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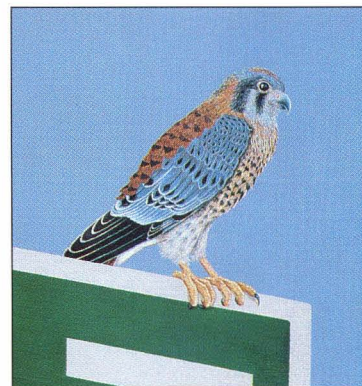
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Front: A mallard drake lands after a morning in the grainfields. Mike Blair stopped the action with a 600mm lens, f/5.6 @ 1/500 sec. **Back:** A white-tailed buck heads for its bedding area at daybreak. Mike Blair snapped the photo-600mm lens, f/4 @ 1/60 sec.

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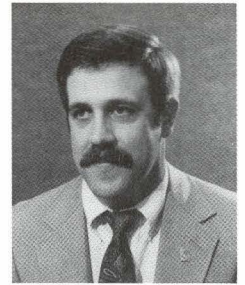
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The View From Here

Steve Williams



The Bad News And The Good News

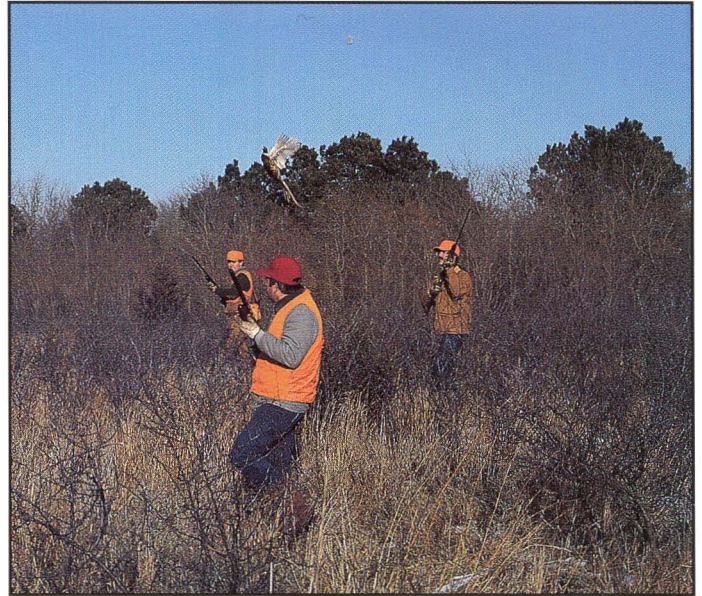
If you're interested in the prospects of the upcoming upland bird seasons, turn to Page 38, where you'll find our bird hunting forecast. But be forewarned, the news could be better. According to our survey data, 1995 isn't going to be a banner hunting season, at least not in most regions of the state. The cool, wet spring is mostly to blame. Pheasant and quail production wasn't good in late spring, and it doesn't appear that later hatches picked up the slack. The two bright spots include the northcentral region, where above average numbers of adult birds (both pheasants and quail) may compensate for low production, and several counties in the southwest, where good pheasant numbers are being reported. Bird densities will be spotty, and you may find pretty fair hunting in small pockets of most regions, but it is likely that hunters will work hard for birds this year.

To many dedicated hunters, the forecast is a mere formality. They'll hunt no matter what. Even nonresidents who travel hundreds of miles to hunt will come despite the pessimistic forecast. They hunt Kansas, not only for the great bird hunting, but they also come for the Kansas people; to renew old friendships with landowners, visit and hunt with family, escape the crowded cities and revel in the Kansas solitude.

For those who've never hunted in Kansas, it can be difficult to tell them what to expect. What is great hunting for one may disappoint another. For hunters from the eastern Midwest, seeing several dozen pheasants in a day might be satisfying. For those who've hunted Kansas during good years, seeing several hundred birds in a day is good hunting.

Quail hunters tend to want more specific information. "How many coveys will you see a day when the hunting is rated as good?" That's a tough question. If a hunter knows the land, moving from spot to spot throughout the day, he might flush ten coveys. A good quail population? It's all relative. If 15 coveys were flushed in the same spots last year, it could be considered a poor year. If you come from Indiana, seeing ten coveys in a day might be considered outstanding, regardless of what last year was like.

Several years ago a hunter from the eastern U.S. traveled to Kansas for the first time. It was considered an average year as far as quail numbers, and this man hunted public land in the northeast corner of Kansas.



Hunting in January, he had what he considered a great week of hunting, averaging six coveys a day. But he was just as thrilled with the fact that he never saw another hunter the entire week.

A group of Michigan hunters hunted in northwest Kansas for pheasants a few years ago. They were unfamiliar with the area, but were pleasantly surprised to receive permission to hunt on private land from generous landowners. The biggest problem they had was finding someone to ask. However, coming from a densely populated part of the country, the fact that they didn't even see a vehicle on the country roads for most of one day was a positive factor in the quality of their hunt.

So I guess your hunt is what you make it. If you're expecting lots of birds and daily limits, you might be disappointed in some areas. If you come for the beautiful rural countryside, warm Kansas hospitality and variety of hunting opportunities, well, we've still got that. Whatever your expectations, hunt legally and ethically, respect private landowners and be safe.

Steve Williams





Tundra Swan: Lord of the North

by Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

Though a rare sight in Kansas, the tundra swan is hard to miss when it does wander across our state. Weighing up to 20 pounds and having a 7-foot wingspan, the elegant, all-white waterbird is an inspiring vision.

Swans. Perhaps no creature has captured the human imagination more than these elegant, graceful waterbirds. In physical beauty, they have no rivals and, perhaps because of this, mankind has imbued the swan with many characteristics we most admire in humans: grace, dignity, courage, humility, faith.

Most of us are familiar with Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale, "The Ugly Duckling." In this parable of tolerance, a swan cygnet is hatched among ducks, persecuted by all creatures for his "ugliness" and driven from place to place until he finally matures and realizes his true nature, at which point he is admired by all. Anderson's message: "It does not matter in the least having been born in a duckyard, if only you come out of a swan's egg." Of course, the swan accepts his new-found celebrity with humility, for "a good heart never becomes proud."

One of the earliest references to swans comes from Plato, who quotes Socrates as he is about to face death:

“Will you not allow that I have as much of the spirit of prophecy in me as the swans? For they, when they perceive that they must die, having sung all their life long, do then sing more lustily than ever, rejoicing in the thought that they are going to the god they serve.”

This, of course, is the source of the term “swan song” and is referred to throughout western literature. Courage, optimism, and faith in the face of death are the same qualities Alfred Lord Tennyson attributes to King Arthur in “The Passing of Arthur.” Mortally wounded in battle with Modred, Arthur bravely, even optimistically, consoles the loyal Sir Bedivere then floats away on his funeral barge. This is how Tennyson describes the scene:

... and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
Then, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs.

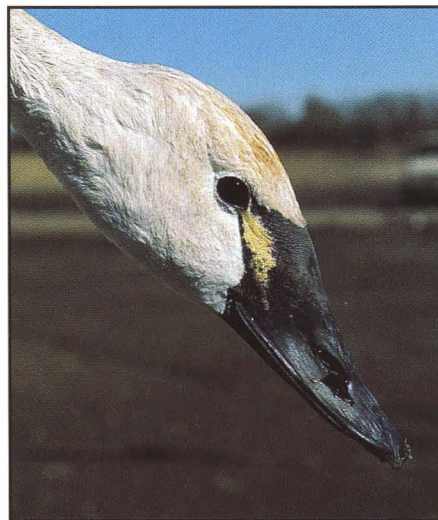
Anthropomorphism aside, the tundra swan, by far the most abundant of the two native North American species (the other is the trumpeter), is actually credited with the tendency to utter a dying song. It's departure song — a series of soft, muted notes preceding takeoff — is considered one of the most beautiful of waterfowl songs. Nineteenth Century hunters noted an unusual song after some of the birds had been shot. In the 1950s, scientists speculated that this was the departure song because the wounded bird would call as it attempted to rejoin its flock.

For many years, this bird was referred to as a “whistling swan” although its call is not a whistle at all. The most common song of the tundra swan is best described in the *Audubon Encyclopedia of North American Birds* as a “loud, melodious, high-pitched call, suggestive of a Canada goose call, like distant baying of hounds, but also more like soft musical laughter, *wow-how-ow*, heavily accented on the second



It takes a short stretch of water for a running take-off, but once the big birds get airborne, they are spectacular, flying as high as 8,000 feet on long migration flights.

syllable.” It may also emit long whoops and sounds reminiscent of a clarinet. When such songs are combined with the unusual size and beauty of a swan, it's easy to see why they have inspired poets.



The yellow spot between the eye and bill is a tundra swan characteristic.

On this continent, the first people of European descent to identify tundra swans were not poets, but pioneers. Lewis and Clark found tundra swans on the Columbia River in the Northwest. Thus, the bird's Latin name, *Olo columbianus*. Weighing 12-20 pounds with a 6- to 7-foot wingspan, those first flocks of tundras explorers encountered must have been an awesome spectacle.

Tundras are closely enough related to other large waterfowl that, in captivity, they have been crossbred with trumpeters, black swans, European greylag geese, and Canada geese. Bewick's swan, *Olor columbianus bewickii*, of Asia and Europe is actually a subspecies of the tundra.

True to their name, tundra swans nest in the northern reaches of North America along the Arctic Coastal strip, where they usually arrive sometime in May. The breeding grounds run from Bristol

Bay, Alaska, north along the Bering Sea, along the Arctic Ocean east to Baffin Bay, and south to the northwest coast of Quebec. Islets of shallow lakes and flooded tundra are favorite nesting spots. Using moss, grasses, and sedges, the swan builds a ground nest 1-2 feet high and as wide as 3 feet. The breeding spectacle is described by ornithologist Arthur Cleveland Bent, quoting A.M. Bailey:

"I witnessed as pleasing a performance as it has been my privilege to see. The tundra was still clothed in its winter coat of white although pools of brilliant colors had been formed here and there by the melting snow. It was in the height of the spring migration, with hundreds of snow geese, little brown cranes, and shore birds in sight continually. Then, far out on the tundra, I heard a different call, a clamoring, quavering call, first full and loud and gradually dying down. With the aid of the glasses I made out three swans, possibly two males performing for the benefit of the female. They walked about with arched necks proudly lifted, taking

high steps with wings outstretched, two birds occasionally bowing to each other, and as they performed, they continually kept calling. After a few minutes in a given place, they took to wing and drifted across the tundra a hundred yards, where the ceremony was then repeated."

Two to seven eggs are laid from late May through June and are incubated and hatched by the female in 35-40 days. At this time, the adults are molting and are as flightless as the cygnets, so the entire family quickly moves to water for safety. Within 60-70 days after hatching, the cygnets begin flying and display the brown-gray feathers and pinkish bill and feet they will retain until their second year, when the pure white adult feathers appear. By age four or five, tundras are mature and will breed.

The adult bird has jet-black feet and bill and can be distinguished from the trumpeter swan by a yellow or orange-yellow spot on the skin in front of each eye. This spot is lacking in the trumpeter. Like the trumpeter (and unlike the non-native mute swan), the tundra swan

holds its neck straight up. Unlike snow geese and pelicans, which have black-tipped wings, swans are pure white.

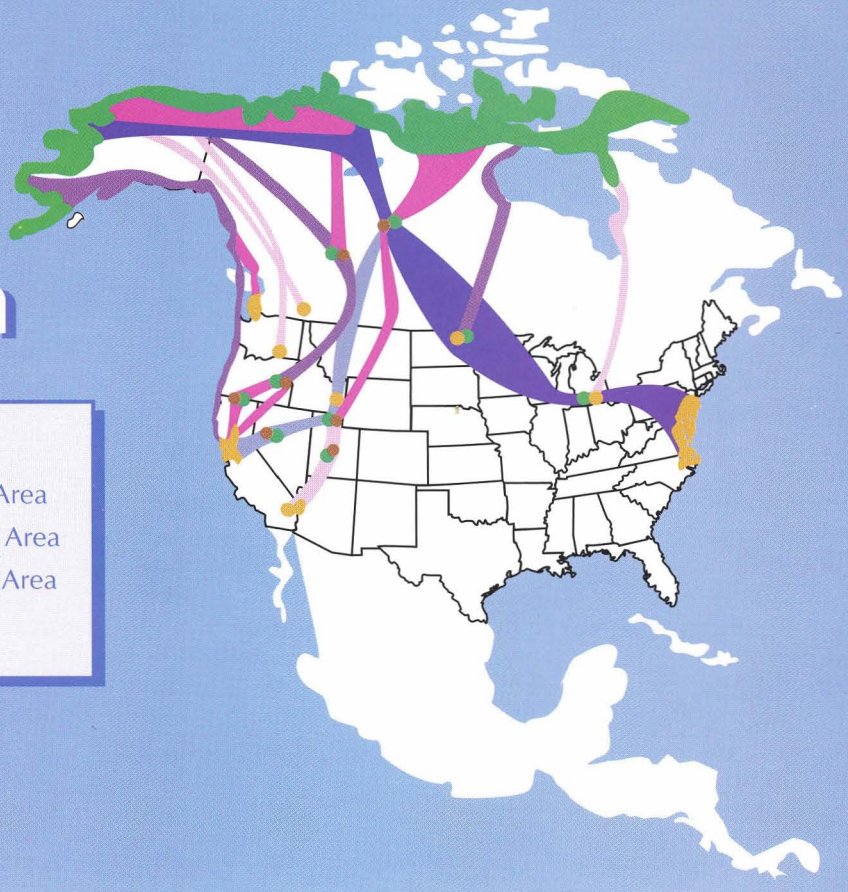
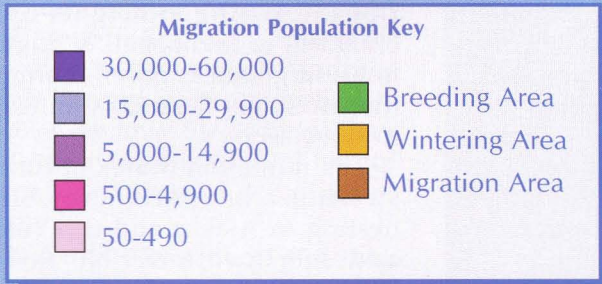
In late September and early October, as the midnight sun yields to a darker season, young tundras are ready for migration to southern wintering grounds, a trip they make with their parents that first year. While the tundra swan's takeoff may be awkward — it must run 16 or 20 feet across the water to get airborne — its migration flight is glorious. Cruising at heights up to 8,000 feet in traditional "V" formations, large flocks cover enormous distances, perhaps 1,000 miles or more nonstop.

The migration routes of tundra swans are unusual. Many birds nesting in Alaska and the Yukon and northwestern Northwest Territories move east and southeast through Canada to the Devil's Lake region of North Dakota. From there they fly east across the northern U.S. and southern Canada, then south to Chesapeake Bay and the Carolinas. At various points in western Canada and the U.S., the



Tundra swans feed on aquatic plants, sedges, grasses and thin-shelled mollusks, plunging their long necks into the water to reach food. This family group stopped in Kansas on a small farm pond, resting and feeding before resuming their long migration journey.

Tundra Swan Migration



Tundra swan migration is unusual in that birds don't necessarily take a direct route to their winter ranges. The nesting range is in far north Canada. Favored winter sites include San Francisco Bay in the West and Chesapeake Bay in the East.

birds from the northwest meet with swans from breeding grounds in the central and eastern Northwest Territories and congregate in wintering grounds near the West Coast, mostly in California and Utah.

By November or December, tundras have escaped the cold northlands to widespread locations from northern Baja California to Texas and Louisiana and the Carolina coast. In the West, the largest wintering concentrations can be found as swans congregate on the Great Salt Lake marshes of Utah. These birds then migrate to the delta marshes back of San Francisco Bay, where they spend the winter. In the east, Chesapeake Bay in Maryland is their favorite spot. They are highly social at this time and may be seen in large concentrations.

Although rare in Kansas, tundra swans have been spotted from Nov. 1 through April 26. Most sightings

have been in eastern Kansas, but some birds have been seen as far west as Sherman County on the Colorado border. Most sightings are of family groups on large reservoirs, but marshes such as Quivira

National Wildlife Refuge and Marais des Cygnes Wildlife Area have harbored migrating tundras. Family groups have even been spotted in winter wheat fields and on farm ponds.



Descriptions of size do not do justice to the huge, white swans. Here a comparison can easily be made as a family group of tundras mingles with Canada geese.

The diet of tundra swans consists mostly of aquatic plants, which they pull from the water by plunging their long neck down to the bottom, as deep as three feet. Swans will also eat grasses, sedges, and thin-shelled mollusks. The rooting and digging habits are thought to stimulate underwater plant growth, improving the habitat for many species. Crops are sometimes eaten.


Limited hunting of tundra swans is allowed in a few coastal states where numbers are high, but most tundra mortality comes from other sources. Because these birds are so large and aggressive, predation is negligible, although in dry years a few young or eggs are eaten by wolves or other canids. Eagles and

other birds of prey may also take a few young birds off the water, but tundras grow quickly so the number is insignificant. The tundra's choice of remote breeding grounds may also help ensure their stable population (about 150,000), but poachers are known to take flightless birds for their down. Still, disease and severe weather are probably the greatest causes of swan deaths.

One of the more unusual causes of swan deaths is known as the Niagara Falls Swan Trap. Migrating on misty or foggy nights, swans often land on the Niagara River, where they are unwittingly swept to their deaths over the falls.

Tundra swans in Kansas may be

rare, but once you've seen them, you'll never forget the sight. Perhaps it's the sheer size and beauty of these magnificent creatures, or perhaps it's because the swans are catalysts for the imagination — the stuff of myths and legends that strike a chord somewhere deep in our collective memories. Whatever the case, keep your eyes — and ears — open this winter. You just might catch a fleeting glimpse of this Lord of the North.

Note: For information on tundra swan and other rare bird sightings, call the Rare Bird Hotline — (913) 327-5499 — sponsored by the Kansas Ornithological Society. 



Tundra swans are easily distinguished from most other waterfowl by the all-white color. Pelicans, snow geese and whooping cranes all have black primary wing feathers. However, the rare trumpeter swan may appear similar at a distance.



Which Film For You?

text and photos by Mike Blair
staff photographer, Pratt

Many hunters and outdoor enthusiasts are finding that photography can greatly enhance their outdoor experience. But choosing the right film can be confusing.

It's a scene you'll never forget: a winter moon hangs above the eastern horizon, painted into the deep blue of an evening sky. Below it, a calm marsh waits for the waterfowl that return each day. Suddenly, waves of snow geese appear. As they funnel across the moon, you're awe-struck again by the beauty of nature. If only you had a camera...

Maybe you do, and if so, the image can be yours to enjoy again and again. Today, lightweight, affordable cameras make great photos possible for nearly anyone.

Nature photography is growing in popularity as outdoor enthusiasts realize the pleasure of capturing their interests on film. Add to this the special satisfaction of decorating a home with self-produced art, and it's easy to see why outdoor photography is catching on.

But even in the relative simplicity of modern photography, there is a confusing array of options. One such problem is which film to use. There are dozens of color films on the market, representing a wide range in price and quality. Type, speed and color characteristics

should be considered before making a choice. Sticking with a particular film leads to familiarity that helps avoid exposure errors under all kinds of field conditions.

To begin with, there are two types of color daylight films to choose from: print films, based on color negatives which must be printed on photographic paper; and transparency or "slide" films, which produce a color positive that can be mounted and projected. Print films are identified by the word, "color," in their names, such as Kodacolor 400, or Fujicolor 200. Transparency

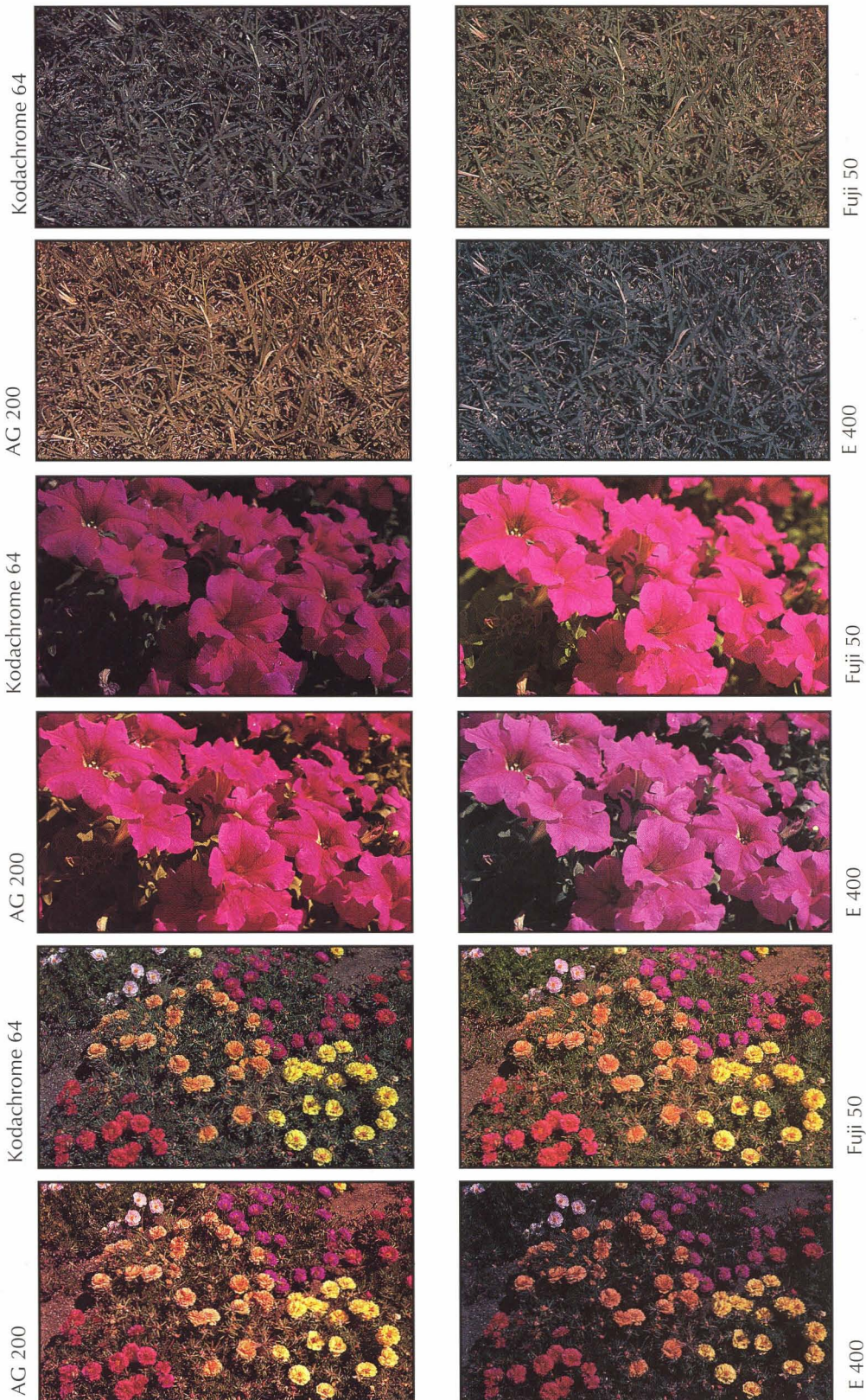
films have the word "chrome" in their names, like Kodachrome 64, or Agfachrome 200.

Best film type often depends on the expected use of the photos. For the occasional photographer, whose purpose is to share outdoor images with a few friends, print film is probably best. Small prints can be carried in a pocket or mounted in albums and passed around to relive special moments outdoors. But print film is expensive, since each roll requires development of both negatives and prints. Outdoor photography typically yields a high ratio of throw-away frames per roll, especially when wildlife or active people are the subjects. The cost of an extra processing step makes print film inefficient for serious field photography.

Transparency films are usually chosen by outdoor photographers. Transparencies are desirable if publication is a goal, since book and magazine markets prefer them. Transparencies can be projected and shown to groups, making them ideal for meetings and programs. If prints are desired, transparencies yield excellent enlargements. Since they are a one-step positive process, they are more economical to shoot than print films.

Once a film type has been selected, the next consideration is "speed." Film speed relates to light sensitivity, and is expressed as an ISO number following the name on the film box, such as Scotchchrome 640. The higher the ISO number, the better a film is able to record an image in dim light. A film with ISO 200 is "faster" than a film with ISO 100. Films such as Kodachrome 64 or Fujichrome 50 are considered "slow," and require good light for acceptable images. Specialty films like Fujichrome 1600 are extremely fast, and best suited for capturing action in poor light. Generally, cost goes up as film speed increases.

It's a common assumption that fast film makes better pictures. High ISO films do make for easier pictures, since increased speed allows greater depth-of-field and sharper



The comparisons above, all shot at similar settings, show the color differences between film types -- Agfachrome 200, Fujichrome 50, Ektachrome 400 and Kodachrome 64.

images at a given shutter speed. But there is a trade-off in image quality. The thicker dye layers in fast films

tend to clump during development, causing increased "graininess" in the finished image. Only rarely is



These two photos clearly show the subtle color differences between Kodachrome 64 on the left and Fuji 100 on the right. It's important that you choose a film with an ISO that fits your photographic needs as well as produces an image you enjoy.

this effect desirable for artistic impact. Normally, the best photos are grain-free, and are produced on slow films of ISO 100 or lower. These slow films offer rich color and fine detail lacking in faster films. If enlargements of 11"x14" or bigger are desired, slow-speed film is a must. As a matter of note, more than 99 percent of all photos used in *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine are produced on either Kodachrome 64 or Fujichrome 100.

But special cases may warrant faster film. Wildlife artists are often interested in capturing good reference material for paintings. In this case, pose is more important than accurate color or increased grain. Fast film - allowing fast shutter speeds - can help to eliminate blur in the wings of a flying duck, for instance, providing valuable detail for the artist. It also provides extra depth-of-field, making lens quality and sharp focus less critical. For this type of photography, 400 speed film is recommended.

It is sometimes helpful to know how film speed relates to exposure. The rule is simple: for each doubling of the ISO number, one f/stop of exposure is gained. The following field illustration shows how this can be valuable in selecting the right film under difficult lighting condi-

tions. Let's say that a big whitetail buck enters a field each evening after sunset. With your lens set to its widest aperture, correct exposure for your normal ISO 50 film is 1/15th second. But prior experience tells you that your telephoto lens performs best when using a shutter speed of at least 1/125th second. Since there is a three-stop exposure difference between 1/15th and 1/125th seconds, you can compensate by doubling the ISO 50 film, three times, to arrive at an ISO of 400. Substituting 400 speed film will allow the preferred shutter speed in the given light to stop the action of a feeding deer.

Another consideration when selecting film is processing time. Most of the newer films use an E-6 process that can be done in a matter of hours, at home or in a local lab. But some films, notably the Kodachrome series, require a complex development process available only at a few of the largest laboratories in the U.S. Prepaid mailers help speed development time, but even so, it can take from one to several weeks to receive film shipped out for processing. On the positive side, large, reputable photo labs make few mistakes and produce the excellent quality needed for publication. Smaller labs sometimes have lower

quality standards that may lead to disappointments. Use them, but only after testing their work with film that can be replaced.

Latitude is an important film characteristic that varies between brands and types of film. This is a term that relates to a film's rendering of an image when incorrectly exposed. Ideally, every frame is taken at nominal exposure, yielding perfect color. But fast-breaking outdoor action or changing light conditions may catch the photographer off guard, resulting in incorrect exposures. Under these conditions, latitude becomes important.

Color print films are more forgiving than transparencies. Generally, under- or overexposing by up to two f/stops can be corrected when printing from color negatives. However, in transparency films, acceptable prints are often impossible if the correct exposure is missed by only two-thirds of one f/stop. This narrow latitude range makes precise exposure necessary when shooting slide film.

Saturation, or richness of color, is enhanced with slight underexposure. Overexposure washes out color. Generally, if the exact exposure is unknown, it's best to err on the negative side, especially when shooting transparency film. Deep

colors are always more pleasing than faded colors. Because of this, many nature photographers deliberately rate transparency films up to one-half f/stop above their specified ISO's. As an example, Kodachrome 64 photos taken for this magazine are rated at ISO 100 on the shutter dial; Fujichrome 100 is rated at ISO 125. This causes small, deliberate underexposures of the film. But be sure to experiment on your own; too much underexposure ruins the images.

All color films have a dated shelf life that should be observed for best success. When film is manufactured, it is expected to sit for a reasonable time on retail shelves before sale. Therefore, brand-new film is created to "age" into its specified ISO rating several months after manufacture, and to remain stable for about a year.

When shooting a few rolls now and then, film age is of little concern, as long as it's not outdated. But for serious outdoor photography, the purchase and storage of large quantities of film deserves attention.

When film is purchased, note the expiration date on the boxes. Quantities of film are usually shipped by emulsion batch, and often the film is newly-manufac-

ured. If the expiration date is a year or more away, it should be aged at room temperature to bring it "up to speed." Six months before expiration, it can be placed in refrigeration to slow the aging process and to hold it at the proper ISO. As the expiration date is reached, the film can be frozen to stop its aging entirely. In this condition, it can be held and used indefinitely. Thaw it for a day, and it's ready to use.

Somewhat related to age is a film's stability over time. Negatives and transparencies may fade over a period of years, until they are no longer useful. Storage conditions such as darkness and low humidity increase image life, but even so, some films are inherently short-lived. Kodachrome images are reportedly stable for 75 years. Other films may fade noticeably in much shorter periods. Early Ektachrome had a storage life of only 15-20 years.

Surprisingly, various films record the same colors somewhat differently. Each film has certain characteristics that may bias it toward a particular color. For instance, Kodachrome is famous for its vivid portrayals of the red-yellow end of the light spectrum, while washing out blues, greens and browns also found in nature. Fujichrome does an

excellent job rendering color across the spectrum, perhaps favoring green. Historically, Ektachrome had a strong blue bias that affected all colors, but improvements in recent years make it worth a second look.

The fact is, many films today are excellent for nature photography. Currently, Fujichrome Velvia 50 is considered tops by many professionals, because of its fine grain and ability to record subtle color even in shadows. For landscapes, nature close-ups and flash photography, it is ideal. But for action shots of wildlife, a slightly faster film with good color characteristics may be desired. Shooting style helps to make the choice.

Film testing is the surest way to arrive at the "best" film for your situation. When comparing films, make sure to shoot a subject under identical light conditions, and meter from a gray card to ensure accurate exposures. Test a variety of colors and textures - blue sky, bare dirt, colorful flowers, your pet. Compare in sunny and shady conditions.

Then, considering cost and speed, choose the film that is right for you. Once settled, you're on your way to a world of outdoor fun with a camera. Your best memories can become realities in living color.



The photo on the left was taken with a 600mm lens with Kodachrome 64. The photo on the right was taken in very low-light conditions with 1600 speed film. You can see the difference in graininess of the photo on the right.





Honey, Don't Let Me Forget The Kids



Marc Murrell photos

by Marc Murrell

public information officer, Valley Center

All hunters bear a responsibility to pass on hunting knowledge to future hunters. The future of hunting will depend on these new ranks, and there may be no greater joy than the smile of a young hunter discovering the outdoors.

It would have been easier to leave young Joshua Church at home on this cool spring morning. His father, Gary, had asked if I minded if Josh went along on our next trip to the turkey woods. I had reservations about how long an energetic 6-year-old could sit still, especially if we happened to spark a gobbler that took his sweet time coming in. Any thoughts of saying no were quickly discarded as I imagined the thrill Josh would experience if we called one close.

Hunters have the opportunity to provide a positive experience for a youngster by taking them along for

the fun but too often, they don't take advantage of it. The easy way out is to say, "It's too much trouble" or "they would get bored" and leave them at home. But if you enjoy the outdoors and are concerned about the future of hunting, you should make it a point to include children. An enjoyable hunting experience will last forever in their memory. Josh can attest to this.

We left long before the sun made an appearance, giving ourselves extra walking time to allow for Josh's short legs. I coasted to a stop in a Butler County creek bottom and

killed the truck's engine. The silence seemed deafening as we waited for a gobbler to let us know we were in the right spot. Nothing.

"You ready?" I whispered to Josh.

"MMM, huh," he said half-asleep.

"Whooo, whooo, whooo, whoo-who, whoo, whoo, whooooooo," I hooted my best impression of a barred owl out the window.

"GOBBLE! GOBBLE! GOBBLE!" the shocked turkey responded.

"Oh, WOW! COOL!" came Josh's now wide-awake reply. "Let's go!"

Gary and I grabbed our shotguns

and a couple of turkey decoys and headed across the field. Josh did his best to keep up while trying not to trip on the ankle-length camouflage shirt he borrowed from his dad. As more gobblers joined in the pre-dawn serenade, we set up just across the creek with Josh between Gary and me. We warned Josh that a gobbler's keen eyes would spot any movement.

The rising sun painted the horizon a beautiful orange as we waited for our guests to arrive. I yelped softly on my box call, and the gobblers boomed their RSVP. It wasn't long until I heard the first turkey leave the roost, sounding like someone frantically beating a rug. The roar of wings and crashing branches got louder as the bird sailed directly overhead like a landing jet. Josh immediately looked skyward as the bird passed.

"Sit STILL!" his Dad whispered through clenched teeth.

The first bird hit the ground to our right just beyond the decoys. More birds bailed out of their roosts, making the same noisy, branch-breaking approach into the soon-to-be corn field. When everyone was awake, nine hens and four jakes stood motionless, looking for any sign of danger. Confident



Marc Murrell photo

they were safe, the birds began feeding toward the decoys with the young gobblers bringing up the rear.

"Get ready, Gary," I said and let out a few soft yelps for effect.

Each gobbler hit full strut and the hens studied our decoys. Slowly they moved in front of us with the closest bird only a few yards away and the farthest easily within gun range. Josh held his promise to hold rock-steady and sat wide-eyed like a kid who just saw Santa Claus outside his bedroom window on Christmas Eve.

"I'm ready when you are," I whispered to Gary, as we had previously decided he would shoot a bird on the left first, and I would follow with one on the right.

He never moved.

"I'm ready when you are," I whispered much louder thinking he hadn't heard me.

He still didn't budge.

The birds started to move away and I began to worry. "Maybe he thought I was supposed to shoot first," I thought to myself as I lined up a gobbler.

"Are you ready?" I asked.

"Yeah!" came Gary's reply between excited breaths.

He still didn't shoot so I assumed pre-turkey hunt instructions were



Mike Blair photo

When teaching a youngster about hunting, it's critical that all firearm safety rules and hunting regulations be followed. Remember, as an adult, you are a role model.

lost in the excitement. My gun boomed and, as I suspected, his followed suit as the remaining birds took off running and flying.

"You got 'em!" Josh yelled as he ran to the two flopping turkeys. "You got both of them!"

"I thought you were going to shoot first," I said to Gary as we watched Josh jump around the two birds as he gave us a rapid-fire play-by-play of the event.

"I thought you were going to shoot first," he said while Josh carefully inspected each bird.

To Josh, it didn't matter who shot first. He was likely more excited than either participant as we tagged our future Thanksgiving Day guests and slapped high fives. Josh led the way back to the truck with one of the turkeys slung over his shoulder.

I hate to think Josh might have missed the opportunity to enjoy one of the most exciting outdoor experiences of his young life because I thought he might be too much trouble. He wasn't, and both he and his older sister, Amy, have accompanied Gary and I on many more turkey and deer hunts.

Taking children on an outdoor adventure requires careful planning. One bad experience early may leave a lasting impression

that's difficult to overcome. Following a few simple tips can ensure a pleasurable trip.

Avoid strenuous activities. Any amount of walking will tire a youngster; a death march pheasant hunt through head-high CRP grass isn't the perfect introduction to the outdoors.

Trips should be close to home and outings short. Children's attention spans are short, and an hour or two of anything is plenty.

Avoid extremely hot or cold days. A child that is sweating or freezing tends to lose interest quickly. Heat exhaustion and frost bite can also pose a serious health hazard.

Take a child's favorite toy or game along in case the pace of the hunt slows. Snacks and drinks can help pass idle time and keep a youngster's stomach happy which may keep them interested.

Turkey, dove, crow, and afternoon quail hunts are ideal hunting introductions since these outings usually require little walking, are short in duration, and can be planned for mild weather. Remember to take stools or seats and make sure to dress youngsters properly so they are as comfortable as possible.

You don't have to be a father or mother to show the magic of the outdoors to a young person. Neighborhood kids whose parents don't hunt often show interest when I pull into the drive after a hunting trip. They always want to know what I saw and how many I "caught." With their parents permission, they are the perfect benefactors of an afternoon afield. Nephews, nieces, and young cousins are also potential students.

It's important to explain to youngsters what is expected of them and what they can expect during the hunt. Describe a typical scenario to avoid any confusion when the excitement peaks. It's always a good idea to talk about firearm safety, too.

Adults demonstrating outdoor skills to youngsters need to remember they are role models. Your actions can influence the way a child behaves in the future. Discuss and adhere to hunting regulations.

Don't expect too much on maiden outings. Some hunters place too much emphasis on the kill or bag limits as a measure of success. High expectations serve only to disappoint. Some of the most successful trips bag nothing more than smiles, good memories, and a better understanding of the natural world.

Watching Josh carry that bird, weighing nearly half of what he did, was the biggest reward of our morning hunt. The big gobbler would swing, causing him to lose his balance and nearly fall. A quick, toothless, over-the-shoulder grin to see if we witnessed his near-collapse, and he was back at his task. A young hunter was born. An old hunter was pleased to relay what he loved most about the outdoors — the chance to be a part of the natural cycle.

A child's smile is one of life's greatest treasures. And if that smile is on the face of a child discovering the joys of hunting, it is worth even more. A small investment of time now will yield tremendous benefits later, to the parent and child and to the future of our hunting heritage. ♡



Mike Blair photo

Hunting experiences will last for the rest of the young person's life. Perhaps this youngster will someday pass on his love of hunting to a son or daughter of his own.



Big City Birds

by Dan Lekie

district wildlife biologist, Kansas City

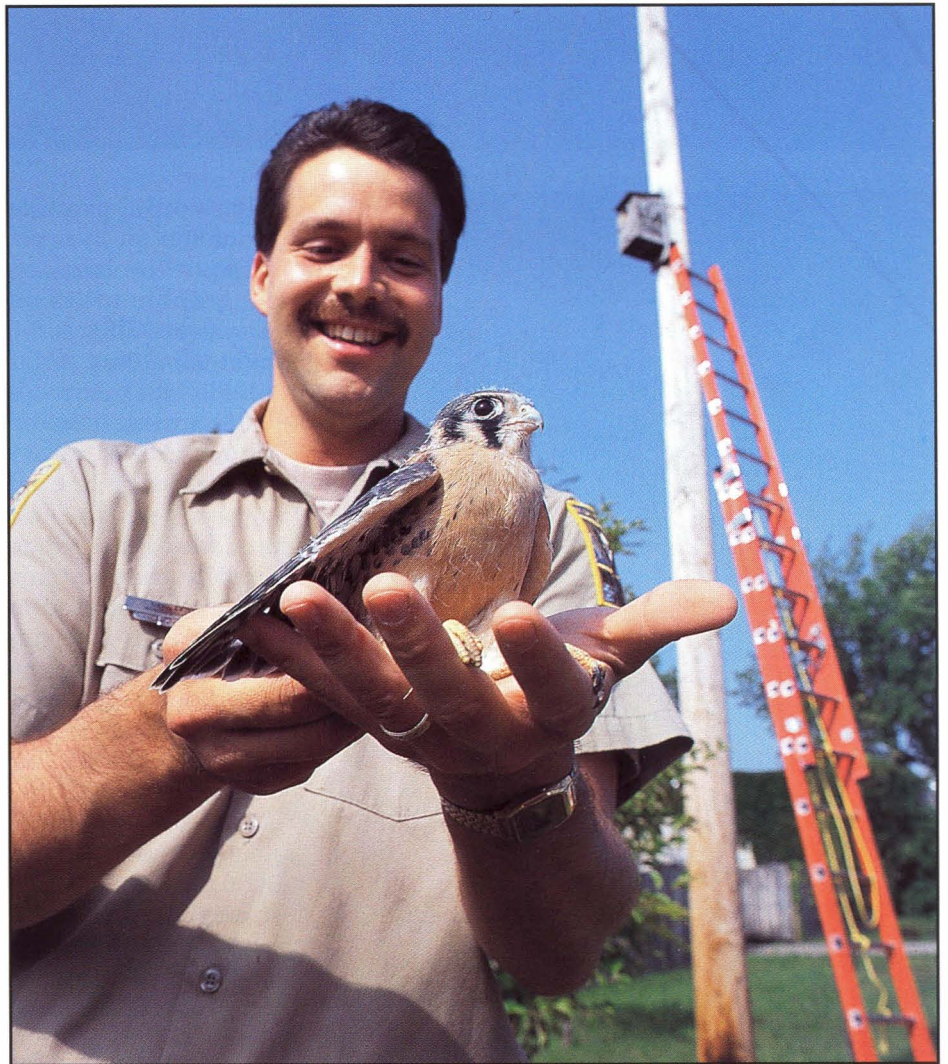
photos by Mike Blair

Illustration by Dustin Teasley

Satellite imagery, computer models and simple wooden boxes are helping our smallest bird of prey prosper within one of Kansas' larger metropolitan areas. The American kestrel is finding a home in Kansas City.

“**H**ey! Ooooh! Ouch!!” As I looked to the top of the ladder, I couldn’t help but laugh as my summer aide attempted to remove five baby American kestrels (*Falco sparverius*) from a man-made nest box. The kestrels in this box obviously were old enough to use their talons and beaks to fend off this unwanted intruder. While waiting for the battle to end so I could band and sex the young birds, my mind wandered through the history of the project responsible for them.

In 1989, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks was cooperating with the University of Missouri on a habitat study in Wyandotte County. The study was looking at habitat changes due to urban development and included a section on determining areas suitable for American kestrels. Large dead trees or trees with dead branches, which provide nest cavities, were being routinely removed during development and by private landowners for safety concerns in Johnson and Wyandotte counties. I wanted to determine if replacing these nest cavity sources with man-made nest boxes would be worthwhile. I decided to initiate a kestrel nesting-box study that would utilize the data already collected during the habitat study. In addition, this



Author Dan Lekie holds a young kestrel that he’s just removed from the nest box in the background. Young birds were checked for sex and health, then banded.



Next boxes were checked every two weeks by climbing a ladder to them and removing the top of the box. When eggs were found, hatching dates were estimated. Biologists then planned a visit for 20 days after hatching so that young birds could be banded.



Within areas that had good kestrel habitat but lacked nest trees, boxes were placed on utility poles.

study would provide information on incorporating satellite imagery, a geographic information system (GIS), and a habitat suitability index model (HSI) into a wildlife project. It would also provide a highly visible wildlife habitat program within an urban area. Information gathered during this study would be used to implement other nesting-box programs to offset the disappearing cavities in Johnson and Wyandotte counties due to urban expansion.

A GIS-based habitat suitability model for the kestrel was tested. The test consisted of comparing kestrel use of the nest boxes located in sites predicted by the model to have high habitat suitability, with use of nest boxes placed randomly. An American

Kestrel Habitat Suitability Index Model (HSI) was obtained from the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Habitat suitability models outline an animal's life requirements, based on habitat, and break these requirements down into specific factors. The HSI model is then applied to a specific land area. Each factor is scored and added up. Higher scores mean better habitat for the target species. The Pennsylvania model was redesigned by the University of Kansas Geography Department to develop satellite application for classifying kestrel habitat. The model was specifically designed for Wyandotte County. Although the model selected for optimum kestrel habitat, it did not consider availability of cavities, since cavities were being provided in the form of nesting boxes.

Variables considered in the HSI were average height of herbaceous vegetation, distance from woodland or grassland, percent of ground covered by herbaceous vegetation, woodland size class, and percent of unit within 2,000 feet of woodland or grassland. In addition to the



Kestrels are the only falcon species in which the young can be sexed by color. The male will have a slate gray color and the female is rufous-brown. Eggs hatch in about 29 days and the young birds will leave the nest box, or fledge, 28 days later.

Pennsylvania model, a computer compatible tape of a satellite image taken of Wyandotte County was purchased. This tape was used to produce a land cover map of the county which was entered into the GIS. The habitat model was then applied to the land cover data contained within the Wyandotte County Surveyor's Office GIS and areas with optimum kestrel habitat were selected.

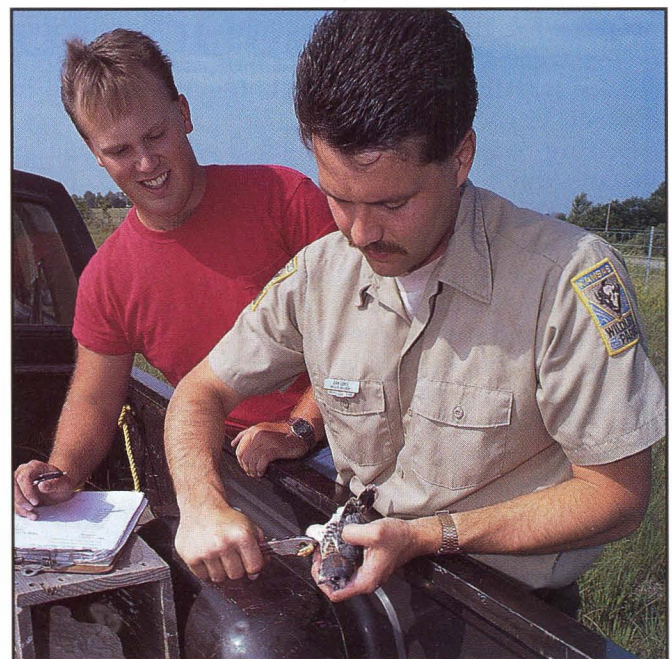
In order to test this GIS-based HSI, 18 boxes were placed in Wyandotte County in locations predicted by the model to have high habitat suitability. Use of these boxes was compared to 20 nest boxes randomly placed within similar habitat and land-use type located with Johnson County.

Nesting box kits were obtained from the El Dorado Habitat Center and assembled by students at Olathe South High School. After reviewing the selected areas, it was obvious that ideal structures for box placement were light poles, electrical poles, and road signs.

Permission was obtained from the Kansas Department of Transportation, Kansas Power and Light, Kansas City Power and Light, the Board of Public Utilities, and individual landowners for box placement. Boxes were placed as high as could be easily reached for maintenance and observation. Most kestrel literature states that boxes placed less than 20 feet off the ground would not be used. However, we placed boxes from 16-19 1/2 feet high and had all heights within this range used successfully by kestrels. Each box was placed so that the entrance was facing east or south-east to keep the

openings away from the prevailing wind direction.

Boxes were first placed in the summer of 1989, after that year's



After bands were attached, the young birds were returned to the box and their parents' care.



A computer model and satellite imagery helped biologists choose nesting sites. To test the accuracy of this method, other boxes were placed randomly in areas with similar elements. Since 1990, 651 kestrel eggs have been laid and 423 young have been produced.

nesting season. This allowed resident birds to become accustomed to box location and also provided hunting perches and butcher blocks (a place to land and tear apart their food) for resident and winter migrant kestrels. All boxes were cleaned the following January to prepare for the nesting season. Boxes were checked every two weeks starting in mid-April. If kestrel eggs were found, the hatching date was estimated. Twenty days were added to this date, so that when the boxes were checked again, the chicks would be old enough to be sexed and banded. Kestrels are the only falcon species in which the juvenile males and females differ in coloration as much as the adults do. Males have slate-gray wings when viewed from the top, while females have a uniform rufous-brown coloration on the top of their wings. Kestrels lay three to five eggs at one- or two-day intervals. The eggs hatch in approximately 29 days and the young fledge 28 days later.

In 1990 and 1991, the original 38 study boxes were monitored. In 1992, the number of boxes was

increased to 60. Since 1990, 651 kestrel eggs have been laid in study nest boxes, and 423 young have been produced.

In the areas where box locations were selected by the GIS-based HSI, 76 kestrel nests have been initiated, and at least one young kestrel has fledged from 53 of the boxes. Fifty percent of available boxes have been used by kestrels. In the area where boxes were randomly placed in suitable habitat, 66 nests were initiated. Forty-six nests fledged at least one young and 34 percent of the boxes were used by kestrels. Overall, 65 percent of all kestrel eggs hatched and 98 percent of all young fledged.

Data on these boxes will continue to be gathered. And due to the success of this project, additional nesting-box projects have been and are being developed within my district. In 1995, Western Resources and the department initiated a bluebird nesting-box trail along State Highway 69 in Johnson County. One hundred and thirty-eight bluebird nest boxes were placed and monitored by Western Resources employees. In addition, Kansas City

Power and Light (KCPL), the department and a Ducks Unlimited Greenwing Chapter have implemented a wood duck nesting box program in 1995. One hundred boxes have been built under the direction of the Greenwing Chapter with lumber supplied by KCPL and hardware supplied by the department. This winter these boxes will be placed in areas suitable for wood duck nesting. Both Western Resources and KCPL have also started their own kestrel nesting box programs.

"Heey! Will you help me?" I was brought back to reality as my summer aide made it to the ground with the five baby kestrels. Banding and placing these birds back in the nest box brought closure to another nesting season for American kestrels in an urban environment.

(Editor's note: The author would like to thank Western Resources for their generous donations of money and equipment, making this project possible.)



New Plan For Setting Waterfowl Seasons

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photos by Mike Blair

In an effort to simplify and improve the process of setting the waterfowl hunting seasons and satisfy the many factions interested, Adaptive Harvest Management has been developed. Here's how it works.

For the past few years, the process of setting duck hunting regulations has been a lot like a family squabble — there is mutual respect and a common con-

cern for the end result, but the arguments can get heated. If you have been involved with or followed the regulations setting process recently, you're familiar with the annual

debate that occurs among waterfowl managers, hunters, scientists and administrators from various agencies and regions.

In 1992, a group of federal, state

and university biologists who are recognized as leaders in waterfowl management got together for the first of many "family" meetings. Their goal was to develop a more objective, less contentious process for setting duck hunting regulations. The result of their labor is called Adaptive Harvest Management. It is designed to streamline the annual process of regulating waterfowl hunting opportunities — to make it more objective and efficient.

Waterfowl hunting regulations are established through an ongoing cycle of information gathering, assessment and decision making. The various monitoring programs waterfowl managers use to gather information are familiar to many duck hunters.

Information on habitat conditions, duck numbers, and duck production is gathered through aerial surveys made by biologists in May and June of each year. Mail surveys of duck hunters and duck bands recovered by hunters provide information on the annual harvest. This combination of monitoring techniques for ducks is more comprehensive than monitoring efforts for any other widely distributed group of wildlife species in the world.

Once all of this information is compiled, it is analyzed and assessed by waterfowl biologists from state and federal agencies and conservation organizations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) uses the information to develop recommendations for duck hunting regulations. The initial recommendations are announced to the public and input is gathered from the Flyway Councils, states and others. After assessing all of the input, the USFWS announces final hunting season frameworks. The Flyway Councils and states then decide on the specific seasons they



Duck hunting regulations have become somewhat complex in recent years as managers attempt to provide not only optimum recreational benefits but healthy duck populations as well.

want within those frameworks.

Waterfowl management efforts in North America have been remarkably successful. For as much debate as there has been over waterfowl regulations, even a pessimistic observer would have to agree that



Duck seasons are modified annually using population and nesting data.

the "family" has done itself proud. Most waterfowl populations remain healthy, millions of acres of habitat have been purchased or protected by conservation easements, and sport harvest has been carefully monitored and regulated.

The Adaptive Harvest Management process builds on this success by addressing three problem areas that have been at the root of the family squabble — disagreement over the objective of the regulations, the large number of possible regulatory options, and disagreement over the extent to which hunting affects duck populations.

Disagreement often arises in the annual discussion of duck hunting regulations over the objective of the regulations — Are regulations being set to provide the most hunting opportunity possible or to allow duck populations to grow at the fastest rate? Under the Adaptive

Harvest Management, managers identify and agree upon the objective before specific regulations are developed.

The harvest management objective used for the 1995-1996 season relied on a mallard population goal of 8.1 million, identified in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP). If the population goal was exceeded, the objective would be to provide maximum hunting opportunity consistent with long-term waterfowl conservation. Emphasis on hunting opportunity would decline as the populations fell short of the goal. It is important to note that liberal hunting regulations could still be appropriate in years when the mallard population is below the goal, if the existing habitat conditions were expected to result in good production of young and a large fall flight.

The NAWMP goal of 8.1 million was established (independent of Adaptive Harvest Management) to ensure satisfactory levels of hunting opportunity, as well as for ecological and nonconsumptive purposes. While the NAWMP is intended primarily to guide habitat conservation efforts, the mallard population goal

has been formally endorsed by the federal governments in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico and is accepted widely by state, provincial, and private conservation agencies.

The volume and complexity of hunting regulations has increased dramatically over the last 20 years, greatly complicating the decision-making process. There are good

indications that hunters and managers alike would prefer simpler regulations. From a management standpoint, the large number of possible regulatory options such as combinations of season lengths and bag limits, make it difficult to assess the effects of regulations on waterfowl populations. Under Adaptive Harvest Management, the number of regulatory options considered each year is limited.

In the proposal for the 1995-1996 season, there were only three regulatory options: restrictive, moderate and liberal. Each option contained flyway-specific season lengths, bag limits and framework dates. Options were developed cooperatively by the USFWS, Flyway Councils and others. For comparison, the bag limits and season lengths in the liberal option were similar to those issued for the 1979-1984 seasons, the moderate option was similar to the 1985-1987 seasons, and the restrictive option was



Adaptive Harvest Management allows managers three options for setting the duck seasons within specific flyways: restrictive, moderate, and liberal. These options include flyway-specific season lengths, bag limits and framework dates.



Ideal nesting conditions for two years have brought duck numbers to high levels, which in turn allowed a liberal season option for the Central Flyway in 1995.



Managers hope that Adaptive Harvest Management will provide a better understanding of the relationship of hunting and duck populations, while at the same time satisfy hunters who have said they prefer simpler regulations.

similar to the 1988-1993 seasons.

These three packages were considered only for the 1995-1996 seasons. The number and type of packages for consideration in future years may change as more technical assessment is conducted by the USFWS and the Flyway Councils.

To effectively manage the waterfowl resource it is important to know how various amounts of harvest affect the population size. Currently, there is disagreement among technical experts on the degree to which hunting impacts duck populations.

In one theory, birds taken by hunters would have died anyway due to disease, predators, starvation, and other causes. Thus, increases in the amount of harvest have little effect on the size of the population. This "compensatory" theory suggests that hunting regulations can be relatively liberal. In a competing theory, hunting deaths are added to non-hunting deaths so that every bird taken by hunters represents a net reduction in the size of the breeding population.


This "additive" theory suggests that hunting regulations should be relatively conservative.

Over time, Adaptive Harvest Management will improve managers' understanding of the relationships between hunting and duck populations. This will be done through the use of a series of waterfowl models — mathematical representations of how waterfowl abundance changes in response to hunting and habitat conditions. What used to take hours or even days to analyze, can now be done in minutes thanks to recent developments in computers and other analytical tools.

The computer models will not replace humans in the decision-making process. Instead, they will allow waterfowl managers to use the tremendous amount of data available on continental duck populations in a way that will provide much needed insight into the complex relationships between hunting and population levels. These models will be improved and refined over time as part of the

Adaptive Harvest Management process. Continued efforts to monitor duck populations and environmental conditions will be critical to the process.

When a family has a squabble, resolution requires communication and cooperation. The "family" of waterfowl hunters, managers, scientists and administrators has done just that to develop Adaptive Harvest Management. Although the current process for regulating waterfowl harvest has successfully provided hunting opportunities while protecting the resource, it has at times been difficult.

Adaptive Harvest Management addresses the issues that have caused conflict in the past and sets a firm course for the future. The cooperative development and implementation of Adaptive Harvest Management is a major milestone in the conservation of waterfowl in North America. The family and waterfowl resource will benefit for many years to come. 

HIGHWAY CHECK STATION

by Richard Harrold

special operations, Law Enforcement, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

Highway check stations are effective wildlife law enforcement tools. All hunters should be aware of the laws governing transportation of game.



A road check station is a tool of wildlife law enforcement commonly used in Kansas, as well as surrounding states. The check stations are usually conducted jointly with other law enforcement agencies such as the Kansas Highway Patrol, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), other state wildlife law enforcement divisions, county sheriff departments, and U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. All check stations must follow guidelines specified by the Attorney General's Office.

In October 1991, a large-scale check station was conducted on I-70, west of Goodland, at the east-bound roadside park. It took several months of planning and preparation by the department and the USFWS to ensure the check station ran smoothly. Other state wildlife agencies, the Kansas Highway Patrol and Sherman County Sheriff's Department also participated.

Vehicles approaching the roadside park on the interstate were greeted by a lighted arrow sign that directed them to slow and move to the right lane. State troopers and conservation officers greeted motorists pulling into the park. Four non-law enforcement aides then asked vehicle occupants if they



Conservation officers check licenses, permits and all transported game.

had been fishing or hunting. Those who indicated they had not were directed to the Highway Patrol check lane, where they were handed a leaflet that explained the check station. Troopers were looking for open containers of alcohol, illegal drugs, and current driver's licenses, registrations, and tags.

Those travelers who had been hunting or fishing were directed to the wildlife side of the check station. Vehicles were checked for any indication of transported wildlife, and legal licenses and permits.

The I-70 check station started at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 23, and ran around the clock through noon on Saturday, Oct. 26. More than 120 officers from the various participating agencies processed 6,176 vehicles, 1,077 of which were subjected to game and fish checks.

The average time motorists spent detained depended upon whether there were violations detected during the check. Legal travelers

were kept an average of eight minutes. Travelers who were charged with violations were detained an average of 37 minutes and were involved with giving statements, posting bonds, getting the cash together for bond or phoning attorneys.

As a result of the game and fish checks, 205 "Notices to Appear" and warnings were issued, and more than 3,200 pounds of illegal game and fish were confiscated as evidence. More than \$31,000 was taken as bond and forfeited by those who posted it, in lieu of personal court appearances. In the three days the check station operated, 776 animals, birds and fish were checked.

To aid in the detection of transported game, a wildlife officer from Utah brought a specially trained dog. The officer and dog would make a pass around the vehicle and any towed trailers while the dog used its nose to do its job. On several occasions, after a traveler had denied having any game aboard the vehicle, the dog would "hit" on scent, pawing and whining at the vehicle or trailer. The traveler's memory would suddenly get better, and he or she would admit to having a deer or elk. Almost always, these animals were either taken illegally or were being transported illegally.

One traveler pulled into the check station pulling a U-Haul-type trailer. He told the officers he was not a hunter and, in fact, was offended by people who did hunt. He almost had the officers convinced, when the dog and Utah officer came by. Although the traveler insisted the vehicle was "clean," the dog's behavior indicated otherwise. When the officers asked the motorist to open the trailer, they found a large . . . and illegal . . . moose rack. The owner acted surprised and denied



Hunters should become familiar with hunting regulations, especially those covering transporting game. The most common violation is failure to provide proof of sex of a game animal.

knowing the antlers were in his trailer. He forfeited the antlers and paid \$1,000 for illegal possession and illegal transportation of the moose rack but never admitted to knowing it was in his trailer.

Several vehicles came through the check station with chest-type freezers mounted on the front of trailers. Almost all of these hunters were legal and had planned ahead, finding out what they needed to do to transport game legally.

The most common violation observed was failure to provide proof of sex or identification of species. Some individuals went to great extremes to hide the sex of the animal they were transporting.

David Oates, a wildlife forensic and analytic specialist with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission participated in the

check station. Oates was able to sex some carcasses by examining pelvic bones or bone structure. He also helped identify some species when the carcasses had been quartered.

The second most frequently noted violation was unlawful possession of wildlife. Twenty-two of these violations occurred. The next most frequently cited violations were unlawful transportation (21) and improper tagging (18).

On the other end of the check station, the Highway Patrol was busy, with 8-12 troopers working in each of two shifts. The troopers checked 5,100 vehicles. One of the first vehicles troopers checked was a van with 18 people inside. It appeared to be an illegal alien operation, but troopers determined that it was not. For this type of situation, the Immigration and Naturalization



A spotter west of the check station watched for vehicles turning off the interstate trying to avoid the check station. Several did and were brought back and cited.

Service had officers on site to interpret for Spanish-speaking travelers.

In other checks, troopers seized a stolen firearm, illegal drugs, and stolen vehicles and arrested runaway juveniles and wanted felons. The Highway Patrol had two canine units on site to help locate illegal drugs.

One Highway Patrol vehicle and one agency vehicle were designated as chase vehicles in case someone failed to go through the check station as directed. This was necessary twice. West of the check station, a Wildlife and Parks patrol unit watched for vehicles turning through the median to reverse their course and avoid the check station. Several vehicles had to be escorted back to the check station after they turned around. All but one were cited for violations.

This particular check station wasn't intended to catch local wildlife violations. The message intended for any wildlife violator was: "Just because you crossed the state line, you're not home free."

Check stations are conducted

across Kansas each year during the waterfowl, upland bird and deer seasons. The check stations are usually held in addition to other selective enforcement efforts. Some check stations are held at fixed locations and some are moved every few hours.

In addition to checking for fish



For those travelers who had been hunting, the delay averaged about eight minutes, although those who had committed violations were kept an average of 37 minutes.

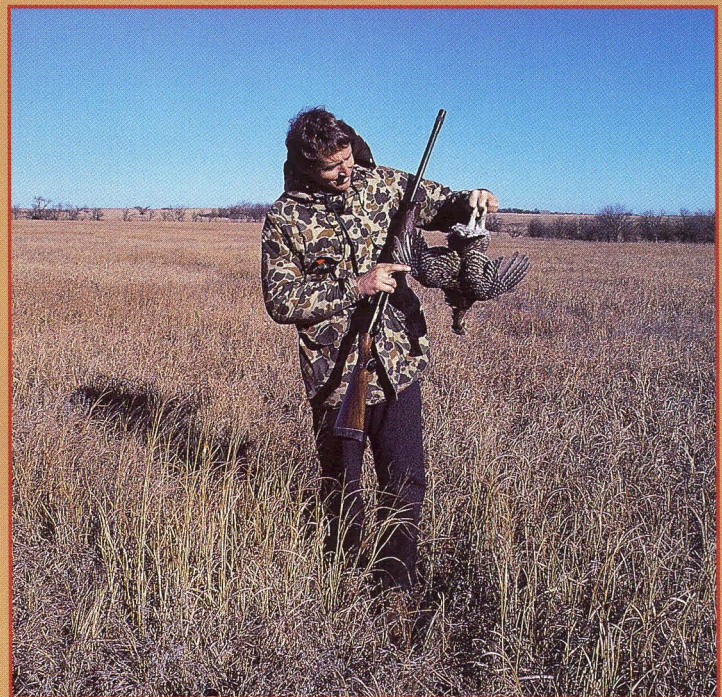
and wildlife violations, other statistical information can be gathered at check stations. Data such as age, condition and numbers of game animals taken can aid biologists in their work. Hunter success rates can also be estimated for regions through check station data.

Dummy check stations are sometimes used when C.B. radio traffic warns enough travelers about genuine check stations.

Hunters traveling to or from another state can take a few simple steps to avoid difficulties at wildlife check stations. Read appropriate hunting and fishing regulations and ask local wildlife officials about regulations applying to transporting game or fish. Keep permits, tags and licenses and be sure your game is properly processed for transportation. A hunting vacation can be ruined if a few simple regulations are not followed. In Kansas, for example, transported pheasants must retain some characteristic identifying sex, since only roosters are legal. This is most easily complied with by simply leaving one leg and foot on the cleaned carcass; the spur will identify it as a rooster. Check with the state you're traveling to and your own state for these regulations and make sure everyone in the traveling party complies. ♣

So Many Seasons, So Little November

November --a time for the hunter. A dedicated hunter can hunt pheasants, quail, prairie chickens, ducks, geese, rabbits, deer, turkeys, and more. The only thing bad about November is it's too short. Before you get everything done, it's December. And to make matters worse, the fishing can also be great in November.



Gene Brehm photo



Mike Blair photo



Mike Blair photo



Gene Brehm photo



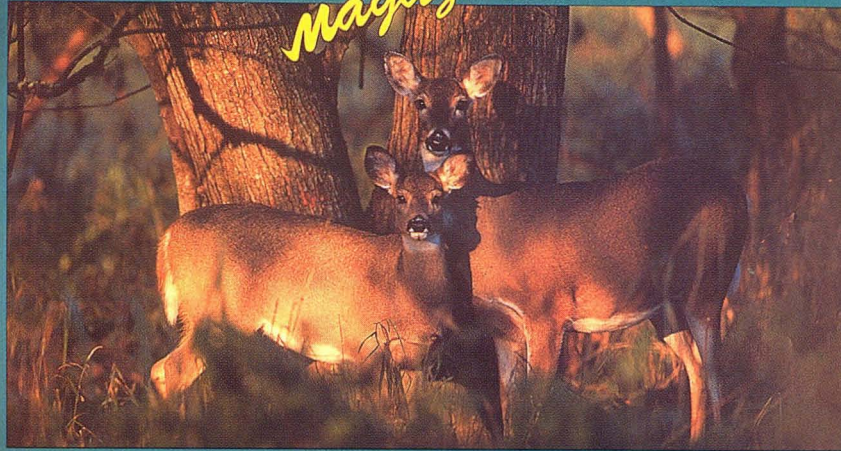
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KANSAS Wildlife & Parks Magazine



taking you through a year outdoors

1996

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Edited by Mark Shoup

EXTERMINATE DEER. NOT!

Editor:

Mr. Sorrick's ["Exterminate All Deer," *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* Sept./Oct. 1995] letter made my blood boil! All of us wildlife lovers should take up a collection to get him out of Kansas. We don't need the likes of him.

We moved from Lake Tenkiller, Oklahoma, where the deer ate our tomatoes and stripped the fruit from our trees, but we loved every one. Keep up the good work. Your magazine is the best.

Elmira Bennet
Hutchinson

Editor:

Was Mr. Sorrick serious? I don't understand how anyone can think that Kansas would be a better place without our beloved whitetails. The thought just makes me mad, not only with Mr. Sorrick, but with this magazine for publishing these biased views. *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* is a magazine put out by the Department of Wildlife and Parks, which, if I'm not mistaken, is a state-funded department that deals with conservation of Kansas wildlife, not its destruction.

I do agree with Sorrick when he says there are quite a few accidents directly related to deer. However, I noticed that he didn't mention the grill and windshield damage caused by pheasants and turkeys. Does he think we should kill off all of our game birds, as well?

Instead of figures on insurance claims, how about telling the readers how much revenue deer season contributes to the Kansas economy. For instance, how much money does the Department of Wildlife and Parks bring in from hunting licenses and deer permits? How much merchandise is sold in Kansas sporting goods stores for deer hunting?

Mr. Sorrick should consider that just

as many or more accidents result from drunk drivers, sleepy drivers, poor road conditions, and just plain carelessness, than from deer. All these accidents reflect on our insurance premiums, too. So before we "wipe out, exterminate, and obliterate the Kansas deer population," let's worry about the bigger problems and preserve part of America's best deer hunting - Kansas.

Clinton Jones
Linn

Dear Mr. Jones:

The "Letters" section of this magazine has always been open to publishing the diverse views of our readership, even when they do not reflect our own. To do otherwise would be a disservice to our readers and to the spirit of free speech which makes this country great. As you can see from this issue's "Letters" section, Mr. Sorrick has done a wonderful job of stimulating folks to exercise their freedom of speech.

A 1991 study commissioned by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies provides some revealing statistics on the economics of hunting in Kansas. In 1991, deer hunting alone generated approximately \$27,340,000 in retail sales, including equipment, travel, and incidental sales. These purchases, in turn, supported 890 full- and part-time jobs, almost \$3 million in state and federal taxes, and a "total economic multiplier effect" of almost \$60 million.

All hunting in Kansas generated more than \$130 million in retail sales that same year.

--Shoup

Editor:

First, I would like to say that Mr. Floyd Sorrick must not have any appreciation of wildlife or any other living creation. People like him are the ones who almost exterminated the bison back in the 1800s. Mr. Sorrick, if you think so highly of your automobile, I suggest you park it in the garage. There are a lot

more vehicles on the road than deer. I hope you don't wish to exterminate humans if they dent your car.

I am an avid hunter and enjoy hunting deer for fun and food. I also have two sons, one who is 14 years old and is looking forward to archery hunting with me this fall. Yes, I have also had an automobile damaged by a deer, and I hope that it lived so I can see it again.

I hereby advocate the following:

1. Mr. Sorrick, move to Antarctica where the deer population is not as high, or

2. sell the automobile and get a bicycle. Maybe it will slow you down enough so that you can appreciate the real things in life around you.

Gary Knight
Coffey County

Editor:

After reading Floyd Sorrick's article, I have to admit that I feel sorry for him, not so much because of an auto being damaged but because of his hatred of deer. As an outdoorsman and lifetime resident of Kansas, I believe deer to be one of the most beautiful and elegant creatures that we have. While I won't argue the point of how cute "Bambi" is coming through the windshield, we can be thankful that this is rare.

As an aircraft mechanic, I have seen from time to time aircraft damaged from bird strikes in mid-air. Is Mr. Sorrick in favor of the extermination of all bird life, as well? One wonders how he would keep all those little winged aliens from flying across the Kansas/Nebraska state line.

Perhaps Mr. Sorrick just needs to lighten up a little, drive a little slower, and enjoy the countryside.

Ken Maules
Wichita

Editor:

I am writing in reply to the letter, "Exterminate All Deer." First of all, the tireless efforts of the Kansas Department

of Wildlife and Parks to keep poachers away is greatly appreciated.

Second, I am a lifelong resident of Kansas, and will always remain as long as I can get in my car and drive down a county road and experience the sights and sounds of a beautiful state.

Third, Mr. Sorrick, I have four words for you: move to the city!

Tom Hays
Wyandotte County

Editor:

I want to say that those who say deer are worthless are themselves even more worthless. I don't mean to insult anyone, but in reading Mr. Sorrick's letter, I couldn't understand why anyone could even begin to think that a wild species, no matter for what cause, should be exterminated. I have been bow hunting with my dad since I was five, and in those 13 years, I have had many great memories.

Hunting gives many teenagers like me something to do rather than running around town and getting into trouble. Plus, when the weekend is over, I always have something to show for my efforts out in the field. Whether it is just a memory or an actual trophy, it is still better than going out and partying all night. We go out for the thrill of seeing the buck in rut looking for a doe or making a scrape, and we are spending our money and taking the time to learn something that we will enjoy all our lives.

Mr. Sorrick, if you think this way about wildlife, why do you live where you do? Very few articles have made me as angry as "Exterminate All Deer." I am glad that we have the wildlife we have and hope it stays the same. It can't get much better than we have it. And *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* is one of the best magazines I read.

Kevin Swanson
Courtland

Editor:

Of all the letters that I have seen printed in our magazine, I feel that this Mr. Sorrick's is as asinine as any. A few years ago, I had a son, Robert. He was

lucky enough to get a huge buck, fifth or sixth in the non-typical class.

I lost my son Robert, but I have another son, Warren, and this season we have two permits on the buddy system. Warren and I feel the same in the case of Mr. Floyd Sorrick. We would like to take that man to the field and show him all the pleasures and sights there. In the event we couldn't convince him of the good things there, we could maybe engage him in the game of bounce, a game two can play. Warren and I are both in the 260-pound class, and we like that game. Mr. Sorrick's head needs some bouncing.

Keep up the good work.

Mike Rose, Major (retired)
Kiowa

THE OTHER SIDE

Editor:

I did not appreciate your reply to Mr. Sorrick's letter (*Kansas Wildlife and Parks* Sept./Oct. 1995, Page 33). You completely ignored the danger we all face from automobile wrecks. I have thought for years they would kill someone, and a lady from Marshall County was killed this summer. One resident from Washington spent weeks in the hospital a few years back from an accident with a deer.

No one wants to hurt the deer. They, however, are sadly lacking in common sense about cars. They will stand by the side of the road and then jump right out into the path of a vehicle.

We have too many deer. They eat the farmer's crops and cause far too many dangerous vehicle accidents. They manage to grow in numbers without any help from we humans.

Betty A. Kastl
Washington

Dear Ms. Kastl:

I do not ignore the danger posed to motorists by deer. Like everyone else, I drive and must deal with this risk. But this involves being careful yet aware that deer are one small factor in the complicated equation that makes driving dangerous.

According to the Kansas Department of Transportation's Bureau of Traffic Safety, Kansas has suffered 2,110 vehicle fatalities in the past five years. Unfortunately, three of these crashes involved deer. Still, I would never consider exterminating one of nature's most beautiful creations just to make my driving safer by a small fraction. Trees, canyons, birds, even the changing seasons pose a threat, but I must live with them. They are all elements of a natural order that precedes us thousands of years.

Behind this debate is an irony that has troubled mankind since the first primitive hunter stepped onto the savannah: the world is at once breathtakingly beautiful and tragically perilous in its perfection.

--Shoup

SNAKES ALIVE!

Editor:

Last summer, our grandson Matt spent a weekend camping and fishing with Grandma and Grandpa at the outlet area at Melvern Reservoir. While reeling in his line to check his bait, a diamond-backed water snake emerged from the bank below and grabbed his sunfish. The snake held on with a death grip, trying to swallow the fish.

A small crowd gathered to watch. Matt would pull the line, and the snake looked as if it were pulling it back. The front half of the snake was off the ground in a coiled position while the back half was firmly planted on the ground. Finally after a few minutes, Matt was able to pull the sunfish from the snake's mouth. Matt again dangled the sunfish close above the snake's head, and again the snake grabbed the bait. Finally, the snake tired of the effort and slowly went back down the bank.

We were certainly moved by the determination of my grandson, who is very caring about wildlife creatures, when he flatly turned down the offer of another teenager, with pocket knife open and ready, who wanted to kill the snake.

Francis and Dorothy Zink
Emporia

ETHICS Abandoned

In October 1994, a report came in on the Outdoor Alert Hotline (1-800-228-4263) that a bowhunter may have illegally killed a deer near the Johnson/Douglas county line. CO Jim Dunn, Lawrence, found evidence that a deer had been dragged across a farmer's soybean field, causing considerable damage.

The information was then given to me (CO Bruce Bertwell) for follow-up. I learned that the bowhunter had been hunting one evening and shot a deer that ran into the soybeans where the hunter did not have permission to hunt. The hunter asked the farmer if he could search for the deer and was granted permission.

The hunter had recovered the deer, but not until the next morning. Two days later, I received information that the hunter was back in the area. I went there and waited for the hunter to return to his vehicle after his evening hunt. When he came out of the woods, I asked to see his hunting license and deer permit. He produced the license and unused statewide and unit archery permits.

I asked if he had killed a deer or assisted someone who had, and he said he had not. However, when I asked if he had previously talked with the owner of

the bean filed to get permission to pursue a wounded deer, he replied that he had arrowed a deer that he hadn't recovered. I then asked if I could look in the back of his van, and he agreed. There I saw a dried blood smear and asked what it was. He didn't respond at first but then said he had shot a deer.

The hunter told me he had dressed the deer, loaded it into his vehicle, and removed the antlers. Then he had decided it was spoiled and dumped it in a deep roadside ditch. He admitted that he had never tagged the deer.

My investigation revealed that the hunter had conducted far too brief a search that night, stopping just short of the place the deer had fallen. Instead of continuing, he went home and didn't return until the next morning. Even then, he chose to go hunting again before resuming his search.

The hunter showed me the dumped deer, and I seized the deer antlers and statewide archery permit that should have been used and cited the man for having possessed the deer untagged and for retrieving but failing to retain it as required by regulation.

The hunter signed a diversion agreement in Douglas County Court. It required him to pay a \$250 fine and \$117 in court costs, complete eight

hours of community service, and not break any laws during the six-month diversion period. The landowner asked the man for restitution for the crop damage and was paid \$100.

*-Bruce Bertwell, conservation officer,
Olathe*

241 = 300

Last Thanksgiving Day, I received a phone call from a southern Ellsworth County landowner who informed me that he had heard a single gunshot near his pond and saw a pickup leave the area. He had then gone to the pond and found two dead Canada geese.

The landowner gave me the pickup's license tag number, and I collected the geese. After questioning two Holyrood men, I gathered enough information to file charges of unlawful hunting and hunting with the aid of a vehicle. The defendant, who was under 18, pled guilty. He received a \$100 fine on one count that was suspended, a \$200 fine on the second count, \$99.50 court costs, a 30-day suspended jail sentence, and one year's probation.

One shot had killed two geese and led to almost \$300 in fines and penalties - one expensive shot.

*-Greg Salisbury,
conservation officer, Salina*

River Ride TURNS DANGEROUS

A father and his daughter, both residents of Mulvane, are lucky to be alive after an incident on the Ninescah River below Cheney Reservoir on July 9. The 35-year-old man and his 13-year-old daughter attempted to float the river in a rubber raft but became stranded in the dangerous current below a low-water dam.

"We got a call from Wild Bill's Country Store that two people in a raft were in trouble," said Jerry Schmidt, manager of Cheney State Park. "The lake was releasing 1,580 cubic feet per second due to high water levels in the reservoir, so the river had a potentially dangerous current."

After a short search, Schmidt and Park Ranger Jeff Ostlund found the two victims in their raft, pinned against the low-water dam. Due to the dangerous undertow created by the fall of water over the dam, the situation was potentially life-threatening. Conservation officers Scott Hanzlicek, Alan Hulbert, and Hank Shocklye soon arrived and called emergency preparedness teams just in case things took a turn for the worse.

Schmidt and Ostlund told the two victims to be patient, and

they would do their best to get them out safely. Ostlund grabbed two ropes and his rescue throw bag. After several throws between a web of tree limbs, the bag made it to the father. Still, the force of the water on the raft was so intense that it was all both officers could do to pull the raft out of the undertow to safety. Both father and daughter remained calm, which aided the rescue.

For their actions, the department presented Merit Awards to Schmidt and Ostlund at the Wildlife and Parks Commission meeting in Wichita last August.

"People don't realize how dangerous low-water dams can be," says Dan Heskett, boating enforcement specialist for the Department of Wildlife and Parks. "The force and current generated from water falling only a few feet is incredible. It can flip a boat in no time, and a person in the water doesn't stand much chance of getting out of its grip alive. This story had a happy ending, but many times people in that same situation end up as drowning victims."

-Murrell

Farm Grants OFFERED

The Kansas Rural Center (KRC) is offering to help farmers reduce pollution through cost-share grants as much as \$5,000.

KRC's Clean Water Farms Project, which began July 1, is offering Kansas farmers and ranchers in targeted watersheds an opportunity to apply for grants to demonstrate low-cost, innovative farming practices to reduce agricultural non-point source pollution. Targeted watersheds are those having serious non-point source pollution problems from fertilizers and livestock manure, pesticides, and sediment run-off from cropland.

Although the deadline for the first round of applications was August 18, additional application periods will be announced later. Over the next five years, the Kansas Rural Center will spend \$1.2 million to aid Kansas farmers in adopting farming practices that reduce pollution while maintaining or improving the farm's bottom line.

A critical part of the project is building a network of farmers who help each other adopt and implement innovative practices and provide farmer-to-farmer education and information. Thirty-two on-farm demonstrations will provide models and learning opportunities for farmers with similar problems or interests.

This project is a cooperative effort of KRC, KDHE's Bureau of Water, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Kansas Biological Survey, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Any farmer interested in applying for cost-share grants or learning more about the program should contact the Kansas Rural Center, (913) 873-3431.

-Kansas Rural Center's "Rural Papers"

Hunters, Anglers UP

According to figures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the number of hunters in Kansas increased considerably from the 1993 season to 1994 season. In 1993, Kansas had 179,515 paid hunting license holders. In 1994, the figure rose to 193,172 - an increase of 13,657, or 7.6 percent. Fishing license buyers also

grew in number. In 1993 anglers bought 286,748 licenses, compared to 316,971 in 1994. This represents an increase of 30,223 or 10.5 percent.

-Shoup

PF TO LEASE WETLANDS

In an effort to provide wildlife habitat for a variety of species, the Smoky Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever in Oakley and the Kansas Pioneer Chapter of Pheasants Forever in Colby are offering cash to lease wetlands in western Kansas.

Western Kansas is dotted with wetland areas identified as rainwater basins, playa lakes, and other seasonal wetlands. They are located in both crop and pasture land, and range from a few square feet to several acres. During wet years, they hold water for short periods and provide waterfowl habitat, and in dry years they can support excellent upland bird habitat.

However, these basins have little wildlife value when tilled. When they are tilled, they are difficult for farmers to manage. The landowner usually receives revenue from these wetlands only every other year because they are summer fallowed, and at times the landowner does not receive any revenue because crops are flooded. Wet soil also makes planting difficult. Sometimes a seeded crop has to be replanted after being flooded, only to be flooded again prior to harvest.

That's where the Pheasants Forever chapters come in. Currently, the program is available in Thomas, Sheridan, Gove, and Logan counties. The chapters will pay the landowner to forego discing, grazing, or applying chemicals to the enrolled acres after wheat harvest and through the lease period. This will allow these acres to grow plants that will be beneficial to wildlife for the summer and provide food and shelter for the winter.

There are also options for multi-year

leases with assistance for tree and shrub planting, and a natural resource easement option is also available.

Anyone who wants to learn more about this program should contact Leonard Hopper, Rainwater Basin Project Coordinator, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 190 N. Franklin, Colby, KS 67701, (913) 462-3367.

Pheasants Forever is an organization of hunters interested in developing and promoting wildlife habitat. Landowners who participate in this project do not have to allow hunting. Although hunting is encouraged, landowners will still retain trespass rights.

*-Leonard Hopper,
wildlife biologist, Gem*



1993, '94 AUDIT RESULTS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has released a preliminary audit report of federal aid funds use by the Department of Wildlife and Parks during fiscal years (FY) 1993 and 1994 (July 1, 1992-June 30, 1994). The audit was performed by representatives of the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General last spring.

Findings outlined in the audit report include the following:

- Documents inspected during the audit indicate that the department diverted about \$2 million in fishing and hunting license revenue from its intended purposes. About \$1.26 million of that amount resulted from records indicating that fish and wildlife programs

paid more than their share of department administrative costs (\$563,618 in FY '93 and \$702,581 in FY '94). About \$789,000 of that \$2 million comprised salaries and wages paid to department employees not documented as being directly connected to fish and wildlife programs.

- Ineligible costs were reimbursed to KDWP by the USFWS in FY 1993. Specifically, the USFWS questioned \$225,646 claimed by the department for reimbursement under its Sport Fish Restoration Act grant that year. The expenditures were not included in approved federal aid documents. In FY 1994, the department had sufficient eligible expenditures to support the reimbursements it received through the federal grant program.

- The department failed to document the required amount of state expenditures for sport fishing activities in FY '93. The Wallop-Breaux Amendment to the Sport Fish Restoration Act requires the State of Kansas to spend at least \$1,886,771 of state funds annually on its sport fishing activities. That amount is based upon the average annual amount spent during the period 1983-1985, prior to enactment of the Wallop-Breaux Amendment. Specifically, the report states that the department spent only \$961,829 of state funds for sport fish activities in 1993, which resulted in a shortfall of \$924,942.

Wildlife and Parks Secretary Steve Williams said he has discussed with the USFWS the department's expectation that a more detailed records analysis may document offsets to the audit findings.

In March 1994, an audit of Fiscal years 1989-92 revealed infractions similar to those reported in the 1993-94 audit. Auditors reported that financial management weakness led to the inappropriate expenditures. The department made improvements in its financial management practices to ensure the state's eligibility for federal aid. Although internal corrective measures were initiated in FY 1995, it was too late to affect the FY '93 and FY '94 audit report.

"We are working closely with the Fish and Wildlife Service to resolve the issue," said Williams, who was appointed department secretary last May.

HEMP FOR TREES

Hemp beats using trees. That's the word from attorney Don Wirtshafter, whose four-year-old company, The Ohio Hempery, is marketing paper made from the long fibers of hemp stalks. He says that decades-old Agriculture Department studies show that one acre of hemp, which takes a few months to grow, can supply four times as much paper fibers as an acre of trees.

Wirtshafter, who imports sterilized hemp seeds from China for hemp oil, recently offered Kentucky farmers \$800 a ton (he says he'd pay twice that now) for fresher hemp seeds. But a state task force rejected the idea because hemp, the more potent strains of which are known as marijuana, is illegal to grow without a permit.

Despite his obvious problem with raw material, Wirtshafter expects to gross \$2 million this year and notes that Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren are using lots of hemp cloth. Wirtshafter has 15 employees and sells clothes, shoes, body care products, and nearly 100 other hemp products through his catalogue business.

-Common Ground, July/August 1995

Department officials expect that a more detailed inspection of cost accounting records from FY '93 and FY '94, which is currently underway, will form the basis for the department's response to this most recent audit. The analysis will also help the department in its current effort to further modify its cost accounting and management systems to prevent future difficulties with federal aid expenditures.

Like other states, Kansas receives federal aid revenue under the Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration acts. The funds for the grants are derived from federal excise taxes imposed on the manufacturers and importers of fishing and hunting equipment, and the funds are apportioned to the states based on their geographical areas, populations, and numbers of fishing and hunting licenses sold. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks typically is eligible for about \$5.5 million annually in federal aid money.

-Mathews

Editor's Note: *This is the latest information as of late September. Further developments may have occurred by the time this issue goes to press. For more information, contact the Pratt Office.*

CONSERVATION POLITICS

The 73 Republican freshmen elected last fall to the House of Representatives don't appear to be conservationists. Average score on 10 key votes: 3 percent, as figured by the

League of Conservation Voters [phone (202) 785-8683] in its "100-Day Scorecard." Sixty-one of the 73 scored zero, as did entire state delegations from Alaska, Idaho, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

However, 22 moderate Republicans scored 52 percent.

The new caucus of 23 conservative Democrats led by Rep Billy Tauzin (La.) only scored 13 percent. Minus Tauzin's group, the Dems averaged 77 percent.

The loneliest Republican was Sherwood Boehlert from upstate New York, who scored 91 percent.

The aforementioned Rep. Tauzin has complained bitterly that his constituents, John and Cindy Chaconas, were victims of federal wetland regulations run amuck. But, as with many horror stories about property rights, the truth is more complex. The unsuspecting Chaconas bought a home on five acres of filled-in cypress swamp near Baton Rouge in 1993. The previous owners sold it because their attempts to stop flooding at the house by filling in the wetland, without a permit, had failed.

The Chaconas, who want to see the wetland restored, aren't mad at EPA or the Corps of Engineers; they're suing the previous owners.

For more on flimsy takings stories, send for "Fairy Tales and Facts," free from Jim Irwin at the National Wildlife Federation, 1400 16th ST. NW, Washington, DC 20036-2266.

-Common Ground, July/August 1995

UPLAND OUTLOOK Gloomy

An exceptionally cool, wet spring diminished upland bird production in most of Kansas this year, making the outlook for the 1995 pheasant and quail hunting season something less than optimistic. Reports suggest that upland game bird densities are very spotty, with trends generally down.

While cover conditions range from average to heavy, depending on the amount of local rainfall, many public hunting areas around federal reservoirs were flooded last spring and may be less attractive to upland birds, particularly in low-lying areas.

In general, pheasant populations seem to be significantly lower in much of the state than in 1994. Pheasant numbers in northcentral Kansas seem to have held up the best and should provide average hunting in most areas, with some relatively good spots. Portions of southwestern Kansas have reported better than normal prospects for pheasant, but southcentral Kansas seems to have sustained the poorest production.

Due to this generally low production, hunters can again expect a high proportion of adults in the pheasant population, which suggests that birds will be more wary than normal.

Quail seem to have fared little better than pheasants. The cool, wet spring substantially postponed the onset of the bobwhite nesting effort in Kansas. Hoped-for late nesting does not seem to have been particularly successful. Prospects for quail hunting seem to be substantially diminished in the southern and eastern sections of Kansas. The northcentral section of the state also seems to hold better-than-average bobwhite numbers, largely on the strength of good carryover from 1994.

Greater prairie chicken populations were substantially lower this spring following the 1994 hunting season, which proved to be the poorest since 1976. It is difficult to monitor these species during the summer, so some uncertainty exists. Weather patterns this season suggest that greater prairie chicken production was probably poor. The Flint Hills constitute the core of Kansas' greater prairie chicken range. Lesser prairie chickens are found mainly on sand prairies in southwestern Kansas, and their numbers are very low. The season length and daily bag limit on lesser prairie chickens has been reduced accordingly, to one per day and two in possession.

In northwest Kansas, prospects for pheasant hunting have declined this year and are expected to be average, at best. Pheasant densities are spotty. Quail are not abundant in most of this area, but fair to locally good numbers occur in Phillips, Rooks, Norton, and Graham counties. Quail numbers seem a bit lower than last year but remain above average. Cover is spotty and ranges from below average to good. Unusual levels of post-harvest spraying in eastern counties of this region have sharply reduced the quality of wheat-stubble habitat.

Northcentral Kansas pheasant numbers are off some from 1994 but still seem relatively good. This region will probably provide the best pheasant hunting in Kansas this season. Quail production was below average this summer, but overall populations still look good for this area. Quail numbers generally increase from west to east in this region. Cover ranges from



average to good. Heavy weed growth is present on portions of public hunting areas around reservoirs that were flooded last spring.

In northeastern Kansas, pheasant populations are significantly reduced compared to last year and are probably below average. This region's overall pheasant density is, invariably, lower than that farther west. The northernmost counties of this area will provide the best pheasant opportunities. Quail numbers seem to be average or below average in northern parts of the region, with more significant declines farther south. Cover ranges from average in the west to heavy in the east. This area also had heavy flooding of public areas near large reservoirs.

In southwest Kansas, pheasant hunting prospects seem diminished in the southeastern third of this region, where hunting will probably be below average. Some above average pheasant reports have come from Scott and Lane counties southwest to Stevens and Morton counties. Some patches of severe hail occurred in the Garden City area this summer. Significant quail populations are found only in the southern and eastern tiers of counties in this region. Quail numbers in the Red Hills seem to be a bit lower than last year but remain reasonably good.

Southcentral Kansas pheasant numbers are substantially down compared to last year, with the magnitude of declines increasing in the south. Best opportunities for pheasant in this region are in the extreme northwest, Barton and Stafford counties. Quail hunting prospects are not optimistic for most of southcentral Kansas because declines seem substantial. A possible exception is the Red Hills area where quail numbers seem lower but are still at reasonably good levels. Cover ranges from good to heavy.

In southeast Kansas, quail populations seem to be down significantly in the southeast counties compared to last year and can be expected to provide below average hunting success throughout the region. Cover is rated as heavy or very heavy, which may make hunting more difficult. Severe flooding of public hunting areas around federal reservoirs also occurred in this area last spring.

For more information or a hunting forecast complete with map, contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124, (316) 672-5911.

-Randy Rodgers, research biologist, Hays

Back to the FUTURE



by Mark Shoup

We live in times when technology forces us to learn new things constantly, and as the rate of technological innovation increases exponentially, so increases the rate at which new skills must be learned.

On the surface this would seem a good thing, stretching our mental abilities and forcing us to learn more things with which to face the world's challenges. Often, however, just as we have learned a new skill we awake to find that it has become obsolete. Computer technology is a good case in point. No sooner have we mastered a particular piece of software than it is replaced by an "update," each new update becoming further removed from the original and in many cases incompatible with previous versions.

Hardware is the same. Much of society has become "computer literate," but hold on to your keyboards. The Internet has added a completely new wrinkle to the face of computing; it won't be long before the personal computer itself is obsolete. Our televisions will be computer terminals, and instead of having a hard drive, we'll rent space on a supercomputer somewhere and be virtually connected to the world. Of course, in this rapidly changing world, even the word "virtual" has been twisted, meaning something closer to "simulated" than what we had originally defined.

The point of all this is that each new generation inherits a diminishing legacy. As a result, modern philosophy often mirrors rapid changes in technology. "Everything is relative" — the existential notion that rules much of contemporary life — could be the philosophy of the computer chip.

Toolmaking, sewing, hunting, farming, building: for thousands of years, these skills were passed from generation to generation, not only providing survival skills but emotional and spiritual connection among generations. In much of modern life, these connections have been severed. The "culture" of one generation often seems completely foreign to that of another.

Yet there are threads of experience whose value remains timeless, if we only look for them.

On the first day of October, my four-year-old son, William, and I discovered such a thread, and we followed it into a marsh. It was a sunny Sunday afternoon as I put my canoe into the water, Will hanging tightly to the front seat, both excited and apprehensive. As I pushed off and the craft slid quietly across the water, a great blue heron flushed from nearby cattails and landed in a willow 100 yards away. We hugged the contour of the marsh, staying close to the cattails so that we might surprise those creatures reluctant to expose themselves. Always with us was the din of hidden blackbirds, thousands of them, a glorious cacophony of sound.

Cormorants flushed black and silent, and terns coursed the sky like snow-white nighthawks.

We inspected two goose nests, long abandoned for this year. "They'll be back next spring," I assured Will.

At the top of the marsh, we entered the quiet, slow-moving river. Two groups of fishermen sunned themselves in lawn chairs, unconcerned by the muffled lapping of my paddle. We glided past them near the opposite bank, smoothly, quietly, respectfully, then under the bridge that supports the highway to town. Beneath the bridge, we "whooped" just to hear our voices echo off concrete and steel, strangely decorated with the muddy nests of barn swallows. Then I back-paddled and returned quietly past our drowsy fishermen to an isolated cove in another part of the marsh where we rammed into the cattails, then sat and just listened to the trilling blackbirds.

On the return trip, I broke off a cattail head, and William used it for a fishing pole, a sword, a light saber, and occasionally just a cattail, which he would poke toward my nose, saying, "Smell the sweet marsh, Daddy." We sailed within fifteen feet of an old telephone pole where an osprey perched nervously before taking off, a green sunfish locked in its talons.

"That was an osprey, Will," I explained.

"No, it was a beach eagle," he corrected.

By this time, we had come around a peninsula that separated us from our entry point. In one place, the peninsula dipped under water, only a thick layer of cattails maintaining the illusion of land. We decided to take a shortcut and plowed into a narrow part in the vegetation.

Sensing that Will had more confidence in this maneuver than I did, I made a game of the struggle as I pushed my paddle against the muddy bottom. "We're trapped, Will," I joked. "This is an African swamp, a crocodile swamp, and we'd better get out of here in a hurry."

"Are there really crocodiles in here, Daddy?" he asked, knowing better but ready to be convinced.

"No, Bud. I'm just pretending . . . But we'd better get out of here before they get us!" I reached out, pulled on the cattails, and we burst into the open water on the other side. Will laughed. "I don't think there's any beach eagles in the Crocodile Swamp, Daddy," he declared, and I laughed, too.

Back at our point of embarkation, I got out of the canoe, held the long rope, pushed Will away from the bank, and pulled him back several times. He delighted in this, as if enjoying the prospect of freedom while still tethered to Dad.

As I loaded the canoe in the pickup, Will discovered a mating pair of grasshoppers on my back. So coupled, they couldn't jump far, and he had a great cat-and-mouse game with them while I tied down the canoe.

"Why do they do that?" he asked.

"To make little grasshoppers," I answered blithely. He took this in without comment, then turned to a nearby mud puddle.

I made the final adjustments to the canoe while Will tested the width of the puddle. As each jump became wider, he declared, "I jumped just as high as a grasshopper, Daddy."

It was a leap of imagination that at once snapped me back in time and sent me drifting headlong, with unspeakable joy and trepidation, into the future.

RECORDS Fall IN '95

On June 6, Rex Stutterheim of Alma caught a 5.64-pound saugeye at Keith Sebelius Reservoir in Norton County. The fish breaks the "old" mark of 5.42 pounds set by James Burns, Norton, just 10 days earlier on May 31, also from Keith Sebelius Reservoir. The saugeye record had been broken four times in 1994 with all fish coming from Keith Sebelius Reservoir.

Linda K. Wilson of Hutchinson caught a 3.56-pound sauger from Melvern Reservoir on June 24, besting the old mark of 3.27 pounds, which was caught in 1993 at Melvern.

Other state records include a yellow (ringed) perch weighing .84 pounds. The fish was caught from Atwood Lake on July 18 by Jacob Morton of Atwood. The previous record yellow perch was caught in 1970 from Lake Elbo, a private lake in Pottawatomie County. It weighed .75 pounds.

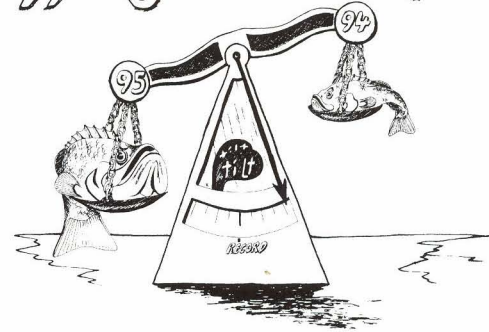
On July 4, Larry Fox, of Scott City,

caught the state record redear sunfish from a pond on the Finney County Wildlife Area. The 1.69-pound redear breaks the old mark of 1.53 pounds, which was taken from a Crawford County pond in 1992.

If you catch a potential state record fish, it's important that it be weighed as soon as possible on certified scales. Do not freeze the fish before weighing. A fisheries biologist or regional Wildlife and Fisheries supervisor must identify the fish, and an official state record fish application must be submitted along with a color photograph of the fish. All record applications are held for 30 days. After the waiting period, if officials are satisfied that the fish was taken by legal means and all submitted information is correct, the fish will be recognized as a new state record.

-Miller

Tipping The Scales



FALL BASS

As the days shorten in Kansas, black bass begin to gorge themselves with food, getting ready for the long winter ahead. The fish will stay in shallow water a lot longer, sometimes feeding there all day. In most of our reservoirs, by fall we have had a number of gizzard shad spawns, and schools of 1- to 4-inch shad are abundant, providing a banquet for a bass's fall feeding spree.

As the water cools near 60 degrees, bass begin to show up in creeks but are generally abundant anywhere near schools of shad. Anglers must slow the lure retrieve, go to lighter line and smaller lures, and begin fishing more during the middle of the day.

As the water temperature cools through the 50s, bass move into deep water, moving vertically to feed and then back down to rest. Those dedicated anglers who brave cold fall temperatures sometimes are rewarded with their largest bass of the season.

In early fall, begin to throw more shad-imitation lures. Many bass are taken on heavy chrome spoons in early fall. White spinner baits are best but don't overlook the plastic worm when fishing is slow. As the water cools, go back to jigs, jig and eel, and smaller spinner baits and crank baits. Don't forget to go with the light 8- or 10-pound test lines and a more sensitive rod. A boat is also an advantage because bass can quickly move .200 or 300 feet chasing schools of shad.

- Tommie Berger, fisheries biologist,
Sylvan Grove

TROUT Time

The Kansas trout season began Oct. 15 with stockings planned throughout the winter and spring. While some areas will receive single stockings, others will receive multiple stockings. Trout stocked in the period July 1, 1995-June 15, 1996 include the following totals:

Webster Stilling Basin	12,500	Cimarron Grasslands Pits	4,800
Glen Elder Stilling Basin	2,000	Lake Charles, Dodge City	2,000
Glen Elder Park Pond	1,500	Finney Refuge Sand Pit	6,000
Kanopolis Seep Stream	4,000	Walnut River, El Dorado	7,500
Kanopolis Park Pond	1,500	Sedgwick County Park	14,000
Cedar Bluff Stilling Basin	4,000	KDOT East Lake, Wichita	10,750
Lakewood, Salina	3,000	Dillon Pond, Hutchinson	5,000
Tuttle Creek Seep Stream	14,400	Gunn Park, Ft. Scott	6,000
Lake Henry, Clinton State Park	2,300	Mined Land WA #30	20,900
Lake Scott State Fishing Lake	11,800	Veteran's Memorial Lake, Great Bend	4,000
Lake Scott State Park Pond	2,000	Smoky Gardens, Goodland	1,500
Golf Course Pond, Dodge City	2,000		

An \$8 trout permit is required during the season, which runs Oct. 15-April 15. Mined Land WA #30 and Tuttle Creek Seep Stream require the trout permit year round. The daily creel limit is 5, and the possession limit is 15.

-Shoup

ANTLERS OR HORNS?

Both antlers and horns are found on the heads of hooved animals. How they are formed and how they look are different, however. Male elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer have antlers; bison and pronghorns have horns.

Antlers, formed of solid bone, grow new each year starting in spring. They are an outgrowth on a permanent frontal bone of the skull. Antler growth is nourished by blood vessels in the outer skin cover called "velvet." Spongy bone makes up the inner core of the antler, but the material just under the velvet surface is very dense bone.

Late in the summer or early fall, the blood supply through the velvet is reduced and eventually shuts off. Once that happens, bucks begin the process of removing the velvet by rubbing their antlers against trees, revealing the hard bony surface of the antler. Bucks use their unsheathed antlers to battle against other bucks during the autumn breeding season, called "rut." The antlers fall off during the late winter, and the growing process starts over again in the spring.

Horns, on the other hand, are made of an inner bony core, which is a permanent outgrowth from the frontal bone. The core contains blood vessels needed for growth throughout the animal's life. Keratin, a fibrous growth similar to human fingernails, grows around the core in the same fashion as a pearl grows around a grain of sand.

Both bison and pronghorns (often called antelope)

have true horns, the difference being that bison produce permanent unbranched horns while antelope have forked-horn sheaths that fall off each October. Six- to 8-inch spikes remain for the next year's growth.

*-Wichita Eagle's
"Outdoor Almanac"*

MARTIN PNEUMONIA

Last summer, Kansas experienced a significant purple martin die-off. During the first week of July, approximately 600 birds in Montgomery, Labette, Neosho, Allen, and Coffey counties were reported missing or dead.

The problem was first noted on July 10 when calls were received from concerned residents in Iola reporting rapid, large-scale die-offs of both adult and young martins. Whole colonies appeared

to be dying overnight. These residents were concerned that the City of Iola's mosquito spraying regimen might be linked to the deaths.

After contacting several residents and the city administration, it was evident that the die-offs were more widespread than initially thought. As word of the problem spread, reports of deaths and disappearances quickly began to come in from other area cities.

The news media and personal contacts were used to locate purple martins that had been dead less than 24 hours for testing. On July 21, two fresh specimens were obtained and sent to the National Health Center at Madison, Wis. Test results indicated pneumonia as the cause of death of these two birds. It is uncertain how they contracted the disease. No

other species appeared to be affected and no further die-offs have been reported.

*-Keith Rather,
conservation officer, Chanute*

GATORBUSTERS

On Aug. 21, the Dodge City Region 3 Office received a report that the Ulysses Golf Course contained a unique addition to one of its water hazards - an American alligator. Conservation officers Bruce Peters and B. J. Thurman, armed with only a large minnow seine, extracted the 3 1/2-foot alligator.

Marlin Perkins and Jim Fowler, as the two are now called, have relocated the smiling creature to the Great Bend Zoo.

*-Jim Kellenberger, Region 3
Law Enforcement supervisor,
Dodge City*

WINTER WATERFOWL

During fall migration, waterfowl consume large quantities of energy-rich food such as waste grains and seeds of wetland plants.

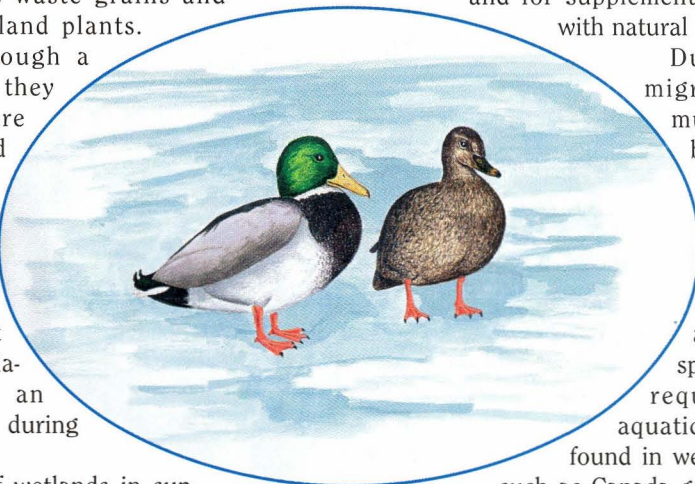
They go through a period when they eat much more than they need to maintain their bodies. As a result, they put on thick layers of fat that serve as insulation and an energy source during migration.

The role of wetlands in supplying food is varied among different waterfowl species. Some species, such as gadwalls and blue-winged teal, are mainly marsh feeders and rely heavily on seeds of wetland plants and other wetland foods. Mallards and Canada geese use agriculture lands

extensively - mallards for waste grain and geese for waste grain and grazing. For species that depend on agricultural lands, wetlands are important for resting, loafing, and for supplementing their diets with natural foods.

During spring migrations, hens must keep their bodies in condition for egg laying. Hens need to consume high-protein foods, and for most species the foods required are aquatic invertebrates found in wetlands. Species such as Canada geese are mainly herbivores and get the protein they need by feeding on wetland plants, which are often higher in protein than agricultural foods.

*-Matt Monda, former Wetland and
Riparian Area (WRAP) coordinator*



**DUCK STAMP
CONTEST**

Kansas Ducks Unlimited has announced the deadline and entry rules for the 1996 Waterfowl Habitat Stamp contest.

Contest entrants must be Kansas residents. The American widgeon must be the subject. Original artwork, one entry per artist, will be accepted, and must be 13 inches high by 18 inches wide, in any medium. The design must be matted and an acetate or other covering applied to protect the surface. The mat should be no larger than 18 x 23 inches. No scroll work or lettering may appear on the design. No design will be accepted in a frame or under glass.

Entries must be submitted no later than April 15, 1996 to The Finishing Touch, attn: Contest, 622 N. Broadway, Pittsburg, KS 66762. The contest will be held April 20 at the Kansas State Ducks Unlimited Convention in Emporia.

The Kansas Waterfowl Habitat Stamp, commonly called the Kansas Duck Stamp, was established by

the Kansas Legislature in 1987 to provide matching funds to the Department of Wildlife and Parks for waterfowl habitat development. Ducks Unlimited contracts with the department to select the stamp design and arrange publishing of prints and stamps.

-Shoup

**KDWP BIOLOGIST
HONORED**

The Wildlife Society -- a national organization of professional biologists -- has honored Robert D. Wood, Pratt, with its 1995 Jim McDonough Award. Wood is chief of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Park's Environmental Services Section.

The Jim McDonough Award was created to recognize a member of The Wildlife Society who is a certified wildlife biologist and is making a significant contribution to the wildlife profession by being active at the local and regional levels. The Wildlife Society announcement recognized Wood with the following statement:

"Bob Wood's career epitomizes dedication through more than three decades of service to the State of Kansas and its wildlife resources as a true professional and untiring champion of wildlife conservation. His work has included responsibility for statewide game surveys, agricultural liaison, the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, environmental reviews, and the endangered species regulatory protection program. Throughout his career, Bob

has maintained a commitment to continuing education and to The Wildlife Society. He has been a member since 1957, served the Kansas Chapter as its president, and currently is the president of the Central Mountain and Plains Section."

Wood's professional career has been marked by a long series of achievements that have improved conditions for wildlife but have resulted in little notoriety for himself. In addition to the honor, Wood also received a \$500 check for the award.

-The Wildlife Society

**BUCKSKINNERS AID
STATE FISHING LAKE**

The executive board of the Kansas Muzzleloaders Association (KMA) met July 22 and 23 at Kingman State Fishing Lake for their annual board meeting and third annual work day. About 12 buckskinners gathered at the lake Saturday morning to help area staff install more than 60 picnic tables and 40 fire rings as part of a campground development project. Members endured 100-degree temperatures and high humidity while welding chains to tables and pouring concrete anchors.

The work was completed late Saturday evening, just in time for an enormous covered-dish dinner. The remainder of the evening was filled with yarn-spinning and gun talk.

Sunday morning, several members tried their luck hunting squirrels on Byron Walker Wildlife Area. All felt

it was a good hunt, but unfortunately the heat and mosquitoes forced a short outing without a puff of smoke from the long rifles. The remainder of the day was spent with KMA business.

This was the third consecutive year that the KMA has held a work day at Byron Walker Wildlife Area (which adjoins Kingman State Fishing Lake). Previous projects have included the construction of floating goose nest structures and seed drying racks, repair of the bison pen and corral, and brush removal along the three miles of nature trails around the lake.

-Troy Smith, wildlife/park manager, Kingman SFL, Byron Walker WA

**HUNTERS HELP
HUNGRY**

Interested deer hunters can donate harvested deer to feed homeless and needy individuals and families through Hunters Helping the Hungry.

Frontier Meats of Halstead and Tiemeyer Meat Company of Wichita have once again agreed to donate their services for the project. Hunters interested in donating deer should take them to either of the two processing locations. Deer taken to Frontier Meats need to be field-dressed, and those taken to Tiemeyer must be field dressed and skinned.

For more information, or to provide financial assistance, contact Marc Murrell, Region 4 Office, 8420 N. Bdwy., Valley Center, KS 67147-0317, (316) 755-2711.

-Murrell

Correction

In the July/August issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks*, I referred to the Peter John Locks Award for inspirational handicapped persons (Page 19). However, the name is actually Peter John Loux. Sorry for the error.

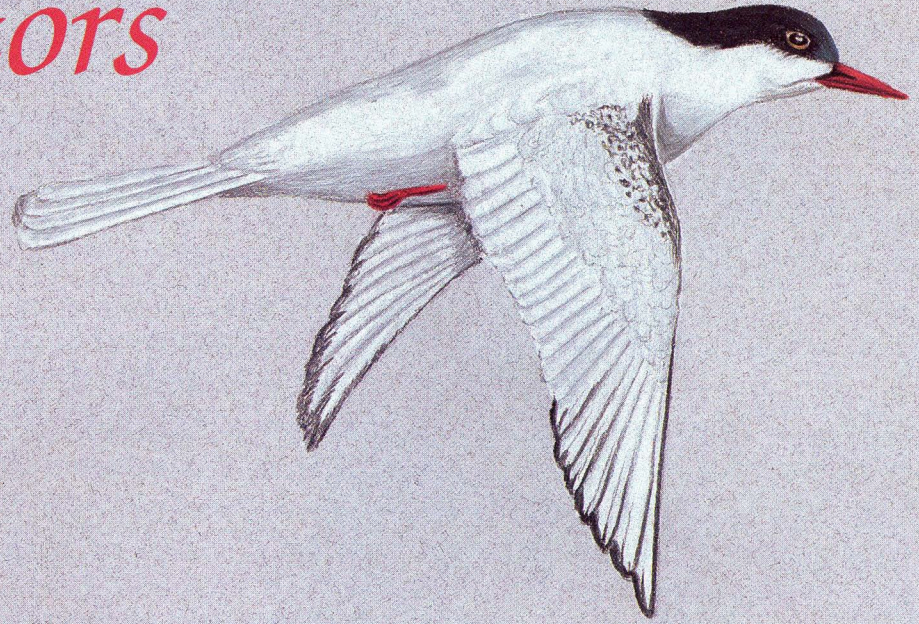
-Shoup

Nature's Navigators

Like people, most animals have home areas, called territories. These territories are often breeding or nesting grounds. The most amazing thing about these territories is how animals can find their way back to them. It doesn't seem to matter whether the animal has left the area on its own or whether it has been taken away, it always seems to find its way back home.

Birds are masters at this navigation. The Arctic tern, for example, flies more than 11,000 miles each fall and spring. After nesting (or hatching) north of the Arctic Circle, it flies down the western coasts of Europe and Africa and across the Antarctic Ocean to its summer grounds not far from the South Pole. Because the sun hardly ever sets in summers at the poles, the arctic tern sees more daylight than any other creature on Earth. And it never loses its way back home.

How do they do this? From



memory? Perhaps, but homing pigeons can be taken from their lofts and released in strange places 100 miles away and fly straight home. It is known that pigeons do not do as well on cloudy days, so maybe they use the sun. But how do they know where home is in relationship to the sun when they don't know which direction from home they have been taken?

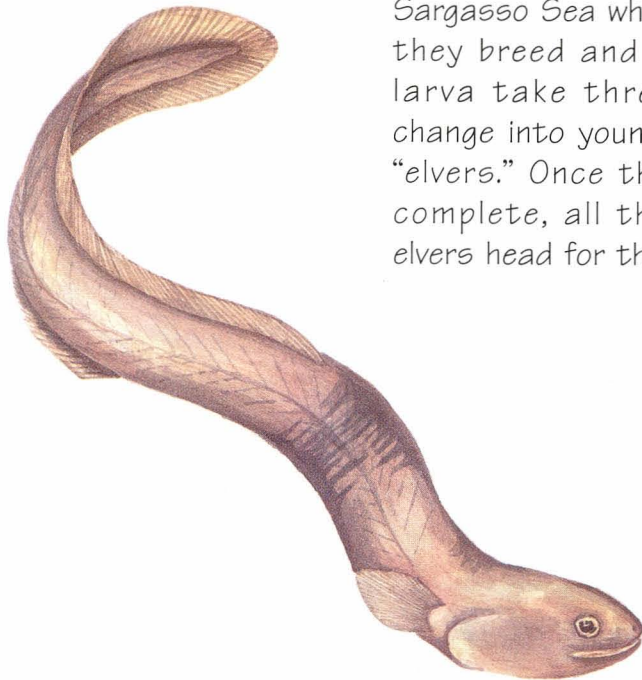
One of the most mysterious cases of homing navigation occurred when a scientist boxed up a Manx shearwater (a gull-like seabird) and sent it from its home on a British island to Massachusetts. The

bird had never been to North America before. It was released at Harvard University and within 12 days it was back in its burrow on Skokholm Island. It had travelled 3,050 miles -- 244 miles per day -- over open ocean, straight home.

Birds aren't the only great homing animals. Take the goby fish of the British West Indies. Each day after the ocean tide falls, the goby is trapped in small pools left on rocky shores. From its position, it has no way of knowing where the next pool is. Still, it leaps without error from one pool to the next until it finds the open ocean. Any mistake would leave

it sunbaked on the rocks.

Salmon are among the most famous navigators. Born in a specific portion of a stream, the young fish will stay within a few feet of that area for two to seven years, fighting the current. Then it will migrate from this small stream down through larger and larger streams until it reaches the ocean. After years at sea, the salmon will suddenly get the breeding urge and head directly home, perhaps a thousand miles away. Up one river into another and another and another it will travel until reaching that exact spot where it was born. There, it will breed and die. How does it know the way? Why does it do this?



Eels are just as amazing. Eels in the freshwater streams of Europe and eastern North American are almost identical, except that European eels have more vertebrae. Each autumn, all the eels on both continents migrate downstream to the Atlantic Ocean. Their destination is a place near Bermuda called the Sargasso Sea where, in spring, they breed and die. The eel larva take three years to change into young eels, called "elvers." Once the change is complete, all the European elvers head for the streams of

Europe. All the North American elvers head for the U.S. How do they know where to go? How do they know who goes where? This certainly can't be done from memory, or from use of the sun or stars.

Seals, sea turtles, green sunfish, albatross, and many, many other creatures display equally incredible navigation skills. How do they do it? A mysterious built-in compass or clock? Memory? Use of the stars or the sun? Some or all of these things may be used. But the fact is, navigation and migration are still great mysteries to science. Why must a female salmon -- bloated with eggs -- navigate 1,000 miles to some remote, fast flowing stream, the only place on Earth where she will allow them to be fertilized?

We may never know. With some things, we can only wonder and be amazed, admitting that nature has an order beyond our understanding.



Just An Old Shotgun

I slid the old shotgun from the faded vinyl case and shouldered 30 years of quail, prairie chicken and pheasant hunts. I opened the receiver bolt, and it snapped back with a pleasing clank that sounded like precision. Although it's a time-tested Browning Auto-5, it's the history behind the gun and the fact that it was a gift that makes it a valued possession.

I don't collect guns, but I have several I treasure — all hunting guns. The Remington 870 pump I bought when I was 15 is one. It was my first big purchase after working in a local cylinder factory all summer. It set me back \$175 (at \$2.42 an hour, about two weeks' wages) and as I look back, it was one of my better purchases. I carried that shotgun on countless days, hunting pheasants, quail, ducks and geese with Rex, my best friend from high school.

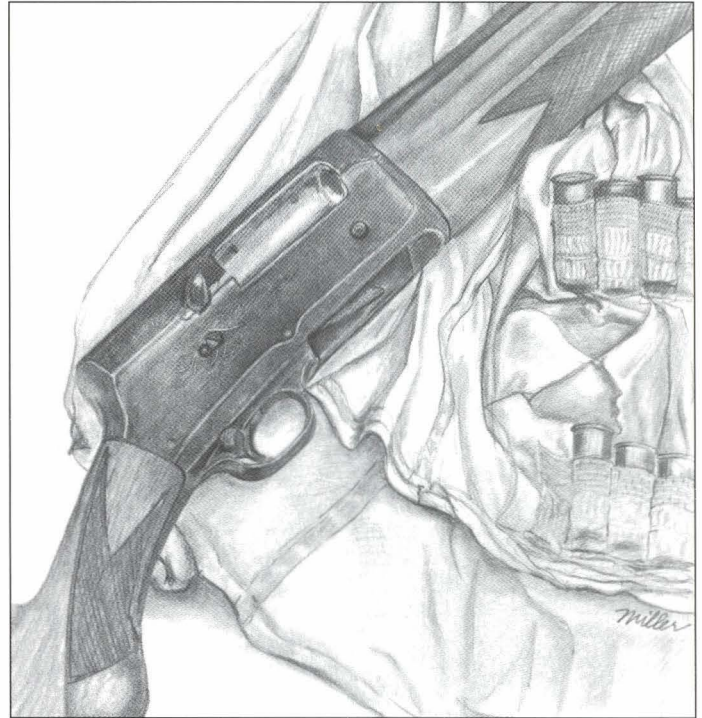
A Remington Model 700 .243 is another special gun. Mom and Dad gave it to me for Christmas when I was a junior. I killed my first deer with that rifle -- a nice muley buck. That was nearly 20 years ago, but I remember it like it was yesterday, especially the bad case of shakes I got after the shot. The rifle probably cost more than we could afford, but it seemed like the best gift in the world to me then. It still does.

Another rifle, a Remington Model 721 .30-06 belonged to my grandfather. I grew up mesmerized by Granddad's stories of hunting mule deer in the Rocky Mountains, and one my most prized possessions when I was 7 was a set of muley antlers from a buck Granddad killed with that rifle. I've never even shot the gun, but just shouldering it and looking through the old Weaver scope reminds me of Granddad.

I've since purchased a couple of new shotguns, but they aren't as special as those tied to family and friends. Each of the older guns holds memories of hunts, magical days and special people.

Last January, my wife's grandfather asked my wife if she thought I'd like to have his old Browning shotgun. When she relayed the question to me, I said yes without hesitation, afraid later that I appeared greedy or over-anxious. I remembered the gun from a quail hunt more than 12 years earlier.

Not long after we had been married, my wife and I were in her eastern Kansas hometown for the Christmas holidays. Jim either felt sorry for me, sitting through the usual formal gatherings, or at the insistence of my mother-in-law, he offered to take me quail hunting. We hunted on their small family farm in the heart of prime



quail country. On a cold, blustery day, we walked up several coveys. I remember the hump-back Auto-5 cradled in his hands, which he shot much better than I did mine. He reminisced about pheasant hunts in western Kansas years before, and he showed me his way of cleaning quail, one I still use today. We didn't shoot a limit between us, but I've never forgotten that day.

The old Belgian-made auto is a true classic, one made to last. It has some rust flecks, probably from sitting idle in the case for the last several years, and the stock shows the wear of briars, thickets, and thistle from many quail and pheasant hunts. The fine gun still shoots and shucks the shell as purely as it did 30 years ago, when Jim and Ella borrowed what probably seemed like a small fortune to purchase it. It would be a special gun under any circumstances, but the fact that he knew I'd appreciate it and wanted me to have it, makes it more so.

I've shown the gun to several envious hunting buddies, and I've hunted with it twice. But as I told Jim in a carefully-worded thank you letter, it will always be his gun. I'll just keep it for him. It will be well cared for, and I'll be sure to carry it several times each season. And maybe, if I'm lucky, someday I'll pass it on to someone who'll treasure it as much as Jim and I do. ♡

