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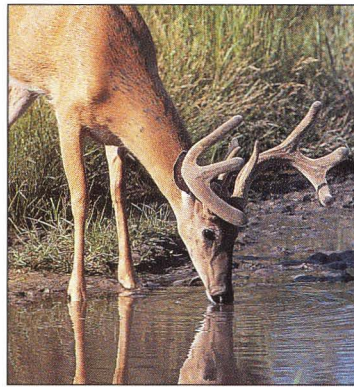
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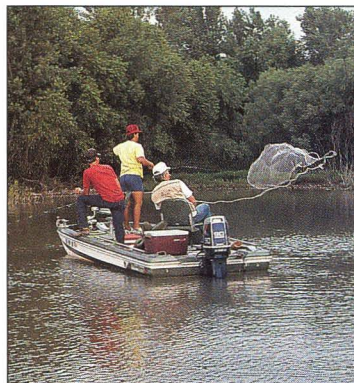
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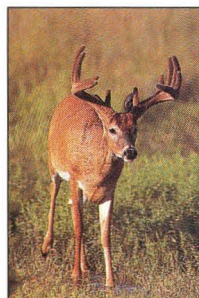
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About the Covers:
Front cover: A magnificent white-tailed buck visits a waterhole on a summer evening. Mike Blair filmed to scene with a 400mm lens f/9.5 @ 1/125. **Back cover:** A hiker enjoys the scenery along beautiful Elk City trail. Photographer Mike Blair used a 55mm lens set at f/5.6 @ 1/125.

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Editorial Creed: To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

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Promise In A Puppy's Eyes

I marveled at the 8-week-old puppy's caution as he smelled the old turkey foot (kept from a bird taken last spring). Stretched as far as stubby little legs would allow and pot belly nearly sagging to the cement floor, he checked out the foot as if it might be a rattlesnake. Every sight, smell and sound was new to the orange-and-white "bird dog." And his enthusiasm for this big, wonderful world I called the garage excited me.

I grabbed a pheasant wing, kept from last bird season just for this moment. As if it were the first time I had seen the wing, I tried to sway the puppy's attention from the turkey foot.

"Look Trapper! Get the bird boy." (I have no good reason for calling him Trapper except that it seemed original and it sounded good — "Fetch the bird, Trap!") The pup dashed over and, with his typical response to anything new, tried to eat the wing. I moved it along the floor, and he eagerly followed until his baby-blue eyes lost track of it. An extension cord at his feet caught his attention, and he went after it with the same vigor. Oh well, he's young and full of potential.

I call him "bird dog" with some uncertainty. Puppies are full of both promise and doubt. You never really know how they'll turn out. I firmly believe most good dogs are the result of good owners. If the pup's ancestors were good hunters, chances are it will have the natural ability and instincts to be a good bird dog. The rest is up the trainer and, of course, the amount of hunting experience the dog gets.

Experience is something I'm certain this dog will get. After losing a loved hunting companion Brittany last summer, I yearned for a dog through last bird season. By this spring, I was *ready* for a puppy. I finally found a litter, and the dam was a daughter of my old dog. All the wet spots on the carpet, chewed tennis shoes, gnawed fingers and interrupted nights would be worth it.

They weaned the pups early, and I picked him up when he was 5 weeks old. As I cradled him on the first night away from his litter mates, I wondered what kind of personality he would have and what kind of a hunter he might turn into. I hope he has some of the same heart and desire his old grandsire had. If he does, even I can't fail in training.

Each day brings new discoveries, fears and trouble. I notice he's not as hard-headed as his grandfather. I'll be careful not to be too terse with him when he makes mistakes. But he accepts my will more readily and that, I



Mike Miller illustration

think, is a plus. I'm anxious to see him develop, but he grows and changes so fast, I can't jump ahead and miss the fun of just having a puppy. He's a constant source of my laughter and a constant source of pain to our old black lab.

The lab has become a wonderful babysitter. The first few weeks, my wife and I constantly reminded the big black dog to play easy with the pup. Simply rolling over could mean disaster. Now, after three weeks, we're telling the pup to take it easy. Either by his good nature or our constant reminding, the lab allows the pup to literally maul him. The pup has a particular fascination with the long, thick tail that Magnum constantly wags, and only when he pulls too hard in the wrong direction will Mag ever mutter a gruff sound.

Trapper learned his first human word rather quickly. As with most puppies, the first word he recognized was "No." I'm sure that through the first two weeks, he thought his name was No. But he learned that a sharp pat with a newspaper soon followed that sound. If he hadn't, the deer skin rug in the living room would have been tatters.

The new pup brings extra anticipation to the coming fall. I'm determined to make the time commitment necessary to work with him this summer. The first bird hunt will be exciting, but I know it's usually several bird seasons before a dog really hunts well. I have to remember that and be patient. Right now, the joy and promise of a puppy is enough.

Mike Miller



Wildlife At The Waterhole

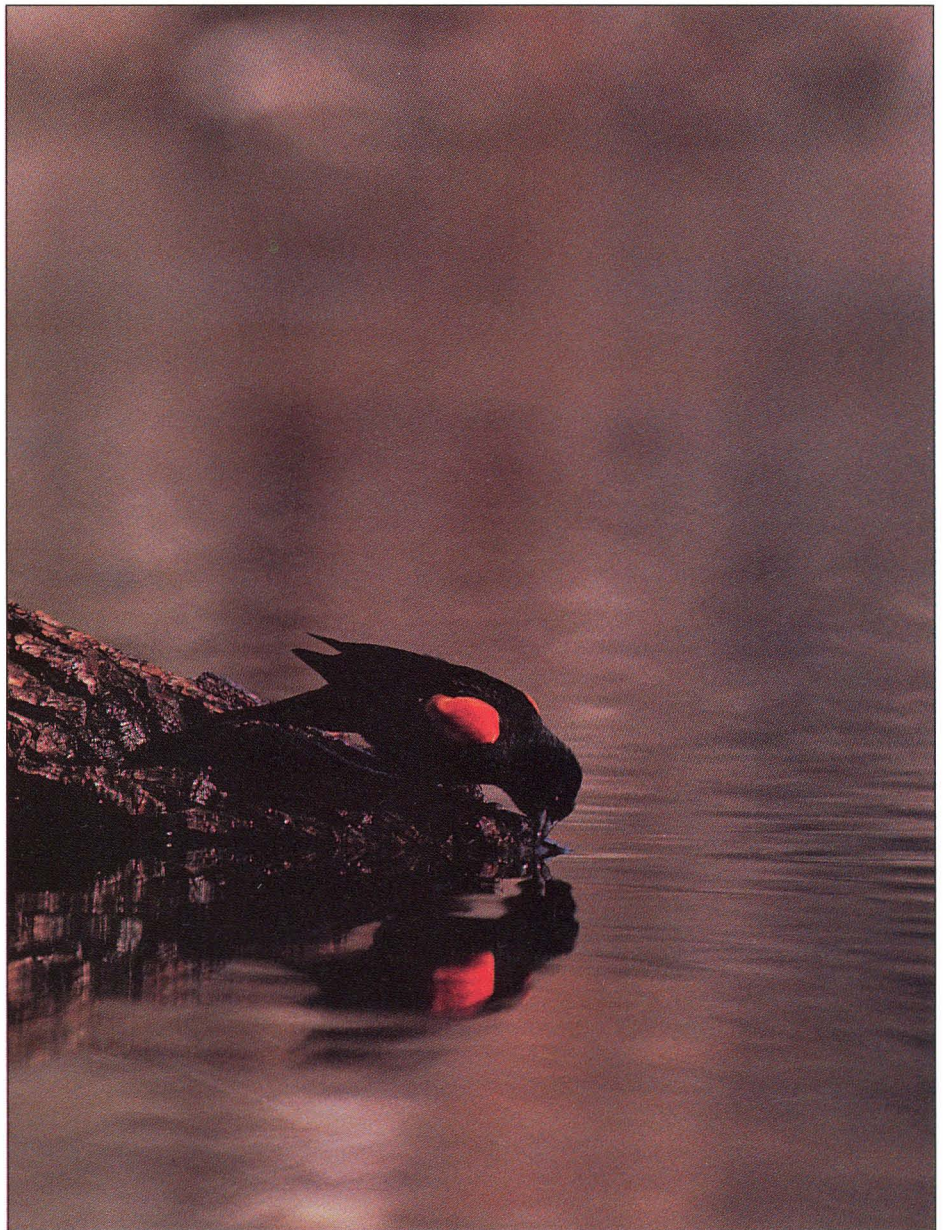
by Gene Brehm
videographer, Pratt
photos by Mike Blair

Watching wildlife is an exciting way to enjoy the outdoors, and there may be no better time and place than a summertime waterhole.

The August sun had swung beyond the cottonwood's screening branches and my photo blind began to heat up. I remember thinking that I was there too early. The waterhole I watched was inviting, yet, surely no wildlife would visit for hours. It was 2 p.m. The evening cool-down was hours away.

My main objective was to take video of a beautiful white-tailed buck that sported a velvet-covered, 12-point rack. I knew the buck lived in the area, and this spot offered the only water for several miles. The deer would water here, but I wasn't sure it would be daylight. The disruption of my arrival had passed and birds began to entertain me. The waterhole was fringed by a lush growth of annual grasses. Only at one spot did bare ground reach water and it was there that the perching birds would land to drink.

Two doves came first. I had lots of tape and batteries, so I began recording. They seemed to take turns drinking, or maybe I should say that they took turns watching for danger. As the tape rolled, they quickly flushed from the scene as an aggressive bluejay took their place. With three lively hops he pounced into the water for a vig-



While deer and other large visitors at the waterhole might be exciting, there is much to learn about the more common species such as this red-winged blackbird. A whole community of life is in play at the waterhole for the patient observer.



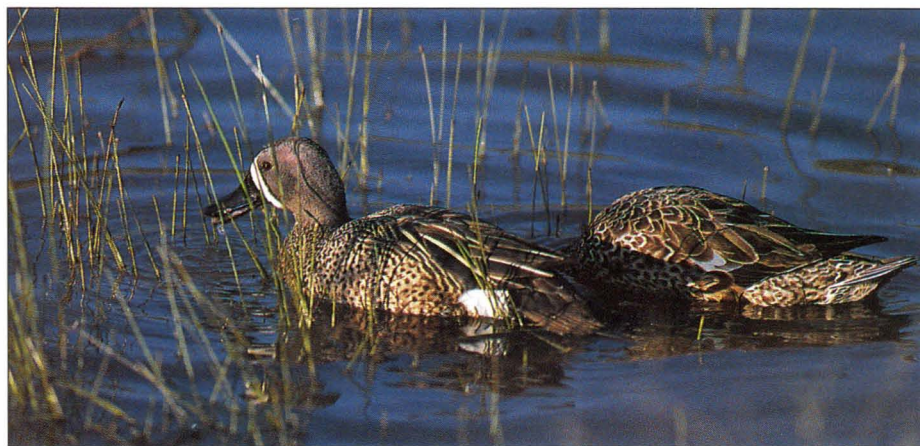
Watching wildlife at the waterhole not only provides a chance to observe animal behavior, but because so many different species may approach, conflicts, such as this one between a kestrel and a bluejay, can be seen. Any water will work, but usually permanent water with some form of fresh run-in is best. Build your blind on the upwind side of the water.

orous bath. This bird seemed to have the answer to the 90-plus-degree heat. Through the black-and-white viewfinder, I watched the bluejay flop its wings, spraying water in all directions. Yet, even this aggressive bird never forgot to scan for possible danger every few seconds. I zoomed in for an extreme closeup and knew that I was recording some "good stuff."

Suddenly the bluejay stood straight upright and took flight. I quickly zoomed wide to see what had spooked the bird. Movement in the sandplum bushes beyond the waterhole caught my eye. The antlers of a truly spectacular buck bobbed above the foliage and then the animal emerged. With the camera still running, I looked up to watch in living color. The sleek summer coat of the deer was sur-

prisingly red. Without breaking stride the buck headed straight for the water's edge. The deer seemed unwary, yet, its eyes, ears and nose were constantly at work. My hide

was a good one. I had chosen a day on which the breeze was constant and in my favor. I relaxed with confidence to enjoy my work and the scene that unfolded before me. At



Blue-winged teal are especially fond of small, isolated pasture potholes. Because of their excellent vision, a good blind is critical to attracting all sorts of waterfowl.

the water's edge the deer paused briefly to scan the area. Then, it lowered that spectacular head and began to draw water from the shallow pool. Back to the viewfinder, I zoomed in for a tight head shot as it drank. The small viewfinder revealed the constantly moving, searching eyes of a truly wild animal. The buck drank for an amazingly long time, then jerked its head up to look about. The move was so sudden that I could not follow. Just as quickly the head reappeared into my view and resumed drinking. I took the challenge. Widening my camera's field of view, I watched only the deer's eyes. When the pupils rolled upward I was ready and this time the head lift was recorded to tape. The massive head turned right, and

then left. Then once again, as I followed the move, the deer drank. I imagined the water level lowering before me. In reality the deer's belly gradually swelled. After minutes of drinking at the edge, the buck waded into the shallow pool and once again began to drink. A group of barn swallows darted over the pool and skimmed water from its surface while on the fly. Unaffected, the deer continued to drink.

Finally the deer turned from the pool and walked, almost waddled, away. I relaxed to revel in the sheer pleasure of the experience. I knew that I had recorded it all on video tape and could share it with others. Curious, I rewound the tape and timed the duration of the deer's drink. I only timed the periods that the animal was actually drinking

and found the time to be five minutes and 34 seconds; quite a drink!

The yelping of wild turkeys brought me back to the purpose at hand. A nearly-grown brood of turkeys were in a race to reach the waterhole. The scene was comical. Each bird was certain that no water would be left if it did not win the race. Some of the birds stopped at the water's edge, scooping a mouthful of water, then tilting their heads back to swallow. Others pushed through the crowd to wade into the water and drink. These birds were easily distracted. The barnyard grass around the pool harbored large numbers of grasshoppers, and the young turkeys quickly took advantage. Two birds focused on the same fleeing hopper, and the chase was on. Just when it seemed



While normally nocturnal, raccoons may occasionally visit in the daylight hours. Permanent waterholes may be more attractive to raccoons, since the permanent water is more likely to hold crayfish, fish and other aquatic diet items raccoons prefer. You can easily determine if a waterhole is frequented by raccoons by simply checking the muddy areas at the water's edge for tracks.

Turkeys regularly visit water to drink and chase insects in the surrounding lush vegetation. The wild turkey has perhaps the sharpest vision of the waterhole visitors and even in a blind, you'll have to keep movement to a minimum to prevent spooking the wary birds.



certain that the insect was food, the two birds collided while in full attack mode. This made both birds mad so, they set about to reestablish the pecking order. It was quite a scene. While the two birds tried to deflock each other, about eight

others were chasing grasshoppers in the barnyard grass.

Few places offer more to a wildlife enthusiast than a waterhole. During a period of dry weather, the waterhole becomes the most important community within the

ecosystem. Like humans, most wildlife must drink water to survive. Yet the waterhole is much more to many species. A shallow pool formed by a stock tank overflow may harbor amphibians such as frogs and salamanders that not only need water to drink but must lay their eggs in the water. These amphibians also use the waterhole as a place to feed and escape from predators.

The world beneath the water's surface also offers an intriguing food chain study. Mosquito larva are abundant, serving as food for the nymph stages of both mayflies and dragonflies. The adult stages of these predatory insects were constantly patrolling the pool to capture newly hatched insects at the surface.

Fairy shrimp and clam shrimp can occasionally be found in such waterholes. These animals can be collected and photographed under the controlled conditions of an aquarium.

At the waterhole I described earlier, Mike Blair (still photographer for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks) and I both wit-



Depending on the temperature and the moisture content of what they're eating, deer may drink as much 1 1/2 quarts per 100 pounds of body weight per day.



nessed a young male kestrel routinely staging attacks on birds that attempted to drink. Like Blair and I, the kestrel was using the waterhole as a place to hunt. Most of the kestrel's attacks seemed to be half-hearted attempts; more like training

exercises than true hunting attacks. The kestrel seemed to be satisfying its nutritional requirements with the area's abundant grasshopper population.

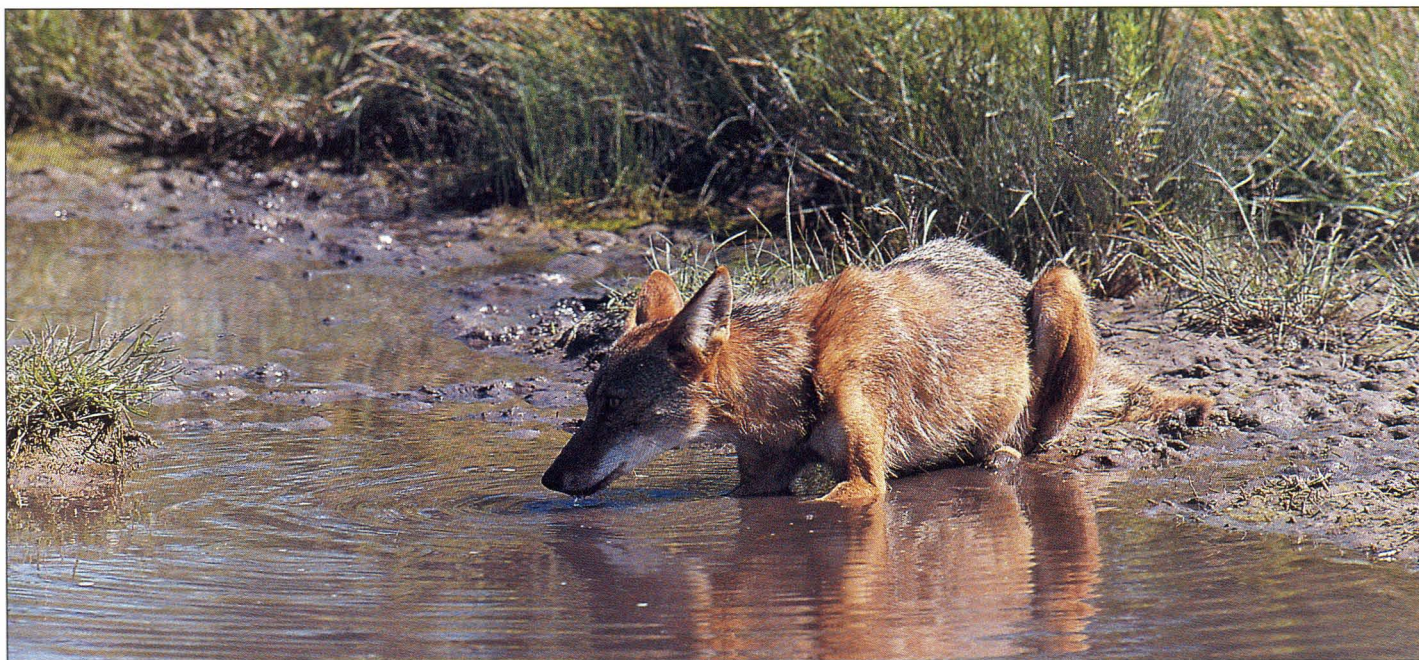
As important as water is to most wildlife, there are many species that are truly adapted to dry climates. Bobwhite quail and especially their dry-climate cousins, the scaled quail, will come to waterholes to drink. Yet, it is likely that these birds could survive on the moisture from the insects and green vegetation that they eat.

Water requirements for different species of wildlife varies greatly. Some rodent species, adapted to desert climates, need no water at all. Kangaroo rats are an example found in Kansas. Their bodies recycle the water produced by the metabolism of their food. In all animals, including humans, water is a byproduct in the processes of metabolizing food into usable energy forms. Only certain rodents are successful in utilizing this water. The rest of us eventually urinate or otherwise excrete this water from the body and must drink water periodically to maintain a proper water balance.

Little is known about the water

requirements of most animals. Deer are one species that have been the subject of considerable research. One source suggests that a deer needs 1 1/2 quarts of water per 100 pounds of body weight per day. Undoubtedly this varies depending upon the daily temperature, relative humidity and wind. The water content of the food being eaten also affects the need for water. An animal foraging on succulent new-growth plants would need to drink less water than an animal foraging on dry vegetation.

At a waterhole surrounded by good upland habitat, wildlife has no timetable for activity. Deer came to water at all times of the day during warm periods. They would come to drink at midmorning and midday almost as often as they would at the more traditional times of dawn and dusk. Blair was fortunate to witness and photograph a coyote bathe and drink one midafternoon. The animal waded to near the pool's center and laid down to cool itself. Mike was concerned that such a wary animal might bolt at the sound of his camera's shutter and autowind. He waited for just the right pose before starting to shoot. Suddenly the coyote bolted for cover before a



The coyote, still shedding parts of a heavier coat, took of advantage of the water to not only to quench its thirst, but to cool off in as well. The smorgasbord of prey species also visiting the waterhole is probably as attractive to the coyote as the water .


single picture was taken. Blair was disgusted with himself for missing the opportunity, but luckily the coyote returned minutes later, and Blair fired at will.

If you are a wildlife enthusiast and are looking for a wildlife hotspot during the dog days of summer, try staking out a waterhole. Make a good blind. A ventilated plywood box will work fine. I find that blinds made of materials that flap in the wind are less desirable than rigid materials. Place your hide close to the water; no further than 20 yards so that your observations can be thrilling. It may take some wildlife a few days to get used to the blind, so erect the blind several days before you plan to use it. If you find mammal tracks around the water, use the blind

only on days when the wind blows from the primary habitat cover toward your position. If mammals scent your presence you will never know they were approaching.

If you have watched children at a swimming pool or at a swimming beach, you already know how much fun playing in water can be. One evening at the waterhole blind I was treated to such activity by five white-tailed fawns. The fawns approached the waterhole accompanied by three adult does. The oppressive heat of the day had passed and the sun was only minutes from setting. As the deer approached, it was evident that the fawns were feeling good. They darted and pranced about their mothers and when they spotted the water, they led the way in full

sprint. At first they drank from the pool. Then they raced through the water splashing and bucking, sending spray in all directions. Finally the metal stock tank caught the eye of two of the still-spotted fawns, and the two unceremoniously climbed into the tank and bobbed about buoyantly. Only when the fawns noticed that the does had left and were nowhere in sight did they eject from the tank and tear off to cover.

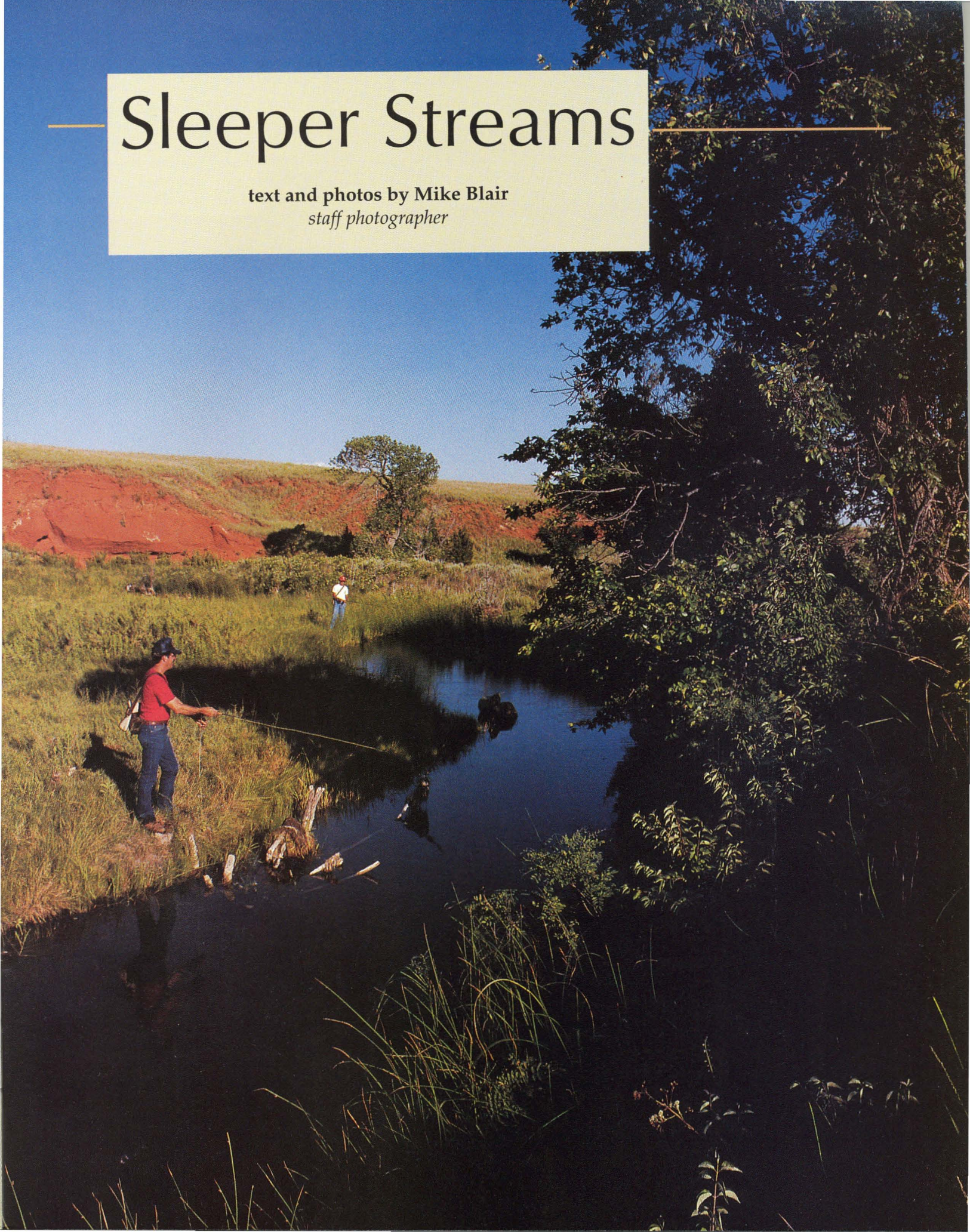
There are lots of fun outdoor activities available during the summer months in Kansas. Watching wildlife is one of them. There may be no better way to teach children how to observe and learn about such a wide variety of wildlife than from a hide near a dry season waterhole. 



Ahhh. On a hot day, there's nothing more refreshing than a romp through the water. These 2-month-old fawns enjoyed the water for the cool reprieve it provided perhaps more than the drink. In fact, on several occasions, the author witnessed the fawns actually jumping in and swimming around in the nearby stock tank. Stock tanks provide an important water source for many wildlife species..

Sleeper Streams

text and photos by Mike Blair
staff photographer





Unassuming and, perhaps unnoticed by most, small pasture draws with spring seeps or tiny creeks can be true fishing hotspots.

Gold Mine creek is an angler's dream, but you won't find it on any map. Even the locals never heard of it. It's a secret place, a brook so small you could cross it a dozen times quail hunting, and never once consider returning in summer.

But there's gold in its pools — catfish, bass, green sunfish. In knee-deep holes the size of a dinner table, wild fish that have never seen a lure literally race each other to a popping bug. And years of hidden existence have produced fish of surprising size.

The discovery of such a place opens new vistas for the outdoor enthusiast. Similar creeks exist throughout the prairies and woodlands. Pristine waters full of fish are waiting for the angler willing to look for them. The key is to think small.

I discovered sleeper streams years ago while fishing a remote pond on a western Kansas ranch. Hearing several bullfrogs chugging in a pasture draw, I switched to a flyrod and set out to find them. Flooded grass hid the frogs, but a small pool in the drainage was intriguing. No bigger than a bathtub, its water was clear and 2 feet deep. Forty feet away, it represented an accuracy test for my No. 8 popping bug. Idly, I false casted several times and dropped the fly onto the surface. Instantly a 12-inch largemouth blasted the popper.

Delighted, I landed and released the fish, but the lure's cork body was torn away, leaving only a hackled hook. I cast it back into the water, and immediately caught a big green sunfish. By now the pool was disturbed.

The stream had no actual channel — just a grassy seep you could comfortably cross in tennis shoes. I sneaked within casting range of the next open water, and again cast the hackled hook. This time, a 15 inch largemouth struck, literally churning the pool to a froth. While releasing the fish, I counted five

skittish channel cats also swimming in the clear water. Each appeared to weigh between 1 and 3 pounds. All these fish lived in a pool only 12 feet long, 5 feet wide and 2 deep!

The next hole was a 100 yards farther, and an old beaver cutting evidenced an important element of potentially good fishing creeks. The fact that beavers had one time lived here was the reason that pools existed in an otherwise grassy watercourse. Other important ingredients were spring seeps that constantly fed the pools (fairly common in prairie ecosystems), and a large, upstream pond which for years had stocked the pools in periods of overflow.

Downstream, my third try produced another bass and green sunfish, and by now the hook was completely bare. I headed back to the car for another lure, and drove to where I'd quit fishing. Walking about 100 yards between each pool, I eventually caught more than 30 fish in two hours. One pool produced eight consecutive bass ranging between 13 and 18 inches long — terrific fishing in anybody's book. You might expect something

like this with trout in mountain meadows, but in Kansas? I was hooked on small stream fishing.

Since then, I spend much of my fishing time searching for such fish hideaways, Whether perennial pasture streams, or hidden beaver ponds on tiny brooks, each trip blends challenge with discovery. Catching fish is the object, but the element of exploration makes small stream fishing enjoyable even when fish are few. And the hope for a trophy bass from small water is fueled around each new bend.

Kansas small stream fishing nearly always requires permission, since most land is held in private ownership. But permission is usually easy to obtain, since these spots are overlooked and receive no pressure. Landowners themselves may be unaware of sleeper stream fishing potential. I remember one small pasture creek where the owner was agreeable but skeptical. I fished a half-mile of water, and caught dozens of green sunfish up to 11 inches long. On light tackle, that's something worth asking for!

To hold fish, small streams must have permanent water and a stocking source. If springs are not present, pasture drainages periodically dry up. Don't waste time on these creeks. Where permanent pools exist, look for old ponds upstream. These provide periodic stockings under flood conditions.

Most small streams in grassy situations are clear and shallow, making fish especially vulnerable to predators. Fish may hide during daylight hours, burrowing into submerged vegetation or resting under cut banks. If you wish, you can determine the productivity of a clear pool by visiting it at night with



Crystal clear, shallow water demands that fishermen stalk the water before making a cast. Shoreline vibrations and a shadow over the water will probably spook most fish in the small holes.

a powerful flashlight. I once checked a pool known by day to hold several bass and a handful of panfish. The night light revealed



Small prairie streams are sleepers not only because they're unknown but they can hold some respectable fish!

much more — including a channel catfish of perhaps 8 pounds, and bass up to four pounds. Later on, I got much better acquainted with them.

Because of the close confines of small streams, fish are spooky. There is intense competition for food, so even large bass may rush to inhale tiny morsels before sunfish arrive. But generally, the splash of a large lure scares fish away. It's best to fish with small lures.

This was illustrated last summer when I took several flyfishing friends to a small stream filled with bass. Accustomed to fishing ponds and lakes, they selected favorite size 1/0 deer hair bugs and plopped them into the quiet pools. Stripping line, the huge flies left wakes like muskrats in the tiny pools. Fish darted frantically, until



the water was lifeless. These tactics, excellent in bigger waters, proved too much for the clear, shallow holes. Only when the anglers switched to small bugs with subtle actions did they catch bass farther downstream.

Because pools are small, shallow and sometimes choked with vegetation, baitcasting and spincasting gear are not suited to this type of fishing. Ultralight systems provide the spinning finesse needed to fish small jigs, spinners or surface lures. But flyrods are even better. The best choice is a 5-weight flyrod. Heavy line does the work of casting, and allows delicate presentations with very light flies. The 5-weight is limber enough for exciting battles with sunfish, yet heavy enough to tackle decent large-mouths.

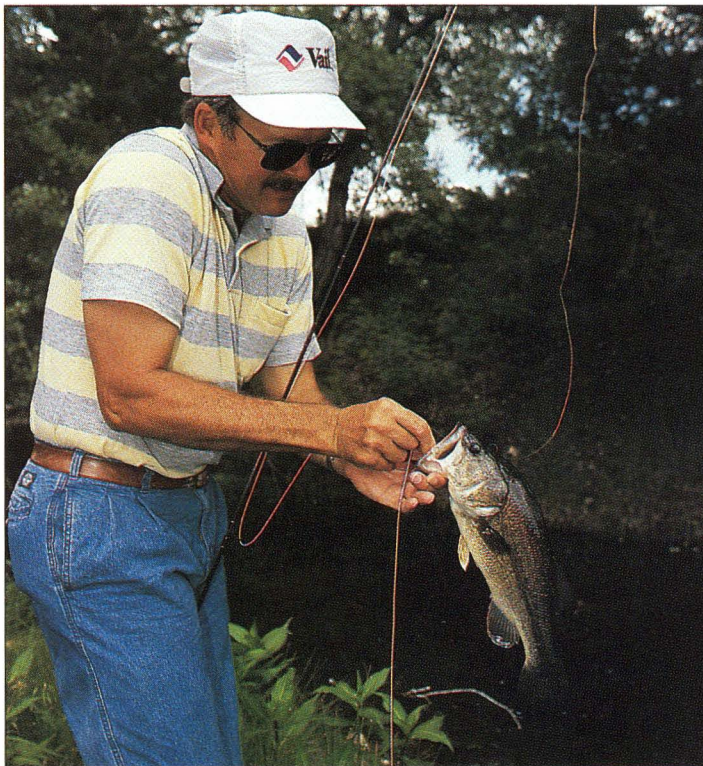
Unweighted nymph imitations provide the natural action of submerged aquatic insects. The slow sink rate allows an arresting, pulsating retrieve that "swims" in the shallow water column better than jigs. Though topwater action is more spectacular, subsurface fishing is often more productive, particularly in the cool waters of early spring and fall. A good all-around nymph pattern for flyfishing Kansas small streams is the No. 10 gold-ribbed hare's ear. Hair, rubber-bodied or cork bugs comprise the topwater choices of the fly-rodder. In early summer, rubber spiders seem to work best. Later, small grasshopper and cricket imitations are preferred. All should be fished slowly, with tiny twitches

Fly tackle might be the best option for these sleeper streams. The fly rod allows the angler to make soft, splashless casts a distance from the water's edge. After a fish is hooked, however, some fancy maneuvering may be necessary to keep from breaking off in brush.

to impart action. Hook sizes #6 or smaller are best for most small stream situations. Eight-foot 3X tapered leaders are adequate for both topwater and subsurface presentations in clear water.

Angler approach is a critical factor in small stream fishing. Since the water is often very clear, it's important to remain hidden from the fish. While not mandatory, dark or camouflage clothing helps blend a person into the landscape. Caps and polarized glasses not only shadow and cover a human face, but help the angler see fish before being seen. Regardless of what is worn, keep a low profile when approaching the water.

Using ultralight gear, crouch or crawl near the water to begin casting. When fly-rod fishing though, begin falsecasting 50 feet or so from the water's edge, then walk forward to drop the fly onto the water. The sight of a waving flyline will spook fish, so



The small waters can hold big fish, but be sure to release them to prevent throwing the fisheries out of balance.

move ahead just far enough to drop the fly and leader at the desired target.

Weather conditions seem to play a greater role in small stream fishing than in larger bodies of water. Barometric pressure, long



Spinning tackle can also be effective, but use light jigs or spinners to prevent the baits from disappearing into the bottom vegetation.

known to influence fish activity, seems especially important in small, shallow pools. I chart fish activity against a recording graph barometer, and experience shows that barometric pressures less than 29.85 inches halt all fish activity in small pools. Fish bury into the moss, and simply don't move. I don't fish small streams at such times.

Moderate barometric pressures between 29.85 and 30.05 suggest fishing deep, using slow presentations. Topwater lures attract little interest by feeding fish under these circumstances. Fish can be caught throughout this range of intermediate pressures, but success increases at the higher end. Either way, you have to work harder for

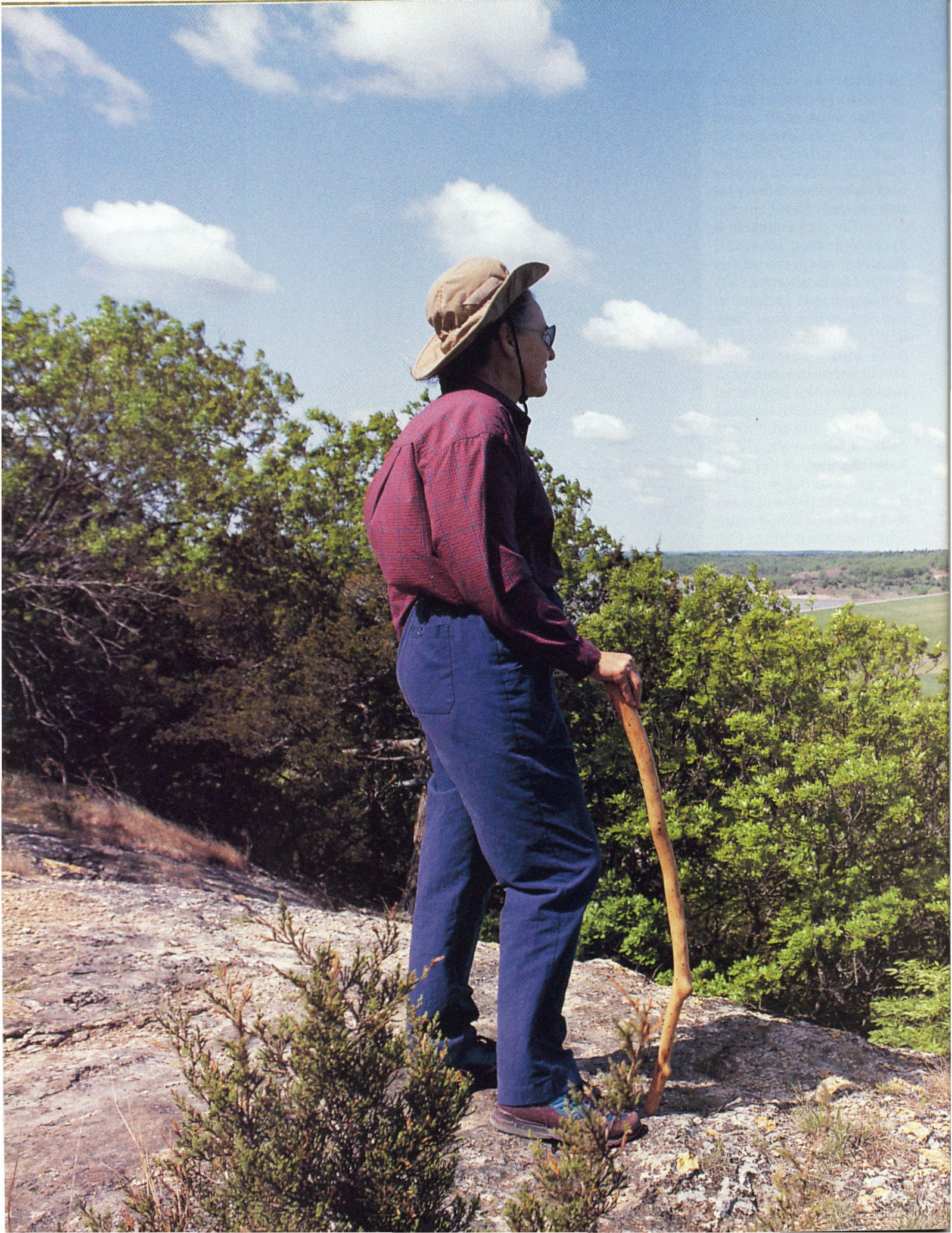
them.

High barometers above 30.05 (and especially 30.20 and above) are best suited for topwater fishing. Under high pressure, all animals seem to show increased activity, and fish are more willing to strike a topwater lure. Rate of catch also increases during periods of high pressure. When the barometer exceeds 30.30, fishing is usually excellent in small streams.

A four-pound bass is a wonderful trophy on Kansas small streams. But these fisheries can be quickly destroyed by removing large fish. Each pool is different, but all are in fragile balance. Release all fish unharmed, and you can expect excellent fishing each time conditions are right.

Discover small stream fishing for yourself. Break loose from the named, and explore the unnamed. Big and hungry fish, no competition, the lure of constant discovery — all are the promises of Kansas sleeper streams. You'll agree; they really are gold mines.





Elk City's Pathways In Paradise

by Marc Murrell

wildlife information representative, Valley Center

photos by Mike Blair



For scenery, variety and length, the hiking trails at Elk City Reservoir may be unmatched in the Sunflower State. Whatever your preference, there is a trail for you.

Imagine a beautiful spring day, walking 50 yards, and forgetting your problems as your hike begins. You take a deep breath and discover a fascinating natural world unfolding before you. You are swallowed by the scenery and your pace quickens as you thirst for more. You could be at any one of the many hiking trails that criss cross Kansas' state parks and wildlife areas. (surprised?) But for today, you are on the shores of Elk City Reservoir near Independence.

The woodlands are deep. Lush

vegetation covers the forest floor in sunlit areas. Hackberry trees hide in the shadows growing inconspicuously as you pass. The redbud's purple blossoms buzz with activity and provide a potpourri scent only Mother Nature can create. Post oaks as tall as you care to bend your neck, tower over all like watchful big brothers.

You break out of the woodland onto a sheer rock ledge with a panoramic view of forever. Eastern redcedars spring from the cracks and crevices in every direction

along the face of the ledge. The hardy shrubs manage to cling to the shallow layer of marginal soil. Each year they grow a little and die some, too.

The ledge takes you to another world, one frozen in rock indefinitely. Skeletons of prehistoric plants and animals that swam in an ancient sea cover the rocks and give the casual observer a glimpse of the past.

You drop into a canyon and wind through limestone tunnels and overhangs as a boisterous blue jay scolds your intrusion. Blue, gray, and green lichens quietly cover the rocks and trees.

Rounding the corner, you startle a deer drinking from the stream. It pauses momentarily, water trickling out of its mouth, and leaves you with a flash of its white tail.



The hiking trails along the shoreline of Elk City Reservoir provide a variety of lengths, challenges and scenery. Hikers will find trail heads from several different locations and can choose a trail to fit their schedule and mood.

Squirrels scatter at the sound of the deer's retreat and bark their alarm. Your presence has interrupted the woodland's routine, but shortly after you pass, the woods return to normal with the content singing of cardinals and robins.

The trail leads you out of the bottomland into a meadow. Big and little bluestem grass waves in the Kansas wind as it fights succession — the encroaching woody shrubs and trees intent on expanding their territory.

The prairie is alive. Red-tailed hawks hunt overhead. Mice and other rodents scurry about, hoping to avoid being the main course. The familiar call of bobwhite quail pleases your ears as you continue.

Your dream trip is nearly complete. You have used all of your senses, sharpening them and bringing you closer to nature. You have smelled the fresh fragrance of redbud blossoms, wildflowers, and cedar. You have heard the shrill scream of the redtail and the sweet melodies of many songbirds. The vivid scenes, sounds and smells are etched forever in your mind. You can return to the *other* world, perhaps better able to cope.

Elk City Reservoir boasts five different trails for beginners, casual and hard-core hikers.

One of the most popular is Table Mound Hiking Trail. This 2 3/4-mile hike provides spectacular vistas of the lake and winds through some of the most fascinating rock formations in Kansas. It is rated as moderately difficult. The Kansas Trails Council designed and worked with many volunteers to construct the trail.

Table Mound winds through U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's (Corps) property and Kansas Department of Wildlife and Park's (department)



The rocky hills of the region provide fascinating hiking surroundings as well as an invigorating physical activity. An observant hiker can learn about not only native wildlife and vegetation but also the area's geological history. Rock formations and fossils abound.

land. One trail head is located in the Squaw Creek Cove Campground in the state park and the other begins at the Memorial Scenic Overlook near the dam.

The Post Oak Nature Trail is a gentle 2/3-mile trail that meanders through various habitats typical of southeast Kansas. This trail was also designed and constructed by the Kansas Trails Council. The trail head is located at the opposite end of the parking lot from the Table Mound Trail at the Memorial Scenic Overlook.

Green Thumb Nature Trail is a 1-mile loop that begins and ends in the Squaw Creek Cove Campground

northwest of the state park office. The moderately strenuous hike will take you to the top of a hill and provide a painting-like panoramic view of the lake framed by trees.

Card Creek Hiking Trail is named after the Corps' area where it



Hikers are advised to wear appropriate footwear as some of the trails will cover rough terrain.



Several of the trails will lead you far away from manicured lawns and paved roads. Hikers have an excellent chance of seeing deer, songbirds and other common wildlife, while enjoying the beauty and solitude of untouched scenery.

is located; the Elk River and Card Creek junction at the upper end of the reservoir. This healthy, 2-mile hike will take you through transitional environments of riparian stream habitat to vegetated hillsides overlooking the flowing water and associated flood plains.

The Elk River Hiking Trail is the mother of all trails. It offers the serious hiker the challenge of approximately 15 miles from beginning to end. There are two trail heads. One is located southwest of the Corps' office and the other is located at the intersection of the Elk River and Highway 160 on the department's wildlife area. For

shorter hike excursions, there are four places where you can turn off the trail.

The breathtaking hike allows you to weave in and out of picturesque limestone rock formations and experience dense hardwood forest habitat alive with all types of creatures. A bit of the prairie is also on tap as the trail winds along the lake. During the wet season, small, clear creeks flow over and through rocks adding a refreshing dimension to the natural landscape.

These trails are a big attraction for Elk City Reservoir and southeast Kansas. Trail visitation from people of all ages is on the rise

according to Doug Blex, unit supervisor for the department.

"We see a lot of people willing to drive 100-200 miles to get here," says Blex. "The use and interest in the trails has increased in the last 4-5 years, and people appreciate them more now."

Eugene Goff, park ranger with the Corps, agrees and thinks the aesthetics of the area helps too.

"People enjoy the uniqueness of the terrain. It's not the type that people usually think about when they talk about Kansas," noted Goff.

Both Blex and Goff have noticed the biggest increase in recent use by school groups and scouts. Many utilize the area for outdoor interpretive work or learning sites. Frequent use by birdwatchers, photographers, and others is also common.

One of the things that users enjoy most is the wide range of wildlife. On any of the trails you may see scissor-tailed flycatchers, northern orioles, mockingbirds, and yellow bellied sapsuckers. Five species of owls have been observed and many species of hawks are common including the northern harrier, sharp-shinned, cooper's, red-tailed, Swainson's, ferruginous, and rough-legged.

The reservoir hosts large populations of wintering waterfowl with 10-12,000 snow geese typically present. About a dozen bald eagles winter here as well.

White-tailed deer, gray and red foxes, skunks, opossums, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, quail, bobcat, beaver, and many other furbearers can be encountered if you're quiet. Silence is the key to wildlife viewing according to Goff.

"Hikers need to walk quietly and make very little noise," Goff states. "It's also a good idea to stop occasionally and either stand or sit silently to observe the surroundings. You'd be surprised how much wildlife you can see doing this"

He also adds, "Binoculars are a very usable tool for wildlife watching."

There are certain types of wildlife people should particularly

watch for and avoid. All of the trails offer prime habitat for copperheads and scorpions.

"There are an abundance of copperheads in this area but if people practice basic outdoor safety and use common sense, they shouldn't have any problems," says Blex. "Be careful to watch where you step and

be careful to look before placing your hands on any rocks or ledges."

Blex adds, "If you're really concerned about the potential encounters, hike in the fall or early spring, or when it's cool in the morning before the snakes emerge from the rocks as the day warms."

Neither Blex nor Goff want

people to be scared away by the possibility of a snake encounter. They just want people to be aware of the potential to prevent any problems. Even with all the groups and the thousands of people that have hiked the trails, neither man can remember a trail user being bitten by a copperhead.



While much of the area is heavily timbered rolling hills, there is ample native grassland that provides a glimpse of the prairie that has stood since presettlement days. The edge areas between timber and grassland provide a study of not only ideal wildlife habitat but also succession as woodland plants encroach on the grassland. Prairie wildflowers will brighten the scenery as you travel.


One frequent problem that occurs on the trails is people becoming lost because they wandered off the trail. Several of the trails wind through vast expansions of woodlands and it's not difficult to get turned around if you leave the trail.

Each of the five trails have paint blazes on the trees next to the trail to monitor your progress. The Table Mound, Elk River, and Card Creek Trails are marked with blue paint. The Green Thumb Trail is marked in white while the Post Oak

Trail is marked in orange to eliminate confusion in the locations it crosses the Table Mound Trail. Most trails have enough use so that a path is worn for reference as well. Hikers are encouraged to stay on the trail for safety and protection of the environment.

The trails are a wonderful place for anyone to enjoy the great outdoors. The tranquil setting offers families the perfect opportunity to spend quality time with each other and forget about life's everyday

problems. No fancy equipment is needed and you can travel, learn, and enjoy at your own pace. There is no admission charge to any trail although a state park vehicle permit is required to use either trail head in the state park.

For more information about the trails, contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Park's Elk City State Park Office at (316) 331-6295 or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Elk City Project Office at (316) 331-0315. 



A trail with a view. The high ridges surrounding the lake provide not only a challenging climb but also a breathtaking view of the entire lake and adjoining bottomland. As a reward for your hard climb, you can sit and drink in the quiet view while resting up for the trek back down. Trails are marked with color-coded paint blazes along the way to prevent hikers from getting lost.

The Missouri River: Big Water Canoeing

The Missouri River is a historic waterway, providing excellent canoeing opportunities, but the big water, strong current and barge traffic demand that boaters be experienced and use caution.

by Joe Hyde and Sam Seagraves

Lawrence

photos by Mike Blair

The Missouri River is at all times big, beautiful and dangerous. It is attractive to canoeists because, for one thing, being out on this huge river in a canoe gives paddlers a personal, gut-level sense of connection with American history. This is the river of the Plains Indians, of the Lewis and Clark expedition, of fur traders and keel boats. Even today, a canoeist paddling the stretch from Parkville, Mo. to Kansas City is likely to meet a touring paddle-wheel riverboat—an encounter guaranteed to evoke the wonders of bygone days.

The Missouri serves as the

geopolitical border of northeast Kansas. Along this portion of the river, from White Cloud to Kansas City, the Missouri's banks have been stabilized by the construction of revetments, dikes and submerged dikes. Called "navigation structures" by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, these manmade earth and rock devices "aim" moving water across sandy river bed, exploiting the river's own power to cut one main navigable channel into the river bed and keep that channel swept free of most natural snags. That's the good news.

The bad news is that by having its once-natural meanderings and

braided channels "corseted" by navigation structures, the Missouri's flow rate has been artificially increased. For such a big, wide river, the Missouri is startlingly fast—some 4 to 5 mph even at low water.

To someone floating downstream with the current, this water speed is not apparent, and the river's vast size easily lulls the canoeist into a false sense of security. Once that happens, things can go downhill fast. The natural tendency is to delay making evasive moves to avoid hitting objects such as channel buoys, snags, etc. Unfortunately, it usually takes some



Canoeing the Missouri River requires experience and common sense. As with any canoeing trip, never go alone and always let someone know where you'll be and when you plan to return. Never underestimate the power of the big river's current.

experience before the paddler realizes that he has less time than he or she thinks in which to paddle defensively. Be alert, and always protect yourself. This river has many dangers.

No matter how warm the water may be, there is no good time of year to fall out of a boat into the Missouri River. Bottom irregularities on the river bed cause "boils" to rise to the surface with a loud, slashing sound. Boils contain intense cross and down currents — bad news for swimmers. Even if there were no water hazards, dumping a canoe on the Missouri would be dangerous because of the great distance the swimmer may have to travel to reach shore.

Of all canoeing safety tips for the Missouri River, two are of paramount importance: **ALWAYS WEAR A PFD** and **NEVER CANOE ALONE**. General hazards on the Missouri are:

Wind

If the wind speed is forecast to rise to 20 mph or above, any canoe trip on the Missouri should be can-

celled. Wherever the direction of water flow runs counter to the wind direction, the Missouri's surface is blown into a hard chop. In such violent waves, keeping a canoe bow pointed safely into the wind becomes practically impossible. Normal boat handling and defensive maneuvering become hazardous, since the canoe will take water over the side when turned across the wind.

High Water (or a rising or falling river)

Under these circumstances there can be lots of driftwood moving downstream. Most will be on the surface. There are also "bouncers"—trees or waterlogged drift that catch the bottom and get pushed upright violently by the current.

Dikes and Submerged Dikes

Of the two, submerged dikes are by far the greatest threat to canoeists. This is because the rocky tops of submerged dikes are designed to lie at or just below the surface at normal river levels. Moreover, submerged dikes often

reach far out into the river. At a low-angle view, the submerged dike is largely invisible to the canoeist. Often, the first clue to its presence is a distant roaring sound or water ripping across the dike top.

If unable to steer clear of the submerged dike, a canoe can sustain hull damage by striking the rocks. Worse, hitting the dike top can upset the canoe and pitch the paddler into the river.

Water on the downstream side of a submerged dike is very dangerous. Particularly intense currents —called "hydraulics"— occur in moving water behind any cross-current obstruction. These currents circulate water from the river bed up to the surface and back toward the dike top. Objects (or people) in the water are moved back to the dike top, dragged under by water flowing over the dike, then returned to the dike repeatedly for further recycling.

Large eddies and powerful cross-currents also occur behind the dikes. At high water and when the

river is falling, these eddies can trap great quantities of tree-sized driftwood, creating huge, swirling log-packs. Any canoe or swimmer entering this environment is in immediate peril.

Barges

For barges, the navigation season on the Missouri River runs from mid-April to mid-October. During this time, people canoeing the river are likely to encounter barge traffic anytime of the day or night. Other than setting the navigation season dates, the Corps of Engineers does not arrange daily movement schedules for barges.

Apart from the obvious problem of being run over by one and chopped to pieces by its propellers, the main trouble with barges is their wakes. These can be violent at times, but not always. It depends on the vagaries of river currents, water depth, and your distance from the barge.

Where barges are concerned, the canoeist is wise to forget all about the inland rules of right-of-way. It is not sensible to expect barge pilots to nimbly move their huge cargo trains out of your path, or to reduce

their speed to avoid "waking" you. Piloting barges on a swift-water river is a dangerous, serious job. Common sense dictates that you keep your canoe as far away from barges as is safely possible.

Sportcraft

Concerning the hazards of boat-to-boat encounters, sportcraft are a more frequent source of trouble for canoeists than barges. Oblivious to the danger caused by their tall wakes, high-speed powerboat operators can be just as rude and threatening to canoeists on the Missouri River as they are everywhere else.


Wakes

When encountering the wakes of barges and sportcraft, the best defensive tactic is to slow your canoe to river current speed, pivot the canoe toward the wake, then take the wake bow-on at a slight quartering angle. This will help prevent the wake from breaching the canoe. Once the initial wake has passed, watch for the rebound wake coming off the riverbank. If it looks serious enough, pivot toward it and defend yourself as necessary.

Like a good driver, a canoeist on the Missouri should check for traffic

behind his boat. Frequent glances over the shoulder will keep the canoeist from being surprised by barges, sportcraft or large floating debris approaching from upstream.

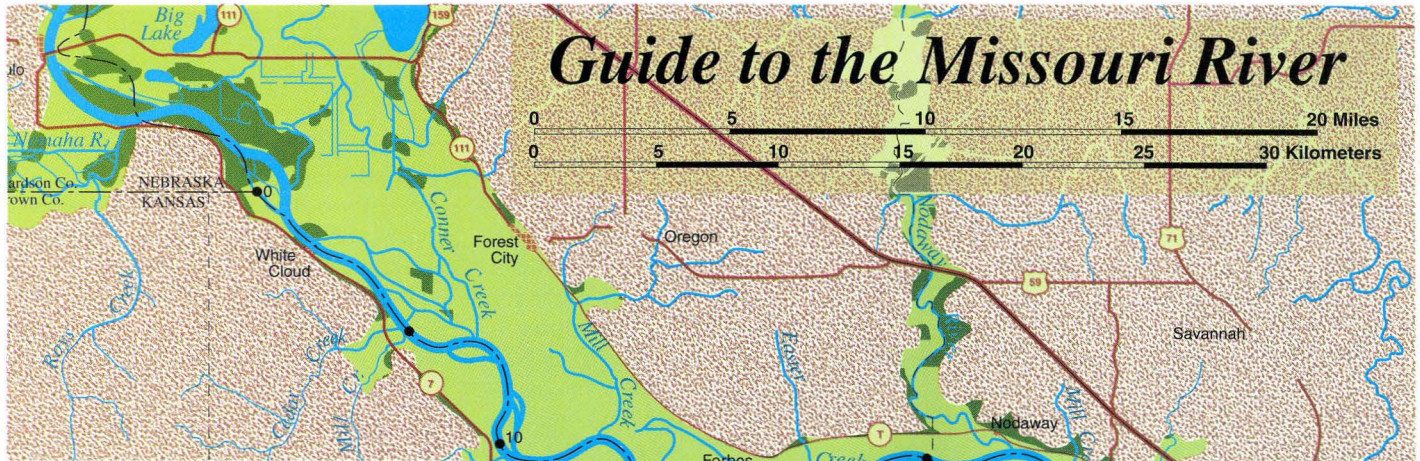
Canoeists wishing to camp on the Missouri will discover very few sandbars for camping while the barge navigation season is open. The best times for camping are early spring and late fall when the lower river levels expose clean sandbars downstream of most navigation structures. Since there are access points every 15 to 30 miles, and since fast current enables paddlers to average 5 mph, it is not hard to travel up to 35 miles in a one-day float.

NOTE: Charts covering the navigable portion of the Missouri River in two volumes (Sioux City to Kansas City, Kansas City to the mouth) may be obtained by mailing your request, along with a check or money order, to: District Engineer, U. S. Army Engineer District, 700 Federal Building, Kansas City, MO 64106. The navigation charts cost \$5 each. 

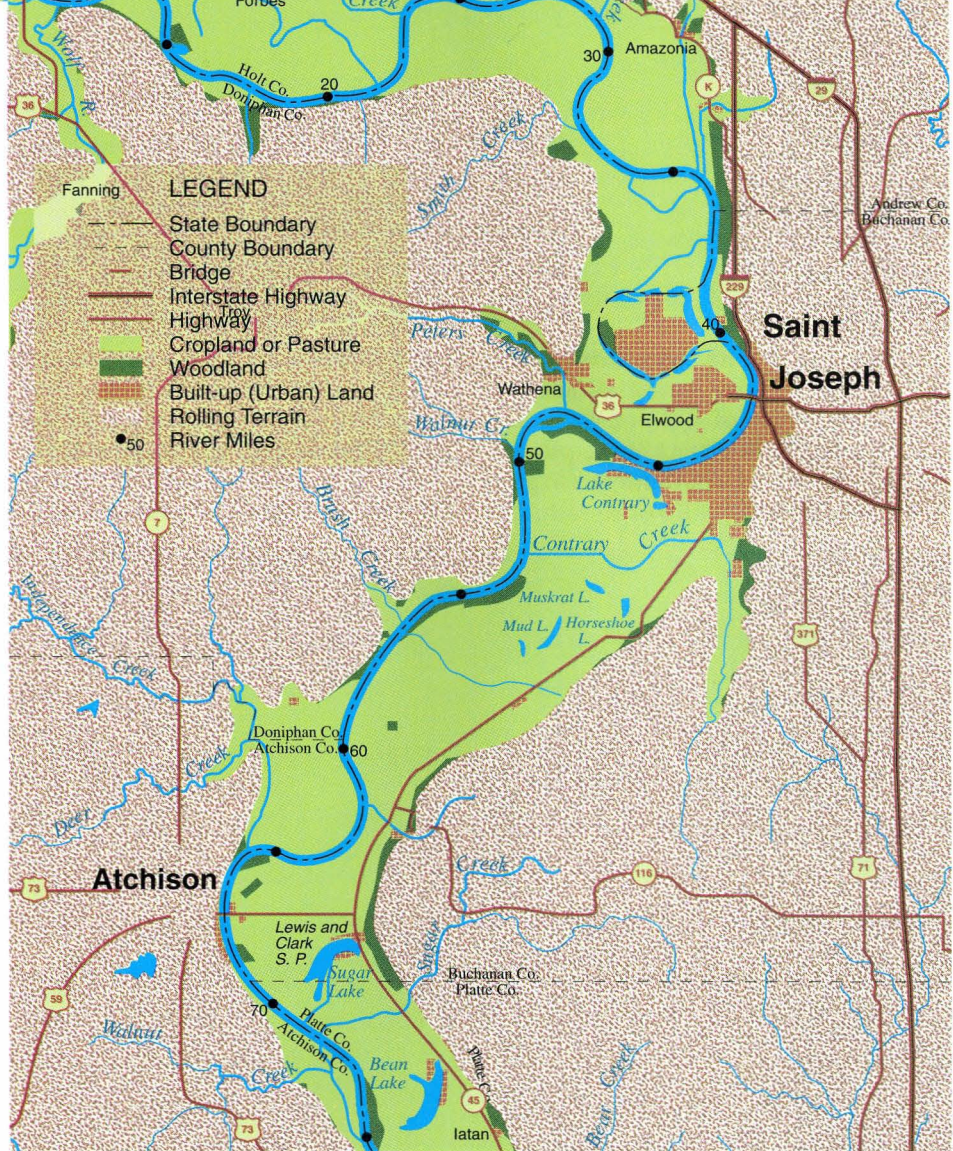


Lifejackets or personal flotation devices are required by law, but it's only smart to wear one while on the river. Barge traffic is common on the Missouri and canoeists should be aware of the wakes these large craft create. Other obstacles include dikes and submerged dikes. Current and eddies around such obstacles must be attended to and caution is advised.

Guide to the Missouri River



- Mile 0 (489.9) Nebraska border.
- 1.7 (488.2) White Cloud Kansas landing
Access on right bank of river just north of downtown White Cloud. Take some time to inquire locally about sites of interest in this historic riverfront city.
- 5.1 (484.8) Cedar Creek enters on right bank.
- 5.4 (484.5) Mill Creek enters on right bank.
- 7.1 (484.8) Cannon Creek enters on left bank.
- 11.0 (478.9) Wolf River enters on right bank.
There is a poor access point on the Wolf upstream two miles at a county road bridge east of the town of Sparks.
- 11.9 (478.0) Buffalo Hollow quarry dock (private) on right bank.
- 12.8 (477.1) Payne's Landing (private) on left bank.
- 13.9 (476.0) Mill Creek enters on left bank.
- 16.2 (473.7) Mt. Vernon quarry dock (private) on right bank.
- 23.7 (466.2) Easter Creek enters on left bank.
- 27.6 (462.3) Nodaway Island recreation area on left bank (Missouri side). Access.
- NOTE: Due to the limited number of bridges over the Missouri, paddlers should plan to put-in and take-out on the same side of river.
- 29.1 (460.8) Mill Creek enters on left bank.
- 32.3 (457.6) Smith Creek enters on right bank
- 37.7 (452.2) St. Joseph, Mo. water intake on left bank.
- 37.9 (452.2) St. Joseph, Mo. marina restaurant and boat ramp. Several access points located on left bank.
- 40.9 (449.0) City of St. Joseph, Mo. on left bank. Water intake on left bank.
- 41.7 (448.2) Union Pacific railroad bridge.
- 42.0 (447.9) U. S. Highway 36 bridge. No access. There are numerous loading docks located on the left bank for the next two miles.
- 45.9 (444.0) St Joseph yacht club ramp and dock (private) on left bank.
- 48.2 (441.7) Peter's Creek enters on right bank
- 48.8 (440.0) Walnut Creek enters on right bank.
- 52.7 (437.2) Contrary Creek enters on left bank.
- 56.5 (433.4) Brush Creek enters on right bank.



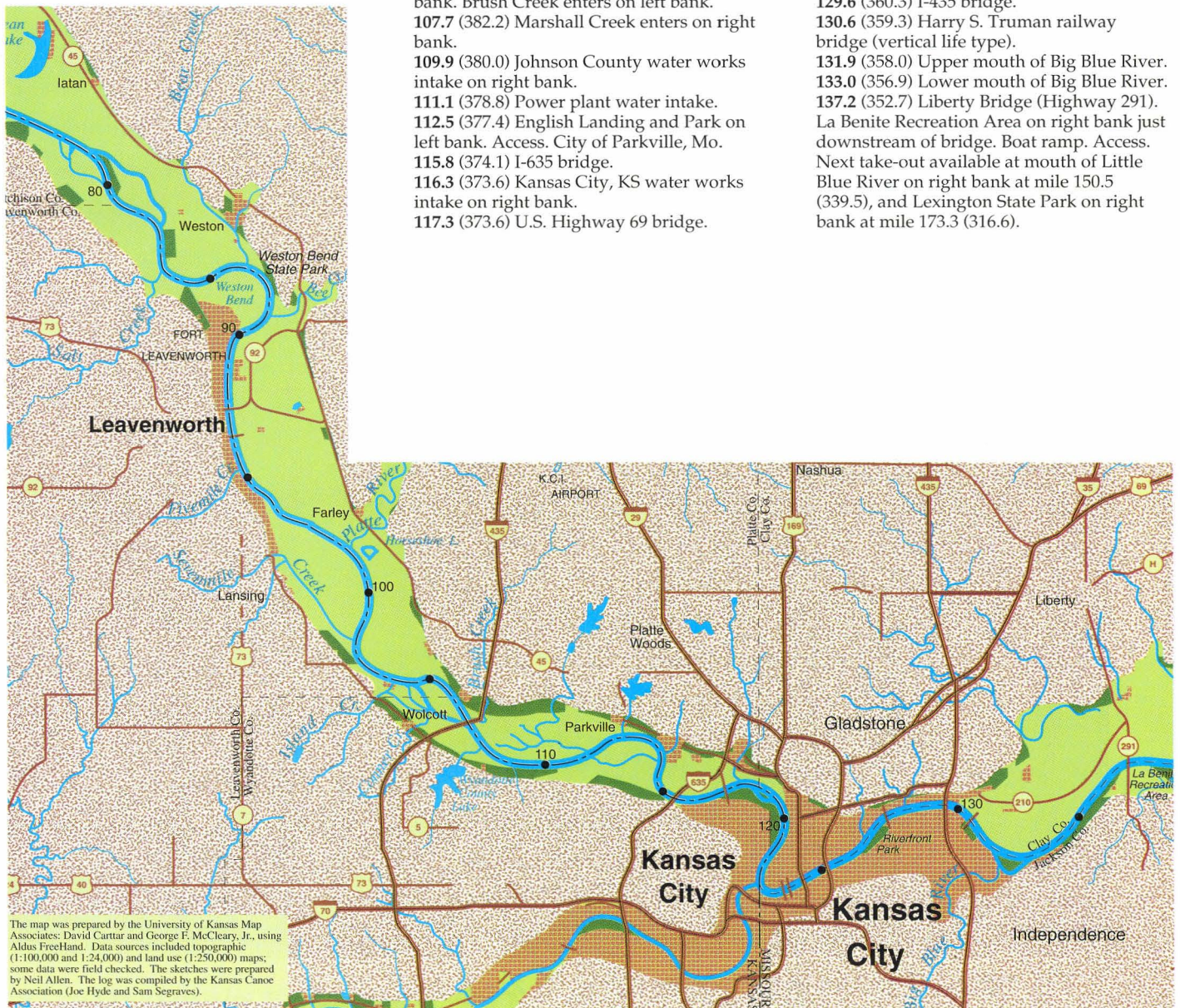
- 51.0 (432.9) Scholz quarry dock (private).
- 65.9 (424.0) Independence Creek enters on right bank.
- 66.9 (423.0) Independence park and recreation area (city of Atchison) on right bank. Access. Boat ramp.
- 67.3 (422.6) Atchison railroad bridge.
- 67.4 (422.5) U. S. Highway 59 bridge.
- 71.4 (418.5) Boldridge quarry dock (private).
- 71.7 (418.2) Sugar Creek enters on left bank.
- 72.9 (417.0) Walnut Creek enters on right bank.
- 76.0 (413.9) Little Walnut Creek enters on right bank.
- 78.9 (411.0) Iatan power plant and water intake on left bank.

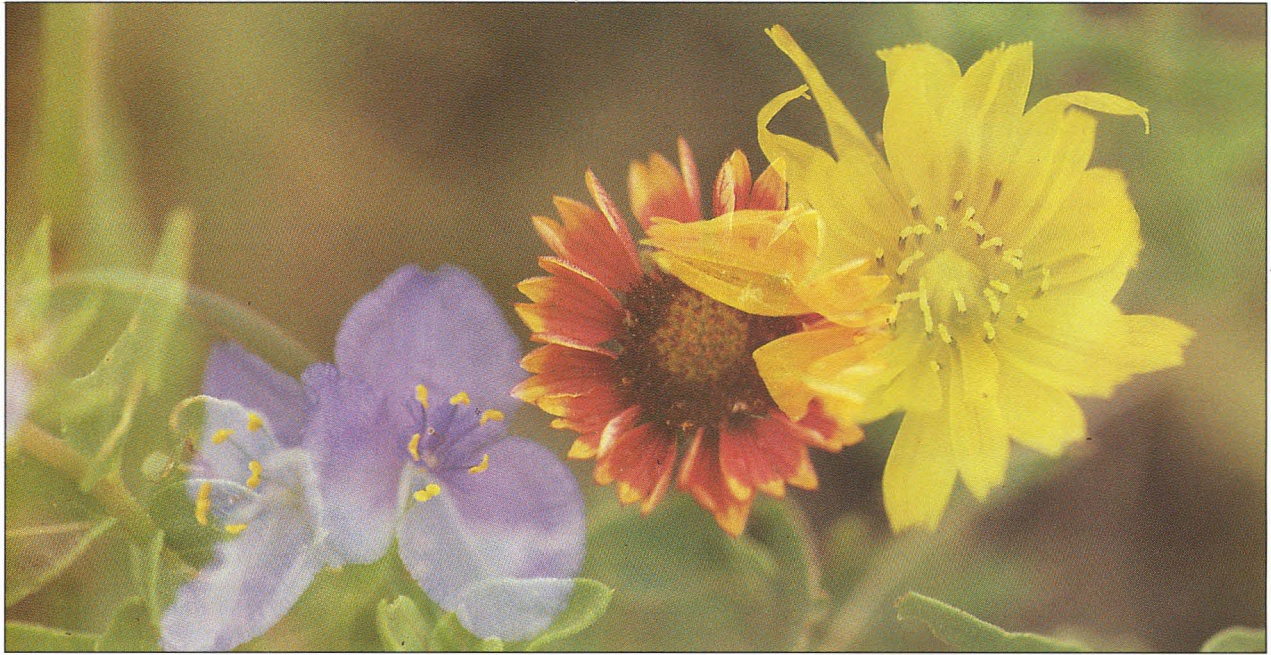


83.7 (406.2) Salt Creek enters on right bank.
 85.9 (404.0) Begin four-mile passage through Weston Bend. The historic town of Weston lies 1.5 miles up bear Creek at mile 86.8 (403.1) on the left bank. There is much to see and do in Weston and paddlers should make time to visit.
 86.9 (403.0) Begin 5-mile stretch of Ft. Leavenworth military reservation on right bank.
 88.6 (401.3) Bee Creek enters on left bank.
 90.0 (399.9) Ft. Leavenworth military headquarters visible on right bank.

92.3 (397.6) U.S. Highway 92 bridge. City of Leavenworth on right bank. Leavenworth park and recreation area. Boat ramp. Access. there are several private loading docks downstream from this point.
 94.2 (395.7) Five Mile Creek enters on right bank.
 98.7 (391.2) Platte River enters on left bank. Many bald eagles roost here in the winter. There is access and boat ramp approximately 2 miles up the platte on the left bank. It can beached on county roads through the town of Farelly, Mo.
 100.4 (389.5) Kansas State Penitentiary picnic area (private) on right bank.
 101.8 (388.1) Seven Mile Creek enters on right bank.
 103.4 (386.5) Salina Terminal elevator company on right bank. Island Creek enters just downstream on right.
 104.9 (385.0) Ellis Branch enters on left bank just downstream of Massman construction dock.
 106.5 (383.4) I0435 bridge.
 107.1 (382.8) Conner Creek enters on right bank. Brush Creek enters on left bank.
 107.7 (382.2) Marshall Creek enters on right bank.
 109.9 (380.0) Johnson County water works intake on right bank.
 111.1 (378.8) Power plant water intake.
 112.5 (377.4) English Landing and Park on left bank. Access. City of Parkville, Mo.
 115.8 (374.1) I-635 bridge.
 116.3 (373.6) Kansas City, KS water works intake on right bank.
 117.3 (373.6) U.S. Highway 69 bridge.

119.4 (370.5) Kansas City, Mo. water works intake on left bank. Fairfax airport on right bank.
 120.8 (369.1) Kansas city, Mo. downtown airport on right bank.
 122.6 (367.3) Mouth of Kansas River. Several river boats docked just upstream on right bank. Downtown Kansas City, Mo. and Quality Hill located on right bank just downstream (Best take-out 15 miles downstream at LaBenite Recreation Area at Highway 291 bridge, mile 137.2)
 123.7 (366.2) Broadway Bridge.
 123.8 (366.1) Hannibal railroad bridge.
 124.3 (365.6) ASB Bridge (Highway 9; vertical life type).
 125.1 (364.8) Pasea Bridge.
 126.7 (363.2) Riverfront Park and Recreation Area on right bank. No access. The park is closed due to the dumping of toxic wastes within its boundaries. There is a sunken barge across the river from the park (left bank).
 127.6 (362.3) Chouteau bridge (Highway 269).
 129.6 (360.3) I-435 bridge.
 130.6 (359.3) Harry S. Truman railway bridge (vertical life type).
 131.9 (358.0) Upper mouth of Big Blue River.
 133.0 (356.9) Lower mouth of Big Blue River.
 137.2 (352.7) Liberty Bridge (Highway 291). La Benite Recreation Area on right bank just downstream of bridge. Boat ramp. Access. Next take-out available at mouth of Little Blue River on right bank at mile 150.5 (339.5), and Lexington State Park on right bank at mile 173.3 (316.6).



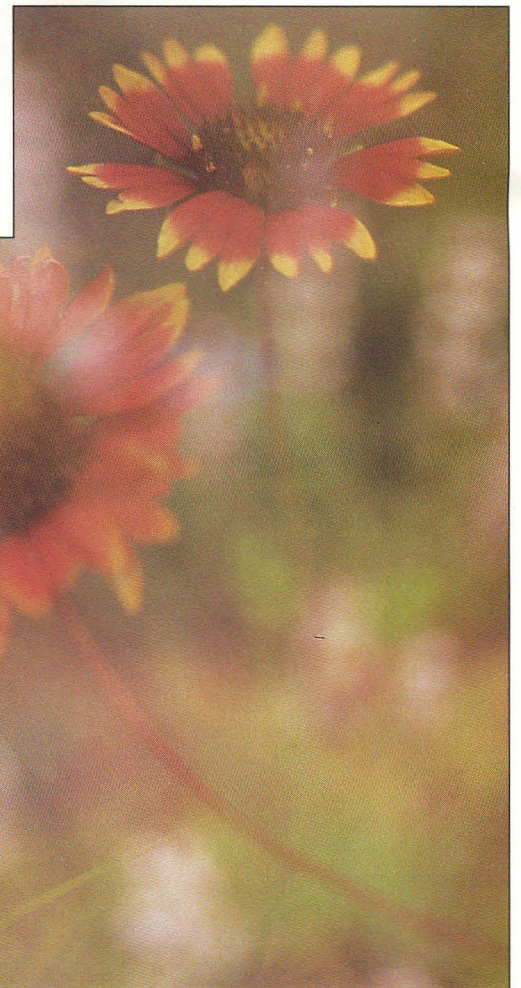


TRIPLE EXPOSURE - 105MM, f/4 @ 1/500 SEC.

Gallery

by Mike Blair

Flowery Images



DOUBLE EXPOSURE - 105MM, f/4 @ 1/250 SEC.



ZOOMED DURING EXPOSURE - 70-210 ZOOM LENS, $f/22$ @ $1/30$ SEC.



TILTED DURING EXPOSURE - 105 MM, $f/4$ @ $1/60$ SEC.



Real Anglers Get Their Own Bait

by Mike Miller

editor, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

Most fishermen started their fishing careers learning how to find and catch bait. Too many forget those lessons, but live bait will make your fishing outings more successful.

Has fishing become too complicated? Do we spend too much time with “hot new” lures, magic scents, depth finders, digital read-out reels and the huge assortment gimmicks advertised to help us catch more fish? It’s time we return fishing to its roots; cane poles and bobbers; simpler times and joys

... Naahh!

Ok, Ok, I’ll admit it; I’m a bona fide tackle collector. I spend countless hours scouring tackle catalogues for just the right lures. I spend an equal amount of time organizing and arranging these lures in an assortment of tackle boxes. Heck, while straightening

out one of my boxes the other night, I found several unopened packages; lures purchased last season — sure to catch fish — but tucked away in a too-full box and forgotten.

I’m not about to advocate that we’ll enjoy fishing more if go back to primitive ways. I enjoy piddling with my tackle and lures too much.

But there are lessons learned in our early years that we shouldn't forget; lessons about the effectiveness of live bait and the joys of catching it.

When I was a boy, getting bait was a prerequisite to any fishing trip. Getting that bait was as enjoyable as the fishing and often as challenging. Like my fishing and fishing tackle then, my bait needs were simple — usually a coffee can full of earth worms. But in the relatively dry climate of southcentral Kansas, worms can be difficult to find in July. Just getting a shovel into the ground was sometimes tough. Our “secret” worm spot was a seepy area behind the old sewer plant. It was a smelly job, but the worms were always there.

As my fishing skills evolved, so did my baits. Through magazine articles I learned about plastic worms and topwater baits. Instead of snelled hooks and egg sinkers, my tackle box filled with bass lures. But when the artificials failed, as they often did, I dug some worms or caught a frog . . . and caught fish.

The bass fishing craze of the 1980s snagged me, and my boxes overflowed with crankbaits, spinner baits, grape worms with chartreuse tails, Salt Craws and Zara Spooks. Live bait became the “easy way” to catch fish. I became enchanted with my new tackle and strived to learn how to fish a variety of lures effectively. Then my fishing evolved more, and I discovered other, even more challenging fish, like walleye, stripers, smallmouth bass and crappie. Some days you catch just about any kind of fish on the right lure but on other days, live bait can be the difference in success and failure.

I guess I've come full circle. I still



After a spring rain, jumbo nightcrawlers can be easily picked up after dark. A strong flashlight and quick hands are all that's needed. A supply of nightcrawlers can be kept all summer if you provide fresh bedding and keep them in a cool place. Commercial bedding and food is available and works well.

spend an inordinate amount of time restocking my boxes with artificials, but I now spend time collecting live bait. And I still enjoy the bait catching as much as when I was a boy.

Most of the worms I used back then fed bullheads and channel cats. Today, with walleye on my brain, I still catch worms, though I've learned you don't have to move a ton of wet dirt with a spade. I discovered nightcrawlers and, fortunately, the local city park is loaded with them. We simply wait for a spring rain, grab a bucket and flashlight and pick them up after dark. If it's really wet, you can fill a 1/2-gallon can with magnum nightcrawlers in a short time. If the ground is damp, a little more stealth is required. The vibration-sensitive crawlers will lie half out of the ground, and if you stumble up to grab them, they're gone in the blink of an eye.

Since you can't count on a rainstorm to conveniently wet things down the night before you go fishing, we usually stock up on

worms whenever they're available. They'll keep for most of the summer if you keep fresh bedding or soil in the container and, most importantly, keep them cool. The best possible storage is a refrigerator. A word of warning though: If you're lucky enough to sneak them past your wife, make sure the container has a lid firmly attached. The first time the bottom tray of your refrigerator is covered with escaped nightcrawlers will be the last.

Nightcrawlers are probably one of the most versatile of live baits. They'll catch walleye, smallmouth, spotted and largemouth bass, all of the catfishes, panfish, you name it. But if not as versatile, the minnow is a close second. Just about any fish you might want to catch, except for some of the rough fish, can be caught on minnows. Crappie fishermen are probably the most avid minnow users, but bass, walleye, white bass, flathead and channel cats and others are all commonly caught on minnows. The most common minnow rig is a small hook and a bobber, but tipping jigs

The nightcrawler is one of the most popular baits because it is easy to find and so many fish like it.

Adding a nightcrawler or earth worm to a jig can be a deadly rig for walleye and panfish.

The bottom rig includes a slip sinker 16 to 24 inches above a hook, with either a barrel swivel or split shot stopper. This allows finicky catfish to pick up and bait without feeling the resistance of the sinker. This rig is great for channel cats, bullheads and drum.

The traditional worm rig includes a bobber, small bait hook and small split shot weight. This rig is commonly used on bluegill but shouldn't be overlooked when walleye are on the shallow flats, or when channel cats are feeding in the riffle of a stream. The float allows presentation of the worm just above the bottom without fear of snagging.



and other lures with minnows is a great way to catch fish such as walleye, smallmouth bass and white bass when they're less aggressive and won't hit an unbaited artificial.

The toughest part of getting minnows might be finding a small creek or pond where you can seine or trap them. Once a good population is found, they are easy to catch with a minnow trap or drag seine. Minnows are, however, difficult to keep. An insulated minnow bucket works great for a while, but if the water isn't aerated or continually freshened, the minnows will die. Some minnow buckets are made so that you can set them in the lake or stream, ensuring that a continuous supply of fresh water circulates. Many boats have aerated live wells, which work better than a simple minnow bucket. And new bait tanks with built in aerators specifically designed to keep shad alive, work great on minnows of any kind.

Catfishermen have known the value of using shad bait for a long time, but they've relied on prepared shad sides, or preserved dead shad. In recent years, striped bass fishermen have increased their catch dramatically with live shad, and they've perfected both catching them and keeping them alive. Most of our larger reservoirs have excellent populations of gizzard shad, and the best way to catch them is with a cast net. It takes some practice to learn to throw a cast net, especially a large one, but it works. Look for shad in shallow, protected coves. If they are in deep water, they'll swim out from under the net as it sinks.

Shad are wimps, and you can't simply put them in a minnow bucket. They won't last long in an aerated bait well with square corners either, as they'll congregate in corners and die. Striper fishermen have developed an oval, insulated bait tank with aeration or recirculation. With a little mineral salt added to the water, and ice when the water is warm, shad can be kept alive all day.



For drifting or casting, hook the minnow through the lips. A colored jig head can be used for added attraction. This a popular rig for walleye and bass.

When using a bobber for crappie, hook the minnow just below and slightly behind the dorsal fin. This will keep the minnow alive and allow it swim freely.

Crawdads are great bait for all black basses as well as white bass. Two popular rigs include adding a crawdad to a colored jig head and the common bottom rig with a barrel swivel and slip sinker. Move this bait frequently to prevent the crawdad from crawling under a rock.



Live gizzard shad are great bait for striped, white and smallmouth bass, catfish and a variety of other reservoir fish. The best way to catch them is with a cast net.



While they won't win any beauty contest, salamanders, both larvae, like this mudpuppy, and adults, can be super baits for bass and catfish. Many live bait fishermen will tell you that salamanders will cat BIG fish. They can be seined from small ponds and creeks.



Small bluegill, shown here, and other panfish such as green sunfish are great bait for stripers and wipers. Since these fish are usually caught deep, a bottom rig works best.

Drift fishing live shad is deadly for big stripers, smallmouth bass, white bass, channel catfish and a variety of other big-water fish.

Another dynamite live bait that works for a variety of fish is the

crawdad (or crayfish). Most fish, especially smallmouth and largemouth bass, eat crawdads whenever they're available. White bass, channel cats and flatheads also occasionally dine on crawdads. If you're lucky enough to know a small pond or stream with crawdads, they're easily caught with a small seine. I caught jillions of them when I was a boy fishing with hotdog skin or bacon on a hook. However you catch them, crawdads are deadly for big bass. They can be fished on a typical live bait rig with a slip sinker and a small hook put through the rear of the tail. And I've had good luck tipping a colored jig head with a crawdad and hopping it just along the bottom.

Grass frogs can be great bait for bass and catfish, but the only way

to catch them is by hand. The best method is take a youngster along and let them have a ball catching the frogs, then show them how to catch fish with them.

Other less widely used live baits include leeches for walleye; crickets and grasshoppers for bluegill; salamanders and waterdogs for bass and catfish; goldfish and bluegill or chubs for big flatheads.

To be sure, live bait usually makes your fishing more successful. It requires a little preparation and work, but the results will be worth it. And the actual bait catching can be a ball. If you catch your own bait, get familiar with the regulations governing live bait in Kansas listed in the 1993 *Kansas Fishing Regulations*

Summary pamphlet.

Bait fish are defined as including the minnow or carp family, sucker family, top minnows or killifish family, shad family, sunfish family — specifically excluding the black basses. Also excluded are any fish named by regulation as threatened or endangered. You may take the listed bait fish for noncommercial purposes with the following methods: seine not larger than 15 feet long and 4 feet deep, with mesh no larger than 1/4 inch; fish trap with mesh no larger than 1/4 inch and throat no larger than 1 inch in diameter (a tag with your name must be attached to the trap); or a dip or cast net with mesh no larger than 3/8 inch. Bait fish may not exceed 12 inches and the possession limit is 500. Taking bait fish is allowed statewide except that seining is prohibited at state fishing lakes. Check local regulations at city or community lakes. Other species may be used for bait if they are caught by legal means such as hook and line. Set creel limits would apply.



WILD CURRENTS

letters

Edited by Mark Shoup

WILSON STRIPERS

Editor:

I wonder if the article on Wilson strippers (KANSAS WILDLIFE AND PARKS, Jan./Feb. 1993, Page 40) should not read "Wilson Reservoir, PAST home of the state's best striper fishery." Your article states that striped bass in Wilson are doing quite well, and anglers are enjoying some excellent fishing, plus the fact that 16.5 percent of the fishing pressure is from striper fishermen. I do not believe that any of these 16.5 percent would agree that the striper fishing at Wilson is even close to excellent or close to the potential that Wilson could produce (or once did).

It appears that the biologist at Wilson does not see fit to stock the lake to produce the numbers of strippers that pressure would warrant. However, biologists at Glen Elder and Cheney continue on an aggressive stocking schedule at those lakes that are not near the striper habitat that Wilson is.

Wilson could be a premier striper lake if given the opportunity. Why isn't it?

Del Peterson
Marquette

Dear Mr. Peterson:

Of the reservoirs mentioned in your letter, Wilson has the most aggressive striper stocking program. Since 1987, Wilson has had a standing stocking request for 45,000 striper fingerlings per year. Unfortunately, the total request has only been met twice — in 1987 and 1992. Floods at hatcheries, poor spawning years, and other factors have limited the number of available strippers for stocking.

These facts notwithstanding, Wilson stocked about 10,500 more striper fingerlings than Cheney in

1992. It has been two or three years since Glen Elder has stocked any.

Net samples also indicate that Wilson has a sizable population of strippers ranging from 6 inches to more than 40 pounds. Studies of angler success rates support stocking and fish sampling data. Currently, we are collecting angler harvest data by means of a "striper diary" to evaluate striper catch rates. Participants in the diary survey at Wilson Reservoir had a better catch rate per trip than did black bass anglers at any other reservoir in the state.

Also, more strippers weighing more than thirty pounds were caught in 1992 than in any previous year.

Please realize that Wilson has a multi-faceted fishery. White bass, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and walleye are also important to many anglers. Wilson Reservoir can only carry a limited number of pounds of predaceous fish. We must be careful not to replace white bass or walleye biomass with strippers. —
Shoup

WYOMING RESPONSE

Editor:

I've just finished reading "Nonresident Note" in the March/April issue of KANSAS WILDLIFE AND PARKS (Page 34) for the umpteenth time. I don't know who I am more upset with, Wildlife and Parks or Mr. Arnberger.

It appears that Wildlife and Parks is only willing to part with leftover permits (0-5 percent). Why not give a percentage for each area in the state? By doing so, you allow nonresident hunters the opportunity to apply for an area of their choice, not Wildlife and Parks' choice. You still meet your target numbers of hunters and animals taken.

Here in Wyoming, 20 percent of the total number of tags for deer, antelope and moose are held for nonresidents in each area. Elk run slightly less, at 16

percent for nonresidents.

Mr. Arnberger seems to be upset because he didn't draw a deer tag for his unit and doesn't think or feel it is proper to offer nonresident permits until everyone in Kansas can get their tag. Mr. Arnberger, I've been a resident of Wyoming for 17 years, and I'm still waiting to draw my first moose tag. Maybe Wyoming should be like Iowa and ban Kansans. But I don't feel this is the answer any sportsman or sports-woman wants to hear. If people would be willing to share the resources of their respective states with everyone, all hunters and wildlife will benefit.

Jerre Porter
Rock Springs, Wyoming

Dear Mr. Porter:

Your explanation of the permit system in Wyoming puts things in perspective.

In defense of our agency's proposal, I would like to make a point of clarification. Our proposal is that 0 percent to 5 percent of permits — in units with leftover permits the previous year — be allocated for nonresidents. These permits would come from the initial drawing, not from leftover permits.

In defense of those who have reasonable questions about the proposal, I should point out that Kansas big game hunting opportunities are much more limited than Wyoming's. Your comparison, while enlightening, is not entirely fair. You may not be able to obtain a moose permit, but elk, deer and antelope are all easy to come by. Kansans have essentially no chance for elk, a very slim chance for antelope and, in much of the state, an uncertain opportunity for a deer permit.

As Mike Miller mentioned in the last issue of KANSAS WILDLIFE AND PARKS (Page 33), we have worked hard to develop one of the

healthiest deer populations in the United States. If we are somewhat protective, it is to the benefit of the herd. I believe the department's proposal — to allow nonresidents 0 percent to 5 percent of permits in selected units — is a reasonable compromise between Mr. Arnberger's point of view and yours.

Of course, legislative action has killed the proposal for this year. —
Shoup

COMMERCIAL FISHING

Editor:

I'm very interested in knowing what ever happened to the commercial fishing program the Kansas Fish and Game Commission began several years ago. Back then, I met [commercial fisherman] Jim Bates, and I was very impressed by his professionalism. His knowledge of the fish his company sought was equally impressive. He mentioned several times that he could remain in Kansas from then on and always have an abundant fish harvest yearly.

Why isn't Kansas Wildlife and Parks interested in continuing this program? I would think there's a good source of income for the department to come out of a program of this sort, to say nothing of the pressure that would be taken off the reservoirs from the amount of space rough fish take up in a lake.

It is only common sense to realize that the more carp and buffalo taken out, the more room there will be for our game fish. Each time the game fish would spawn, more would no doubt live because of the increased space in the water for them to live. With the extreme pressures put on our game fish today, allowing for an increase in spawn survival should be paramount to the department.

Or could it simply be that Kansas Wildlife and Parks is only interested in the parks division of this department?

Jack Copeland
Salina

Dear Mr. Copeland:

As you know, we once had a commercial fishing program in Kansas. Under the old Fish and Game Commission statutes, the agency was allowed to let a bid to one contractor per year to remove bigmouth buffalo, carp, river carpsucker and freshwater drum from certain reservoirs. The program, which required intensive tracking of activity and monitoring of results, was supported by money from the contractor (based on his catch) and from the Commercial Fisheries Research Act, administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The contractor you mention retained the bid from its first year in 1978 until the mid-1980s, when he no longer showed interest in the contract. Subsequent contractors left loads of dead fish in state parks or were just inefficient, and when the Commercial Fisheries Research Act ended about 1986, the agency abandoned the program.

While studies have shown that a decrease in rough fish populations may not immediately improve sport fishing, we are currently working on reviving the commercial fishing program on a local level. The local biologist would be responsible for generating interest in the program, recruitment of a contractor, tracking, and monitoring.

Commercial fishing will be limited to colder months when sport fishing activity is lowest, and techniques and equipment will have to ensure a minimal effect on large sport fish such as striped bass and flathead catfish. Obviously, the reservoirs standing to benefit most from commercial fishing are those with low flow-through, where the effects of rough fish removal would be long-term. For more information, contact Bob Hartman in the Pratt Office, (316) 672-5911.

In answer to your final question, I can only say that the men and women in every division of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

have dedicated their lives to the natural resources of the state of Kansas.

—*Shoup*

KANSAS GRIZZLIES

Editor:

I have for many years received your great magazine, KANSAS WILDLIFE AND PARKS, and enjoy it very much, so thank all of you who are a part of its publication. I have ordered it for some of my friends through the years, and they also enjoy it.

I had a friend at my home last February, and we were discussing what type of bears lived in Kansas years ago. I told him I was sure black bear and grizzly bear were part of Kansas wildlife, but he informed me that grizzly bear was not.

Who is right? I have enclosed a check for \$5 as a donation to Kansas Wildlife and Parks for your trouble.

Kenneth McClintick
Wichita

Dear Mr. McClintick:

Thank you for the pleasant letter. Your question is not trouble, and your donation, while very much appreciated, was an unexpected and generous gesture.

You win. There were both black bears and grizzlies in Kansas at one time. According to the book, Mammals of Kansas, by James W. Bee, Gregory E. Glass, Robert S. Hoffman and Robert R. Patterson (published by the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History) grizzly bears disappeared from Kansas in the mid 1800s.

Since no specimens survived to modern record-keeping times, we must rely on early literature to document sightings. Grizzlies were reported in Gove, Logan and Morris counties; however, the authors surmise that grizzlies were common throughout Kansas, mainly along the river courses, and depended on the great herds of buffalo for food. —
Miller

POACHED POACHER

In 1991, conservation officer David Ellis, Osawatomie, asked Paola police officer Shane Chambers to help the Department of Wildlife and Parks identify and bring to justice some area deer poachers. On the night of Dec. 20, 1991, Chambers did just that.

In a conversation with Chambers, an Osawatomie man revealed that he had taken some deer illegally. Officer Chambers contacted Wildlife and Parks, and Spring Hill conservation officer Larry Hastings and I (CO Bruce Bertwell) got the call. We interviewed the man at the police station, where he admitted killing three deer illegally. One was a six-point buck that he shot with a .22 cal. rifle while squirrel hunting in October. The second, a doe fawn, was killed with an arrow about three weeks later, but the man had no deer tag.

The third deer was a doe shot during the firearms season, again with no tag. When asked to produce a hunting license, the poacher said he couldn't buy one because he had never received hunter education. Hastings and I weren't too surprised. The man's conduct revealed no sense of wildlife ethics.

We seized some deer meat, the .22 rifle and a compound bow that night. Charges were later filed in Miami and Anderson counties, resulting in fines, costs and fees totaling \$1,614, one year of supervised probation and 60 days in jail served on weekends. The meat, rifle and bow were also forfeited. —*Bert Bertwell, conservation officer, Olathe*



"Give me the special, with a side order of alfalfa."

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER

Last December, Nemaha County sheriff's officer Steve Hanzlick stopped a car for a routine traffic violation when he noticed a number of what appeared to be packages of meat in the back of the driver's pickup. Hanzlick questioned the driver about the contents and discovered that they contained deer and other wildlife. Hanzlick then called me (CO Mike Little).

When I arrived on the scene with Sheriff Albert Clark, I discovered parts of six deer, one red fox and one pheasant in the pickup. I advised the driver, a juvenile, of his rights, and we pro-

ceeded to the Nemaha County Sheriff Office to sort things out.

As it turned out, nine deer had been taken from early October through November. The juvenile's vehicle and the meat were seized as evidence. Based on the juvenile's statement, a search warrant was issued for a Sabetha residence. A search of the residence yielded 28 packages of deer meat and the confession of another man. This, in turn, led to charges against two men and the juvenile.

One man was charged with possession of three deer, which is commercialization of

wildlife, a Class E felony; three counts of failure to tag deer; unlawful taking of wildlife; spotlighting; and hunting from a motor vehicle.

The second man was charged with two counts of taking deer during the closed season, two counts of taking deer without a valid permit, and two counts of failure to tag deer.

The juvenile was charged with possession of six deer, also a Class E felony; six counts of taking deer without a valid permit and failure to tag deer; unlawful taking of the deer, one hen pheasant and one red fox; spotlighting; and hunting from a motor

vehicle.

After plea bargaining in Nemaha County Court, one man was fined \$500, was assessed \$93 in court costs, and lost hunting privileges for five years. The second man was fined \$250, assessed \$37 in court costs and placed on probation for one year. The juvenile was fined \$250, assessed \$16 in court costs and placed on probation for one year.

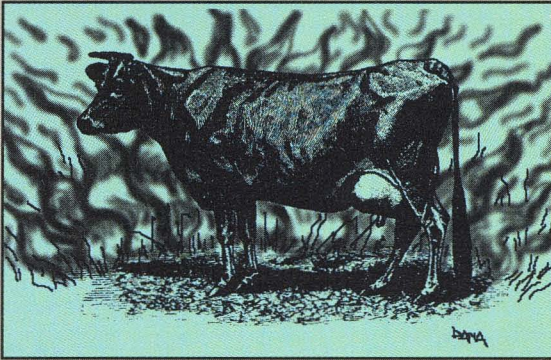
The vehicle and rifle were returned to the owners.

The cooperation of the Nemaha County Sheriff Office is greatly appreciated. Without their help, the matter probably would not have had the chance to go to court. —*Mike Little, conservation officer, Seneca*

CARBOFURAN CASE

Last winter, a Timber Lake, South Dakota, rancher agreed to pay \$50,000 to the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Foundation and undergo "a period of supervision" in a settlement against him. The man had been charged with misuse of carbofuran, resulting in the deaths of protected wildlife, including hawks and two golden eagles, according to the U.S. Justice Department.

An investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revealed that the rancher had placed carbofuran-laced bait on his and his neighbor's land to kill coyote and fox. The Justice Department said the kills of protected wildlife resulted when they had eaten the bait or animals that had ingested the bait. —*Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News*



FIRE AND HOOVES

Ensuring the perpetuation of healthy native prairie through sound range management is basic to the Department of Wildlife and Parks' wildlife mission. The agency invests in equipment and staff training necessary to conduct the best possible range management.

The department employs two primary range management tools to ensure long-term health of the state's public grasslands — controlled burning and livestock grazing. Other practices, such as haying, mowing and mechanical brush removal, are used less frequently in special pasture management applications.

Across Kansas, most of the range management conducted on the department's 344,000 acres is implemented through grazing, burning, or a combination of the two. The natural resource managers responsible for these lands, like their private land counterparts, recognize the value of grassland conservation.

Prairie species have thrived since before recorded history in cycles of fire and grazing. Wildlife and Parks land managers, striving to maintain these natural cycles, burned about 39,000 acres in 1992 and used livestock

grazing to improve wildlife habitat on approximately 11,000 additional acres. The primary objective of these

efforts is to maintain high-quality habitat for prairie wildlife.

Department land managers receive training through the Extension Service, universities and other sources. About 50 of the agency's public lands employees have received special range management training, and department employees are recognized range management experts. In 1991, more than 50 Wildlife and Parks employees participated in a hands-on training session at El Dorado State park.

Some state properties that had not been burned for decades have been burned or grazed for the first time since the Department of Wildlife and Parks was created in 1987.

In 1992, the department burned about 4,000 acres and grazed 6,000 acres in its northwest region (Region 1). In the northeast region (Region 2), approximately 10,000 acres were managed by fire, 300 by grazing. In the southwest (Region 3), more than 10,000 public land acres were burned, and about 1,000 were grazed. In southcentral Kansas (Region 4), approximately 8,000 acres were burned and 600 grazed. Even in the southeast region

(Region 5), where much of the department's property is heavily forested, about 7,000 grassland acres were burned, and 3,000 were grazed.

Because the prairie sustains the wildlife and other natural resources so important to all Kansans, the Department of Wildlife and Parks has a long-term commitment to sound range management, which generates quality wildlife habitat and healthy grasslands. —Manes

BOTTOMS, PLAYA GRANTS

In early March, after several months of delay, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) approved a \$1.8 million grant for continuation of a multi-year restoration project at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area, near Great Bend. In addition, the Commission approved a \$100,000-grant for the Playa Lakes Joint Venture in southwest Kansas.

The Bottoms has been recognized as a Wetland of International Importance, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the area as critical habitat for the endangered whooping crane.

Last fall, some members of the Kansas Congressional delegation asked U.S. Department of Interior officials to delay consideration of this grant until all aspects of the proposal were better understood. One central question dealt with the allocation of a portion of the grant for use by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a non-profit conservation group. It was explained that TNC will use the funds to purchase

additional wetland areas that would be managed as a nature preserve to benefit shorebirds, waterfowl and other wildlife. TNC will continue to have all management obligations and can never sell the land without returning the funds to the federal government.

The Department of Wildlife and Parks manages the area for the State of Kansas. This grant will allow the agency to fund design and construction of three pump stations for independent control of water in the individual pools within the wetland. In addition, the grant makes possible installation of one water control gate and modification of another. All this allows the Bottoms' limited water resources to be managed more efficiently.

Another portion of the grant is allocated for acquisition of 640 acres by TNC in the Cheyenne Bottoms basin to improve and ensure its wetlands value. All newly acquired land will be regulated but open to the public.

The federal grant — which comes from Congressional appropriations and wildlife-related interest and fines — is matched by money from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (\$1,056,094), The Nature Conservancy (\$780,000), Ducks Unlimited (\$14,020), and the City of Great Bend (\$7,500).

For a grant to be considered for funding, the Wetlands Conservation Council recommends it to the assistant secretary of Interior, who must then submit the grant to the MBCC. MBCC

members are Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner, U.S. senators Sen. Thad Cochran, Mississippi, and David Pryor, Arkansas; and U.S. Congressman John Dingell, Michigan.

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture grant is also part of a long term project, one that will make possible acquisition of 360 acres in fee title and long-term lease on 40 acres of playa lakes in Kansas. In addition, the grant will provide for enhancement of another 160 acres on and around playa lakes.

This is the third grant for the Playa Lakes Joint Venture, and the project should help accommodate migrating birds and other wildlife in the region. As part of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, the joint venture is cooperative effort by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and conservation agencies in Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, and a number of conservation organizations and private businesses.

The latest grant will help Wildlife and Parks acquire sites and make enhancements to playas in 13 counties (Clark, Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Hamilton, Haskell, Kearny, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton and Stevens).

The \$100,000 provided by the grant will be matched with \$50,000 from the Department of Wildlife and Parks, \$25,000 from Ducks Unlimited and \$25,000 from Phillips Petroleum, making

ENVIRONMENTALITY

Kansas Statutory Authority (KSA) 32-107 states that "The ownership and title to all wild animals, birds, and fishes, both resident and migratory, in the state, not held by private ownership legally acquired, shall be and are hereby declared to be in the state."

Who owns the wildlife? All Kansans. —Shoup

\$200,000 available for the project this year. Of this amount, \$144,000 is allocated for acquisition, \$10,000 for easement or lease, \$3,000 for restoration, \$24,000 for enhancement and \$19,000 for administrative and other costs.

Kansas was the first Playa Lake Joint Venture state to receive funding. To date, playa lake easements have been secured in Grant, Finney, Kearny and Meade counties. One wetland has been restored in Meade County, and two playas have been acquired in Ford County. In addition, joint venture money has been used to produce a video to promote playas throughout the region, and brochures about the playas have been produced and distributed. —Shoup

WETLAND DECISION

The Environmental Protection Agency has accepted the 1987 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual and, thus, the included definitions. Earlier, the 1989 version was rendered invalid; it had touched off much controversy when prior converted farmlands in some cases fell under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Permits were then required depending on site conditions.

It is also important to realize that the U.S.

Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service (SCS) developed the definition for terms, such as "prior converted croplands," "farmed wetlands," "converted wetlands," and "wooded wetlands." Each has a definition, and the Corps of Engineers has adopted these same definitions.

There have been occasions when the SCS and the Corps have disagreed on a particular permit or site. There is no appeals process with the Corps except the courts, but there is a study underway by the National Academy of Sciences that will address the wetlands issue and scientific validity of current definitions and delineations.

For more information on wetland issues, copies of the 1987 Wetlands Delineation Manual and contacts for regulatory matters, call EPA's Wetland Protection Hotline during weekdays at 1-800-832-7828. —Farmers and Wildlife

GET OFF JUNK

Every address in the country received an average of 674 pieces of bulk-rate mail in 1992. That adds up to 62 billion pieces of junk mail delivered annually, which would fill Manhattan's twin 110-story World Trade Center three times over each year.

Not that direct mail isn't a

legitimate enterprise, admits Good Advice Press, a home-grown book and newsletter publisher, which itself uses the mail to market. It's that such statistics — compiled by Good Advice from U.S. Postal Service third-class mailing records — indicate that aspects of the industry are out of hand, taxing not only the environment but also hapless citizenry. In 1991, the disposal of all those pieces cost taxpayers more than \$275 million, even though recipients didn't ask for most of them.

In an unassuming 15-page pamphlet ambitiously titled "Stop Junk Mail Forever," Good Advice deplores both the shotgun-mailing techniques of direct mailers (environmental organizations are held as blameworthy as any "because they support themselves just like the other mailbox fishermen do") and the privacy-invading dispensation of personal and business particulars to direct mailers by such institutions as credit bureaus, voter registrars, motor-vehicle bureaus and even the U.S. Postal Service itself.

Giving the junk-mail senders and their sources a dose of their own medicine, the booklet supplies the address and phone numbers of trade organizations, list brokers, public agencies and other groups that, on request, promise — or promise to try — to delete your name from the lists of bothersome mailers and telemarketers while preserving continued delivery of welcome material.

The \$2 booklet is from Good Advice Press, Box 78, Elizaville, NY 12523. — INC., April 1993



WALLEYE WUNDERKIND

On the evening of April 15, Wichita angler Brian Haskins caught four walleye at Council Grove Reservoir ranging from 5.2 pounds to 11.2 pounds. Haskins, who had recently finished a master's thesis on walleye spawn fishing, wrote the following account of the evening and his techniques.

"Well, I did it again! I had been out eight times on the spawn this year with no luck at all. That's because the fish weren't there. Last year, I caught 21 walleye during the spawn, but they were all between 1 pound and 6.2 pounds.

"But last Thursday, I had the greatest night of my life. I got three walleye —

weighing 8.2 pounds, 9.4 pounds and 11.2 pounds — and released another, a female weighing 5.2 pounds. The fish were full of eggs and actually were leaking. I believe in catch and release, but I wanted to get my 11 pounder mounted, and I had no fish in the freezer, so I kept most of this catch.

"We (Todd Hall and I) use rattle baits and rip them very shallow, parallel to the rocks. The fish must be up shallow for success, but what makes the difference is the presentation. Many fishermen bounce jigs off the bottom and work crank baits slowly. However, jigging allows the fish time to analyze the situation and possibly refuse bait. My

wading technique produces strikes out of reaction.

"I travel to Canada every other year to fish remote glacial lakes west of Hudson Bay, but I wouldn't trade Kansas walleye for nothin'. I have taken six walleye more than 8 pounds here in Kansas, and my largest Canada is 3.5.

"Thanks for the great experiences and the greatest walleye fishing in North America."

Thank you, Brian, for the tip. —*Shoup*

BASS BENEFIT

On Saturday, April 17, Kansas anglers made money and helped improve El Dorado Reservoir at the same time. The event was the 1st Rusty's Outdoor Sports,

KFDI and Zebco Big Bucks Bassin' Tournament. Some 250 boats — two anglers per boat — made this the largest bass tournament in Kansas history.

Prizes of \$500, \$250 and \$150 were awarded for the three largest bass caught every hour. The KFDI Radio Ranchhands broadcast the event live and announced results of weigh-ins for the biggest bass caught each hour of the eight-hour tournament.

Prizes of \$5,000, \$2,500 and \$1,000 were awarded for the top three bass of the tournament. First place went to Bill and Marlie Barron for a 6.54-pound largemouth. Second place honors went to Donald Burden and Lloyd Shetlar for 6.05-pounder, and Clint Milbourn and Spud

Nolte nabbed third-place honors with a 5.88-pounder.

Best of all, \$9,000 in proceeds from the tournament are being used to fund the El Dorado Bass Stocking Project. This project is designed to improve the quality of bass angling at El Dorado Lake by transplanting 8- to 12-inch largemouth bass from area watershed lakes into the reservoir. The project also entails planting a variety of aquatic plant species to improve habitat for young bass, enhancing the lake's natural production of bass. *Shoup*

GET THE LEAD OUT

Mounting evidence suggests that lead sinkers may be inadvertently poisoning waterfowl. Recent studies have confirmed that at least two northern-breeding species — the common loon and the trumpeter swan — are ingesting the sinkers and dying of lead poisoning. It is very likely that other species are also vulnerable.

According to the Environmental Defense Fund, a Mississippi sandhill crane died earlier this year after ingesting a lead sinker. In Michigan between 1988 and 1992, studies of dead loons at a research center near Lansing found that 40 percent had died from lead poisoning. Studies at Tufts University in New England reported that 52 percent of dead adult loons there had died of lead poisoning after ingesting lead sinkers.

In response, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Federation of Fly Fishers, the North American Loon Fund and the Trumpeter Swan Society are seeking a ban on lead sinkers in national parks and refuges in the 16 states where loons and trumpeter swans live.

Alternatives to lead sinkers are available. Non-toxic sinkers made of tin and brass are on the market, but cost 20 percent to 30 percent more than lead. Bismuth sinkers are widely used in Britain, where the poisoning of mute swans led to a ban on the sale, import and use of lead sinkers in 1987. — *River Crossings*



A Little Learning

by Mark Shoup

In mid-May, I finally find time between honeydo's and home improvements to take my 5-year-old son fishing. He has given up the soulful plea, "Daddy, can we go fishing tonight?" as I return home each evening. Now he has become an apparition on the sidelines of my projects, casting the Snoopy Zebco I bought for his birthday in late March.

But one sunny Saturday, I leave the paint in the can, the nails in the shop, and the faucet dripping. About 3 p.m., we near a stretch of rocky shoreline where brushpiles jut from the lake.

"Okay, Bud," I say. "This looks like a good crappie spot. Let me put a bobber on your line."

"I want a bobber like yours," he declares.

"I'm not using a bobber, Bud. Just a jig. You'll be using a bobber and a jig."

"Why?" comes the familiar reply.

"Because you'd get caught in the brush and rocks too often. When you get a little older, you can use just a jig. For now, just try to keep out of the brush."

"I will," he assures me.

While I tie my jig, Logan casts perfectly beside the brush, letting his bobber bounce on light waves. A natural, I think.

I cast along the rocks several times without luck, but on my first cast to the brushpile, I feel an old familiar tug. I'm snagged. After several flips and pulls, I mutter, "Dangit! Can't get this sucker free."

As my line snaps and flies loosely over my shoulder, I notice my son looking up at me.

"Put another jig on, Daddy," he encourages. "Maybe you'll catch a dang crappie!"

This is a leprechaun, not a little boy. Where did he learn to talk like that?

I tie another jig and notice a bullhead surface about 15 feet down the bank. Now's the chance for Logan to catch a fish. "Logan!" I yell. "I just saw a big bullhead surface. It's a keeper, too."

"Was it a bullhead catfish?" he asks precisely.

"Yes, Bud. Give me your pole." Logan watches intently as I put a worm on his jig. "Now cast over by that stick. That's where I last saw it." He casts the right direction but near a different limb.

"Not that way, Bud. Here, let me help." I tiptoe over the rocks, take his pole, and cast three feet from shore. Stupid little toy. Logan tugs my pantleg.

"Is that the spot, Daddy?" he asks.

"No, Bud. It's down this way."

"Then why did you cast it right here?" he asks again.

"Because I . . ." Off balance, I hold the line in my left hand, and as I pitch with my right, the pole flies out of my hand. "Shoot!" The word spits through clenched teeth. I'm about to throw the line in, too, when I hear a whimper.

"Don't worry, Bud." I breath deep. "I'll get it for you. It's only out a few feet." Of course, a few feet out can be several feet down, and I'm soon thigh-deep in water.

"Are you going to drown?" Logan asks calmly.

"No, Bud. I'm not going to drown." I reach down sideways, almost neck deep. "Got that sucker." Squishing onto the rocks, I grumble, "I guess that's the end of the bullhead."

"Why, Daddy?"

I am, if nothing, a patient father. "Because I scared it away when I threw your pole in the water." I hand him the pole. "Here. Fish."

We resume our former positions and soon begin catching small crappie, no keepers but enough to make time fly on a warm afternoon. But three hours later and one-half mile down shore, I'm tired of catching little ones. "It's almost six, Bud. I think we'd better head home."

"No, Daddy," Logan pleads. "Just a little longer."

"Okay, ten minutes. Then we have to go." On my very next cast, I land a 12-inch crappie.

"Is that a keeper?" Logan cries.

"You bet it is," I answer proudly. Logan prods the fish as put it on the stringer. I think we'll be here awhile.

I cast again, and Logan reels in. He makes another perfect cast two feet from a brushpile. "Now I'm going to catch a BIG sucker!" he exclaims.

I look sideways at my oldest son, not knowing quite what to say. It seems our children learn so many things when we're not looking. He's a good kid, but where did he learn to cast like that?

EARLY HUNTING CALENDAR

SEASON. BAG. POSSESSION

SMALL GAME

Bullfrogs (fishing license required)	July 1-Oct. 31	8; 24
Rabbits, (Cottontail & Jackrabbit)	Year round	10; 30
Squirrel	June 1-Dec. 31	15;20

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

Prairie Chicken (<i>early</i>)	Sept. 15-Oct.15	2:8
Prairie Chicken (<i>regular</i>)	Nov. 6-Jan. 31	2:8
Pheasant	Nov.13-Jan. 31	4:16
Quail (<i>eastern zone</i>)	Nov.13-Jan. 31	8:32
(<i>western zone</i>)	Nov. 20-Jan. 31	8:32

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Dove	Sept. 1-Oct. 30	15:30
Rail (Sora & Virginia)	To be set	
Snipe	To be set	
Woodcock	To be set	
Teal (<i>early</i>)	May be set	
Duck, Low Plains (east of US 283)	To be set	
Duck, High Plains (west of US 283)	To be set	
Goose (Canada/whitefronts)	To be set	
Goose (snow, blue & Ross')	To be set	
Crows	Nov. 10-Mar.10	No limit

BIG GAME*

Deer (<i>firearms</i>)	Dec. 1-12	1:1
Deer (<i>archery</i>)	Oct. 1-Nov. 30 & Dec. 13-31	1:1
Deer (<i>muzzleloader</i>)	Sept. 18-Sept. 26 & Dec. 1-12	1:1
Antelope (<i>archery</i>)	Sept. 18-26	1:1
Antelope (<i>firearms</i>)	Oct. 1-4	1:1
Turkey, fall(<i>archery</i>)	Oct. 1-Nov. 30 & Dec. 13-31	1:1
Turkey, fall (<i>firearms</i>)	Oct. 13-24	1:1
Elk (<i>Cimarron</i>)	Sept. 25-Oct. 3	1:1
Elk (<i>Ft. Riley, arch. & mzldr</i>)	Sept. 11-Oct. 11 (9 days)**	1:1
(<i>firearms</i>)	Oct. 30-Dec. 3	11:1

*Big game possession limits are one per permit.

** Nine days only. Check Ft. Riley for open days.

FURBEARER HUNTING

Badger, bobcat, gray/ red/swift fox, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk	Nov. 17 (noon) - Jan. 31 (midnight)no limit
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FURBEARER TRAPPING

Badger, bobcat, gray/red/ swift fox, mink, muskrat, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk & weasel	Nov. 17 (noon) - Jan. 31 (midnight)no limit
Beaver (<i>eastern</i>)	Nov. 24-March 2 no limit
Beaver (<i>central</i>)	Dec. 8-March 2 no limit
Beaver (<i>western</i>)	Jan. 1-Jan. 31 no limit

FURBEARER RUNNING

Gray/red fox, opossum, and raccoon	May 1-Nov. 1 Feb. 15-April 30 may not be killed
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GET INVOLVED

The very future of hunting is dependent on the education and involvement of the hunting community. One way to be both educated and involved is to join the Hunter Education Association (HEA). HEA educates hunters to be safe, responsible, knowledgeable and involved.

Throughout Kansas and all of North America, thousands of dedicated HEA volunteers train 800,000 new hunters each year. Since the inception of the program in 1949, HEA has trained more than 20 million students through the efforts of its volunteers.

There are many reasons to become involved in hunter education, as an instructor or financial supporter. Members have the satisfaction of knowing they contribute to an organization with the most positive impact on the future of hunting. Members also receive a bi-monthly newspaper, the *Hunter Education Instructor*, through which they are continuously informed on the latest developments in hunter education and public perception of hunting. A number of hunter education products are also available to members.

Membership categories start at \$10 annually. For more information, write the Hunter Education Association, P.O. Box 525, Draper, UT 84020. —Shoup

FOR MALES ONLY

There is something special about hearing frogs in spring and summer, but not all frogs are vocal talent. Only the males can sing in ensemble.

Frogs don't sound off because they like the weather although they require warm temperatures to get in the mood. They make noise to attract females. Each species of frog and toad has its own vocal repertoire. Someone with good "frog ears" can identify these amphibians by listening to their calls.

The female's "home-in" on a pond or wetland by tuning in to the male's calling. Even though several species of frogs and toads may be calling from the same area, the female is able to sort out the calls by frequency, trill rate, length or interval to locate the proper mate.

The males of different species have their own special calling places. Depending on species, frogs and toads may prefer to call when they're floating in water, perching on a low bush, or sitting in shallow water at the edge of a pond.

Frogs also contribute to the food chain by eating insects and, in turn, by being eaten by fish, reptiles, birds and mammals.

Because they often use temporary pools for raising tadpoles, frogs are a good index to the health of the land. Temporary pools of water in or along a field edge form after warm spring rains. Not only do these ephemeral wetlands attract frogs, but they also accumulate non-point source pollutants from the run-off of fields. Frogs

tend to absorb pollutants through their skin. A polluted pool is not a good place to promote proper cell division that turns eggs into tadpoles and tadpoles into young frogs. Thus, when frog populations drop, we know that something is wrong in the wetland.

Frogs are easy to take for granted, but they are useful monitors of environmental health and another strand in the web of life. They also eat a lot of insects. Evidently, Europeans are less prone to take their amphibians for granted. Where highways interrupt the travel lanes of frogs, passageways are placed under the road to let these leapers get from one side of the highway to the other without becoming flattened frogs or road toads. — *Ed Miller, nongame biologist, Independence*

UNDERGROUND AVIAN

Beneath the western Kansas prairie resides an unusual occupant, the burrowing owl. True to its name, this peculiar little raptor inhabits underground burrows. Its unique physical attributes and diurnal habits make it one of the most fascinating and entertaining birds to watch.

These owls stand erect on extraordinarily long, knock-kneed legs. They are most active during dawn and twilight hours. About 10 inches tall, they have a small, round head lacking ear tufts.

The burrow is the most unique aspect of the burrowing owl's life. It is used

for nesting, shelter and protection from predators. Although capable of digging their own in a pinch, burrowing owls would rather pilfer burrows from prairie dogs and other burrowing mammals. Burrowing owls use their wings, beak and feet to modify and remodel the burrow to their specifications. Housekeeping involves lining the burrow, predominately the nesting chamber, with cow or horse manure. It has been suggested that the manure, or other linings, may mask the owl's scent and mislead predators.

Burrowing owls arrive in Kansas in the early spring to nest. Courtship involves a variety of vocalizations and acrobatics. An average of nine eggs are laid in the nesting chamber. Nesting peaks in mid-May. When threatened in the burrow, owlets can effectively imitate

the warning rattle of a rattlesnake.

Burrowing owls hunt from an elevated position. They can hear the rustling of an insect 100 yards away, but their vision is thought to be equally important. They are perpetually hungry and will feed throughout the day. Due to the large number of rodents and insects they eat, burrowing owls are second only to the barn owl in economic importance to plains farmers.

Due to loss of habitat from land development and loss of burrow sites resulting from widespread control of burrowing mammals, burrowing owl populations have declined in recent years. The use of poison for rodent control not only reduces the number of burrows available but may also poison owls. — *Mary Kay Crall, wildlife information representative, Kansas City*



OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

The Kansas Wildlife Federation and Kansas 4-H programs announces its annual Outdoor Adventure Camp, to be held August 1-6 at the Rock Springs 4-H Center south of Junction City.

During the 6-day event, girls and boys 10-12 years old will hike, swim, ride horses, canoe, create works of art, and shoot bows, rifles, and muzzleloaders. Special sessions will also be offered in environmental education, boating safety, outdoor ethics, native flora and fauna, and wetlands.

Total cost of the camp is \$150 per child. For more information, contact the Outdoor Adventure Camp, KWF, P.O. Box 5715, Topeka, KS 66605 or phone Eugene Goff, (316) 331-8950. —*Shoup*

BLUEGRASS AT PARKS

Bluegrass and arts and crafts festivals will be held at two Kansas state parks in July and August.

On July 16-18, Eisenhower State Park, on Melvern Reservoir, will host their 11th annual festival featuring the bands Best of Friends, Dick Hugill and Over The Hill Bluegrass, Georgia Rose, Hot Pursuit and Legacy. On Aug. 20-22, Pomona State Park will host a their 13th annual festival featuring the Vassar Polecats, Blue and Grey Pickers, Calhoun County, Blue Grass Missourians, Special Notes and Dick Hugill and Over The Hill Bluegrass.

In addition to the bands, participants will enjoy arts and crafts, concessions and a Sunday worship service. Swimming, fishing, boating, playgrounds and restrooms with hot showers will also be available.

Festival admission is \$6 for Friday evening, \$8 for Saturday all day, \$7 for Saturday evening only, \$5 for Sunday or \$12 for the entire event. Children under 12 will be admitted free with parent. Rough camping permits are \$3 and camping permits with electricity are \$8. Daily vehicle permits are \$3.50.

For more information, contact festival promoter Dick Hugill at (816) 249-9593. —*Shoup*

CHENEY UNIT GETS FACELIFT

Park visitors, fishermen, and day-users at Cheney Reservoir have seen several improvements in the facilities this summer.

One of the first changes can be seen upon arrival. New signs constructed from cedar are easily visible and provide an attractive natural look. New signing will also be completed this summer at Kingman State Fishing Lake and Cheney and Byron Walker wildlife areas.

The state park office is also undergoing a major overhaul. The new handicapped-accessible office will include a public restroom, five offices, a conference room and a large reception

area with room for future interpretive displays. The office will be open for park business throughout construction.

On the lake shore, the Wichita Point area was closed last summer so that renovations could be made to include day-use and camping. The area will boast new roads, a handicapped accessible vault toilet, 50 designated shoreline campsites and large parking lots for windsurfing and other activities. The area will be reopened after construction is complete. A trailer dump station is also being installed on in the East Shore area. Due to floods in late spring, some of this construction was delayed, but most work should be completed this summer.

Shorelines have also been stabilized with rock rip-rap to eliminate erosion from constant wave action. Heimerman Point, the west boat ramp and Toadstool Loop have all been stabilized.

Park patrons should also welcome a new dump station on the east shore, which will greatly reduce the amount of time campers have to wait to dump their tanks before leaving the park. In addition, two new handicapped-accessible vault toilets have been constructed at Fish Cove and the Red Bluff area.

For more information about any of these changes, contact the Cheney State Park Office at (316) 542-3664. —*Murrell*

NATIONAL HONORS TO GRAEFF

Each year, the National Recreation and Park Association gives Fellow Awards to the outstanding U.S. park and recreation leaders in each of five regions across the country. The awards are given to NRPA members with at least 10 years experience and service "in the promotion, organization and development of a pioneer-type activity." Character and leadership ability are other important criteria to qualify for the award.

This year, Wildlife and Parks' Parks and Public Lands Director Todd Graeff receive the award for the NRPA Midwest Region. In nominating Graeff for the award, the Midwest Regional Council of NRPA made the following statement about his accomplishments:

Among other things, Graeff has helped found the Idaho Rivers Coalition, the Kansas Adopt-A-Public-Land Program and the Kansas interpretive naturalist program. He was also instrumental in development of a self-pay park system and was instrumental in establishing the Friends of Kansas Wildlife and Parks program.

Graeff has a Master of Science degree in natural resources for Ohio State University. Before coming to Kansas in 1988, he worked as a park manager in Ohio, a park and recreation planner in Idaho, and as a special assistant to the Idaho parks director.

Todd has recently accepted the deputy director of parks position in the State of Oregon. We wish him the best of luck. —*Shoup*

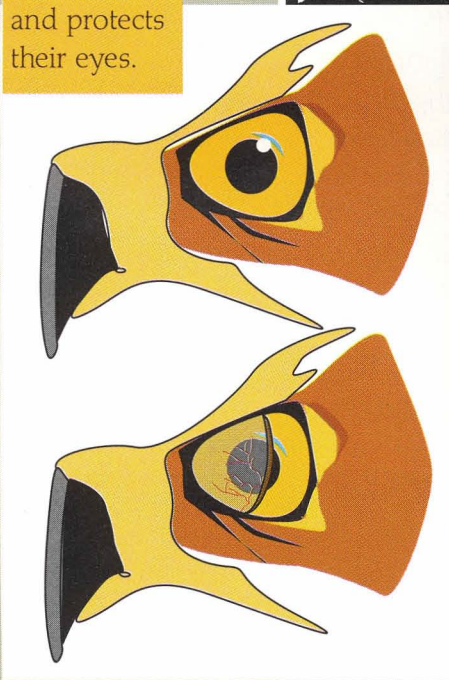
OWLS

by Dana Eastes

What a hoooot!

Owls: silent flight, heart-stopping calls, sizziling eyes, terrific senses. Owls add to the richness of Kansas wildlife.

All owls have a second eyelid called a **nictitating membrane** that cleans and protects their eyes.



The owl's flight is silent, making them an efficient and successful predator.



barn owl

Barn owls find cover in barns, abandoned farm houses and city buildings. They are white-faced with brown eyes. Their appearance is haunting and ghost-like. Excellent rodent hunters, they are equal to seven cats in catching mice.

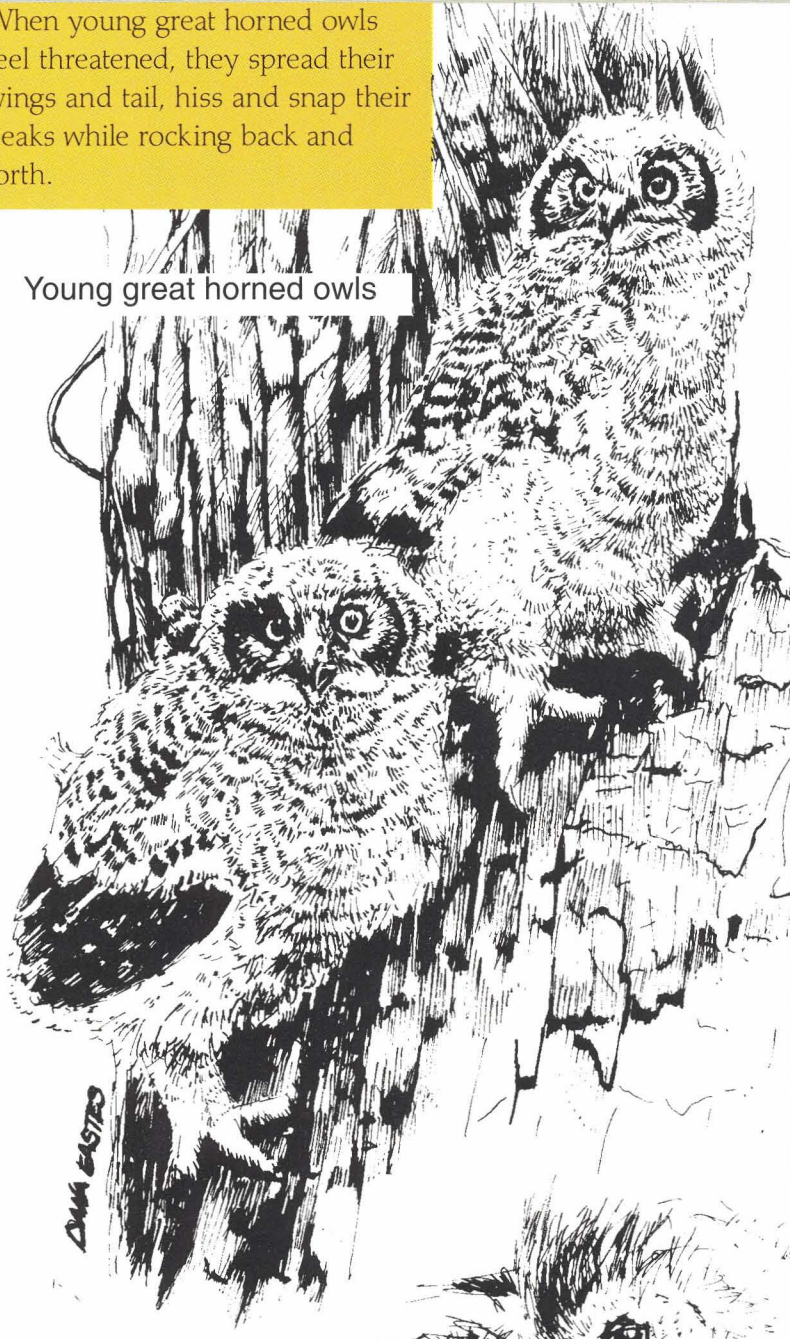
The long-and short-eared owls are sometimes winter residents of Kansas, but both are secretive and rare.

Snowy owls are also rare in Kansas. It is estimated that only one to five visit the state annually. They live on the arctic tundra and eat small white rodents called lemmings. When the lemming populations are low, the snowy owl will journey south to find food.

The loud squawking and diving activity of crows and other birds is usually a sign that a roosting great horned owl is near by.

When young great horned owls feel threatened, they spread their wings and tail, hiss and snap their beaks while rocking back and forth.

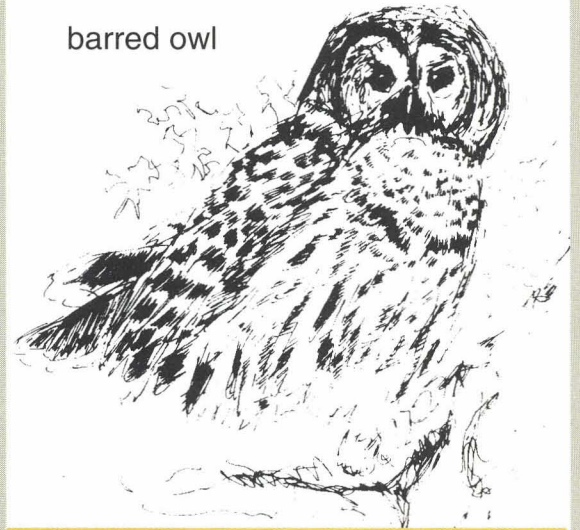
Young great horned owls



Owl feet have four toes; two in front and two in back. Most owl feet are used for grasping and their talons are razor sharp.

The northern saw-whet owl is the smallest owl in Kansas. Although it can be found statewide, it is rarely seen. It gets its name from the saw-sharpening sound the males make during the breeding season.

barred owl



The question awakes the night. "Who cooks for you, who cooks-for-you-all". It's the distinctive, rhythmic sound of the barred owl. You stop in your tracks, heart-beating, and return the call. "We eat out!" NOT! Hearing the barred owl call can be a very special and exciting experience. Barred owls like wooded areas and can be found mostly in the eastern part of the state. Barred owls are large like great horned owls, but have big, round heads without the "horn" tufts.

Whooooo cares about owls? You should! Not only are they fascinating birds, but their presence is an indicator of a healthy environment.

screech owl





It Happened To Me, It Can Happen To You

My reputation is forever tarnished. It happened so fast, I hardly had time to think. But it happened, and now I know it can happen to anyone. I had fished carefree for years, always tiptoeing around the gunnels of my boat with the greatest of ease and grace. Even in heavy waves, I always managed to make near falls look like mere, momentary losses of balance. Then, it happened one day, in fairly calm water. One moment I was on board enjoying the day, the next I was checking the water temperature using the complete submersion technique.

Luckily, my boat partner that day was preoccupied and didn't see the actual dunking. He heard the not-so-quiet splash and turned around in disbelief to find I had completely disappeared. As hard as I had tried to stop atop the water, I went completely under. Gene still couldn't believe I had actually fallen overboard until I lunged to the water's surface gasping from the temperature shock. Fortunately the water was 60 degrees and fortunately, I was wearing my life jacket. Unfortunately, there were other fishermen nearby.

I'm sure I brightened their day. When I finally clambered into the boat with Gene's assistance, I sheepishly looked around, hoping I guess, that no one had seen. But in the small cove we were fishing, it would have been impossible for them to miss the spectacle. I'll never forget the two in the nearest boat as they laughed with stunned looks on their faces. I wanted to explain that it had never happened before. I wanted to yell at them that if the boat seat pedestal hadn't come out of its socket when I grabbed it, I would have never gone over. But my embarrassment allowed only silence.

I took off my shirt and boots and immediately retreated from the cove, away from my laughing spectators. They were polite, and none laughed too loudly. But as I tried to escape under the power of the trolling motor, one of the boats followed. I avoided eye contact, not ready to discuss my mishap yet. Gene was laughing uncontrollably now, apologizing politely when he could catch his breath.

"I didn't laugh until I knew you were OK," he assured me. "I don't mean to laugh so hard, but I just can't believe you fell out of the boat."

I did, and I'll never live it down. The following boat caught up, and I finally turned around when the driver asked me what happened. A million excuses went through my head — like the waves caused me to lose my balance or an inner ear infection was making me



Dana Eastes illustration

dizzy, or my laughing boat partner had rocked the boat. But I finally decided to blame it on the faulty pedestal. Frankly, I don't know if I could have saved myself even if it hadn't slipped out. Swivel seats are great when you're sitting in them fishing, but they're murder when you're hanging on to them for dear life.

The inquisitive boater seemed satisfied and even related his own unceremonious dunking. I guess I belong to an elite club now. Maybe I should start a support organization for those who've suffered similar humiliations: "Boaters Without Balance," or "Fishermen Who've Taken The Plunge." I could probably get on the Geraldo show, if only to express my deep and unabiding embarrassment.

The sun soon dried my clothes, and I motored to a cove in another, far away, part of the lake. But my embarrassment was far from over. I thought it was fortunate that I was on a lake far from home, and that none of my other fishing buddies were there to witness the act. But my boat partner that day turned out to be a rat. The next day, I answered the phone to hear only hysterical laughter on the other end. "You heh, heh, heh, fell out, hahh, haahh, of the hah hah, boat? . . . Oh, hah hahh hahh."

Soon everyone knew. And when I confronted the informant, all he could do was sheepishly laugh some more. "They would have found out sooner or later," he comforted. "It's better that it comes from a friend. Right?"

"Don't laugh," I said seriously. "It could happen to you."



