



JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1974

**KANSAS**  
**FISH & GAME**



BILL HANZLICK  
714 SECOND AVE BOX 77  
DODGE CITY KS 67801

# KANSAS FISH & GAME



January-February, 1974

Vol. 31, No. 1

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The Coyote Controversy by <i>Vic McLeran</i> ..... | 1  |
| Chain Saws Gone Wild by <i>Bill Scott</i> .....    | 6  |
| Turkey Hunting Tips by <i>Vic McLeran</i> .....    | 11 |
| <b>SASNAK</b>                                      |    |
| Ducks Unlimited by <i>Farrell Brewer</i> .....     | 15 |
| Why Hunting? by <i>Ross Manes</i> .....            | 19 |

## COVER PHOTOS

Front cover—Silhouetted against the western sky, a lone coyote begins his evening hunt. Ektachrome transparency by Vic McLeran.

Back cover—A young 'coon searches the shallows for crawfish. Ektachrome transparency by Vic McLeran.

### COMMISSIONERS

JACK HALEY, *Chairman* ..... Minneapolis  
 R. W. (BILL) FOWLER ..... Weir  
 JOHN LUFT ..... Bison  
 ART HANSON ..... Bonner Springs  
 FRED SEARS ..... Colby

### DIVISION CHIEFS

ROY SCHOONOVER ..... Fisheries  
 LEROY E. LYON ..... Information—Education  
 ROBERT WARD ..... Fiscal  
 WALTER HARRISON ..... Field Services  
 HAROLD LUSK ..... Law Enforcement  
 LEE QUEAL ..... Game

### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

RICHARD WETTERSTEN ..... Director  
 FRED WARDERS ..... Assistant Director

### MAGAZINE STAFF

VIC McLERAN ..... Editor  
 FARRELL BREWER ..... Staff Writer  
 ROSS HARRISON ..... Staff Writer  
 ROSS MANES ..... Staff Writer  
 BILL SCOTT ..... Staff Writer  
 GEORGE VALYER ..... Staff Writer  
 PAUL BOCQUIN ..... Staff Writer  
 KEN STIEBBEN ..... Photographer  
 BEV ALDRICH ..... Editorial Assistant

KANSAS FISH & GAME is an official bi-monthly publication of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Box 1028, Pratt, Kansas 67124. Subscription is free upon written request to adult Kansas residents. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted without permission provided proper credit is given. Second class postage paid at Topeka, Kansas, and at additional mailing offices.

PRINTED BY  
 ROBERT R. (BOB) SANDERS, STATE PRINTER  
 TOPEKA, KANSAS  
 1974



35-2163

## POSITION STATEMENT

Furbearer harvest and use of trapping devices are being reviewed critically before the public with increasing frequency without understanding or concern for the biological realities of population dynamics of furbearing animals.

Furbearers, like other forms of wildlife, are renewable natural resources. Given adequate habitat, furbearers possess the biotic potential to assure maintenance of desirable populations. This biotic potential most generally provides a surplus which can be harvested. These population surpluses cannot be stockpiled or reserved for a future year. If not harvested they will be lost to natural causes or will attempt to relocate in less desirable habitat, perhaps in direct conflict with other resources or man himself.

The Kansas rural environment contains many examples which indicate that it would be irresponsible to prohibit use of traps or harvest of furbearers.

There are over 80,000 farm and ranch ponds in Kansas constructed for stock watering, surface runoff control and other purposes. Muskrats frequently inhabit these ponds and sometimes cause considerable damage and occasionally complete destruction of the pond by digging dens into the dams. Periodic trapping in season when muskrat fur is prime (or at other times under a damage control permit) provides a population control measure. Such periodic control is superior to complete eradication of the species from problem locations.

Muskrats in a marsh situation, if totally protected, will increase to phenomenal levels only to undergo a massive dieoff due to stress of overcrowding and self-induced loss of food and cover. Periodic trapping permits a sustained yield of muskrats without experiencing the "boom or bust" situation.

Beavers are found in isolated colonies throughout the state. When trapped periodically, these populations move up and down the stream courses wherever there is food and cover. When permitted to overpopulate, the food supply for a large area along the stream may be removed. The unharvested surplus is forced, by loss of habitat and behavioral patterns of the species, to seek new areas. These new areas are frequently of poorer quality and beaver may resort to utilizing fruit and ornamental trees, merchantable timber in various stages of growth, and specific agricultural crops, particularly bottomland corn.

The coyote is a furbearer in Kansas even though not legally classified as such. It is a natural predator and is usually considered only in this light by stockmen. Control of coyotes, where needed, can frequently be effected best by use of traps. The Kansas Extension Service provides instruction in wildlife damage control specifically for this purpose. Trapping is usually done in a very selective manner. If trapping was prohibited, use of non-selective poisons, although illegal, would increase in an effort to control offending animals wherever excessive populations occur.

If furbearer harvest by trapping or other means was prohibited in Kansas, the resource would not benefit but to the contrary would undoubtedly suffer. Without the resource user and his financial support, interest in the furbearer resource would vanish. Prohibition of trapping would drastically reduce genuine support for furbearer management programs as the non-user and general public are generally reluctant to provide financial support for such programs.

The art of trapping furbearers has considerable value in providing opportunity to witness and understand the many ecological complexities that govern wildlife resources. At the same time the trapper does more to promote a sustained yield natural resource than those who would totally prohibit this activity.

Trapping as a furbearer harvest procedure is biologically sound. Prohibition of use of traps in the harvest of furbearers has been fostered as a moral issue rather than one based on ecological resource management.

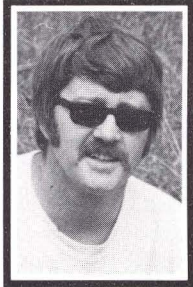
With consideration to these views of the furbearer resource and the factors of animal damage control with specific regard to the coyote, the prohibition of the use of traps would be in direct contradiction to sound resource management. Therefore, the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission fully supports continuation of furbearer harvest regulations based on biological considerations. Further, it is the opinion of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission that the potential harvester of the furbearer resource, the trapper, must be totally free to decide whether such trapping activity is in conflict with his personal ethics.

# The Coyote Controversy

By Vic McLeran  
Editor

**IT** WAS A classic example of predatory teamwork. Two coyotes joining forces to haul down the prairie speedster—a black-tailed jackrabbit.

From my vantage point atop a small knoll, I watched through field glasses as a pair of coyotes covered a pasture several hundred yards away. One animal trotted along checking fence-rows on the north while its companion worked the



McLeran

fencerow on the opposite side of the field. Suddenly a large jackrabbit leaped from beneath a tumbleweed. The coyote on the north immediately gave chase but its mate simply stopped watching the race with interest. The jack's initial spurt gave it quite a lead. However this soon stabilized with the coyote about 20 yards behind the bounding rabbit. The jack began to circle in a southerly direction. As it did, the other coyote which had been watching intently, began sprinting to the south, where it could intercept the rabbit's intended escape route.

The coyote reached this point and

crouched behind a yucca plant. I could see the animal digging its hind feet into the soil for traction. As the rabbit and its pursuer approached the hidden coyote, the jack apparently sensed danger and started to swerve. But it was too late. The coyote darted from the yucca and overtook the rabbit within seconds, both animals going down in a cloud of dust.

That's one side of the coyote—a Long a subject of controversy, the coyote seems to be holding his own in Kansas.

natural predator designed by years of evolution to prey on rodents, many of which are destructive to agricultural interests.

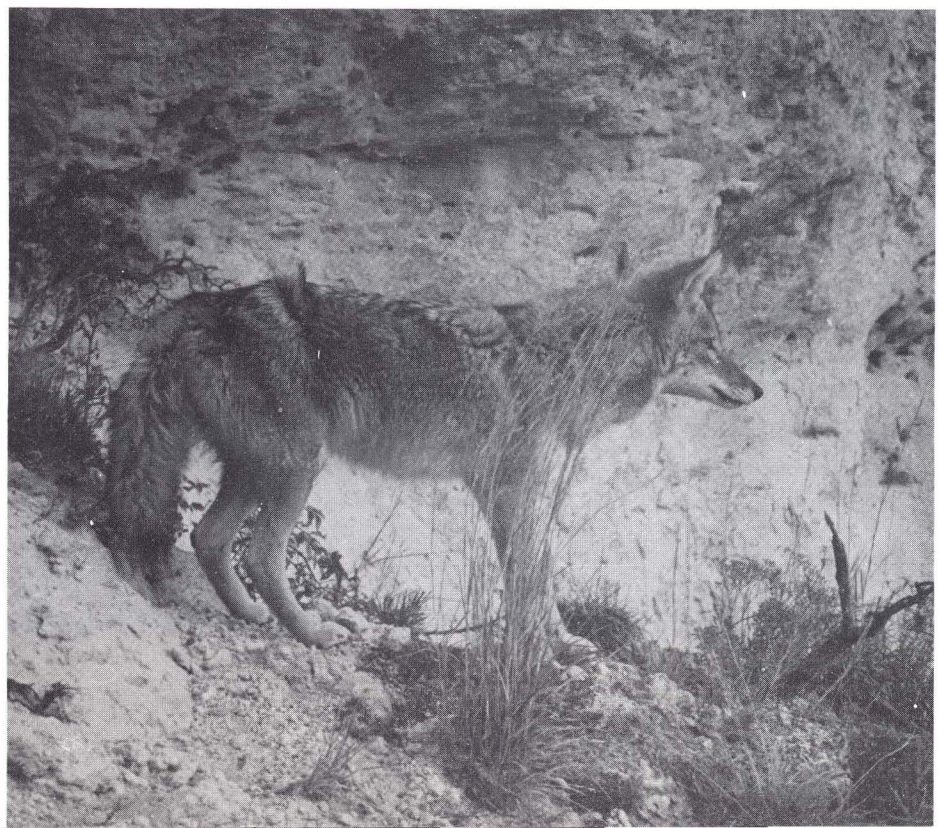
**This is another side:**

It too is a classic example of predatory teamwork, although on a different quarry.

It's nearly midnight and the sheep are uneasy. A pair of coyotes are circling the flock's perimeter and their scent has the animals excited. Utilizing a small north-south draw for cover, the big male coyote slips closer to the sheeplot. Meanwhile, his mate trots around to approach from the east. Occasionally one of the ewes bleats a low note of alarm but the stiff north wind whistles around nearby outbuildings, muffling the sound.

Reaching the fence, which surrounds the sheep yard, the dog coyote crouches and eyes the situation warily. Nearly 200 yards to the north is the farmhouse, dark at this late hour. Less than 30 yards away is the flock. Composed mostly of ewes, some with lambs, the sheep huddle nervously against a small shed on the far side of the lot. The coyote and his mate watch as a small lamb is constantly jostled by the flock's perimeter by larger, heavier ewes. Instinctively the coyotes sense the lamb's vulnerability.

**The victim has been selected.**



Vic McLeran

Slowly, the big dog coyote bellies his way beneath the lower strand of barbed wire. Movement catches his eye and he glances toward his mate who is dashing toward the flock in a running crouch, gradually gathering speed. As the sheep start to run, he charges.

**Bleating in panic**, the animals scatter. Bumped roughly, the small lamb stumbles. In a flash the female coyote is at the lamb's throat, jaws chopping. An instant later, the big male is at her side and the lamb is dead in seconds.

Oblivious to the bleating sheep, the coyotes begin to feed, rapidly tearing large chunks of flesh from the freshly-killed lamb. Several minutes later, a fickle breeze carries the sound of anxious bleating and the scent of coyotes to a collie sleeping beside the ranch house. Aroused, his sharp barking wakes a sleeping rancher inside. As lights come on in the house, the coyotes sprint away to the south and are soon swallowed by the darkness.

**This too, is the coyote**—a "varmint" whose occasional depredations on livestock have some stockmen crying

for his scalp. And these aren't the only views of the little prairie wolf. Some sportsmen for instance, blame coyotes for what they feel is a shortage of game today. On the other end of the scale some environmentalists cry for complete protection of this clever little predator. In fact, probably no other animal around creates as much controversy as the coyote.

What's the real story?

**Is the coyote a saint or a sinner**, should he be protected or exterminated? We suspect the answer lies

**Controversy surrounding the coyote ranges from a desire for complete protection all the way to cries for total extermination.**

somewhere between these extremes. Wild animals, predators especially, are often judged by whether or not their food habits are beneficial or detrimental to man's interests. Since this is the case, let's examine the coyote's varied and often controversial diet.

First of all, the coyote, like many other predators, is an opportunist. He

simply takes what is most readily available. Secondly, he's omnivorous. This means he'll eat almost anything—plant or animal—that doesn't eat him first. Thirdly, he's a scavenger who doesn't mind picking up a road-killed pheasant or calf that's been dead for three weeks. In fact, some studies have indicated the coyote is partial to carrion, often preferring "ripe" meat over fresh. With this universal taste, it's not hard to understand why the coyote has little problem finding a meal—or getting into trouble.

**Mention the fact that livestock** such as cattle and sheep are occasionally included in the coyote's diet and you automatically upset some stockmen. And you can't blame them. I've heard liberal protectionists say, "Oh leave the coyote alone, he doesn't know he's doing anything wrong." That's easy for the protectionist to say because those aren't his lambs and calves the coyote is killing. The fact remains that when a coyote kills livestock, he's costing the rancher hard cash and the offender should be removed.

However, and this is the kicker, not all coyotes are stock killers, just as all people aren't bank robbers. Most authorities—game biologists and predator control people—contend that when livestock depredations occur within a given area, one or two individual "outlaw" coyotes are to blame—not the entire coyote population in that area.

**Let's see how this happens.** When young coyotes are taught to hunt by their parents they usually start out on grasshoppers, mice, rats and rabbits—the most readily available items. Normally they stay with this natural diet throughout their life. From time to time however, certain coyotes develop a taste for "no-no" items like calves, lambs and poultry.

What accounts for the acquisition of this "deviant" taste?

**There are several factors involved** and surprisingly, the farmer or rancher

**The red fox, shown here, is an opportunist like all other predators. As such, he'll take an occasional game bird, but the bulk of his diet is rodents.**



Vic McLeran



This coyote has just killed a black-tailed jackrabbit—a natural prey item for most coyotes.

is often to blame, although unwittingly. Let's say the stockman has a diseased lamb or calf die. Rather than bury the animal where it is out of the way, many ranchers simply take their dead stock out to the nearest shelterbelt or draw where the scavengers can clean them up. Being a scavenger and a carrion-lover as well as an opportunist, the coyote welcomes this free meal. After several meals of dead calf the next step is sometimes meat on the hoof. This is not to say that all coyotes which eat dead stock turn cattle-killer. Many coyotes eat dead livestock all their lives without once ever killing stock but some experts believe it can lead to stock killing.

Along these same lines, coyotes which have been injured or crippled occasionally turn to stock killing as an easy way of picking up a meal. Corbett, in his monumental work on the man-killing tigers of India found that many of the offenders were old, crippled animals which had learned it was easier to prey on humans or livestock than on wild natural prey. Accordingly, coyotes which have been crippled

in a steel trap or by a gunshot wound often find it easier to catch a fat young lamb than a wild jackrabbit. This is especially true when that lamb is housed in inadequate fencing.

**Let's turn now to the contention** held by some sportsmen that coyotes are game-killers, responsible for wholesale depredations on pheasants, quail and rabbits. It would be naive to assume coyotes don't kill game birds. Of course they do. Like we said earlier, they're opportunists and take what's available. Should the opportunity of taking a plump pheasant present itself, the coyote will take advantage without hesitation. But the fact remains, there are a heck of a lot more field mice, rats and gophers than there are pheasants and quail.

Numerous biological studies have repeatedly shown that predators like coyotes have little overall effect on game populations. There are exceptions sure, but these are usually local problems which occur when conditions have centralized the prey species. An example of this happens during drought periods when most watering spots are dry and game birds

are forced to congregate at the few remaining water holes. It's an easy matter for the coyote to pick off birds in a situation like this. The same thing occurs during heavy snowstorms when most of the food is covered and only isolated feeding spots remain. It's simple for the coyote to locate the birds since he knows sooner or later they'll flock to the remaining food locations.

For years biologists thought predators controlled game populations by culling the unfit and excess individuals. This is still true to some degree but contemporary wildlife specialists are beginning to believe predators have little overall effect on game populations. Sure, there are exceptions as we've mentioned earlier, but experts now say the most important factors affecting game populations are the amount of available food and adequate cover as well as weather conditions. This makes sense too, because it's easy to see how rabbits and pheasants would be more susceptible to coyote predation in areas which have little escape cover. On the other hand, a farm which contains a lot of plum thickets and thick brushy draws, provides game species with the protection they need from predators.

OK, what about control measures for "outlaw" coyotes that are killing stock and other coyotes which appear to be depleting game populations in certain areas. Here again, opinion is divided and conflicting. Some people advocate widespread use of poisons, others want cyanide guns, some cry for a return of the bounty system, while still others maintain a No. 3 double-spring steel trap is the most effective control method.

**Of all the control methods** available, the widespread use of poisons seems to be the most controversial. Its proponents say it's the only surefire method of decreasing coyote populations and coyote damage. Opponents of coyote poisoning programs contend the method is indiscriminate. That is, it kills not only coyotes but many other animals and birds as well. For instance, in 1971, the coyote poisoning program in several western states accounted for not only 86,653 coyotes



Although similar in appearance to the coyote, the smaller gray fox prefers dense brushy areas like those found in eastern Kansas.

but 24,273 foxes, 20,780 bobcats, 19,052 skunks, 10,078 raccoons, 7,615 opossums, 6,941 badgers, 6,685 porcupines, 2,771 red wolves, 1,179 beavers and 842 bears.

Another objection to the use of poisons is that much of this activity is conducted on public lands. Sheep men graze their flocks on public lands for a nominal fee and then request that the government poison wildlife which actually belongs to the public—you and I.

**Public opposition to the poisoning programs** prompted President Nixon to issue Executive Order 11643 on February 8, 1972. In effect, this order barred further use of poisons for predator control on public lands or by Federal officials. The Environmental Protection Agency followed this action up with an immediate halt on interstate shipment of all pesticides registered for use in controlling predators.

Another controversial method of coyote control involves the so-called "coyote getter" or cyanide gun. This is a spring gun device which discharges a cartridge of sodium cyanide

when activated. The apparatus is covered with sheep wool soaked in coyote urine or some other attractant. When the coyote—or any other animal or bird—tugs at the bait, the cartridge is discharged. The cyanide, on contact with moisture in an animal's mouth, releases a gas and the victim is literally gassed to death. Kansas law makes it illegal to use cyanide guns without a permit. These permits are issued sparingly by the Director of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission only after a wildlife damage control specialist at Kansas State University has made a thorough investigation and determined the definite need for cyanide guns.

**There are still those** around who want the bounty system returned to Kansas. Under this system, a bounty of two dollars was paid by the county clerk for each coyote scalp with ears attached. The program was established in 1877 but was discontinued in 1970. Contrary to common belief, there is no evidence to show the bounty system ever reduced either the number of damaging predators or

the damage attributed to these predators.

In the words of the late Michigan Conservation Director, Ralph MacMullan, "This bounty business has become downright ridiculous. Since 1935, Michigan squandered nearly four million dollars in hunting and fishing license money on bountied animals under the flimsy pretext that the system would reduce predators and result in more game." Speaking of the state's bounty on foxes, MacMullan continued, "After 18 years of trial and error, we reached the Utopia of this great fantasy in 1964 when more foxes were bountied than ever before. It doesn't make a smidgen of sense and it's high time we wised up to the fact that bounties don't work—and never will!"

**Beside being inefficient**, the bounty system is costly. Running as high as \$200,000 to \$300,000 per year in some states, it was costing Kansas taxpayers an average of \$100,000 per year when it was discontinued in 1970.

All of the above control methods have the same deficiency—they fail to concentrate on the small minority of individual offending predators. Because of this inadequacy, as well as other objections, some states have adopted a do-it-yourself program similar to the one developed by Missouri in 1945. It's a relatively inexpensive program which has been proven effective in reducing and controlling damage caused by the larger animal predators such as fox, bobcat and coyote. Kansas adopted this system in 1958.

**Essentially the project** consists of a wildlife damage control specialist who travels the state assisting stockmen with predator problems. In Kansas this specialist is Bob Henderson who works out of the Kansas State University Extension Office in Manhattan.

The Extension Control program is based on the fact that most coyote damage is caused by relatively few individuals—not all of them. Usually when the individual offender is caught, the damage stops. In other words, the program is a predator *damage* control program, not a predator control program since no attempt is made to control populations of predators.

**The system works like this:** When a farmer or rancher has coyote problems, he contacts his local county agent who in turn notifies the Extension Specialist in Manhattan. Henderson then calls on the farmer and shows him how to trap or call up the coyote and makes other suggestions about reducing losses. Proponents of the program say it's effective in eliminating the individual coyote which is causing damage and that it encourages the landowner to help himself. The program costs around \$15,000 a year compared to the \$100,000 figure which was being paid out under the old bounty system.

At the other end of the spectrum are some who oppose any form of control placed on the coyote. Instead, they want the animal placed on the protected list. One such group, The Defenders of the Coyote, has been formed out West to work for protection of the animal.

**Eating habits and control methods** aren't the only controversial points surrounding the clever little brush wolf. Even methods of hunting the coyote have become topics of controversy. Take dog hunters for example. They outfit themselves with specially-equipped pickup trucks containing elaborate dog pens. Once a coyote is sighted the hunter drives his truck as close as possible to the animal then releases his dogs, often a combination



Predators, like the bobcat shown here, produce annual surpluses which can be harvested by hunters and trappers without endangering the resource. This one was trapped by the Hartley boys of Kingman.

little "sport" in letting six big stag-hounds tear apart one exhausted coyote.

protectionists who want all coyotes protected from hunting and trapping. As we've seen, the coyote is an opportunistic predator whose tastes occasionally put him in conflict with agricultural interests. When this happens, stockmen should have the right to remove individual offenders which are causing them problems. The fact remains, coyote populations, like other animal populations, produce annual surpluses. These surpluses can be harvested safely by hunters and trappers without danger of wiping out the resources.

**The coyote's future?** Well, the way he's held his own against poisons, guns, dogs and traps indicate the coyote will probably be with us for quite awhile.

**Those coyotes and other predators responsible for livestock damage are usually individual "outlaws," not the species as a whole.**

of greyhound - staghound. The dogs quickly overtake and kill the weary coyote. Other dog hunters use trailing hounds, usually Walkers, to chase the coyote.

This dog hunting fraternity claims its method is the most sporting way to capture coyotes. They have little use for the lone hunter with a predator call and a scope-sighted rifle. On the other hand, those who use the call and rifle say it is the only way to bag coyotes. They point out there is a

And so goes the controversy over *Canis latrans*.

Personally, I can't agree with those who advocate the use of poisons with total extermination of the coyote in mind. He's a natural and important part of the Kansas outdoor scene. As far as I'm concerned, the chilly winter night would be a little less appealing without the coyote's lonely howling from a distant hillside. On the other hand, I can't agree with pie-in-the-sky

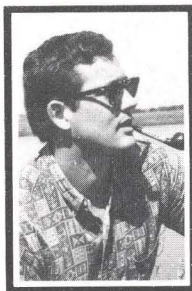
# Chain Saws Gone Wild

By Bill Scott  
Staff Writer



**T**HEY MARCHED off to the east that warm, short-sleeve October day in Dodge City's railroad yards. Cottonwood logs, trimmed and prim, were piled 20 cords high and lined up

single file on seven groaning flat cars. Soon they would begin their trek across the Kansas flatlands, bound for the sawmill. Don Wiles, Ford County agricultural agent, Melvin Baughman, area extension forester from Garden



Bill Scott

City and I gazed at the sight.

As a switch engine muttered to itself on a side track close to the yard office, I found myself thinking about how dangling leaves on those cottonwoods once rattled noisily, signaling every meandering breeze. Once these trees had shaded the swirling pools of the Arkansas River. The popping of

carp as they fed on the cottonwood's fuzzy seeds had once been heard below those trees. Quail, squirrel and deer had stirred with their scratching the brittle leaves littering the brown, sandy riverbottom soil. Perhaps even wild turkeys had roosted on the horizontal limbs.

Then what a Dodge city logger had said earlier that day came to mind: "I've heard people curse the cottonwood! But when you start cutting it, they fall in love with 'em!"

Touted as one of Kansas' burgeoning industries, cottonwood logging has been chomping through these Kansas trees for several years now. Driven by the pioneer instinct, noting the availability of logging crews, lured with the promise of big money, squeezed by real estate taxes and longing for more cropland, many landowners are inviting logging crews to unleash screaming chain saws on their trees.

Also, with this winter's energy crunch thousands of homeowners are installing old-fashioned wood-burning stoves and fireplaces. While cottonwood burns too fast and throws sparks, making it a second choice for warming homes, the lively market for firewood is an added incentive for cottonwood destruction.

But, there can be no denying there is plenty of marketable cottonwood. Assistant State Forester Gary Naughton said, "The total volume of Kansas cottonwood 11 D. I. B. (diameter inside bark) or more in size is 700 million board feet. Two hundred million of that is in northeast Kansas. Sixty percent of our cottonwood is unharvested surplus."

However, Naughton went on to emphasize this timber surplus must be managed responsibly, and there is a great difference between harvestation and destruction. Harvestation or management asks, "What may I safely take



Ken Stiebben



Fox squirrels are natural inhabitants of many cottonwood groves in western Kansas.

"I don't dare leave weeds in my fence-rows or trees and weeds along the draws on my rented ground. The landowner wouldn't stand for it!" As Naughton says, "There's a strong desire among farmers to have straight rows and clean fences; this kind of thing gives them self-esteem. The unexpected attitude is 'I'm going to leave this land in a better condition than I found it.'—This is good social philosophy, but what is *better*?" Naughton asks.

Most loggers are in Kansas from Arkansas and Louisiana, but some are natives.

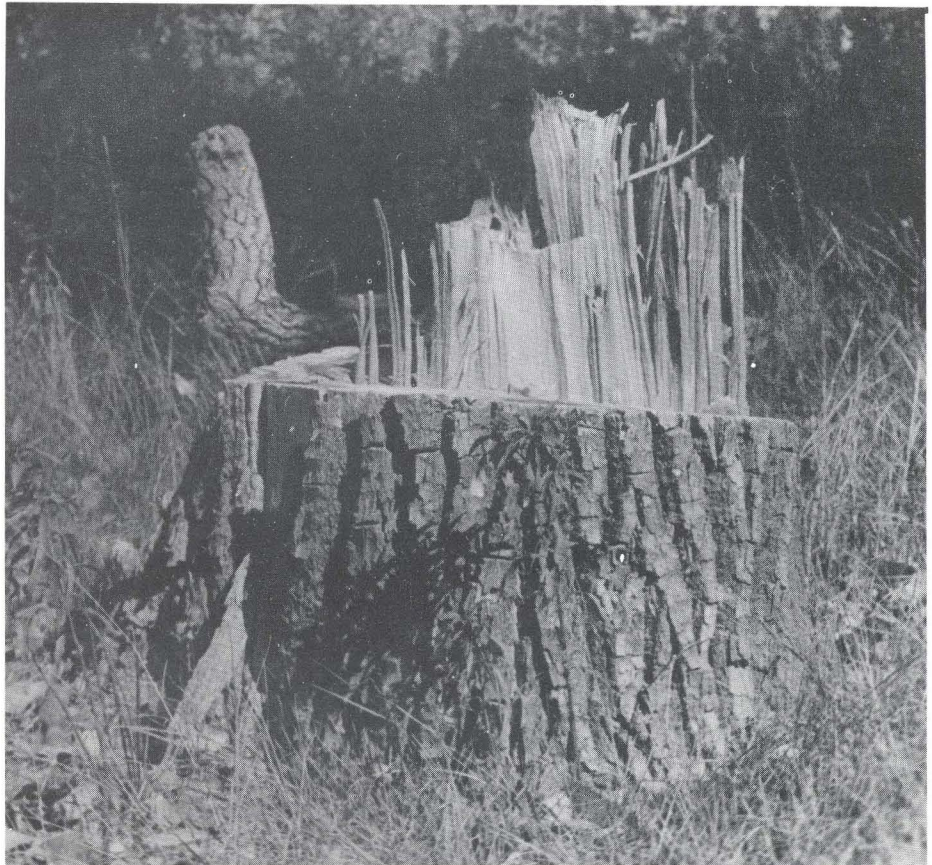
Some solicit landowners' business, while others simply run ads in local newspapers and on radio stations. When contact between a logger and landowner is made, the logger makes at least one trip to look over the timber site. Because sawmills will take only green wood, loggers are interested only in living trees. If there is a suitable quantity of live trees no less than four inches D. I. B. and no larger than 30 inches, the logger moves in.

from a given area with little or no damage to the plant and animal life?" Destruction says, "Take it!"

Far too much of the pioneer instinct involves this destructive attitude. The drive to clear the land of weeds, grass and trees is still so deeply embedded in the minds of people, in fact, modifying it will be difficult. Too many people are looking at the land for what serves them best, rather than adapting themselves to the land for what the land does best. This forcing the land to do what serves us best normally means destruction.

As Melvin Baughman points out, this pioneer-like drive to dominate by destroying may yet totally wipe out rural timber. "When the white man first came to Kansas, we had 4½ million acres of timber. Today, we have only 1½ million acres of rural timber, but two million acres of urban timber! We have more acres of timber in town than we do out in the 'woods,' in other words."

The pioneer instinct places great social pressures on all farmers to conform, or else. One farmer confessed,



Bill Scott

The approach is to clear cut an area, leaving few trees and hundreds of stumps ranging from one foot to almost three feet high. Limbs smaller than four inches D. I. B. are left scattered about, much as they fall. "I'm not in the brush clearing business," one logger told us. Loggers move as rapidly as possible through an area in order to move to the next site, before another logger beats him to it. Also, sawmills require timber be cut no more than two weeks before loading. Because of the speed with which loggers move through a timber plot, landowners often are not even aware of these methods until it's too late.

The logger was asked if he would cut down a tree larger than 30 inches D. I. B. to get suitably large limb wood. "I take what I can take," he said. Some of the most magnificent cottonwoods in Kansas have fallen because of this philosophy.

Because of the undeveloped market situation, prices paid the landowner by the logger are nickels and dimes, with 50¢ to \$1 a cord the typical price. A cord is a pile of logs four feet high, four feet wide and eight feet long, although what is presently being purchased is 4 x 5 x 8. A large cottonwood yields about one cord, so landowners sell their trees for 50¢ to \$1 apiece.

Loggers are paid \$11-\$15 a cord at the railhead. Does he show a profit at that price? "I doubt it," one said. "It's \$275 for chain saws. Chains cost \$14 apiece. They wear out every four days. I haul four cord of wood, weighing 36,000 lbs., each truck load. The differential is dragging and there's a lot of strain. To cut four cords, it takes 10-15 gallons of gas for vehicles and chain saws just to get it to the railroad yards." Why does he do it, then? "Logging is just another job,"

he reflected. "If you like it, you like it. If you don't, leave it alone."

The logs leaving the Ark River area, Forestry's Utilization and Marketing Specialist Gould said, are bound for the Pasadena, Texas, mill. Pasadena, a suburb of Houston, boasts a large mill where the logs are prepared for pulp, which is used to give a smooth finish to certain kinds of paper.

According to a railroad spokesman, freight rates charged for the Dodge City-Houston haul are \$26.15 per cord. Here is the point where the lone operator is seriously hurt, according to Gould. He explained that if a logging company has entered into a contract with the mill, the mill pays all shipping charges. An individual logger, since he is an irregular source of supply, must pay all charges himself.

It was not possible to learn precisely what volume of cottonwood is leaving

**Cottonwood trees make excellent shelterbelts which provide windbreaks for cattle and homes for wildlife.**



Bill Scott



'Coons and 'possums, integral parts of western Kansas fauna, will miss the disappearing cottonwoods.

the Ark River area. Railroad officials, for competitive reasons, will not release such figures. One flatcar, however, holds 20 cords. I saw one out of seven loaded cars just one day in Dodge. This is written not to blame the railroads in any way, for common carriers must accept the business offered them if they are themselves to remain in business. This is written to say there is a tremendous blow being dealt to the Arkansas River basin by the nature of these loggers' activities.

Extravagant offers of huge profits on a cottonwood logging operation have a way of never materializing. One landowner was told by a logger who surveyed his tree stand, "Why, you've got \$50,000 worth of trees here!" He was offered 50¢ a tree, which meant that this landowner had to have 100,000 trees. It's unlikely that the entire Ark River basin from Garden City to Dodge City would have that many marketable cottonwoods. The rancher, smelling a rat, declined to give the loggers access rights to his land. Mrs. Will McFarland of Cimarron added, "Everybody I talked to was terribly disappointed." Steve Kraisinger, Pratt

County agricultural agent, said "From what I've seen on this pulp thing, you might as well put it in a pile and burn it."

Besides landowners getting 50¢ to a dollar per tree, there are two immediate additional problems, one of which is getting payment at all. This writer was told by one landowner, "There's been a little problem of (landowners) collecting their money."

The other problem is cleaning up the mess the loggers leave behind. Will McFarland, Wiley's father, feels strongly about what they did. "They leave limbs strung all over the ground and stumps about a foot high!"

However, some landowners are quite satisfied with these methods. A. V. Anna, Cimarron, said, "I looked at it as a cheap clean-up operation. I was promised very little money and received very little money, but the cost of getting those big trees down would have been enormous."

And, the tax squeeze is real. Landowners who resist the steamroller which commands, "Convert all land



to tangible dollars-and-cents value!" are being run over. Naughton says, "There is a pressure that—says—, 'Either you conform to our idea for the use of this land or you pay the cost.' There's an overwhelming tendency for lower producing land to be taxed at a higher proportionate rate than higher producing land."

"There was an area of about 200 acres of riverbottom woodland on the Neosho River in the middle '60's I knew of," Naughton continued. "It was extremely productive of timber but low in human use production. The land was taxed at a rate equivalent to the adjacent cropland." The result was that the trees were torn out. "I see too many cases like this, where land has been converted due to tax pressures."

"I personally feel they are taxing something that doesn't exist! That acreage on the Neosho floods annually. It is unknown to me where the landowner has received economic benefits to justify the clearing costs," Naughton said.

Driven by these tax pressures, the landowner is forced to convert his ground to cropland or pasture. But in southwest Kansas, does a cattleman gain that much ground? Will McFarland doesn't think so, and he says trees help protect what ground the farmer and rancher has from blowing away.

Besides the immediate problems of collecting his money and cleaning up the mess left behind, the rancher is now left without a windbreak for his cattle from here on. Ray Purdy, Gray County agricultural agent, said, "For a cow-calf operation, which most ranchers along the Ark River are engaged in, a windbreak is essential. Over the long haul the guy who can winter his cows in trees along the river is a lot better off than the operator who winters them out on the prairie." What does a rancher do when he needs a windbreak, then? He usually doesn't build cowsheds to take up the slack, for protection. The cattle are simply left on the prairie to do the best they can, or moved to an adjoining rancher's land where the trees were not removed!

Irrigation is also the indirect enemy



In the western part of the state, shelter belts provide much of the cover for mule deer.

of Kansas trees, as Kraisinger and Wiles point out. While it has done wonders for helping "The Great American Desert" bloom, a pivotal system demands a complete circle for its operation. If a grove of cottonwoods is in the way, out they go.

From the viewpoint of the Kansas Fish and Game Commission, this logging is annihilating absolutely essential wildlife habitat, particularly for the Rio Grande wild turkey. The turkey, introduced from west Texas, demands the big cottonwoods with spreading horizontal limbs for roost trees. At night the huge birds rest there to escape coyotes, skunks, possums and other predators. If they're cut down, the turkeys move to another tree stand. If there are no trees somewhere else, the turkeys slowly vanish altogether.

It is true that in west Texas, where the Rio Grandes come from, there are few cottonwoods and the turkeys do well. Why is it so important for southwest Kansas to have cottonwoods, then? Steve Capel, southcentral regional game manager, explains: "In Texas they have mesquite and shiner oak which provides acre after acre in any direction of continuous habitat." Kent Monte, big game biologist,

adds: "Pecan and live oak are the roost trees in west Texas." But in Kansas, Capel says, "—our habitat is linear; that is, it goes in a line along the river. If riverbottom timber is eliminated, all roosting habitat is removed.

As Lee Queal, game division chief of the Fish and Game, comments: "Our chief concern is that total conversion of land use to agricultural practices will leave nothing for turkey, deer or quail. The wildlife resource base is being destroyed."

So, the future for the Rio Grande turkey in Kansas appears shaky, at best; indeed, the future of much of southwest Kansas wildlife is in doubt. The only hope is that landowners will stop before it's too late and call the Extension Forestry in Manhattan at 913/532-5752 and the Kansas Fish and Game Commission in Pratt, 316/672-6473.

Let these two agencies work for you. They will advise you on responsible harvestation of your tree stand, get you top dollar on your trees, and still give consideration to the wildlife resource which depends on their continued presence.

Chain saws gone wild can be tamed!

# PROJECT SASNAK

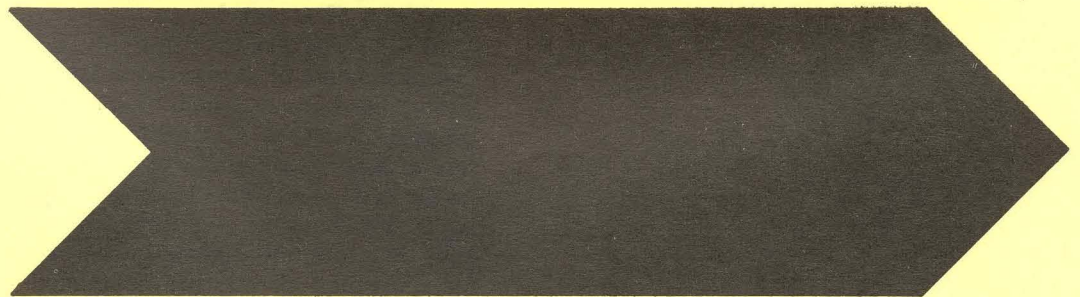
Surging Ahead for Skippers, Nimrods  
& Anglers of Kansas

Goals to be met in five years:

1. Increase game fish catch by 50%.
2. Enhance habitat on private lands.
3. Double upland game harvest on public hunting lands.
4. Implement new hunter safety course.
5. Establish courtesy water patrol.

Photos by Ken Stiebben  
Text by Ross Harrison

Here's how





## INTRODUCTION

Flashy headlines like those above began stirring up the hopes of Kansas sportsmen just after the August 18, 1972, announcement of Project SASNAK by the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

After many more such news accounts, after a host of supportive resolutions by organizations and inclusion in Governor Docking's budget, the 1973 Legislature approved the bold plan to improve hunting, fishing and boating in Kansas. With the beginning of the fiscal year last July, implementation of SASNAK began.

In the seven months since July, accomplishments of SASNAK have laid a strong base upon which the entire program depends. A statewide inventory of fisheries resources in all public lakes and reservoirs is underway; plans for boosting wildlife habitat and, therefore, more game in the bag for sportsmen already are completed

for thousands of acres of public land and some private holdings; the hunter safety training course in Kansas has broken all records since it started in May; and the courtesy boat patrol is ready to launch.

You will recall SASNAK, a new way to spell Kansas, stands for Surging Ahead for Skippers, Nimrods and Anglers of Kansas. It's a project with five objectives each to be met in five years. We will review each of these to show what they are, what's being done and what you can expect.

But first, one reminder. It is of prime importance to understand that the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, and Project SASNAK, operates entirely on funds from sportsmen. The money sportsmen spend for hunting, fishing and other licenses, plus the excise tax they pay on firearms, ammunition and fishing gear, constitutes 100 percent of the funding.

To ensure the financial footing of the commission, state budget officials requested and got an increase in license fees. Note that resident licenses will not go up until 1975, while the new nonresident license fees are now in effect. The increase in fees is the first for Kansas in 13 years and puts Kansas closer to an equal level with other Midwestern states.

| License                                  | 1974 fee  | 1975 fee  |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Resident Hunting                         | \$3       | \$5       |
| Nonresident Hunting                      | \$25      | \$25      |
| Upland Bird Stamp                        | abolished | abolished |
| Resident Fishing                         | \$3       | \$5       |
| Nonresident Fishing                      | \$10      | \$10      |
| Nonresident 10-day Fishing               | \$5       | \$5       |
| Combination Resident Hunting and Fishing | \$6       | \$10      |
| Trapping—Residents Only                  | \$1.50    | \$3       |
| Deer and Turkey Permit—Residents Only    | \$10      | \$15      |
| Boat Registration—Three Years            | \$3       | \$3       |

## SASNAK men hired, oriented and stationed across Kansas

In approving Project SASNAK, the Kansas Legislature added about 90 new employee positions to the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission to accomplish the five goals. After hundreds of civil service interviews and tests in May and June, most of the new men were hired by August 6.

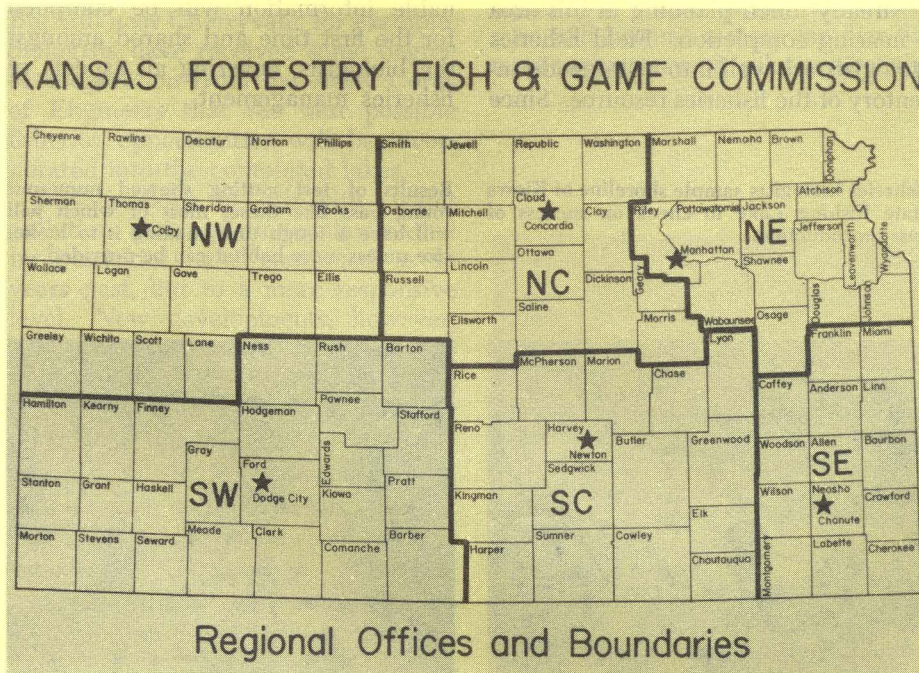
Although more than half of the new employees were Kansas residents, all participated in a thorough orientation program on Kansas—its resources and the goals of SASNAK.

They attended two weeks of classes at Pratt Community Junior College conducted by veteran commission em-

ployees. This was followed by more than two weeks of bus tours throughout Kansas to experience first hand the varied land use and resource patterns, and to start the new men forming opinions of needed improvements for better hunting and fishing.

Prior to their coming, the commission had established six regional offices strategically placed throughout the state, where division supervisors could better coordinate SASNAK efforts. So, after the new men completed the statewide tours, they went through even more in-depth orientation on their specifically assigned areas and their regions of the state.

By October the new employees had settled in their new communities and were hot on the job of implementing the goals which you are about to examine.





With proper fisheries management for a reservoir, it could yield 500 lbs. of fish per acre, half game fish and half rough fish as the two piles on the left show. With little or no management on the reservoirs, they yield about 200 lbs. of fish per acre, 80 percent rough fish, only 20 percent game fish as the two piles on the right show.

this past summer more than half of the 20 federal reservoirs have been test netted, almost two-thirds of the 40 state fishing lakes have undergone fish sampling in addition to 10 community lakes and numerous other impoundments.

Through coming years fish populations in all reservoirs will be scientifically sampled each year along with about one-third of the state fishing lakes so all are completed every three years or less.

By this spring and summer, Kansas anglers will begin seeing another approach to fisheries management which has been around for some time in a much smaller degree—creel censusing. Plans now are underway to periodically census anglers and their creels at all public fishing waters, using this information with test netting samples, to coordinate better fish management.

With one fisheries biologist stationed at each of the existing 20 federal reservoirs, where none were stationed before, vast amounts of valuable information will be compiled for the first time and shared amongst the biologists, covering all aspects of fisheries management.

## 1. Increase game fish catch 50%

The most basic need to accomplish this goal is first to get a handle on the fisheries resource in all public waters and how anglers use that resource. Then comes implementation of modern fish management techniques to

put more fish on the stringers of Kansas fishermen.

Already much planning in this area is nearing completion. Field fisheries biologists are well into a statewide inventory of the fisheries resource. Since

Fisheries biologists sample shoreline of Kiowa State Fishing Lake to check on success of bass reproduction.

Results of test netting showed numerous young bass like these, most of which will have a tough time making it to lunker size unless more habitat can be provided.





This past fall has seen fisheries management efforts in Kansas increase at a rate never before approached. At Miami State Fishing Lake near Osawatomie, plans have been completed so that by this summer the lake will be drained, deepened, the dike built up and access for fishermen bolstered. What for many previous years was a stagnant body of water, will be one of the most productive lakes in eastern Kansas. And at Cowley State Fishing Lake near Arkansas City, roads were built up and widened and fishing piers constructed, improving angler access and saving the shoreline from being washed away, as well as improving game fish habitat.

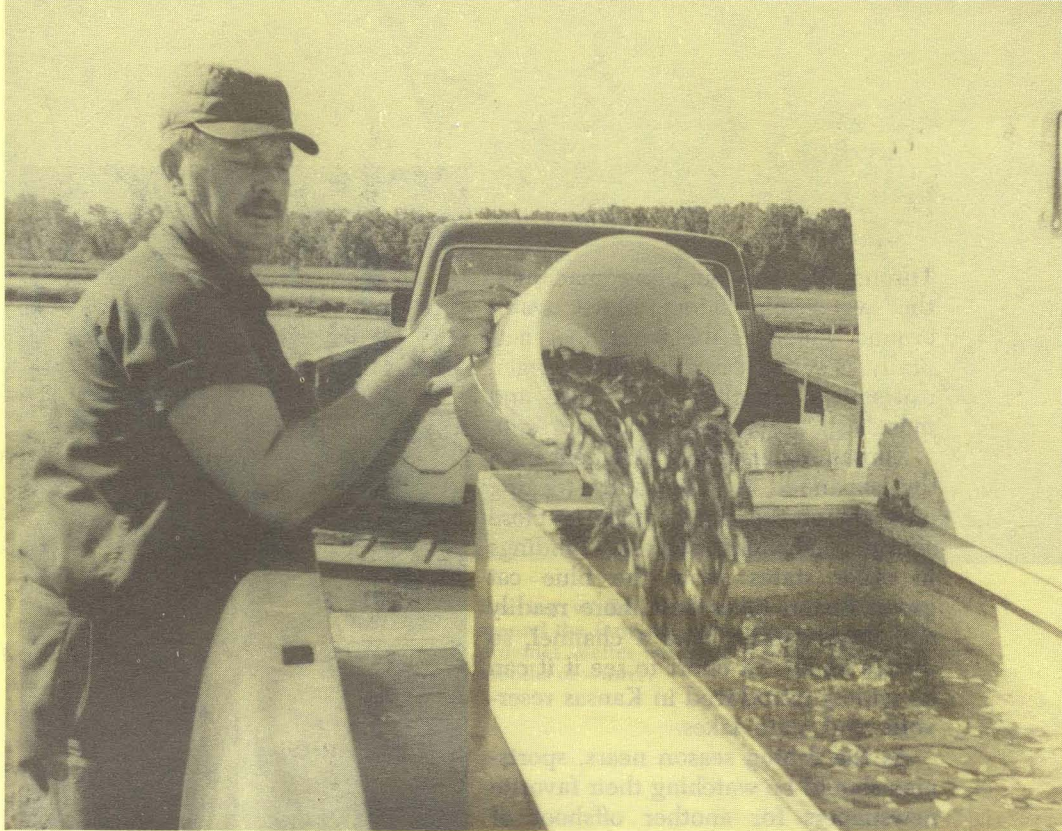
Farlington State Fish Hatchery, this past fall, was improved to the point that it will produce 30 percent more game fish to stock in more Kansas waters.

This past fall has seen the new SASNAK troops stocking fish, fertilizing the waters and adjusting populations in more than 20 state fishing lakes across the state.

Since SASNAK began, fisheries administrators of the FF&G Commission have had active and highly important input into the federal agencies in charge of building nearly one dozen new federal reservoirs in Kansas. On Clinton Reservoir near Lawrence and Big Hill near Cherryvale, for example, biologists have received some degree of cooperation from the Army Corps of Engineers that the best possible fisheries opportunities will be incorporated into the completed lakes.

Investigations of fish kills, water pollution and aquatic contamination by pesticides have continued as in years past, but to a more responsive level. New developments, however, have begun to crowd into the spotlight.

For example, at Perry Reservoir north of Topeka and Melvern near Lyndon, a fisheries management tool used for the first time in this state last November has revealed some startling information. Through many hauls of a new open-water trawl seine a surprising abundance of walleye appeared in these impoundments, lo-



cated far from shore, more towards the middle of the reservoir.

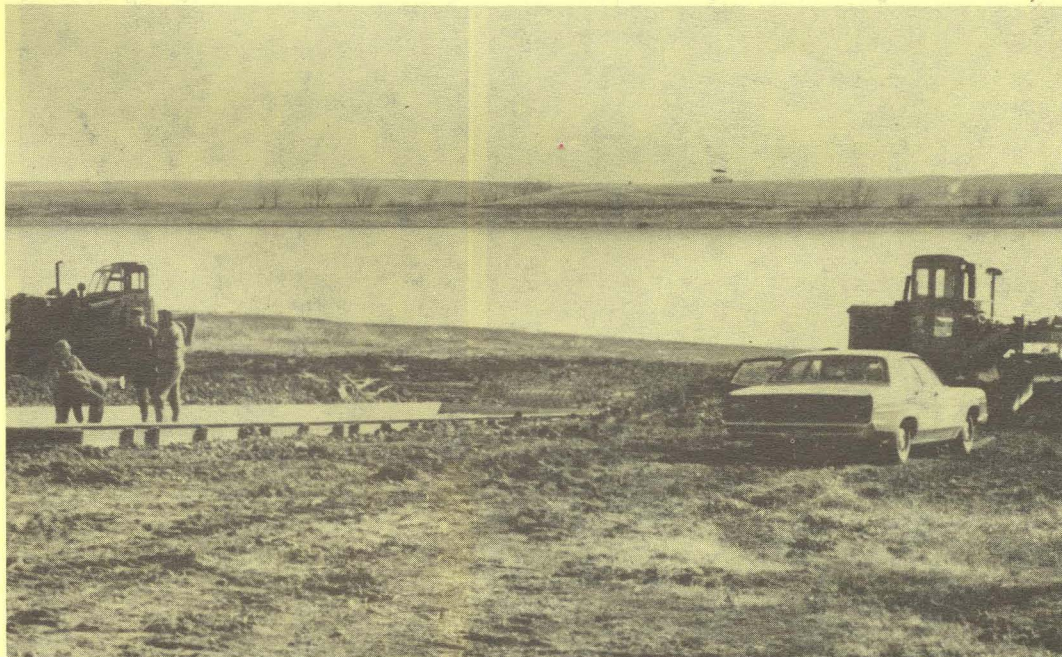
This kind of information, of course, becomes extremely valuable to fishermen. While such sampling techniques are developed, their results will be fired to the public and Kansas anglers will be one step closer to more fish on the stringer.

Northern pike, a game fish of high repute but scarce supply in Kansas, soon will become a more familiar fish to our sportsmen. A pilot project this

spring and summer is aimed at finding the easiest way to rear northern fry to 10 to 11 inches. Upon stocking in public waters, northern of such size generally are assured a high rate of survival instead of being quickly gobbled when stocked as fry.

Also under study is possible use of "water circulators" to de-stratify certain state fishing lakes. In summer months many lakes stratify, that is, the colder, denser water settles to the bottom and becomes devoid of oxygen.

**Installing boat ramps and fishing piers makes it easier for fishermen to get to the fish.**



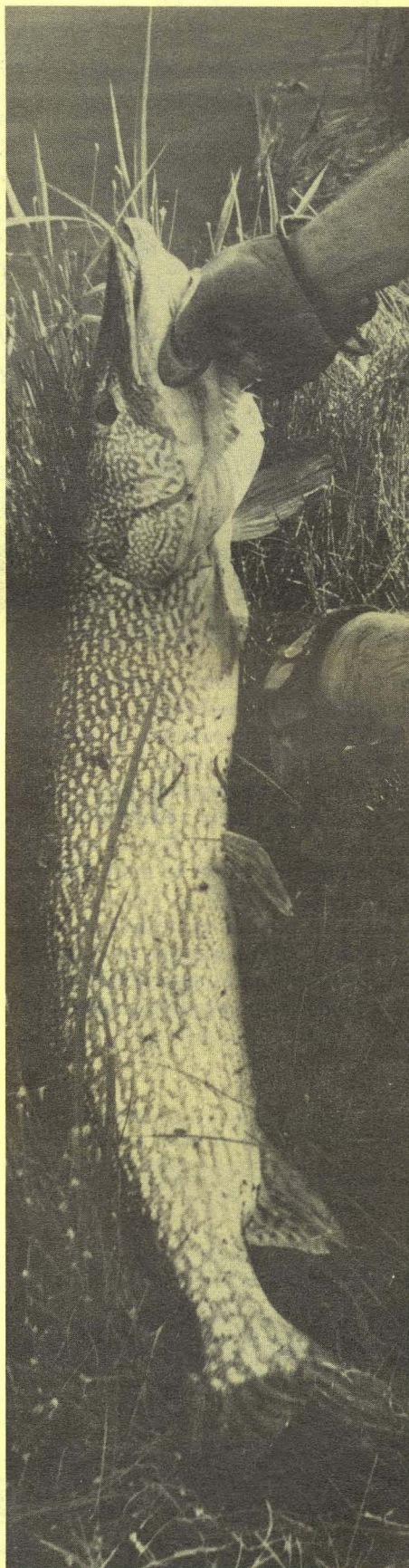
Through forced bubbling machines, the water circulators move water around, much as the wind does naturally in some cases, so that oxygen exists in all reaches of the lake and more fish are produced as a result.

Kansas anglers also will benefit from the expanded tagging and stocking program of the blue catfish, a close cousin of the channel cat. Findings in other states show the blue cat grows faster, takes bait more readily and fights harder than a channel, so there's an all-out effort to see if it can be widely introduced in Kansas reservoirs and state lakes.

As the fishing season nears, sportsmen should be watching their favorite newspapers for another offshoot of SASNAK. That would be more timely, accurate and helpful weekly fishing reports, made possible through more emphasis on getting the fishermen to "where they're biting."

---

Because of the nature of many Kansas waters, northern pike, like the one on the right, grow to large size in a very short time. One SASNAK program is to rear more northern pikes from fry to 10-11 inches so they won't be eaten by other fish when stocked.



## 2. Private land habitat improvement

Of all the influences on hunting in Kansas one main factor always has stood out as the most important: quality habitat—simply a good place for game to eat, produce young and escape the rigors of nature.

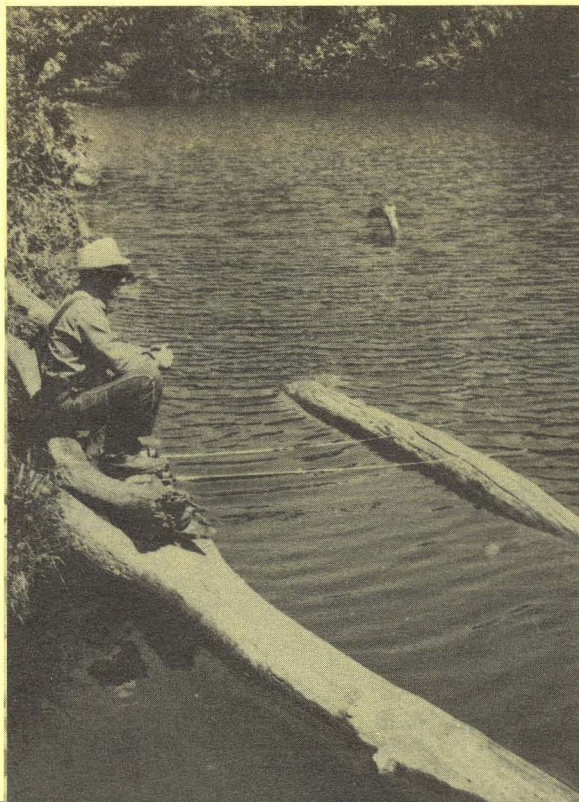
Two goals of Project SASNAK are aimed at ensuring more quality habitat in Kansas and, therefore, more game in the bag for sportsmen.

This particular goal concerns habitat on the private farms and ranches of Kansas, where 90 percent of the hunting occurs. It is called WHIP for Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program—an all-out effort now in progress to save existing and provide additional wildlife habitat without encroaching upon agriculture productivity.

Since SASNAK got underway district game biologists have been intensively studying the Kansas agricultural industry, with emphasis placed on developing ideas to incorporate wildlife habitat into the modern farm and ranch operation.

Surveys have shown that landowners of one half of the state's 80,000 plus farm and ranch units are interested in some sort of habitat improvement program for their lands. And about half of those interested, or a total of 20,000 landowners, said they were willing to cooperate without cost-sharing benefits.

Now, with much of the planning for WHIP either underway or completed,



primary duties of field game biologists are shifting to direct contact with landowners to put these ideas to work.

Included in their technical assistance to landowners and tenants, district biologists are planning methods to keep such habitat improvements at a low cost. Wherever possible, natural development of habitat will be encouraged because it requires little time, effort or cost to landowners.

Federal cost-share benefits for such conservation programs are being fully examined to help defray habitat expenses. District biologists are seeking and obtaining wholehearted cooperation from associated agency personnel in the Soil Conservation Service, Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service, Extension Service and other county officials.

As **WHIP** progresses more knowledge will be needed to help game managers have a more positive influence on wildlife populations. Because habitat is the basic influence on wildlife, steps now are being taken to compile a massive statewide habitat inventory.

Research biologists are looking towards assistance of NASA and its satellites to provide detailed photo imagery from high above the earth's surface, showing land use patterns in



Leaving wildlife habitat in areas like this around the farm not only helps save soil, but provides shelter and food through the trying months of winter.

Kansas and changes in these patterns over the years. High-flying U-2s also are being looked at as well as ground surveying. As these methods are refined biologists will be able to forecast changes in wildlife populations and pinpoint reasons why. And, their efforts will be geared towards compromises and remedies to detrimental changes to sustain the highest possible populations of wildlife.

Game researchers this fall and winter have actively been involved in iron shot-lead shot studies and their affects on waterfowl. Collections of gizzards and wings from about 1,000 ducks in

Talks like those on the left can prevent something like this eroded gully from ever happening.

Game biologist and game protector talk to wheat farmer, pointing out some ways to increase wildlife habitat, without hurting crop production, or costing much money.



Kansas, plus observations of hunters using iron and lead shot will, in weeks to come, provide the first evidence to see which of the two shots is best for the resource and best for the hunter.

Following 10 years of highly successful wild turkey trap-transplant operations on private land in southwestern Kansas, the state will enjoy its first turkey hunt since the turn of the century in April. Spurred on by cooperative efforts of landowners, game biologists now are trading Kansas prairie chickens for the eastern subspecies of turkey from Missouri. The eastern turkeys will be introduced at sites already selected in eastern Kansas with a possible hunting season in the near future.

Through cooperation of landowners throughout the 1960's and early 1970's, the Rio Grande turkey was re-introduced to Kansas. They have become so established because of trap-transplant operations by commission biologists that in April the first wild turkey hunt in Kansas will be held since the turn of the century.



Wildlife other than the game species are benefitted, like this young loggerhead shrike, from more habitat on the farm or ranch.

Game biologists also report antelope, which mostly range the wheat farms and cattle ranches of Wallace and Logan Counties, have approached numbers that will support a limited hunting season possibly in the second year of SASNAK.

The destiny of wildlife and the

sport of hunting is in the hands of private landowners of Kansas. SASNAK has made possible a working relationship between these individuals and professional game managers to guarantee wildlife and agriculture can both have bright futures.



### 3. Double upland game harvest from public hunting areas

As the goal indicates, most public hunting areas in Kansas have operated far below their capacity to produce game for hunters.

Through intensive habitat management on the state's 200,000 plus acres of public hunting lands managed by the commission, this SASNAK goal, however, is well on the way towards changing that.

Most significant is the nearly completed, comprehensive game management plan, covering all land holdings of the commission. This detailed account is aimed at fully exploiting all potentials to make these areas ideal examples of intensive habitat and game management. The face-lifting already has begun.

Of the 20,000 acres in state fishing lakes and land surrounding them, for example, only about 12,000 acres now are open to hunting. And of these open areas, most have not been managed as public hunting sites. However, by next fall the management plan will see much of the remaining 8,000 acres available to hunters, and habitat planting, fencing and posting programs underway in many cases.

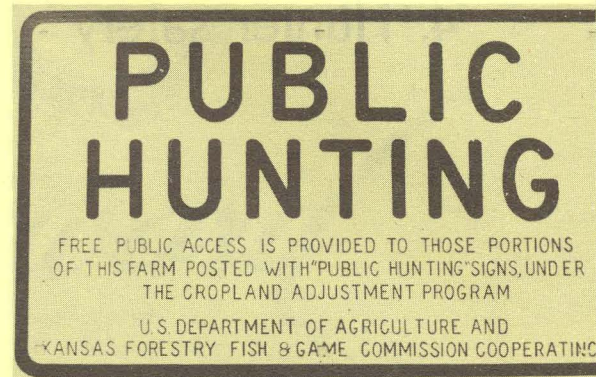
SASNAK already has resulted in several hundred acres of new waterfowl marshes at Perry Reservoir Game Management Area. More than 700 new hunting acres have been added to the Fall River tract as a result of fencing out neighboring cattle in October. A new pond for dove and puddle ducks also was added there. And at Elk City, waterfowl marshes in excess of 100 acres will be constructed as an early accomplishment of SASNAK. The Marais des Cygnes Waterfowl Area is being expanded this winter by one-third.

By affording new manpower, SASNAK has relieved neglected areas such as the Glen Elder and Wilson Game

Management Areas, totaling more than 30,000 acres, but where only one man was available to manage them. Beginning last fall, each of the areas will benefit from new district game biologists, a new area manager and a new line of habitat farming equipment. Next fall hunters will begin seeing the difference.

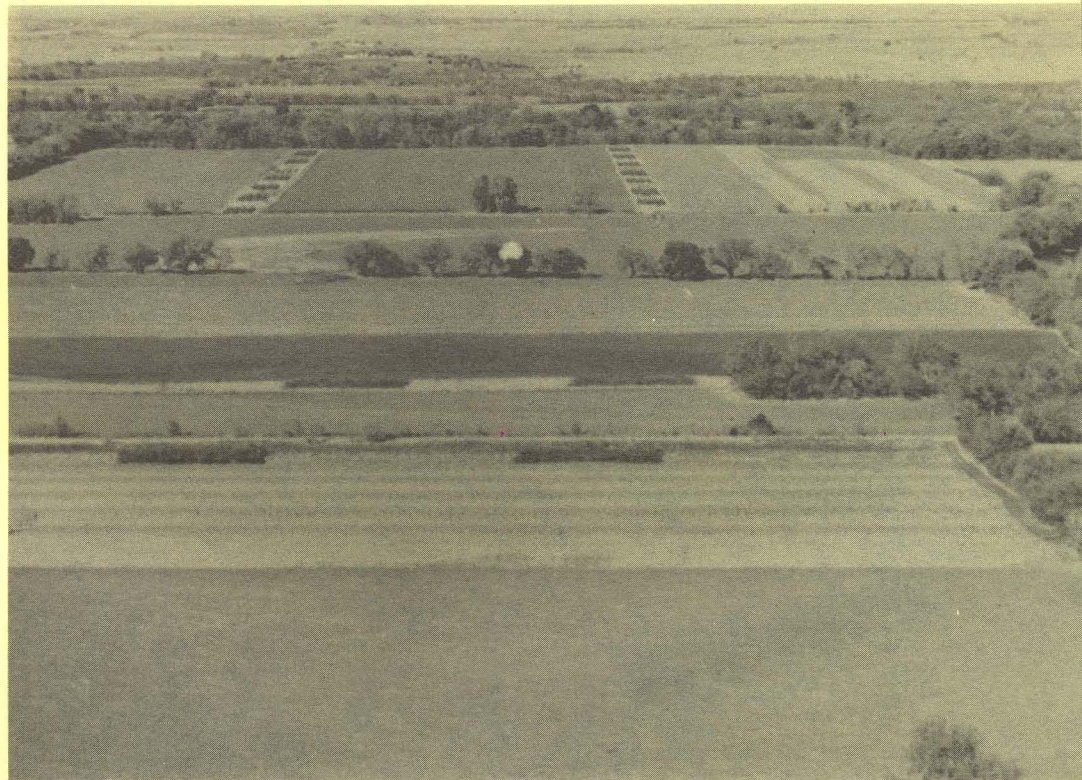
Plans now are in progress to open up to 4,000 additional acres to public hunting at Kirwin Reservoir, possibly by the '74 seasons.

With new techniques for evaluating game habitat that is lost when new reservoirs are built, Kansas sportsmen



will be provided many more thousands of acres of public hunting lands. Of 10 new reservoirs now under planning by different federal agencies, it is expected they will yield a minimum of 85,000 more acres of game management lands when they are completed.

This year the new SASNAK employees kept close records on hunters' activities at most of the game management areas, and they will continue this in coming years. From this point on, their direction is onward with improved game habitat and upward with more game for sportsmen.

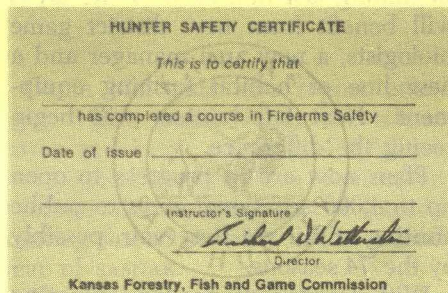


## 4. Hunter safety



With the first new hunter safety classes for students begun in May, this part of SASNAK has broken all records in Kansas and across the country as one of the most progressive and responsive hunter safety training programs ever to exist.

As of this printing, close to 40,000 students have attended and graduated from the comprehensive course, just nine months after it was started.



Volunteer hunter safety instructors are the backbone of the already successful hunter safety program, less than a year old.

All young Kansas hunters must have this card before they can hunt.

More than 3,400 volunteer instructors also have been trained by FF&G Commission personnel to teach the courses, another record which places Kansas at the top of all states with similar programs. And in the last few weeks, more than a dozen large workshops were conducted across the state to bolster advanced training of instructors and recognize their efforts.

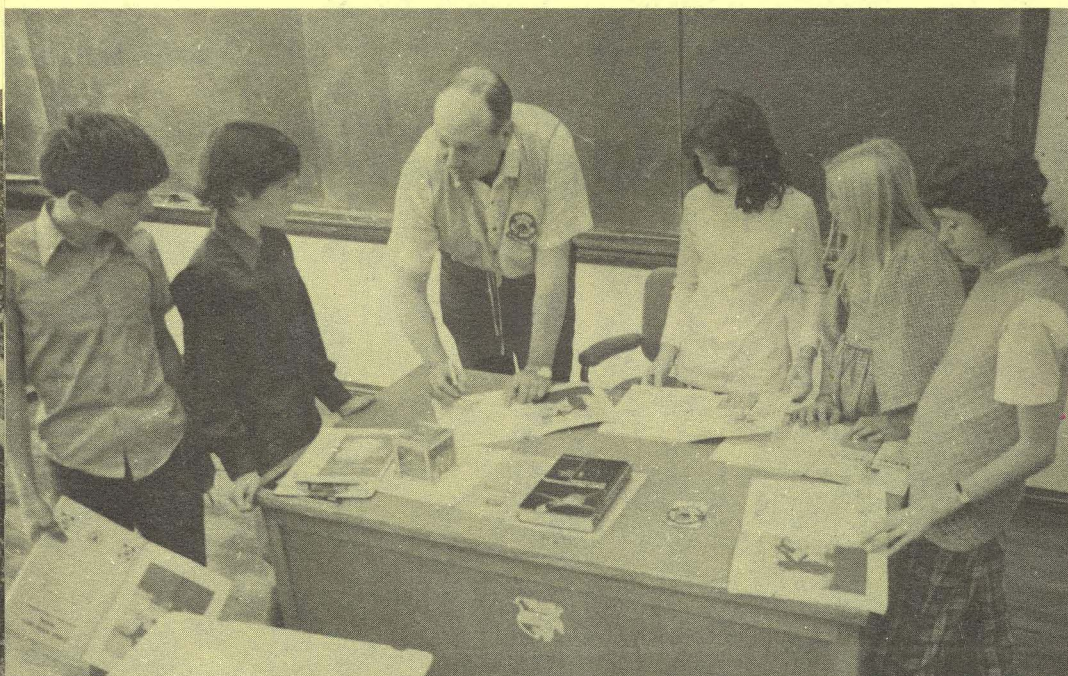
During the 1972 Kansas legislative session, a new law was enacted which, after July, 1973, required each person born on or after July 1, 1957, to complete the hunter safety course developed by the commission before going afield to hunt. Because of this legislative mandate and deadline, the new mandatory hunter safety program became the first of many innovative and dramatic plans which will be carried out under SASNAK.

On November 1, 1972, Royal Elder, a veteran game protector at Manhattan, was selected to fill a new position of hunter safety administrator in the information - education division. His job was to formulate and then implement the hunter safety training program.

Since the law required coursework in conservation and hunting ethics, as well as covering safe gun handling techniques, the administrative staff soon approved an eight-hour hunter safety course to cover many topics.

At the August meeting of the International Association of Fish and Game Commissioners and Directors in Orlando, Fla., the Kansas hunter safety program was singled out from about 30 other states' and given a huge slap on the back by this prestigious group.

From its beginning, the Kansas hunter safety program was designed to instill in each student the importance of respect—respect for firearms, respect for game and other wildlife, respect for other hunters, respect for land and property, and respect for the student himself.



HUNTER



ETHICS

# Award

ISSUED TO

IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR PRACTICE OF HUNTER ETHICS, SHOWING RESPECT FOR OTHERS AND SPREADING GOOD WILL IN THE STATE OF KANSAS THIS YEAR OF \_\_\_\_\_

To encourage respect for the landowner, a unique hunter ethics course was developed which gave Kansas the distinction of being the first state in the nation to formulate a hunter ethics award program—a plan designed to improve the hunter's image.

Sessions on wildlife conservation and game identification also were included, requiring preparation of student and instructor manuals and a multitude of other printed materials. No similar materials were available from any other source which would be applicable to Kansas.

With emergency help of the State Printer, manuals and other printed materials soon were ready to start the second phase of the hunter safety program—training of volunteer instructors who would perform actual student training.

In early March of 1973, Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game employees were trained as master instructors. Later that month employees from all divisions of the commission were busy throughout the state holding training sessions for volunteer instructors in nearly every county.

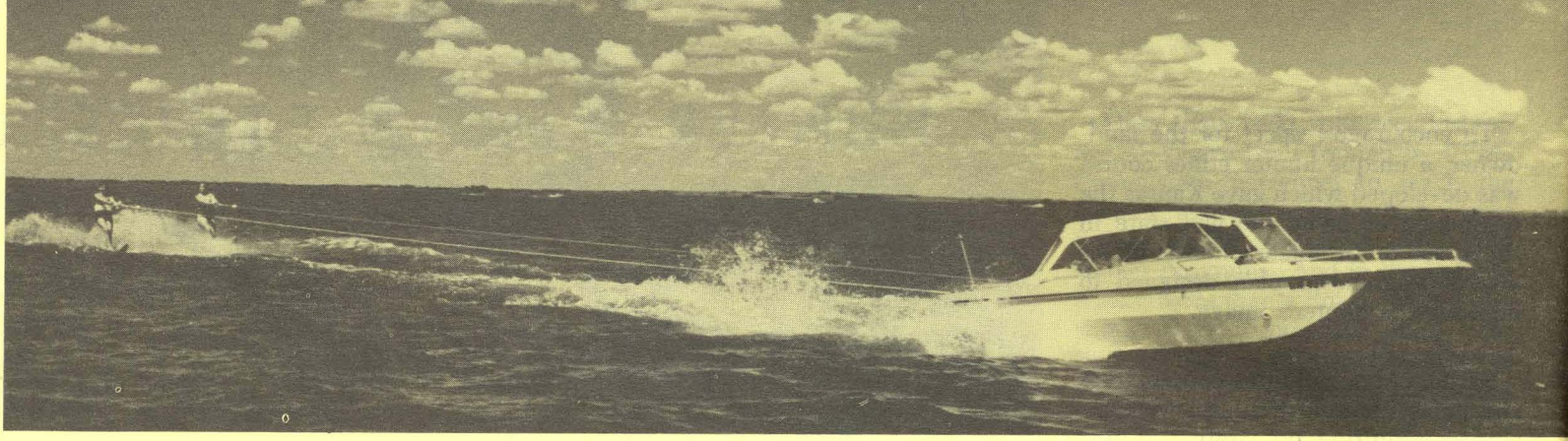
This work continued into early fall resulting in 3,400 volunteer instructors being certified. Many sportsmen clubs, civic organizations, police departments and schools became involved to lend impetus to the program. Without the donation of time and talent of this elite corps of workers, the hunter safety program would have failed miserably.

Thanks to publicity given by news media, word of the new program has spread and youth throughout Kansas know they must graduate from the course before they can hunt. The course will continue in the coming years providing even more interesting and informing courses through continued analysis and improvement in the entire program.

Upon completing a special good deed for a landowner, a graduate of the hunter safety course may be in line for special recognition and this Hunter Ethics Award certificate.

Father points out to son to be respectful and courteous to landowners, offering them cleaned squirrels to show their gratitude.





## 5. Establish the courtesy water patrol

As one-fifth of the SASNAK plan, the courtesy water patrol already has been established and is ready to launch for the 1974 boating season. The patrol's aim is to enforce, educate and help develop water safety in Kansas.

When the first SASNAK funds became available last summer, the program got underway with the hiring of the first three full-time members of the patrol. In addition to the orientation and training with the other new SASNAK employees, the water patrol took five weeks of instruction at the Law Enforcement Training Center in

Hutchinson. Then it was off in early January to the National Boating Safety School in Yorktown, Va., for six weeks.

The courtesy water patrol is operating under a "six and six" program—six months of enforcement during the boating season and six months of education during the off-season.

Boating safety education includes presentations to civic groups, school systems and other organizations as well as making appearances on radio and television. These efforts also will be interspersed with enforcement duties as time allows during summer months.

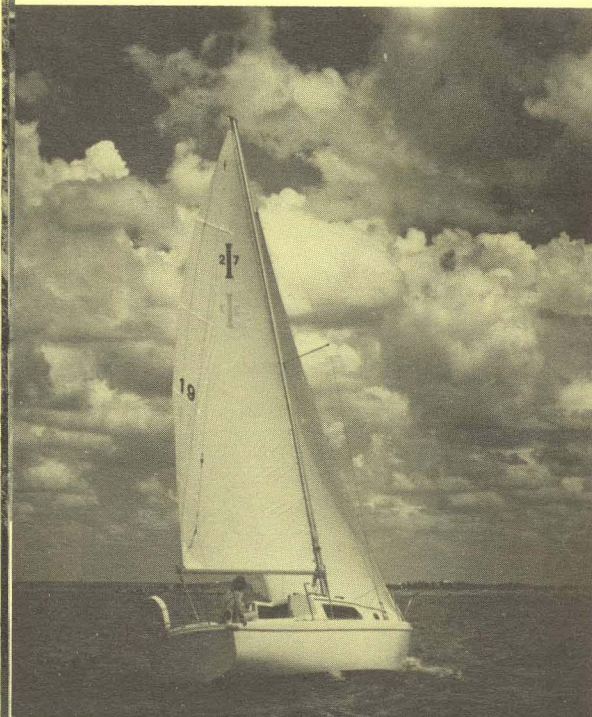
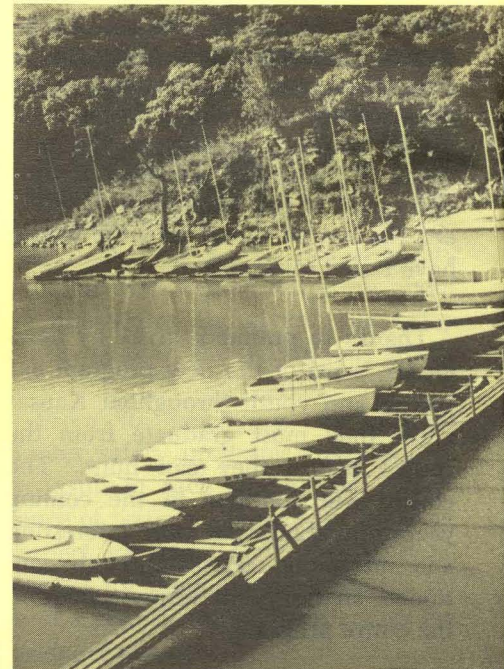
Three additional part-time personnel will be hired for June, July and August and the six men will split up into three teams of two men. Each team is being outfitted with fully equipped 18-foot inboard-outboard patrol boats. They will be highly mobile, shifting between the most heavily used reservoirs on randomized schedules.

"Courtesy" comes into play as the teams conduct on-the-spot voluntary safety checks near heavily used sites, such as marinas. Similar to auto safety checks with no fear of arrest, boaters can have their craft examined. Upon approval vessels will get an inspection decal. Boats bearing such decals will

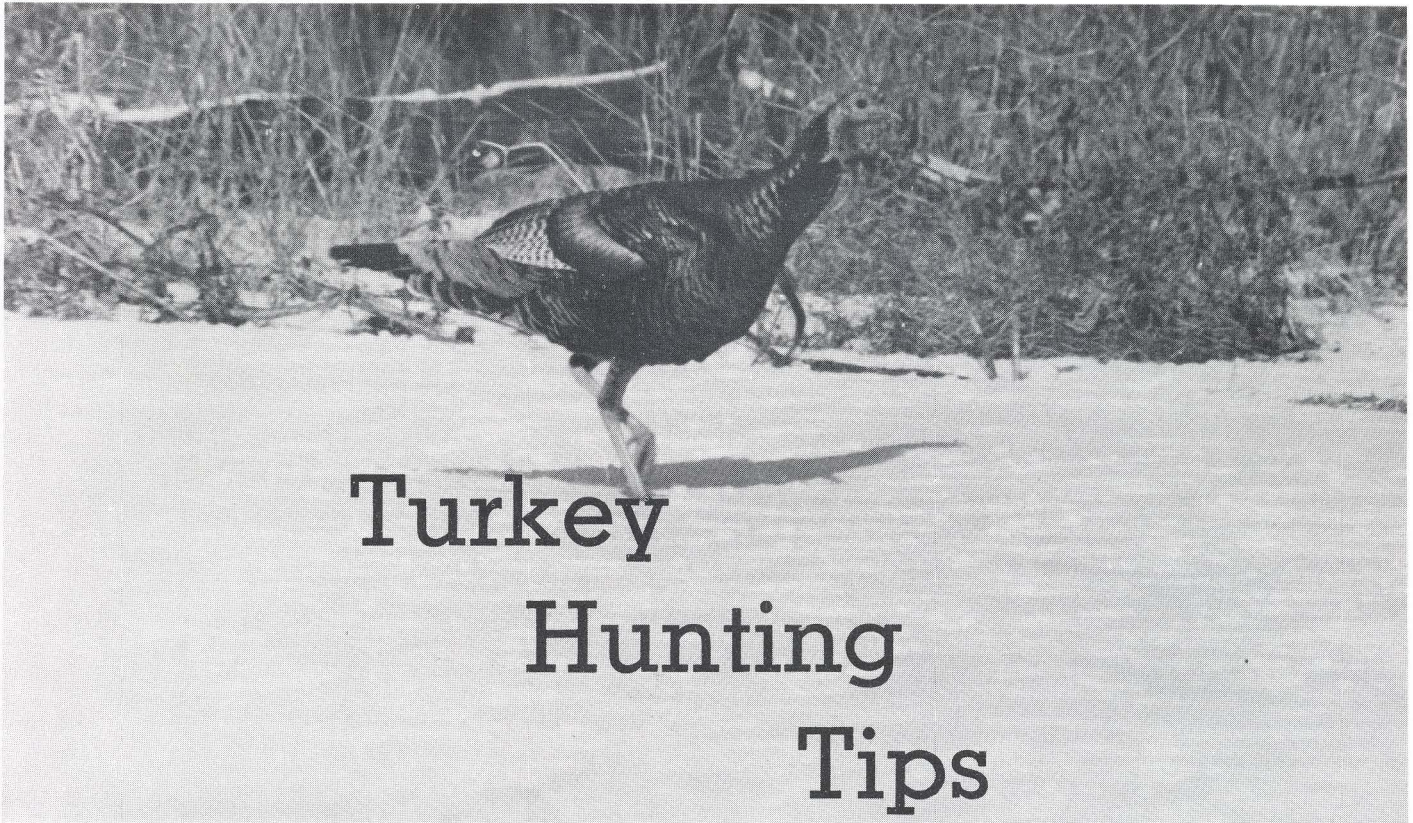
not be stopped on the water unless obviously violating the law.

Another aid to Kansas skippers is a soon-to-be-published booklet covering all facets of boating in Kansas, including the most up-to-date information on safety, laws and technical assistance.

Here's a likely looking spot for a courtesy boat check.







# Turkey Hunting Tips

By Vic McLeran  
Editor

**T**HE CAMOUFLAGED hunter crouches silently at the base of a cedar tree. In his hand is a small boxlike affair. Cradled in one arm is a 12 gauge pump gun. Around him, the woods are quiet as dawn's first light filters through from the East. It's Spring and newly-emerged buds cast a green haze through the riverbottom timber. Here and there splashes of pink and white dot the greenery as redbuds and dogwoods bloom.

The hunter tenses as a fox squirrel barks from a distant tree and is answered by the harsh scream of a bluejay. The woods are waking up. As the sun rises higher and visibility improves, the hunter puts a piece of chalk to his boxlike apparatus. Moving it in two sharp jerks, he imitates a hen turkey's "keow, keow."

No reply. The woods are quiet.

He waits several minutes and repeats the process. "Keow," "keow." The hunter can hear nearby river wa-

ter gurgling softly as it swirls around a partially submerged cottonwood log. Impatience sets in and the man is about to use the call again when from the far side of a plum thicket, he hears it—the call of a Rio Grande wild turkey.

Sucking in his breath sharply, the hunter swallows hard trying to pick out the gobbler in the hazy light. Feeling the adrenalin, he fights down the impulse to hit the call again, remembering that it's easy to spook a gobbler by overcalling.

Moments later the big tom calls again, this time much closer, but off to the hunter's left. Then he sees the bird. About 30 yards out coming in

hind a large cottonwood, the hunter eases off the safety and slowly brings his shotgun into position. Always wary, the turkey pokes its neck from behind the tree before stepping out. Then slowly, it comes into the clearing, uttering its cry once more, strutting proudly.

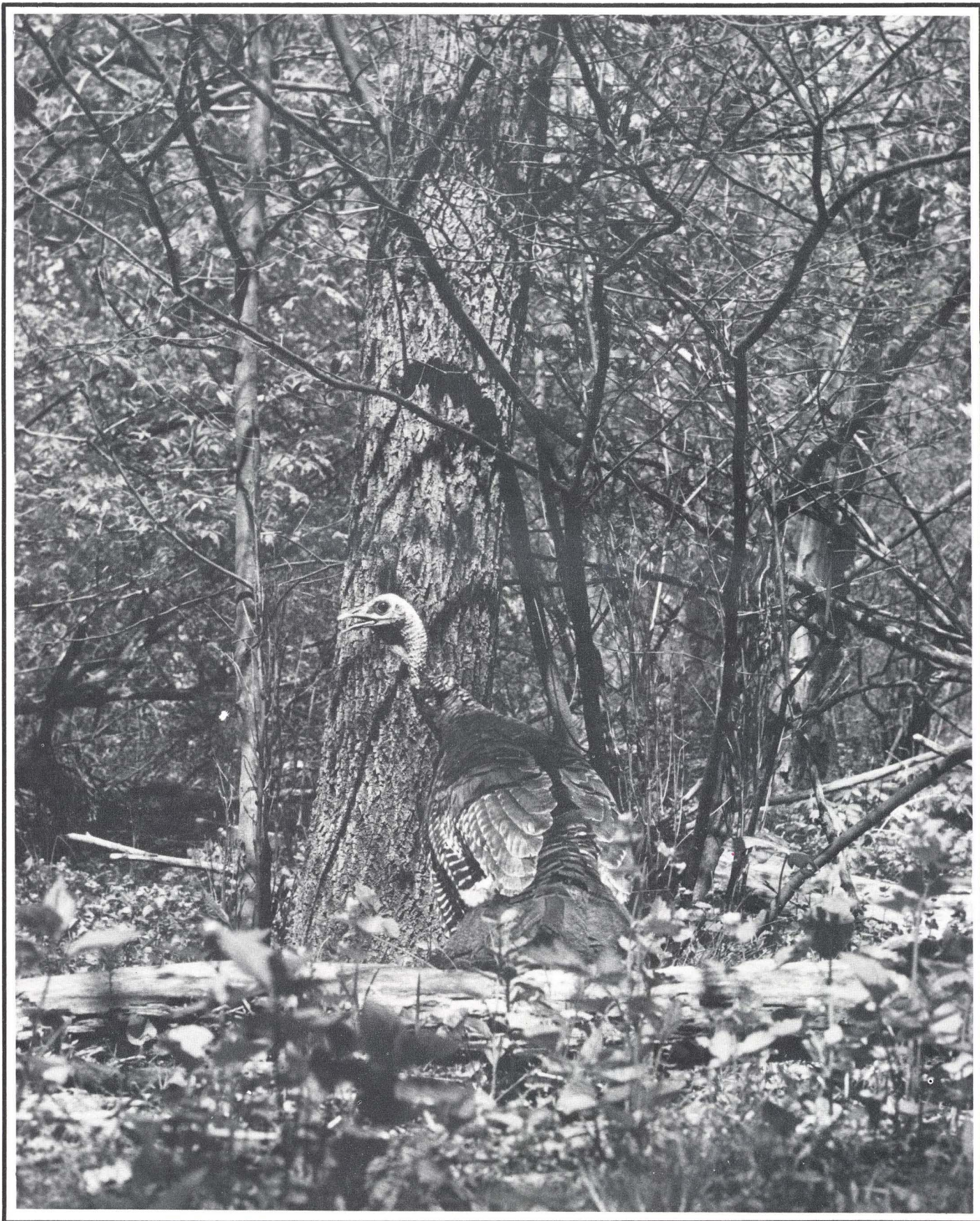
The front bead on the shotgun settles on the big tom's neck and the hunter squeezes off. The 12 gauge shatters the stillness as the turkey goes down in a whirlwind of black-bronze feathers and leaves. Pumping another shell into the chamber, the hunter is ready for a second shot. But there is no need. The No. 4 magnums have done their job.

**Now is the time when prospective turkey hunters should be obtaining permission to hunt, scouting the terrain and making other preparations for the upcoming season.**

slowly, placing each foot down deliberately, and craning its long neck, intensely alert.

As the gobbler steps cautiously be-

Shaking with adrenalin, the hunter dashes through the underbrush into the clearing to claim his prize—a Rio Grande gobbler.



Wild Turkey by Leonard Lee Rue  
*Fish and Game*

This scene, and others like it, will be recreated this Spring in Kansas as 400 lucky applicants get a chance at turkey hunting during the state's first season in modern times. Slated for April 20-28, the season should be a dandy.

In order to provide some tips for these 400 lucky hunters, I talked with several turkey hunters who have bagged gobblers in Oklahoma under terrain similar to that found in Kansas. They offered some information which should prove helpful.

**Everything I've read and heard** about turkey hunting stresses the importance of pre-season preparation. This includes obtaining permission to hunt. "Before the successful applicant does anything, he should contact landowners and obtain permission to hunt way in advance of the season," cautions Lee Queal, the Commission's game chief, who has taken several turkeys in Oklahoma.

Ideally, the hunter should have taken care of this prior to applying for a permit. But if not, it should be done as soon as the permit is received.

**After you've obtained permission** from a landowner, you'll probably want to scout the area you're planning to hunt. Obviously this land must fall within the areas designated as hunting units so you should check the maps carefully.

"It's extremely important that the hunter be familiar with the terrain he intends to hunt," says Queal. "This familiarity is especially important when the hunter goes after birds which have been spooked for one reason or another. If he knows where the birds will go when they've been scared, he can often intercept them. It also gives him a reference point from which he can start his stalk."

What exactly should the novice hunter look for during these preseason scouting trips?

"It's a real good idea to try and locate roosting areas," Queal continued. "Each morning the birds come down and mill around strutting and clucking. However, the law prohibits hunters from actually shooting the turkeys

from the roosting trees," Queal cautioned.

The game chief also says it's best to make several of these reconnaissance trips into the area. "The first trips should be made well in advance of the season. There's not much chance of spooking the birds badly on these early trips but later, as the season approaches, the hunter should be more cautious and make less noise.

**"When scouting the land,** look for natural existing cover such as big stumps, cedar trees or thickets and other areas which will provide the hunter with a good place to take a stand or build a blind. It's best to have several of these places firmly in mind in case weather conditions or

ter J. Hen droppings, on the other hand, appear as neat, flattened spirals. This is important when hunting during a "gobblers only" season such as the one we are about to have in Kansas.

**Turkey scratchings are another sign** which tell the hunter turkeys are in the area. When feeding, turkeys scratch the ground bare in search of food items. During this scratching, turkeys throw ground debris to the rear. If the scratchings are recent, moist earth will be deposited on top of leaves and other litter in the rear. The scratchings are roughly triangular in appearance with the apex pointing in the direction of the flock's travel, almost like a directional arrow.

**Late winter and early spring is the time for turkey hunters to be scouting the land they'll be hunting.**



Ken Stebben

other factors dictate a change in positions. If you decide to make a blind, be sure to use natural materials that blend with the immediate area."

Other signs to look for include dust baths, feathers, turkey tracks and droppings. Interestingly, the droppings of turkeys tell more about the critter than does the spoor of most birds or animals. The droppings of the gobbler are straight for most of the length with a hook or curve on the end. Roughly, they resemble the let-

Wild turkeys are also fond of taking dust baths, especially when the weather is warm and the ground is dry. Dusting spots are easily recognized. Usually they appear as oval-shaped, shallow depressions in dry or sandy soils. They are a foot or so wide and two or three feet in length. Loose body feathers from the turkeys are often found in the soil around the bath.

**Once you've located an area** that turkeys seem to be using, it's time to



Hunters should check areas where grain fields are adjacent to timbered riverbottoms.

check out your equipment. What do we mean by turkey hunting equipment?

Let's look at the hardware first. Many turkey hunters I've talked with recommend a 12 gauge, bored full with a load of No. 2 magnums. The law says, "legal firearms for the taking of turkey shall be shotguns, muzzle loading shotguns and long bow at the option of the landowner on whose property the permit holder has permission to hunt."

**Legal gauges include 20, 16, 12 or 10.** No 410's or 28 gauges will be allowed. Shot size must be No. 6 or larger.

For archers, the law reads, "Legal archery equipment shall be a long bow of not less than 35 pounds pull at 28 inches of draw. Legal hunting arrows shall be equipped with broad-head points of which all parts are fabricated from steel. Cross bows shall be illegal to use in hunting and taking of turkey."

**Choice of shot size varies** from hunter to hunter. Some favor No. 2 shot saying the turkey is a big bird, hard to kill. They maintain the energy and penetration inherent in the larger shot is needed to do the job. Most of

these hunters usually shoot at the bird's body.

James F. Brady, in his book, *Modern Turkey Hunting*, says, "Most turkey hunters now favor the head-and-neck shot, and prefer no shot larger than No. 4's. The dense swarm of small shot striking the head and neck acts like a bolt of lightning, usually anchoring the turkey on the spot."

**Since most hunters recommend** waiting until the turkey comes within 25 or 30 yards before shooting, it's wise to pattern your shotgun at this range to see which load works best. The tight patterns given with full and modified chokes seem to be the favorites of many turkey hunters.

You can't read much on turkey hunting or talk to very many turkey hunters without quickly learning that camouflaged clothing is important. The exceptionally sharp vision of a wild gobbler enables him to easily pick out the human form when it isn't broken up by camouflaged gear. Face and hands are important too. Some hunters use face masks and gloves made of camouflaged netting. Others simply streak their hands and face with camouflaged paste or charcoal.

**Use a little common sense** when selecting these camouflaged suits. "Try and wear camouflaged clothing that blends with the specific terrain you'll be hunting," advises Game Chief Queal. This means if you're taking a stand among some cedars you don't wear a camouflage suit which is predominantly brown.

Since most wild turkeys are taken by still hunting rather than stalking, it's important to have a good call and know how to use it. There are dozens of calls on the market but the Kansas hunter should buy one which imitates the mating yelp of the hen since it will be used to call up the gobbler in the Spring.

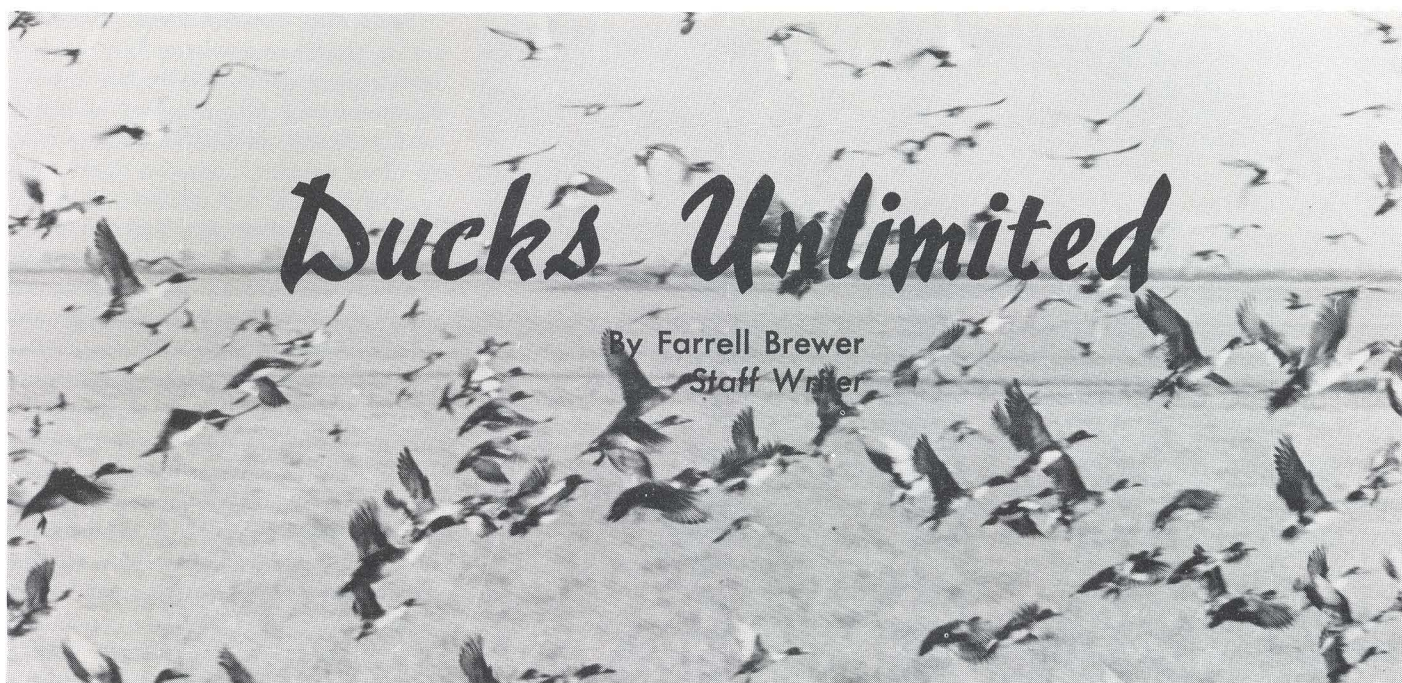
**The best way to learn the art of calling** is to sit down with an experienced caller. Since this is not always possible, the next best thing is to purchase one of the instructional records on the market. The only one I've seen is entitled, *How to Call Wild Turkey*, . . . It costs \$2.49 and is marketed by Penn's Woods Products, Inc., of Delmont, Pa.

Once you've purchased a call the next step is practice, practice and some more practice.

**Another good idea for the novice turkey hunter** is to locate an experienced hunter who has several turkey to his credit. Veterans like this can provide some good tips which might prevent costly mistakes later in the actual hunt. If you don't know of anyone who has hunted wild turkeys, try your public library or local bookstore. Look for books which describe the habits of Rio Grande wild turkeys as well as methods for hunting them. The more you know about wild turkeys, the more you increase your chances of taking a bird. And don't forget the landowner on whose land you'll be hunting. He, better than anyone, knows the location of game on his property.

So remember, now's the time to obtain permission to hunt. Once that's out of the way you can start scouting the area to locate the turkeys. Pattern your shotgun, get the necessary gear in order and start practicing with the call.

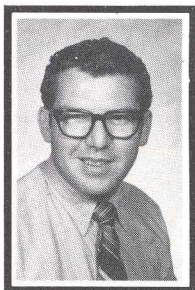
**April 20th isn't far off.**



# Ducks Unlimited

By Farrell Brewer  
Staff Writer

**H**AVE YOU ever heard the "Old-Timers" of the hip boot clan spin yarns of migrating duck flocks darkening the sunrise of a crisp autumn morning, a graceful vee of geese silhouetted high against a yellow Harvest moon, or a flight of mallards as they wheel and drop into a wind-swept marsh? These, indeed, are memorable and pulse-quickenning moments.



Brewer

At the century's beginning, it was a commonplace experience to see massive numbers of ducks and geese literally blanketing the sky as they winged Southward to their traditional wintering grounds, pulled by the mysterious magnet of their migratory instinct.

This breath-taking vision of seemingly endless flocks of waterfowl in flight was a noble heritage graciously endowed upon man by nature—a heritage for him to enjoy, protect, and hand down as a legacy for the generations to follow. Those who thrilled at the awesome sight of these countless thousands of wildfowl gave little thought to any possibility of the skies

ever becoming almost devoid of ducks. It was unbelievable that the glorious tradition of waterfowling could ever be pushed to the brink of becoming just a memory of the bountiful "good old days." Yet, fantastic as the possibility seemed, within a few fleeting years such grim prospects came dangerously close to reality.

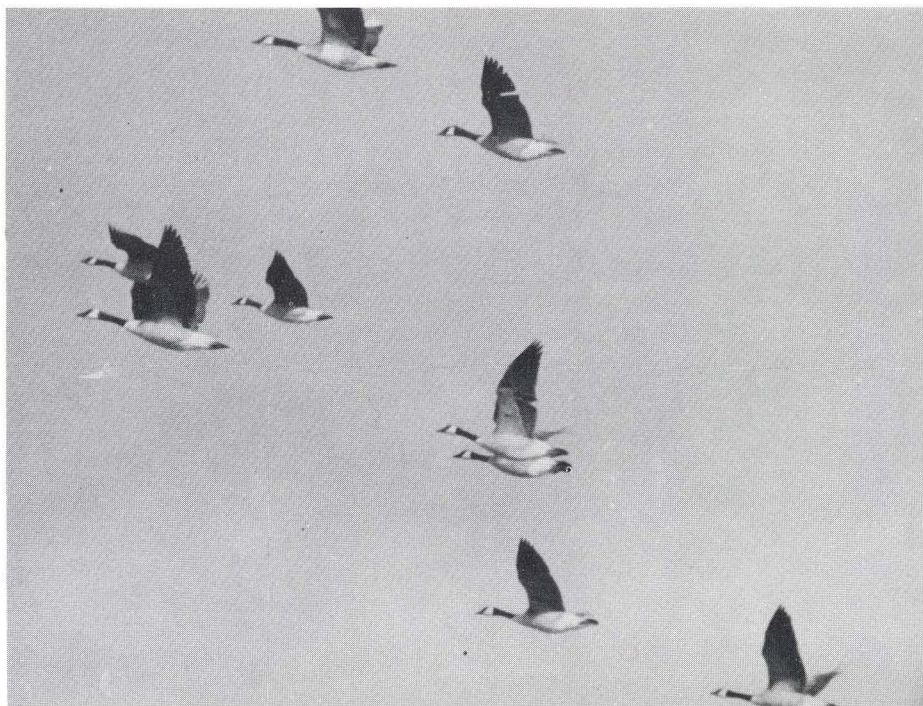
Shortly after World War I, civilization rapidly sprawled westward across the North American continent like a huge wave, encompassing the prairie areas of both Canada and the U. S. Among sportsmen - conservationists there soon arose a disturbing observation—the vast, sky-darkening flocks of ducks were rapidly disappearing.

As waterfowl populations continued their downward plunge toward oblivion, the concern mounted into full scale alarm. The drastic decline gave rise to dire predictions of the death of our duck hunting heritage. Those who loved to hunt waterfowl did not await the season opening in 1936 with the usual anticipation. A dark shadow was suspended over the duck shooter. It was likely that this season could prove to be the last one when many could pursue this favorite sport.

What could be done about this desperate situation? Could the U. S. Gov-

ernment preserve and enhance the prime breeding grounds in Canada? Much had been done to make funds available to lessen the dangers threatening migratory game birds from drainage and other causes by the acquisition of areas of lands and water to furnish reservations for adequate protections of waterfowl and other species. Fees collected from sportsmen with the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act or other federal funds could not be used in a foreign country, such as Canada, where the bulk of waterfowl destruction had been occurring.

In this black hour, the solid foundation for the Ducks Unlimited was carved, with the formation of the "More Game Birds in America Foundation." Searching for the answers to the dark problems responsible for the tragic decrease of continental waterfowl populations, the foundation launched an extensive study, lasting several years. Among the Survey's conclusions: (1) Over 65% of the continent's waterfowl begin life in the three Canadian Prairie Provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; (2) the irresistible onslaught of civilization, through draining and cultivation, was steadily ravishing the



Geese and many species of shorebirds are also helped by DU projects.

prime breeding grounds; (3) natural droughts and floods were becoming increasingly critical as a limiting factor in waterfowl production. Finally, the study concluded that if the duck and geese populations were to be maintained and restored, then immediate efforts in the gigantic task of rehabilitating and preserving the primary nesting areas of Canada, must be initiated.

**To attack a task of this magnitude,** a group of farsighted American sportsmen banded together to form Ducks Unlimited. In January of 1937, DU was incorporated in Washington, D. C., and was dedicated to the wise conservation and the perpetuation of the noble heritage of waterfowling.

The U. S. Government, realizing that federal funds could not be spent for conservation in Canada (even though American sportsmen gained primary benefit), granted tax exemption for contributions to DU's programs of reclaiming and preserving the prime waterfowl breeding grounds. To actually construct the projects, and to handle the many facets of such enormous building program, a sister Canadian corporation called Ducks Unlimited (Canada) was

formed, under laws of the Dominion of Canada.

**Now that some funding was available,** DU was faced with problems of immense proportions, when dirt was turned on its first wetlands project, Manitoba's Big Grass Marsh, in 1938. Even though a serious depression lingered in both the U. S. and Canada, the determined outdoorsmen pulled up their boots and waded in. To the wholehearted support of American sportsmen was added the invaluable cooperation of Canada's Provincial and Dominion governments, plus that of ranchers, landholders, communities and industries, who generously granted long-term land leases on wetland areas.

The result of this, was a program of truly international cooperation in conservation, in a brotherhood that has been unrivaled anywhere. The noble cause of Ducks Unlimited—pioneering in the wise conservation of North America's valuable waterfowl resources—has, from the very beginning, been championed by sportsmen, who have made the future of our ducks and geese the concern of all, from the highest government agency to the hunter himself.

**Since this conservation movement** was initiated some three and one-half decades ago, Ducks Unlimited has led the way in the perpetuation of waterfowl, utilizing all facilities at its command to restore, preserve and create nesting habitat for ducks and geese. DU has expended over \$22,000,000 to plan, build and develop some 1,000 "duck factories," as its projects are appropriately called by sportsmen and wildlife officials. All told, since work first began in 1938, almost 1,200 water control structures such as dams, dykes and levees have been constructed. Today, Ducks Unlimited has, under lease, over 2,000,000 acres of prime wetland habitat, with a total shoreline (a vital ingredient of top quality production) measuring over 9,500 miles.

During early 1970, Ducks Unlimited's programs became truly continental in scope with the launching of Ducks Unlimited de Mexico. During the thirty-six years of its progressive achievement, Ducks Unlimited has raised a total of well over \$29,000,000 in contributions from concerned sportsmen and organizations in the U. S. and Canada. They are proud of the fact that, since its founding, almost 80 cents of every dollar contributed has gone directly to Canada to be spent in the never-ending battle to preserve, protect and restore the vital waterfowl breeding grounds.

**Ducks Unlimited has one very** unique feature in their projects, they do not buy the land, they lease it. It is felt that if the organization purchased land there would be a tax and maintenance burden and this would not allow for expansion. This would take more and more of their budget and the balance left to launch new duck-producing projects would be less and less and finally nil.

Leasing of land is not the only effort being expended by DU, they also manage the land they have leased. They conduct research and advise the agricultural community of the proper time to burn lands, cut hay and help gear other agricultural practices around the nesting requirements of the waterfowl.

**The cooperation received from the**

Canadian agricultural community is excellent. This is not surprising, DU projects definitely enhance breeding grounds for ducks, they also provide flood control, water for crop irrigation and livestock.

Ducks Unlimited is faced with a highly unusual opportunity and challenge. Forging ahead with an aggressive program of project construction now will enable them to provide and protect much valuable habitat from future floods and drought.

**According to research**, an additional 4,500,000 acres of habitat are needed to better stabilize the continent's waterfowl population. It is also felt that this acreage must be secured prior to 1980, or it may be lost to other purposes. By setting a goal of increasing their income by 20% annually, DU is making a bold effort to spearhead this race against the calendar.

The funds which are so necessary to accomplish this long-range goal must in the most part, come from the United States. To attain this goal DU's membership must be expanded.

**Kansas waterfowlers can play** a vital role in this project. There are several Ducks Unlimited Chapters scattered throughout the state, names and addresses of various chapter chairmen will be listed later in this article.

Someone must carry the ball if the noble heritage of waterfowling is to be perpetuated. In Kansas, in excess of 60,000 hunters trek to the marshlands each fall in search of their favorite duck or goose, yet only 888 Kansans contribute to the very organization that ensures that there will be waterfowl here to hunt in years to come.

**There are no doubt those** who will say they support waterfowl conservation when they pay the excise tax on ammunition and firearms or with the purchase of licenses and stamps. This is indeed true, but monies collected from these sources help maintain conservation projects in the United States and cannot be utilized in Canada where over 80% of the ducks harvested in Kansas begin life.

Others who do not hunt might be interested, that while perpetuating

waterfowl is a prime interest of Ducks Unlimited, other species utilize the nesting habitat provided on Ducks Unlimited projects. The list of such is enormous, let it suffice that many shore birds that the dedicated bird watcher or the novice seeks out on his jaunt to the field could possibly perish if it were not for the efforts of groups like DU.

**Memberships to fit every budget** are available in the DU organization starting with the Green Wing Teal membership for those under 16 years of age at the cost of \$5.00 annually. This membership entitles you to a bill-fold membership card, a year's subscription to the DU magazine and a window decal. The \$10 adult membership entitles you to the same privileges. A \$20 membership has the same benefits plus a special "Duckological" report on ducks and habitat published in Canada. Also available is a \$200 sponsor membership, which includes all above mentioned benefits plus a special sponsor's report and certificate.

The Kansas chairman for Ducks Unlimited is Dennis Nelson, 3614 Holly Lane, Topeka, Kan. 66604. In the Hutchinson area, address your requests to Merle Sellers, P. O. Box 196, Hutchinson, Kan. 67501. The Great Bend chapter chairman is Ed Herres,

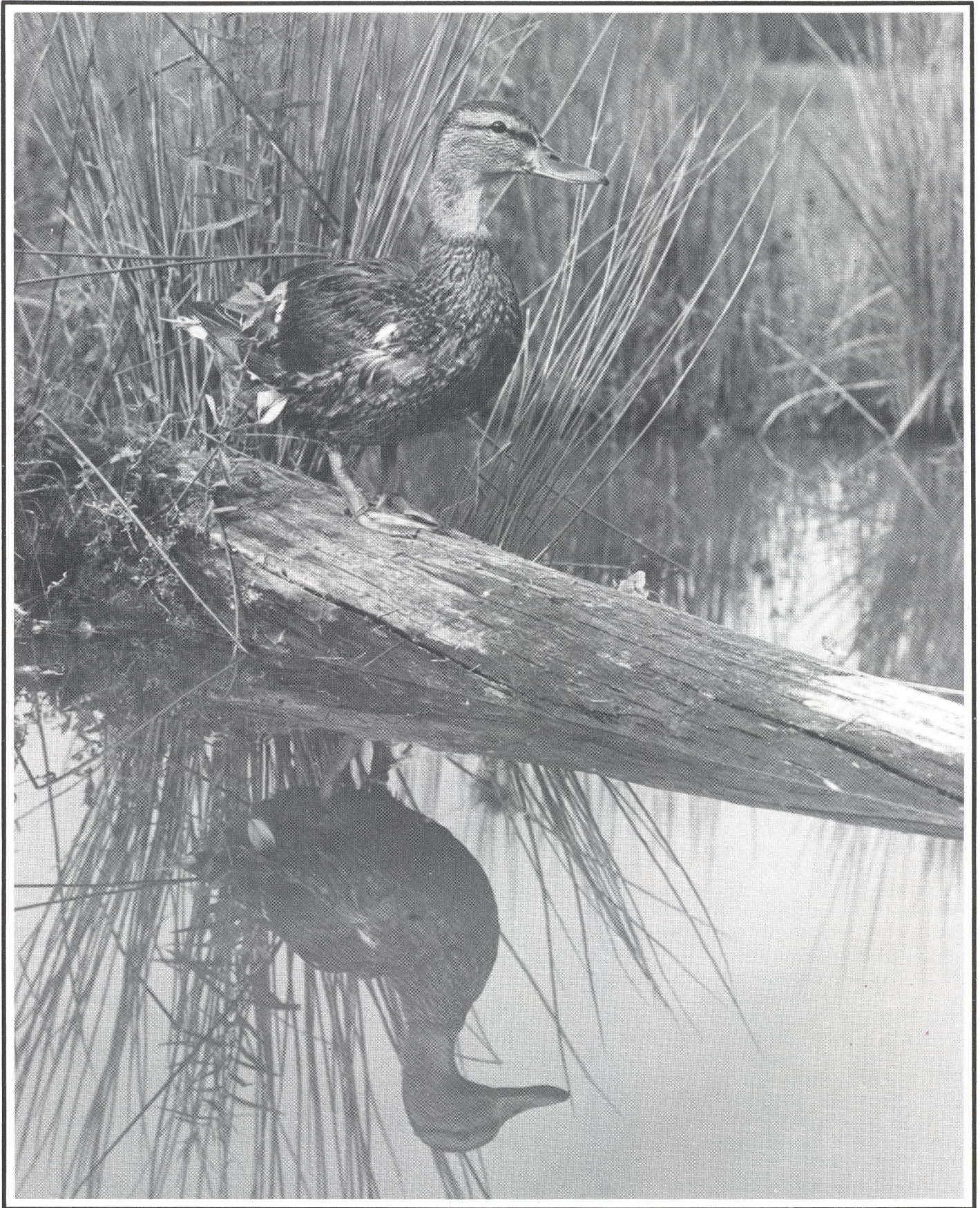
622 N. Vine St., Hoisington, Kan. 67544. Phil Griffith heads the Wichita group and can be contacted at 7633 Dublin, Wichita, Kan. 67202. C. W. Culbertson, 2510 Parkway, Coffeyville, Kan. 67337 is the man to contact. In Garden City contact George Purnell at 659 Wheatridge, Garden City, Kan. 67846. Larry Erne of Independence is a DU chairman and may be contacted at Box 767, Independence, Kan. 67301. The Pittsburg area is chaired by Gus Bossetti, P. O. Box 1005, Frontenac, Kan. 66762. Bob Clubine heads the Salina group and may be reached at P. O. Box 114, Salina, Kan. 67401. Out in western Kansas you may contact Dave R. Rankin, Jr. 322 S. Sixth, Phillipsburg, Kan. 67661. James C. Nyman, 3700 Twilight Drive, Topeka, Kan. 66614 heads the Topeka organization. Bernie Butler, 91011 Bluestem Terrace, Manhattan, Kan. 66502 may be contacted in that area. In the Lawrence area interested may contact Lynn Lindsey, RR 1, Lecompton, Kan. 66050.

**If there is not a chapter** in your area, and you wish to contribute, you may contact any of the above or you can mail your contribution directly to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., National Headquarters, P. O. Box 66300, Chicago, Illinois 60666.

**DU projects support and maintain small prairie potholes which are the lifeblood of many ducks.**



Ken Stiebben



Mallard Hen by Leonard Lee Rue

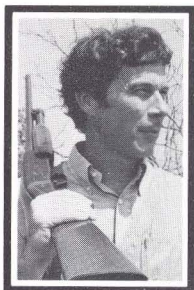
*Fish and Game*



# Why Hunting?

By Ross Manes  
Staff Writer

I STOOD, ARMS akimbo, facing the small, shrill voiced woman who was still fighting an almost overwhelming urge to shake her fist in my face. The car door was warm where I leaned



Manes

against it and sweat was beginning to trickle down between my shoulder blades. It was an all too familiar position, but I knew the woman wouldn't attempt to do me physical harm, much as the idea might appeal to her. We had been in nearly the same position for most of half an hour, though she had edged slightly closer from time to time, the parking lot gravel crunching softly under her crepe-soled shoes. She would pause occasionally to tuck a stray wisp of short, gray-brown hair back under her flop hat and I finally grabbed one such opportunity to make a hurried excuse and an even faster escape.

Driving home in the gathering dusk, I tried to recall the many incidents when I had been cornered by a fanatic anti-hunting individual and pressed to justify the practice of "blood sports." Each single event was so much like another that they ran together in my mind, and only the most recent could be recalled in detail. The settings, dialogues, and particularly the outcome of each experience were all remarkably alike, and unproductive. Over the years one is led to the unavoidable conclusion that no amount of talk will ever sway the anti-hunting convictions of a confirmed preservationist. Yet, we must try.

Hunters, the preservationist will argue, are a selfish lot; killing when

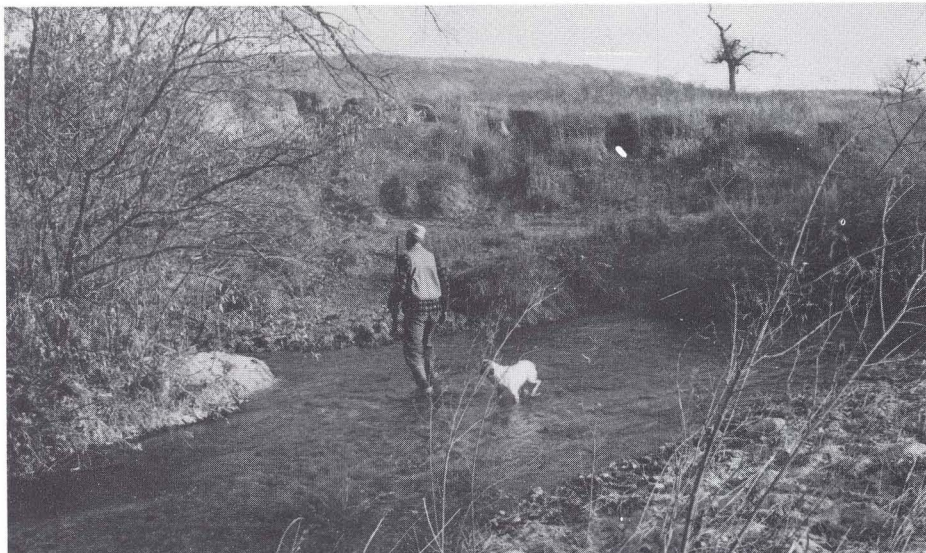
there is no need for food, destroying animals that could be enjoyed by myriads of people if left alone. Well, it's doubtless true that we no longer need to hunt for food. Man has brought his predatory instincts to such a high level of efficiency that we cultivate animals in unlovely herds, transport them packed in steaming, stinking vehicles, and destroy them in gory abatoirs conveniently located across the nation. It is not true, however, that hunters, as a group, are selfish. In fact, they have proven to be a formidable force in protecting wildlife from overharvest, real or imagined. More than any other group, with the possible exception of wildlife managers, they strive to maintain viable populations of game animals. During closed season many of them join the ranks of non-hunters, finding pleasure in simply seeing wild animals in their natural state.

Hunters contribute millions of dollars to the protection and management of both game and non-game animals, but the non-hunter sees this as nothing more than a selfish perpetuation of

hunting. Why, the non-hunter asks, if hunters care so much for wildlife's welfare, won't they continue to contribute if hunting is stopped? It's a matter of differing politics. Will non-hunters pay for wildlife conservation while hunting continues? Would Senator McGovern contribute to Nixon's campaign fund?

The anti-hunting element labors under the delusion that their efforts are totally unselfish. Stop hunting, they say, and let nature take care of her own. Everyone can then enjoy the wild critters, no one will have to pay a fee, and everything will be rosy. Bunk! Under such an arrangement a large segment of this country's population would be bilked of rights granted by the Magna Carta, game populations would face catastrophic starvation and disease, and habitat destruction would rage rampant across the land like a plague.

Perhaps the most important function of hunting is that it provides the funds and the impetus for the great majority of wildlife habitat protection. Unfortunately, protectionists are often



Ken Stiebben

more concerned with waging war on hunters and wildlife managers than they are in closing ranks to combat the real threat to wildlife, habitat destruction. On the other hand, professional conservationists are well aware that if they fail to attempt the action required to protect wildlife and wildlife habitat hunters will soon have the fat in the fire.

Literally thousands upon thousands of words have been written about what motivates a hunter. Fellow hunters tend to speak in terms of love of nature, the thrill of the chase, primitive instincts, and the more mundane need for conservation funding. Non-hunters, on the other hand, couch their opinions in terms like killer psychosis, blood lust, and male ego (which ignores a fairly active distaff group).

**Frankly, I can't question a protectionist's love of wild animals.** It is real, and I am occasionally carried away by the beautiful word pictures painted by a person who actually gets out into the boondocks and watches or photographs wildlife. I am, however, totally bewildered by the lack of logic exhibited by certain armchair conservationists.

For instance, immediately after speaking to a woman's club group in one of our western states, I was approached by an attractive, middle-aged lady who began describing coy-



ote hunters in scathing and eloquent words. They were, in her opinion, considerably lower than the belly of the most degenerate side-winder in the northern hemisphere. Then, almost without drawing breath, she began to decry the scarcity of those darling little top-knot quail in her neck of the woods, and the super-

abundance of those scallawaggy, quail-eatin' coyotes.

**On several occasions I have** been approached by people who said that if it was indeed necessary to kill game animals to prevent overpopulation, that it should be done by "professionals." They were extremely pleased about the elk slaughter that was perpetrated in Yellowstone National Park a few years ago when those majestic animals were on the verge of eating themselves out of house and home. Personally, although I fancy myself a professional conservationist, I doubt any superior right or ability to lay an elk down, and I'm a hundred percent sure the elk doesn't care who does the shooting.

None of this answers the question, "why hunting?" The truth is, hunting doesn't require any justification. For some of us it is a simple fact of life. For others, hunting is an abhorrent thought, but no less a fact of life. The packing plants of this country put meat on the tables of both hunters and non-hunters. If all those plants suddenly closed, hunters would put meat on their own tables. As for non-hunters, well—I doubt they'd starve.

**Hunters contribute millions of dollars to the protection and management of both game and non-game species.**

Ken Stiebben





Ken Stiebben

