the other organisms react, either favorably or unfavorably, depends on the action taken. In recent years, too much of this reaction has been unfavorable. The continued slaughter of hawks and owls can only result in more unfavorable reaction from other species within the wild community.

The old timer grew up years ago, before the science of ecology was as well-known as today. Maybe he has an excuse for his ignorance about predators.

What's yours?



Sometimes it's a case of predator preying on predator. Moments before this photo was taken, an adult red-tailed hawk was busily feeding portions of the bull snake to its three youngsters. In addition to an occasional snake, hawks feed on large numbers of destructive rodents. (Photo by Vic McLeran.)

Help Bring Down Those Posted Signs

By LEROY E. LYON



This is the era of the “gaps.” We hear a lot about the “generation gap”—but how about the “landowner-sportsmen” gap?

Each year hunters and anglers are confronted with more “No Hunting,” “No Trespassing,” “No Fishing,” and “No Nuthin’” signs as they search for a place to pursue their favorite outdoor sport—proof that such a “gap” does exist.

Admittedly, there are two sides to the long, often bitter conflict, both groups claiming certain rights and citing many abuses.

“My family is a church family and we like to attend church every Sunday,” claims a Dickinson County farmer. “But, when hunting season opens, we can’t leave the farm to go to church. When we do, we come back to find my cattle out and gates left wide open.”

Sportsmen are equally vocal in their sentiments.

“I’m not even going to buy a hunting license next year,” a Wichita hunter asserted recently at a sports

show. “Every year it is harder to find a place to hunt. All the good places are either being leased up by large groups or else posted,” he claims.

Since territorial days, Kansas law has vested in the state the ownership and title to all wild animals, birds and fishes, both resident and migratory, which are to be taken under certain laws and regulations.

Although wildlife resources are owned by the state and held in trust for its citizens, another early tradition and sacred right which has extended to the present is the ownership of private land and the granting of trespass rights onto private property.

In 1868, for instance, when there were extremely few fish and game laws, the legislature passed a law making it unlawful for any person, at any time, to take, catch, or kill any game birds except on his own premises.

Four years later, in 1872, the legislature extended trespass rights setting a precedent which still exists today. The law provided “that any person

who shall hunt . . . on the grounds or lands of another, without first obtaining leave of the owner so to do, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor. . . .”

Today, Kansas law still declares that it is unlawful to fish, or shoot, hunt or pursue any bird or animal “upon any land of another or from any traveled public road or railroad right-of-way that adjoins occupied or improved premises, without having first obtained permission of the owner or person in possession of such premises.”

Although a sportsman is part-owner of the state’s wildlife resources, his license does not grant him the right to hunt, fish, or trap anywhere in the state regardless of who owns the land.

Rather, he may be charged with a misdemeanor and, if found guilty by a court of law, may receive a fine or a jail sentence, or both, if he fails to secure the landowner’s permission before entering upon private property.

Since most hunting in Kansas is conducted on private land, all sportsmen should remember that the key to the future of public hunting is held by the landowner. At the moment, hunting on private land may be compared to a game of poker with the landowner holding the high cards—the land. Treated fairly he will usually meet the responsible sportsman half-way; mistreat him and his property and the average landowner will seek seclusion behind his boundary fences and “No Trespassing” signs.

Good farmer-sportsmen relations are a vital phase of the overall hunting picture. Without a place to hunt, the gunner goes home frustrated and angry. If he goes ahead and hunts without permission, he takes the risk of running afoul of the law, and it’s a sure bet he’ll just strengthen the landowner’s resolve to keep the “No Hunting” signs up. Such a hunter not only spoils future hunting chances for himself but for everyone else as well.

If the farmer or rancher is ap-

proached in the proper manner before hunting begins, it’s a safe bet that in most cases he’ll grant hunting privileges on his land. Then, if you respect his property and act as a good guest should, you’ll be welcomed back again and again.

Once you’ve made friends with him, you’ll probably find he’s the best possible source of information on locating game. If you ask him, he may even hunt with you and if he does, your chances of a successful day are greatly increased because he’s not likely to waste his time on fruitless hunting.

In most cases, posted signs are not

erected because the landowner is anti-social but rather because he has been burned by thoughtless hunters who first neglected to ask his permission and then, compounding their sins, failed to respect his property rights.

Sportsmen must also realize that there is usually a reason why property is posted. In most cases it is because the landowner feels he must do so to protect a crop, his livestock or family. The farmer knows quite accurately the numerical limit of hunters his acreage can safely support at one time so that his property or family is not en-



If a farmer is approached in the proper manner before hunting begins, he will probably grant hunting privileges on his land. If he refuses to grant permission, remain courteous and friendly. It will pay dividends in the future—not only for you but other sportsmen as well.

dangered by heavy concentrations of eager hunters.

This Fall, sportsmen can help to bring down a good percentage of the "Posted" signs and start a crusade of good will between farmers and themselves by observing the following rules as they go afield:

(1) **Secure permission before starting any activity, preferably several days in advance.** While the average farmer rises early, he doesn't like to be aroused at 2:00 a. m. by some duck hunter or enthusiastic fisherman.

(2) **Ask permission although the property may not be posted.** Property does not have to be posted to be off limits to the sportsmen.

(3) **If permission is refused, remain courteous and accept the landowner's decision graciously.** Never proceed to censure the farmer for what, at the time, may be a justifiable refusal. Controlling your feelings may pay dividends next year.

(4) **Once permission is granted, respect the landowner's wishes.** He may impose simple conditions or designate certain boundaries to protect buildings, livestock, or unharvested crops. In return for hunting

privileges, certain promises should be made and kept.

(5) **Be respectful of all property—treat it like you would your own.** Destruction of private property is the major contributor to poor relations between sportsmen and landowners. Refrain from walking or driving through fields of standing grain. Don't shoot near livestock or occupied dwellings. Never put "practice" shots through water storage tanks, idle farm machinery, signs, or any other property. Reclose access gates if they are found closed to keep livestock from straying. Don't break down boundary fences or cut wire fences; refrain from standing on wires while crossing a fence—no farmer likes to re-staple his fence. Take care in preventing fires. Don't scatter your litter—no landowner wants beer cans, bottles, sandwich wrappers, empty shell boxes and other filth scattered across his land.

(6) **Avoid bringing all your friends or family without prior clearance with the landowner.** Just because you have been granted the privilege doesn't give you "blanket coverage" for all your friends and family.

(7) **Abide by all fish and game**

laws and regulations. Landowners in general have low opinions of so called "meat" hunters. They cite instances where hunters have killed more than their legal quotas and even brought their families to divy-up over-the-limit bags of game and creels of fish.

(8) **Avoid shooting from public roads or road rights-of-way unless permission has been granted.** While the public owns the rights-of-way and road for road purposes, the adjacent landowners control it as far as hunting or fishing is concerned. Farmers and ranchers do not like hunters who stand on public roads and shoot across boundary fences at game in pastures where unseen livestock may be feeding or people working. Also disliked are "road-hunters" who are too lazy to work for their game.

(9) **Share your game with the landowner—and don't forget him throughout the rest of the year.**

Obviously landowner-sportsman relations can be improved and many posted areas can be opened to public hunting if all sportsmen will apply the "golden rule" to hunting as well as everything else.

Courteous, friendly treatment of the landowner, even when turned down, won't hurt a bit and may result in a close and lasting friendship. Only when sportsmen make friendly, cooperative approaches to landowners, with accompanying assurance of individual good conduct and responsibility, will a good percentage of the current crop of "Posted" signs come down.

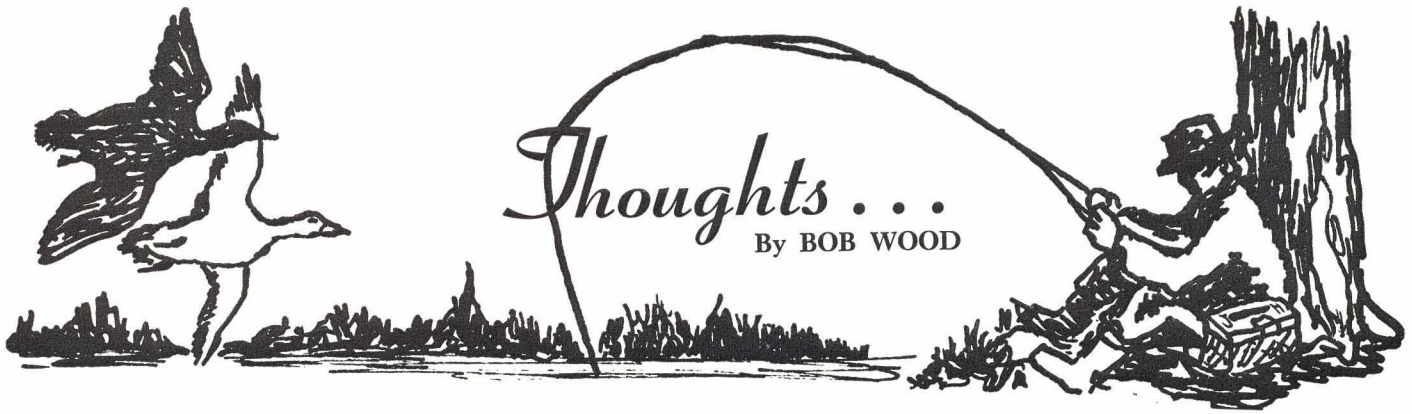
Why not try it this season? You'll be doing yourself and other sportsmen a big favor.

Once so common that it was found in the nation's largest cities, including Washington, D. C., the peregrine falcon (duck hawk) faces extinction today and is the latest addition to the Interior Department's list of endangered wildlife species.

The recent survival of six whooping cranes hatched in captivity brought the total number of captive whoopers to a record 24. Approximately 50 remain in the wild.



"HE'S NOT MUCH OF A HUNTER
BUT THE RABBITS DIE LAUGHING."



On a recent trip to northeast Kansas, I visited with a farmer about the success of his recent crops. He illustrated the influence of a little known unwritten law that touches all of us at one time or another. It seemed, for various reasons, this particular farmer's bean crop had been less than desired. In fact, some portions of his field were yielding less than five bushels per acre. Needless to say, the farmer left much of his crop unharvested. Such a low yield would not pay the expense of planting, let alone any additional expenses required for harvesting.

The farmer had met head-on with the "Law of Diminishing Returns." His crop yield had reached such a low point, it was no longer economically feasible to go to any expense of attempting a harvest.

The Law of Diminishing Returns is a phenomenon that applies to many activities. In nature, it is a primary factor by which many species are assured of perpetuation. The Law is most dramatic in its influence on predation. As a matter of definition, hunting must be included as a form of predation.

On that same trip, thoughts of several other farmers and hunters were expressed concerning how pheasant populations in that part of the state were too low to support a hunting season. A couple of men were especially concerned, stating an often quoted comment that hunters were able to kill every pheasant because there were so few birds. Being sincere in their belief, none of the spokesmen paused to realize the fallacy of their logic. We have been hunting pheasants in northeast Kansas since 1965. Had pheasants been completely eliminated in 1965, we could not have held a season in 1966, and so on for the years since.

Just as with the farmer's bean crop,

wildlife is a product of its environment. With an established breeding population, any game species will be able to maintain itself at the maximum population its living conditions can support at a given time of year. As game living conditions deteriorate, so must their population level decrease. Animals in excess of what existing food and cover can support much perish. Predation by man and animal is just one means of lowering a game population. If man did not hunt, those animals normally taken by him would succumb to something else. Animals without adequate food and cover are most vulnerable to death.

Using pheasants as an example, by the end of a nesting season, pheasant numbers are at their highest. From that time until the next nesting season, their numbers will dwindle through predation, disease, accidents, starvation and natural disasters.

During early fall, hunting becomes a significant predation factor, but other types of losses decrease. Food and cover are less abundant during fall and winter and are capable of supporting fewer birds. As their populations are lowered, birds themselves become harder to find because they are fewer in number, have developed

an increased wariness, and have a greater amount of protective cover per bird in which to hide.

A point is reached when a majority of men find it too difficult to flush birds to warrant hunting. Those men turn to other interests and are witness to the Law of Diminishing Returns. Overall length of a hunting season has little effect on total small game harvests. When man finds he must work too hard to effect a harvest, he quits. With a farmer, expense of harvest triggers the Law. With predators, both man and animal, it is amount of effort required to find prey. Farmers and hunters are similar in behavior in this respect whether they live in Pratt County or Doniphan County. Each farmer and each hunter has his own triggering point, but make no mistake, everyone has one.

All predators are cut from the same mold. They are opportunists. Predators will take what is most available and most easily caught. When one prey becomes too difficult to obtain easily and abundantly, they turn to another prey.

Although man may limit most of his predatory activities to birds and animals he has arbitrarily categorized as "game," and is not dependent on his predator ability for livelihood, his behavior as a predator will follow natural instincts. No game population upon which we have a hunting season is endangered by such predation alone.

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Glimpses of Kansas Wildlife

Cottontail Rabbit

Photo by Leroy E. Lyon

FIRST IN A SERIES



By LEROY E. LYON

Just call the cottontail rabbit number one.

If you do, you can't be all wrong for the cottontail is the nation's number one game animal. Although rarely bragged about in hunting circles, more cottontails are harvested each year by hunters than any other game animal.

There are three true species of rabbits in Kansas—the eastern cottontail, desert cottontail and swamp rabbit. All three belong to the family *Leporidae* and the genus *Sylvilagus*.

While many people regard jack-rabbits as being members of the rabbit family, they are actually hares—not rabbits.

The eastern cottontail is common throughout the state in areas of good cover but in western portions is generally found only in taller plant cover, particularly along stream courses.

The desert cottontail lives in open country in the western one-third of the state and is usually confined to shortgrass areas above the floor or stream valleys. Desert and eastern cottontails closely resemble each other except the desert has shorter ears and shorter hind legs.

Swamp rabbits are found only in extreme southeastern areas, primarily in Cherokee, Crawford and Labette counties, where they live in wet bottomlands along the Neosho River and its tributaries. They are somewhat larger and darker than cottontails.

A cottontail has long, soft brownish fur on the head, neck, back and sides. The belly, chin and insides of the legs are white. Its trademark is its short tail, the underside of which is white. When a cottontail bounces away to seek cover, its fluffy white tail closely resembles a bouncing snowball or cottonball, hence its popular name, cottontail.

Since cottontails are vegetarians, nearly every kind of green plant is included on their menu, particularly in summer when they have an almost unlimited supply of succulent greens. In winter or at other times when greens are not available, they survive on stems of young woody plants.

A rabbit's home range is small,

seldom exceeding more than five acres. To be good cottontail range, food and cover must be close together.

Cottontails are most active and more frequently seen at night and in early morning and evening hours when they are feeding. Except for short feeding periods, most daylight hours are spent in or near shelter, most generally in "forms"—matted grassy hollows in and beneath vegetation where the rabbit crouches.

Burrows used by rabbits for protection from enemies are usually made by other animals.

In Kansas breeding begins in February or early March and continues through August. With this long mating season, a female may raise as many as five litters each year.

After the female carries her young for about 28 days, the young are born, blind and naked, in a nest which the doe has made. To fashion a nest, the doe digs a saucer-like depression in the ground and lines it with grass and fur.

At birth, each small rabbit weighs about one ounce and is scarcely larger than a man's thumb. Most eastern cottontails will average four to six young per litter while litters of the desert cottontail and swamp rabbit are usually smaller.

On the first day after birth, the mother spends several hours with her young. Thereafter, she visits the nest periodically to nurse them but doesn't stay long. Most of her visits are in the morning and evening.

In about a week the young cottontail's eyes are open. At about two weeks of age, the youngster leaves the nest for its first solid meal and is now able to scamper through the grass. Even at this age, the alert youngster knows how to "freeze" or remain motionless, making him nearly invisible in good cover. This is another secret of cottontail survival—those who fail to learn, don't survive.

By the end of the third week the young are weaned. They leave the nest permanently and are entirely on their own. The female, which breeds immediately after giving birth, then prepares for her next family.

The cottontail is extremely important as a food supply for it is

preyed upon by nearly every meat eater that walks, crawls and flies, including man. To understand how rabbits can flourish in spite of such heavy pressure from predators, one needs to understand the rabbit's reproductive capacity. Quite often, young born in the spring are able to bring off a litter of their own before the end of summer. Thus, under perfect conditions, it is possible for a pair of cottontails to build to a population of 40 rabbits by fall.

Rabbits, in common with most wildlife, normally produce an annual surplus of young that far exceeds the supporting ability, or carrying capacity, of winter habitat. The more surplus, the higher the mortality.

Research has shown that about 85 percent of all rabbits die or are killed each year—even if they are not hunted. Because of this high annual turnover, the surplus rabbit crop is ours to use or lose. Hunting allows sportsmen to harvest as much of the surplus as possible and salvage it for human use and recreation.

Although rabbits have the capacity to reproduce rapidly, the young cannot survive long if suitable habitat is not present throughout the entire year. Grassy cover is needed for nesting and some heavy brushy cover is required for escape from predators. The key to managing cottontails is to provide this habitat so they can survive during the entire year, particularly in late winter months when large areas are left without a good balance of adequate cover and food.

Cottontail numbers can be increased in an area by such management techniques as planting shrubby cover plants or construction of brush piles, or both.

At present, intensive management is rarely necessary for this abundant little mammal. But, unfortunately, recent trends toward clean farming threaten the cottontail's abundance as well as that of many other wildlife species. The clearing of brushy fence rows and odd corners removes the protective cover a cottontail requires.

Thus, if certain land practices are continued, we may someday have to work hard to keep the nation's number one game animal with us.

To Skin a Squirrel

By BOB WOOD

Without question, hunting squirrels with a small caliber handgun is one of the most challenging ways of hunting squirrels. A keen eye, a steady hand and smooth trigger pull are prerequisites to success.

Often, however, the most unpleasant part of hunting, regardless of the weapon used, comes with preparing game for the table. After bagging those bushytails, what next?

Illustrated here is one quick, easy method. When executed properly, a cleaned carcass will be relatively free of blood or loose hair. With a little practice, anyone can clean squirrels with less mess and difficulty than might be experienced with rabbits or many game birds.

One additional tip, clean squirrels as soon as possible after they are killed. It can make the job even easier.



Photos By LELAND M. QUEAL

(1) To reduce chances of getting hair on the squirrel's flesh, pluck all hair and underfur from a small area at the base of the tail.



(2) Starting where tail joins body, cut from underside through tail-bone and flesh, but *not* through the dorsal layer of skin. Then, using a sharp knife, peel skin back about three inches and at the same time cut diagonally down each flank for about one and one-half inches.





(3) Secure tail—



(4) and pull slowly. All hide on the front half of the squirrel will pull off like a T-shirt.



(5) Pull front legs free.

(6) Grab the point of skin on the squirrel's belly and pull the "pants" off, completing your skinning chore.



(7) By leaving the "pants" portion attached to the rear legs, the squirrel can be hung over a convenient stub to ease removal of entrails, head and feet.

Dawn of a New Decade

By OLIVER GASSWINT

Game Division Chief

It was the dawning of a new decade.

In 1961, by action of the state legislature, a new Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission was formed.

For the first time in the state's history, the Commission was placed on an absolute professional basis for the management of the state's wildlife resources.

One of the first and most significant steps taken by the Commission was the hiring of a professional "wildlifer" as its Director and the formulation of a comprehensive program of action.

In succeeding years, funds were budgeted for staffing the Department with additional personnel whose duties were directed toward accomplishing specific goals set forth in the long-range program. As a result, the total amount of annual hunting recreation in Kansas more than doubled in five years.

At the same time, hunting license sales remained relatively stable at approximately 208,000, averaging 3,700 more annually than in the pre-

vious ten years. Since license sales have not changed significantly, it is obvious that Kansas hunters doubled their hunting effort in this short span of years (see chart).

The increased hunting effort, determined by an annual survey of five percent of license buyers, can be attributed to a number of factors. They include: (1) a relatively prosperous economy which provides the average sportsman with more time and money to devote to his sport, (2) a system of good highways and automobiles for fast, efficient and comfortable transportation, (3) an unprecedented high and sustained level in the Bobwhite quail population through the 1969 hunting season, (4) inauguration in 1965 of the first deer hunting season in modern times, (5) increased availability of managed public hunting lands, and (6) liberal hunting seasons.

The sustained high in quail numbers for the past seven years is unprecedented and has provided an unusual opportunity to prove

the premise that gun harvest of an upland game species is usually not an important limiting factor in the population level of that species. Two factors of greatest importance are weather and land use, both of which exert a controlling influence over annual production and habitat quality. All upland game species have a high annual turnover which negates any effort to "stockpile" by closing the season or severely reducing the number of hunting days.

In 1965, a total of 5,145 archery and gun permits were issued for the legal harvest of deer for the first time since the turn of the century. This resulted from plans inaugurated in 1956 when the statewide deer herd was estimated at 3,000 animals. However, the primary work was accomplished after the addition of several game biologists to the staff in 1962. During the 1969 seasons, 11,700 permits were issued and deer hunters more than tripled their hunting effort from a modest 19,500 days of recreation in 1965. In the past five hunting seasons, hunters have harvested more than 10,500 deer in Kansas.

In 1962, the Commission approved a program of increased land acquisition for public hunting benefits. It included buying new lands, licensing of additional lands on federal reservoirs, and a liberalized policy for use of lands already under ownership. In the latter case, 10,000 acres of additional lands on state lakes and waterfowl management areas were opened for public hunting. Through continued negotiations with the construction agencies (U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation), 104,000 acres of lands and waters were licensed on 12 reservoirs for wildlife management.

In addition, approximately 14,000 acres of lands have been purchased in the last eight years. The Commission now manages a total of 186,000 acres of public hunting lands in 44



Big wild tom turkey struts in pasture near Arlington, one of many sites in Kansas where turkeys have been stocked.

of the 105 counties (see map and listing), a three-fold increase in the past ten years.

In 1962, the Commission set the first three Saturdays in November as standard opening dates for prairie chicken, pheasant and quail hunting seasons, respectively. This was done as a convenience for hunters, permitting them to plan hunting trips as much as a year in advance.

Soon after reorganization, a staff of biologists was hired to conduct field investigations on distribution, relative abundance and ecology of primary game species. With the invaluable assistance of game protectors and other Department personnel, a system of surveys was established to determine seasonal and annual populations of all game species.

This information was used to formulate recommendations for hunting regulations and has resulted in longer and more liberal seasons. This has given the hunter more time to pursue his favorite sport. In addition, the overlap of several seasons has provided opportunity for mixed-bag hunting.

Without doubt, longer seasons have been the prime factor responsible for doubling hunting recreation in recent years. The Kansas hunter is now getting considerably more for his license fee than he obtained a few short years ago.

But what about the future? Long-range plans and programs are being continued and expanded to provide even more opportunities for the hunter. The Commission plans to continue acquiring lands by purchasing one or two thousand acres per year and will assume management of wildlife lands on federal reservoirs when they become available.

A turkey stocking program was begun in 1962. Through trades and trapping, a total of 276 birds have been obtained for restocking purposes. If all goes well, limited turkey hunting will be possible in a few years.

Antelope have been acquired and stocked in grasslands of western, central and southcentral Kansas. Some success in establishing new herds has resulted, but it's far too early to predict the possibility of having significant huntable populations.

Man-Days of Recreation



Lesser prairie chickens, found on sandy range lands in southwest Kansas, occur in sufficient numbers to permit hunting. A two day hunting season has been set for this November. The last legal hunting season for this species occurred in 1935!

Despite gains and continued progress, wildlife management and the status of game populations are never static. A case in point is the ring-neck pheasant. Populations of this popular bird reached all-time highs

in the late 1940's and early 1950's, declined drastically during the drought of the 1950's and then made a steady recovery to a modest high in 1962. Since that time, populations have been adequate for reasonable hunting success but remain at a relatively low level compared to years of greatest abundance.

Specific reasons for this state of affairs are rather obscure. It is reasonably certain that a decline in the acreage of soil bank grass has been a factor. Progressive increase in the

consolidation of farms into units having large tracts of uniform habitat types may be another.

A most recent concern relates to the widespread use of pesticides for control of weeds, insects and crop disease. Presently, there is little first-hand information on immediate or long-range effects of pesticides on wildlife in Kansas. However, the Commission proposes to budget funds for contractual research on this problem and expects to do further work utilizing Department personnel.

In 1969, the Commission took a critical look at its long-range plan and accomplishments since reorganization. In addition, it reviewed the evaluation and recommendations made by the Wildlife Management Institute, Washington, D. C., following a study of the Department in 1968. It was determined that significant gains have been made, that many of the goals of the original plan have been accomplished and that it was time to revise and up-date plans for the future. The revised plan has much of interest to the sportsman and to the citizen who neither hunts nor fishes.

Not only will the Commission continue to acquire lands for development and management as public hunting areas, but other programs initiated in recent years will be continued. There will be a greater concern for the total environment. For example, the Commission will take a more active interest in determining cause and effect relationships relative to environmental pollution. These will include the legitimate and abusive use of pesticides, stream and ground water quality, and recreational needs of future generations.

Historically the Department has been a self-sustaining organization, depending on license fees and sportsmen's excise taxes under the Dingell-Johnson and Pittman-Robertson grants-in-aid programs for its sources of income. No general tax revenues have ever been used by the Commission.

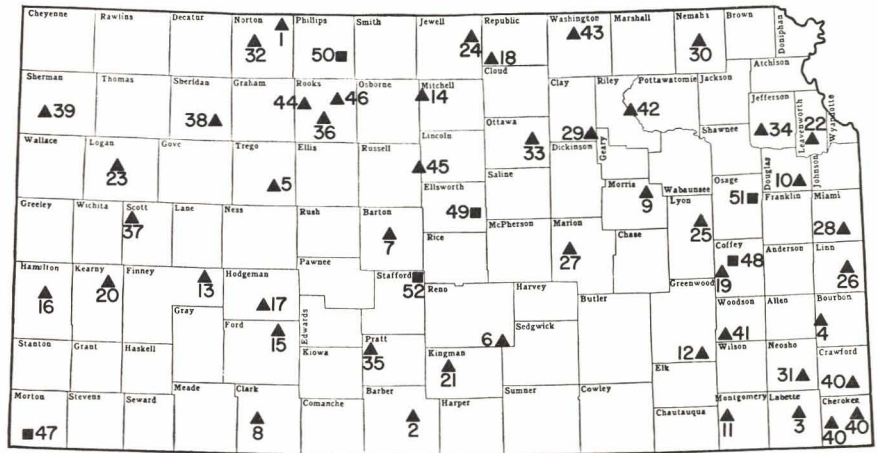
Current small game license and upland game bird stamp fees have remained at \$3 and \$1 each since 1961. It may be surprising to realize that so much has been accomplished during these years of growing inflation

without having to request an increase in fees.

The Commission and its personnel feels that much has been accomplished in the past decade and hopes

to do as well in the 70's. To do so will require the continued efforts of a Department staffed with dedicated personnel and the support of an informed and concerned public.

PUBLIC HUNTING AREAS



State Owned and Leased Areas ▲

Federal Administered Areas ■

- Almena Diversion Game Management Area, 11 acres. 2½ miles southwest of Almena.
- Barber County Game Management Area, 80 acres. ¼ mile north of Medicine Lodge.
- Big Hill Game Management Area, 1,280 acres. 8 miles west, 4 miles south of Parsons.
- Bourbon County Game Management Area, 380 acres. 4½ miles east of Elsmore.
- Cedar Bluff Game Management Area, 11,834 acres. 16 miles south of WaKeeney.
- Cheney Game Management Area, 7,958 acres. 7 miles east of Pretty Prairie.
- Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area, 12,090 acres. 5 miles north, 5 miles east of Great Bend.
- Clark County Game Management Area, 1,040 acres. 9 miles south, 1 mile west of Kingsdown. No migratory waterfowl hunting permitted.
- Council Grove Game Management Area, 2,638 acres. 5 miles northwest of Council Grove.
- Douglas County Game Management Area, 713 acres. 1½ miles north, 1 mile east of Baldwin.
- Elk City Game Management Area, 10,760 acres. 3 miles west of Independence.
- Fall River Game Management Area, 10,092 acres. 14 miles northeast of Severy.
- Finney County Game Management Area, 863 acres. 8 miles north, 3 miles west of Kalvesta.
- Glen Elder Game Management Area, 25,100 acres. Tracts immediately surrounding Cawker City.
- Hain Lake, 52 acres. 5 miles west of Spearville. Waterfowl hunting only.
- Hamilton County Game Management Area, 432 acres. 3 miles west, 2 miles north of Syracuse.
- Hodgeman County Game Management Area, 254 acres. 4 miles east, 2 miles south of Jetmore.
- Jamestown Waterfowl Management Area, 1,626 acres. 3½ miles north, 2 miles west of Jamestown.
- John Redmond Game Management Area (Otter Creek Arm), 1,472 acres. 4 miles west, 1 mile north of Burlington.
- Kearny County Game Management Area (Lake McKinney), 3,000 acres. 3 miles north, 3 miles east of Lakin. Primarily waterfowl hunting.
- Kingman County Game Management Area, 4,043 acres. 7 miles west of Kingman.
- Leavenworth County Game Management Area, 376 acres. 3 miles west, 1 mile north of Tonganoxie.
- Logan County Game Management Area, 271 acres. 9 miles south of Winona.
- Lovewell Game Management Area, 3,153 acres. 12 miles northeast of Mankato.
- Lyon County Game Management Area, 562 acres. 5 miles west, 1 mile north of Reading.
- Marais des Cygnes Waterfowl Management Area, 4,374 acres. ¼ mile west of Trading Post.
- Marion Game Management Area, 3,062 acres. 2 miles south, 2 miles east of Durham.
- Miami County Game Management Area, 267 acres. 8 miles east, 5 miles south of Osawatomie.
- Milford Game Management Area, 10,030 acres. Tracts immediately north and south of Wakefield.
- Nemaha County Game Management Area, 200 acres. 4 miles south, 1 mile east of Seneca.
- Neosho Waterfowl Management Area, 2,016 acres. 1 mile east of St. Paul.
- Norton Game Management Area, 5,056 acres. 5 miles west, 2 miles south of Norton.
- Ottawa County Game Management Area, 611 acres. 5 miles north, 1 mile east of Bennington.
- Perry Game Management Area, 10,984 acres. ½ mile west, 1 mile north of Valley Falls.
- Pratt Sandhills Game Management Area, 4,757 acres. 3 miles south of Hopewell.
- Rooks County Game Management Area, 243 acres. 1½ miles south, 2 miles west of Stockton.
- Scott County Game Management Area, 160 acres. 12 miles north of Scott City.
- Sheridan County Game Management Area, 458 acres. 4 miles east of Hoxie.
- Sherman County Game Management Area, 1,295 acres. 10 miles south, 2 miles west of Goodland. No migratory waterfowl hunting permitted.
- Strip Pits Wildlife Management Area, 5,979 acres. Local inquiry advised to determine location of scattered tracts in Crawford and Cherokee counties.
- Toronto Game Management Area, 4,366 acres. 1 mile south of Toronto.
- Tuttle Creek Game Management Area, 10,469 acres. ½ mile east, ½ mile north of Randolph.
- Washington County Game Management Area, 373 acres. 7 miles north, 3 miles west of Washington.
- Webster Game Management Area, 7,539 acres. 8 miles west of Stockton.
- Wilson Game Management Area, 7,108 acres. 7 miles northeast of Bunker Hill.
- Woodston Diversion Game Management Area, 210 acres. 8 miles west of Stockton.

Second Half of the Hunt

By JOHN MADSON

Your hunt is only half over when the game is bagged. The other half of the hunt lies between gunshot and dinner table—and that's the part that separates the sportsman from the slob.

Wild game can be tender, sweet and delicious if properly handled; otherwise, it may be just expensive garbage. The main thing to remember is that body heat is the greatest spoiler of freshly killed game. The deep body heat of game should be released as quickly as possible. Get the animal opened up, emptied out, body cavity swabbed, and fur or feathers off as soon as possible.

Even though game may be shot in cool weather, it's smart to draw its innards in the field if you're a long way from home. We once wasted a prime Canada goose by not gutting it, thinking that the December air would chill the bird until we dressed it that night. But it didn't work that way. The big bird was wearing the finest insulated underwear in the world, and this didn't let much 30-degree air temperature in or much 104-degree body temperature out. Result: A soured goose.

Doves and quail are usually hunted in moderate or warm weather. They are small and tend to cool rapidly, but it pays to get them opened up and at least partly field-dressed. Some dove hunters do this as they hunt, absently picking their birds while they watch the sky. In warm weather, dressed doves can be put in a muslin sack and hung in the shade, or packaged in plastic bags and kept in an ice chest.

Southern quail hunters may hang birds from slotted leather thongs so that air can circulate around them. The worst thing is to cut off air circulation around freshly killed birds by jamming them into a rubber-lined game pocket. Almost as bad is piling unpicked, undrawn birds in a car trunk.

The best thing is to pick and draw the bird soon after shooting. If you don't want to pick the bird, at least jerk out his plumbing. Just cut around the vent with a sharp pocket knife and pull out the innards with a forked twig or the "gut hook" of a knife. A friend carries a crochet hook for pulling quail and this seems to work OK.

We prefer to split the back of a bird and remove plumbing and boiler room all at once—gizzard, heart, lungs, liver, intestines, the works. This long incision not only drains body heat faster, but makes an easy job of mopping out blood and fluids from shot-punctured viscera. Clean, dry grass is a good mop.

Birds split down the back and promptly drawn and cooled can be kept without refrigeration for surprisingly long periods.

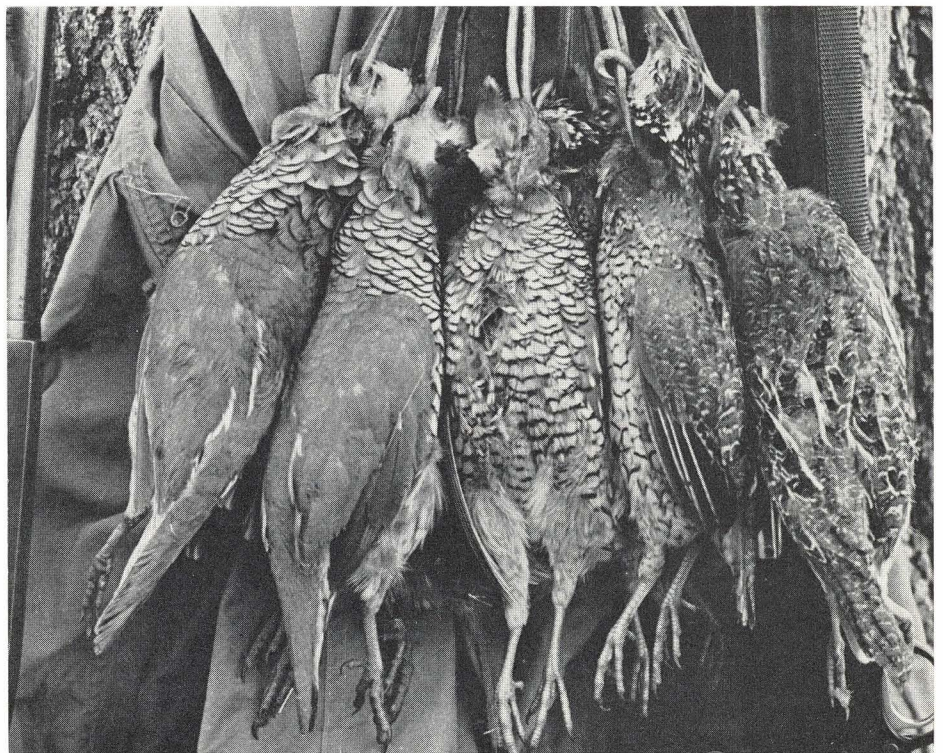
We've carried pheasants for three days in late October, without spoil-

age, having drained body heat from the birds as quickly as possible.

It's easiest to clean game right after it's shot. Feathers pull more easily from birds and skins peel easier from animals. It's also pleasanter. We've skinned and gutted our last eight-hour-dead cottontail. The best time to shuck a rabbit is while the echoes of the gunshot are still rolling around the hillsides.

Some hunters skin birds instead of picking them. That's O. K. if you want second best. But game birds have a thin layer of fat under their skins, and much delicate flavor is lost if the birds are peeled. To some old hunters, skinning a quail or pheasant is as barbaric as shooting a possum over a good bird dog.

Nothing in your supermarket can equal the richness or flavor of game that you'll bag this season—depending on how you handle the last half of your hunt.



Like other wild game, scaled quail can be tender, sweet and delicious if properly handled. (Photo by Thayne Smith.)

Fall Is for Fishin'

By VIC McLERAN

It was a cool evening in late October and the first few frosts had painted the sumac a bright scarlet.

With rod and reel, the fisherman left his car and moved toward the pond. Quail, already coveying with the cooler nights, whistled from nearby multiflora rose thickets.

Treading lightly over the dam, the angler watched as a pair of blue-winged teal flushed and veered off frantically to the south.

Rigging up a plastic worm, he cast toward the far end of the dam and began working his bait, slowly.

This man, unlike many Sunflower sportsmen, was taking advantage of fine fishing which can be found state-wide at this time of year.

"Why fall fishing? Fall is for hunting." Well, maybe, but even though many outdoorsmen associate cooler weather with guns and hunting dogs, some of the year's finest angling can be enjoyed during the winter prelude.

Proof of this lies in the fact that six of the current state records have been posted by anglers who were working the waters from September through December. This is significant when you consider a recent report which showed that most Kansas fishing is done during May, June, July and August. This is probably due to the fact that many people are forced to schedule their vacations during these months.

Biologists tell us that extreme water temperatures, either high or low, seem to have about the same effect on fish. Throughout the "dog days" of July and August, fish become sluggish and feed mainly at night. With the cooler nights of late September and the frosts of early October, action picks up until water temperatures drop to a point where fish, with lowering metabolism, become lethargic again.

This means that fish are most active and feed more during the spring and fall, a fact which is



Phillip Byers, Garfield, proudly displays four bass taken from the waters of Clark County State Lake—proof that lunker largemouths are available to Autumn anglers at many of the ponds, lakes and rivers throughout Kansas. (Photo by Vic McLeran.)

incongruent with the peak periods of fishing activity in Kansas.

With this in mind, let's examine seasonal fishing in Kansas for one of our more popular species, the ever-present largemouth black bass. Maybe then, fall fishing will make more sense.

It's interesting to watch how an-

gling follows a seasonal pattern in our state. With spring and warmer weather, almost everyone turns out, anxious to try their luck after the long winter lay-off.

A lot of fish are caught during this period for two reasons. One, there are simply a lot of fishermen out, and two, many bass are up in

shallow water where most anglers fish.

Although some of the bass run large, most are just good eating size.

Warmer weather finds most bass heading for deeper, cooler water. And, since the average angler doesn't ply the deeper water, fewer fish are taken.

As the water gets progressively warmer, fewer bass are caught. By mid-summer, the extremely hot weather and the high water temperatures have successful fishing almost at a stand still.

As summer fades into fall and the water temperatures gradually drop, bass and other game fish move closer to the shore on feeding sprees, much as they do during April and May.

Since the fish's behavior during the early fall is similar to their antics in the spring, the angler should act accordingly. This means fishing fairly close to shore, early in the morning or late in the evening with top-water baits or shallow running lures.

Later however, as water temperatures drop, the big bass move again to deeper water and their actions become sluggish. Bottom offerings which can be presented slowly, seem to produce more consistently during this period.

Included are the pork baits and plastic worms, the latter, by the way, have been called the "number one bass lure" by many experts.

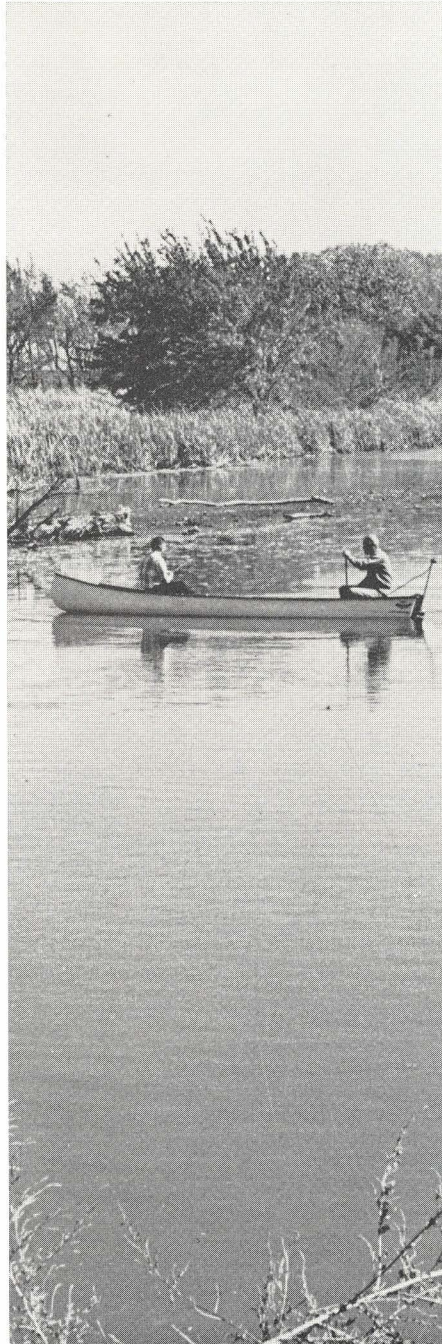
A couple of handy things about these baits, in addition to their effectiveness, are their portability and versatility. You don't have to lug a big tackle box around when fishing with them, since a small sack or even your pockets will suffice.

The methods in which these baits can be used are many. In addition to fishing them alone, jigs, spinners, weedless hooks, spoons and deep-running plugs are just a few of the standard lures which can be modified and enhanced through the use of pork rinds or plastic.

Since colder water temperatures render bass sluggish, strikes may be less spectacular and the fight not as pronounced as in warmer weather. However, a creel full of lunkers is compensation enough for any lack of aggressiveness.

Anglers who net a largemouth weighing seven pounds or more, are urged to apply for a Master Anglers Award. Applications may be obtained from most marinas, sporting goods dealers, license vendors, game protectors or from the Information-Education Division of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124.

Since bass are found in deep holes at this time of year, the angler with



Some of the year's finest angling can be found during Autumn months.

an electronic fish finder can put it to work locating holes and drop-offs. These devices are especially effective when fishing large reservoirs.

Fishermen who prefer smaller bodies of water such as state lakes or farm ponds, can often locate deeper water by using deep-running baits which bump along the bottom when retrieved rapidly. Jigs and weighted plastic worms can also assist the angler in finding deep spots.

In most Kansas farm ponds, the deepest water lies adjacent to the dam, while old creek or river channels usually hold the deepest water in state lakes. State impoundments without tributaries are normally deepest just off the face of dams.

Accessibility during early fall may be a problem in some farm ponds and strip pits due to heavy perimeter vegetation and for that reason, a small fishing boat in the 8-10 foot class comes in handy. Early in the fall, before water temperatures prohibit it, some anglers utilize waders or the new canvass-covered inner tubes to reach areas which are otherwise inaccessible. However, inner tubes are for small bodies of water and for safety's sake should not be used on large reservoirs or state lakes.

Boaters, water skiers, troublesome insects, snakes, bothersome vegetation like poison ivy and other minor annoyances which can take some of the fun from a fishing trip, are conspicuously absent in the fall.

For the angler who likes his solitude, fall fishing is great since many sportsmen have turned their interests to hunting. Consequently, there is no shoulder-to-shoulder, tangled lines hassle as is sometimes the case during warmer months.

Waterfowl migration is at its peak and with most heavy foliage gone, birds and other wildlife are much easier to observe during Nature's farewell to summer.

Blazing colors, crisp autumn breezes laced with the smell of wood smoke and a stringer of fat black bass can make fall fishing a real joy.

So, the next time you hit a lull in your dove shooting or the quail get a little hard to find, pick up your fishing tackle and try some autumn angling for a pleasant change of pace.

SAFETY . . .

A Way of Thinking

SCENE: A county seat hospital in a western Kansas town.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS: A physician, a nurse, an ambulance driver
—and a lifeless body on a stretcher.

By **GEORGE VALYER**

After a brief examination by the local doctor, the body was turned over to the local mortician, a death certificate was filled out and a report was filed with the sheriff's office.

It was too late for any other action—carelessness had claimed another victim.

The tragic drama had a gala beginning on a sparkling November day—the opening of Kansas' pheasant season. The hunter had hugged his wife as he left the house and gaily waved to his children as he left the drive.

After picking up his hunting companion, the two men drove into the neighboring countryside where arrangements had already been made to hunt on several farms.

The first hike through a weedy draw provided a number of shots and resulted in two brightly-colored cock pheasants for the hunters' game pockets. A little good-natured jesting about poor shooting was exchanged by the men as they returned to the car.

It was a beautiful day for a hunt and already it was off to a good start. But thoughtlessness was about to play its deadly game!

Upon returning to the car, the hunters laid their guns on the floor between the front and back seats—neither seemed to notice that one had failed to unload his gun. The stage was set. The making of a tragedy was underway.

Upon arrival at the next hunting area, the hunter reached into the auto, grabbed the muzzle of his shotgun and pulled it toward him. It took

only a slight bump against the center-hump of the floorboards to dislodge the safety. As the trigger was pulled past a pair of overshoes, a buckle snagged in the trigger guard providing the necessary pressure to discharge the gun.

It was all over in a second. The hunter took the full charge of number six shot squarely in the abdomen and died almost instantly.

Fortunately, such accidents are not frequent occurrences in Kansas since most hunters are relatively careful. Statistics consistently prove that a person stands more of a chance to get hurt or fatally injured in his own home than while hunting. Even so, one injury or fatality accident is too many.

Without question, safety with guns should be a part of the preparation for every hunt.

How do you prepare for safety? By thinking about safety and conditioning yourself so that you will react safely at all times.

A good automobile driver conditions himself so that he automatically follows the rules of safe driving. Should something unexpected happen, he keeps his head and reacts quickly to prevent injury to himself and others.

The same is true with a good hunter. He knows and obeys the rules of safe gun handling and reacts quickly if he is threatened by the carelessness of others.

Gun handling experts throughout

One basic rule of gun safety is, "Never carry a loaded gun in a vehicle." Even if unloaded, guns should never be removed from an automobile by the muzzle.



the nation who have spent thousands of hours analyzing hunting accident reports, have adopted some basic rules which should be followed whenever a gun is handled. If every hunter would learn and observe these rules, hunting accidents would be practically non-existent.

Three cardinal rules of gun safety as set forth by the National Rifle Association are:

1. Treat every gun as if it were loaded.

2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

3. Always be sure of your target and what is beyond.

In addition, the NRA advocates observance of other rules in certain situations. Some of these rules while afield are:

(1) Make sure all firearms are unloaded before placing them in a vehicle or carrying them into camp;

(2) Open the action and unload the weapon before crossing a fence or other obstruction;

(3) Keep the safety on and finger outside the trigger guard until you are ready to shoot;

(4) Keep the gun and yourself under control—don't let the excitement of a hunt cause carelessness;

(5) Make sure your gun is in good mechanical condition and the ammunition is proper for the firearm you are carrying;

(6) Avoid alcoholic beverages before and during a hunt.

There are rules for gun safety in the home as well.

(1) Firearms should be unloaded and uncocked at all times.

(2) All guns should be locked up and kept out of reach of children.

(3) Ammunition should be stored away from firearms.

(4) When showing a gun, always open the action and show it's unloaded.

Some hunters disobey one or more of these rules then defend their action by saying, "I've been doing it this way for 30 years and haven't had an accident yet." None-the-less, statistics show that disregard for any of the listed safety principles can lead to injury or death.



When there are two or more hunters in a party, the "buddy system" is a good, safe way to cross a fence—but first, unload the guns and open the actions. When hunting alone, unload the gun, slide it under the fence—then cross.

Nearly all hunters who have hunted extensively have probably been in a group where someone has violated safe gun handling rules.

What should you do if you find yourself looking down the barrel of a neighbor's shotgun or if you observe some other flagrant violation of safe gun handling rules? Should you take the chance and go on hunting or should you leave?

While each hunter must decide the answers to these questions, it is usually better to leave than to occupy a cold marble slab. It's even better to go through the embarrassing ordeal of telling the careless hunter why you're leaving. It's far better for him to be corrected than to live through the agony of knowing his carelessness had resulted in the death of a hunting companion.

Hunting is a great sport and one which can be pursued for a full-term lifetime. Certainly it is worth the time and effort necessary to become an expert in safe gun handling.

The real hunting expert is one who realizes his responsibility to himself, his family and fellow hunters. He is also one who exercises proper caution with the tools of his sport.

Any firearm is made of metal and wood—it cannot think. As such, it has never hurt anyone by itself.

But sometimes people—unthinking people—hurt themselves or others with a gun.

Now is the time to condition yourself for the hunting seasons by careful consideration of all aspects of gun safety.

Your family will be glad you did.

A Public Target

By JOHN MADSON

In the new surge of environmental concern, a frequent target of aroused citizens is the hunter.

The citizen knows that wildlife is a desirable part of the environment. So it figures that if the hunter kills wildlife, he is somehow damaging the environment.

Such logic recently drew fire from Dr. Leslie Glasgow, Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Marine Resources:

"The anti-gun fabricators and extreme preservationists have managed to sell a great many people the entirely false notion that harvest of wildlife is a crime against conservation and the environment. The truth is, that hunters and hunting have literally saved many wildlife species from extinction.

"The hunter-haters chatter on about the threat hunting poses to wildlife populations. Their solution is as grandly simple as it is naive: Prohibit all hunting. Stop it completely and wildlife will be saved forevermore.

"What silly rot! And what dangerous rot!

"The wildlife scientist knows that the hunter and his harvest is not the real danger. The real danger is habitat destruction. Any time overhunting becomes a danger, it is the hunter who demands a restriction in season or bag limit.

"Hunters and fishermen have been the leaders in every conservation crusade in this country. This is the American the anti-harvest crowd is portraying as the spoiler.

"The animal sentimentalists should be motivated to exert their effort toward saving habitat and improvement of the environment . . . Movements based on emotion and minus factual information are dangerous."

Extreme preservationists overlook the fact that some game species have

been "wiped out" every fall for decades, but for some reason they always seem to come back. That reason is modern game management—probably the best example of how to live in harmony with environment and still enjoy its fruits. It's also a classic example of studying problems, finding solutions, and then financing action.

Environmental maintenance isn't the only thing that hunters and fishermen are useful for.

A great value of such men is their unwillingness to compromise environment. They know that it is impossible to have quality environment with no fish or wildlife, for such critters are true biological indicators of environmental quality. They know, more than

most men, that a world that isn't good for wildlife isn't good for people. A non-hunter, non-fisherman, non-outdoorsman might settle for an environment without fish or wildlife, for he has no standards to guide him, and he might be content with an unpolluted sky, a sterile, manicured park, and crystal-clear water that is too infertile to support aquatic life.

We are hearing a call for quality environment from many Americans who don't *really* know what quality environment is.

It is ironic that the men who know the most about quality natural environment, and its elements, should be the targets of those who know the least.



Photo by Ken Stiebben

1970 *Kansas Hunting Seasons*

Squirrel	Now Open	Closes December 31
Dove	Now Open	Closes October 30
Rails, Gallinules	Now Open	Closes November 9
Snipe	Now Open	Closes November 22
Deer (Archery)	Now Open	Closes November 30
Woodcock	Opens October 17 ...	Closes December 20
Ducks, Coots, Mergansers	Opens October 17 ...	Closes December 13
Second Segment	Opens December 20 ..	Closes December 31
Geese	Opens October 17 ...	Closes December 30
Prairie Chicken (Greater)	Opens November 7 ...	Closes November 8
Second Segment	Opens December 19 ..	Closes December 20
Pheasants (West of U. S. 81)	Opens November 14 ..	Closes December 31
Pheasants (East of U. S. 81)	Opens November 21 ..	Closes December 31
Quail	Opens November 21 ..	Closes Jan. 21, '71
Prairie Chicken (Lesser)	Opens November 28 ..	Closes November 29
Deer (Firearms, Western Season)	Opens December 5 ...	Closes December 9
Deer (Firearms, Eastern Season)	Opens December 5 ...	Closes December 13
Rabbits—Season open the year around except from October 16 through December 14. In addition, rabbits may be taken during any upland game bird season.		

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