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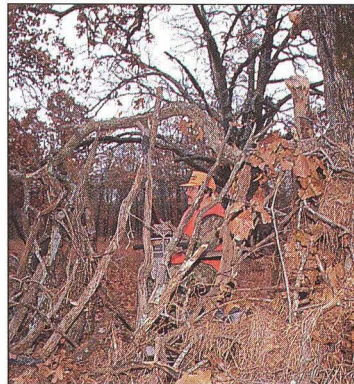
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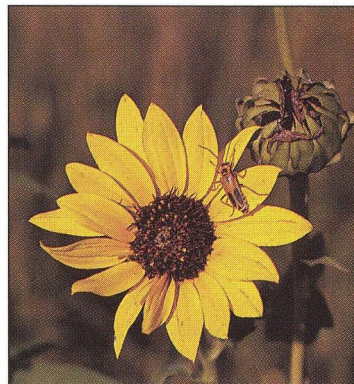
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**Editorial Creed:** To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

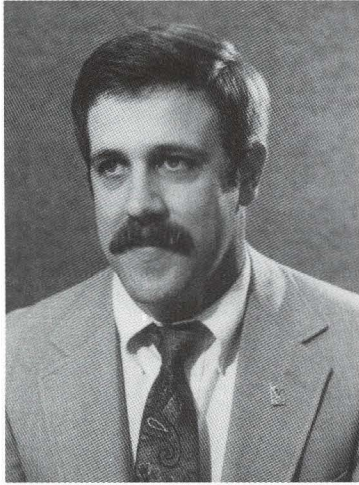
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# The View From Here

## Beginning A New Era

This is an informal introduction, but it will have to do until I have a chance to meet some of you personally. I have proudly accepted Governor Graves' appointment as Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. This is really old news; I officially began my duties on May 8, but I want to offer a little about myself.



I come to Kansas from Pennsylvania where, most recently, I served as the Deputy Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Prior to that, I worked as the Assistant Director of Wildlife for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, after serving as the division's deer biologist for four years.

I earned a Ph.D. in forest resources from Pennsylvania State University. I have a master's degree in biology from the University of North Dakota and a bachelor's degree in environmental resource management from Pennsylvania State University. I am confident that both my education and work experience have prepared me to succeed in Kansas.

My wife, Beth, and I have two children. Matt is 13 years old, and he loves sports, target shooting, hunting, fishing and camping. He is particularly looking forward to the excellent deer and bird hunting in Kansas. Heidi, my 11-year-old daughter, likes to fish and has accompanied me squirrel hunting. I hope to introduce her to bird hunting this fall. Beth and I come from families where hunting and fishing was an integral part of family life. We all look forward to enjoying Kansas' natural resources together.

I am honored that Governor Graves has selected me to fill this important cabinet position, and believe I can fit in well with the Governor's management team approach to government. I sense a strong commitment from the Governor and his staff to improve the depart-

ment's image and programs. Based on the results of the department's passed budget, I think the Legislature shares this commitment.

There are some challenges ahead of the department that will require support both from the state government and the public. They will also require hard work and dedication from department staff. In my short time with the department, I have learned that Kansas has the people in place to meet these challenges head-on. In fact, much progress has already been made in many areas. Working together, I believe we can bring the department to one of national prominence in natural resource management.

The federal aid diversion issue will be one of our top priorities. Progress has been made, and we will continue to focus on this issue. The nature of budget appropriation and restrictions on funding make this a unique challenge, but it is not insurmountable.

The challenges of funding natural resource management are not unique to Kansas. It would be ideal to secure a stable funding base that reflects the impact of inflation, and there is a good argument for equitable user fees. However, there are no easy solutions. Solving the funding problem will involve a variety of ideas and input from many different groups. We must recognize the tremendous contributions of private organizations. After an alternative funding task force is established, we will work with private organizations and department constituents to secure the future of outdoor recreation and natural resources in Kansas.

Of course there are many other challenges ahead for the department and Kansas' natural resources. Together, we — the department, its constituents and private conservation organizations — will face and overcome these challenges, moving the department positively into the future.


*Stue Williams*



# The Ghost Of Turkey Creek

text and photos by Mike Blair  
*staff photographer, Pratt*

*Every hunter or photographer dreams of seeing a magnificent white-tailed buck. However, the non-typical giant the author chanced to meet last summer surpassed any of his dreams both as a hunter and as a photographer. True to legend, the big bruiser was incredibly wary and rarely ventured far from heavy cover in the light of day.*



**H**e was the stuff legends are made of, a huge non-typical white-tailed buck with a Roman nose and ears that drooped beneath massive antlers. Twenty-seven points graced the deer's rack, a wondrous adornment that had it all: a 9-inch drop tine on the left antler and a double main beam on the right. Each non-typical deer is unique, but few are as unusual as this giant. He was, and is, a signature buck.

I called him Moses. From the moment we met on a summer evening, I was spellbound by his ghostly presence. Though the area was hard-hunted and photographed, only one report had surfaced in previous years to indicate that he might exist. In November

1993, a rancher had casually reported seeing a monster buck cross the road; a buck with antlers that were "strange, something like a moose." At once I focused on the area, hoping to see and film the animal. But throughout the winter, the familiar setting yielded only the same bucks that I kept tabs on throughout the year. Neither rubs, tracks nor visual sightings provided a clue that such a buck was in residence. Months went by, and I shrugged off the report.

Summer came, and whitetails settled into the easy lifestyle that marks the period of antler growth. Months removed from hunting season and surrounded by a lush smorgasbord of foods, summer bucks formed bachelor groups that



Rarely venturing out in daylight, the big buck proved his age was no accident. Photos on previous pages were taken with Kodachrome 64 at long shutter speeds. This photo was taken with Fuji 400 speed film pushed to 1600 to compensate for the low light.

openly strolled through their home ranges on long, cool evenings. For scouting and photography, summer offers the best time to learn about bucks within a given area, since they are relaxed, visible and grouped for easy comparison. Between other photography assignments, I began watching and photographing velvet bucks throughout Kansas.

In mid-July, I heard about a pair of big, typical whitetails that were living in a cornfield near my home. Looking for them several evenings without success, I eventually drove to a feed field where the "moose" had been reported and watched five nice bucks enter the field at sunset. The next day, I checked the field and learned that deer were feeding on succulent pigweed growing in the fenceline. The setting was ideal

for photography — heavy cover and shadows to conceal a photo blind, located just downwind of the feeding area. By 6:30 that evening, I was in place with camera, tripod and 600mm lens.

It was July 19, and an approaching cool front called for wind to switch directions during the night. However, as I sat in the blind waiting for deer, the wind began to swirl and change earlier than expected. Rather than risk spooking deer, I packed up and walked out, planning to come back when conditions were right. I was nearly out of the field when I looked across the CRP and saw a large rack protruding above the grass 300 yards away. The buck was staring my direction.

Dropping low and raising my binoculars, I saw at once that the

animal was huge and non-typical. The deer continued to stare, but I felt confident that he hadn't seen me well enough to become alarmed. After another minute, he dropped his head and disappeared. At the same time, I saw five other bucks emerge from the plum thickets behind him.

Thrilled, I now faced a dilemma. Here lay the opportunity to film the largest buck I'd ever seen, but the sun was setting and light was fading fast. It could take the deer 15-20 minutes to approach within camera range, depending on the route they chose. They were in a swale that would probably loop them downwind through brushy cover into the corner of the feed, but I had seen few tracks in that area earlier. On the other hand, a heavy trail cut directly across the open

grass, and it was possible that they would use it. I gambled and stayed put. Crawling under the barbed wire fence, I set up my tripod and camera, draping it with brown camouflage that served only to break up my outline. In green grass, the setup was conspicuous.

A minute later, the big buck emerged from the swale and started across the open as I hoped. The train of bucks followed, oddly led by the old deer. I quickly changed to a roll of 400 speed slide film carried for such emergencies and pushed it to a rating of 1600 to gather all the light possible in the

growing dusk. Binoculars revealed the impressive stature of the approaching buck, and I prepared for the opportunity of a lifetime.

Knowing that a swirling wind could spook the deer at any time, I shot the 36-exposure roll prematurely, sacrificing distance in order to show the antlers from as many angles as possible. By the time the bucks arrived at the field edge 70 yards down the fenceline, I was forced to change back to the slow film (Kodachrome 64) I normally use for grain-free pictures.

The bucks stepped into a mowed firebreak, offering my first clear

look at them. The non-typical never looked my way, but the second buck spotted me instantly. His head snapped as he recognized a strange feature in the normally empty CRP grass. At the edge of hearing, he caught the sound of the camera's motor drive and immediately began a cautious approach. All the bucks followed his gaze, and fanned out with great interest to unravel this mystery lump in their territory. But surprisingly, the big buck ignored them, jumped the fence and began feeding calmly.

Several young bucks approached within 35 yards before stopping.



When the big buck was spotted under more favorable light conditions, it was usually near heavy cover. Getting photos was a guessing game, the author trying to be in the right place at the right time without being careless about wind direction.

Now, with the massive lens open to its maximum of  $f/4$  and the shutter set at 1/2-second exposure time, I could only hope that statuesque poses of the alerted bucks would allow sharp images during long exposure times. The younger bucks seemed amazed that the huge deer was unconcerned, and they constantly looked from him to me to him, as if to ask, "shouldn't we run?"

Finally, the big buck noticed and began to show concern. Now, through the lens, I could see the magnificence of his rack, as he looked first at me, then at the other deer surrounding me in a triangle. He stood transfixed for seconds at a time, allowing me to lock the camera mirror and use the remote trigger release to avoid vibrations while shooting at long exposures. In the gathering dusk, exposure times increased from one, to two, to four seconds.

The big buck jumped the fence


and approached for a closer look. During the next five minutes, the six bucks moved constantly, trying to get a scent that would identify this strange new object. But fortunately, they never did. I shot three rolls of film before darkness fell, and then the deer ran away through moonlit grass.

After that night, stunned by the size and beauty of his growing antlers, I worked constantly for another look at Moses. During peak growth, antlers can lengthen as much as 1/2-inch per day, and though the growth was slowing by mid-July, I expected them to add at least two inches overall by the time they hardened.

I sat for weeks, but saw the buck only three more times before October. Each time it was nearly dark, and the deer was far in the distance, proving how fortunate our July meeting had been. Once in mid-October near the same field, I had a good bow-shot at the buck

through a barbed-wire fence in the last minutes of legal light but didn't shoot for fear of hitting the wires. Another bowhunter spotted the buck several times in November, but Moses was always elusive.

The story ended the first night of firearms season, when the big buck struck out across open country at dusk. There, Bill Soerries of Pratt killed the deer, which by then had broken an estimated 18 inches of tines from its great antlers. The deer green-scored 213  $6/8$  Boone and Crockett points, placing it in the top 20 non-typical firearms records for Kansas whitetails.

Among the fields and woodlands, in secret places more common than one might expect, deer like Moses exist. Wise and nocturnal, they stay out of sight, and often out of trouble their entire lives. Knowing these giants exist keeps the thrill alive for those who dream of big whitetails. 



While the author hunted the big buck with a bow for several weeks, the story ended when Pratt hunter Bill Soerries got the the buck of his life on the first evening of rifle season. Even with tines broken from fighting other bucks, the huge rack is truly impressive.





# *Kansas Ozarks? Spring River Wildlife Area*

*by Stan Harter  
area manager, Mined Land Wildlife Area, Pittsburg*

*photos by Mike Blair*

*This unique wildlife area in Cherokee County is worth a trip. There is something for everyone here, from fishing and hunting to birdwatching and hiking.*

**T**he Spring River Wildlife Area lies along the extreme western edge of the Ozark Plateau, which reaches into Kansas at the very southeastern corner of Cherokee County. Located about 2 miles from Missouri and just more than 12 miles from Oklahoma, this is a part of Kansas rarely heard

about, being overshadowed by the more familiar Ozarks of those neighboring states. The area is best reached by driving 3 miles east of the junction of K-96/US-69 at Crestline. Then go 1/4 mile north to the south parking area.

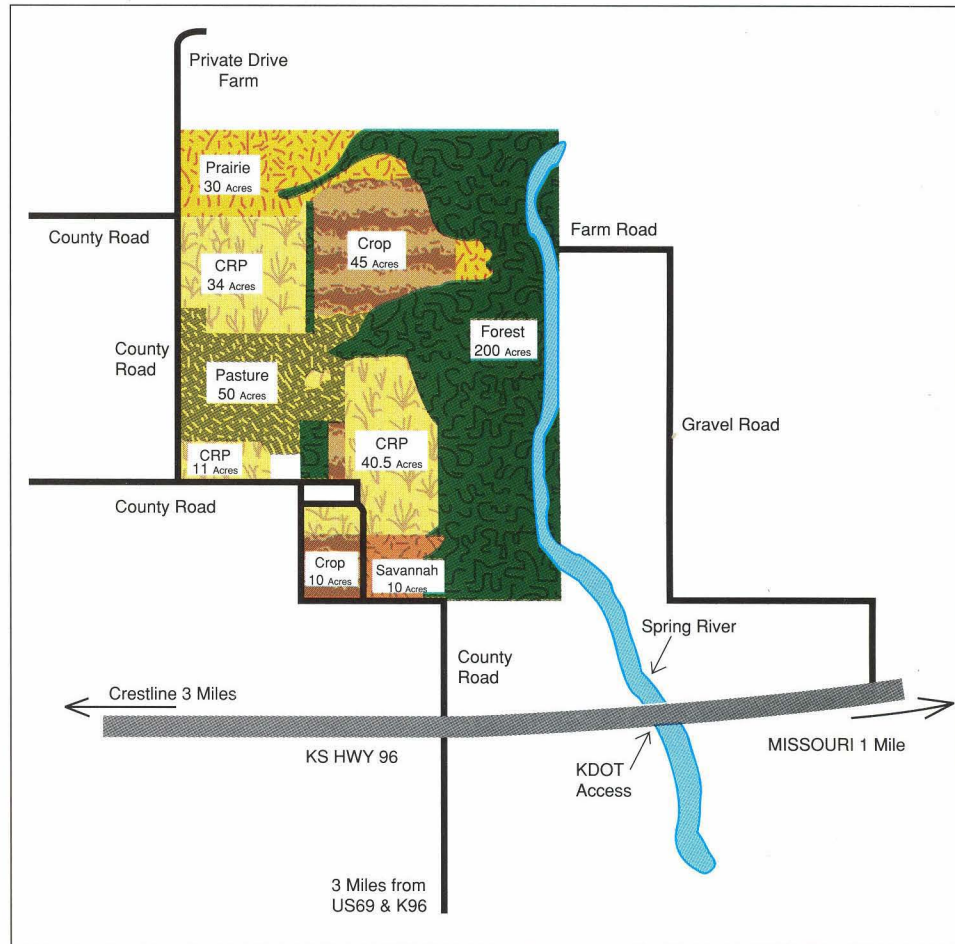
The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks purchased the

area in 1992, from a gentleman interested in preserving the natural history of his boyhood farm. Covering 424 acres along the west bank of the Spring River, this wildlife area is a showcase of natural diversity. With Ozarkian hardwood forest along a sandstone ridge overlooking the river and a small

prairie meadow and other native grasslands, the area is a perfect example of transition. You get the feeling that this is what the edge between the Great Plains and the Eastern deciduous forest must have been like 150 years ago. This is especially evident in a meadow at the south end of the area where several groves of oaks and hickories intermix with prairie plants, creating the savanna which must have been common along the transition zone.

The area has seen the impacts of modern agriculture, but has remained quite natural due to the former owner's recognition of the importance of natural things. Prior to the acquisition, I toured the property with the owner. He demonstrated a tremendous knowledge of wildlife, native plants and the delicate balance of nature. He offered a comprehensive history of the area dating back to ancient cultures. He expressed an innate desire to have the land dedicated to natural history conservation and education. The knowledge gained from the outing will be useful in development of management plans for the area.

The prairie meadows are abundant with wildflowers and forbs that show up from March through

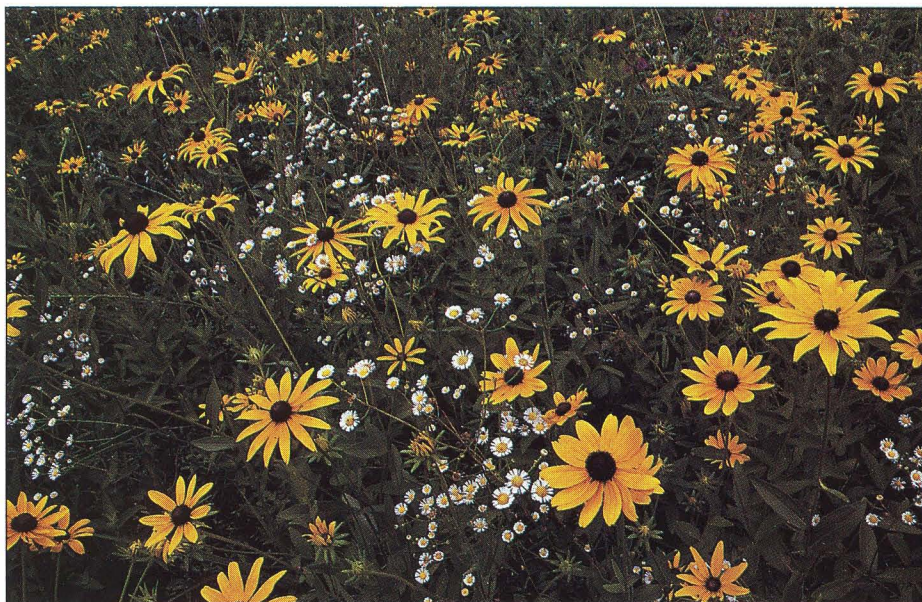


September. Some of the more conspicuous include orange and yellow Indian paintbrush, lousewort, plains wildindigo, and field pussytrees in spring, as well as blue

wildindigo, leadplant, gayfeathers, pale purple coneflower, butterfly milkweed, and catclaw sensitivebriar later in summer. More than 50 species of wild plants can be found within a small area, with more than 150 species present overall.

Ninety acres of former cropland were planted to native grasses under the Conservation Reserve Program in 1987. These fields have healthy stands of native grasses, including big and little bluestem, Indiangrass, switchgrass and side-oats grama. Future plans include interseeding a variety of native wildflowers and forbs. With the exception of about 60 acres of cropland and a few small plots which are planted for wildlife, non-native plants will not be introduced to the area.

Grassland management practices will include prescribed burning to discourage exotic grasses such as fescue and to prevent woody vegetation from invading. Fire also encourages the native plants to



Other than some cultivated food plots for wildlife, management practices at Spring River Wildlife Area maintain the area's native vegetation and habitats.



A portion of the area that was previously farmed was entered into the Conservation Reserve Program. It consists of native grasses and allows a glimpse of what the original prairie might have looked like.

grow more vigorously and reduces the dead plant material which can choke out the desirable vegetation. Rotational burning schedules will be used to ensure that not all areas are burned each year, leaving nesting and denning cover for small birds and mammals. Some birds that nest in the native grass meadows include bobwhite quail, turkey, dickcissel, eastern meadowlark and several other songbirds.

Timing burns late in spring can promote native grass growth and inhibit woody or weedy vegetation from invading the meadow, while also inhibiting cool season grasses such as fescue. Burning in late winter or early spring allows abundant growth of wildflowers and forbs. These forbs, mostly legumes and other plants including native sunflowers, usually attract insects in the summer, providing a critical food supply for young birds and mammals. Some

forbs also produce seeds which provide needed wildlife food in the winter.

A 40-acre pasture with a mixture of native prairie and introduced fescue will be grazed periodically. This pasture was probably unintentionally overgrazed and overseeded with fescue once the native plants declined. A careful burning and



This meadow illustrates succession as the prairie fights the encroachment of trees. Fire will be used to manage much of the grassland.

grazing schedule is being designed to allow limited use of the pasture, while trying to recover the natural characteristics of the prairie.

Unique to Kansas public lands is the woodland, classified as an Ozarkian hardwood forest. The upland portion of the woodland is indicative of the forests found through out the Ozarks. Dominant trees include several species of oaks and hickories, with ash, elms, hackberry and several other hardwoods intermixed. Oaks include bur oak, blackjack oak, post oak, chinkipin oak, northern red oak, Shumard's oak

and black oaks. Hickories include bitternut, shagbark, mockernut, black hickory and pecan. The floodplain forest along the Spring River is representative of eastern Kansas with the dominant trees being cottonwood, sycamore, black willow, silver maple with elms and hackberry intermingled. The transition between upland and floodplain forest is general with few oaks and hickories on the lower sites. Understory plants in the woodlands include coralberry, greenbriar, Canada wildrye, ferns, May apple, gooseberry, golden current, riverbank grape and poison ivy. Some of the woodland wildflowers include bird's-foot violet, trillium, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Johnny-jump up, wild sweet William, yellow lady-slipper and wild senecio.

Most of the hardwood forest is found on a ridge formed chiefly of sandstone with a few areas of moderate-sized rock outcrops. Different rock for-



The Spring River flows through the area and provides a pleasant get away for visitors. Fishermen will find smallmouth and spotted bass, channel catfish and flathead catfish in this unique Kansas stream. The area is truly a treasure in the southeast and worth saving.

mations are evident as upland sites drain into the small brooks which flow east off the hills. The small springs and seeps form small waterfalls in the outcrops of these rock formations. Generally the floodplain woodland is situated on moderately wetland soils. The floodplain understory is similar to the upland sites. Fewer leaves remain due to extensive flooding over the past few years. Canada wildrye is more prevalent on lower

sites.

Spring River Wildlife Area features a variety of neo-tropical (birds that spend part of the year in the tropics), with several species of warblers nesting or migrating through the area in spring. Black-and-white, prothonotary, yellow, yellow-rumped and northern parula are the most common warblers. The hardwoods hold several species of woodpeckers including the pileated, in addition to thrushes, vireos, and

many species of sparrows. An unusual bird found along the river is the fish crow, which can be identified by its call — it sounds like a common crow with a sinus cold. The brushy borders near the pastures provide nesting habitat for many songbirds, while still others nest in the mature hardwoods.

There are several species of wildlife, rare to much of Kansas, which are found in fairly good numbers on the area. The broad-

head skink can be found in the woodlands, spring peepers are commonly heard calling from the small seep springs and numerous rare mussels are found in the river. Neosho madtoms, a rare species of tiny catfish, are found in the river, too. Some of these rare species are considered indicator species, meaning their presence indicates a healthy habitat. However, the Spring River faces the same threat from contaminated runoff from nearby cities and agricultural land as other rivers in the state. The presence of these rare species only emphasizes the need to conserve unique areas like Spring River Wildlife Area.

More common wildlife found on

the area include white-tailed deer, fox and gray squirrels, coyotes, bobcats, and red and gray foxes. Fish found in the river include smallmouth and spotted bass, channel and flathead catfish and numerous rough fish.

Wildlife watching opportunities are good, but care should be taken. The area provides suitable habitat for copperheads and timber rattlesnakes, both of which have been reported by adjoining landowners. Also, the most recent report of a water moccasin, or cottonmouth, was at the K-96 bridge on Spring River. The snake was possibly imported, but the extreme southeastern corner of Kansas could be within their range.

Spring River Wildlife Area provides outdoor opportunities in a unique setting. From hiking and birdwatching, to primitive camping, hunting and fishing, there's a lot to choose from. There are plans for some facilities such as trails and campsites, but excessive disturbance of natural features will be avoided to maintain the area's natural integrity. Vehicles will be allowed only on parking areas located at the south end and near the northwest corner of the area.

Someone once said " The key to intelligent tinkering is to save all the pieces." The Spring River Wildlife Area is one of those pieces worth saving for today and future generations.



From the air it's easy to see why you might call this the Kansas Ozarks. The rolling hills are covered with hardwood timber, and the river carves a rocky ridge, winding through the hills. A visit to Spring River offers a multitude of things to do.



# Ferruginous: Hawk On The Edge

by Mike Miller  
editor, Pratt  
photos by Mike Blair

*The largest of the broadwinged hawks lives in the rough and desolate prairie of northwest Kansas. Not much for company other than its own, this magnificent bird is less common today as its preferred habitat has been reduced.*

Close your eyes and imagine for a moment. Picture a large hawk soaring effortlessly against a deep blue-sky, a barren, dusty landscape of chalk outcroppings, ragged bluffs and an occasional scraggly tree below. Hear the piercing *kree, kree*, and see the determination in the hawk's eye — determination to find a meal in this inhospitable place — determination to survive. For those who've spent time outdoors, this image conjures up feelings of freedom and wildness. Tied to the earth by our physical limitations as well as our material dependencies, we view the hawk with awe and admiration.

Riding the wind, broadwinged hawks sail over the land, travelling in a single wind gust a distance that would take a man several hours on foot. Buteo is the family of broadwinged hawks, and those we see soaring over Kansas include the redtail, roughlegged, redshouldered, broadwinged, Swainson's and the largest Buteo, the ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*). Perhaps



Named for the rufous color on its back, the ferruginous is common in northwest Kansas. It may be seen farther east from September through April.

more than the others, the ferruginous embodies the spirit of the wild prairie.

The ferruginous, if by nothing more than the home it prefers, is wild and untamed. In Kansas, ferruginous hawks are common in the northwest corner, preferring to nest in the chalk beds of Logan and Gove counties, along the Smoky Hill River Valley. This is unforgiving land — shortgrass prairie, rocky canyons and chalk towers that jut from the earth, having been carved by ancient erosion forces. An occasional tree provides a nest platform, but the birds usually nest on craggy bluffs or the chalk towers. Ferruginous can be seen here year-round, but you might catch a glimpse of one farther east from September through April.

The species' latin name, *Buteo regalis*, refers to the regal appearance. The common name, ferruginous, refers to the rusty color



Nests are built with sticks, yucca stems, livestock manure — even deer antlers.

common to the birds. There are actually two color phases. The light phase bird is reddish-brown with a white underside and red-brown legs. The legs are feathered to the toes, and the dark-colored leg feathers form a characteristic V on the bird's belly while in flight. The

tail is light-colored and without bands in both phases. The white underwings have black-tipped primaries. The dark phase is a rich brown, rufous or nearly black. Ferruginous are big birds, sporting wingspans of 56 inches and measuring 22-25 inches from head to tail. In fact, the dark phase is sometimes mistaken for an eagle. Identifying characteristics include light spots on top of the wings, near the wrist, the V shape made by the feathered legs and the white, unbanded tail.

Nesting can occur from February though July. A large nest of sticks, chunks of yucca, perhaps bits of wire and sometimes dry cattle or horse manure is constructed. Usually a pair will have several nest sites and add to the site selected prior to nesting. As a pair continues to add to a nest each year, it can get quite large, measuring several feet across and a foot or more deep.



Ferruginous hawks will nest in the scarce trees of the region, but more frequently they build on the chalk towers or rocky cliffs. A pair will usually have several nest sites and may alternate from year to year. Human disturbance often causes abandonment of a site.





Young ferruginous hatch in staggered intervals since incubation begins when the first egg is laid. Three or four eggs is an average size clutch. The young will fledge 44-48 days after hatching.

Three or four white/bluish eggs with rich brown spots are laid. Both parents share in incubation duties. Since incubation starts as soon as the first egg is laid, the young hatch in staggered intervals after 28 days. The young will fledge, or fly, 44-48 days after hatching. While mortality is high during the first year, ferruginous hawks can live a long time in the wild. One, banded in New Mexico, was found dead 20 years later.

Ferruginous hawks are marvelously adapted to the rough and desolate land they inhabit. They avoid humans and human activities, making this area of northwest Kansas ideal. Their preferred diet is also readily available on the short-grass prairie. Ferruginous parents have been observed bringing a variety of prey home to their young. Most common diet items include thirteen-lined ground squirrels, gophers and prairie dogs. However other prey species noted in nests include jackrabbits, cottontail rab-

bits, wood rats, kangaroo rats, bull snakes, toads and small birds.

Like other broad-winged hawks, ferruginous are commonly seen soaring in huge circles, scanning the open prairie for prey. However,

they have adopted other hunting techniques. In Arthur Cleveland Bent's *Life History of North American Birds of Prey*, there is a description of two birds working a prairie dog town with a technique similar to that of coyotes. The pair was observed waiting on the ground near a prairie dog burrow. When the prairie dog ventured away from the burrow, the hawks worked together to cut off the escape route. The hawks alternately ran and flew to get between the prairie dog and its burrow. Another account told of a ferruginous hawk hunting over freshly cut alfalfa. When a fresh mound of dirt from a gopher digging was spotted, the bird landed near it and waited. When the gopher pushed up near the surface, the hawk jumped stiff-legged and snatched the gopher from its tunnel.

It's also common to see ferrugi-



The young are fed a variety of prey including gophers, prairie dogs, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, rabbits, snakes and occasional small birds. This youngster gulps a rat.

nous hawks flying very low to the ground, as if trying to surprise prey animals that might have otherwise detected it soaring at a higher altitude. They may also be seen sitting on low perches such as rock outcrops or fence posts and will readily perch on the ground.

Ferruginous hawks were once common from Kansas west to California and from Texas to Canada. However as rangeland was converted to farmland, ferruginous numbers fell. Presumably, many were indiscriminately killed through the first half of this century as men considered all birds of prey threats to not only livestock but also to gamebirds. We now know, however, that ferruginous rarely if ever killed poultry and probably never took any significant numbers of pheasants or prairie grouse. On the contrary, when you consider the number of gophers and prairie dogs a single family of ferruginous hawks will consume in a single season, the birds provide a benefit to agriculture. Today all birds of prey are federally protected, and people are generally better edu-



A parent ferruginous returns with a gopher to feed the young. Noting the number of gophers and prairie dogs a single ferruginous family can eat, they benefit agriculture.

cated about the critical niche these birds fill.

The biggest threats to ferruginous hawks today are loss of habitat, loss of prey species such as prairie dogs and human distur-

bance. Ferruginous hawks are intolerant of disturbance, and may be easily driven from a nest site by nearby human activity. Other factors that contribute to nest failure include predation from mammalian predators, severe thunderstorms and erosion of the substrate on which the nest is located.

Today, ferruginous hawks nest in 17 western states and 2 provinces with Kansas being the eastern-most range. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lists the ferruginous hawk as Category II, meaning it is being considered for listing as threatened or endangered.

The ferruginous hawk is perhaps as much a symbol of the western prairie as the prairie dog or buffalo. Count yourself lucky if you see one, and enjoy the feeling of pure freedom it can exude. As our grasslands continue to change, let's hope the ferruginous always finds a niche and doesn't go the way of some other prairie species such as the bison or plains elk. We lose a piece of our heritage when any species disappears. We also lose an avenue to escape our own crowded world — our connection to freedom. ♡



This adult light phase ferruginous shows the characteristic "V" shape of the legs. The darker legs are feathered to the toes and contrast against the white belly.



# Beating The Odds

by J. Mark Shoup  
*associate editor, Pratt*

photos by Rob Manes  
*acting assistant secretary, Pratt*

*Enjoying the outdoors can be an immense challenge to a handicapped person, but with the help of enthusiastic volunteers and the Boy Scouts of America, 12 lucky hunters proved that the challenge is far from insurmountable.*

Few healthy people understand what it is like to have a physical disability. We take for granted daily activities that often require extensive planning effort for the handicapped. For some, simply getting dressed in the morning may take an hour or more. Imagine then, the difficulty and frustration of handicapped people who love the outdoors, who yearn to hunt, fish, camp, or take a simple outing to their favorite lake, stream, or meadow.

Jim Holderman understands this frustration and the need to make accommodations for physically-challenged people who want to enjoy Kansas' bountiful outdoor resources. Although Holderman has a partial disability, he is an avid waterfowler and outdoorsman. As chairman of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission, he has been in a unique position to provide insight into the needs of the handicapped and to encourage special events that provide handicapped persons the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities that previously seemed out of reach. In fact, it was one of his goals when appointed to the commission in 1991 to review and expand such opportunities.

"I began to notice through news items and magazines that other states were conducting special handicapped hunts and other events," says Holderman, "so I came back to the Department of Wildlife and Parks and asked them to explore the possibility of doing something in Kansas."

Actually, Holderman did more than just suggest the possibility. In March of 1994, he approached good friend Bill Ward of Wichita, who is activities chairman for the

Executive Board of the Quivira Council of Boy Scouts of America, a volunteer position. The Quivira Scout Ranch, with 3,200 acres of rugged woodlands in Sedan County, seemed an ideal location for a special deer hunt, so Ward put Holderman in touch with Kansas Boy Scout Council President Brad Haddock, and the wheels began to turn.

Of course, there was some red tape to cut through. The executive board had to approve the idea, and because Scout property is generally reserved for Scouts, its legality had to be studied with the organization's national office. Once these obstacles were overcome, Ward contacted another Scout volunteer, Ken Reavis, an engineer for Raytheon Corp. who spends his spare time as special projects coordinator for the Quivira Council.

Reavis had worked for the Scouts for years. In fact, in the late 1970s, he had started the annual fall Sunshine Fishing Tournament for

handicapped anglers in a 19-county area of southcentral Kansas. This tournament mates a handicapped person with a Scout and a tournament bass fisherman for a day of fishing. Now in its 19th year, it has been a huge success, and Reavis' involvement in it made him the perfect choice to help organize a handicapped hunt.

Reavis would act as liaison between the Scouts and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, whose help they felt was essential for a pilot project of this type. Largely through the efforts of Wildlife and Parks Special Assistant Rob Manes and local Conservation Officer Bill Ramshaw, the agency helped design the hunt. Safety, hunter placement, and promotion of the event had to be considered and dealt with. The logistics of moving 10 or 20 hunters between blinds and quarters would be a job in itself.

There were other questions, as well. Who would qualify for the



There were many things to consider as the special hunt for handicapped hunters was planned. Some of the obstacles included transportation on the ranch, access to facilities, recruitment of volunteers and special hunting equipment for some of the hunters.



Response to the call for volunteers was overwhelming. Many of those helping felt it was one of their best hunting experiences, even though they didn't really hunt.

event? How severe would disabilities have to be? Would disabilities have to be permanent? After a great deal of consideration, it was decided that applicants must fit Wildlife and Parks criteria for handicapped hunting permits. This includes people who cannot walk without assistance from another person or the use of a brace, cane, crutch, prosthetic device, wheelchair, or other assistive device. Arthritic, neurological, and orthopedic conditions were also considered, as were conditions that severely limited the use of arms.

Prior to the hunt dates (Dec. 3-4), participants also had to be 18 years old, must have completed an approved hunter education course (unless exempt by law), and had to have a Unit 12 deer permit and a valid Kansas hunting license (unless exempt by law). The event would be limited to 20 hunters.

Design and criteria had been established, but perhaps the most critical part of planning the event was yet

to come: volunteers had to be recruited to guide and assist each hunter. As it turned out, this was not as difficult as one might think. Reavis was able to recruit about 75 percent of the guides from the ranks of adult Scout leaders. Others were friends of these leaders who simply wanted to be involved in what they felt was a worthwhile event.

Once these logistics had been worked out, the hunt was announced. June 20 was the deadline for application. Because this was a first-time event, only 12 hunters applied, which was enough to make it worthwhile for the Scouts. Each would be given access to the Quivira Scout Ranch, a blind suited to his or her needs, transportation from the ranch headquarters to the blind, meals and lodging during the two-day hunt, a firearm (if needed), use of handicapped accessible shower facilities at the ranch, personal assistance with the hunt, and other training and assistance, as needed. Participants paid

\$50 each to the Boy Scouts, but some scholarships were offered on the basis of need.

When Dec. 2 finally rolled around, a dozen excited hunters and their assistants descended upon Quivira Scout Ranch. They came from all over Kansas, and their disabilities ranged from heart problems to needing a cane to walk to having no use of limbs at all. Four of them were first-time hunters.

Tim Steininger, from Dodge City, had one of the most unique backgrounds of the group. At the age of 16, he had broken his neck. At the time of the Quivira hunt, he was 31 and had been paralyzed from the neck down for almost 16 years. But he hadn't given up. He had grown up hunting with his family and was a bowhunter before his accident. After the accident, he continued to go on fishing trips with his family, but it was his dream to hunt deer again.

He had inquired all over the country in search of a device that would allow him to aim and fire a rifle. Finally, he found a manufacturer in Nebraska who made a device called the SRS-77. Essentially, the device is a shooting rest with which the hunter can move his rifle back and forth with his chin. To fire the rifle, the shooter sips on a micro-hose attached to the trigger.

Unfortunately, Steininger could not afford the device. As luck would have it, however, he was chosen to receive the 1993 Peter John Locks Award for inspirational handicapped persons and was awarded the SRS-77 as the prize.

That same year, he bagged a 10-point buck. Word of this feat spread quickly through news stories that were picked up by wire services and published nationwide. Because of this publicity, Wildlife and Parks had contacted Steininger and asked if he would like to apply for the special hunt. Living in western Kansas where fewer deer permits are offered, he was eager to participate in a southeast Kansas hunt. In fact, he even visited the Quivira ranch two weeks before the hunt to scout

the area.

On Dec. 2, 1994, Steininger and the others went to bed early, anticipating an exciting two days ahead. And exciting they were. Some took deer early and had the luxury of lounging around the camp headquarters, swapping stories. Others continued the hunt for the full two days, but everyone enjoyed the camaraderie, the food, and the experience of hunting in a true wilderness setting. By the end of the two days, 11 out of the 12 handicapped hunters had bagged deer, eight of which were bucks.

Ironically, Steininger was the only one of the 12 who didn't take a deer. On a chilly morning, he had a buck in his sights only to have his trigger mechanism fail. Still, displaying a spirit that typified this event, Steininger was not disappointed.

"Success is not the point of any hunt," says Steininger. "I really enjoyed it even though I didn't take a deer. And this event was important because it gave the volunteers and Wildlife and Parks personnel an awareness of problems of the disabled. I think it was really nice of Wildlife and parks and the Scouts. Everyone enjoyed it. I hope it happens in other places, maybe even for the muzzleloader season."

If the hunters were happy, the organizers were elated . . . and

inspired.

"One of the things that impressed us was the effort that the handicapped people will go through to do something this special," said Bill Ward. "We had one fellow who had to wake up at 3:45 just to make the 5 a.m. breakfast."

The guides, most of whom gave up their opening weekend deer hunts to participate in this event, were no less upbeat. One unidentified guide said, "This is the best deer hunt I've ever been on, and I didn't even shoot." He seemed to echo the general sentiment of the volunteers.

"We all had a lot of fun," added Ken Reavis.


Last spring, Reavis assessed the results of the hunt, tracking the pluses and minuses. On the plus side were the willingness of participants and volunteers and the cooperation between the state, the Scouts, and the volunteers. The only minuses were actually concerns that never came up: 1) severe weather could have been a problem, especially for those who have lost feeling and circulation in their limbs; 2) transportation to and from the field could be a problem in snow or mud; and 3) it might be hard to set up a weapon for those without the strength to properly hold it. In 1994, the weather was unseasonably warm, as well as dry,

so cold and wetness were no problem. (Still, they had golf carts and a 6-wheel all-terrain vehicle with a pickup bed in case of emergencies.) None of the participants had trouble with their weapons.

By all accounts, the event was a complete success, and it appears that there will be another special hunt at the Quivira Scout Ranch this year, according to Reavis.

Of course, the Scout ranch is not the only place in Kansas where something like this could be conducted. The future of such events is in the hands of grassroots organizers everywhere who are willing to volunteer. Ward hopes the Quivira experience will be an inspiration to volunteers across the state.

"I'd like to see other groups — Scouts, Lions clubs, hunting clubs, whatever — sponsor these events in other areas," he says. "The people who put the Quivira Scout Ranch hunt together would be willing to help them set it up."

As Reavis puts it, "Giving back to the community is what Scouting is all about." 

For information about future handicapped hunts at Quivira Boy Scout Ranch contact Clark Israel, Program Director for Quivira Council of Boy Scouts of America, (316) 264-3386.



# Wildflower Spectrum

by Lorraine Kaufman  
Moundridge

photos by Mike Blair

*Little flower in the wild-  
In the prairie grass,  
Blooming for the world to see,  
Though no one may pass.  
Still you show your cheery face  
Just where you are growing,  
And you send your sweet perfume  
On the breezes blowing.  
Little flower sweet and wild,  
Treasure of this prairie child!*

Lorraine J. Kaufman



*evening primrose*



*sunflower*

Every Kansan should, at least once in life, walk the prairies for which our state is known. For many, a single trek will stimulate a desire to return again and again, to experience the solitude, exquisite beauty and calming peace that pervades these broad, open spaces. The prairies have a simple grandeur, a quiet magnificence and a gentleness that needs only to be embraced to be appreciated.

One of the grassland's gentle gifts is its wildflowers. Through the long growing season from mid-March until October, flowers appear in waves of rainbow hues to brighten the landscape. They enliven the rolling hills and valleys, carpet the woodland floor or nestle beside the meandering streams. They crowd into small meadows salvaged from the plow, or dare to

bloom along roadsides as a last resort in their struggle for survival. Wherever, wildflowers decorate the places they live.

Undulating in a gentle south wind, kissed by warm Kansas sunshine and nourished by spring rains, the prairie flowers keep pace with emerging native grasses. Colorful blossoms appear head-high to the grassy spears, and constantly change as the season progresses. Indeed, this succession is part of the wildflower's spell. Almost weekly the cast changes, as one flower quietly finishes its performance and leaves the prairie stage, only to be replaced by another. It's easy to be captivated by this wondrous show, presented in living color.

For those who care, wildflower-watching becomes an anticipated

part of each growing season. Through the years, old friendships develop, and happy memories often surround these plants whose pleasures are free for the taking. Each year is different; rain and drought, heat and cold, changing land use — all affect the location, quantity and sometimes even color of previous acquaintances. So discovery is always assured.

The wildflower world brings me to my knees before a new found treasure, then gently lifts my eyes in praise and thanksgiving to our Creator. It is the excitement of discovery, the joy of beholding and the passion of claiming that thrills my soul in our prairie gardens. It's a world that lies just down the road. Won't you visit?



*aromatic aster*

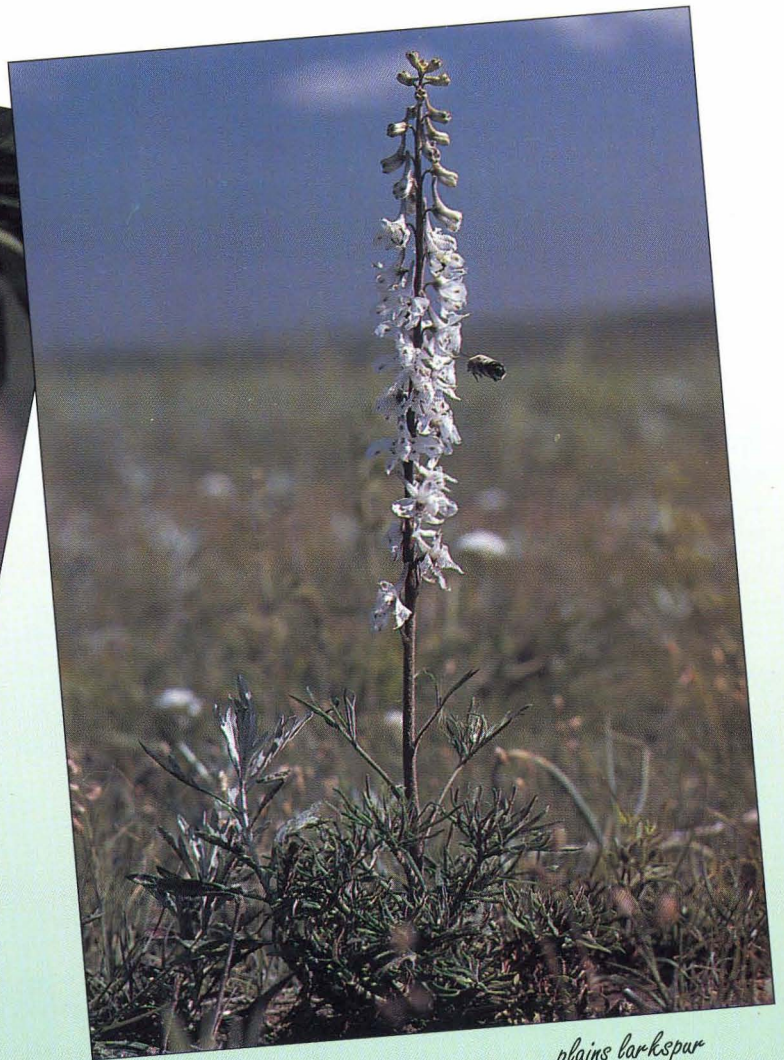




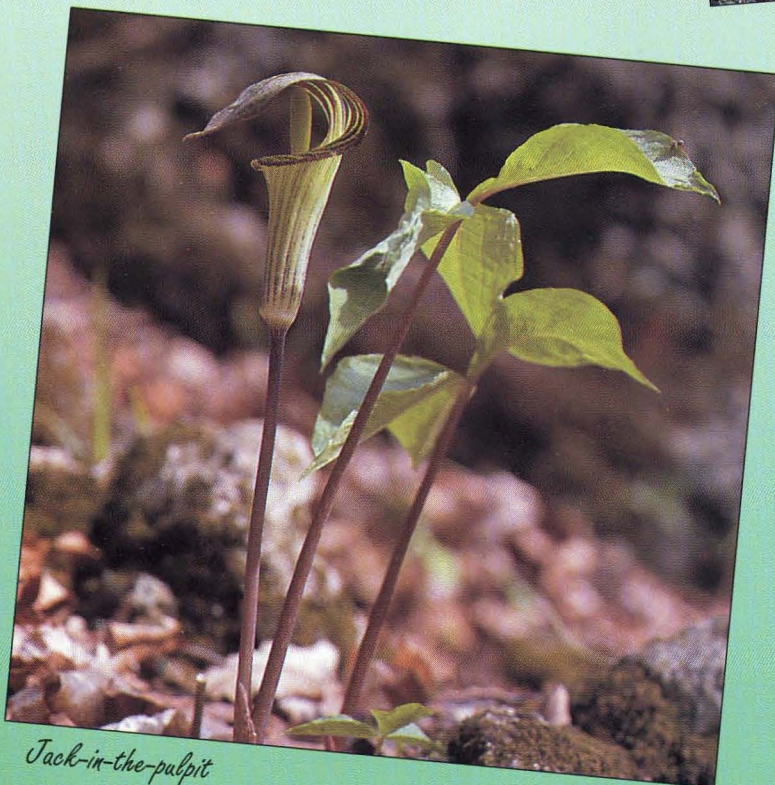
*May apple*

#### WHITES

The showy evening primrose wears a delicate white gown like the Virginia spring beauty, though the latter flower adds a touch of pink to hers. Dutchman's breeches, always a delightful find in the woods, appear as tiny pantaloons suspended on a delicate arching stalk, as if hung out to dry by some woodland elf.



*plains larkspur*



*Jack-in-the-pulpit*

#### GREENS

Green flowers in a green world are scarcely noticed, unless characterized by unusual form. One such winner is Jack-in-the-pulpit, an early-spring flower of eastern Kansas creeks and woodlands. This unusual flower has a spadix protected by a folded leaf and is reminiscent of a preacher in his pulpit.

## PINKS

Reminiscent of a glowing dawn, the delightfully fragrant prairie rose adorns many forgotten lanes. I first learned to love it when I was a child, walking to our mailbox in early summer. Roses are among the loveliest of wildflowers and remind me of adorable little girls, innocent and unaware of their charm and beauty.

Pinks are splashed throughout the seasons, brightening the state from east to west. From the columbine of rocky hillsides, to deptford pink of eastern meadows, to goat's rue and cat-claw sensitivebriar of the open prairies, pinks add their beauty to the land.

*prairie rose*



*catclaw sensitivebriar*



*chicory*



## BLUES/PURPLES

Variations among shades of blue wildflowers is amazing. The deep hue of blue wild indigo in a spring rainstorm, the cheery blue of prairie violet on a sunny slope, the electrifying shade of big blue lobelia in an autumn pasture, or the pastel blues of Rocky Mountain bee plant or chicory — all enrich their spaces and times in the wildflower world.



*Rocky Mountain beeplant*



*coreopsis*

### YELLOWS

The yellows of summer wildflowers are as bright and cheerful as the sun itself. I have found only one large hillside colony of bigflower coreopsis, but the memory of it painted a bold gold in my mind's wildflower album.

Here also are the sturdy annual sunflowers that are companions to most country roadsides, and the striking goldenrods that wave in September. Goldenrods are pollinated principally by insects, since little pollen is wind-borne. It then behooves those who blame their hay fever on these flowers to look elsewhere for the culprit!


Softer yellow shadings are offered by wildindigo and evening primrose.



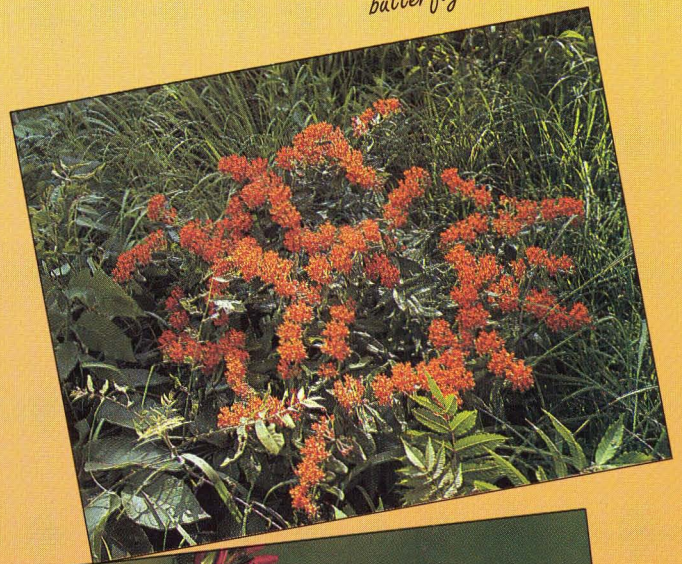
*goldenrod*

### REDS/ORANGES

There are times on a wildflower search when one is stopped abruptly before a heretofore undiscovered beauty; so it was when I first met cardinal flower blooming in a dry creek bed. The brilliant and vibrant scarlet of this flower is simply breathtaking. Its only rival of vivid red is green dragon, which, though it has a green flower, produces an exquisite fall cluster of scarlet seeds that brightens its woodland home.

Of softer hue, but nonetheless gorgeous, are the orange flowers of Indian paintbrush and butterfly milkweed. Rosering gaillardia also joins this group of flaming stars in the wildflower world. 

*butterfly milkweed*



*rosering gaillardia (with spiderwort)*



*cardinal flower*



# Pearl On The Plains: Scott State Park

by Marc Murrell  
*public information officer, Valley Center*

*A spring-fed gem in the arid plains, Scott State Park is appreciated by thousands of western Kansans — Kansans who don't take these resources for granted. The lake and state park are unique, and the land has a wealth of history behind it.*

Lake Scott State Park lies in southwest Kansas like a mirage in the mind of a man dying of thirst in the desert. Its hidden beauty is suddenly revealed as you drop off into the creviced canyon unseen moments before on the endless horizon. The entrance road meanders by a privately owned herd of buffalo and elk, giving you a brief glimpse of what Kansas' first settlers must have seen. The bottom of the canyon is lined with towering cottonwoods, ash, elm, and walnut trees that guard the 100-acre sky-blue lake. This isn't a mirage!

The park was the dream of a man who homesteaded the area in 1888. Herbert Steele found the canyons and springs, many of which provide a constant water source to the present lake, to be the perfect site for a home. Five years later, Steele married Eliza Landon and the couple lived on the property for 40 years.

But the Steeles weren't the first visitors to take advantage of the unique surroundings. A group of Taos Indians fleeing Spanish rule constructed pueblos and cultivated crops nearly 200 years earlier. The settlement became known as El



Mike Blair photo

Mule deer are common in the shortgrass prairie around Scott State Park. However, the landscape changes dramatically as you drop into the canyon that holds the lake.

Cuaratelejo, meaning "old barracks or building," and was inhabited for 20 years before being abandoned.

El Cuaratelejo was inhabited again briefly in 1701, and in 1717 it became a trading post. Opened by Jean Iturbi, famous for leading the explorer La Salle to his fatal ambush, the post became one of the

first white settlements in Kansas. It was abandoned in 1727 and eroded from the plains.

The pueblo ruins were discovered by Steele during the mid-1890s. They were excavated by two individuals from the University of Kansas. The Daughters of the American Revolution erected a monument there in 1925 and the site became a National Historic Landmark in 1964.

During the time that the Steeles lived on the property, they earned a reputation for sincere hospitality. Visitors and friends were invited to partake in the wonderful fishing, hunting, and relaxing setting offered. As a result of this enjoyment, it became the dream of the Steeles that their land would continue to provide outdoor recreation for the benefit of all people. The 640-acre Steele homestead was acquired by the Kansas State Forestry, Fish and Game Commission in 1928. An additional 640 acres surrounding the Steele property were also added.



Two hundred years before the area was homesteaded by white settlers, the Taos Indians constructed pueblos and cultivated crops here. This foundation is all that remains of those buildings.



Camping and picnicking are popular on the facilities provided by the state park on the shores of Scott State Fishing Lake. The area is an oasis in an otherwise dry region.

Nearly 170,000 visitors venture to the park, located 12 miles north of Scott City, to enjoy camping, boating, swimming, fishing, and hiking each year. Its value is recognized by those who enjoy the outdoors, but don't have the opportunities offered by areas of the state with more resources.

"The big attraction is the water," said Rick Stevens, wildlife/parks manager and life-long resident of the area. "There is a fairly even level that doesn't fluctuate. (People) can count on there being a lake.

"The next biggest thing is the fishing. In western Kansas there just aren't that many places that (people) can go," said Stevens.

The spring-fed

lake was created when a dam was built in 1930. Four years later it washed out and was replaced. In 1984 the lake was drained to rebuild the spillway and dredge areas of heavy siltation. Renovation work

was completed in 1987. The deepest portion of the lake reaches nearly 20 feet with an average depth of roughly 6 feet.

Bass are king of the species in Lake Scott, according to Stevens. Crappie run a close second, followed by panfish which include redear and bluegill, and channel catfish. Trout are top dog during the cold months and fishermen took advantage of nearly 15,000 stocked during the winter of 1994-95.

Joining Crawford and Meade, Scott State Park is only one of three which are built on a state fishing lake rather than federal reservoirs. Sixty modern campsites with water and electricity await campers, and primitive camping is allowed within the park. Two hundred picnic tables are available and a two-lane boat ramp is easily accessed by boaters. A concession stand is operated year-round and offers paddleboat and canoe rentals, tackle, live bait, camping supplies, food and drinks. Nature trails designed for hikers and horseback riders provide something for everyone.

"We get a lot of local business



A privately-owned buffalo and elk herd near the state park provide visitors a glimpse of what the prairie might have looked like before settlement. Both species were present before 1800.



The state fishing lake provides good fishing opportunities for bluegill, redear sunfish, largemouth bass and catfish. In the winter months, trout are stocked for hardy, cold-weather fishermen. The trout season is Oct. 15-April 15. A trout permit is required.

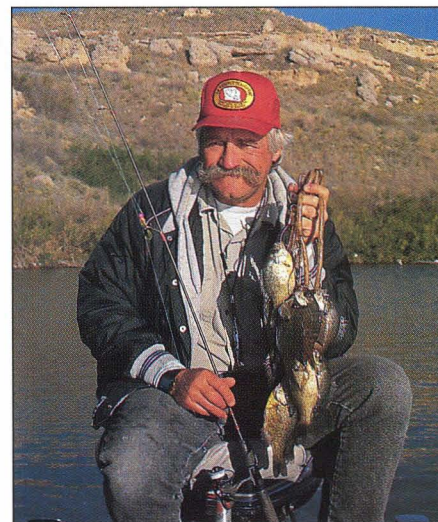
and we get a lot of people traveling through," said Stevens. "People traveling on vacations to Colorado will stop here or if they have a short vacation they come out from eastern Kansas like the Topeka area or maybe even Wichita. They've heard somebody talk about it that said it's a really neat place to go because it's quiet, and it's not crowded."

The most noted recognition came recently when The National Geographic Society's *Traveler* magazine listed Lake Scott State Park as one of the 50 "must see" parks in the country. It is also listed in the Reader's Digest Travel Guide. This notoriety has generated substantial interest according to Stevens.

"We've been getting calls from all over the country," he said. "We've been getting calls from Colorado, a lot of calls from New Mexico, California, New York, and surprisingly a lot of calls from Florida."

Working at the park for nearly 20 years now, Stevens has had the opportunity to chat with visitors from all over the country. He summarizes their impression in one word, "Amazement."

"They come across all this flat ground and all of a sudden they drop down into this little place — especially coming from the north," he said. "People that have friends that have told them about this place make it a point to be here."




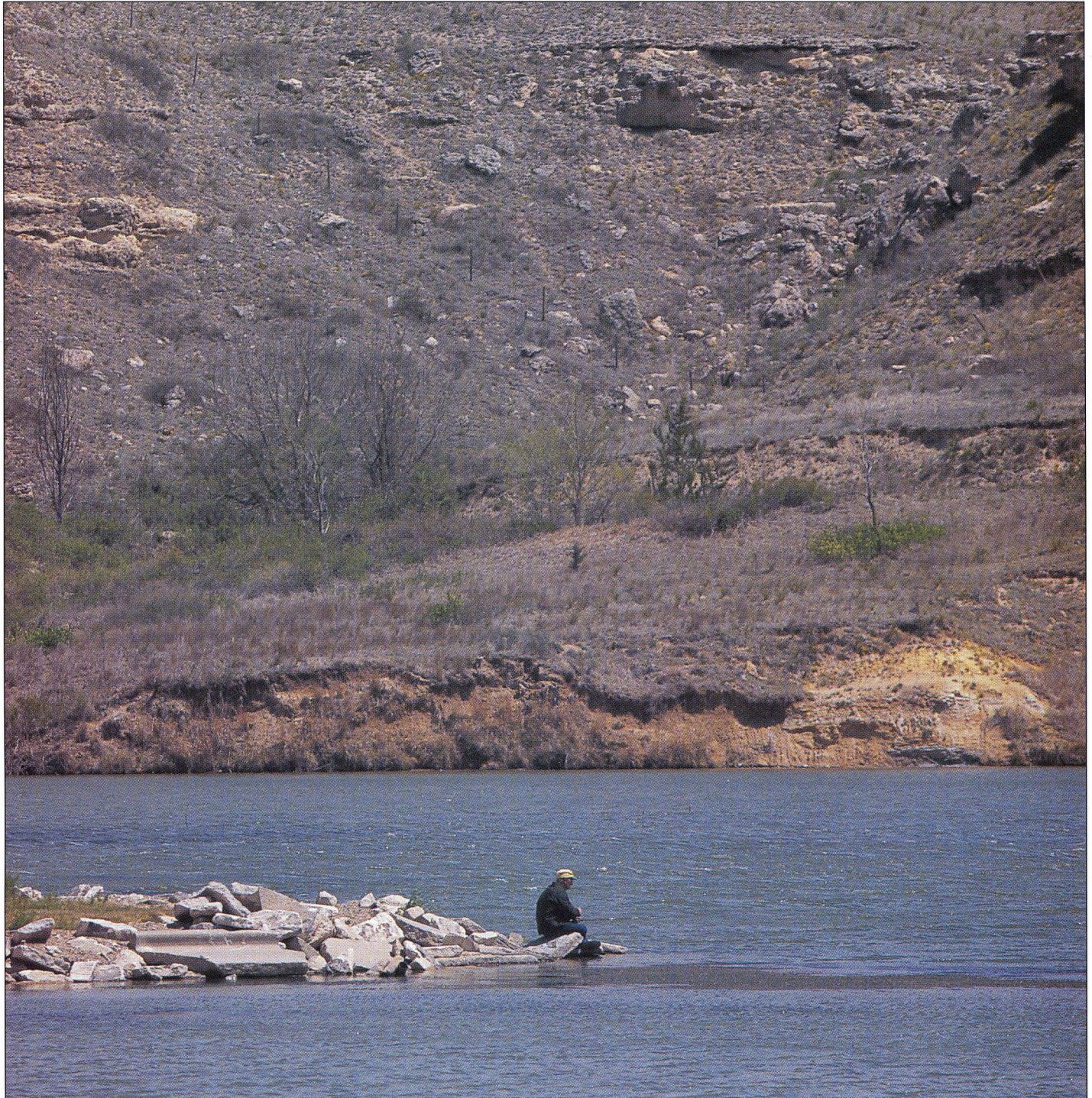
While bass fishing might be more popular, bluegill can add fun to any trip.

Visitors can take advantage of another tidbit of historical lore unique to the area. In 1878, Chief Dull Knife and Little Wolf of the Northern Cheyennes escaped from an Oklahoma reservation and traveled north through western Kansas. The two, along with other braves, women, and children were confronted by the U.S. Cavalry on September 27. A battle erupted on the bluffs of Beaver Creek south of

the park. The Squaw's Den Battle, the last Indian battle in Kansas, was named because of the cave where Indian women and children hid during and after the fight. Colonel William H. Lewis died of wounds inflicted during battle and was the last casualty of Indian Wars in Kansas.

Lake Scott State Park and the surrounding area is alive with history. Beautiful aesthetics provide visual

enjoyment words can barely describe. Visitors are often treated to close encounters with wildlife such as deer, wild turkey, waterfowl, beaver, muskrat, bobcat, and numerous species of birds and raptors. The area offers a perfect setting for many forms of recreation and is truly a gem in southwest Kansas. 



Marc Murrell photo



# KANSAS OUTDOOR STORE

## *Show your colors!*

No matter what your interest, Kansas state parks offer a rich variety of outdoor experiences. They also offer a colorful collection of top-quality wearables and gift items. Visit one of these Kansas Outdoor Stores today . . . and take home a splash of Sunflower State color!

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Embroidered caps, maroon or spruce (\$8); "Kansas State Parks: Where the Fun Always Shines" imprinted adult T-shirts, available in navy blue (pictured) or teal (\$12); "It's Too Nice to Be Inside" printed youth t-shirts, available in red (pictured) or white (\$8); "Kansas: Home of the Whitetail" imprinted t-shirts, youth (\$8) and adult (\$10); "Kansas: Walleye World" t-shirts, youth (\$8) and adult (\$10).



Can coolers (\$1.50); heavyweight frisbee (\$4); floating key safes in your choice of five colors (\$2); 15-ounce, midnight blue ceramic coffee mug (\$6); insulated mugs, red or granite (\$5).



Edited by Mark Shoup

## BLUEBIRD HOUSES

Editor:

I was born a mile north of Stockdale on the Blue River and went to school in Olsburg. Twice I went into the service from Kansas. I usually go back to Kansas twice a year and go fishing with my half brother on Decoration Day and Labor Day.

I have donated about 50 bluebird houses to you, but have never known who puts them out or where you put them.

I think you have the best all-round wildlife magazine and programs going of any state.

Neils D. Jensen  
Clovis, New Mexico

Dear Mr. Jensen:

Thanks for your letter, and thanks especially for your bluebird house donations. I talked to Nongame Program Coordinator Ken Brunson, and he remembers your name and the houses you have graciously given the agency. Neither he nor I can say exactly where your houses have gone because all our donated bluebird houses are distributed to agency staff and the public as they are needed. They are placed mostly in rural areas, usually along roadsides or in state parks, and you can be assured that yours have helped many a bluebird trail throughout Kansas.

Thanks again for your support.

—Shoup

## EARLY DOVES?

Editor:

One of the great early hunts we have in Kansas is mourning doves. The one drawback is that it only occurs once in several years, especially for those who live in the northern part of the state. It has been our experience that we normally get a cold snap the last of August that sends the birds south, and the good

folks of Oklahoma have an excellent hunt.

My suggestion, and many other dove hunter friends I have visited with, is to advance the opening date to August 15. The length of the season is much less important because very few doves, due to cold weather, are left in Kansas at the end of the present season.

I do realize that the dove season is set by the federal folks, as they do for other migratory birds. Who would be the proper person to contact to cause some change?

Paul J. Schmitt  
Abilene

Dear Mr. Schmitt:

Your letter regarding the opening date for the mourning dove season was referred to me because I am responsible for migratory birds in Kansas, including mourning doves.

Your suggestion to move the opening date of the dove season earlier is a very common one in Kansas, and even more common in states such as North Dakota, where dropping fall temperatures can really move birds south in a hurry. The problem is that a few doves — about 5 percent in Kansas — are still nesting in early September, and moving the season earlier would result in an unacceptable number of young being left without a parent to provide food.

There is a contingent of individuals who oppose dove hunting at any time. Moving the season earlier would infuriate these individuals. Each year, comments are received by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the public hearing on migratory birds in Washington, D.C., urging the USFWS not to allow hunting prior to the 15th of September. The USFWS was even sued at one time, but managed to win the suit and continue allowing an open date of Sept. 1.

Finally, the Migratory Bird Treaty signed with Canada and Mexico in the 1930s does not allow a hunt season prior to Sept. 1. The current opinion is that it would be almost impossible to

modify the treaty at this time. In fact, there is concern that we could actually lose hunting opportunity if the treaty were opened for modification.

—Marvin Kraft, waterfowl program coordinator, Emporia

## 1/8 OF 1%

Editor:

In the March/April issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* (Page 33), you published a letter titled “Downside of Leases.” I would like to share a Missourian’s thoughts on the issue of leases and public land.

I grew up on a farm just 30 miles from St. Louis. I have hunted since I was a little boy, but because of urbanization and land ownership changes, my hunting spots have dwindled. Leases are proliferating in Missouri, too, so it’s very hard to find new places to hunt on private land. Naturally, I’m not the only one in the state with this problem.

Missourians love their outdoor heritage and decided years ago to do something to preserve it. We passed a 1/8 of 1 percent sales tax to make sure everyone has an opportunity to enjoy a place to hike, hunt, fish, or learn about our environment. Land acquisitions are administered by the Conservation Department for all kinds of public uses, and Missouri is a better state to live in because of it.

I take a four-day hunting trip to Kansas every year, and I share Mr. Peterson’s concerns. He is right on the money when he writes about not understanding why people are willing to spend money on leases but are unwilling to spend money purchasing additional lands for public use. He also has the foresight to know that the average hunter in Kansas will be in trouble in the near future without additional public areas to enjoy. The average person can’t afford to lease hunting rights.

Why can’t Kansas follow Missouri’s lead? I know that “taxes” is a dirty word, but surely something can be worked out.

Perhaps a \$1 per room motel tax.

Just a thought from one of your neighbors. You have a wonderful, beautiful state and a great magazine, too. Keep up the good work.

Bernard Leonhard  
St. Charles, Missouri

Dear Mr. Leonhard:

Thanks very much for your thoughtful comments. Indeed, Missourians did a wonderful thing for all their natural resources – not just game species – when they passed the small sales tax you mention. Of course, this is something that must be approved by the legislature and voted on by the public, but it is one of many options the department is exploring in its search for long-term funding alternatives.

–Shoup

## DOGWOOD DOUBTER

Editor:

A quick glance at the back cover of the May/June 1995 issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* had me wondering if all the photos used in your magazine are taken in Kansas. That branch of flowering dogwood made me curious about the location pictured.

The location was not identified, but odds are good that those are not Kansas bluegill or Kansas plants because flowering dogwood is scarce in Kansas, being found only in a single southeast county. The plant is certainly rare enough in our state to be noteworthy.

This is a good opportunity to point out that our flora, as well as fauna, are an important part of Kansas' natural heritage, not simply a beautiful backdrop to be overlooked or taken for granted, but a living resource to be given careful respect and attention. As the steward of our state's wild resources, I hope the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will expand public education and programs relating to our native plants.

Iralee Barnard  
Hope

Dear Ms. Barnard:

Your recognition of dogwood flowers on that back cover shows that you know

your plants. However, your assumption that the photo was taken outside of Kansas is incorrect. The flowers shown were photographed in Linn County, from a tree I planted when I was a boy. Like pines that are prevalent in Kansas ornamental and windbreak plantings, but which are not native to the state, flowering dogwoods can grow well in many Kansas soils. As such, they are frequently found in eastern Kansas landscapes.

Nearly 100 percent of the photos used in our magazine are taken in Kansas. We believe that Kansas contains a unique blend of physiographic and biological diversity, and we work hard to present that spectrum of natural resources to our readers. This has always included the flora that comprise Kansas wildlife habitat. In recent times, we have featured articles on native grasses, wildflowers, trees, and mushrooms, and will continue to do so.

–Blair

## CRP ACCESS

Editor:

My comment is in regard to your article in the Jan./Feb. issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* (Page 21), entitled "CRP: A Future of Hope?"

My hunting colleagues and I agree that to lease is not to own, but we feel that in regard to Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land, to lease is to have access, especially since farms on which CRP land is found are being leased to hunting clubs. These clubs are making a profit, and we feel that the taxpayer is paying twice.

South Dakota uses license fees and funds from the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Program to lease farms and open them up to hunters by use of their Walk-In Program. I talked to farmers and hunters, and the program seems to be working well.

I realize that the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has a funds shortage, but as a license-exempt senior citizen, I would gladly purchase a license to provide more funds for access.

CRP has certainly helped the duck population in the north, but I don't

believe it has been as beneficial in Kansas as we might expect. We need to proceed one step further to work out programs for access.

Frank Mannasmith  
Kansas City, Kansas

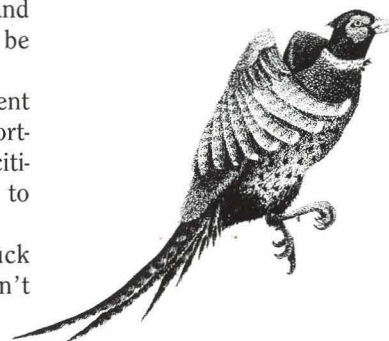
Dear Mr. Mannasmith:

In regard to hunt clubs leasing CRP land, this is a federal issue that should perhaps be looked into. (See *Kansas Wildlife and Parks*, May/June 1995, Page 33.) Programs such as South Dakota's Walk-In seem to work well, and the department has explored this possibility in the past and is still pursuing it.

I commend you on your attitude toward the use of our natural resources and your willingness to pay for using them. Frankly, your feelings reflect the attitude of the majority of senior citizens I have talked to.

As for CRP wildlife benefits in Kansas, I think the benefits to native songbirds, small mammals, and other species are without question. Of course, Kansas is not nearly as important to nesting ducks as are the prairie pothole regions in North and South Dakota. In regard to pheasants, one possible explanation for the different effects of CRP in Dakotas and Kansas might be that in the Dakotas cool-season grasses in CRP plantings increased spring nesting cover. In Kansas, this cover has always existed in the form of winter wheat – the preferred pheasant nesting cover – as opposed to the spring wheat planted in the north. Thus, CRP may have provided little in the way of new nesting cover in Kansas. In addition, the Dakotas planted legumes with their grasses, providing essential broadleaf plants for brood cover and food. In Kansas, only native grasses were planted.

–Shoup



## COSTLY CROSSOVER

**K**ansas conservation officers became the border patrol during the nine-day Oklahoma deer season, which ended Nov. 27 last year. They issued 107 citations for deer-hunting violations, all to Oklahomans who crossed the state border into southeast Kansas thinking they could take a Kansas white-tail and slip back across the border unnoticed.

"We had one 14-mile road chase," said Bill Ramshaw, a conservation officer in Sedan. "They had a 10-point buck, and we confiscated the truck. We put 15 poachers in jail and confiscated 14 deer and several weapons, too. It's worse than I've ever seen it."

Southeast Kansas was not the only part of the state that experienced problems last year. High numbers of deer poaching reports were taken from all across the state.

—Brent Frazee,  
*Kansas City Star*

## ONE BOAST TOO MANY

**C**onservation Officer David Nelson, Garnett, first became suspicious when he had trouble finding out the name of the hunter who had harvested a trophy deer. A picture of the deer appeared in the Dec. 3 edition of the *Ottawa Herald*.

More than one month later, on Jan. 12, Nelson was called to a residence in Westphalia to tag a bobcat. While inside the house, he noticed a picture of the same trophy deer with the individual who had requested the bobcat tagging. When Nelson asked if he had been the one who shot the deer, the man proudly admitted he was.

Nelson's initial check of the man's residency indicated that he was from Shawnee. However, further investigation revealed that he actually live in Liberty, Mo., and had used a friend's address to get a Kansas driver's license to use in obtaining resident hunting licenses and

permits. Still more investigation revealed that the man had made applications for resident deer permits in both states within a week of each other.

Officials from the Department of Wildlife and Parks, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conducted interviews and received a written confession on all charges filed.

The deer was returned to the state of Kansas with an official Boone and Crockett score of 197, typical whitetail, the third largest ever taken in Kansas.

—Mathews

## A DEER IN THE VAN

**O**n opening morning of last year's firearms deer season, I (CO David Ellis) was patrolling the north end of Miami County near the Missouri state line. I was talking to a group of hunters when I was notified that another hunter had just shot a deer in a field nearby.

As I passed a driveway, I saw a man next to a van washing blood off his hands. The man told me that he had a deer down and that the tag was on the deer, but when we went to the kill site, the deer was missing. After a short search of the area, I notified Conservation Officer Bruce Bertwell, Olathe, who came to the scene.

Once we all returned to the van, it was discovered that the deer had been in the van the whole time. Illegal drugs were also found in the van.

The poacher was charged and convicted of illegal possession of a deer. He was fined \$500 and lost his rifle. A drug trial is still pending.

—David Ellis, conservation  
officer, Osawatomie

## ROVER RESCUE

**I**t's not every time that you save a life that you are rewarded by having your nose licked. Then again, it's not every day the life you save is that of a dog. However, Lake Scott State Park Ranger Joe Allen braved the freezing water last winter to rescue a Dalmatian that had broken through the ice on the pond near the park's entrance.

The incident took place when Dick Barton was trying to call his dog, Lydia, from the opposite side of the pond. Lydia decided to take a shortcut across the ice on the pond. However, when she got

about 60 feet from shore, the 40-pound dog broke through the ice and was unable to break a path back to shore.

Barton and three other fishermen tried to break more of the ice with a log. Barton even tied three sets of jumper cables around him and waded into the water in an attempt to break away more ice. Meanwhile, one of the men left for the park office to see if a ranger was available.

By the time Allen arrived, Lydia had already been in the water about 40 minutes, but she was still afloat. Allen initially threw her a buoy, but she couldn't

grasp it with her teeth. Shedding his shirt, putting on a life vest, and tying the rope around his waist, Allen swam the first 15 feet until he reached the ice. With one hand resting on the sheet of ice, he used his other arm to break ice and eventually broke through the 20-25 feet of remaining ice. Once he reached the dog, she was able to swim ashore on her own.

"Joe went way beyond the call of duty," Barton says. "There aren't too many guys who would go in and break ice to save a dog. I'm sure she wouldn't be here today, and I probably wouldn't either because I was going to do whatever it took to save her."

—Scott County Record

## KBA HONORS FOSTER

**R**etired Conservation Officer Dudley Foster, Parsons, has been named CO of the Year by the Kansas Bowhunters Association. Foster, who retired in August 1994, won the award for his efforts in support of bowhunting through education, safety, and enforcement work.

The KBA has been a leading force in the Department of Wildlife and Parks' decoy deer program and has donated manpower, time, and money to support the effective enforcement tool used by Kansas conservation officers.

—Mathews

## Z-BAR LEASED

A Texas millionaire has paid \$2 million for grazing rights on the historic Z-Bar Ranch, providing money that conservationists say will aid efforts to create a tallgrass park in the Flint Hills. Edward Bass, from Ft. Worth, agreed in April to the 35-year grazing lease with the National Park Trust, owner of the 10,734-acre Chase County site. Bass also donated \$1 million to the tallgrass prairie campaign.

—Wichita Eagle

## CORPORATION SUES LOCALS

Former North Carolina hog farmer Don Webb summed up the sentiments of those gathered in Lincoln Township when he warned, “Don’t let happen to your states what happened to North Carolina.” Webb joined speakers from 35 groups and at least 12 states who took turns on stage during an April 1 rally in Lincoln Township, Putnam County, in northcentral Missouri.

An estimated 2,000 people attended the rally to offer their support for the township’s fight against mega-hog giant Premium Standard Farms’ lawsuit [voters had recently banned corporate hog farming, so Premium is suing] and express their concern over corporate agriculture’s takeover of the nation’s farms, its food system, and its natural resources. Speaker after speaker from North Carolina to Oklahoma warned that “as went chickens, so go

hogs, and so will go the rest of agriculture to the detriment of family farmers, rural communities, and the environment.”

Country singer and Farm Aid president Willie Nelson was also on hand. Nelson joined township residents on stage early in the program and cited the letters he’d received from residents asking Farm Aid for help. He closed the rally with a 30-minute mini-concert.

Lincoln Township and rally organizers asked Premium Standard Farms for three things: drop the lawsuit, abide by township zoning laws, and start being a good neighbor.

Meanwhile in Kansas, six more counties voted down corporate swine and dairy farming in April 4 elections. Reno County rejected corporate hogs 9,275 to 2,976 and corporate dairies 7,988 to 3,893. Decatur County

rejected corporate hogs 987 to 460 and corporate dairies 924 to 602. Rawlins County rejected corporate hogs 1,009 to 284 and corporate dairies 912 to 368. Chautauqua County rejected corporate hogs 949 to 481. Bourbon County rejected corporate hogs 2,649 to 640. Trego County rejected corporate dairies 981 to 282.

When the total votes cast in all 12 counties that have now voted on the corporate hog question in Kansas are tallied, the sentiment runs 3 to 1 against corporate hogs.

—Mary Fund, Kansas  
Rural Center’s  
Rural Papers

## AMERICORPS AIDS KANOPOLIS

“Getting things done” is the slogan of the AmeriCorps national service program, according to Jim

Meisenheimer, Kansas AmeriCorps/USDA regional facilitator. In February, four members of the AmeriCorps team at Kanopolis State Park, Reservoir, and Wildlife Area — Chris Newton, Kurt Grimm, Troy Hurlburt, and Scott Morris — developed fish habitat, built and installed waterfowl nesting structures, fixed water crossings on trails, constructed public information shelters, and maintained park buildings and picnic tables.

The members placed eastern cedar trees eliminated from rangeland, recycled Christmas trees, and old tires wired together into the lake, supplying fish habitat. The benefits to fishermen are greater survival of little fish, which attract larger predator fish to the habitat. The habitat will allow more fish to reach a catchable size, as well. AmeriCorps members have created six



new brush piles in Kanopolis Reservoir.

Members have also built 16 wood duck nesting boxes. Seven have been installed at Kanopolis State Park Wildlife Viewing Area, and the others will be placed in wildlife areas.

An increase of beavers at the lake has caused the water level to rise at crossings on the Kanopolis trail system, making them difficult for both hikers and horses to cross. AmeriCorps members installed drain pipes through the beaver dams in order to lower the water level.

In addition, they installed two information shelters.

Questions concerning the AmeriCorps members' work at Kanopolis can be answered by calling (913) 546-2565.

—Lyons Daily News

## ENVIRO ASSAULT

Legislation with huge environmental consequences poured out of the House of Representatives in its first session. Among key actions

\*House appropriators rescinded hundreds of millions of dollars authorized last year for land acquisition, urban parks, forests, and drinking water;

\* the regulatory Transition Act (HR 450), approved Feb. 24, halts endangered species listings and critical habitat designations until Dec. 31, 1996, or until Congress reforms the Endangered Species Act;

\* HR 1022 and HR 926 require risk assessment and cost-benefit, regulatory-impact, and regulatory-flexibility analyses of environ-

mental regulations, each subject to court challenge.

In jeopardy is spending from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the key federal land acquisition account. House appropriators sliced \$29 million (12 percent) from LWCF spending already approved for fiscal year (FY) 1995. Funding for FY 1996 is likely headed for a greater nose dive.

Remaining land acquisition funds could be depleted by the "takings" bill, which would require government compensation for owners of land or water rights if federal action under the endangered species act or wetlands protection, farm conservation, or irrigation programs diminishes value of any portion of their property by 20 percent or more.

The agency responsible for the action would pay the compensation. The land acquisition account of the Fish and Wildlife Service, which implements the Endangered Species Act, is a likely source of funds.

Conservation groups, the National Governor's Association, the National League of Cities, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and 33 state attorneys-general oppose the takings legislation.

The Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis Act, HR 1022, set up two new hurdles that certain regulations must clear before issuance: quantifying economic costs and benefits and assessing the health, safety, and environmental risks addressed. Far from simplifying regulation, the new analyses will slow the process further while increasing its expense. The

Congressional Budget Office estimates implementation will cost \$250 million a year and require 1,500 new public employees.

—Common Ground

## CRP NEWS

According to Pheasants Forever's CRP Bulletin, four senators have introduced legislation, S. 418, that would extend the Conservation Reserve Program and establish wildlife as one of the program's three main objectives, together with soil conservation and water quality.

Meanwhile, the Wildlife Management Institute, in cooperation with the Soil and Water Conservation Society, has compiled and

published *How Much Is Enough?*, a regional wildlife habitat needs assessment for the 1995 Farm Bill. The 30-page report analyzes the accomplishments and needs of the Farm Bill in regard to the needs of wildlife on a region-by-region basis, dividing the country into six regions: the northeast, southeast, midwest, northern great plains, southern great plains, and west.

Each region's section outlines landscape changes, wildlife impacts, and wildlife goals broken down by habitat types. Single copies of *How Much Is Enough?* are available from the Wildlife Management Institute, 1101 14th Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20005, (292) 371-1808.

—Shoup

## LIVING SNOW FENCE

The need for snow control along western Kansas roads is shown by the slatted snowfences that are erected each year in problem areas and by drifted snow in other areas that aren't protected. In some locations, you may notice rows of trees becoming visible along problem areas. These are living snowfences.

Living snowfences are an alternate, and more permanent way to control snow. These tree rows also provide wildlife habitat, protect against soil erosion, and have some aesthetic value. In some cases, they may double as livestock protection.

The living snowfence program is a cooperative effort of several government agencies: the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), State and Extension Forestry, the Department of Wildlife and Parks, the Department of Corrections, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and various county governments. Sites are selected by KDOT or county road departments based on the need for snow control. Landowners then are contacted about their interest in a living snowfence on their property. The fences are planted by the sponsoring agencies at no cost to the landowner.

Anyone who is familiar with a location that could benefit from a living snowfence should contact the nearest KDOT office (if the site is along a state or federal highway) or the county road department (if it is along a county road).

—Troy Schroeder,

Region 1 Fisheries and Wildlife supervisor, Hays

**White Bass**

One of the most prolific fish that swims, white bass thrive in most reservoirs in Kansas. During summer, white bass school in large numbers in open water, often congregating near roaming schools of shad. Capitalizing on a white bass' craving for shad is easy to do at this time of year, especially at night. Night fishing for white bass is best from a boat although bank fishermen with access to deeper water may find success, too.

Good areas to look for white bass on nearly any Kansas reservoir include submerged brushpiles, river channels, and dropoffs. Fish can be caught at depths from 15-45 feet.

Many anglers use cast nets to catch shad for bait. Others use artificial lures like Kastmasters, jigs, Sassy Shad, Cicadas, or any other lure that resembles a small bait fish. Bait is lowered to the bottom and systematically worked at various depths upward. When a fish is caught, the number of reel turns off the bottom should be noted.

Submersible 12-volt lights attract microscopic organisms that in turn attract shad. Shad begin to circle the light, and the activity can quickly catch the interest of white bass.

That they are numerous, easy to catch, and grow to several pounds makes white bass favorites among fishermen when the mercury starts soaring. They make good eating, too.

**SUMMER NIGHT  
BEST BETS****Largemouth Bass**

Midnight jitterbuggin' may sound like the latest craze in dances, but it's not. It's actually an excellent way to catch largemouth bass.

The same equipment used during the day works fine at night. Although submersible baits work well, one of the most exciting methods entails topwater baits such as a jitterbug, buzzbait, or weedless frog. Topwater baits can be fished on a steady retrieve if the action is fast and furious. If fish are neutral or passive, a stop-and-go retrieve will often evoke a strike.

Night fishing is often productive on any of the state's 55,000 ponds where largemouth are present. Landowner permission is required to fish these private impoundments.

There's nothing more exciting than hearing the constant pitter-patter of your topwater lure interrupted by a huge splash and an instantaneous jerk on your line. The fact that you can't see what's going on adds even more mystique to the joys of midnight jitterbuggin'.

**Channel Catfish**

Of all forms of night fishing, catfishing is probably the most popular. Well known for their nocturnal feeding habits, more channel catfish are caught under the cover of darkness than any other fish. No casting or constant changing of lures is required, and many a story has been told while waiting for Mr. Whiskers to come calling.

Rivers are good spots to find large numbers of the whiskered ones, especially after a good rain, when more food is available. Many public wildlife areas have good access to rivers on the upper ends of reservoirs they feed.

Because catfish rely on smell rather than sight to feed, an aromatic bait such as cheese or blood bait, liver, or shad sides will attract their attention in a hurry.

In addition to beating the heat, fishing at night is the perfect solution to escaping the crowds of skiers, jet skiers, and pleasure boaters. However, night fishing should be undertaken with a great deal of caution, especially from a boat. Always use required lighting and life jackets. Be sure to tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Keep one eye on the sky, too, because summer often spawns nasty storms. Use common sense, and your next night outing for white bass, largemouth bass, or channel catfish just might be your most enjoyable.

—Murrell

**GET HOOKED!**

There's definitely something fishy about Wildlife and Parks' newest youth education program. Hooked On Fishing, Not On Drugs is a national program sponsored by the Future Fisherman Foundation of Alexandria, Va., to promote fishing as a positive alternative to drug use. A partnership between the department and the Kansas Wildscape Foundation is making the creation of a Kansas program possible.

Curriculum materials are available for grades K through 12 and cover everything from the aquatic ecosystem to how to tie a hook on a line. Fishing is introduced as a lifetime sport that can be enjoyed alone or with family and friends as an alternative to free time spent using drugs and alcohol. Family involvement is stressed, with opportunities for fishing activities including families, neighborhoods, and organized groups.

Local programs can be sponsored by a number of different groups. Proposal guidelines will be provided to interested

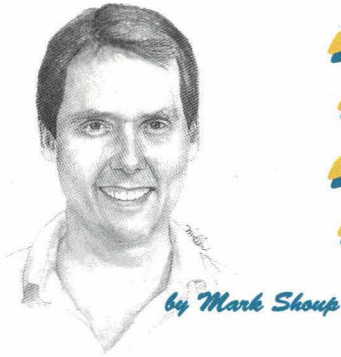
groups for inclusion in the Kansas program. Approval of a local program will include start-up grant funds as well as development and funding assistance, access to continued training and materials, and the potential for special packaging and donations of fishing supplies and materials. Volunteer instructors must attend training workshops to be certified.

The first workshop was held in Hutchinson on April 28. Individuals representing law enforcement, recreation departments, school systems, and Wildlife and Parks received certification. Potential local programs from this workshop alone will reach young persons in approximately 30 communities in north-east, southeast, and central Kansas. A second workshop is planned for late August.

For more information about the Kansas Hooked On Fishing program, contact Kathy Brown George, P.O. Box 3033, Junction City, KS 66441, (913) 238-6866 or FAX (913) 238-6718.

—Kathy Brown George, Kansas state coordinator for Hooked On Fishing, Not On Drugs





## Father or Fisherman?

by Mark Shoup

One warm day in March, it finally dawns on me that the term “fishing father” is an oxymoron. My oldest son, Logan, has just turned seven, and my youngest, William, will be four in July. These are ages at which a large gap exists between desire and ability. When it comes to fishing, desire is no short-coming.

For his birthday, I promise Logan a new Rattletrap and a trip to the lake. He informs me that Will needs a new rod and reel, too, so we go to the sporting goods store. Will touches every shiny lure before spotting a Snoopy rig. Logan finds the Rattletrap immediately and then sees a 12-pound wiper mounted on the wall.

“Dad, look at this!” he yells. “What is it?” But before I can say “Shhh. It’s a wiper,” he returns to examining the hundreds of lures with Will, who is shaking a Jitterbug.

Twenty minutes and two stalled check lines later, we plow our way out the door and to the truck. Within five minutes, we’re at the lake. “Ah, finally,” I sigh. “Now we can do some fishing.”

First, of course, I have to tie the boys’ rigs, normally an easy matter, except when one is still in a blister pack sealed by someone from a fishes’ rights group. The space age plastic is melted around the Snoopy rod and reel and each component, including the line guides. It stubbornly resists my fingernail clippers, and I have to dig it from between the wires of each guide.

Meanwhile, Logan booms a slab of concrete into the water and Will cries, “Fix my pole, Daddy!”

“Logan!” I scream. “You’ll scare the fish!” So he starts tying his Rattletrap.

“Don’t throw that line yet, Logan,” I

warn as the last bit of saboteur’s plastic gives way. At last, I hand Will his new rod and reel with a jig attached. Logan waits patiently, and as I retie his new lure, William slaps the water with his rod. By the time I’ve retied Logan’s line, Will is wrapped in his.

Will’s turn again. I unravel him and decide that casting is not the best strategy for a three-year-old. Jigging the rocks for green sunfish is a good bet, but first I have to move Logan and his new Rattletrap a safe distance away. I’m helping Will dip his jig between the rocks when a sudden “Slap!” hits the water near us. Logan’s first cast of the year is not his best, but the next is better.

Will, however, doesn’t see the point until I dip his jig a few times and catch a green sunfish. Logan is immediately at our side. He wants to keep it.

“It’s not big enough, son.” Will is leery of the critter, so I let Logan throw it back. Then he runs to his tackle box and brings back a jig, which he ties surprisingly well.

“Catch another one, Daddy,” Will demands, as if it is only a matter of will. I try with no luck, so I hand the pole back to him.

“You fish now, bud,” I say as I grab my own rod for the first time and walk down to the end of the pier.

“I’m going to fish with you, Daddy,” Will declares, following.

I’ve barely cast into the water when the unmistakable sting of a hook buries into my back. Will looks up with his best sad puppy face. After a patient but tense discussion and a bit of minor surgery, the two of us resume fishing — with some distance between. Finally, we’re all fishing. Is this idyllic, or what?

I catch a small crappie. Things are looking up.

My back is to Logan, who is fishing on the other side of the pier, when I hear his confident statement, “I’m going after the big ones — wipers!”

A moment later, heartbroken tears. Logan changed back to his new Rattletrap, which flew perfectly off his line into the lake.

I try to comfort him, but it seems no use. “I’m not having a very good day,” he moans. “I haven’t caught a single fish, and I lost the lure you got me for my birthday.” I pull the pickup tailgate down and set him on my lap.

“I bet I’ve been fishing 10,000 times and not caught fish,” I confess. No good. “I’ve probably lost 100,000 lures.” Still no good. “I’ll buy you another one, but let me help tie it on, okay?” That’s better.

Then Logan sees a fish surface. “Get your pole, Daddy!” I do, and the boys “wash rocks” while I cast. I step over Will, who looks up at me with pure joy. The water is a mirror where sun meets horizon. All seems right with the world as my jig flies over the surface, then pops beneath. The finely crafted reel hums faintly in my hands.

“Just a few more casts, boys. The ballgame is about to start.”

“Ten,” they chorus.

“No, not ten. Five.”

“Okay, five.”

As I pull in the sunset with my fifth cast, the tears return.

“I haven’t had a good time.” What Logan is really trying to say is that he doesn’t want to leave. “I lost my new lure.” So I return to the truck and pull a Rattletrap from my box.

“Here, Logan. Put this in your tackle box.”

Eyes still glistening, he smiles. “Thanks, Dad,” comes the second sweetest phrase a father hears. Then he adds, “I’ll ride shotgun,” avoiding the usual battle he and Will wage to see who sits by me.

A brilliant pink sky greets us as we drive back to town. I breathe deeply, feel Will gently lean his head against my arm. That night, my team loses. Oh, well. Tomorrow I’ll buy myself a new Rattletrap.

## SHOTSHELL BASICS

The six most common shotshell sizes – called gauges – are, from largest to smallest, 10, 12, 16, 20, 28, and .410. Their length and shot charge varies from the 2 1/2-inch, 1/2-ounce .410 to the 3 1/2-inch, 2.4-ounce 10 gauge. They are loaded with lead shot, buckshot, steel shot, or slugs. Some of these loads have a granulated plastic buffer to cushion the shot.

The gauge of a shotgun means the number of lead balls that have the same dimension as the bore of a shotgun and weigh one pound. For example, it will take 12 lead balls the size of a 12 gauge shotgun bore to weigh a pound. The only exception is the .410, which is measured in inches, as are pistols and rifles.

There are similarities and differences in the component parts and construction of a shotshell. The head and primer are similar in all shells. The tube and base wad are either paper or plastic.

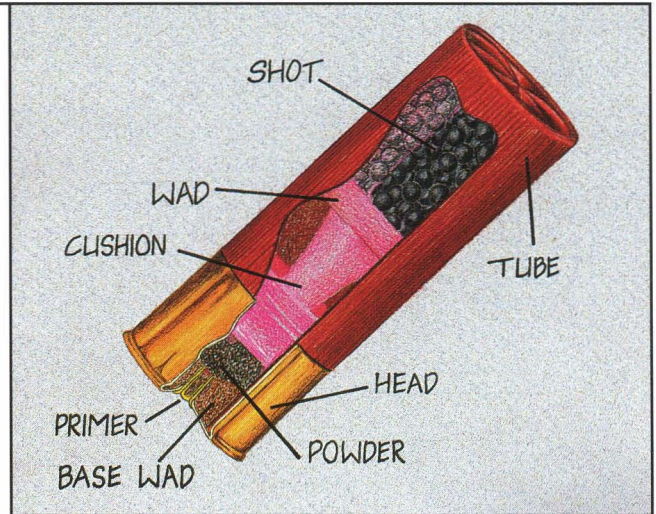
Lead shot pellets and buckshot are formed by pouring melted lead through a sieve, or they are swaged (formed in a die). Steel shot is made by cutting soft steel wire into short lengths that are formed and ground. The shot is then annealed and copper plated.

Wads for lead shot ammunition are molded from flexible, low-density polyethylene plastic and have a cushion section on the bottom that collapses on firing. The cushion helps reduce the number of deformed pellets. Wads for steel shot ammunition are molded from high-density polyethylene plastic that does not have a cushion section. The cushion is desirable, but because steel is 30 percent lighter than lead, the additional space is needed to accommodate the larger volume of shot. Wads made for steel shot are thicker than those made for lead shot to prevent the pellets from contacting the bore surface.

Steel shot ammunition requires large charges of special slow-burning powders to give the large shot column a gentler start but a faster exit from the bore. Lead shot ammunition's cushioned load uses faster burning powders.

Constriction in a shotgun's muzzle is referred to as "choke." The three most common chokes are full, modified, and improved cylinder. Different loads perform differently in each of these chokes. To determine which load provides the best pattern density and most even pellet distribution, it is necessary to pattern a variety of loads at different distances.

—Federal Ammunition



## ELK UNIT LIMITED, PRIVATE

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has established a new elk hunting unit for the 1995 season. The unit, called the Liberal Unit, includes parts of southeast Seward and southwest Meade counties and is in addition to units in the Cimarron Grasslands and Ft. Riley.

The Liberal Unit will offer eight any-elk permits in 1995, four for landowners and four for general residents. However, department officials want general resident applicants to know that all the land in the unit is private. Landowner permission should be obtained before applying for one of these once-in-a-lifetime permits, and permission may be hard to come by.

"Many landowners in the area will probably not allow elk hunting this year," says Lloyd Fox, big game coordinator for Wildlife and Parks, "not because they're against elk hunting, but

because they want to see elk numbers increase. General residents should keep this in mind when considering application for this unit. We would hate to see anyone draw a once-in-a-lifetime permit and then be unable to hunt."

Elk in the Liberal Unit comprise a small herd of animals that moved from the Cimarron National Grasslands in Morton County. Earlier this year, department officials met with landowners in this predominately rangeland area to discuss the situation. At the meeting, some landowners expressed objections to elk on their land and were adamant that something be done. In response, Wildlife and Parks established the new elk unit for the 1995 season.

After the season was established, a group of landowners from the area wrote Wildlife and Parks and expressed their concern over the number of permits issued. They also indicated their desire to have an elk population managed in this area. Department officials believe these

are positive signals and will continue monitoring the Liberal Unit population of elk, working closely with area landowners to develop a cooperative elk management plan.

The application period for the 1995 Kansas elk season in the Cimarron Grasslands and Liberal units is Aug. 1-11. The firearms season for both the Cimarron Grasslands and the Liberal units is Sept. 23-Oct. 1. No archery season will be offered in the Liberal Unit although archery equipment may be used during the firearms season. Elk permits are only available to Kansas residents. For more information about permits and applications, contact the Department of Wildlife and Parks, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124, (316) 672-5911.

For information about the Liberal Unit, contact the department's Research and Survey Office, 1830 Merchant, P.O. Box 1525, Emporia, KS 66801, (316) 342-0658.

—Shoup

**WEIRD NAMES**

If you didn't know, here's just a few critters with unusual names you may have heard: the black witch, regal fritillary, pistol case bearer, and wood nymph are butterflies; the blue-faced booby is a seabird; the hairy-legged vampire is a bat; the stinkpot is a turtle; the slender dwarf siren is a salamander; the water bear is an insect; the peeper is a frog; the organ pipe shovelnose is a snake; and the elegant tern is a bird.

—Shoup

**COLOR BLIND DEER**

Can white-tailed deer see colors? This is a question that often comes up as people put on their hunter orange and try to bring home some venison.

In the past, the most accepted theory among biologists was that deer are totally color blind. It was believed that their world is one of shades of gray, much like a black and white photograph. A recent cooperative research effort by the University of Georgia, the University

of California, and the Medical College of Wisconsin sheds new light on the subject.

Using some high-tech instruments and techniques, these researchers set out to determine if deer can distinguish any colors, and if so, which ones. The test results indicate that deer are not totally color blind. The researchers likened a deer's vision to that of a human with red/green color blindness. Deer are probably capable of seeing blues and yellows but unable to distinguish reds and greens.

What this means to the hunter is that it is probably difficult for a deer to distinguish hunter orange in a woodland setting.

—Oklahoma Instructor  
Newsletter

**Life INVENTORY**

Concerns for the environment and for the protection of biological diversity prompted the Kansas Legislature to call for the establishment of a Kansas natural heritage program in 1986. The Kansas Biological Survey (KBS) was directed to

cooperate with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in the effort, and the Kansas Natural Heritage Inventory was created.

Operated by KBS and TNC until June 1988, the Inventory is now part of the KBS's Natural Areas Program.

The Kansas Biological Survey is a research and service unit of the University of Kansas and a non-regulatory agency of the state. It has statutory responsibility for gathering and distributing information about the biota (animal and plant life) of Kansas. Funding for the Inventory comes from the state and from external grants and contracts.

—The Nature Conservancy

**Did You Know . . .**

. . . that Chetopa, Kansas, is the Catfish Capital of the World; that Cassoday, Kansas, is the Prairie Chicken Capital of the World; that the Marais des Cygnes River is named for the French phrase, "marsh of the swans"; or that Kansas has the lowest percentage of public land of any state in the U.S.?

—Shoup

**LITTLE GIANTS**

Diatoms are microscopic, single-celled plants, a type of algae that inhabits virtually all freshwater and saltwater environments on Earth. There are about 5,600 diatom species living today. There are also many diatom fossils, bringing the total of identified species to more than 10,000. Diatoms are so diverse that they are found in unexpected places such as glacial ice, soil, and moist areas of highway road cuts.

In lakes and streams, diatoms can be bottom dwelling (benthic) or floating (planktonic). Diatoms are the primary food producers in most freshwater lakes and streams, making them important in the food chain of those ecosystems.

A unique feature has allowed diatoms to play a key role in the geologic history of the Earth. The cell wall of diatoms is composed of glass (silicon), giving rise to the name glass algae. Because the silicon cell wall is resistant to weathering, deposits of dead diatom cells, known as diatomite, survive a long time as fossils. Mining ancient diatomite provides the raw material for products such as water filter sys-

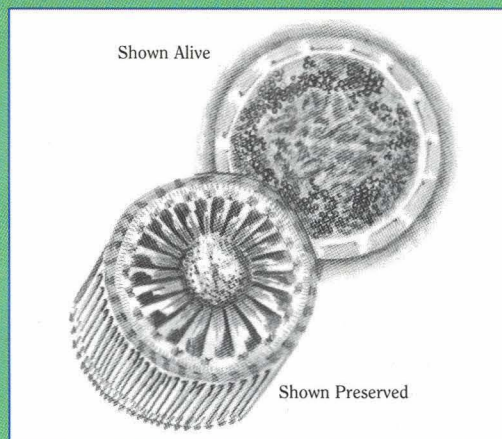
tems and polishing compounds. Diatomaceous earth is used as a drying agent and as soil in ant farms. The United States is the largest producer of commercial diatomite, led by the state of California.

Diatoms make excellent subjects for classroom examination. Benthic diatoms can be collected by placing several small rocks from a lake or stream bottom in a container of water. Planktonic diatoms can be collected by using a standard plankton net. This is done by casting the plankton net into the water and drawing it rapidly over the surface.

Classroom observations of diatoms require a standard light microscope with at least 100x magnification power. Student microscopes found in most schools will satisfy this requirement.

To observe living benthic diatoms under a microscope, use a tablespoon to scrape a small amount of material from the surface of the rock. Place the debris on a glass microscope slide, add a drop of water and a slide cover slip, and observe the diatoms at 100x magnification.

—Joe Pitts, Missouri  
Resource Review



**KANSAS  
RAINFOREST**

The Southeast Kansas Education Service Center, thanks to more than \$250,000 from a private charitable trust, will open an agriscience learning center, greenhouse, and tropical rainforest on a plot of land near Greenbush, in southeast Kansas, next fall.

The Greenbush Agriscience Center will include a 100-foot by 50-foot classroom and training building, an adjoining 30-foot by 40-foot greenhouse, and a 30-foot by 40-foot living rainforest center. It will be used by biology students in client school districts across southeast Kansas.

—*Pittsburg Morning Sun*

**NATIONAL HUNT &  
FISH DAY**

National Hunting and Fishing Day, Sept. 23, offers each and every hunter and angler an opportunity to make their own contribution to the future of our outdoor traditions. Your involvement might be as simple as inviting a few friends or family members to the local gun club. If you're more ambitious, you can order a complete packet of ready-to-use material to help you make NHF Day a special event for you, your club, and your town.

Sample letters to the editor are provided to send a message on NHF Day to your local newspaper. Use the official sample proclamation so your mayor can declare Hunting and Fishing

Day in your community. Use the complete directions provided to hold and open house at your sportsmen's club or learn how other clubs have set up information fairs at shopping malls, town parks, and other public areas in their communities.

For more information, write NHF Day, 11 Mile Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470-2359.

—*NHF release*

**GOODBYE OLD  
NATURALIST**

Ralph Wiley, a great Kansas Audubon leader, died on April 19. He was a cornerstone in the Wichita Audubon Council for several decades, for most or all of the existence of the chapter, formed in 1955. Ralph served in many capacities as an officer, committee chairperson, and board member for the chapter, and in creation and support of the Chaplin Nature Center.

Ralph was also a leader of long standing within the Kansas Audubon Council. He served as a delegate to the council at various times over the past 20 years of its existence, and his support was always there. He worked from the very beginning for establishment of the proposed Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, for the preservation of Cheyenne Bottoms, and many of our conservation goals, including conservation provisions of the 1995 Farm Bill.

Ralph was honored with the first National Audubon Society William Dutcher Award in 1984. The award, named after Audubon's first president, is now presented

annually in each region of the country.

Ralph Wiley will be missed by all of us who were lucky enough to have known him, for many or just a few years. Some things won't be the same without him. But I prefer to think of the many things — including our Great Plains environment — that are much better because of him.

—*Ron Klataske, Audubon Society regional director, Manhattan*

**SHOTGUN AWARDS**

At the April 6 meeting of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission in Pratt, five exceptional hunter education instructors — one from each of five Wildlife and Parks regions in the state — received Franchi 48 AL shotguns in gratitude for their dedicated work in 1994. The shotguns were offered at a greatly reduced price by American Arms, Inc., of Kansas City, Mo., and purchased by the Kansas Wildscape Foundation with contributions from the Patterson Duck Club of La Cygne.

The award recognizes the contributions hunter education instructors have made to the education of Kansas youth.

The 1994 award recipients were Lavina Worth, Salina; Don Dalquest, Lawrence; Jimmy Drake, Great Bend; Gary Schultz, Peabody; and Gene Goff, Independence. They were selected using several criteria, including number of classes taught, in-service workshops attended, and number of instructors

recruited and trained. Their contributions of time and effort to the Hunter Education Program in past years were also considered.

"These shotguns are a great boost to our program," Robins added, "and they're much-deserved and valuable honors for the recipients who have contributed so much toward developing safe and responsible hunters. As is always the case when such honors are awarded, there are many other instructors across the state who are equally deserving of this award. Determining the winners was a very difficult task."

Hunter education instructors from across the state attended the award ceremony, held at the Holiday Inn in Pratt.

—*Shoup*

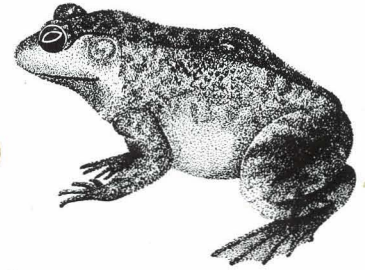
**PFD UPDATE**

According to officials with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, there has been some confusion among the public about new boating laws that deal with the use of personal flotation devices (PFDs), commonly called life preservers.

In compliance with the federal regulations, the Department of Wildlife and Parks requires all boats — including canoes and john boats — to carry a Type I, II, or III PFD for each person on board. In addition to this requirement, boats 16 feet and longer must also have at least one throwable PFD on board. Boats shorter than 16 feet are not required to carry a throwable.

—*Shoup*

# The Original *TRANSFORMERS*

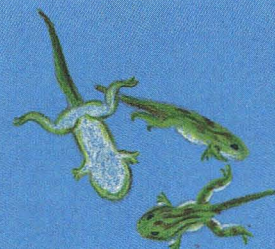
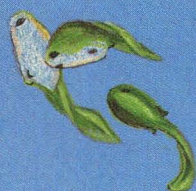
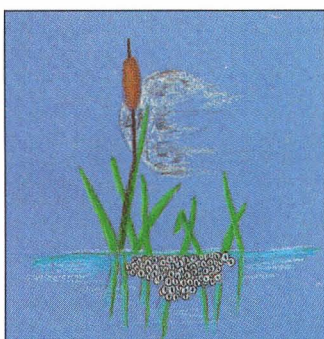


If you were asked to recall one sound of summer nights, what would it be? Chances are, it would be the singing of frogs. Frogs have great voices, ranging from the high-pitched chirping of tree frogs to the deep bellow of the bullfrog. In fact, it is thought that the first animal ever to sing was the frog.

Like other amphibians such as toads and salamanders, frogs start out life in a big way. A female bullfrog may lay as many as 50,000 eggs at a time. The male clasps to her back and fertilizes the eggs as they are spread into the water. Once the eggs hatch, one of the most amazing events in nature begins — metamorphosis. (In the January/February issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* [Page 43], you read about metamorphosis in insects, but amphibians are the only animals outside the insect world that go through metamorphosis.)

In metamorphosis — which means “change” — an animal transforms. For frogs, this begins when the eggs hatch into tadpoles, sometimes called polli-

wogs. The tadpole has a round head and a long tail, but no legs. It also has gills instead of lungs. Then the back legs appear, followed by the front, and the frog body begins to form. Gills are traded for





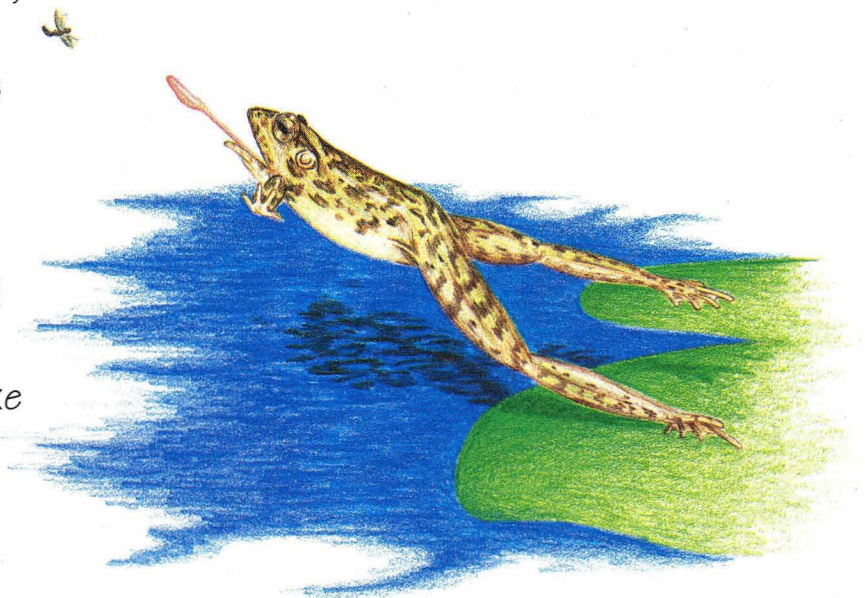
lungs. In its final stage, the tadpole looks just like a grown frog with tail. When the tail falls off, we have a full-grown frog, the original “Transformer.”

Frogs are fierce predators, and many can flash out their tongues several times the length of their own bodies to snatch prey. Insects are the preferred dish for frogs, but some will eat anything that moves, including small mammals like mice. Although they can go for days or weeks without eating, when the bugs are around, frogs will eat constantly. This makes them very beneficial to man.

And yes, frogs can jump. Unlike their close relative, the toad, frogs’ legs are long and highly developed for jumping. A bullfrog — the largest frog in Kansas — can jump as far as three feet.

In Kansas, there are 16 species of frogs. Eight of these are tree frogs, and six are aquatic frogs. Two are microhylid, or narrow-mouthed, frogs.

The bullfrog is probably the most well-known and popular frog in Kansas. As with all frogs, it is the male bullfrog that sings — primarily to attract a mate. In his case, however, the “singing” sounds more like a warning from a mad bull than a serenade. Besides its vocal strength and size, bullfrogs are also loved for their meat, especially the legs, which make fine eating. In fact, late summer and early fall — July 1-Oct. 31 — is bullfrog season.





## EFP And The Fish Supernatural

To catch fish, you should think like a fish. Noting the small size of a fish's brain, that shouldn't be too difficult, even for me. However, I'm attempting to take this theory a step further. I'm developing my hidden powers of Extrafishy Perception, or EFP.

When I master EFP, I'll catch fish every trip. I'll read the fishes' minds and know what they're going to do before they do it, and I might even be able to will them to bite my lures. But I've found the piscatorial paranormal to be a scary dimension, and I've run into nasty fish spirits along the way.

These spirits have a mystical power over us mere humans, and they delight in making me look foolish. They have taught me humility; the fish spirits hate overconfidence.

Lennie, Roy and I proved this fact several years ago. We had failed for years to hit the white bass river run. We were always a day early or a day late or a big storm muddied the river and turned the fish off. We blamed it on our normal rotten luck, but I now theorize that many of our failures were a result of our ignorance of the fish spirits and the revenge they took on us.

On this particular trip, everything was perfect, and we came prepared (which was one of our mistakes). We hadn't fished 15 minutes when Lennie began to giggle, his rod dancing to a big river-run white bass. Roy hooked one, then I caught one. We all laughed and caroused at our good fortune. (A primitive celebration common to anglers unaccustomed to catching fish.)

As our success grew, our humility shrank. We felt we'd paid our dues and deserved to catch these fish. As Roy strung his third fish he remarked, "You know, har, har, har, I don't know if this 6-foot stringer will hold all the fish I'm going to catch today, har, har,har."

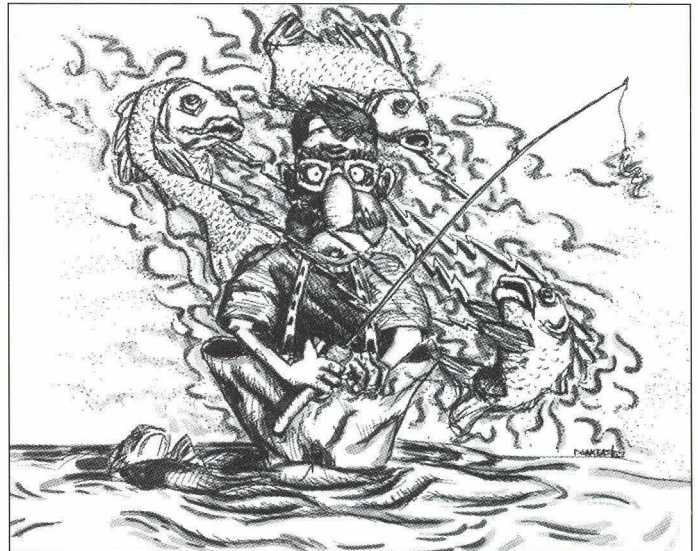
We all chimed in, angering the spirits and pounding the final nails in our coffin. "Yeah," Lennie added. "I hope Miller's got heavy-duty shocks on his pickup, heh, heh, heh."

"Yup, our arms will be sore from setting the hook and fighting these big ole hogs," I just had to throw in.

Then, as if overcome by a magical force, the river went dead. We couldn't buy another fish. Our ecstasy turned to depression, and we returned home with the few measly whites caught before our little session of joyful sarcasm. The fish spirits had struck.

These spirits have a cruel sense of humor. I once hooked a state-record smallmouth bass, and as I fought the fish, I made plans for my fame, fortune and even where I'd put the fish on the wall. By the time I worked the fish to the surface, though, the spirits had turned it into a channel cat.

On a recent pond fishing trip, I was alerted to an awful commotion of cussing and thrashing. As I came over the pond dam, I saw Lennie slumped on the ground, head in hands. His rod was thrown several yards up the bank, and the vegetation around him was destroyed. Fearing he'd been attacked by some wild animal, I approached cautiously and asked what



Dana Eastes illustration

happened.

"I just broke off the biggest bass ever," Lennie sobbed. "I swear it weighed 12 pounds if it weighed an ounce."

As I listened, I gazed into the water and happened to see a large grass carp swirl. "You sure you didn't snag that big ole grass carp," I said, pointing.

Lennie gazed blankly into the pond, then walked away without saying a word. It was several days before Lennie, realizing he'd been had by the fish spirits again, would speak to me.

To avoid the spirits' wrath, I've developed a list of planned mistakes. The idea is to appear so inept that the spirits will ignore you and look for more worthy prey. For example, I like to forget the net. Rocky and I caught some huge walleye the day I forgot the net. Without the net, we lost most of the biggest fish at the boat, but as I consoled Rocky after he'd just lost the biggest walleye of his life, if we'd had the net, he would have never hooked that fish. In his ignorance of the fish paranormal, Rocky glared angrily at me the rest of the day.

Other mistakes that can prevent the spirits' revenge include forgetting your stringer, bringing only one of a particular lure (the only one that will catch fish that day), not changing the old line on your reel or leaving the drain plug out on your boat. You'll look pretty foolish, but that's a small price to pay to be rid of the fish spirits. This ploy did fail once for Lennie when he forgot his entire tackle box. He claimed he did it to throw off the spirits, but he became so depressed without his beloved lures, he couldn't concentrate on fishing.

The aquatic supernatural is a dangerous field, but I'm committed to my pursuit. If I could just get on the good side of the fish spirits, I'd be home free. I'm just afraid they're having too much fun with me to leave me alone. ♡

