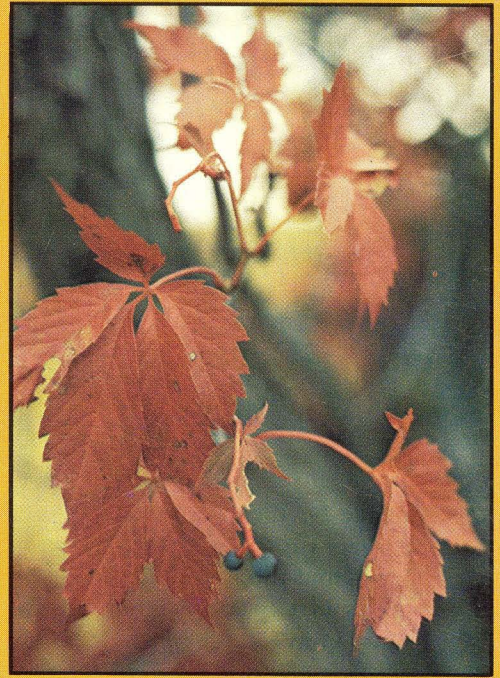


KANSAS FISH & GAME



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November-December 1975

KANSAS FISH & GAME



November-December, 1975

Vol. 32, No. 6

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COVER PHOTOS

Front cover—Pointers, autumn foliage and pointer with quail by Vic McLeran. Fox squirrel and quail hunter by Ken Stiebben.

Back cover—Pheasant hunter, brace of mallards and mallards in flight by Ken Stiebben. Pheasants and quail by Vic McLeran.

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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
1975



36-1751

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Change . . .

What we've got comin' down at us here is that old constant—change. Like free lunches, nickel cigars and dime draughts, your free KANSAS FISH & GAME magazine is soon gonna' be just another memory—a thing of the past.

For nearly 40 years now, the Commission has published and distributed the magazine free of charge to Kansas residents. But the high cost of livin' finally caught up with us. Rising paper costs, spiralling production expenses and mushrooming postal rates make it impossible for us to continue publishing the magazine on a free basis any longer. So effective July 1, 1976, KANSAS FISH & GAME as we know it today, will make some changes.

First, it will no longer be free. The subscription rate for one year (six issues) has been set for \$3, \$5 for two years and \$7 for three years. The magazine will continue to be published six times a year but we anticipate more pages and more inner color photos. The content and editorial style will remain roughly the same, but there's the possibility of a name change and subsequently, a different logo. There will be no advertising and we'll continue to slant articles around the Kansas outdoors as well as informing readers of fish and game programs and operations.

In the January-February, March-April and May-June issues of KANSAS FISH & GAME we'll provide subscription forms for readers to fill out and return to Pratt headquarters with either personal checks or money orders for the proper amount.

During the past six years we've watched KANSAS FISH & GAME's circulation climb from 18,000 to more than 80,000. And we've seen the magazine's format move from that of a black/white quarterly bulletin to its current bi-monthly format with full color covers. Through the efforts of a number of folks, we've watched KANSAS FISH & GAME's quality improve to a point where it was recently judged third best wildlife conservation magazine in North America at the 34th annual conference of the American Association of Conservation Information in Portland. We've reached a lotta' folks with a lotta' good information and I'm sorry to see it all end.

But that old constant is a fact of life—an' we gotta' go with the facts.

Change . . .

Vic McLeran, Editor

FEATHERED FURY

By Vic McLeran, Editor

AN IRATE BROWN thrasher wages a savage battle with a copperhead; a starling enters the nest cavity of a woodpecker and maliciously smashes all the eggs; a shy mallard hen flails a bloodthirsty mink while a blue jay viciously kills and eats a chickadee at the bird feeder.

Sound like something out of *The Birds*? Well it's not. In fact documented encounters like these prove that stimuli such as fear, territorial possessiveness and hunger can turn normally peaceful song and game birds into feathered furies. When this happens harmless songsters may repel not only other songbirds, but physically superior predators as well.

A classic example of this unusual aggressiveness occurred last summer when I watched a blue jay turn the tables on a young Cooper's hawk. I was working in the garden when a jay's harsh distress cry shattered the late afternoon stillness. An instant later the bird exploded from a rose thicket. Hot on the screaming jay's tail was the bullet-shaped form of a male Cooper's hawk. Designed by years of natural selection to prey on

species like the jay, the hawk pumped its broad short wings powerfully. Its long rounded tail acted like a rudder, enabling it to follow the blue jay's every move through dense thickets and tangles.

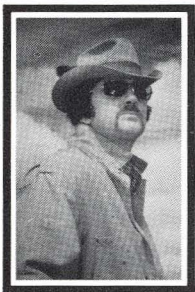
As I watched, the jay darted into a thick lilac hedge. An instant later the hawk plunged into the same bush. Dense foliage prevented my watching the action but the bush shook and leaves rustled. Suddenly the blue jay burst from the bush with the hawk only a foot or so behind. Within seconds the hawk closed the gap and pulled the jay to the ground with its long curved talons.

"It's all over now," I thought as the two birds tussled on the grass, a whirling struggling mass of blue and brown feathers. But with a quick move, the jay suddenly rolled atop the immature hawk, giving the predator several hammerlike jabs to the head. To my surprise, the hawk relinquished its grip and shook itself as if stunned. Apparently the jay was unaware that the hawk no longer had its hold because it became a buzzsaw of blue fury, slashing the hawk several more times. This was too much for the inexperienced hawk. It flew into the air and quickly disappeared in a nearby woodlot. The jay flew to a small oak where it ruffled its feathers and screamed a raucous scolding cry. Evidently fear, and its subse-

quent surge of strength-producing adrenalin, accounted for this surprise victory by the jay.

Even the shy little English sparrow can be a fury when cornered. Bill Lynn, high school biology instructor in Atchison, tries to give his students a real look at the natural world by keeping live snakes and birds in his classroom. "I once had a bull snake in the classroom cage," Lynn said. "The reptile had been eating well in captivity and so one morning I placed an English sparrow in with the snake. I figured the reptile would kill and swallow the bird while the students watched. But within the confines of the small cage, the trapped sparrow immediately became the aggressor, jumping on the snake's back and pecking its head. The terrified bull snake thrashed around the cage, frantically trying to escape. This continued for several minutes until I took the bird out. By this time, the snake was completely neurotic."

Fear isn't the only stimulant which can transform an otherwise peaceful song or game bird into a buzzsaw. Protection of young can also trigger aggressiveness. Ornithologists assume this aggressive behavior increases the chances of a parent bird rearing its young successfully. Dr. Richard Johnston, ornithologist and biology professor at the University of Kansas,



McLeran

elaborated using the mockingbird as an example.

"Let's suppose that sometime in the past mockingbirds weren't the aggressive nest protectors they are now, but that they were shy birds that built a bulky nest that was easy for predators to locate. Let's also suppose that a behavioral variant led to a certain adult mockingbird becoming aggressive, harassing and driving predators away from the nest. This aggressive behavior would probably lead to increased productivity of offspring by that individual mocker. Now 'if' that aggressive tendency were genetically governed, the offspring of the aggressive parents would tend to have similar behavioral tendencies. We might further assume, the more aggressive mockingbirds, outproducing their less aggressive neighbors, would become abundant in the population and eventually in the species. Something like this could have occurred," said Dr. Johnston, "but it isn't the sort of thing

that is subject to experimental testing. Few hypotheses involving natural selection are easy to test."

Regardless of how it evolved, this "mother love" was responsible for an unusual episode I witnessed in Tennessee. While mushroom hunting in some dense creek bottom timber, I spotted a brown thrasher. The bird fluttered down from a wild grapevine tangle with quick nervous wingbeats. Alighting, she began to circle in a weird, erratic manner. With wings and tail feathers drooping, she made short, choppy hops darting forward to peck sharply at something in the grass. From a nearby blackberry thicket, I watched the thrasher's antics, puzzled by her strange behavior. Then I saw a copperhead snake as something lashed out toward the bird. For some reason, the brown thrasher had decided to take on a three-foot copperhead. Each time the reptile struck, the bird would leap into the air, easily evading the thrust. As it came

down, the thrasher would peck savagely at the snake before it could recoil. Impact from the small bird's hammerlike pecks jerked the reptile's body convulsively. Once or twice it appeared that the copperhead's lethal fangs had made contact with the bird's body as brown feathers became ruffled and distorted, but the thrasher continued its attack.

I finally moved closer to investigate. The bird flew when I was several feet away and I got a close look at the damage which the thrasher had inflicted on the copperhead. There were two gashes atop the reptile's head behind its eye, was a half-inch tear from which blood flowed freely.

Throughout my examination of the snake, the thrasher continued hopping about in the grapevine, chattering constantly. Curious about her attachment to the thicket, I moved closer. The volume picked up as I parted the foliage and spotted the coarse twig nest containing three young thrashers.

Waterfowl, like this mallard hen, are usually shy but they can become extremely aggressive in defense of their young.



Ken Stiebber

The parent bird seemed to know instinctively that the copperhead was a predator and she had risen to her youngsters' defense. When I looked back, the reptile was disappearing rapidly in the dense foliage.

Another incident in which "mother love" apparently played a part involved the normally demure mallard hen and a mink. These little aquatic weasels are fond of ducklings and prey on young waterfowl. But a Canadian wildlife researcher once watched a shy mallard hen turn the tables on a mink. The animal attacked as the hen was leading her young through some dense reeds in the shallows toward open water. As the weasel lunged toward one of the ducklings, the mother raced across the surface quacking and flapping. Throwing herself between the attacker and the duckling, the hen flogged the mink in the face with her wings. The mink retreated, then circled the group and tried for another duckling. But each time he approached, the hen drove him from her young. The mink finally retreated.

As strong and determined as they are, the instinctive attempts of adult birds to protect their young aren't always successful. Marvin Schwilling, waterfowl biologist for the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, recalled watching one of these unsuccessful attempts by a pair of irate mockingbirds. "The birds had their nest in the lower reaches of a Russian Olive," he said. "The bull snake had spotted it and was in the tree only a foot or so from the nest which contained three young birds. First one mocker and then the other would dive on the snake, screaming and pecking. They hit the reptile so hard it was nearly knocked from the limb several times. But their efforts were in vain because the snake reached the nest and began swallowing the young birds."

There is another innate drive, and while not as strong as fear or the instinct to protect young, is still responsible for some aggressive behavior among birds. It's the territorial instinct, closely linked to the birds' sex drives and most noticeable in the spring. While not strong enough to prompt attacks on predators, it ac-

counts for some lively scuffles between and among songbird species.

This drive first manifests itself early in the spring when the males are staking out nesting territories in preparation for the females. At this time, fights among males are sometimes so frenzied that the birds pay little attention to anything else. I once watched two male purple martins start their combat high in the air. As the fight continued, the birds dropped lower and lower, finally hitting the ground locked together. There the scuffle continued with the birds pecking and flogging each other, oblivious to the world around them. They were so engrossed in combat I walked up and kneeled next to the fighting martins, watching their struggle. Finally one of the combatants saw me and flew. The other followed seconds later.

This lack of caution among fighting males sometimes causes accidents. Bob LaShelle, Junction City, watched a classic example of this. "I was driv-

ing down the street," he recalled, "when ahead of me, I noticed two male orioles engaged in a terrific aerial fight. Suddenly they veered into the path of my car and were struck. Both birds fell to the pavement. I slammed on my brakes and ran back to where the birds lay, several inches apart. One had been killed instantly. The other oriole was only stunned. And as I looked on, he regained his feet, staggered over to his dead adversary and began hammering him with his beak. When I moved closer, the bird saw me and flew."

Incidents like these show that the little songbird isn't always so harmless. Driven by some of these innate drives, birds have even been known to attack humans. Come to think of it, maybe it's a good thing most songbirds don't come in larger sizes. If they did, that fictional story *The Birds* might just come true.



Ken Stiebben

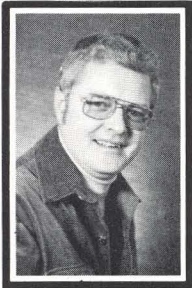
Leonard Lee Rue, nationally-known wildlife photographer, once watched the normally timid mourning dove attack a feisty gray squirrel in a squabble over seeds from a bird feeder.

Kirwin and the Geese

By George Anderson, Staff Writer

"ANDERSON, this is Wikoff," said the gravel voice at the other end of the line. "Doing anything tomorrow that can't wait?" he inquired. Not wanting to commit myself I countered his question with another, "What ya got in mind ole buddy?"

"The old man just called to remind me that goose season ends this week and we ought to give 'em one last go at Kirwin. Since we're all off tomorrow let's meet at Stockton about five-thirty."



Anderson how cold it would be at five-thirty I finally agreed.

After explaining to my better-half why I was setting the alarm for three-thirty to allow me time for coffee and the hour drive to Stockton, I hit the sack. Her casual remark of "You're all nuts" was probably more correct than my agreeing to this early morning madness, but what the heck. "You only go around once, and I was doing it with two other nuts so I feel justified."

Driving to Stockton the next morning I had time to reflect on this place called Kirwin reservoir and how it relates to that strange breed called goose hunters.

Kirwin provides Kansas with the normal benefits usually associated with reservoirs. Benefits such as flood protection, irrigation storage, fishing, hunting and recreational boating. When at normal pool, Kirwin, dam backs up 5,000 surface acres of water. It is located in Phillips county on the north fork of the Solomon river near the town of Kirwin.

Reservoirs, like humans, have sets of fingerprints—prints that identify them as having something unique to offer. While almost any Kansas reservoir can provide some fine goose hunting, Kirwin has a set of those prints that give it a slight edge over some other lakes. It is the home of the Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge.

The refuge was established in 1954 by the Department of the Interior and was the first federal refuge authorized in Kansas. It consists of 10,778 acres of which 5,000 acres are water.

Management of Kirwin is particularly directed toward accommodating spring waterfowl migrants. It is one of the last major feeding stops between their wintering areas and the northern breeding grounds. Winter wheat is raised to provide green browse for geese. Corn and sorghums left standing in the fields are knocked down to provide feeding ducks and geese easy access.

In addition the western one-third of the reservoir is closed to all boating to provide sanctuary for nesting and rearing of waterfowl. Several roads

are also closed during fall through spring to create areas where birds can rest and feed undisturbed.

The past several years has found excellent numbers of Canada geese wintering at Kirwin. During late winter these geese start leaving the refuge to the surrounding fields for wheat browse and provide some fine field goose hunting.

Hunting the public hunting areas of Kirwin does yield some good pass shooting but shooting over decoys, from a pit and on private ground is the most popular. You must plan ahead for this type of hunting. Permission from local landowners is a MUST. Some farmers provide pit blind hunting on a pay-by-the-day usage of pits they provide and there are several commercial goose hunting clubs in the area.

About the only thing I was secure in as I pulled into Stockton to meet my buddies was the fact we had a place to hunt. A pit had been dug weeks earlier in a wheat field northwest of the refuge and about fifty field decoys were awaiting our arrival.

The thought I had the night before on how cold it would be at five-thirty was well-founded. Getting out of the car at the cafe I noticed the temperature on the bank across the street blinked 16 degrees. If that wasn't bad enough there was about nine inches of snow still on the ground from a recent storm.

"Be damn lucky to find the pit lid



Established in 1954 by the Department of Interior, the Kirwin refuge was the first such area authorized in Kansas and is home to a number of geese.

in all this snow," I thought glumly, as I walked into the cafe.

My arrival completed this hunting trilogy and over a hurried cup we plotted the day's attack. Both of my partners, like myself, work for the fish and game commission and were assigned to the northwest region as game protectors. The phone call that started this hunt the night before was made by Wes Wikoff from Hoxie and the third member, the one Wikoff referred to as the "ole man," is George Whitaker stationed at Colby. The author was then a game protector stationed at Ellis but has since been transferred to Pratt.

To keep this factual I should point out that George is really not a game protector. He used to be, but for a number of years has been the law enforcement supervisor for northwest Kansas.

Coffee finished, we loaded my gear in Wikoff's wagon and started the

final thirty mile drive to the pit location. "I heard they got some geese at Willow flats yesterday," Wes offered as he drove north.

"Wind's wrong today," George countered. "Might just as well get in the pit for awhile and see if they fly and take a chance on a pass shot."

Hunting the Kirwin geese can test your patience to the fullest. One day they'll fly north or up the river and then north. Another day, south is the way of the geese and likely as not they might just stay on the refuge and not fly at all.

We arrived at the field where the pit was located about a half-hour later and confirmed what we already suspected. Only a few patches of green wheat were in evidence on the wind-blown terraces. The remainder was a sea of white and about nine inches deep. Not a good day to set the decoys, assuming we could find the pit they were in.

After the quarter-mile walk and a short search the pit was located and the lid dug out from the snow. "Don't think this is gonna help much," Wikoff muttered as he set some of the Canada decoys around the pit. "Geese ain't about to land in all this snow."

I agreed that decoys weren't gonna help much, but if all three of us were going to be in the pit we needed the room. When you hunt from a hole in the ground with someone the size of George Whitaker, you need all the room you can muster.

Sitting in the blind the next half hour I couldn't help but think of how the three of us were living proof of the extremes goose hunters will go to for a shot. Why grown men would sit in a hole in sixteen degree weather surrounded by snow with no guarantee of even seeing a goose is still one of life's mysteries.

The legal limit of Canada geese for us that day was one apiece. That doesn't sound like much for the trouble we had gone to, but I know hunters who have never so much as shot at a goose. Geese are regarded by most as a prize or trophy and one is enough.

"Geese in the air," whispered Whitaker. "Moving up the river west, maybe they'll cut up our way."

"Some more over east of us," West said trying to dig his goose call out of three layers of clothes.

The next ten minutes the air was filled with geese. The Canada goose has numerous subspecies and a good number of each was over us at one time or another. The small Canadas' with the high-pitched call, lessers and greaters honking that sweet music the goose hunter loves.

All were high flyers. Only several pairs came within fifty yards over our pit. Close, but not close enough. Geese are big and a lot of hunters think they are in range when they're still thirty yards too far out. Nothing worse to a serious hunter than to cripple a bird, only to have him fly back to the refuge and die later.

Wes and I were so intent in watching the flocks that we almost missed Whitaker's command to "Get Down," a short time later. "Down," Whitaker repeated, "got two keepers coming

straight at us from the south and they're low."

Wikoff, from his crack in the pit lid watched the approach of the two keepers and kept us posted. "They're locked up, gonna land behind us," he whispered.

"Take 'em," Whitaker yelled as he threw the lid of the pit open, and three shotguns went off so close together it sounded like one shot.

"Got mine," George remarked in a rather matter-of-fact tone of voice. "Who got the other one?"

This left one goose for Wes and I to argue about as to "who got it," since George had already laid claim to the larger of the pair. Even if we were on days off, he was still the boss so we let him think he had shot the goose. Besides you have to be nice to older people.

The problem was solved a short time later when a nine-pounder was collected from a flock of about fifty geese that decoyed. It was decided that Wikoff would shoot and I would back him up if he needed backing. After missing the goose twice, which he blamed on the shotgun he borrowed from a friend, I slipped in a rather sterling shot and the hunt was over.

The first two geese bagged, and the larger of the three, were banded birds. In fact they had bands on both legs. Red plastic on one leg and the normal aluminum band on the other. These bands later identified the big geese as "Giants." They had been banded in North Dakota during the summer near Robinson.

The size of these geese wasn't important and neither was the fact that

we had a limit. The three of us have hunted together on similar occasions when nary a shot was fired or a goose seen and we enjoyed those hunts, too.

What is important to us is the opportunity that one has in being able to hunt an area such as Kirwin or any other fine hunting area for that matter. The enjoyment realized at seeing the wild goose in flight and pitting your skills against theirs on their own turf. If you win, fine. If you don't, that's O. K., too.

A large part of any hunt is respect. Respect for the game, the land and landowners and the partners who share the hunt with you. Partners like Wikoff and Whitaker, I respect them, they're friends . . . but I'm still not sure that George shot that big goose.

A giant Canada goose from Kirwin, one of the waterfowler's most sought after prizes.



Ken Stiebben

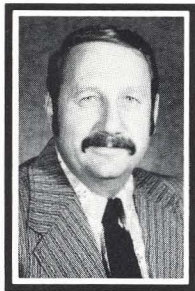
Ferrets in Kansas?

By Bill Hlavachick,
Game Biologist

WE THINK SO.

A Kansas search for this legendary mammal has been conducted in the past but 1975 marked the first time a person was hired to spend entire summers looking for it. This search will continue for the summers of 1976 and 1977. We will also be checking suspected ferret locations throughout the fall and winter months.

The black-footed ferret has only been known to science for little more than a century. First described in 1851, it was not reported again until 1876. For those intervening 25 years many people doubted its existence. The ferret is a nocturnal beast and most of its activities are conducted underground. No wonder it's rarely seen. It's felt that ferrets may not have been common even in historic times. The Plains Indians valued rare animals and ferret skins were used for decoration and ceremony in many of the Indians' religious rituals. Skins of ferrets were less commonly found than ermine skins so even the Indians found them somewhat hard to come by.



Hlavachick

A closer look at the animal shows that he is small, 21 to 23 inches in total length. Males weigh between two and three pounds with females being somewhat smaller. They are short legged, have long, well developed claws, large ears and eyes.

The most distinguishing feature is the black mask across the face. The feet, legs to the shoulder and the last one-fourth of the tail are also black. The rest of the coat is pale yellow-buff getting lighter on the under parts and almost white on the forehead, muzzle and throat. The top of the head and middle of the back are brown. The hair is relatively short. Over-all the ferret is similar in size to a mink.

Ferrets have been found living in

a variety of habitats: Farm buildings, haystacks and ground squirrel colonies. Most evidence, however indicates that their primary natural habitat is in prairie dog towns. Hall and Kelson in their *Mammals of North America* indicate that the ferrets' former range and that of the prairie dog very nearly coincide.

Herein lies the ferret's perilous problem; his apparent dependence on prairie dogs. Since its discovery the ferret's distribution has decreased markedly, due, apparently, to changing land use and man's determined



KANSAS FISH & GAME



NEWS

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PRATT, KANSAS 67124

News contact: Paul Bocquin
George Anderson

Phone: 316/672-5911

RELEASE _____

SPORTSMAN'S CALENDAR

SEASON	OPENING DATE	LAST DAY	BAG LIMIT	POSS. LIMIT
Rabbit, Cottontail	Season Open Year Around		10	20
Rabbit, Jack	Season Open Year Around		No bag or possess. limit	
Squirrel	June 1	December 31	5	10
Rail, Sora & Virginia	September 13	November 21	25	25
Snipe, Common	September 13	November 16	8	16
Woodcock	October 11	December 14	5	10
Geese	October 18	December 28	5	5
Ducks (East of U.S. 283)	October 18 December 20	December 7 December 28	100 points	Two days limit
Ducks (West of U.S. 283)	October 18 December 20	December 7 January 18	100 points	Two days limit
Pheasant	November 8	Jan. 11, 1976	3	9
Quail	November 8	Jan. 11, 1976	6	18
Prairie Chicken	November 8	November 16	2	4
Deer (Archery)	October 1 December 20	November 30 December 31	1* 1*	1* 1*
Deer (Firearms)	December 6	December 14	1*	1*
Turkey	April 24, 1976	May 2, 1976	1*	1*

* Special Permit Required

COMMISSION LAUDS HUNTERS:
BLASTS "GUNS OF AUTUMN"

(released Sept. 24, 1975)

PRATT--We in Kansas are proud of our sportsmen!"

So stated the director of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, Richard D. Wettersten, in letters of protest written to the Columbia Broadcasting System condemning the 90-minute program, "The Guns of Autumn", presented by CBS on Sept. 5.

"Sportsmen are responsible for the reintroduction of antelope and wild turkey to our state after both species had been absent for nearly a century. They contribute funds necessary to maintain massive spring and fall flights of waterfowl. And when animal populations decline, they are the first to demand positive corrective action," Wettersten said.

"In letters to Bill Leonard, Vice-President of CBS News, and William S. Paley, chairman of the board of CBS, Wettersten said, 'Guns of Autumn' has inflicted harm to the conservation effort and alienated thousands of viewers who have no understanding of wildlife conservation and the principles of modern, scientific game management.

"The program offered no details concerning the vast wildlife research effort underway in this country for many years. No details were mentioned concerning the many millions of acres of habitat improved and managed to promote game populations as well as other forms of wildlife. Scant mention was made of the fact that sportsmen have paid for these programs--and worse yet, no details were given as to their success.

"It is apparent CBS purposely sought out the most rare and disgusting examples of 'hunting' that could be found. 'Guns of Autumn' did not portray hunters as they really are," Wettersten stated.

"For these reasons the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission condemns and deplors this type of reporting. The Commission also requests the discontinuance of this type of reporting by CBS and suggests that future documentaries be planned to show the factual side of hunting in North America. Until such action is taken by CBS, you can rest assured that the majority of the 26 million hunters in America and professional wildlife biologists will continue to question the ability of CBS to present any topic in a factual unbiased manner."

The Commission also filed a letter of complaint with the Federal Communications Commission for the "biased and deceitful presentation" and wrote a letter of protest to the Block Drug Company, a paid advertiser of the 90-minute program.



Kansas Fish & Game NEWS



Turkeys continue to thrive in Kansas. According to the Kansas Fish & Game Commission there are more than 1,700 wild turkeys in Kansas. (Fish & Game photo by Ken Stiebben)

1976 WILD TURKEY SEASON SET BY FISH & GAME COMMISSION

GREAT BEND—Recommendations for the third wild turkey season in Kansas were adopted by Kansas Fish and Game Commissioners at their November 12 meeting at Great Bend.

The turkey season was set for April 24 through May 2, 1976. This nine-day season will provide two weekends of hunting opportunities. Like last spring's hunt, there will be 400 permits issued by drawing. The same hunting area will again be in effect. The legal limit will be one bearded turkey.

The hunting area is bounded by highway US-50 on the north from the Colorado state line to Newton, then south on

I-35 to Wichita, then east on highway US-54 to Augusta, and south on US-77 to the Oklahoma state line. It is bounded on the west by Colorado and on the south by Oklahoma.

This turkey hunting area includes two management units which are separated by highway US-281. There will be 300 permits available in the western unit and 100 permits in the eastern unit.

During the 1975 season, sportsmen harvested 139 turkeys, including 133 toms and 6 bearded hens. This compares with 123 turkeys harvested during the first modern-day turkey season in 1974.

TURKEY APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE JAN. 1, 1976

PRATT—Want to go wild turkey hunting in Kansas next spring? If you do, you'll have to follow the permit application procedures established by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

First, as required by law, you must be at least 14 years of age and a resident of Kansas. Non-residents cannot make application for a turkey hunting permit.

Then, after Jan. 1, 1976, permit application materials will have to be obtained from one of three commission offices — Pratt Headquarters Office, Box 1028, Pratt, Ks. 67124; Dodge City Regional Office, 808 Highway 56, Dodge City, Ks. 67801; or the Newton Regional Office, Box 764, Newton, Ks. 67114.

After obtaining the permit application, it is to be filled out in detail and returned to the Pratt office by 5:00 p.m. on Feb. 5, 1976. A cashier's check, certified check, money order or bank draft for the \$15.00 permit fee must accompany each application. No personal checks will be accepted.

By law, one-half of the permits in each of the two management units will be reserved for landowner-tenants and one-half for general residents.

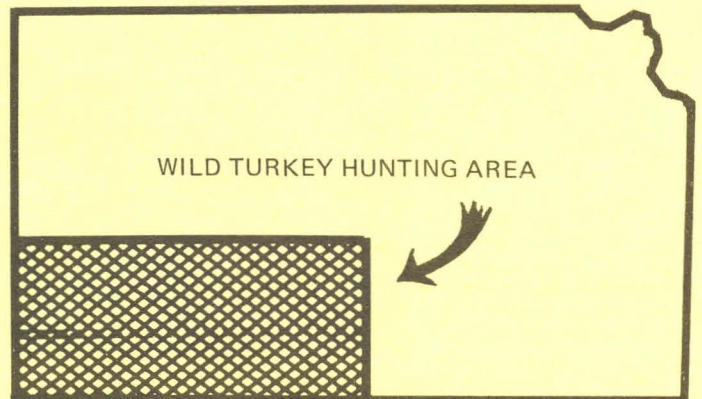
A resident owner or tenant is defined as one who owns, manages or operates farm or ranch land of 80 acres or more. A landowner or tenant is not eligible to apply for a landowner-tenant permit except in the management unit in which his/her land is located.

Members of an immediate family domiciled with a landowner or tenant may apply for a landowner-tenant permit provided no more than one permit is issued for each 80 acres owned, managed or operated by the landowner or tenant.

Persons who were issued turkey permits for the 1975 season will not be eligible to receive permits for the 1976 season unless there are permits remaining after applications of new applicants are processed.

If more applications are received than there are permits available, a drawing will be held at the Pratt office on March 3, 1976, to determine the successful permittees.

Informational brochures explaining the application procedure and turkey hunting regulations will be available with the application forms after Jan. 1, 1976.



ANTELOPE SEASON
HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL

(released Oct. 2, 1975)

SHARON SPRINGS--The second antelope season in Kansas is now history and was very successful, according to the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Commissioners had authorized eighty permits for the three-day season which ended at sunset on Sept. 29.

"We checked 72 antelope at the check stations during the opening two days and four came in Monday, said Kent Montei, Hays, game biologist, who worked the Sharon Springs check station. "Allowing for two hunters that did not hunt, there was a 97 per cent hunter success."

Only eight of the antelope taken were does. Field-dressed weights ran from 70 to 95 pounds. Several bucks were in the trophy class with horns measuring 15 inches or slightly better. Antelope taken during the season cannot be measured until the 60-day drying time is over.

"Landowner-hunter relationships appeared to be real good this year," Montei said. The area was well patrolled by northwest game protectors and no major problems developed."

According to George Whitaker, Colby, northwest law enforcement supervisor, one trespass complaint was investigated by officers and one hunter was charged with failing to check his antelope as required by law.

The 1975 season appeared to be a carbon-copy of the first antelope season in Kansas last year. During the first year of pronghorn hunting in Kansas 70 antelope were harvested. Hunting is expected to eventually expand antelope into new areas which should help alleviate some crop damage complaints.

Preseason antelope population estimates in western Kansas indicate there were approximately 750 animals.

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Logan County rancher, Chet Collins with his antelope taken during the third annual Kansas hunting season.

PERMIT REQUIRED
FOR FIRING LINE

(released October 11, 1975)

GREAT BEND--For the first time, a daily permit will be required for hunting on certain days in the goose hunting unit of pool 5 at the Cheyenne Bottoms Waterfowl Management Area near Great Bend.

From Oct. 18 through Dec. 28, the special daily permit will be required to hunt on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. To obtain the free permit, a hunter must check in at the headquarters check station, leave his hunting license and obtain a hunting zone permit. Permits will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis. On these days, no hunting is permitted in the hunting zone without the permit.

On the other days of the week, except for holidays, hunting without a permit will be allowed.

Known locally as the "firing line", the goose hunting unit is the south 200 yards of pool 5 which extends for a distance of four miles west of U.S. 156 highway.

As approved by commissioners of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, the four-mile long unit will be divided into 33 equal zones approximately 200 yards by 200 yards. Each zone will be assigned an identification number and on those days when a hunting permit is required, the permits will be valid only in the assigned numbered zone. No more than three individual permits will be issued for each zone at any one time. Check station personnel will have the right to assign one additional hunter to a zone which has previously been assigned to a single permit holder.

New regulations dictate that hunters must hunt from within the assigned zone but may enter adjacent zones, without gun, to retrieve game birds and animals they have bagged. Retrieving dogs may be used. Decoys may be used except in the retrieving area.

Access to the zones is provided along the south 10 yards of the entire hunting unit. No pit blinds are to be constructed in the hunting zones and after the hunt hunters must return to the check station to show bagged waterfowl and pick up their hunting licenses.

The new regulations were adopted by commissioners to reduce hunter congestion during days of peak hunting activity. It is hoped these regulations will improve the quality of the hunt for all participants.

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COMMISSION ATTEMPTING TO RELOCATE SNOW GEESE

HIAWATHA — Snow geese are the objects of much attention at Brown State Fishing Lake near here. For months elaborate plans have been made by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission and when the geese do come people living near the lake may think an early bi-centennial celebration is underway.

But the simple truth is that snow geese are no longer welcome at the lake. An assortment of noise-making devices, complete with acetylene exploders, sound recordings, lights, boats, and other equipment, will be used by commission personnel in an attempt to move the geese to larger management areas which are better suited to handle large numbers of geese. No geese will be injured or killed; just encouraged to move on elsewhere.

For several years now, from 150,000 to 300,000 geese swarm each fall onto the 62 acre lake sanctuary. The small area produces limited hunting of poor quality and at the same time provides a high risk of epizootic disease outbreak.

"Such large populations of geese on small areas may, in the event of a disease outbreak, be highly susceptible to large losses," said Bob McWhorter, Northeast regional game supervisor, Manhattan.

To prevent this possibility from occurring, the commission initiated the plan which will also allow hunters to assist in moving geese from the lake area. Under this plan, a smaller refuge and a controlled shooting zone with a retrieval area, has been established by proclamation of the commission. All hunting will be on private lands surrounding the lake. Thus, permission will be needed from owner-operators of

these private lands before hunting begins.

A retrieval zone 300-400 yards wide around the outside of the lake property has also been established and has been posted. No hunting will be permitted in this retrieval zone although retrieving will be allowed, without a firearm, within the zone outside of the state lake property boundary. State lake property will remain a sanctuary and no retrieving or hunting will be permitted.

While geese will be discouraged from landing at Brown, the commission hopes to attract the geese to larger game management areas in eastern Kansas. At Perry Lake, 5,000 acres of land and water has been set aside as a seasonal wildlife sanctuary through joint cooperation between the commission and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No hunting will be permitted on this refuge.

Public hunting will continue to be allowed on most of the 10,984 acre Perry Game Management Area which is operated by the commission and most of which is not included in the sanctuary. For the past three years the commission has developed extensive marsh habitat at Perry with 900 acres of marsh concentrated in 11 pools specifically designed to attract and hold waterfowl. Only one of these pools is located in the sanctuary.

It is also hoped snow geese from Brown will move to other management areas adjacent to Elk City, Melvern, John Redmond and Tuttle Creek reservoirs. While no snow geese have arrived to date at Brown, some have been observed recently at Tuttle Creek.



Fish & Game Photo

COMMISSION EXPLAINS SNOW GEESE PHENOMENON

HIAWATHA — The phenomenon of the Brown State Fishing Lake snow-blue goose flock continues to astonish the public and prompt questions as to the reasons for the large concentrations of geese which last winter numbered 300,000.

"Snow geese frequenting northeast Kansas come from colonies on Hudson's Bay coast that did not exist, in modern times, before 1960," said R.E. McWhorter, northeast regional game supervisor for the Kansas Fish & Game Commission, Manhattan. "Many breeding colonies have been established and they are expanding at a high rate."

"For example, the mouth of the McConnell River, or 'Eskimo Point' as it's known, had 200 breeding pairs in 1960. This population alone expanded to 40,000 breeding pairs by 1972."

Other colonies of five to 15,000 breeding pairs have emerged on the Manitoba and Ontario coast of Hudson's Bay. Contrary to snow geese of all recorded history, these birds have in recent years wintered in the Mid-Continent Region of eastern Kansas, Nebraska, western Missouri and southwestern Iowa.

Waterfowl biologists now

call these geese the "Mid-Continent Wintering Population". For the past 10 years snow geese have been fall or winter residents at Brown State Fishing Lake east of Hiawatha.

"Brown State Fishing Lake is one of five satellite areas in four states around Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge located in northwest Missouri. As the geese move south, they are attracted to Squaw Creek and its satellite areas. They usually depart Squaw Creek en masse for Brown on freeze-up," McWhorter explained. "Brown has been maintained as a sanctuary due to its small acreage."

But now that numbers of geese at Brown have increased to the 300,000 level, the commission has decided that for the welfare of the geese they should be moved from Brown and attracted to larger management areas such as game management areas on federal reservoirs in eastern Kansas. With such a large concentration on a small area, disease could effect large losses.

If this relocation attempt is successful, snow geese will probably return annually to the other areas thereby increasing hunting opportunities throughout eastern Kansas.

BACKYARD BIRD BUNDLE

The Kansas State Forester, State Extension Service, Kansas Wildlife Federation and Forestry, Fish and Game Commission are pleased to announce the availability again this year of a program to help urban homeowners develop songbird habitat in their backyards.

The three state agencies, assisted by the state's largest sportsmens group, have jointly developed a bundle of plants, available through the State Forester, that are suitable for use in backyard landscapes and are selected for their attractiveness to songbirds. When planted and grown, the trees and shrubs will provide year round shelter for birds plus supplemental food during late summer, fall and winter.

If you are interested, or know someone who is, clip the order form below and send it to the State Forester today. Bundles will be sent direct to you postpaid at the proper spring planting time. Each bundle will contain 7 Indian coralberry, 2 fragrant sumac, 2 Eastern redcedar, 3 Manchurian apricot, 1 winterberry and 2 Nanking cherry. Late season orders may have other suitable shrubs substituted.

If you have additional questions about developing wildlife habitat in either urban or rural settings, please call on the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission for assistance.

BACKYARD BIRD BUNDLE ORDER

To: Kansas State Forester
2610 Claflin Road
Manhattan, Kansas 66502

Please send me _____ "Backyard Bird Bundle"
at \$6.00 each.

*Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____

Bundles are to be mailed postpaid to:

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ Zip Code _____

*Note: Full payment must accompany order.

efforts to wipe out prairie dogs. For instance, of the 82 ferret specimens in the U. S. National Museum 28 are from Kansas (mostly from Trego County), all collected before the early 1900's.

By the mid 1950's after extensive prairie dog control Hall considered the ferret to be very rare in Kansas. This is not to say that the ferret will not or cannot use other animals as a food source. What little is known about their food preference indicates they will take mice, ground squirrels, maybe pocket gophers and the like. However, their preference remains prairie dogs. Recovered ferret scats in one study showed a 91 percent frequency of occurrence for prairie dog remains and 26 percent frequency for mice. As is true of most predators the ferret is probably an opportunist and will take what is most readily available at the time. In the ferret's case this will usually be prairie dogs.

In recent years the Fish and Game Commission has conducted prairie dog town surveys. In 1970, 1972 and 1973 the Soil Conservation Service and Rural Mail Carriers were sent prairie dog questionnaires. Results of these surveys indicate that there may be some 30,000 acres of dog towns in Kansas, all of which may be potential ferret habitat. Many of these towns are being poisoned and are disappearing.

So—where does all this leave the ferret? In about the same position as the Titanic just before she hit that iceberg! A little smooth sailing and then disaster—with only a few survivors.

The last recovery of a ferret in Kansas was in Sheridan County in 1957. Since that time several unsubstantiated sightings have been reported from various areas in western Kansas. The most recent sighting (prior to 1975) was on the Cimarron National Grasslands in Morton County in 1970. This report is considered to be authentic since the reporter was, at that time, the manager of the area and knew about ferrets and their habits.

In the summer of 1975 a student at Ft. Hays State College, Pat Latas, was hired to attempt to document the existence of the ferret in Kansas. In

August Pat saw a ferret on a small dog town in Cheyenne County. Subsequent follow-up observations could not verify this sighting, however it too is considered authentic. The town where the ferret was sighted is very small with few prairie dogs, an indication of ferret activity. Other signs in the area also indicated ferret presence. Prairie dogs will attempt to seal ferrets in a burrow by plugging up the entrance of the burrow with dirt. The ferret, when digging out of the plugged hole will back out carrying dirt with him. In each trip the animal drags a load of dirt further from the entrance, usually in the same direction. After many trips, a trench from three to five inches wide and from one to nine feet in length is formed. Trenches are good indications of ferret activity and should be looked for by any interested observer.

In 1964 the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service first published a list of rare and endangered species; the black-footed ferret was included on that list.

Since then more knowledge has been gained about the ferret but much still remains a mystery. No one knows, for example how large a dog town is needed to provide habitat for a ferret family or anything about their

breeding behavior or the timing and direction of family break-up.

But as much as that information is needed the first order of business, in Kansas at least, is to determine where ferrets are and how many there might be. To accomplish this goal will take much more than a summer aide and Fish and Game personnel making inspections of prairie dog towns. It will take a combined effort of these plus a large measure of public help and support. With help we may, in the near future, be able to say that, yes, Kansas still has the ferret, and, yes, we are going to do all we can to maintain and enhance the ferret in Kansas.

We are asking that anyone who sees or has seen a ferret, ferret sign or has any knowledge about ferret locations to contact any one of the following as soon as possible:

Any employee of the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

Any County Agent.

F. Robert Henderson, Extension Specialist, Kansas State University.

Pat Latas, Ft. Hays State College, Biology Dept.

Try to be as complete as possible in describing the location of the sighting or sign observed.

The black-footed ferret, the rarest mammal in Kansas, is a small weasel-like animal similar in size to a mink.



Audubon in Kansas

By Bill Scott, Staff Writer

IT HAD BEEN northeast Kansas, mid-July, midafternoon.

Dog days.

No air stirring. Just breathe sticky heat. Sodden heat and dust. Sweat drenches your forehead and soaks the back of your ears and you cuss wearing glasses. Sweat-slickened, they fall to your nostrils and dangle there precariously as a one-legged house painter 20 feet up. Chiggers, exulting in finding a meal after a long fast,



Scott

crawl greedily up your leg.

But now we'd entered a brand new world. Cool, quiet, dark, refreshing. We'd found an oasis in the midst of curled-up corn leaves and snarling sun.

Ron Klataske and I were canoeing on Deep Creek, a wide stream that meanders through the Flint Hills southeast of Manhattan. Ron, west central regional representative for the National Audubon Society, had re-introduced me to this highest of qual-

ity sports. I hadn't stepped in one since canoeing in 1968 on Arkansas' Strawberry River.

Now we were sluicing down this rocky stream, the aluminum canoe softly slicing an ever-widening wake in the placid pools. American elm, sycamore and bur oak formed a protective canopy overhead.

Hawk, Klataske's English Setter-cross, wasn't certain he wanted to trust his fate to us at first, but after a little "gentle persuasion" changed his mind. Drifting down the stream wasn't such a bad deal after all, he seemingly agreed.

Deep Creek was low and clear; and swarms of shiners and other forage fish of the *Cyprinidae* family darted upstream from us, startled by our approach. Rocks once underwater now became riffles with the stream's low level, and we had to portage 'em. I hadn't taken Ron's tactful advice to wear sneakers, and after maybe the two dozenth riffle I was hurtin', for certain. Ron chuckled, watching me use that paddle like a cane. "Ya look like an old man!—d'ya suppose that's where the expression 'tenderfoot' came from?"

Ron was born near Greenleaf, longer ago than you'd think if you see him.

"Today, that country has changed," Klataske continued sadly. "Then, hedgerows laced both sides of practically every country road. Native patches of prairie and wooded draws were part of every farm—today, it's nearly a monoculture of cultivated fields."

This reflects what is perhaps Klataske's overriding concern: Rapid change of land use. The voracious bulldozer, unplanned real estate developments, intensive agriculture, indiscriminate herbicide spraying of woodlands and range, channelizing of streams and rivers, and removal of native tallgrass prairie to be replaced with introduced grass like fescue are all part of the package.

As west central representative of the Society, Klataske is in charge of Nebraska, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas. Headquartered in New York City, the parent organization is "one of the nation's oldest and largest direct membership citizen conservation organizations." Incorporated in 1905, boasting more than

350,000 members and 350 local branch chapters, its stated aims are to "Promote wildlife conservation . . . and to educate man regarding his relationship to . . . the environment. . . ."

With chapters located in Kansas City, Topeka, Wichita, Manhattan, Lawrence, McPherson, Emporia, Hutchinson and Salina, Audubon's presence is felt in this state.

Klataske realizes that mention of the Audubon Society brings snorts of "birdwatchers" from some not familiar with the organization in the last decade. "We're striving to change that image through our actions," Klataske said. "We're not trying to change the interest of birdwatchers—they're an integral part of the organization—but the Society is involving itself in diversified activities like campouts and canoe trips. We're sponsoring field trips for the study and appreciation of geology, reptiles and amphibians—really, the whole spectrum of natural history."

If "Audubon Society" conjures up the classic—though hackneyed—picture of little old ladies in floppy hats and tennis shoes dashing wildly about brandishing butterfly nets, better give it a second thought. We're gonna acquaint you with just a few of the issues Klataske has been involved in over the past few years. After we're through, see what kind of an image comes across.

The recipient of a University of Maine master's degree wasn't wearing a floppy hat when he blasted the Corps of Engineers November 9, 1972. At that time, he issued a statement on proposed channelization of Mud Creek at a joint public meeting in Lawrence.

"For the Corps, this is a self-fulfilling assumption: building this project will help to create a need for additional goodies for a 'keep busy,' self-perpetuating bureaucracy," Klataske charged.

The Corps decided to construct a levee at less expense, but political

pressure has made channelization of Mud Creek still possible.

And "Mr. Audubon" was swingin' a mean butterfly net when he charged promoters of the Mid-State Reclamation Project in Nebraska with keeping the Platte River diversion scheme "afloat with straws" in a recent news release. The Mid-State Project was proposed in the early '40's as an irrigation plan, before farmers in the area developed pump irrigation systems. However, after 32 years of promotion, its local appeal is basically one of bringing \$178 million in federal funds into the area for construction.

It so happens that Platte's Big Bend country west of Grand Island is alive with the roar of wings and hoarse, warbling cries as a quarter of a million lesser sandhill cranes (more than 80% of the total continental population) pour in each March and April during their northward migration.

Klataske, standing squarely against the diversion, has organized several local Audubon chapters. They in turn

Although the Audubon Society's popular image is that of a birdwatcher's organization, the Society is also stressing the importance of all phases of the ecosystem.



Bill Scott



Ron Klataske, Manhattan, is the Society's regional representative.

formed a state-wide coalition of conservationists and farmers in a "Save the Platte Committee" to push preservation as an alternative. That countershove is for a 15,000-acre Platte River National Wildlife Refuge which would protect this waterfowl haven for generations.

In one of the most ambitious undertakings ever by a state chapter, Wichita's membership began purchase of the newly-christened Chaplin Nature Center in 1974 at a cost of \$50,000.

Located five miles northwest of Ark City, the 200-acre tract was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. C. Stedman Chaplin as a nature interpretive center. Mr. Chaplin died last June, but his widow continues to reside on the property. As members of the Wichita chapter, the Chaplins had maintained the farm as a wildlife refuge since 1957 prior to purchase of the property by their fellow members.

When Louis Bussjaeger, president of the Wichita group, took me on a tour of one of the five proposed trails, I ran short on film before we'd picked our way through half of it. Resplendent with bottomland timber like

slippery elm, wahoo, woolly buckthorn, pecan and sycamore, subjects fairly beg to be photographed. Upland species like bur oak, walnut, dogwood and hickory claim higher ground. Projected plans call for con-

The Chaplin Nature Center, an Audubon purchased project, is located northwest of Arkansas City.

struction of an interpretive building covering 2500 sq. ft. featuring an indoor beehive, 3-D scale model of the Center and a small bookstore. Carroll Lange, district game biologist for the Fish and Game, is working with the group on re-establishment of native grasses like big and little bluestem and Indian grass.

It's expected to attract 15,000 to 25,000 visitors annually and doubtless could host more than that. However, because of the Center's size and educational purposes, picnicking is not recommended as too many visitors could easily spoil the area's beauty. And, Chaplin Nature Center Committee Chairman Ralph Wiley points out that the Center is two to three years away from handling a large influx of visitors, so don't rush down there for a while yet. Permission to visit the Center is also required from Committee Chairman Wiley before entering the area.

If all of this interests you and you'd like further information on joining or forming a local Audubon chapter, contact Ron Klataske for details. His address is 813 Juniper Drive, Manhattan 66502. Ron's phone is 913/537-4835.

Many chapter activities are just for fun, but don't be surprised if you are educated and activated at the same time!



Bill Scott

Fisheries Division

By Paul Bocquin,
Staff Writer

(This is the second in a series of seven articles on the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission. Subsequent issues will feature each of the five other divisions.)

THE FISHERIES Division oversees many facets of Kansas Fish and Game activities throughout the state. But its main objective is to provide optimum fishing and maximum success for the licensed angler.

Some of its better known projects, such as the creel census, test netting and other functions under Project SASNAK have been publicized in recent issues of KANSAS FISH & GAME. However, the division also performs many lesser known duties that don't often make headlines but are nonetheless important.

A brief historical background of the Fisheries Division will show how it evolved from virtually a one-man operation in the 1870s to its present work force of 58 employees.

The first biennial report of the Commissioner of Fisheries was published for the years 1877-78. In 1880, the second biennial report lists his title as State Fish Commissioner. In 1893, he was known as Fish Commissioner, State of Kansas. In 1899, the title Kansas Fish Warden was used to identify the still one-man task force.

Fish and Game

The agency was devoted entirely to fisheries activities during those early years with most of its duties centered around the state fish hatchery in Pratt. In 1905, the scope of his duties was expanded to include game management activities and the position title was changed to Kansas Fish and Game Warden.

The first report from the Fish and Game Department came out in 1914-1916. The agency carried this name until 1925, when the Forestry, Fish and Game Commission was created.

The 1924-1926 report states that the Kansas Fish and Game Department was financed entirely by fees.

"The bulk of funds comes from hunters who pay \$1.00 a year for a license to hunt. A considerable sum comes from trappers of furbearers. Other sources of revenue are: non-resident hunters, non-resident fishermen, commercial fishermen, mussel fishermen, game breeders and minor sources such as disposal of confiscated furs."

A fishing license plan was under discussion but was not the law at that time. It came into being a short time later but for male fishermen only.

In a recommendation to the legislature, the 1926-1928 biennial report states: "Every person who hunts, except resident landowners, must have a hunting license. Every person who fishes, making the same exception, should have a fishing license, possibly

excepting boys of tender age, say 16. Why exempt women? They are not exempt from property tax, railroad fares, or anything else that costs money to provide. And it costs money to provide fishing."

This inequality of the sexes was later rectified in what might be considered one of the earlier equal rights movements in Kansas.

Cooperative Efforts With Federal Agencies

While it may come as a surprise to some readers, the Fisheries Division has federal aid research projects going at four state institutions of higher learning—University of Kansas, Kansas State University, Kansas State College of Emporia and Kansas State College of Pittsburg.

These research projects currently add up to a total of \$32,140 for the fiscal year 1975-1976, with 75 percent of the funds sponsored on a federal cost share reimbursement through manufacturers' excise taxes collected on fishing gear. This is from the Dingell-Johnson fund.

Fisheries personnel also cooperate with federal agencies that operate the 20 federal reservoirs in the state. This involves voluntary cooperative agreements with the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Such agreements are carried out under guidelines established by the National Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act,

Leonard Jirak, (right) fisheries biologist and Russell Nelson, summer aide, tag a large flathead catfish from Webster Reservoir.



Ken Stiebben



Fish and Game Forum



Q. Last summer I saw a freshly-killed snake from the hill country of Chautauqua county. It was red, yellow and black and the guys who killed it told me it was a poisonous coral snake. Is this true?

A. The reptile was a red milk snake, *Lampropeltis triangulum*, formerly called a scarlet king snake. It's a colorful, nonpoisonous reptile with black-bordered bright red bands separated by narrow yellow or cream bands. Coral snakes don't range nearly this far north. They're restricted to places like Florida in the southeast and Arizona to the southwest.

Joseph T. Collins, vertebrate zoologist for Kansas University's Museum of Natural History, writes about the milk snake in his book, *Amphibians and Reptiles in Kansas*: "Milk snakes in eastern Kansas frequent the rocky hillsides of open woods or woodland edge. In western Kansas they inhabit the rocky ledges of prairie canyons and along streams. This species is active annually from April to November. It normally prowls actively by day, but during the hot summer it may become nocturnal, particularly in western Kansas. This snake rarely basks in the sun, preferring to remain hidden beneath sun-warmed rocks to maintain its optimal body temperature. During winter the milk snake retreats into dens on rocky, wooded hillsides or into small mammal burrows to avoid cold temperatures. Mating in this species occurs during spring after emergence from winter inactivity. The eggs are laid in nests during June or July, and the number of eggs per clutch varies from 5-9 with an average of 6-7. A female from Douglas county was observed to lay 7 eggs on July 2; she required four hours to complete laying the clutch. All seven eggs hatched on August 31. Incubation probably requires two months, depending on the prevailing temperatures. Prey is killed by constriction in this species. It feeds pri-

marily on small lizards and snakes, but also eats new-born mice."

The Kansas Academy of Science has placed milk snakes on the threatened species list and recommended prohibition of the capture, transport and sale of these animals in Kansas due to the high demand for them in the commercial pet trade.

Q. How many different kinds of gar fish do we have in this state?

A. Cross and Collins, in their book, *Fishes in Kansas*, recognize three different species; the shortnose, the spotted and the longnose gar. The shortnose is the smallest, averaging less than two feet in length. They're found in some of the state's largest rivers like the Blue, Marais des Cygnes, Neosho and Arkansas. It's most common in the Kansas River. The spotted gar is the rarest of the three and is confined to the lower portion of the Neosho basin in rivers like the Neosho and the Verdigris. It has a decided preference for warm, calm waters. The longnose gar is the largest and most abundant species of gar in Kansas. The state record weighed 31 pounds, 8 ounces, and was taken by Ray Schroeder from the outlet at Perry Reservoir, Jefferson County, on May 21, 1974, using rod and reel. This species grows to

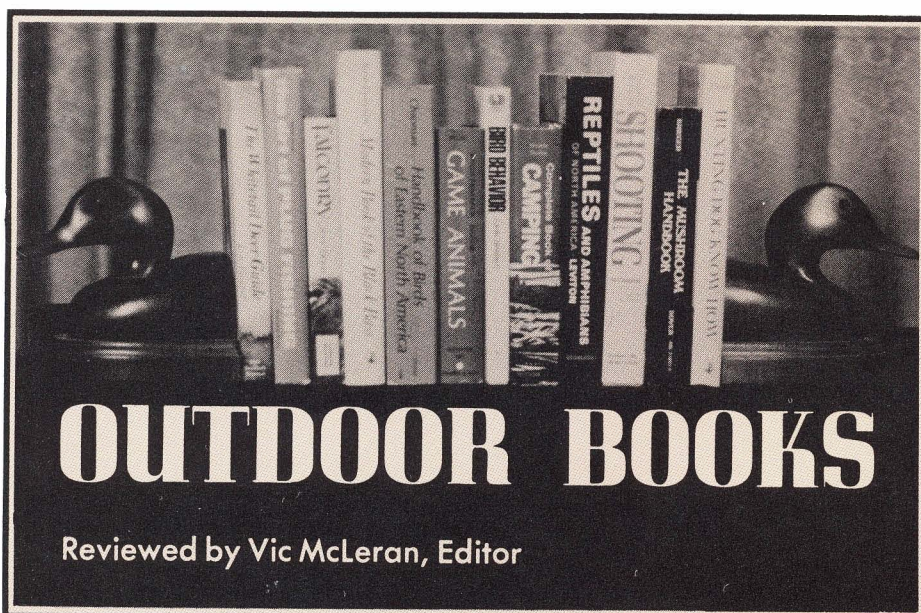
a length of 60 inches. The longnose gar inhabits most rivers and creeks in the eastern half of the state. It is the most abundant of the three species of gar in Kansas, and the only one likely to occur in small streams. Longnose gars occur with shortnose gars in large rivers, and in oxbow lakes and reservoirs. In winter they leave the shorelines and shallow backwaters to congregate in the bottom of deep pools. In spring, longnose gars migrate upstream into small, rocky tributary streams for spawning or into the shallow weedy margins of lakes. The eggs are strewn over the bottom and abandoned. Longnose gars feed almost entirely on other fishes, chiefly minnows while young, and gizzard shad or small suckers as adults. The species is one of the largest and most widespread predatory fish in Kansas. It performs an important and beneficial function by helping to keep the abundance of the prey species within desirable limits.

Q. Are salamanders related to snakes?

A. No, salamanders are classified as amphibians while snakes are placed in the reptile category. Amphibians—the salamanders, frogs and toads, differ from reptiles in several ways. First, they have moist skin which isn't covered by scales or shells like the reptiles. Lacking a protective, water-resistant skin, amphibians quickly lose body moisture so they can't stray far from water or moist areas. According to Collins' book *Amphibians and Reptiles in Kansas*, "Amphibians reproduce by laying soft gelatinous eggs which have no shell and deposit them where they will remain moist. Failure to do this would cause the eggs to dry up and die.

Amphibian reproduction, unlike that of reptiles, is characterized by the eggs hatching into aquatic larvae or tadpoles which spend the first period of their life in water until they metamorphose into more terrestrial adults.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Each month, hundreds of letters reach Fish & Game Commission headquarters with questions regarding various phases of the department's activities, policies, projects and plans. In addition, we receive numerous queries about hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife. As space permits in future issues, we'll publish some of these questions and their answers to provide Sunflower sportsmen with a greater appreciation and understanding of their Fish & Game Commission and the Kansas outdoors. If you have a question, mail it to FISH & GAME FORUM, Box 1028, Pratt 67124.



WILDCATS OF THE WORLD by C. A. W. Guggisberg; Taplinger Publishing Company, New York; 1975; 328 pages; \$15.95

This is a comprehensive history of all the wild cats, for reference or leisurely reading, from their evolutionary beginning to detailed descriptions of the 37 known species. These range from the mighty lion and tiger to the obscure Chinese desert cat through snow leopards, lynxes, bobcats, puma, jaguars, servals and fishing cats.

The author brings to this landmark study an extensive knowledge of the world's wild cats. More than a handbook on the various species, it provides complete data of physical characteristics, habitat, distribution, and habits, together with much fascinating material on behavior. This ranges over the entire literature from accounts by early naturalists to the latest findings of contemporary animal behaviorists. Taken together, this well-illustrated book makes one of the most intriguing of animal families come thoroughly alive.

Guggisberg also treats the cat's place in history and in its relationship with man. Trained cheetahs were used as hunters not only in the East, but also in Renaissance Europe. And the lion has been used as an executioner. The European wild cat was man's unrecognized and persecuted ally in the war against rodents while the African wildcat is the ancestor of our domestic cat. This is an excellent publication for anyone with an interest in cats.

THE ROUGHSHOOTER'S DOG by Michael Brander; St. Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, 10010; 198 pages, \$7.95

Despite the fact that there's been a considerable decline in the old and grand form of driven shooting because of the very high overhead costs involved, the sport of shooting has today a greater following than ever before. But the guns are those of hunters who must rely more than ever on the efficiency of their dogs. An all purpose dog, a dog trained to find, point and retrieve game and bring it to hand when it has been shot, be it dead or alive, in open ground, cover or through water.

Michael Brander shows in this book how, with skill and above all, patience, virtually any breed of gun dog can be trained to the requirements of present-day shooting. The frustrations of, the set-backs, the days of training when all goes wonderfully well and the days of training which send you home convinced there's absolutely no hope for the dog—all these things from his great experience and deep understanding of the training of gundogs, he writes about constructively and with a refreshing style.

This new, revised and heavily illustrated edition of *The Roughshooter's Dog* is an essential volume for anyone with an interest in guns, dogs and hunting.

THE BOOK OF OWLS by Lewis Wayne Walker; Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York; 1974; 256 pages, \$12.50

This book is the rich legacy of a fifty-year love affair with owls, an incomparable guide to all major North American species, and a

splendid compendium of information, anecdotes and personal about the order *Stringiformes*. From his boyhood—when he once spent ninety-six consecutive nights in the belfry of the First Congregational Church of Flushing, Long Island, watching a pair of nesting Barn Owls raise a family of owlets, feed them, teach them to fly and hunt—Lewis Wayne Walker has been one of America's foremost owl experts. *The Book of Owls* glows with his knowledge.

Here is the author's own experience with the tiny Elf Owls, so seldom seen as to be almost mythical; moving accounts of life with a family of rare Spotted Owls; a successful search for Great Grays in the Canadian wilderness; strange visitations by the majestic Snowys; and a treasury of personal observations on other major North American species.

For each kind of owl the book provides all the essential details of nesting methods, hours of activity, calls, food habits. There are nearly 100 superb photographs, culled from the author's collection and from the work of other owl specialists, that make it easy to identify owls in the field. And best of all is the array of engaging owl lore—how owls live, see and hear, train their young, practice cannibalism, use their talons, fly.

Lewis Wayne Walker's deep familiarity with his subject, and his feeling for it, make what is already a first rate handbook and picture book something far more—a superb tribute to our most elegant elusive bird.

TRAPPING NORTH AMERICAN FUR-BEARERS by S. Stanley Hawbaker; available from St. Stanley Hawbaker & Sons, Fort Loudon, Pa., 17224; 352 pages, \$3.00

Stanley Hawbaker's book is probably the most complete source of trapping information on the market today. Just look at some of the chapter titles: Outfitting the trapper; traps and their care; derusting, coloring and waxing traps; chapters on trapping each of the following species—red fox, mink, muskrat, raccoon, coyote and wolf, beaver, weasel, otter, bobcat, skunk, opossum, badger, marten, fisher, wolverine and black bear; lures and baits; tracks and tracking; trap sizes for each animal. In addition to the chapters on trapping, there are sections on skinning, fleshing and drying furs, hunting whitetail deer and wild turkey, tanning buckskin, camping, cabin building and bee hunting. Hawbaker is an experienced old woodsman and his book would make the perfect gift for either the beginning school-boy trapper or the experienced professional.

