

# KANSAS FISH & GAME



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**JULY—AUGUST 1973**

# KANSAS FISH & GAME



July-August, 1973

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## Cover Photos

Front cover—Immature red-tailed hawk with a freshly-killed matrix water snake. Ektachrome transparency by Vic McLeran.

Back cover—Sunflower, symbol of the Kansas summer. Ektachrome transparency by Vic McLeran.

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## SHAME

Recently, an ad ran in our local paper offering a \$50 reward leading to arrest of the man who had shot a doe pregnant with twin fawns and left the remains of this butchery on the edge of the brook in a little park where the kids play after school.

Last fall, the same paper carried a notice from a man who had seen two hunters shoot his little dog just 100 yards from his house. The notice was a plea for gunners to be more careful, since this was the second little dog he had lost in the same way.

I cannot comment further on these incidents, nor do I think I have to. But I'm sure that this is not by any means an isolated example or two. The point I'd like to make is that the average sportsman doesn't give a damn about policing his own ranks. Do you insist that your hunting buddies pick up the sandwich wrappers? Or fix the fences? Or offer the farmer a bird or rabbit now and then? If you know a companion is committing an illegal act, do you have the guts to turn him in? Or if he's just plain stupid or careless, have you taken the time to give him a good talking to?

There are a lot of folks who don't use a gun but enjoy the same thrill of being outdoors amidst the game that we do. They have a couple of rights themselves. Carrying a gun or owning one doesn't grant any special privileges—what it really does is add a lot of responsibilities. Responsibilities that a lot of us are apparently unwilling to shoulder.

I don't know the details of cross-country game laws but I wouldn't object if my state had a clause that could remove a man's hunting privileges for life if he was caught shooting illegal game. Or being so carelessly stupid as to shoot a man's pet dog. As far as I'm concerned that is an illegal act. It is theft of a very base sort and might easily be ruled in the area of grand larceny and carry a similar penalty.

Until this sort of thing is stopped it should be a burden on our conscience and we should feel shame if ever we turn a blind eye to such acts among people we know.

Reprinted from  
*A Hunter's Fireside Book*  
By Gene Hill  
Executive Editor  
*Sports Afield*

# Beneficial Buteos

By VIC McLERAN, *Editor*



Vic McLeran

**A** LIGHT breeze cut the August stillness and gently rippled the leaves of riverbank cottonwoods. Below me, in the dark pool, a carp rolled noisily at the surface then dropped from sight. The commotion seemed to irritate a nearby kingfisher which took flight, breaking the serenity with his chattering cry. It was late afternoon and I'd been threatening channel cats along the Verdigris River since dawn. Feeling drowsy, I leaned back against a gnarled cottonwood.

A sudden movement caught my eye and I spotted a red-tailed hawk as it settled on the bare snag of a tall sycamore about 30 yards downstream. The bird's gaze seemed riveted to a spot several yards beyond the tree where an alfalfa meadow faded into lush streamside foliage.

As I watched, the hawk stiffened and leaned forward slightly. Suddenly it left the perch with powerful down strokes of broad wings. Knifing through the air, the hawk hurtled diagonally toward a slight movement in the grass below.

Then I saw it—a large natrix water snake, winding its way through the weeds. A split-second before impact, the hawk's wings flared and the fan-shaped tail braked hard as the bird lit several feet from the reptile. The

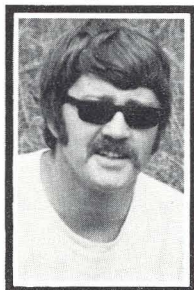
snake snapped into a series of taut S-shaped loops and cocked its head, ready to strike. The hawk shuffled forward, eyeing the reptile thoughtfully. From his hesitant, inexperienced method of attack, I could tell the hawk was a youngster and this was probably his first attempt at killing a snake. An older, experienced raptor would have sailed into the snake without hesitation. Because of this hesitancy, the redtail had lost its advantage of surprise and it was now a contest of speed and reflexes. As the hawk moved closer, the reptile struck, its head lashing out in a dark blur. The hawk's wings flared briefly as it leaped into the air and stabbed at the reptile with four sharp talons which hooked the snake behind the head. Before the reptile could turn to bite, the hawk clamped down on its head with the other foot. There was a brief struggle and the snake was dead.

As I stood up for a better view, the hawk spotted me, and with its prey, flew to a hedgerow on the far side

of the alfalfa. For me, it had been an exciting episode but for the redtail it had been just another hunt.

The redtail is only one of several buteo hawks which are native to Kansas. The red-shouldered, broad-winged, Swainson's and rough-legged are other resident buteos. All buteo hawks are characterized by broad wings, fan-shaped tails and an easy soaring flight pattern. These are the large hawks you see perched on roadside telephone poles, dead tree limbs and other conspicuous locations. Since the plumages of these hawks vary according to species, sex and age, space prohibits detailed descriptions. However, complete physical descriptions and color plates are available in books like Roger Tory Peterson's, *Field Guide to the Birds*.

The largest and probably most common buteo hawk statewide is the redtail. Outside of the great horned owl, it is also our earliest nesting bird of prey. Most buteos mate for life and following courtship activities in Feb-



McLeran



The rough-legged hawk is a fairly common buteo in western Kansas.

ruary and March, the pair selects a nest site. For redtails, the nest itself is often located in the lofty crotch of a tall cottonwood or sycamore. Red-shouldered and broad-winged hawks, found mainly in eastern Kansas, locate their nests in denser timber than the redtail. The Swainson's hawk, common only in the western part of the state, often nests in shelter belts or along river bottom timber. Furruginous rough-legged hawks, seen mainly in the extreme western part of Kansas, also nest in trees but have been observed nesting on cliffs or on the ground.

Both male and female participate in construction of the nest which is large and bulky, often measuring 30-36 inches across. The base is composed

of heavy sticks while the center depression which holds the eggs is lined with softer material such as strips of inner bark, corn shucks and weeds or grasses.

An interesting situation exists between two of the buteos and a couple of our native owls. The redtail is considered a complementary species to the great horned owl. Both birds utilize the same nesting areas with the owl often using an abandoned nest of the hawk to rear its young. At night, the owl hunts the same territory which the redtail covered during the day. This same complementary situation often exists between the red-shouldered hawk and the barred owl. In fact, one researcher observed the two species nesting in the same tree within several feet of each other.

Nests of the large buteos, particularly those of the redtail, are often utilized by other raptors. Perry Conway, biology instructor at Manhattan High School, watched one nest which contained redtailed hawks the first year, great horned owls the second, barred owls the third and came back full cycle to redtails the fourth year.

The home range of our buteo hawks varies according to species and the fertility of their area. Generally, the smaller broad-winged and red-shouldered hawks occupy smaller ranges than the redtail and rough-leg. If the hawk's home range is a lush area with a high concentration of mice and rodents, fewer acres are required to support the bird and its family. On the other hand, if the area is low in rodent numbers, the hawk is forced to cover more territory in search of food. So an area with a high concentration of buteo hawks usually indicates a large number of rodent pests.

The migratory habits of buteo hawks are varied. Kansas redtails and ferruginous roughlegs aren't very migratory for the most part, and tend to remain in their summer range throughout the winter. Red-shouldered hawks tend to drift southward more, and the broad-winged hawks go as far south as Central America. The real traveler though, is the Swainson's hawk which winters in South America, returning to Kansas in March or early April, often in flocks of 2,000 or more.

In Kansas, red-tailed hawks usually lay either two or three dirty white eggs blotched in various shades of brown. Red-shouldered broad-winged and the ferruginous roughlegs generally have three or four while the Swainson's may lay as many as five. Although the redtail starts laying in March, our other resident buteos don't usually begin these activities until April or May.

For most buteos, the incubation period lasts from 28-32 days with both sexes taking part. Newly hatched hawks are attractive little critters, garbed in grayish-white down. At two or three weeks of age, they begin to feather out. Following a period of six or seven weeks in the nest, the young hawks fledge and begin to hunt for themselves.

The hunting methods of our buteo hawks usually conform to one of two methods. Most of their hunting is done from a lookout perch, usually a high strategic position from which they can watch a field or meadow for prospective meals. And on favorable days when the weather is conducive to soaring, buteos hunt from the air. When hunting from aloft, the birds generally stay within 100 feet of the ground since mice and rats don't remain exposed for more than a few seconds and the hawk's attack must be quick. Certain buteos, like red-tails and roughlegs, occasionally hunt from a hovering position much like the common sparrow hawk.

Top flight speed of buteo hawks ranges from 30 to 40 miles per hour but when diving from high overhead, stronger-flying hawks like the redtail can attain speeds in excess of 100 m. p. h. Hawks also employ their fantastic vision when hunting. Using binocular vision eight times more powerful than man's, the hawk's eye can adjust rapidly from distant viewing to close-up when the bird is chasing a quick-moving rodent.

Most raptors, as birds of prey are called, are sensitive to certain sounds. The high-pitched distress cries of rabbits and other rodents will often attract the attention of nearby raptors. It's another example of a hawk's readiness to capitalize on an opportunity since these distress cries often indicate an injured or handicapped critter. Sportsmen using predator calls occasionally lure in hungry hawks which are looking for an easy meal.

The redtail probably exemplifies these attributes of speed, power, vision and hunting ability more than any of our other buteos. In fact, the redtail's skill and aggressiveness as a hunter has made it a favorite with many falconers in other states. Since Kansas law prohibits possession of any raptor, falconry is still illegal in our state. Only scientific institutions and organizations which have a scientific collector's permit, can legally possess hawks or owls in Kansas.

The hunting ability of our buteo hawks is, for the most part, directed toward the rodent populations since this is the hawk's main food supply.



Vic McEran

These two young red-tailed hawks will spend about six weeks in the nest before learning to hunt on their own.

The following is a partial list of items observed in various buteo hawk nests: ground squirrels, pocket gophers, rabbits, moles, mice and rats of all kinds, tree squirrels, leopard frogs, fish (a 12-inch carp turned up in one redtail's nest), many types of snakes, large insects, crawfish, lizards, shrews, weasels, opossums, woodchucks, prairie dogs, and even porcupines.

Since the diet of buteo hawks is so beneficial, many studies have been done on the subject. One ornithologist writing in Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey*, made the following calculations regarding a flock of 200 Swainson's hawks which was feeding almost entirely on grass-

hoppers. "Assuming that each hawk captured 200 grasshoppers a day and there were 200 hawks, the daily catch would be 40,000 grasshoppers. At this rate these hawks would destroy 280,000 grasshoppers in a week and 1,200,000 in a month." Even half this figure would still be an impressive number of insect pests.

The value of rough-legged hawks to the wheat farmer was illustrated in this same publication. "A conservative estimate of the food requirements of a family of these hawks is surprising in its total. Two adults, from spring arrival to the birth of the young consume not less than a gopher a day, 90 in all. After the young are out, four in the brood, and for two months

at least, the family requirement can not average less than three gophers a day, or 180. Thereafter for one month, the six probably will require one gopher each day, or 180 more. A single gopher, under favorable circumstances, destroys at least one bushel of wheat. Supposing that one-tenth of this can be charged against the average gopher, we still have 35 bushels of wheat as the value of this one family of rough-legged hawks for a single season. This can be translated into dollars and cents by multiplying the current price of wheat and makes a sum well worth considering."

In addition to rodents, the redtail is not above picking up a half-wild roaming cat for dinner. Bent, in his

*Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey*, recorded an interesting account of such an incident. "A large red-tailed hawk came out of the timber and flew over the meadow, hovering over one point a moment for special inspection. Then he flew back to the woods again. A few minutes later he flew out and hovered over the same place, then returned to the woods as before. After having performed this round trip several times, the hawk finally flew to this point and plunged down into the meadow. Instantly there was a mighty commotion. Hissing, flopping, spitting, caterwauling; and one could see feet, claws, wings and tails whirling about just over the grass. The air was full of fur and

feathers for a few moments, then the hawk made his getaway and with feathers ruffled, flew for the timber as fast as his wings could carry him. And an old gray tom cat went with great bounds in equal haste for the farm buildings!"

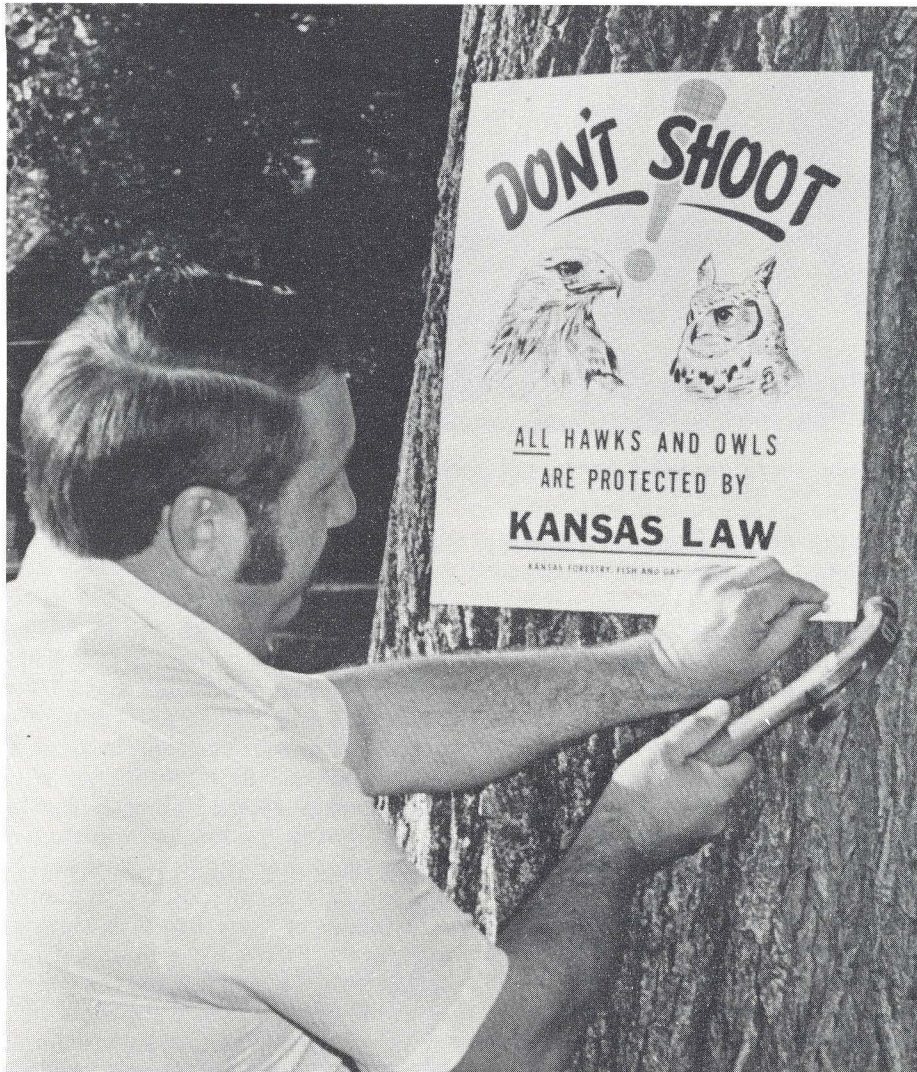
Several years ago, while living in Tennessee, I was fortunate enough to witness one of these hawk-cat battles. At the time, I was active in the sport of falconry and had a female red-tailed hawk which I used for rabbit hunting. When not hunting her, I kept the bird tethered on a perch in the back yard. One morning I glanced out the window to check on her. Through the haze of an early-morning mist, I saw the hawk staring intently at something several feet away. Then I noticed the feline form of a half-wild roaming cat. Moving toward the bird in a low stalking crouch, the cat obviously figured on hawk for breakfast. Just as the cat tensed to spring, the hawk dove to the attack. Meeting in a mid-air collision, the hawk clamped its powerful talons around the cat's head and neck. Snarling and hissing, the cat went to work with its deadly claws. Fearing for the hawk's safety, I sprinted for the back door, grabbing a broom on the way. I could have taken my time.

In a matter of seconds the hawk had dispatched the cat with slashing talons, losing only a few feathers in the process. Later, as I checked the dead animal, I found that one of the hawk's talons had penetrated the cat's brain while another had severed the animal's jugular vein.

The flesh of victims is quickly digested but bone, hair, feathers and other indigestible parts are formed into an oblong compact "pellet" which is regurgitated by the hawk several hours after feeding. Biologists dissect these odorless pellets to determine what the hawk has been eating. Investigations like these have proven repeatedly that the diets of butec hawks are extremely beneficial to man. Wildlife researchers have also found that even when hawks occasionally pick off a game bird, the victim is usually crippled, slow, diseased or otherwise defective in some manner. So in effect, the hawk is culling unfit individuals, leaving a healthier game

Bill Hlavachick, technical services biologist with the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, tacks up a poster showing all hawks and owls are protected by law in Kansas.

Ken Stiebben



population. And since birds of prey feed mainly on large numbers of destructive rodents and insect pests, Kansas and most other states have

In their book, *Hawks, Owls and Wildlife*, the Craigheads wrote, "In three nesting seasons, the horned owl is known to have been responsible for

killed and eaten. Five pairs of hawks constructed nests, but because of the disturbing influence of neighboring horned owls, they did not lay."

And larger mammals like coyotes, bobcats and raccoons will prey on young hawks when they find them unattended or on crippled, wounded adult birds.

Even snakes, common prey items of the buteo hawks, occasionally turn the tables on the big raptors. In Texas, George Williams of the Rice Institute found a red-shouldered hawk which was nearly dead from the constrictive strength of a rat snake's coils. Reporting in the ornithological publication, *Auk*, Williams wrote,

**Biological studies have repeatedly proven the diets of buteo hawks are beneficial to farmer and sportsman alike.**

laws protecting all hawks and owls. Federal law also protects all raptors. Anyone who sees someone shoot a hawk or an owl should report it to their local sheriff or game protector just as they would any other game law violation.

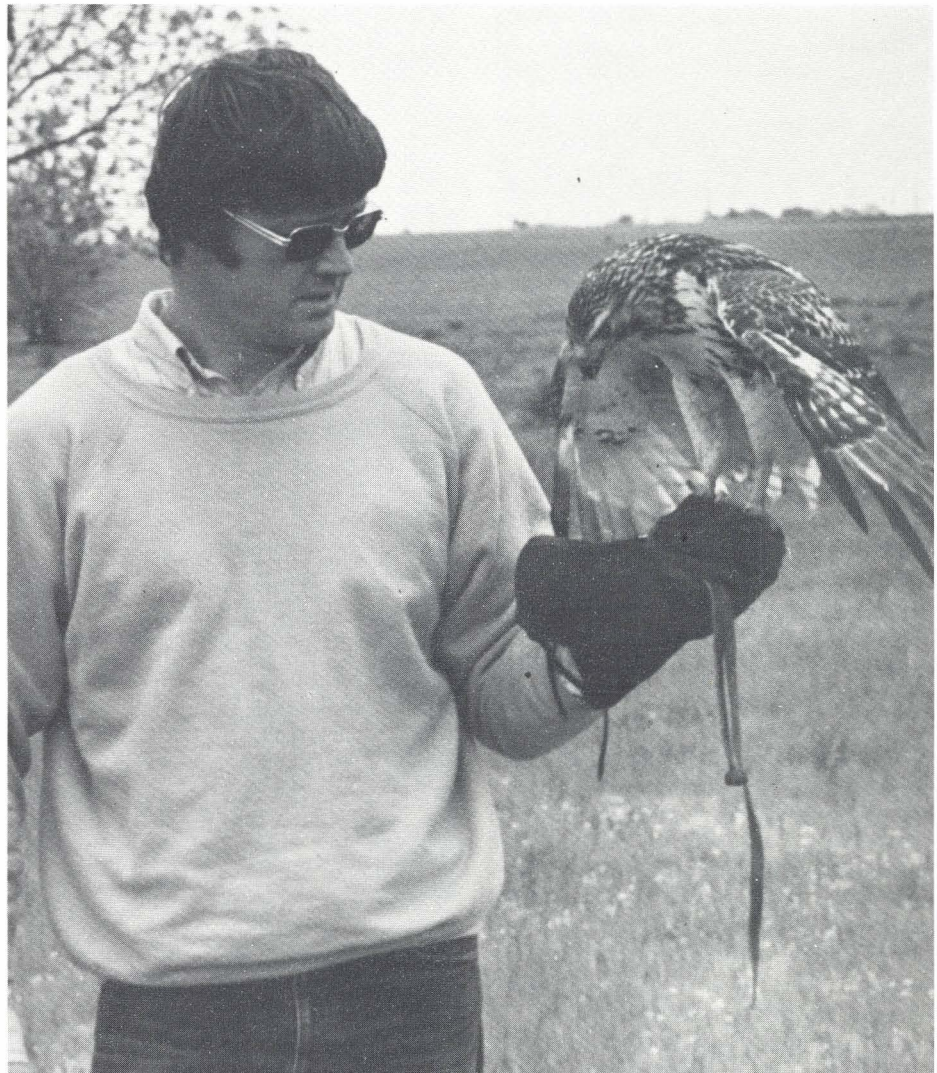
Even though buteos are large, powerful hawks, they're not without enemies. In fact, interpredation is not uncommon among the raptors. The formidable great horned owl for example, is a very capable predator on many hawks. Wildlife literature is sprinkled with cases where this savage nocturnal hunter has killed and eaten various hawks. Bent's *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey* gives this account of a great horned owl-red-tailed hawk encounter.

"We saw a pair of red-tailed hawks sailing over a large tract of pine timber half a mile or so distant. Later, only one of the hawks was seen, circling over the woods and looking for something. We had not gone far into the pines before we saw a great horned owl fly from a small pine. On closer inspection, we saw a great mass of feathers on a flat branch near the top of the tree. I climbed up to investigate and was surprised to find the wing of an adult red-tailed hawk which had recently been torn from the body of the victim; the flesh was still warm. I had no doubt that the owl had just killed one of the hawks that we had seen sailing over the woods less than an hour before."

Since the great horned owl is the most powerful raptor in any woodland community, it has its preference of nest sites and cannot be evicted by other birds of prey. In addition, the owl can hunt or defend itself equally well by day or by night. In fact, the great horned owl is so dominant its presence can affect the nesting success of neighboring raptors.

the destruction of four hawk nests and may have destroyed others. Two of the four were red-shouldered hawk nests, one belonged to red-tailed hawks and one to Cooper's hawks. In three cases the young were eaten. One adult red-shouldered hawk was also

The author with a trained redtail. The bird is licensed under a scientific collector's permit issued to the Raptor Research Association of Kansas. Possession of hawks or owls is illegal unless a scientific collector permit has been issued. Normally these are given only to colleges and research institutions.





The broad-winged hawk shown here is normally found only in the extreme eastern part of the state.

"The hawk was on its back, feathers ruffled, wings half extended and legs limp. The mouth and eyes were open but the bird was not struggling. A large rat snake was wrapped tightly around the hawk's neck. Holding the hawk's legs, I removed the snake. The thick of its body formed one loop about the bird's neck, and its tail region formed another. The hawk revived and flew off. The rat snake was unharmed and still full of fight," Williams concluded.

Dick Cole, game protector with the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, witnessed a similar incident involving a red-tailed hawk and a large bull snake. And rattlesnakes, too, have been recorded as killing hawks. A. E. Borell, of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reported the following in Laurence M. Klauber's publication entitled, *Rattlesnakes*. "I found a dead rattlesnake and five feet away lay a dead adult western red-

tailed hawk. The snake, which was about two feet long, was partially eaten. Between the snake and the hawk was a mass, about a cupful, of rattlesnake meat and skin that appeared to have been regurgitated by the hawk. The snake and hawk had been dead only a few hours when found. Possibly the hawk had been struck while killing the snake but proceeded with its feast. When the poison began to take effect, it regurgitated its meal and died shortly after."

But even though buteo hawks occasionally find themselves on the short end of an encounter with other wildlife, their greatest enemy is still man. It's a shame, but thousands of beneficial hawks are killed each hunting season by ignorant gunners. And in addition to destroying a valuable and desirable member of the ecosystem, those who shoot hawks are breaking both state and federal law. Keep it in mind this fall when you're afield and give our beneficial buteos a break.

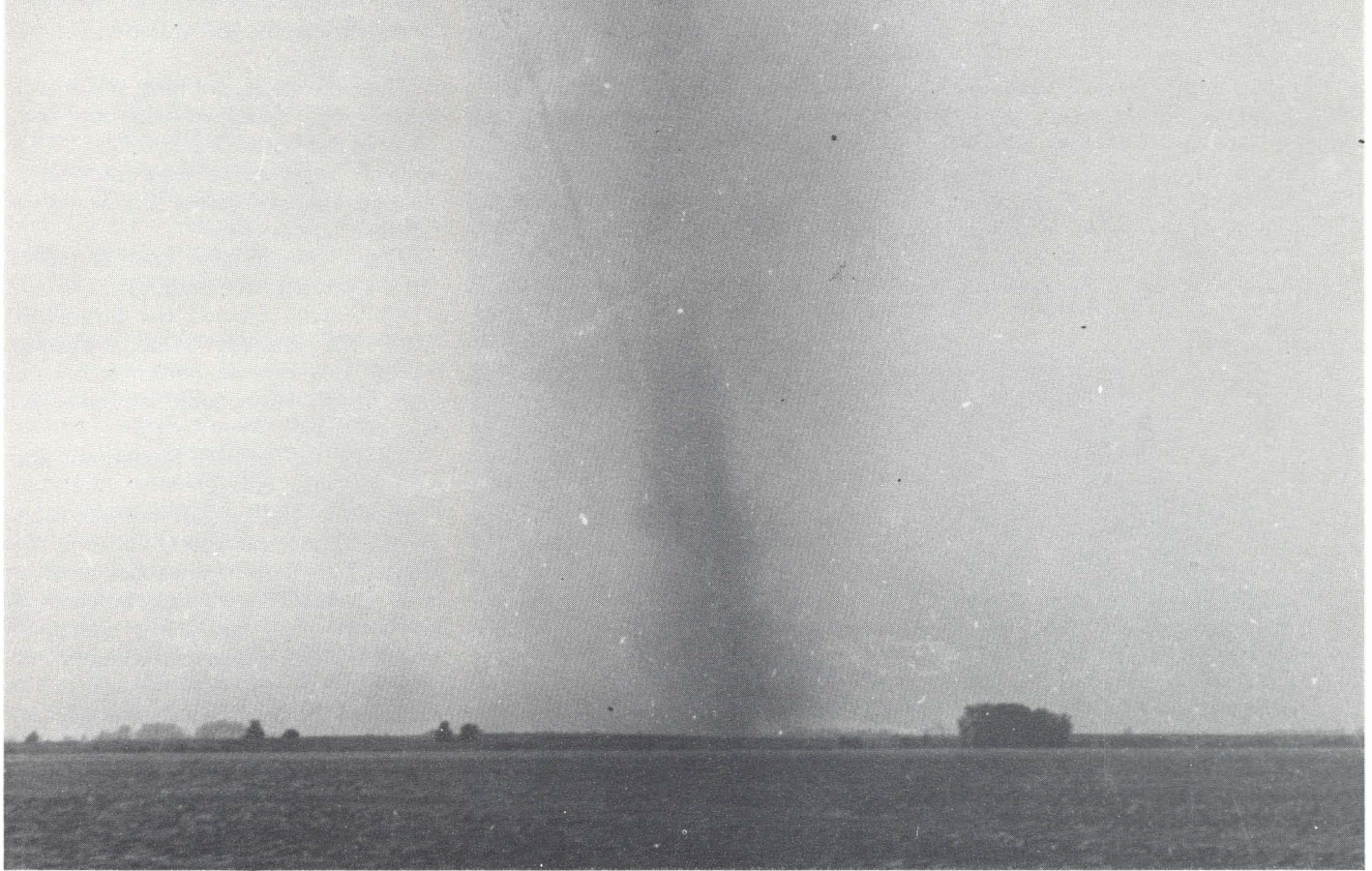
This young red-tailed hawk has just killed a matrix water snake. Actually, hawks and snakes are often in competition for the same prey items—namely destructive rodents and insects.





# Treacherous Blue Ladies

By BILL SCOTT, Staff Writer

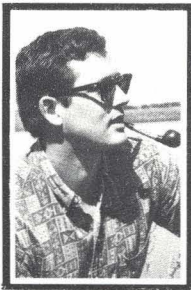


**C**AN BLUE water kill? How can she, lying resplendent in the sun spangled with shimmering jewels and dancing diamonds? Look at her beckon, listen to her siren song. "Cast aside caution! Abandon judgment and frolic with me now!" she pleads from her depths.

Blue water, blue sky—DIE!

It was the afternoon of June 24, 1972.

The powerful throb of the 90-horsepower motor pushed the 25-foot cabin motorboat easily through the placid water of Milford Reservoir. White spray jetted



Scott

out alongside as

the aluminum hull sliced through the wet coolness. Bubbly foam swirled like cake frosting in the boat's wake. Above, the azure sky offered no resistance to a brassy Kansas sun. Only small waves slapped at the boat's belly as a light southerly wind ran its fingers through the water. The gently rolling hills of north central Kansas bobbed like a cork on the ocean, putting their final touch on the splendor of the scene.

Three Abilene boaters were luxuriating in the hearty pleasure of cool water and warm sun on their skin. One of the boaters, a dentist, was sitting amidships. Sixty-nine years old but tanned, good-looking and lean from his constant outdoor life, the balding dentist could be counted on to be hunting, fishing or boating some-

where when his office door was locked. A rigorous enforcer of boating safety rules, he would not allow anyone on his boat without giving firm instructions to "Put on that life jacket!" Today, however, the ever-present life preserver was not wrapped protectively about the dentist. It was lying idle on the bottom of the boat.

A companion was at the wheel. Of average build and lightly browned, he was a veteran of more than 500 hours of manning watercraft.

A 19-year-old girl completed the party. A competent water skier, she was about to witness the watery blue lady kill.

The time was 4:20 p. m.

The dentist's companion straightened out stiff muscles and stood up behind the wheel. Squinting against

the glare, he called to the girl. "Would you take the wheel? I gotta use the restroom."

She rose and grasped the placidly writhing circle.

The dentist moved from his position amidships and took a seat near the boat's side.

**It was now 4:30.**

The boat had traveled less than 100 feet when a wave from nowhere reached up its fist and viciously punched the boat. The craft reeled under the sneak attack and the dentist was flung overboard like a rag doll.

He landed with a hollow splash in the arms of the waiting blue lady. The geyser erupted by the plummeting doctor's body showered back to the water's surface.

At the sound, the girl jerked around. Screamed. The dentist was thrashing wildly against the Blue Hand that was fastened on his throat, strangling him. Quickly, she cut the motor.

**Below, the companion heard** the frantic call for help and flew back on deck. One glance was all it took and without hesitating he leaped into the water to save his stricken friend.

**Cirrus clouds, seen here through billowy cumulus, can often indicate precipitation within 20 to 30 hours if the wind holds from the northeast, east or south.**



But reason had now left the doctor and instinct took over. With the panic-stricken savagery of a man about to drown, he fought.

Then, as though someone had pulled the plug in a bathtub, they were sucked out of sight. Horrified and helpless, the girl watched her two friends drown.

**Over the inert, bobbing bodies,** the treacherous blue lady was now completing the lyrics of her song. "Abandon all hope, all ye who enter here," echoed silkenly across the waves of Milford Reservoir.

Later, two helpful boaters picked up a hysterical teen-age girl.

Many who viewed the large boat after the tragedy were surprised. "Why, this boat is better than three feet deep! How could anybody fall out of that?"

**That's the point.** Somebody did, and anybody could.

Probably the biggest mistake made by the tragic trio was violation of the dentist's own rule. Personal flotation devices stashed away are not enough to blunt the paralyzing effects of shock. Most water-related accidents happen with very little warning. The treacherous blue lady is simply not courteous to allow you time to grab your life jacket.

No matter how safe the boat, weather and water conditions and your fellow passengers seem to be, wear a life preserver. It's probably hot, cumbersome and uncomfortable. Sweat it out. If you can swim, slip on that life preserver. Cuss it you must, but don't rip it off. You'll live to cuss tomorrow.

**Also notice the weather conditions** under which this double drowning occurred. Fair skies. Good visibility. Warm and sunny. Light (0-6 m. p. h.) to moderate (7-14 m. p. h.) winds. Water surface calm to barely choppy. No strong winds, no huge waves, no lightning. The boat did not run aground or bang into another boat or a hidden snag or sink or capsize or explode. But two men died!

In a random search through the boating accident report files of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission for the years 1968, 1969 and 1972 I found only two storm-related mishaps. I looked through perhaps 65

reports. Two out of 65 means only three percent of the incidents involved wrinkle-straightening wind, hair-soaking waves and lightning stabbing its bayonet into the flinching earth. Doubtless part of the reason for the lower death rate due to bad weather is that boaters are more aware of danger then.

**And the other 63 incidents?** They all occurred when the day was calling, "Come and find me!"—the kind of day in which the Abilene men lost their lives. The treacherous blue lady—blue water—usually kills on days when no one is thinking about dying.

That's much of the reason people do die!

When the blue lady is dressed in her formal gown, boatmen are in a relaxed frame of mind as they dine on the banquet she has prepared. No thoughts of danger disturb the peace. The wind brushes their face, musses hair like a playful uncle. Problems like the whining wife, absentee husband and car payments are borne away on the wind's strong arms. But while devouring the repast the hostess has prepared, skippers must keep an eye on her. Drunken horseplay, break-neck speeds on turns, overloading and falls overboard can change the beautiful waitress to a cackling, toothless old crone serving only death.

**Can blue sky kill?**

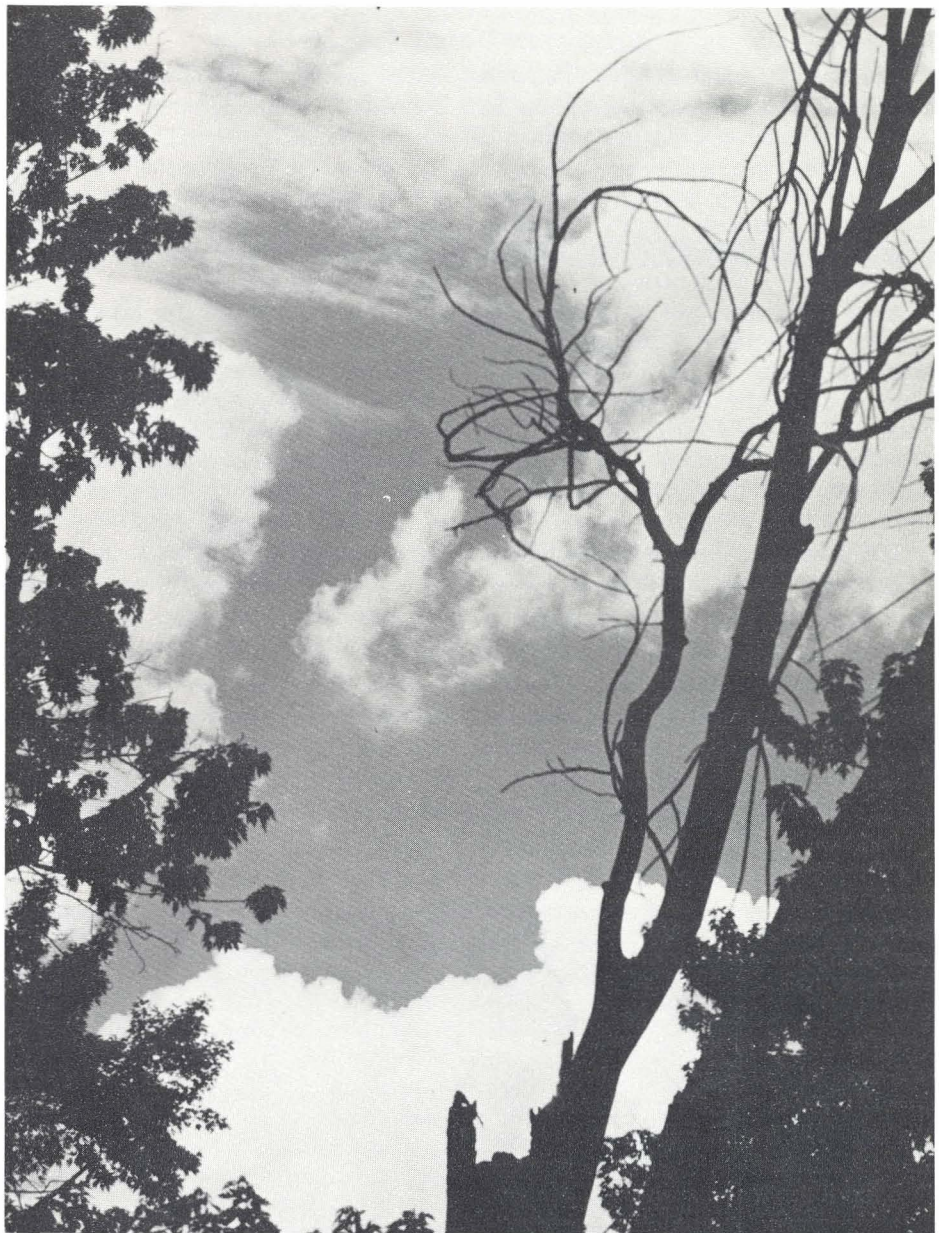
She can.

She is the second blue lady of treachery for boaters.

While storms account for only three percent of boating calamities, they can tear a 19-foot craft to kindling wood with merciless fury and blinding speed. It has been done.

In a holocaust of horror May 26, 1973, a tornado ripped through Cheney Reservoir west of Wichita. Three members of one family died when the waterspout, a tornado over water, crushed their fishing boat like an eggshell. The sadistic storm completely inundated them with waves two or four times as high as your house. Then the waterspout picked up the hapless craft 50 to 60 feet in the air and smashed it to pieces on the water as an enraged child would do to his toy when told "No more candy."

**Moments before the black snake**



All weather formations move from west to east around the globe at about 600 miles each 24 hours.

struck, the reservoir was glassy calm. Then, according to eyewitnesses, "there were waterspouts all over the place." Other boats were caught flat-footed on the lake, but were not so unlucky.

A severe thunderstorm which packs possibly tornadic winds nearly always gives warning. The signs vary, but the key word is "change." Any change in the weather conditions merits your instant attention. Blue Lady No. Two is warning you that her mood is no longer friendly toward you.

High cirrus clouds, looking like feathers and often called "horsetails," indicate this. When you gaze at these, beware that not far behind the hooves of these horses may be galloping hooded black riders.

**In the middle of a hot, sultry day,** concentrations of waterfowl like gulls and cormorants may begin streaming from the area. They seem to have some sort of built-in mechanism that warns them to flee. You should, too—quite soon.

The wind may be blowing hard all day and abruptly stop.

It may be a gentle breeze that begins whooping across the lake.

Clouds may come rolling from the northwest or southwest, complaining in the distance like farmers before a tax meeting.

The wind may change directions and stop altogether. That is the calm before the catastrophe. When the winds die in a flash, scam!

After the wind has submitted his seeming retirement, lightning usually starts popping. These tongues of fire darting from the sky are nothing to fool with. Cecil Carrier, KARD-TV's weatherman (Channel 3 in Wichita) told me air temperature around a lightning bolt ranges from 10,000 to 18,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That compares with water's boiling temperature of 212 degrees. Fifty yards, Cecil said, is about the minimum safe distance from a lightning blast. Aluminum boats are better conductors of electricity, Carrier explained, and would send the charge down to the water. Wood or fiberglass hulls would

be blown up because they give no conduction.

The danger to boats from lightning is great. Besides water being a better conductor of electricity than land, water is a flat or plane surface. There are no hills or valleys as on land to partially shield you. That means that in a boat on water, you are automatically the highest point.

If you are not off the lake by the time the wind comes out of its short-lived retirement, you are in serious trouble. Some idea of your predicament can be seen from this example.

If you are one-half mile from shore, your top speed may very well be 1½ m. p. h. In a storm throbbing with power-mad wind. That means it will take you 20 minutes to reach land. By that time, you may be learning quickly what it's like to be a muskrat.

And, as Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission's Boating Coordinator Ollie Gasswint says, "The typical rowboat and john boat should not be on open water with wind speed

more than seven m. p. h., even with a motor. The average Kansas afternoon wind is 10-15 m. p. h.!" Even on nice days, you in small craft are exceeding your boat's capabilities if only a friendly breeze is blowing.

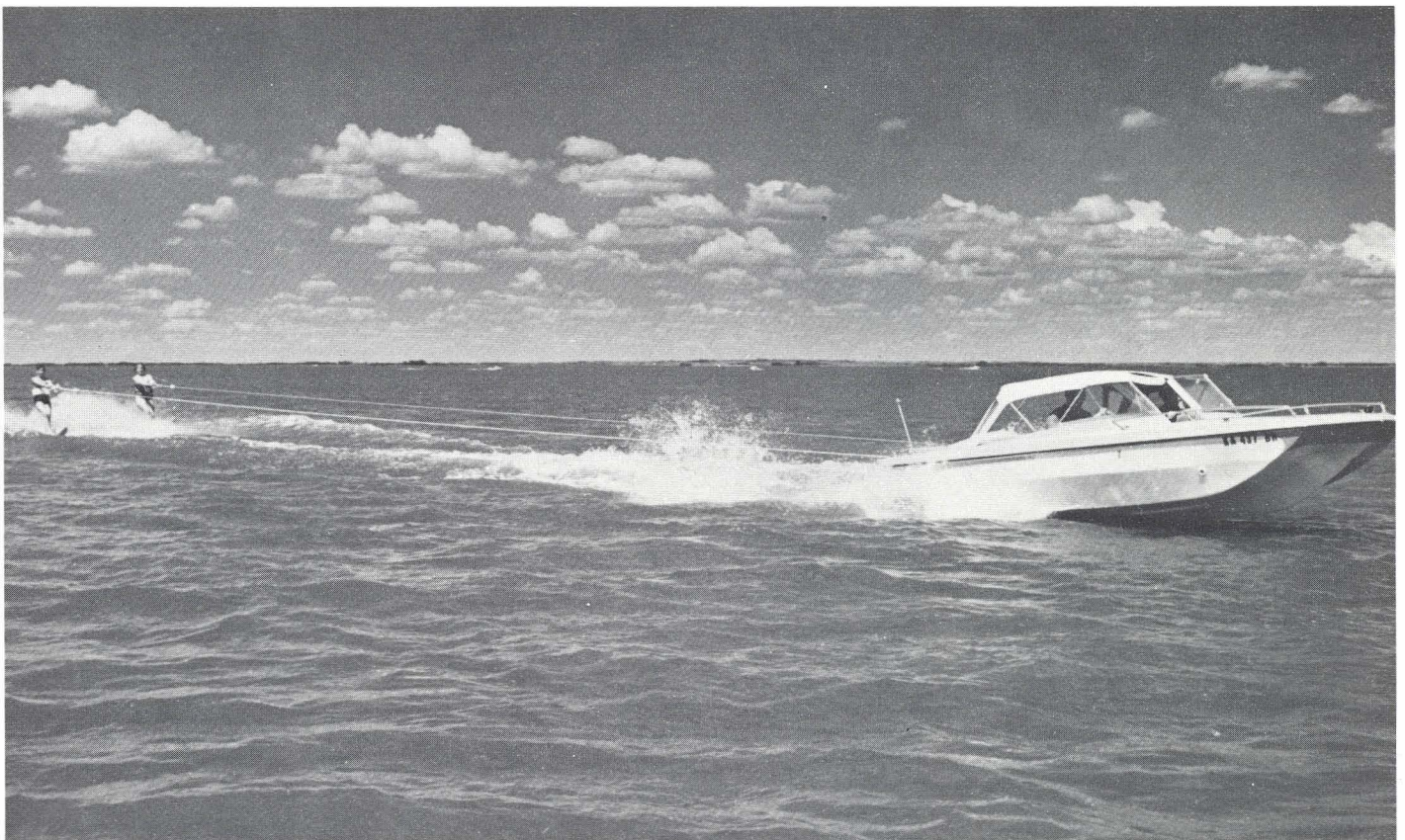
One of the trump cards you can hold in his high-stakes game is your friend with the wide-open mouth, the transistor radio. Area stations give forecasts every hour or less.

Two other advantages of Kansas boating is that you are almost never out of sight of other boaters and never out of sight of land. That is not true in the Great Lakes, for example.

However, let's say you forgot your radio. Let's say you ignored the weather signs. Other boats have gone in, and you're out there wondering why.

Or, let's say you have your radio but the area stations have signed off; only KOMA in Oklahoma City and WBAP in Dallas-Fort Worth are talking to you. They just don't help much in Kansas weather, and it is mighty lonely. What should you watch for?

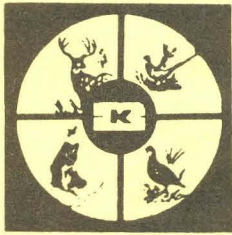
**One advantage of Kansas boating is that you're seldom out of sight of other boaters.**



# KANSAS FISH & GAME

## NEWS

P.O. BOX 1028  
PRATT, KANSAS 67124

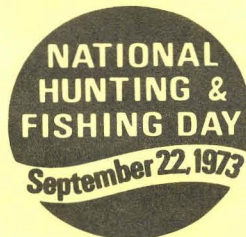


EDITOR'S NOTE: The following news items have been condensed from the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission's weekly news release. Compiled by the Information-Education Division the release is mailed to news media throughout the state. In coming months, we'll select items of interest for inclusion in this news insert.

News contact: Ross Harrison

Phone— 316/672-6473

RELEASE \_\_\_\_\_



### 1973 KANSAS HUNTING SEASONS SET

PRATT--Hunting seasons for upland game birds and hunting and trapping seasons for furbearers were set recently by the five-man board of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, which approved complete recommendations of staff biologists.

Pheasant season will be Nov. 10 through Jan. 31 and have a daily bag limit of four cocks, possession limit of 12 on or after the third day of hunting.

Quail season will be Nov. 10 through Jan. 31 with a daily bag of eight and possession limit of 24 birds on or after the third day.

Greater and lesser prairie chicken seasons are the same, Nov. 10 through Dec. 9 each having a daily bag limit of two and possession limit of six on or after the third day. Greater prairie chickens, however, can be hunted only in the area east of U.S. 81 and I-35W. Lessers will be legal only in the southwest portion of the state bounded by U.S. 50 on the north and U.S. 281 on the east.

Shooting hours for all species are ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. The 1973 season will be the last year in which hunters will be required to purchase the \$1 upland bird stamp along with their hunting license to hunt these upland game birds.

The trapping season established for furbearers except otter, swift fox, black-footed ferret and beaver is Nov. 20 through Feb. 15. Beaver trapping season will be Jan. 1, 1974 through Feb. 15. There is no open season on swift fox, otter or black-footed ferret.

The Commission set a hunting season on all furbearers except otter, swift fox, black-footed ferret, beaver, mink, muskrat and weasel of Oct. 1 through Feb. 28. There is no closed season on striped skunk. The furbearer hunting season will not take affect until Jan. 1, 1974 which means raccoon, opossum and other furbearers covered by the hunting season will remain open until Feb. 28.

###

### TAKES STAND ON TRAPPING CONTROVERSY

PRATT--In the wake of a growing negative opinion by some small but vocal organizations on the trapping of furbearers, the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission has adopted a strong position statement, supporting trapping as a valuable tool of wildlife management.

-more-

Missourians nearly lost their trapping privileges last year due to the efforts of some animal protectionists and the state of Florida already has banned steel traps. According to the position statement, such reactions have come about through a lack of understanding of biological realities of furbearing animals.

The statement explains that furbearers, like other forms of wildlife, given adequate habitat will produce an annual surplus, but the surplus cannot be stockpiled. If not harvested, the surplus will be lost to natural causes or it will attempt to relocate in other areas possibly conflicting with agriculture and other resources.

Specific examples were made of the muskrat, beaver and coyote where if trapping were totally prohibited, these animals could cause serious social and economic harm.

The three-page position statement points out, "If furbearer harvest by trapping or other means would be prohibited, the resource would not benefit, but to the contrary would undoubtedly suffer." It says such prohibition drastically would reduce support for furbearer management programs because the public is generally reluctant to finance programs which do not offer benefits in return.

Prohibition of trapping has been fostered as a moral issue rather than one based on logical resource management, says the statement. But because trapping furbearers is indeed a valuable management tool, the statement says, it should be left to the trapper, not the law, to decide whether trapping conflicts with personal ethics.

###

#### FISHING MAY STOP DUE TO SNAGGERS

PRATT--Consideration is being given to close waters to fishing just below the dams of several northeastern Kansas reservoirs, announced the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

The move would be in reaction to outbreaks of the illegal practice of snagging fish in these tail waters. Reports from area game protectors indicate snaggers are numerous and are interfering with legal bait fishermen. Snaggers catch fish by dragging hooks through the water and hooking fish in the body instead of the mouth. Snagging is legal in Kansas only on a short stretch of the Neosho River just below Chetopa Dam, and only when the area is posted by the Commission as being open to snagging. Only rough fish, including paddlefish are allowed to be snagged.

Because it is difficult to catch illegal snaggers, about the only recourse is to close the popular snagging areas to fishing temporarily, according to Assistant Director Fred Warders. He said legal fishermen would soon begin to police their own ranks and drive the snagger out of business so these good fishing areas could remain open to the fair sportsman.

###

#### ANTELOPE INCREASING IN NUMBER

PRATT--Antelope of western Kansas increased in number in 1972 according to studies by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

It is estimated that antelope in Kansas numbered about 650 last year, a 15 per cent hike over 1971. The investigating biologist, Bill Hlavachick, determined the increase by counting the percentage of fawns in a large, representative sample of antelope in Wallace County.

According to Hlavachick, Kansas antelope have been increasing at better than a 15 per cent clip through the last five or six years. With the fawns making up about 30 per cent of the population for the last three years, he said it appears the herd is increasing at a strong and steady rate.

Nearly all antelope in this state are located in Wallace County, lying against the Colorado line. A few, 60 or so, are in neighboring Logan County, and there could be upwards of 100 antelope in Barber and Comanche Counties, southcentral Kansas, according to landowner reports.

Hlavachick said plans are still being considered about whether some western antelope may be trapped and transplanted to the Flint Hills in eastern Kansas. Plans also are on the drawing boards, he added, to possibly recommend to the Fish and Game Commissioners a limited antelope hunting season in the future.

###

#### FISH CALLING COSTS \$500

INDEPENDENCE--An old fashioned crank telephone and three flathead catfish cost three would-be fishermen a total of \$500 here recently in the City Court of Independence.

Kenneth Brannon, 30, Topeka, Ronald D. Whistler, 21, rural Elk City, and Rex Perdue 38, Denver, Colo., paid for their illegal fishing tactics in Judge Richard Thompson's court after being apprehended by two Kansas game protectors May 27.

Game Protectors Verle Warner, Independence and Don Clarke, Yates Center nabbed four men in their effort at Elk City Reservoir during routine surveillance. The fourth man, Nicholas White, 23, LaCygne, had his case continued to June 26.

Brannon was fined \$150 on counts of illegal fishing methods and possession of an illegal fishing device. Perdue and Whistler received the same penalties as Brannon, but they didn't have a fishing license so were charged an extra \$25 apiece.

Confiscated along with the flatheads which weighed 31, 25 and 2 pounds was the group's 14-foot aluminum fishing boat and a 6 h.p. outboard. They had used the crank telephone to generate electricity and stun the flatheads, making them rise to the surface.

###

#### SQUIRREL SEASON OPENS JUNE 1

PRATT--The 1973 squirrel season in Kansas will open one-half hour before sunrise June 1, announced the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Continuing through Dec. 31, there will be a daily bag limit of five and a possession limit of 10, just like last year. Shooting hours will be from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Game Chief, Lee Queal, Pratt, said the more than 42,000 Kansans who hunt squirrels should notice little difference in numbers available from last year. He added that the Kansas squirrel population is an under-harvested resource and hunters could take more advantage of the fine sport and good eating squirrels provide.

Of the two species of squirrels in Kansas, the fox squirrel is abundant in nearly all parts of Kansas. The gray squirrel is limited to eastern counties where heavier hardwood timber predominates.

###

#### ILLEGAL DEER MAKES BEEF LOOK CHEAP

PRATT--Beef is cheap....compared to what seven men recently paid for venison, and all they wound up with was the bill, not the meat!

In two separate deer poaching cases, four men of Lakir and three from Elmdale were fined a total of almost \$3,100 for three deer they shot out of season.

-more-

Dave Gentry, game protector of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission for Chase and Lyon Counties, with the aid of the Chase County Sheriff's Department, nabbed Henry R. McClellan, 42, Vernon R. Lawrence, 24, and Roger Wayne Henderson, 20, all of Elmdale, with two whitetail deer April 6.

George L. Imthurn, probate judge of Chase County, April 17 fined each of the violators \$350 plus \$9.50 court costs. Imthurn also revoked McClellan's hunting license. Gentry acted on a tip from the sheriff's office and arrested the trio with the deer buried beneath straw in the back of their pickup.

Game Protector Bruce Peters whose territory is Hamilton, Kearny and Stanton Counties, apprehended Dale Yount, Jr., 19, Danny Harris, 22, Harold Urie, 28, and Don Bemis, 28 all of Lakin, March 28. All four were charged with illegal possession of deer meat taken out of season. Thirty-one packages of meat from one deer were recovered from the homes of the four men as evidence.

Kearny County Probate Judge Patricia L. Jones fined each of the four men \$500, but suspended \$400 of the fine provided they have no court violations for the next year. Each paid costs of \$10. Peters said the deer meat will be given to Cookson Hill Childrens Home, Syracuse.

###

#### MORE STRIPERS BROUGHT TO KANSAS

PRATT--Half a million striped bass fry were brought into Kansas from South Carolina recently by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Verl Stevens, Pratt, supervisor of hatcheries, picked up the fry from the Monck's Corner State Fish Hatchery in the eastern state, one of the few artificial nurseries in the country which produces enough stripers for distribution to other states.

The young stripers are now in rearing ponds where they will grow to fingerling size for subsequent stocking in public fishing waters.

###

#### 1973 DEER SEASONS SET

PRATT--Western Kansas deer hunters will get a season four days longer and almost 900 more deer hunting permits will be granted statewide this fall, announced the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

In establishing the 1973 Kansas deer seasons, April 6, the board of commissioners of the FF&G fully adopted recommendations of big game biologist Bill Peabody, Emporia. Peabody said significant changes from last year's season include 895 more permits to be issued, for a total of 8,960, and a statewide nine-day firearm season, Dec. 1 through Dec. 9. Last year the season was nine days in the eastern two-thirds of the state and five days in the west.

Peabody noted deer production in Kansas has been excellent and said the more liberal season is needed in many areas to hold deer populations in check. This is necessary, he said, to keep road-killed deer and crop damage complaints to a minimum. Peabody estimated between 3,200 and 3,400 deer will be harvested by hunters this fall, compared to just under 3,000 last year.

A split archery deer season was set to be Oct. 1 through Nov. 24, and Dec. 15 through Dec. 31. The split season, used before in 1970, came about due to complaints by firearm hunters that archers were spooking deer away from their opening-day hunting areas. There will be no limit to the number of archery permits available due to the lower level of participation and hunter success in the sport.

One new addition to archery regulations requires broadhead arrow tips be made entirely of steel. Peabody said some types of broadheads have plastic cores which shatter on impact and are poor substitutes for those made from steel.



Hunters will be able to obtain applications for deer permits from county clerks and some license dealers July 2 through July 25. Drawings for successful applications will be conducted Aug. 14.

###

#### NETTED DUCKS COST \$300

KANSAS CITY, KS.--Two of the three illegal fish netters of Missouri who had to give up their boat, motor, trailer and \$460.70 Feb. 27 after violating Kansas fishing laws had to pay out again April 5 in federal court here.

Besides being nabbed with more than 5,000 pounds of illegally taken fish, the trio also had 28 mergansers, a duck like bird under federal authority, which had become tangled in their nets at John Redmond Reservoir near Burlington. The federal violation cost Norman D. Carlson, 32, and his wife Joan, 34, of Missouri City, Mo., a total of \$300 in the courtroom of U.S. Magistrate Robert Miller. The two also received a six-month suspended jail sentence and were placed on probation for five years.

The third member of the party, Marvin Peek, 36, also of Missouri City, could not attend the federal court due to injuries suffered in a recent automobile crash. His case is being continued.

###

#### FF&G BOARD REORGANIZES

PRATT--Jack Haley, Minneapolis, was elected chairman of the five-man board of commissioners of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission April 6 at the organization's monthly meeting here. John Luft, Bison, was elected secretary, moving into Haley's old position.

Haley replaced outgoing commission chairman, Fred Sears of Colby, who served in the position for two years and has been on the commission since 1969. Haley has been on the Commission since 1970 and Luft since 1972. Other members of the commission are Bill Fowler, Weir, appointed in 1968 and Art Hanson, Bonner Springs, appointed in 1973.

###

#### KANSAS DEER PLACE ONE, TWO NATIONALLY

TOPEKA--An archer from Maple Hill has taken top place in the 1973 National Big Buck Contest sponsored by American Bowhunter magazine. Robert Hack's big whitetail buck topped all others in the nation in the yearly contest with a score of 181½ points.

To make the story even better for Kansans, second place in the contest went to Roger Ray, Milan, who's big whitetail scored 176 1/8.

The double victory for Kansas archers in the nationwide contest shows the Sunflower State is a hot spot for trophy bucks. This past season, 16 per cent of Kansas archers bagged deer. That figure is one of the highest success rates in the nation.

Scoring for the American Bowhunter contest is not the same as for Pope and Young Club competition. The Pope and Young Club is the keeper of official trophy records for bow and arrow hunting in North America. But both of these fine bucks should place well in this competition as well.

The Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission issues trophy deer certificates for bucks harvested both by archery and firearms. Deer hunters who took an exceptionally large trophy head are invited to register their deer with the Commission for state records. Complete information on the Kansas award program can be obtained by contacting the Information-Education Division, Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124

###

MORE TAGGED BLUE  
CATS IN MARION

PRATT--Close to 2,000 eight-inch blue catfish were lip-tagged and released in Marion Reservoir recently by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Bob Hartmann, Pratt, fisheries research supervisor, said the release is similar to the first such release last fall at Marion, when 2,000 tagged blue cats were stocked. Hartmann stressed that fishermen should follow instructions on the tag if they catch one of the fish and notify the FF&G of their catch.

According to Hartmann, the blue cat is very similar to the common channel catfish in color and physical features. He said some studies have indicated that blues may gain weight faster and bite more readily than channels, but there has been no work on them in Kansas to see if that's the case here.

Blue catfish have between 30 to 35 rays on the fin behind their belly, while channel catfish may have 24 to 29. He said this is one sure way to identify the fish.

Although present in the Kaw River and some other Kansas streams, the blue cat is scarce in Kansas. The tagging experiment is meant to find out how well they grow and reproduce in Kansas reservoirs and to shed some light on how well they bite for anglers.

###

KIRWIN WALLEYE  
TO DONATE YOUNG

PRATT--Kirwin Reservoir walleyes, at the hands of fisheries biologists, soon will donate between 10 to 12 million eggs to meet 1973 Kansas stocking needs of the popular game fish.

A crew of four Forestry, Fish and Game Commission fisheries men plan to begin trapping and "stripping" walleyes at the 5,000 acre reservoir in northwest Kansas the middle of next week.

Probably more than 1,000 walleyes, male and female, will be needed in a two-week period. With gentle pressure on the fish's abdomen, biologists will relieve females of their eggs and males of their milt. Frank Schryer, Hays, northwest fisheries supervisor of the FF&G, will be in charge of the annual operation.

According to Schryer, the eggs and milt gathered at lakeside will be mixed for fertilization then transported to the FF&G's walleye hatchery at Webster Reservoir. There, an estimated 100 quarts of eggs will hatch after 12 to 14 days.

Schryer said most of the 10 million or so fry, only three days old and one-eighth inch long, will be stocked in the newly built Melvern Reservoir in Osage County. Others will be retained and reared to a larger size, eventually to be stocked in other public waters.

Schryer added that the very abundant population of walleyes at Kirwin will not be affected by the absence of the eggs stripped by biologists. He said one five-pound female may carry as many as 125,000 eggs and it takes the milt of two or three males to assure fertilization of such a female under these artificial conditions.

Once relieved of their eggs and milt, the walleyes will be immediately returned to the reservoir, none the worse for wear, said Schryer.

###

TURKEY TRAPPING  
BEST IN YEARS

PRATT--A foul Kansas winter can chill the hunter's enthusiasm, but the recent snow and ice storm actually has turned out to be on his side, at least in one case.

-more-

The most successful wild turkey trap-transplant operation in years was made possible last weekend when storms covered normal turkey food sources. The big birds readily followed a path baited with grain beneath the nets of two game biologists.

Bill Peabody, Emporia, and Bill Hlavachick, Hays, biologists of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission secured 46 wild turkeys with one drop of their special net near Medicine Lodge. All they needed to fill their quota for transplanting was 26, so 20 turkeys had to be released at the trap site.

Thirteen turkeys, 10 females and three males, woke up the next morning near Howell, 100 miles from their home. A similar group was offered a new residence south of Milan, about 70 miles from Medicine Lodge. They came from a flock of more than 80, which reportedly doubled its numbers this past spring. More transplants from other flocks are being planned for western Kansas later this month.

Just prior to 1960, the only wild turkeys in Kansas were in the memories of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The FF&G established several small breeding flocks in the mid-1960s with birds obtained from Texas and Oklahoma. After eight years of trap-transplant projects, turkey range has increased an untold number of times and their numbers have increased 10 to 15 times.

Peabody and Hlavachick said they will have a better account of turkey populations with the completion of the winter flock count in February. And they are optimistic about the wild turkey resource for Kansas sportsmen.

The pair said they plan to recommend to the Commission later this spring the setting of a "limited, gobbler-only spring season for 1974."

Peabody explained some the reasons why a limited hunting season may be beneficial for the turkeys in Kansas.

"With the populations growing unchecked for the past 10 years, we are finding flocks are becoming overpopulated with old toms," he said. "Other states have found turkeys will reproduce at a faster clip and have better offspring when some of these older males are harvested, leaving the younger, better able toms for more productive breeding."

Hlavachick added, "of course the turkey hunting season would be tightly controlled and closely watched so there will be no chance of an overharvest. We envision possibly a permit type system such as we use for deer hunting."

Unmolested for their entire modern life in Kansas there is some concern that turkeys may be on the verge of losing some of their "wildness" which makes them such an excellent but difficult game bird to pursue.

Hunting would help keep turkeys more in the wild state and away from relying on domestication for survival, according to the biologists. And they said hunting would keep flock sizes to a level at which diseases would pose much less a threat to their numbers. They said, for example, it would be much better to have 100 flocks of 15 than 15 flocks of 100.

###

#### REGIONAL OFFICES SELECTED

PRATT--Addresses for the six new regional offices of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission today were announced by Robert Ward, chief of administration of the FF&G.

Ward said contracts for the Manhattan and Dodge City offices are in the process of being approved by state officials, but he listed the addresses along with the other four office sites: Manhattan, 215 South Sethchild Road; Concordia, 135 West 8th St.; Colby, 890 South Range; Dodge City, 714 Second Avenue; Newton, 204 West Sixth; and Chanute, 222 West Main.

Regional supervisors of fisheries, game, field services and law enforcement soon will be located in each of the offices to provide a more local contact and more efficient operation in their regions of the state.

###

LICENSE SALES DROP

PRATT--Sale of 1972 hunting and fishing licenses were down just slightly from 1971, reports the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

With all license sales tallied, it was revealed about 746,000 were sold in 1972, generating about \$2.3 million. In 1971, about 760,000 licenses were sold for about \$2.4 million.

Robert Ward, chief of administration of the FF&G, accounted for the five per cent decrease, stating that last year was the first year persons 65 years and older did not have to buy hunting and fishing licenses because of a law passed by the previous year's Legislature.

###

SASNAK BEGINS WITH  
95 NEW EMPLOYEES

PRATT--Hiring and orientation of 95 new employees by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission will be the first major step to implement Project SASNAK.

As approved by the 1973 Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Docking April 2, Project SASNAK is the bold five-year plan of the Commission to vastly improve hunting, fishing and boating in Kansas.

Commission staff members now are conducting interviews to fill the openings including 53 positions for fish and game biologists, thought to be the most massive hiring of biologists in one state at one time in the entire country. Most of the new employees will report to work the second week in August to begin about two months of training and familiarization with their new areas.

By next spring, Game Chief Lee Queal said the 22 new game biologists will begin working with private landowners to aid in developing portions of their land into good wildlife habitat. Other activities in the game division will include intensive habitat development to improve wildlife populations on the more than 200,000 acres of public hunting lands.

Fisheries Chief Roy Schoonover said 20 of the 31 new fisheries biologists hired under SASNAK will be stationed one at each of the major Kansas reservoirs. The reservoir biologists, along with regional fisheries personnel will develop ideas and methods to improve angling in all public fishing waters of the state, including municipal and county lakes. Some of their first duties will be to determine existing fisheries resources through test netting and the rate of harvest by interviewing fishermen. In addition they will study and plan the development of presently limited species such as walleye, northern pike, blue catfish and others.

Boating Coordinator Oliver Gasswint reports that the three new Courtesy Water Patrol crews also will be hired this summer, but that full-time water surveillance and educational services will not get underway until next year. Gasswint is considering sending the crew to the National Boat Safety School in Virginia later this year for intensive training in all phases of boating and water safety.

One of the five goals of SASNAK was implementation of the statewide Hunter Safety Program. Since March more than 2,000 volunteer instructors have been certified and almost 10,000 students graduated. Hunter Safety Administrator Royal Elder said the program is going better than anyone had believed possible, mostly due to the cooperation of Kansas sportsmen who have volunteered their efforts.

###



No matter how safe and serene the weather appears to be—wear a lifejacket at all times.

Basically, the same conditions that would drive you off the water during the day. Any change in wind direction or velocity, the flicker of lightning in the west or south mean sound the retreat. The far-off snarl of thunder should be enough to start you reeling in your lines.

Now the blue ladies are throwing everything they've got at you. It's a full-fledged Kansas thunderstorm. Have all persons sit or lie down in the boat. Have them move cautiously to the rear as this raises the bow to help it ride over the waves. Point your

bow into the wind at a slight angle. Slow down motor speed. If your engine sputters to a halt, grab the oars. Throw together a sea-anchor from a length of rope and a bucket or several items of clothing. This will produce enough drag to keep the bow pointed into the waves. Wind, waves, and rowing will get you to shore.

If you do everything right and still end up in the drink, stay with the boat. It will probably float, and you are easier to see hand-onto an upset boat than if you're somewhere in the inky blackness.

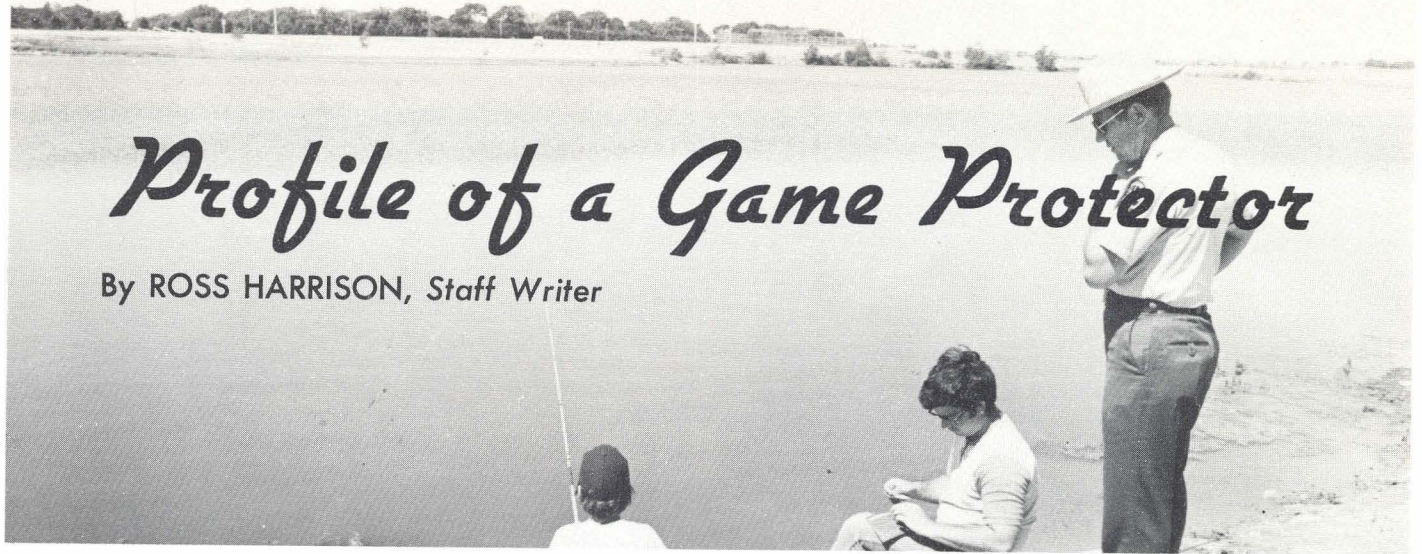
The Fish and Game will publish a manual for Kansas boaters by spring 1974. When it comes out, be sure to get a copy. It will have a more comprehensive treatment than we can give it here.

In spite of everything said, boating fatalities are steadily spiraling downward and ranks among the safest of sports. Love the ladies of blue, enjoy them but understand their changing moods. Remember that true love involves respect. Respect what both can do.

If you don't, it may be the last boating mistake you ever make.

# Profile of a Game Protector

By ROSS HARRISON, Staff Writer



**T**HEY ARE COPS, teachers, speakers, game-counting, net-pulling, backcountry-driving men in green uniforms and pickups with long antennas.

They number 65 in Kansas; some cover one county, others as many as four. They are the game protectors of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, each an individual in his own right, but together they share a common profile.

What does it take to be a game protector? That's a question asked by scores of young and not-so-young men, most of whom should have first asked: What is it *like* to be a game protector?

"It's like not knowing what a straight eight-hour working day and 40-hour week is," retorts Gene Hitt, Pratt, who covers Pratt, Kiowa and Barber counties. Not until April did Kansas game protectors get a five-day instead of a six-day work week. Still many find their one or two days off (usually not taken on weekends) are spent picking up a road killed deer or addressing a cub scout pack.

"It's like having a sore back all your life," offers Paul Lies, Hutchinson, with Reno County in his charge. A game protector can easily rack up up 40,000 miles in one year over some of the roughest Kansas roads.

"It's like not knowing whether some violator is going to cry, hit you with his fishing pole, or pull a knife when you write him up," says Dean Deutsch, Larned, responsible for Pawnee, Staf-

ford and Edwards counties. Last year Kansas game protectors issued about 2,600 tickets. Nearly all those charged plead guilty. While very few game protectors are assaulted by fish and game law violators, there's always a chance, especially around highly populated areas.

**But there are some roses, too.**

"Most of the time I have the freedom to decide how to run my day," says Pat Bryan, Shawnee Mission, with Johnson and Wyandotte counties as his territory. After a five-week course in the Kansas Law Enforcement Academy, Hutchinson, and a period of in-service training with a veteran game protector, the men soon come to know their territories better than their bosses and are given a degree of liberty on how best to serve their public.

Paul Miller, Randolph, Riley County game protector, adds, "It's generally pretty easy to get out of bed in the morning knowing I'm going to spend much of my time outside. Offices always did bother me." While there is some record keeping and form filling activities involved in his work, a game protector has to spend the bulk of his hours out-of-doors where the people and the action are.

**And there's one more thing** from Richard Harrold, Garden City, game protector for Finney, Haskell and Gray counties. "There's a deep rooted satisfaction I get from knowing that a game protector's job is a vital part of any successful fish and wildlife conservation program in any state." Law enforcement was one of the first tools of wildlife management and continues holding a strong place today.

The official job description sheet on game protectors points out three major work responsibilities. Enforcement of fish and game laws and surveillance of their assigned area is of course their main duty, but other obligations are no less vital.

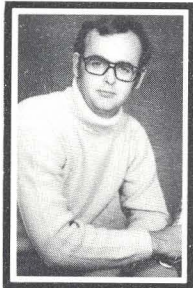
Another responsibility includes cooperating with fish and wildlife biologists in field research. This may find a game protector making prairie chicken or waterfowl counts. He may assist in a dove banding project, or even help pull a seine.

**Since game protectors are** more in contact with the public than most other employees of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, public relations has become an increasingly important job for them.

A general rundown of time spent in each of these three areas is roughly: 50 to 60 percent law enforcement; 15 to 20 percent public relations; and 15 to 20 percent cooperating with biologists and other agencies.

To perform these duties requires some common qualities amongst the ranks of the game protectors. Excellent physical stamina and no handicaps are necessary to meet one required ability spelled out on their job description sheet: "Ability to work long hours under difficult and arduous conditions."

**The only educational requirement** is graduation from high school. But with the great number of men interested in becoming game protectors, more jobs are being filled by men with college degrees and with biology or law enforcement backgrounds. An example is taken from the Kansas Civil Service records.



Harrison

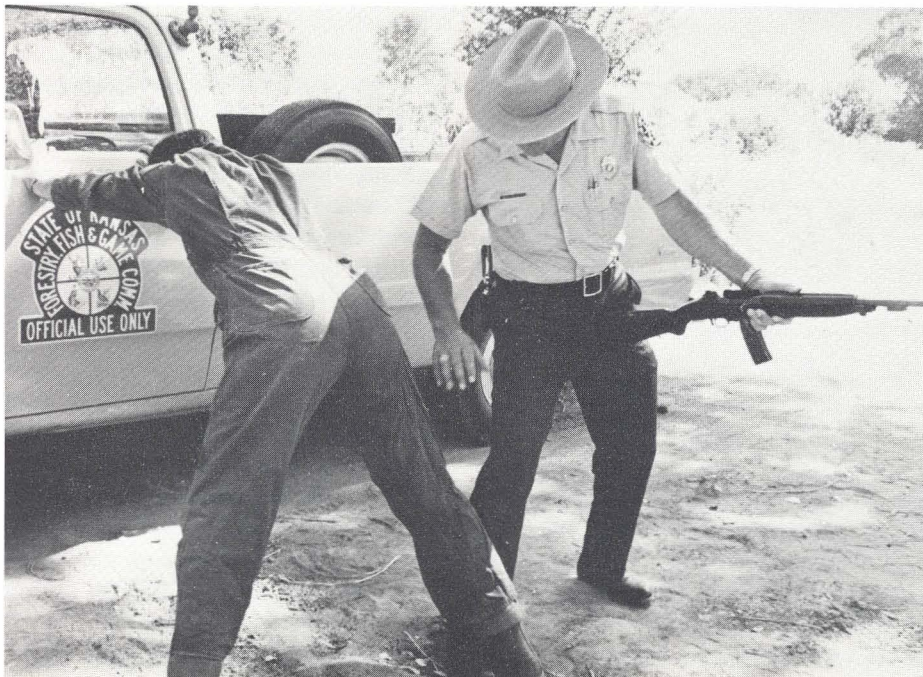
Last year more than 300 persons took the qualifying test for game protectors. To fill just two vacancies, 10 off the top of the 300 were personally interviewed by Forestry, Fish and Game Commission officials. And of those top 10, seven held college degrees, most being a master of science. The two men hired had B. S. degrees. About 10 of the presently employed game protectors have at least a bachelor of science degree and 15 to 20 have completed a year or more of college.

However, not having a degree won't rule out a prospective employee. The foremost consideration is the man's willingness to work, his overall attitude, a generous dose of good common sense and an ability to meet and work with the public.

Another preferred but not required attribute is a background in law enforcement and/or some work that has required a great deal of public contact.

It takes about a year for a new game protector to be trained, equipped and become familiar with his territory enough so that he is efficiently performing his duties. It stands to reason then a highly sought after trait in a prospective game protector is his de-

**Apprehending fish and game law violators is one of the more dangerous aspects of a game protector's job.**



Ken Stiebben



Game protectors occasionally pick up orphaned animals. Here, Ernie Huslig, Great Bend, and Dean Deusch, Larned, deliver a pair of orphaned fawns to the Britt Spaugh Zoological Park in Great Bend.

sire to remain in the position for some time. If his intention is just "to get his foot in the door" for something else, he should look elsewhere for a job. Say that after a year a game protector decides to transfer to another job or quit, it'll take another year to replace him, and you've lost two entire years.

The single most important influence on a game protector's activities is the season of the year; boating checks in the summer, hunter checks in the fall, game counting in the spring, and so on.

Let's take a typical November week and follow his steps for a better idea.

**It's Monday morning, 8:00.** There he is, still sawing logs in a comfortable bed. It's his day off and so is Tuesday. Unlike the typical worker, few game protectors get the weekend to themselves. Most sportsmen take to the fields on the weekend for relaxation, so the game protector usually has to be there to work.

Monday may go pretty good for him. Although he is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, there are some days he can spend with his family. Tuesday, however, he has to appear before the local Rotary Club to explain a few new wrinkles in the up-



Hours of surveillance are often included in the game protector's long day.

coming pheasant season. If he's lucky, he may wrangle a couple hours off later in the work week to make up for the time off he missed.

Wednesday morning he begins the week driving to a wooded river bottom 40 miles from home, where there had been reports of some too-early pheasant shooting. After scouting the area he discovers some recently fired shotgun shell hulls. They are marked "slug." A bright shiny object catches the sun and he stoops to retrieve a .30-06 empty cartridge. "Could be deer hunters," he says almost out loud.

A few discussions with local landowners reveal no additional information so he leaves them with, "Call me if you hear anything else." Back in his pickup his radio crackles, "Ten forty to ten sixty-one." He responds and is directed to assist a fellow game protector in the next county 35 miles down the road. He's hungry at 1 p. m., but can't eat. A possible drowning case needs his attention more than a hamburger.

Three hours after the search for a possible drowned 11-year-old boy in a 10,000-acre reservoir by the two game protectors and half a dozen sheriff's officials, the kid comes walking out of a nearby woods still chasing the dog he earlier followed into the woods. The searchers are too relieved to be mad. Clock shows 5 p. m., time to head for food, then home, 70 miles away. He makes it back in time for "Dr. Welby," but at 10:30 p. m. he's out again, tagging and making a report on a road killed deer.

Thursday's calendar shows he is to meet a new biologist and show him around the area. Looks like an easy day. He wound up responding to only two other calls and he was home again by 5:45 p. m.

Friday morning at six his telephone got him out of bed and he was out like a flash again to that possible deer poaching area 40 miles away. A rancher heard some shots and wanted quick action. He got it, but the violators were not to be found.

A greasy breakfast later finds the game protector driving a dusty road with no one to talk to, and no one giving him orders, save a scratchy sounding two-way radio. He spots some quail picking grit, a skunk slipping into a hole and a wedge of geese flying out for their morning feed. He stops and checks an old couple fishing near a bridge. No fish, no fishing licenses (they were over 65), but some good conversation. Friday afternoon he spends still driving along through his territory.

Saturday by 10 a. m. the game protector has ticketed two boys, 14 and 15, for shooting quail out-of-season. They are good boys, but their parents just never taught them right, he figures. The judge will give them a theme to write and scold their parents. Next time if may be different.

His radio blurts out that another early-season hunting party may be in violation 20 miles south. A farmer had called the sheriff's department which then relayed the call. He makes it in 15 minutes. Nabs three locals, two of whom he knows. They've got two quail and a hen pheasant. Each of the three drew \$50 fines a week later and he doesn't plan to play poker with those two friends again.

Sunday morning he takes the initiative and arrives at that possible popular deer poaching site. For the first time in two months he's pulled a good one he thinks, eyeing two figures pulling a carcass from a thicket. They don't see him until the spiked buck is thrown in their pickup.

Approaching the violators, he senses trouble. Sure enough, they try a quick exit, but he pulls the driver from the cab before the ignition kicks in. The two turn docile, give up their firearms and deer. They receive two tickets instead.

It's been quite a week. Maybe he'll be able to take his daughter fishing in the afternoon. The day stayed quiet and the sun kept its warmth so he did.

Out on the lake one of the guys he busted for the quail and pheasant violation just two days ago motors over to his boat, no trace of a smile on his face.

"It this how you earn your pay?"



# Is There a New Awareness?

By ROSS MANES, Staff Writer

**F**ACT! Young people today are more aware of what's going on in their environment than ever before. Students from elementary level through college are cognizant and concerned about litter, air pollution, water pollution and the general degradation of the environment. You can bet your boots that the ecology symbol wasn't dreamed up by a member of the over-the-hill gang.

American youth is becoming the voice of conscience for this country. They speak openly about the causes of environmental



Manes

problems, and sometimes march and picket for protection of our natural resources. Occasionally they get into things even more physical. Individuals have initiated projects as uncomplicated as collecting and selling aluminum containers, and as involved as maintaining a continued surveillance of potential pollution sources. In groups they have literally waded in to clean up streams, parks, roadways, and stretches of oil-soaked beach.

Where did it come from — this awareness—this concern for the environment? In part, it comes as a natural result of increasingly apparent pollution. It doesn't take much effort to understand a sign reading "CLOSED TO SWIMMING—POLLUTED WATER." The burning sensation that comes to the eyes, nose and throat when a large city has a temperature inversion is about as subtle as a sharp stick in the eye.

Advances in the communications media; radio, television, and newspapers, have made a major contribution to the "new awareness." The news that a bunch of cats in some obscure Japanese village died from mercury poisoning just wouldn't have been news a few years back, and although tankers have been colliding with a variety of objects for a long time,

who ever heard of an oil-spill twenty years ago?

Schools are taking an increasingly active part in promoting understanding of the environment. Science classes are no longer devoted to the study of air, water, rocks, trees and animals in broad, general terms. Students now are urged to find out what's happening, see it first-hand, and understand how it affects them. Other classes are into ecology too. Current events and history students are encouraged to read accounts of actions affecting the environment, past and present. New terms, like environmental economics, are being introduced. Even speech and drama classes get into the picture. When assigned a project in mass communications, two students at French Junior High in Topeka wound up doing nine public service messages for a local radio station. The topic of the mes-

sages was, of course, clean up the environment.

School buses travel hundreds of miles on field trips that permit students to observe factories, laboratories, a woodland ecosystem, or a pollution-ravaged stream. Education will play an increasing part in creating an understanding of our natural surroundings. Organizations, such as the Kansas Advisory Council for Environmental Education and the federally funded Environmental Education demonstration Project are busily planning for the future.

Much of today's ecology movement is centered around a growing concern with litter. Our eyes and ears are constantly bombarded with messages designed to make us police ourselves and each other in the war on litter. Industries involved in the manufacture and use of metal containers have initiated programs encouraging us to recycle



Photos by Ken Stiebben

American youth is becoming concerned about this country's environmental problems.



The concern for litter may be getting in the way of more serious dangers like pollution and habitat destruction.

their product. Other industries, such as glass manufacturers and those building trash compactors, have sprung up to meet the growing demand for a litter-free environment. National organizations, such as Keep America Beautiful, are devoting endless hours and countless dollars to the fight.

The real significance of litter is that it indicates the lack of what has been termed an "environmental ethic." In more simple words, it shows that we have been content to play fast and loose with our natural surroundings for a long time. Well, the young ecologists are no longer content and they have responded in a predictable fashion. They have ganged-up, stood-up and cleaned-up in widespread areas. Preoccupied fathers have found themselves the subject of withering tongue-lashings by eight-year-old children, when they thoughtlessly discarded an empty cigarette pack or gum wrapper. It's wonderful. No one denies that a landscape free of litter's blight is a worthwhile goal.

The trouble is, this deep concern for litter may be getting in the way of more important things. If you ask

a group of elementary school kids to describe the "environmental crisis," many of them will start talking about litter. Much the same thing is true for large numbers of urban adults.

The truth is that litter, in itself, is not that big a problem. Oh sure, it's bad. It's unsightly and undesirable, but if people become so concerned with it that they start to ignore the more subtle but serious dangers of pollution and loss of habitat we're going to be in real trouble. Someone once pointed out, jokingly perhaps, that with a big enough pile of litter and a little top soil you can build a mountain. It is a fact that we now have golf courses and parks on old land-fill sites that were once nearly worthless for anything.

Fortunately, not all young ecologists have been blinded by smoke from the anti-litter fires. Many of them are aware that we can't keep polluting indefinitely and destroying wildlife habitat indiscriminately if we're going to have a quality environment. They are also aware that we can't simply shut down all polluting industries and kick society back into the horse and buggy days. They are learning that, with a strong push in the right direc-

tion, modern technology can reverse the trend toward a polluted earth. Many are planning and studying to do just that.

Unfortunately, with all the existing emphasis on ecology and environmental protection, with all the grand and grandiose plans for the future, there is still an area of glaring deficiency.

As a one-time science teacher, the author has perused a goodly number of junior high and high school text books. In researching this article, teacher manuals and student workbooks were reviewed for content dealing with wildlife. Several students and teachers were interviewed to determine what, if anything, was being taught about wildlife and wildlife habitat. The results were not encouraging.

While neither the literature review or the student/teacher samplings can be said to be anything like a representative cross-sample, one quickly develops a gut-feeling that wildlife conservation and management may be in serious trouble.

Although many of the newer textbooks contain relatively good sections on resource conservation and ecology,



Youngsters of all ages are becoming involved in the recycling of various containers like aluminum and glass.

and while better teachers are striving to reinforce the literature with enlightened teaching, wildlife is still taking a back seat. Very little is said about the importance of wildlife in our environment. Frequently, when reference is made to habitat or wildlife it is in terms of small "green belts" or parks, and in terms of remnant samples of animal species. The emphasis seems to be on making sure that enough protection exists to avoid extinction of the last representative of a plant or animal community, rather than insuring that species continue as a viable population.

Only rarely, usually in college-level wildlife courses, are animals considered as an essential element of man's ecosystem, and vice-versa. For example, this statement from a student workbook in current usage in Kansas: "When man kills the predators, he must begin to spend more and more time killing the deer, elk, rabbits, and mice that multiply and threaten the crops the predators need to protect." What it doesn't say, doesn't even imply, is that man is a predator in this ecosystem, and that if we are to maintain this tenuous thing we call the bal-

ance of nature under the onslaught of habitat destruction, man must fulfill his role of controlled predation.

There are individuals and groups active today who would have us abandon our role as a predator. Their doctrine is preservation, and it holds a dangerous appeal for some of the young ecologists. They can visualize a utopian condition where the lion and the lamb lie peacefully together. (Although preservationists don't seem to consider slaughter of domestic animals, including lambs, comparable to harvest of surplus wildlife.)

More and more often young people are being told that man should stop destroying wild animals. Let nature take care of things. What they aren't being told, in most cases, is that nature is the environment—the natural environment, and that if we want nature to take care of things, someone has got to take care of nature.

Yes, there is a new awareness. An awareness being born in the minds of a great mass of young Americans. An awareness that will be guided, or misguided. An awareness that it fraught with risk—and opportunity.



# Johnny Can't Go Hunting, Unless . . .

*If your boy is 16 years or less  
you'd better read this !!!*

By ROSS HARRISON,  
Staff Writer

**I**t WON'T BE too long before the doves are flying but some young man is crying because he can't go hunting with dad—that is unless his parents had enough foresight to sign him up in the new Kansas Hunter Safety Course.

Remember, it used to be that any youth younger than 16 years could hunt without a license. It used to be when you turned 16 all you had to do was buy a license at the nearest vendor. All that is just a memory, now.

For youth to hunt in Kansas today there's a little more required of them, thanks to the 1972 Kansas Legislature which made the following law: Anyone who did not reach 16 years by last July 1 must successfully complete the Kansas Hunter Safety Course to obtain a hunting license; and from July 1 onward, any youth younger than 16 (not required to buy a hunting license) must have in his possession the certificate of competency issued on successful completion of the course to hunt on lands other than his own.

In short, there are about 25,000



Kansas youth who must take the Hunter Safety Course before hunting seasons come this fall or they won't be able to hunt on lands other than their own! This will take about 2,000 volunteer instructors, donating their time to learn what to teach, then putting this information to use in the classroom.

The Kansas Hunter Safety Course is not just another formality, a restric-

tion, or a pain in the neck. It has been developed along the lines of the most modern, comprehensive hunter safety courses in the entire United States. The course should be one of the most enjoyable pre-hunting experiences Kansas youth have ever had the chance to enjoy. It doesn't cost a cent. But it does provide a wealth of useful information.

Basically there are five general



areas covered in the Hunter Safety Course:

1. Knowledge of guns and ammunition and how to handle them safely.
2. Hunter ethics.
3. Conservation and wildlife management.
4. Hunter responsibility.
5. First aid and survival.

Given the responsibility to develop and administer the Hunter Safety Course, the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission appointed Royal Elder as Hunter Safety Administrator late last fall. Elder, formerly of Manhattan, is a 13-year veteran game protector, serving most of his time in Riley County. Included in the list of special recognitions he has received, Elder was named Wildlife Officer of the Year in 1970 by the Shikar Safari Club International and in 1969 he received one of the seven Presidential citations issued in the United States by the National Water Safety Congress for his efforts in promoting water safety.

Previous to the new mandatory course, there were three organizations presenting voluntary courses to Kansas youth. The National Rifle Association, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Now, the NRA and NSSF have joined hands with the Commission so that all Kansas youth will receive the same basic instruction in a uniform manner. All instructors of the course have to become certified under the guidelines of the Forestry, Fish and Game to teach the course.

(See the special sections on Do You Want to Be a Certified Instructor? and If You Want to Hunt. . . .)

Of the five general areas covered by the course shown above, the first three were listed as requirements by the Legislature. Hunter responsibility, first aid and survival were necessary additions to the course, according to Elder.

The hunter responsibility section impresses upon youth the reasons why there are game laws, a little of what these laws are, and the responsibility that goes with carrying a gun as well as the student's responsibility to conserve wildlife.

First aid and survival were included because states such as Colorado and



Photos by Ken Stiebben

The first four hours of the Kansas Hunter Safety Course are devoted to instructions on parts, function and safe handling of firearms and ammunition. Without this course many young Kansans will have to sit home this season.

Utah have made these mandatory and Elder said that any student passing the Kansas Hunter Safety Course should be able to hunt in any other state in the country. Without covering these two topics our hunters could not hunt in these other states.

Elder also pointed out that the law requiring Kansas youth to take the course also says youth from out of state must have completed a similar course in their state to be eligible to hunt here.

The most exciting portion of the course, and probably the most unique in the United States, is the hunter ethics session. Many Kansas youth who have not had the opportunity to learn proper hunting ethics should gain a fresh outlook on respect for the landowner, respect for other hunters and respect for the game they hunt.

An incentive award goes along with the hunter ethics class. When a student completes the course, he is given a card. It is an incentive for him to show his appreciation to a landowner and prove to him that he does indeed respect his property.

After a special effort of appreciation

is made to a landowner, the student can offer his card to him. If he feels you should be recognized as an ethical hunter he will mail the card and a letter of explanation to the Pratt office of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission. The ethical young hunter then will receive a certificate suitable for framing for his efforts in addition to publicity of his accomplishments.

As laid out in the Instructors Manual, the Hunter Safety Course is designed for about eight hours of classroom time. Live firing is not mandatory, but Elder says he recommends it where experienced instructors and facilities are available.

The first four hours are devoted to instruction on parts, functions and safe handling of firearms and ammunition. Hunter ethics will take about one hour, so will conservation and wildlife management. Hunter responsibility and a special topic on safe hunting from boats will occupy a one-hour class and first aid and survival will take one hour together.

The Instructors Manual offers lessons on three additional topics, not

required, but which should be of interest and valuable use to some students. These include: archery safety, care of game in the field (including how to dress a deer), and procedures for live firing.

**Best student attitude**, test score and class attendance, there is one overriding major philosophy that will determine if a student passes the course: **WILL HE OR SHE BE A SAFE AND ETHICAL HUNTER?**

At the time of this printing, interested adults throughout the state of Kansas donating their time as volunteer instructors have been responsible for probably the most successful beginning a hunting safety course has ever enjoyed in the entire U. S. Their cooperation and dedication is sincerely appreciated by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission and should be recognized by all Kansas sportsmen.

### CAUSES OF HUNTER ACCIDENTS 1967-1972

Victim covered by shooter swinging on game .....	73		
Carrying loaded firearm in vehicle .....	41		
Shooter stumbled and fell .....	20		
Defective firearm .....	18		
Victim out of sight of shooter .....	16		
Crossing fence with loaded gun .....	13		
Victim moved into line of fire .....	10		
Unloading or loading gun .....	9		
Firearm fell from insecure rest .....	7		
Horseplay .....	7		
Trigger caught on brush or other object .....	7		
Victim mistaken for game .....	2		
Using gun as club .....	2		
Barrel obstruction .....	2		
Holding hand over muzzle .....	1		
Placing handgun in holster .....	1		
Ricochet .....	1		
Shooting trapped animal while holding trap .....	1		
Unknown .....	25		
			256
Injury Accidents .....	228	Self-inflicted .....	97
Fatal Accidents .....	28	Involving others .....	159
	256		256

### DO YOU WANT TO BE A CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR?

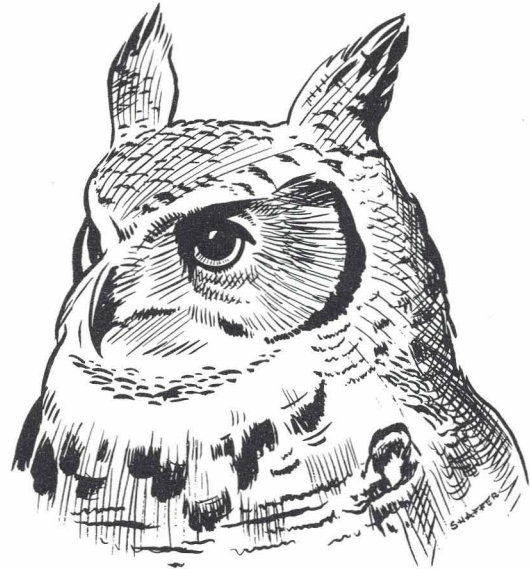
1. Notify your nearest Forestry, Fish and Game employee or the Pratt headquarters, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124—316-672-6473.
2. You will be informed of the nearest class to be held to certify instructors in your area. You may have to travel some distance to attend such a class.
3. Successfully complete the instructor certification class which probably will be administered by a Forestry, Fish and Game employee.
4. To retain your certification, you must conduct or assist in at least one class of students a year.
5. Plan with a couple other instructors in your area when and where to hold a class for students.
6. **VERY IMPORTANT!!!** Talk to your local newspaper man, radio and TV stations and have them publicize your coming class.
7. Request materials for an estimated size of your class from Royal Elder, Hunter Safety Administrator, Pratt Office.
8. Use your instructor's manual as a general course guideline.
9. Be accurate, be interesting, be firm.
10. Pass those students who you feel will be safe and ethical hunters.

### IF YOU WANT TO HUNT . . .

. . . and did not reach 16 years of age by July 1, then you must take the Kansas Hunter Safety Course.

1. If you have seen no publicity about a local course being offered, notify your nearest Forestry, Fish and Game employee or the Pratt headquarters, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124—316-672-6473.
2. Attend the nearest course in your area as soon as possible. **DON'T PUT IT OFF UNTIL HUNTING SEASON COMES OR YOU MAY BE OUT OF LUCK!!!!**
3. Study your student manual, attend every class, and pass the final test (which is easy for most students who have faithfully taken the course).
4. If you are too young to be required to buy a hunting license, you must keep the certificate of competency (awarded upon graduation) in your possession while hunting.
5. If you are 16 years old and required to buy a license, you must show your certificate of competency to the license vendor before he can sell you a license.
6. Put the knowledge of safe and ethical hunting you learned from the course to work for you and you'll find hunting a more enjoyable and pleasing experience.

**DON'T SHOOT**



**ALL HAWKS AND OWLS  
ARE PROTECTED BY**

**KANSAS LAW**

**KANSAS FORESTRY, FISH AND GAME COMMISSION**

