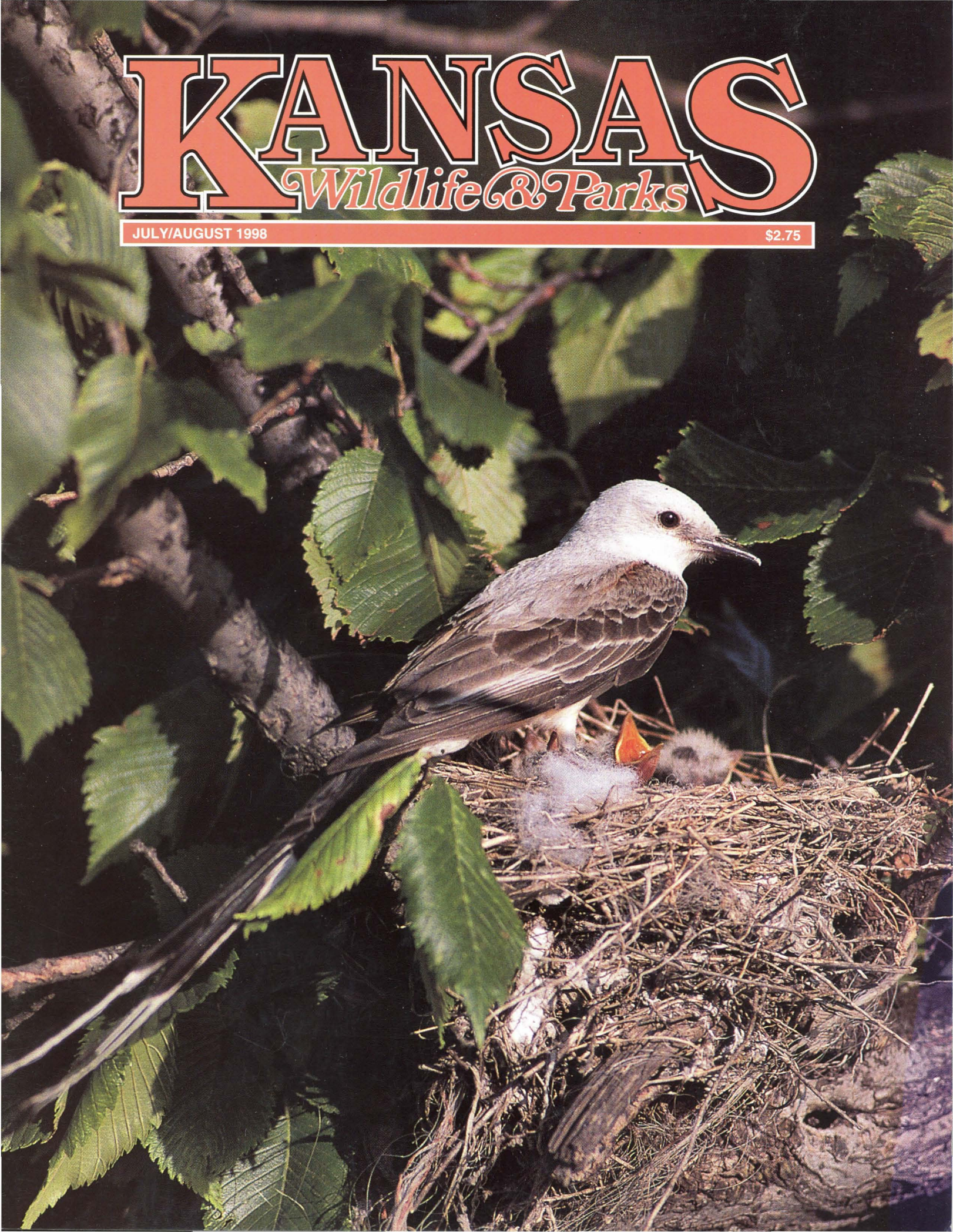


KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

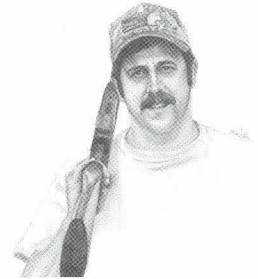
JULY/AUGUST 1998

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The View From Here



by Steve Williams

Kansas: Land Of Lakes?

Let's play word association. You say Kansas and I'll say whatever pops into my head. Kansas — Friendly people. Kansas — Pheasant and quail hunting. Kansas — Big whitetails. Kansas — Lakes . . . Lakes? Yes, lakes. Most people don't associate Kansas with water recreation, and it might be one of our best kept secrets.

There are 24 large reservoirs totaling 160,000 acres of water; 40 state fishing lakes — 5,500 acres of water; 200 community lakes — 13,000 acres of water; 50,000 private farm ponds; and 10,000 miles of streams. More than 100,000 boats are registered in Kansas.

Kansans love the water. Take a drive to your nearest state lake, community lake, or reservoir next weekend. You'll see all types of boats, from sailboards and sail boats, to personal watercraft, speed boats, ski boats and fishing boats. Our reliable winds make Kansas lakes popular with sailors and sailboarders. Only three rivers, the Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas, are open to the public. All other rivers and streams require landowner permission, but some polite asking can open a world of uncrowded stream floating and fishing opportunities.

Kansas state parks have adjusted to this growing recreational trend, improving boat ramps, adding sailboard and personal watercraft beaches, and erecting wind-warning devices. To help boaters enjoy safe waters, the department has stepped up its boating enforcement efforts, adding boating enforcement officers, who, along with conservation officers, patrol state waters. Courtesy boat check lanes are operated on select lakes during busy weekends to help boaters understand and comply with boating laws. However, with the large amount of water and the diverse types of boating activities available, it's impossible to have boating law enforcement present everywhere.

Boaters can make our waters safer by knowing and complying with all boating regulations. The department publishes a summary of boating laws and regulations. Every boater should read through this brochure and keep a copy in the boat.

The most important rule in boating safety is to wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD), or life jacket. In the past ten years, two-thirds of the people who died in Kansas boating-related accidents were not wearing PFDs. Be sure to fit a life jacket to each person on board. The department encourages everyone to wear a PFD, but for those not

required to wear one, an emergency situation is not the time to try to size and fit a life jacket. Remember, life jackets float, you don't!

Kansas is also among the first states to implement a boating education program. The program utilizes volunteer instructors for classroom courses, or offers the course through correspondence for convenience. It's an excellent program for all boaters, especially those new to boating. Youngsters 12-15 years old must complete this or another approved course before they can legally operate a personal watercraft alone.

Another issue of concern with the department is boating under the influence. Fifty percent of all boating-related accidents in Kansas involve alcohol. Operating a boat on busy waters under the influence of alcohol or drugs is dangerous for you, your boat partners, and other boaters. It's also illegal. Kansas law sets the alcohol blood content limit at .08. Conservation officers have been trained to perform field sobriety tests and operate preliminary breath testers. If you boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you not only risk lives, but you can be subjected to fines, loss of boating privileges, and even imprisonment. To help encourage safe, sober boating, you can participate in the department's "Sober Skipper" program. Here is what you can do:

1. Make sure you designate a skilled, non-drinking boat operator for the duration of your outing on the water.
2. If you choose to drink, refuse to take the helm and always wear a PFD while on deck.
3. Show your support for safe boating by displaying the Sober Skipper sticker.

Take a minute and read the *Kansas Boating Guide* included in this issue. There's lots of useful information included, and you'll learn something even if you've been boating for years. And consider enrolling in a boating education class. It not only will help make your boating safer and more enjoyable, it may make you eligible for a discount on your boat insurance. Boating on Kansas' wealth of streams, lakes and reservoirs is a great family activity. Let's keep it that way. This summer, boat safe and sober, wear a life jacket, and make your day at the lake fun for everyone.

Steve Williams

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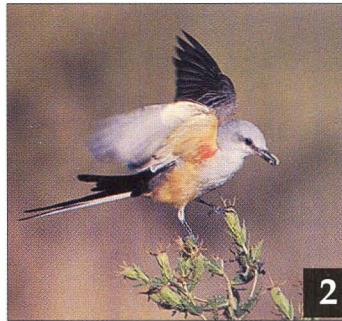
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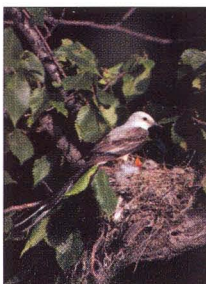
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About the covers

Front: A scissor-tailed flycatcher checks the nest before returning to the work of feeding its young. Mike Blair filmed the action with a 600mm lens, @ f/8, 1/250 sec. **Back:** Kansas winds make our lakes perfect for sailing. Gene Brehm photographed this scene at El Dorado Reservoir with a 400mm lens, @ f/16, 1/500 sec.





Sky Dancer

by Kevin Becker,
fisheries technician, Pratt Fish Hatchery

photos by Mike Blair

After spending the winter in Mexico, the scissor-tailed flycatcher returns to the open prairie to nest. The subtle rosy flanks and the long, flowing tail feathers make it a truly spectacular bird to view.



Springtime is a season when nature experiences birth, growth and development. For birdwatchers, spring welcomes a wide array of neotropical migrants back to their nesting grounds. Neotropical birds winter in Central and South America, returning to North America to breed and rear their young. One of the earliest and most recognizable migrants we'll see in the spring is the scissor-tailed flycatcher. Kansans can anticipate observing scissortails from early April until their departure in October.

Scissortails spend the winter from central Mexico to Panama, although some small numbers regu-

larly winter in southern Florida. The breeding range of the scissortail is concentrated in the southcentral United States extending from southeastern Colorado and southern Nebraska south to eastern New Mexico and southern Texas.

The scissor-tailed flycatcher is a member of the genus *Tyrannus*, the tyrant flycatchers. Other members of the genus common to Kansas include the western kingbird, eastern kingbird and great-crested flycatcher. These birds are considered tyrants because of their aggressive territorial behavior when breeding. During this time they are fearless and will attack any intruder, regardless of size —

including hawks, owls, crows and mammalian predators. *Tyrannus forficata* is the Latin name for the scissortail. The species name *forficata* is derived from the word *forfex* meaning scissors, describing the bird's long, forked tail. While in flight, the tail is often spread similar to a pair of scissors. Other common names include Texas bird-of-paradise and swallowtail flycatcher.

The scissortail measures up to 14 inches long, more than half of which is tail. The long tail streamers are black with white outer tail feathers. Upper parts of the flycatcher's body are pale gray, and the wings are sooty black. Its whitish under parts are complemented by salmon-pink



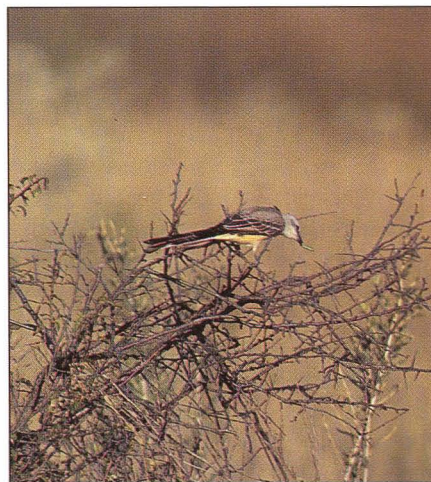
Most of the scissortail's diet consists of insects, which are often caught on the wing. However, the scissortail's diet includes more terrestrial insects, such as grasshoppers, than that of other flycatchers.

sides and flanks. Like most Tyranids, the scissortail has a concealed scarlet patch of feathers on its crown. This patch of feathers may be raised during aggressive encounters. Immature scissortails don't have long tails like their parents and may be mistaken for western kingbirds. Young scissortails can be distinguished from western kingbirds by their pink sides, white tail, and the lack of yellow underparts.

The scissor-tailed flycatcher is a common transient and summer resident in southern and eastern Kansas, becoming less numerous northward in the state. They prefer semi-open country, grassland and farmland with scattered or isolated trees. Scissortails are commonly seen perched upright on telephone wires, fences, posts and bare branches, awaiting an appetizing meal to flutter by. When an insect flies by, scissortails will swoop out and snatch their quarry.

Like most flycatchers, the majority of the scissortails' food is captured in flight, but an occasional morsel is plucked from the ground or foliage while the bird hovers. Flycatchers are beneficial to agricul-

ture, eating many unwanted pests. The scissortail's menu includes grasshoppers, crickets, bees, wasps, moths, flies, caterpillars, spiders and occasionally small fruits and berries. Scissortails consume more terrestrial insects than other Kansas flycatchers. Some studies have shown that grasshoppers and crickets comprise more than 50 percent of their diet at times. Hard body parts of these terrestrials such as legs and wings are difficult for flycatchers to digest and are often



Scissortails prefer semi-open grassland with isolated trees for nesting.

regurgitated as small pellets.

The scissor-tailed flycatcher is an agile flyer, able to maneuver gracefully with its long, elegant tail. Normally, flight is fast with rapid wing beats, and its tail is folded together. During the breeding season, the male scissortail performs an aerial acrobatic courtship display known as the "sky dance." The male attempts to attract the attention of a prospective mate by ascending high into the air. After reaching nearly 100 feet, he plunges a quarter of the way down, and then swoops back up. While chattering loudly, the male repeats this zig-zag

course. Finally the male soars high up in the air and begins to somersault backwards toward the ground. The male opens and closes its elaborate tail feathers during this display to further entice its prospective mate. Males will perform this aerial ballet throughout the breeding season, sometimes until eggs hatch.

Once mating has ceased, the female builds a nest 7-30 feet off the ground on a horizontal limb. Scissortails often favor isolated trees as their nesting locales. Man-made structures may also be used such as towers, bridge supports, crossbars on utility poles and windmills. The nest is 4 1/2-6 inches in diameter and is a bulky, open cup of twigs and weeds lined with soft fibrous material such as hair, rootlets and plant down.

Generally, three to five brown-spotted, cream-white eggs are laid. The female incubates for about 14 days. During this time, the female develops a brood patch on her breast where feathers are lacking and body heat can be more efficiently transferred to the eggs. Throughout incubation, the male defends the pair's territory and brings food to the female.

Scissortails are extremely noisy and aggressive as they ward off predators with loud, scolding shrills. Other vocalizations include a repeated *kw-quee* and harsh *kecks* and *kews*. After hatching, both parents will bring food to the nestlings, but the bulk of the nurturing is done by the female.

The young scissortails fledge in about 14 days. They remain with the parents until the family unit is ready to migrate southward. A second brood may be raised and, if so, the male cares for the fledglings from the first nest.

Following the breeding season, scissortails become less territorial and begin to congregate at roost trees in the evenings. The congregations will continue to grow until migration. The birds will disperse in all directions during the day, foraging for food, then returning at dusk to roost. In the core of their range, a single roost may hold as many as 1,000 birds, but 100 to 300 is more common. While the scissortail is common in Kansas, these large concentrations are more likely in Texas and Oklahoma.



Fiercely territorial after establishing a nest, scissortails will defend against much larger intruders. Here a scissortail harasses a prairie falcon that has ventured too close.

Natural predators, habitat destruction and even poaching threaten scissortails. Poachers may kill scissortails for their tail feathers, which are used to make Native American head dresses and peyote fans. A peyote fan is an arrangement of feathers resembling a tightly bound feather duster, and is used in Native American religious ceremonies. Approximately 80 scissortail feathers are required to make one fan.

Habitat destruction is by far the

most important biological issue to the scissortails existence. Loss of habitat in North America, as well as Central and South America, threatens many of the neotropical species. Currently, scissortail populations appear stable and in good health. We are fortunate to be able to enjoy the spectacular "sky dances" of this magnificent bird. Sound habitat management practices will ensure future generations can do the same. ♡



WILDLIFE OFFICER UNDERCOVER



by anonymous

Catching poachers is a daunting task. They often work at night in remote areas, and many operate in groups that look out for one another. In some situations, the best way to stop them is to infiltrate the operation with an undercover officer.

You've heard it before, "There's more than one way to skin a cat." In wildlife law enforcement, there are two main strategies, overt and covert. Each has its own time and place. Most people are familiar with the overt option, which is uniformed conservation officers (COs) out there beating the bushes, investigating and catching as many violators as possible. And for the most part, Kansas officers are very successful, due to their dedication, skill, and training. This is no small task given that they are out numbered by violators and the vast size of the average assigned area. COs have

learned that they have to vary their daily routine, as well as how they operate to stay one jump ahead in the game. They work at all hours of the day and night, weekends, and holidays. As bad as this sounds, I would venture to say that most COs think like I do. I've been doing this for more than 15 years and can't imagine doing anything else.

Since COs are spread so thin, we spend a lot of time trying to create proper deterrent. We know we can't catch them all, so we try to convince others to simply not break the law in the first place. How do we do that? Well, some people are easier to convince than others. For some,

believing they could get caught at any given time is enough reason not to violate. We like to think that we are at least taking the fun out of breaking the law.

Unfortunately, there will always be a few who are going to violate no matter what. These are the hard-core violators. They have discovered that some wildlife has a cash value, and they don't care about the resources, the laws, or the people of this state. To them it is very simple — money! These people are in to shortcuts, and very often if it isn't wildlife they're exploiting, it's other things, like drugs. The trade in illegal wildlife is second only to the

drug trade in total dollars.

Many of these people cannot be caught through conventional, overt means. They are often part of tight-knit groups that watch out for each other, making it difficult for the local officer to catch them. The officer may know of the activity, but he just can't do much about it. Enter the undercover wildlife officer.

Working out of a section called Special Ops, undercover officers target individuals or groups who are having a major impact on the wildlife resource. Often we are referred to as the "most feared and least seen" game wardens. I can live with that.

Many people are interested in what it is to be an undercover game warden. I'm going to attempt to answer that. Obviously, I can't give away all the trade secrets, but I hope you can get a feel for it.

The first question most people ask is, "Isn't it dangerous?" The short answer is, yeah, I suppose it is. From the time I became a CO, I've been pounded with statistics on how dangerous being a wildlife officer is, and undercover work is much more so. It's just one of those things you can't spend a lot of time worrying about. But you'd also better never forget. I'd like to think my training and experience gives the suspects more to fear than me. None of this is of any comfort to my family, though, who worry the most. This kind of work often takes me far away from home for long periods of time. And it is common to not be able to contact them for days. For them, this can be nerve wracking. It takes a stable home life and a heck of a supportive spouse to get through it.

Covert projects can take on different forms. Some are simple, one-time buy busts. Others are more complicated and can last years. Cases have a way of going off in any number of different directions. It's amazing just how many nuts will fall out of a tree if you shake it hard enough. Sometimes we discover that the case is bigger than anyone ever imagined.

Undercover work can be kind of



Box turtles purchased by an undercover officer in Kansas then sold to an illegal dealer in Louisiana. The illegal reptile trade is large. The trophy bucks pictured on the opposite page were killed illegally in another state. A Kansas undercover officer assisted.

like being a pinch hitter. Sooner or later you'll get the call. A meeting is scheduled to go over all the intelligence information, usually gathered by the local conservation officer: names, addresses, physical descriptions, vehicles, associates, hangouts, and complaints about what may be going on. Then a plan is formulated, including dates, times, equipment needed, and most importantly, a good cover. Covers can be simple or they can be elaborate. Once I was told to be at the airport first thing the next morning. I was being flown to Springfield, Ill. to pick up an entire cover including driver's license, hunting licenses, various other government documents, as well as a fictitious job and residential items. Sometimes it happens that fast.

One of my first cases involved trying to infiltrate a group of suspected deer poachers we believed were selling the meat, as well as committing other violations. There always seem to be other violations. On this case, I had a partner, which is a luxury not always available.

We started out trying to get our foot in the door. This is not as easy as it

might sound. We knew that these individuals liked to frequent taverns, so with a physical description of the main suspects and their vehicles, we hit the bars. Being inconspicuous in a bar isn't too tough, but trying to find and meet your target in a busy bar can be. Our first attempts were in vain. Anyone paying attention probably thought we were quite the barflies because we went to every place in town. Finally we went to one bar on our usual route and noticed a vehicle that matched. Inside we spent more than two hours trying to identify our suspect. We were looking for a guy with a full beard and long hair. Nobody matched. At closing time,



It is illegal to sell wild reptiles for pet shop trade. Milk snakes are popular with illegal dealers.

we were watching the vehicle when a man and woman approached. It was now or never. We went over and asked the couple about the location of another club in town. It seemed like a reasonable question, even though we knew the location of every bar in town all too well. It turned out the man was, indeed, our target. He had gotten a complete shave and haircut only that day.

Almost immediately we were offered drugs and an invitation to go to another tavern and talk. It didn't take long for the conversation to turn to hunting. If this guy was doing half the things he claimed, we were in business. Not too long into the conversation, his girlfriend piped up and announced that if we were game wardens, they would see to it that we ended up in the bottom of a well. I don't think Bonnie cared for us, but Clyde was spewing information like crazy. We confirmed everything we suspected was probably true.

We stayed at the second bar until it closed at 3 a.m., going to the bathroom a lot just to get rid of a drink, or at least water it down. After all, it's important to keep a clear head at all times. After the bar closed, our suspect took us out to spotlight for deer. We spotlighted until dawn with mixed success. It made for a long day.

On this and two other trips back to the area, we were sold several

deer, usually two at a time. We had the main suspects and a few others ready for the sack, and we were ready to end this case. But we needed to wait for some cases in other parts of the state to be completed. Takedowns are often done simultaneously so suspects in other cases don't get suspicious.

Then one of the main suspects called to say that he had six deer to sell. Something stunk about this. He had too many deer and he wanted to meet in a new location. When we went to make the buy, we were loaded for bear. I always figure that if someone gets hurt, I'm not going to be the last one. But the sale went off without a hitch, and we made the bust soon after. All of the suspects pled guilty to various charges, including spotlighting deer, taking deer out of season, and sale of deer.

That's the way I like these cases to go. All of our covert officers are schooled extensively, starting with a course from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia and followed by continuous training covering a variety of subjects. During our investigations, we try to make the cases as lock-tight as possible. To date, I have never had to appear in court to argue a case. All suspects have pled guilty.

Sometimes we are called on to assist with a case in another state. Wildlife agencies across the country work together, as we did in a recent case. The call came in, "Can you be ready to go on an illegal guided deer hunt in two days?" Let's see, an all-expense guided deer hunt — yeah, I think I can handle that. Sure, it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it. Right?

I worked alone on this case, which made the long drive to the capital city of this state even longer. There

I met with state and federal authorities to go over the intelligence. This case involved state residents guiding nonresidents and tagging deer with resident tags. I was given a list of possible guides and clients from across the U.S. and was told to memorize as many names as possible. No problem, right? There were almost 40 names on the list! Then I was told I would be staying at the house of one of the suspects.

Luckily I had one more day before I was to be at the hunting camp. I spent all my time studying the reports and trying to figure out how to keep all the hunters, guides, tags, and their deer separate.

The next day I arrived at the camp. The other hunters were arriving, as well. Eventually there were 26 hunters from all over the U.S. in camp. To say that it was a note-taking nightmare is putting it mildly. Over the next few days, I made written and recorded notes, all carefully concealed in sometimes unmentionable places. But there was one piece of evidence that proved to be invaluable, and no one seemed to mind — I videotaped the whole thing!

All of the hunters killed at least one deer, and almost all of them were illegal, including mine. Taking a deer always sounds fun to those of us who hunt, but I admit that this one made me sick. Instead of going to legal hunters, most of these deer fell to greed. These so-called guides collected \$2,000 from each hunter. You do the math. The intelligence reports indicated that this had been going on for years. This was confirmed by many of the participants who I talked to. This case was only recently completed, but I understand that all suspects may have pled guilty.

An undercover officer has to be willing to play many different parts in this business. "Fitting in" is all important. Sometimes this calls for dressing down — way down. And sometimes it calls for dressing up to look like some kind of high roller. I've had to spend days looking and smelling like the people I'm working, and I've passed myself off



The containers in this photo hold a just a few of the reptiles and amphibians warehoused by the Louisiana dealer.

as vice president of a company. It all pays the same.

Poaching in Kansas takes many forms, and deer are not the only targets. Some people attach more value to species like deer because they are pretty to look at and they are a valued game species. Nature makes no such judgments, and as a wildlife agency, neither can we. No one species is any more or less important than another. They all have a place.

That's why when I got the call about this last case, I was more than willing to get started. This one involved infiltrating the illegal reptile trade. I have to admit that this one of the easiest cases I've worked, mostly because the suspects had never been investigated and, I guess, they thought they never would be.

My first target was a guy suspected of dealing primarily in box turtles, both buying and selling. When I went up to his front door, I noticed some buckets and tubs that had box turtles in them. In game warden school, we call that a clue.

Over the course of about a year, I bought hundreds of turtles from this guy. (Most of the turtles were released back to the wild.) As often happens, the case started to reveal players above and below this guy. Soon we had identified many of the main collectors that were selling to him, as well as the larger buyer that he was selling to.

Before long, I was buying from everyone and selling to everyone. We used their own illegal animals to buy and sell back and forth and then released as many as possible along the way. Much of the attention was now focused on the main buyer who turned out to be a major reptile and amphibian dealer in Louisiana. After all, he had created much of this market. We later estimated that he was doing \$300,000 a year in business. He had a business location complete with storage, computer equipment, and several employees.

Up until now, I had only been dealing with him over the phone and through the mail — yes the

mail. He told me that he did it all the time. He also told me he would buy every reptile and amphibian I could lay my hands on, in any number. He said he could handle hundreds at a time. I knew I had to meet this guy.

At the same time I was working this case, other officers were working reptile dealers across the state. When we were ready to close out all of the cases, it was decided that I would go to Louisiana with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent to make a final sale. As luck would have it, I just happened to have a couple of hundred turtles on hand.

We told the dealer that were coming down to do some fishing, and I would stop in to meet him and unload these turtles. He bought it. First we had to go to the Federal Courthouse in New Orleans to secure warrants. Then a team, including federal agents and Louisiana wildlife officers, was assembled. Everyone was given an assignment. The sale was made, followed by the bust. Both went off without any problems. After the bust, I stayed on hand. At first I could tell the man was less than pleased with me. He probably felt betrayed and maybe a little silly. I make no apologies for what I do. This guy had it coming. Eventually he lightened up. In fact, he was so convinced of his guilt that when asked to write a statement, he said, "Can I just write on here, what ever you guys say I did, I did?" All suspects in this case pled guilty, some to felony charges.

Undercover wildlife law enforcement will always be a valuable and necessary tool in the fight against



Box turtles and other reptiles delivered to an out-of-state dealer were mailed in boxes marked "Live Tropical Fish."

wildlife crimes. It's definitely not for everyone. If you are after fame and glory, this is probably not the job for you. After all, we have to remain anonymous. We are kind of like the crazy uncle who no one talks about. I wrote this with the intent that it not be just for or about me, but rather for and about all Kansas conservation officers, particularly the ones in Special Ops. You know who you are, the anonymous ones. ♡

Crime Doesn't Pay

Wildlife officers are sometimes frustrated when wildlife crimes are not taken as seriously as other crime. However, attitudes are gradually changing. In the illegal reptile trade case, the dealer, Terry Stevens of Thibodaux, La., received some pretty hefty fines. Stevens pleaded guilty to violations of the Lacey Act -- interstate purchase or sale of wildlife taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of state law. In the United State District Court in Louisiana, Stevens was fined \$500, placed on probation for three years, and required to make a restitution payment to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks of \$7,624.



Benedictine Bottoms

text and photos by Michael A. Watkins
wildlife biologist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Part of the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Benedictine Bottoms is a 2,110-acre wildlife area in its infancy. However, it is already showing promise. Managed by the Department of Wildlife and Parks, the wildlife area will provide excellent opportunities for hunting and wildlife viewing.



It's early spring and more than 20,000 ducks are feeding on aquatic vegetation and resting on the wetlands at Benedictine Bottoms. Several species of shore birds are scurrying on the mud flats in search of invertebrates. Waders such as great blue herons and egrets make slow, calculated moves as they stalk small fish and amphibians. The birds are taking a break and recuperating before continuing on their long trip north to nest and perpetuate the species. The spring migration is in full swing, and the Bottoms has come alive with avian activity.

Just a few short years ago, Benedictine Bottoms was 2,110 acres of farmland that was annually planted to row crops. Today it is quickly evolving into one of the premier wildlife areas in the state. Benedictine Bottoms is located approximately 2 miles north of Atchison along the Missouri River. The area received its name from the religious community associated with Benedictine College and the Benedictine Abbey, which once owned a large portion of the land.

The area is part of the Missouri River Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project administered by the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers. The project's purpose is to restore approximately 48,000 acres of wetland and riparian habitat in Kansas, Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska. This is a portion of the half-million acres of fish and wildlife habitat that was destroyed when the Corps constructed the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project from 1912 to 1980. All of the mitigation lands are to be purchased by the Corps from willing landowners. Congress authorized the mitigation project in 1986 and funding was secured in 1990.

Development of Benedictine

Bottoms began immediately after the area was purchased and has been a perfect example of several agencies working together to achieve a common goal. A Corps wildlife biologist and forester spearheaded revegetation of the area, but the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Kansas State and Extension Forestry and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided critical input into the development plan. The Corps is funding development of the site and will remain the landowner but once development is complete, the area will be maintained and operated by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

During the last four years, the area has gone through a dramatic transformation. The Corps has planted more than 175,000 tree and shrub seedlings on 550 acres, and approximately 750 acres have been



Most of the area that is now Benedictine Bottoms was once farmed. To begin the restoration of the area to wetland/prairie and riparian habitat, native grasses and legumes were planted on 750 acres.

planted to a mixture of native grasses and legumes. The trees were planted in large blocks and interspersed with grassland habitat. Edges of the tree plantings were planted with several rows of shrubs. The shrubs will provide a transition

zone between the woodland and wetland prairie habitats. In addition, food plots and annual weed strips surround the woody plantings. These will serve as firebreaks when the wetland prairie compartments are burned every three to four years.

According to Ken Davidson, a forester with the Corps' Kansas City District, the tree plantings are progressing quite well. "We selected water-tolerant tree and shrub species that will adapt to the site and provide quality wildlife habitat," he said. "The combination of bottomland hardwoods and shrubs will provide mast as well as escape and winter cover."

A mixture of native grasses including big bluestem, Indian grass, Eastern gama grass and switchgrass along with wildflowers and legumes was planted. This wetland prairie habitat will provide valuable nesting and escape cover, as well as a source of food.

The native grass plantings have done extremely well. The seed germination and plant growth rate has been phenomenal. During the first year, mowing to control weeds and prescribed burns accelerated the



On more than 500 acres, 175,000 tree and shrub seedlings were planted. The trees were interspersed with native grassland plantings to provide optimum wildlife habitat.



Dikes and water control structures allow the management of 16 wetland units on 450 acres. Electric pumps allow managers to fill wetlands during critical nesting and migration periods. The area is expected to attract thousands of migrating waterfowl and shorebirds.

development of native grass stands. Many of the individual plants developed seed heads during the first or second growing season. Native grass plantings normally do not reach this stage of maturity until the third or fourth growing season.

In addition, 16 wetland management units were constructed using low profile earthen fill levees with associated water-level control structures. These units will provide more than 450 surface acres of quality wetland habitat. The large number of wetland units will allow the area to be managed to benefit a maximum number of wildlife species. Some of the units will be operated as permanent marshes, which contain shallow water year-round. Others will be managed as seasonal wetlands or moist-soil management units. They will be drained during the late spring or early summer to allow wetland plants to grow. These units will then be flooded in the fall to provide food for migrating waterfowl.

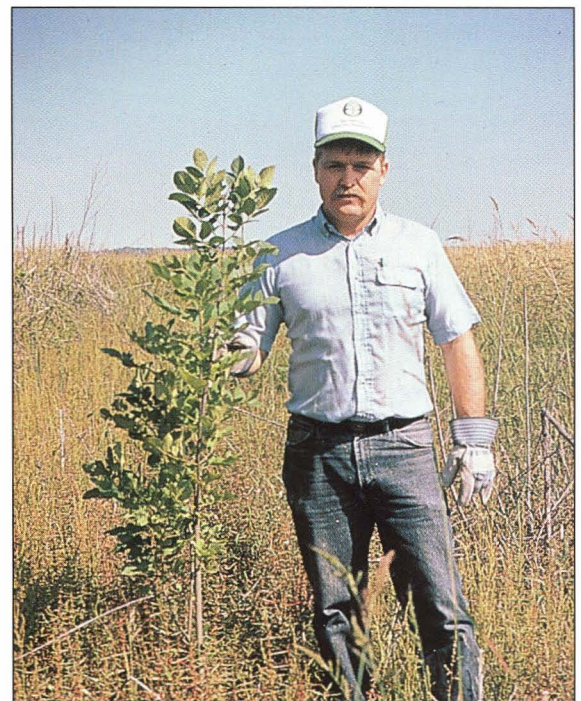
Three wells and pumps were installed at the site to provide max-

imum flexibility with managing the wetlands. The electric pumps and reliable wells will allow the area manager to fill the wetland at critical times of the year. In addition, these facilities will ensure that the wetlands are full of water, providing critical habitat when other areas in the region are dry due to lack of rainfall.

The majority of the work was completed in the spring of 1997, and the wetlands were flooded for the first time last fall. According to Kirk Thompson of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the Benedictine Bottoms project is progressing as anticipated. "From a wildlife standpoint, it really looks good right now," he said. "Everything is new, young and fresh and ready to produce exactly what wildlife needs."

One of the unique aspects of this project is that biology students from Benedictine

College, under the direction of Dr. Daniel Bowen and Dr. Martin Simon, are monitoring and documenting the evolution of habitat



The restoration project started four years ago, planting trees, shrubs and grasses. This is a green ash during the second growing season.



While it may be 20-25 years before Benedictine reaches its full potential, it is already providing a great place for wildlife. More than 130 species of birds have been documented on the area already. Tentative plans include hunting by special permit in 1998.

quality at the site. More than 100 students from the college have spent the past three summers collecting data on the biodiversity of the area.

"The project has offered students a living lab. The work is real and means something to the people making decisions about the area and how the river is managed," Dr. Bowen said. "We jumped into the project from ground-zero. Because of that, there will be a continuum that we can study until Benedictine Bottoms becomes whatever it becomes 100 years from now."

The students have documented more than 130 species of birds at the site, and more than 70 species have nested there during the last four years. Bowen estimates there were only seven to 10 nesting species in

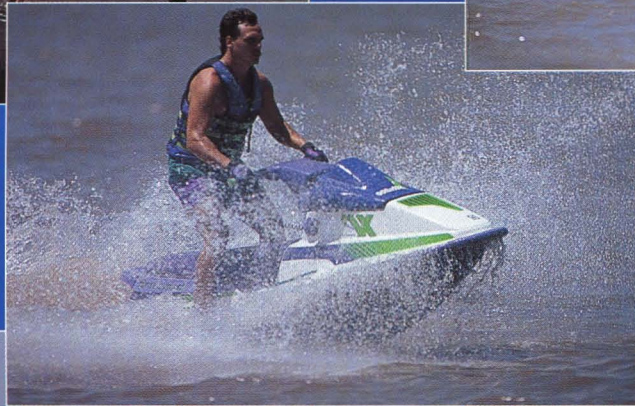
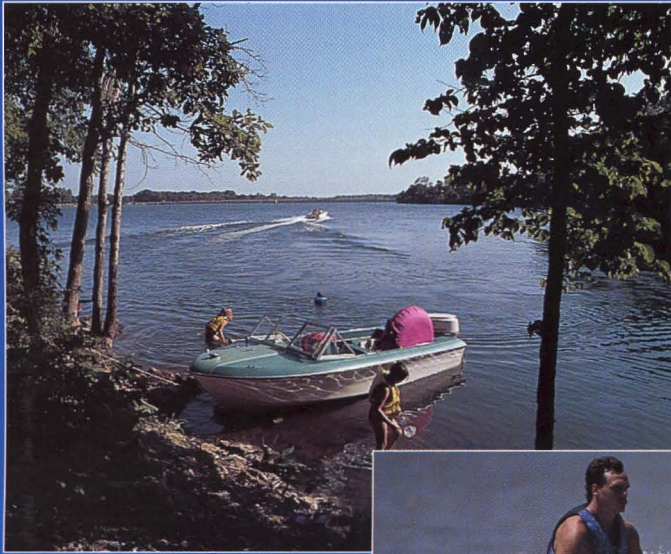
the area before the project began. The study has documented rare and endangered species that many thought were no longer in the area. In addition, sightings of deer, raccoons, frogs, songbirds, pheasants, quail, and hawks are increasing. Plant diversity has also mushroomed since the area was created. Students have collected and identified more than 100 species of upland and wetland plants.

Benedictine Bottoms is open to the public, but motorized vehicles are not allowed on the area. A parking area has been constructed, and hikers, sightseers, birdwatchers, and photographers are welcome to use and enjoy the site. According to Thompson, "We hope to open the area to hunting in 1998, after the Department of Wildlife and Parks

assumes management of the site, but it will be open by permit to prevent overuse of the area." It is likely a small portion of the area will be designated as a refuge during the hunting season.

It will probably take 20 to 25 years for Benedictine Bottoms to approach its maximum potential. But judging from the preliminary study by Benedictine College and the large numbers of waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds that used the wetlands during the 1997 fall migration, the area is already providing quality habitat for a diverse number of wildlife species. For more information about the area call the Department of Wildlife and Parks at (785) 367-7811. ♡

Kansas Boating Guide





Boating By The Law

by Mike Miller
editor, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

With so many boaters on Kansas waters, it is imperative that boat operators know and comply with laws and regulations. They are designed to make boating safe and fun for everyone involved.

It was a beautiful spring morning, and I was on my way to Kanopolis Reservoir. I could hardly drive the speed limit — the crappie were in the shallows and biting like crazy. Finally, Kanopolis Dam was visible, and I turned left into the state park. As I made the turn into the boat ramp parking lot, though, I was a little unnerved. A line of boats waited to launch, and several law enforcement officers were standing with clip boards as boaters scrambled through their boats. What were they looking for? Drugs?

My worries were soon laid to rest, as I learned it was a courtesy boat check — something department conservation officers conduct regularly at reservoirs through the summer. An officer politely approached and explained the situation to me and while he called off items, I located them for him. Current registration and visible numbering on boat hull — check; life jackets, accessible and serviceable — check; throwable device — check; fire extinguisher, charged — check; horn or sound-making device — check. Whew! Everything was in order. If I had been missing a required item, the courtesy check would have saved me a ticket, had I been checked later on the water. It only took a few minutes and gave me peace of mind that I was legally and safely equipped.

More than 100,000 boats are registered in Kansas, and there are certain equipment items required by law, depending on length and type of power source. The first step any boat owner must take is registering the boat with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. All boats powered by gasoline, diesel, and electric motors or sail must be registered and numbered — sailboards and personal watercraft included. Boaters must have Certificate of Number on board at all times.

Boats can be registered by obtaining an application from your marine dealer, the county clerk's office or the nearest Wildlife and Parks office. A fee of \$15.50 for boats less than 16 feet long, or

\$18.50 for boats 16 feet and longer must accompany the application. The registration will need to be renewed every three years. If a boat is sold, lost or stolen, the owner is required to notify the department within 15 days.

The certificate of number should be on board at all times, and registration number and decals are required on the boat hull. Numbers must be vertical block characters at least 3 inches tall that read from left to right, and they must contrast with the color of the boat hull. The registration decal must be displayed throughout the three-year registration period. A new decal will be issued when the registration is renewed.

All boats must have one type I, II, III or V personal flotation device (PFD) for each person on board or being towed. PFDs must be the proper size, in serviceable condition and readily accessible. An unserviceable PFD might have broken fastening devices, webbing straps that are torn or missing, fabric tears that have resulted in loss of buoyant material or buoyant material that is hardened or contaminated. A serviceable PFD is structurally sound and free of rotted or corroded components.



A day on the lake is relaxing, but it can also be dangerous if laws aren't followed and a little common sense isn't mixed in. Wearing your life jacket may save your life.

To be readily accessible, PFDs must be plainly visible to passengers in an area that can be reached in an emergency without opening a compartment or reaching under a portion of the boat's hull. Wrapping or packaging material must be removed. Type V PFDs are a special use PFD and must be worn at all times to be legal.

Children 12 years old and younger are required to wear a type I, II, III, or V PFD at all times while on board or being towed. Boats 16 feet long and longer, except canoes and kayaks, must also have a Type IV throwable flotation device that is serviceable and not in an enclosed compartment.

For equipment requirements, motorboats are separated into classes by length. Class A includes all motorboats less than 16 feet long. Class 1 includes boats 16 feet long but less than 26 feet long. Class 2



An approved personal flotation device must be accessible for each person on board and being towed. All persons under age 13 must wear a PFD at all times.

includes boats 26 feet long but less than 40 feet long. Class 3 includes motor boats longer than 40 feet.

Fire extinguishers are required on most motorboats. Class A boats must have a least one type BI fire extinguisher if: the boat has an inboard engine; closed compartments under thwarts and seats where portable fuel tanks may be stored, including livewells and storage compartments; double bottomed construction not sealed to the hull or not completely filled with flotation material; closed compartments in which combustible or flammable materials are stored; or permanently installed fuel tanks.

Class 1 boats must have at least one type BI fire extinguisher on board.

Class 2 boats must have two type BI fire extinguishers or one type BII fire extinguisher on board. If the boat has a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) approved built-in or affixed fire extinguisher in the motor area, only one type BI is required.

Class 3 boats must have at least three type B, size 1 fire extinguishers or one type BI and one type BII fire extinguisher on board. If the boat has a built-in or affixed fire extinguisher, two type BI fire extinguishers or one type BII are



Boating enforcement officers patrol lakes to enforce regulations. Read through the regulations summary and double-check your equipment before you go.

required.

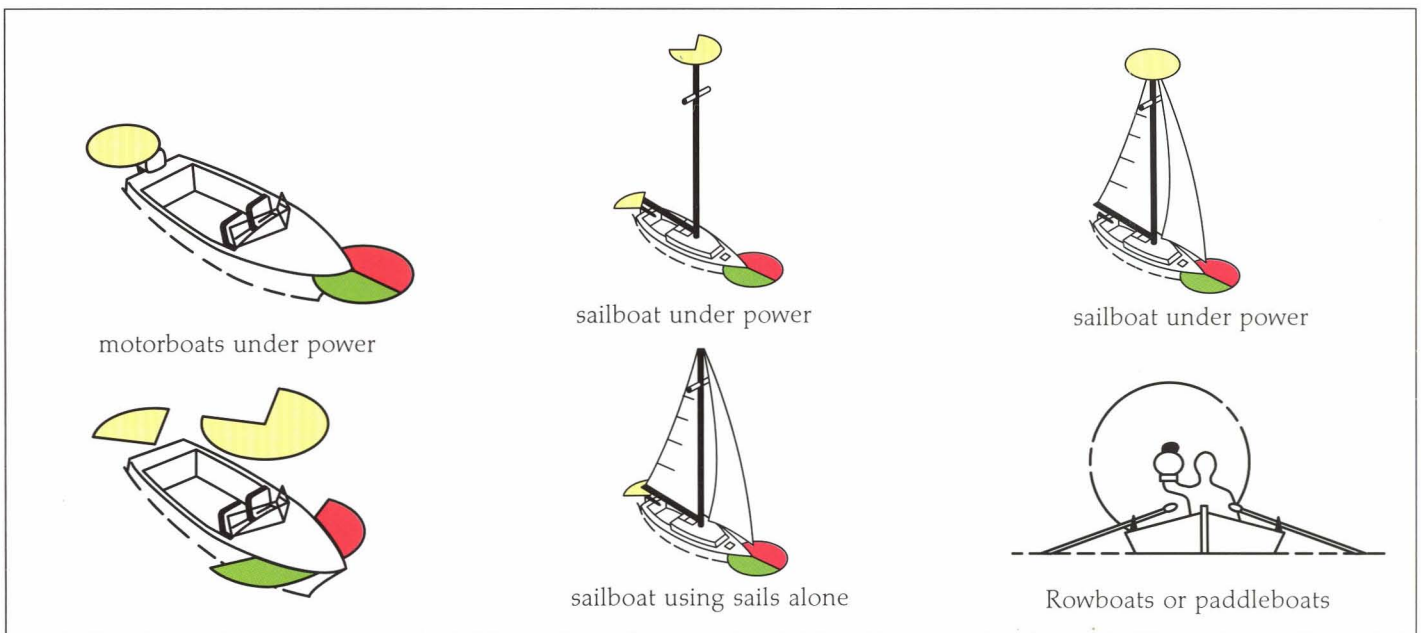
Keep fire extinguishers in an accessible place, and check them frequently to ensure they are properly charged.

All closed construction, fuel-powered motorboats must have ventilators to remove explosive vapors from engine and fuel tank compartments. Gasoline vapors are heavier than air and will accumulate in the bottom of a boat not properly ventilated.

Inboard fuel powered engines must be equipped with a USCG approved backfire flame arrestor on the carburetor.

All boats must use navigation lights while operating on Kansas

waters between sunset and sunrise. Class A and Class 1 boats must have a bright white light aft, or at the back of the boat, that is visible all around the horizon, and a combined lantern (lower than the aft white light) at the stern, or front, showing green to starboard (right side) and red to the port (left) side (see illustrations). Class 2 and Class 3 boats must have a two white lights, one near the front and one aft, as well as the red and green lights at the stern (see illustration). Sailboats must have navigation lights shown in the illustrations and must conform to motorboat navigation requirements while under power. Manually propelled boats



Pictured above are some of the lighting arrangements for boats less than 12 meters in length. A row boat or paddle boat must have a white light ready to display in time to prevent a collision. All boats must display a white light at anchor, unless moored.



Have your boat ready to launch before you back down the ramp, and lines will flow smoothly on busy days. When pulling out, pull well away from the boat ramp line and parking area before securing your boat for trailering.

shall carry, ready at hand, a flashlight or lantern showing a white light to be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent a collision. Boats at anchor must display an all-round white anchor light unless anchored in a designated mooring area.

All Class 1 motorboats must have a whistle or horn capable of producing a four- to six-second blast of sound. Class 2 and Class 3 boats must have a whistle or horn, as well as a bell with a clear tone.

All boats less than 20 feet long, which were built after Nov. 2, 1972 and designed to carry two or more people have a permanently affixed capacity plate. It is illegal to operate any vessel beyond the safe passenger and carrying capacity or motor horsepower rating of the vessel specified on the capacity plate.

Other Boating Regulations:

It is illegal to operate any boat while under the influence of alcohol (blood or breath alcohol concentration of .08 or more) or drugs. Any person who operates or attempts to operate a boat is deemed to have given consent to an alcohol and/or drug test. Failure to submit to a test will result in loss of boating privileges for three months, in addition to other penalties prescribed by law. Conviction of boating under the influence of alcohol or drugs is punishable by fine and/or imprisonment and the loss of boating privileges. Successful completion of an approved boating safety course

may also be required.

Wakeless speed is required when operating a boat close to boats engaged in fishing or moored, boat docks, launching areas swimming areas or with designated slow areas. The boat operator is held responsible for injury or damage caused by the boat's wake.

Water skiing is allowed only between sunrise and sunset. Boats towing skiers must be equipped with a wide-angle, rear-view mirror that is properly placed to allow maximum vision of the person being towed, or there must be an observer at least 12 years old in addition to the operator.

Persons less than 12 years old may not operate a boat unless accompanied by and under the direct audible supervision of a parent or person over 17 years old. No persons 12 to 15 years old may operate a personal watercraft unless a person 17 years old or older is aboard the watercraft, or they have passed a department approved safe boating course.

It is illegal to operate a boat in a negligent manner. Negligent operation is the failure to exercise the degree of care necessary to prevent endangering another person or their property. Some examples include bow riding, excessive speed, and operating too close to another boat.

If you are involved in a boating accident, you must assist other people involved in the accident. Notify law enforcement officers by

the quickest means available. Provide your name and address to any injured person or owner of property that is damaged in the accident. Notify the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks within 48 hours if the accident involves a death, treatable injury, or the disappearance of a person. If damage from an accident results in property damage greater than \$500, report the accident to the department within five days. Boating accident forms are available from the Law Enforcement Division or any conservation officer.

The laws and regulations for boating are designed to make boating safer and more enjoyable for everyone. Follow them, but also use courtesy and common sense on the water. On busy weekends, crowded boat ramps and parking areas can cause problems. The unwritten rule of boating is that you have your boat ready to go BEFORE you back down the ramp. Simply pull off before you reach the ramp and load all coolers, jackets, fishing tackle, and anything else you'll want on the water. Then remove transom bars, trailer tie-downs, winch straps, put your drain plug in, get life jackets out and unplug your lights. When it's your turn, you can back down and unload in just a minute or two. If you have motor problems on the ramp, pull out and take it to a mechanic or another, less crowded area. NEVER work on your boat motor on a busy boat ramp.

Use courtesy docks for loading and unloading only. They are not fishing piers or long-term boat docks. As you motor away from the ramp area, keep within the required no-wake speed. Not only is it safer in the crowded area, but wakeless speeds prevent waves that could damage boats that are launching or pulling out.

Follow similar procedures when you leave, pulling out and away from the ramp to secure your boat for highway trailering. A little common sense and courtesy will make everyone's day at the lake more enjoyable. ♡

Bottoms Up?

Dustin Teasley illustration



by John Purvis, *conservation officer*
and Cheri Swayne, *boating education coordinator*

Fun on the water is often associated with alcohol, but statistics show that more than half of all Kansas boating fatalities and half of all boating accidents involve alcohol.

Each year in Kansas, 516,000 people hit the water eager to do everything from fishing, hunting, water-skiing, paddling, sailing, or cruising. Unfortunately, many boaters automatically associate boating with drinking and drugs.

Is there really a problem? The statistics support an unqualified YES. In 1995, 60 percent of people who drowned in Kansas waters had

alcohol in their bloodstream. Fifty percent of the boating accidents were alcohol related.

Boating under the influence (BUI) has an effect on everyone. Campers or hikers using a state park complain about boaters who are under the influence. When a drunk boat operator gets into a vehicle to trailer his boat home, he has become a driver under the influence (DUI). When asked, boaters

who have been arrested for BUI will admit that they were drinking or taking drugs prior to driving out to the lake to put their boat on the water.

According to the Nighttime Boating Accident and Fatality Study published by BOAT/U.S. Foundation in Nov. 1995, alcohol contributed to at least 53 percent of nighttime boating fatalities in 1993. The Foundation also obtained blood

alcohol content, or BAC, for 66 accident victims. Of these, 31 percent were intoxicated at levels ranging from .20 to .427 and 36 percent had a BAC of .10 to .19 — still over Kansas' legal level of .08.

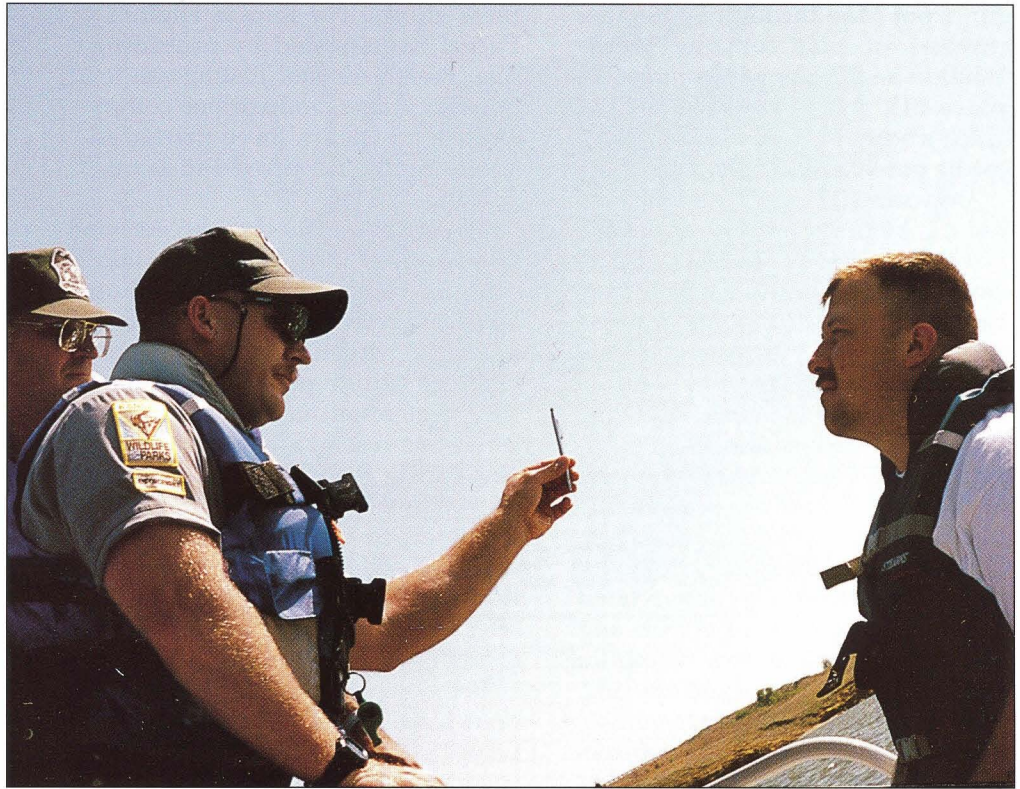
The U.S. Coast Guard statistics for 1994 revealed a study done in four states which showed that 51 percent of the boating related fatalities had a blood alcohol content of .04 or more. BACs of .10 or more were found in 31 percent of the fatalities. Statistics have shown that boating under the influence of alcohol and drugs is a major contributing factor in boating accidents and fatalities.

Two years ago the Kansas laws on boating under the influence were updated. Implied consent was added, BAC was lowered to .08, and penalties were strengthened to include higher fines, imprisonment, and required boating education.

Alcohol and drugs affect the boater in many ways. A boat operator under the influence can have the illusion that they are performing better when their performance is actually impaired. Judgment is affected causing the boater to enter high-risk situations that they would normally avoid. The ability to process and react to information is affected.

Balance and coordination are among the first things impaired by even one drink. A common boating fatality is a rider in the boat who falls overboard while the boat is moving. The risk of this type of accident is much greater when a person is under the influence, and it is difficult for an inebriated person to swim, no matter how good a swimmer they are sober. In many cases, an intoxicated boater is so disoriented he or she will swim down instead of up to the surface.

Vision can be reduced as much as 50 percent when a person is under the influence. The colors red and green are the first colors that become difficult to detect when



Greg Salisbury photo

Conservation officers have been trained in field sobriety tests and preliminary breath testers. If you survive boating drunk, you could face fines, loss of boating privileges and imprisonment.

intoxicated, and those are particularly important colors to a boater navigating at night. Peripheral vision will begin to deteriorate after the first drink. This creates a tunnel vision effect. Peripheral vision is critical to a boat operator trying to keep track of boat traffic, especially since there are no lanes, stoplights or yellow lines on the water.

A BAC of .05 will affect thought, judgment and vision. There will be a significant increase of errors in steering and divided attention tasks. A boater with a BAC of .08 has a three or four times greater risk of having an accident than when sober. Reaction time for making decisions is very slow. With a BAC of .10, a boater is six times more likely to have a boating accident. At this point, voluntary motor skills become noticeably clumsy and reaction time to auditory or visual stimulus increases. And a boater with a BAC of .20 is 100 times more likely to have an accident.

Wildlife and Parks is responding to the challenge of reducing alcohol- and drug-related accidents and

deaths by focusing in three areas. The first is public education and information about the dangers of boating under the influence. The second is training law enforcement personnel, and the third is increased boating enforcement.

Boating under the influence information is provided in the correspondence and classroom boating courses offer by the department. Other courses such as *Boating Safely* and *Boating and Seamanship Skills* offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron *Basic Boating* course include information about boating under the influence.

In July 1995, the Department of Wildlife and Parks, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Drug and Alcohol Prevention Centers, Bass N Badges, SADD, MADD, Association of Insurance Agents, and boat dealers got together to start a Kansas Sober Skipper Program. The program kicked off during National Safe Boating Week in 1996. Plans are underway to expand the program so that it can

run from May through September instead of just for one week. Wildlife and Parks will continue to place billboards throughout the state about BUI and continue a media public service campaign.

Department conservation officers have been trained to use Preliminary Breath Testers or PBTs, which measure breath alcohol. They have also received training and certification on the Intoxilizer 5000 Breath Alcohol Unit, as well as Standardized Field Sobriety Testing. Other training includes the physiological and pharmacological effects of alcohol, how stressors in the marine environment can exacerbate the effects of alcohol in the body, and constitutional case law related to BUI. Dispositions of vessels and property, as well as how to ensure the safety of all involved are also part of the officers' training.

Department conservation officers are taking their new skills, training and equipment to the water. Enforcement of boating violations and BUI is staggered to include both day and night patrols.

Selective enforcement is labor and equipment intensive, but it is effective. BUI check lanes have been set up at high-use lakes such as El Dorado, Perry, Cheney, Pomona and Wilson in the past two years. Other agencies have assisted in

these efforts. The Kansas Highway Patrol has assisted by providing their Breath Alcohol Testing van for one check lane, and various county sheriff's officers have provided drug dogs, and provided transportation.


The most effective selective enforcement is to saturate a lake with officers. This works well on lakes and reservoirs where we have received multiple complaints. Officers utilize patrol boats, personal watercraft, and on-shore assistance for detection, testing and processing. Officers on the water observe boats in operation and talk to boaters to look for potential violations. Reckless or negligent operation and lack of navigation lights after sunset are some of the indicators of BUI.

Because of the random nature of boat traffic, detecting BUI is different than DUI. Face-to-face encounters provide officers with the best indications of BUI. During the encounters, officers look for signs such as odor of alcohol or drugs, alcohol containers or drug paraphernalia, as well as coordination and speech problems. Preliminary breath testers are a valuable tool used by officers in the field to determine whether to require additional testing or release a suspected boater.

At Perry Lake in June of 1995, a female boater was stopped for a boating violation and tested on a PBT. The test indicated that she was approaching intoxication but not quite at the legal level yet. She was sternly warned and released. Unfortunately, the same boater was stopped later in July for another boating violation. This time the PBT and other tests indicated she was over the .08 level, and she was arrested and taken to jail for BUI. Fortunately, no one was injured or killed, but it's too bad for her that she didn't learn from the first warning.

Conservation officers are finding various amounts of drugs and drug paraphernalia on boats during these checks, and the ages of the offenders range from teens to mid-fifties. There are no established threshold levels for drugs to determine if a person is under the influence, but drugs are illegal regardless of the amount. It is also difficult to determine whether or not the drug affected the person's competency level, since, unlike alcohol, some drugs stay in the blood stream for extended periods.

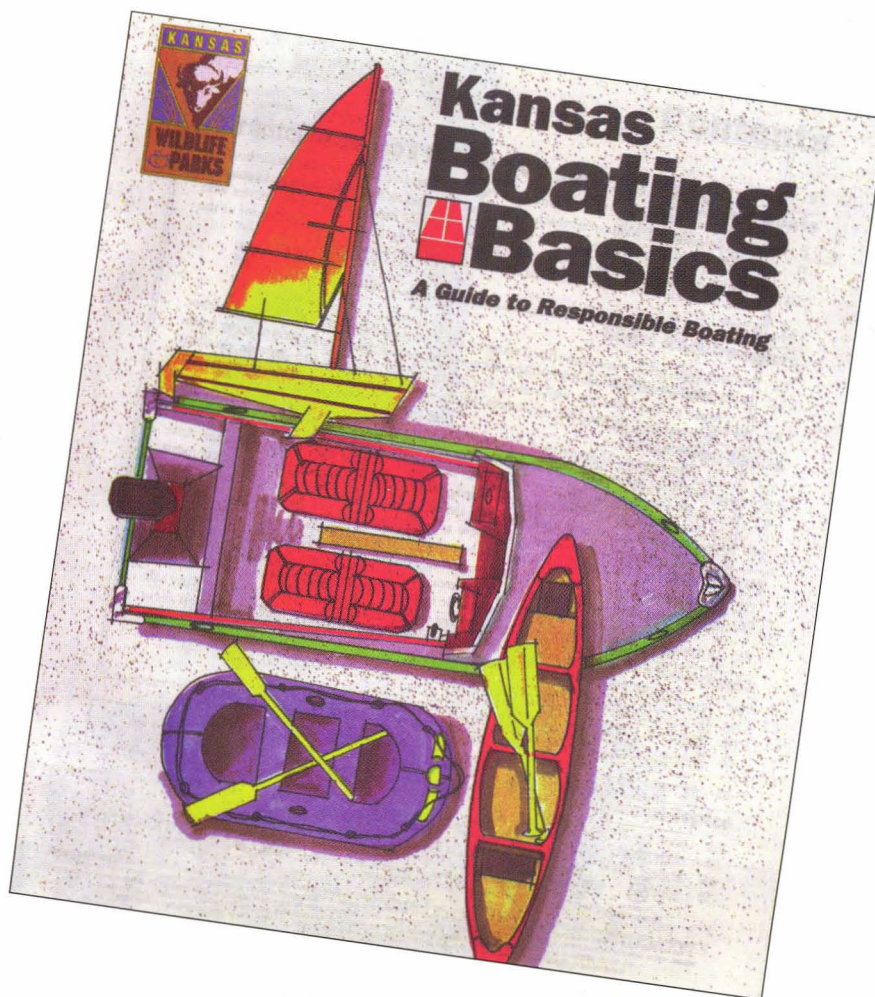
During the past two years, drug dogs have been used to see how well they would work on the water. Jefferson County Sheriff's deputy Kevin Gibson has assisted with his German Shepard, Maxx, at Perry Reservoir. The results were positive, and there are plans to continue the use of K-9 in the future.

As a nation, we have become increasingly intolerant of drunk drivers on the road. Why is it that we don't take alcohol and boating as seriously? Statistics show that it can be just as deadly. As our waters become more crowded, we have to recognize the dangers of boating under the influence. The department will continue to educate boaters and enforce boating laws on the water, but it is ultimately the boaters themselves who must make the right decisions. Make sure your boating trips are safe and fun, don't mix boating and alcohol. 



Greg Salisbury photo

Failure to submit to an alcohol or drug test will result in loss of boating privileges for three months in addition to any other penalties prescribed by law, rule or regulation.



Boating Education

by Cheri Swayne

boating education coordinator, Topeka

The Boating Basics course is required of youngsters 12-15 before they can operate a personal watercraft alone. But the course isn't just for kids. All boaters can gain from this valuable program.

The *Kansas Boating Basics* course is recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard and is designed to inform participants about boating legally and safely. It is offered both in a classroom setting or through correspondence. It is a great way for new boaters to get started right, and it can help more experienced boaters who want to brush up on rules of navigation, laws and regulations, and safety practices. It is required by law for youngsters 12-

15 who want to operate a personal watercraft alone.

The course covers choosing the right boat, legal requirements, navigation rules, trailers, accident procedures, facts about boating and alcohol, and more. A comprehensive manual is included and can be kept for future reference.

Volunteer instructors and boating enforcement officers hold more than 40 classes around the state, usually between February and

June each year. The classes are geared toward families and mixed age groups. Completing the course may make you eligible to receive a discount on your boat insurance. The classes offer a variety of lecture, video, and role play situations.

The instructors teaching these classes come from all walks of life. Most are veteran boaters who want to make our waters safer. Initially, most of the instructors were department law enforcement officers, or

members of dive teams and rescue squads. As word has spread about the program, more volunteers have expressed interest in teaching. The program trains about 25 new instructors each year, but new instructors are always needed, especially in small communities.

Instructors must have a basic knowledge of boating, good planning and organization skills, as well as public speaking, training and teaching abilities. An instructor training class, which must be completed by all instructors, covers policies of the program, lesson planning, instructional aids, methods to learning, and the topics required by the course.

As with any education effort, the instructors are responsible for program's success. We are fortunate to have a core of dedicated instructors. They are a good mix of people, including personal watercraft experts, anglers, and professional boat captains, and they are making a difference. Last summer a Wichita instructor was contacted by a grateful mother who's children had completed the course just two weeks earlier. Her child and a cousin were involved in an accident while operating a PWC. The cousin was unconscious and bleeding from a head wound. The woman's son supported his cousin's head and neck, keeping his face out of the




The classroom course includes lecture, video and role-playing. If a course is not available in your area, a correspondence course may be completed in your home.

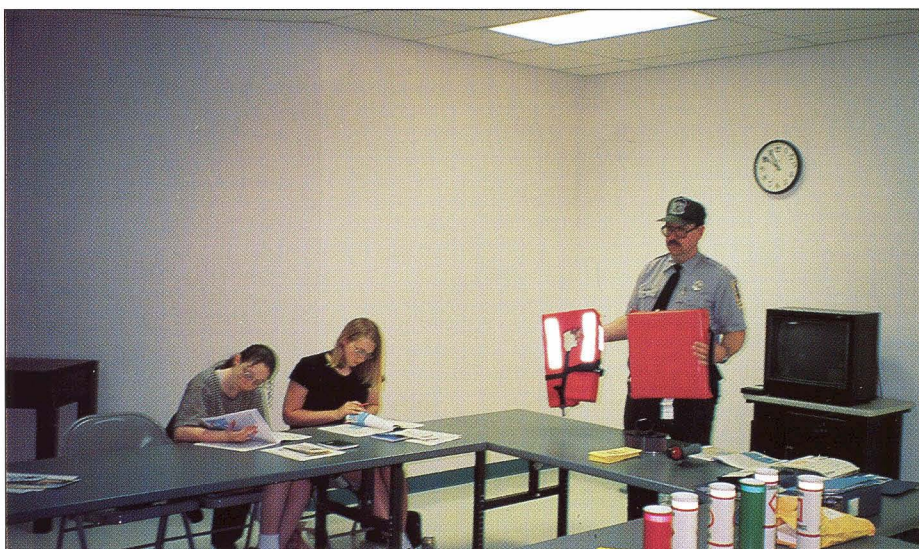
water and put pressure on the wound until help arrived. The mother was later told by emergency staff that her son's efforts prevented his cousin from drowning or bleeding to death. When she asked her son how he knew what to do, he said he learned it in his boating class.

If you are 12-15 years old and want to operate a PWC alone or just someone who wants to learn the basics of safe boating, call your nearest Wildlife and Parks office, marina, or sporting goods dealer to

find out when the next class is scheduled in your area. Instructors will often advertise in local newspapers and on radio, too. Classes are generally held during several weekday evenings or on a Saturday. You can also contact the boating education coordinator for a course that you can complete at home. Most courses and materials are free, however, pre-registration fees of \$1-\$15 may be charged by some sponsoring agencies.

If you are an experienced boater and wish to be an instructor, contact the boating education coordinator, Cheri Swayne, (785) 296-2281. You will need to complete an approved safety course and an instructor training course. All instructors are required to pass a KBI background check, and they must be 21 years old or older. Finally, all instructors will be evaluated in a teaching situation before being certified. Active instructors will be asked to teach a class at least once every three years and complete an additional 8 hours of re-certification training every three years.

The Kansas Basic Boating Course can help all boaters enjoy the water safely. It's an especially good idea for young or beginning boaters, and it can even save you money on your boat insurance. Enroll today. 



Boating enforcement officers and a growing team of volunteer instructors are providing more than 40 boating education courses across the state each year.



Cold-weather Boating

by Rob Ladner

law enforcement regional supervisor, Topeka

Boating isn't just a summertime activity. Waterfowl hunters and fishermen face additional dangers when boating in frigid temperatures.

If you are a fisherman or hunter, this article is for you. Boating was once considered a summer recreational activity — family fun — fishing, water-skiing or just soaking up the sun. However, today boating is a year-round activity, and the numbers of fishermen enjoying winter fishing is increasing each year. Waterfowl hunters commonly use a boat to reach an out-of-the-way duck hunting spot.

The drownings at Wolf Creek Lake and Milford Reservoir in November of 1997 are grim reminders of the potential dangers that exist when water temperatures dip below 50 degrees. Nationwide, nearly 5,000 people drown each year. Twenty percent of these are a result of boating accidents. And you may be surprised to learn that three out of four boating fatalities are fishermen. In 1997, six of the nine boating fatalities reported in Kansas were fishermen. And it might also be a surprise that approximately 50 percent of boating fatalities occur outside the traditional June-August

season, even though that's when most boaters are on the water. Drowning is also the number-one reason for fatalities for hunters.

Why? Cold water. A person falling into water that is between 40 and 50 degrees may become exhausted or lose consciousness in 30 to 60 minutes. In water 32.5-40 degrees you may only have 15-30 minutes before exhaustion or unconsciousness.

Be smart. If you plan to boat during cold weather, take steps to make your trip as safe as possible. First, watch the weather forecast. If a winter storm is approaching or high winds are forecast, make other plans that don't include boating. Storms and associated high winds make any boating dangerous, but are particularly lethal in cold weather. Tell someone where you are going and when you plan to return. Bring along some type of first-aid kit, blankets, fire-starting gear, and some food and water. On big water, high winds may strand you on a far shoreline or island.

With proper equipment, surviving the night, or at least until the wind dies, won't be a problem. A weather radio can keep you informed of changing weather, and a long-range, two-way radio or cell phone may save your life.

In your boat have quality personal flotation devices for everyone on board, as well as a throwable device, as required by law. Wear the PFDs at all times! Surviving a fall into icy water will be much more likely if you're wearing a PFD. If your boat swamps, stay with it. Today's boats are equipped with flotation so they will float even when swamped or turned over. A strong swimmer may be tempted to swim for shore, but the stress of exercise will accelerate exhaustion and heat loss. Keep all members of the party with the boat. If you're in the water, huddle together to take advantage of each other's body heat. Above all, don't take cold water lightly. It can be deadly. ❖

PFD

ersonal otation evices

by Rob Ladner

law enforcement regional supervisor, Topeka

It's simple: a personal flotation device (PFD), or life jacket, can save your life. Wear one when you're on the water. Make sure your life jackets are serviceable and are the correct type and size for everyone in your boat.

Each year thousands of boaters flock to our reservoirs, lakes, and streams to enjoy all types of water-related fun — fishing, hunting, water-skiing or just relaxing. It's hard to believe that today there are more than 100,000 boats registered in Kansas.

The department's law enforce-

ment division inspects approximately 14,000 vessels each year, issuing 2,500 tickets and warnings for boating violations. Almost half of these violations involve the lack of life jackets or having life jackets inaccessible. Ironically, in boating accidents in which life jackets were available, they were used only 10

percent of the time.

Within the last few years, changes have been made to our life jacket regulations you should be aware of.

1. All boats regardless of length are required to carry on board one wearable Type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device (PFD) for each

individual on board and being towed. In addition, vessels 16 feet long and longer, must have on board at least one throwable, Type IV, device. Canoes and kayaks, regardless of length are only required to carry one wearable Type I, II, III or V for each person on board or being towed. The change involves vessels less than 16 feet long, which previously only needed a throwable device. Now a wearable PFD is required for each person. U.S. Coast Guard statistics show most boating-related drownings occur in boats less than 16 feet long.

2. Children 12 years old and younger must wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved Type I, II, III or V wearable PFD while on board or being towed by a vessel.




Everyone riding or being towed by a personal watercraft must wear an approved type I, II, III, or V personal flotation device. All persons under 13 must wear a PFD at all times on the water.

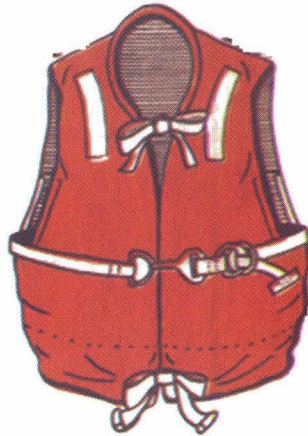
Approximately 50 percent of all drowning victims are under the age of 25, and 10 percent are younger than 5. Statistics also show that two-thirds of drowning victims are non-swimmers.

3. Each person aboard a personal watercraft or being towed shall wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD Type I, II, III, or V. Personal watercraft currently make up 8 percent of all boats registered in Kansas and were involved in 54 percent of the 57 boating accidents reported in 1997.

One of the most difficult aspects of complying with PFD requirements is keeping them accessible. Hey, nobody likes having those things underfoot, right? Unfortunately, when something goes wrong, there is little time to hunt for PFDs. When a conservation officer stops your vessel for an equipment inspection, they look for each required PFD to be in open view, not stowed in a locked or closed compartment or inside plastic or other packaging material. This may seem basic, but having PFDs inaccessible is a very common violation. Keep this in mind: most boating fatalities result from victims simply falling out of the boat and finding themselves unexpectedly in the water. Coast Guard statistics indicate that as many as 85 percent of boat accident victims would have lived had they been wearing their life jacket when the accident occurred.

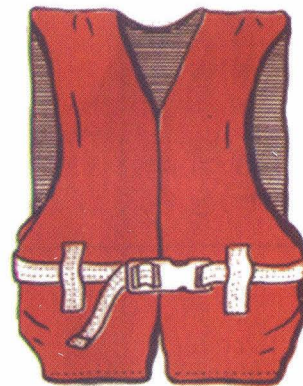
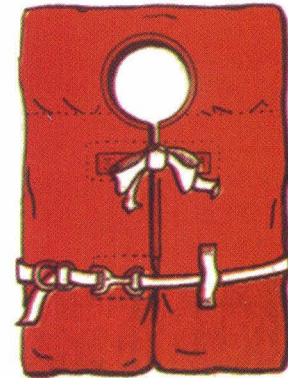
There are many different kinds of PFDs on the market. Find one that fits and is comfortable so you'll be more likely to wear it. More importantly, purchase PFDs that fit youngsters who will be in your boat. Fitting an adult PFD on a youngster is dangerous and illegal.

Keep your PFDs dry so that mildew won't rot them. And check them thoroughly before you go to the lake to make sure they're in serviceable condition. You may have to replace them every few years, but investing \$30-\$50 to save your or one of your loved one's life isn't really that expensive. 

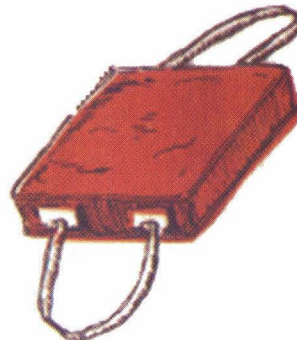


Type I: Best for open, rough or remote water where rescue may be slow in coming. This PFD will turn most unconscious wearers face up in water.

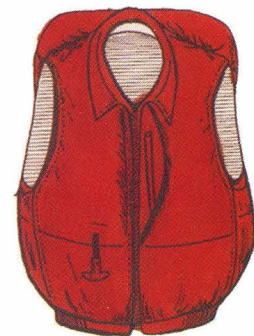
Type II: Good for calm, inland water where there is a good chance of fast rescue. This PFD will turn many unconscious wearers face up in the water.



Type III: Good for calm, inland water where there is a good chance of fast rescue. This PFD is comfortable to wear for long periods, but wearer may have to tilt head back to avoid face-down position in water.



Type IV throwable device



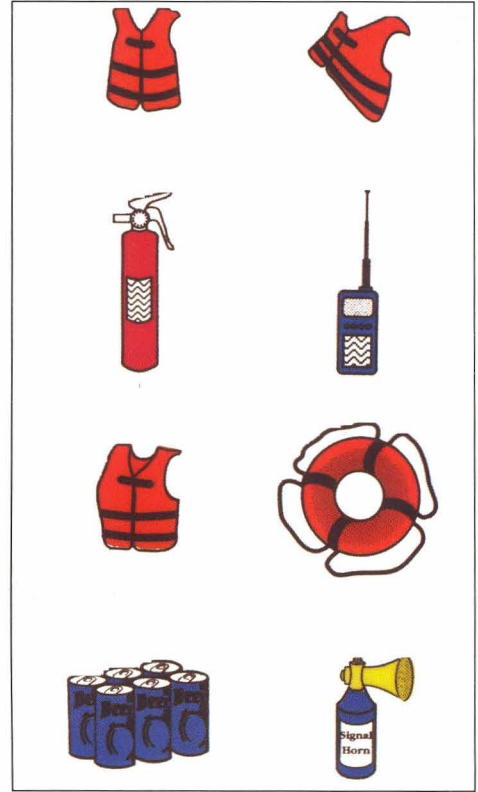
Type V: This PFD must be inflated to float wearer, and it must be worn at all times to be a legal PFD.

KIDS' PAGE

**WEAR YOUR
LIFE JACKET!**



BOAT SMART FROM THE START.



STOP!

FIRST . . . Let's make sure our family and the boat have all the safety equipment we need. Circle each piece of equipment pictured above and draw a line to where it should be in the boat. There's one item that we should NOT take on our boating trip. Can you figure out which it is and draw a line to the cabin where it should stay?

Okay, NOW let's GO!

Personal Watercraft Safety

by Larry Stones
conservation officer, Kirwin

photos by Mike Blair

Personal watercraft are the fastest selling boats in the U.S. today. And while they make up only a small percentage of the boats on the water, they are involved in a large percentage of accidents.

Jet Ski, water bike, personal watercraft — whatever you choose to call them, they are part of the fastest growing water-recreation activity in the U.S. They are designed to go fast, turn quickly, be completely submerged, and keep on ticking. The entire experience is much like riding a cutting horse, except you are on the water (and going 40-50 mph). Half of the Kansas boating accidents in 1997 involved personal watercraft, including two fatalities. If you are 16 years old, all you need to legally operate a PWC is a life jacket — no license, no training.

Because of the growing popularity of these vessels and the potential danger involved, children 12-15 years old must complete a boat safety course before they can legally operate a PWC alone. But PWCs are

not toys! Many times while on water patrol, I have encountered 12-year-olds riding PWCs on busy reservoirs, often with a younger child riding behind them. I realize this is legal if they've completed the course, but I wonder if parents would allow those same children to hop on a 750cc or 900cc motorcycle and race through busy city traffic. As powerful and fast as today's PWCs are, there isn't much difference. Operating a PWC or boat requires many of the same responsibilities as operating an automobile. The driver is responsible for their own safety, as well as that of those sharing the water.

"Know before you go," is a phrase taught in the department's *Kansas Boating Basics* course. It refers to knowing all the laws and regulations regarding boat and

PWC operation. It also refers to knowing general "Rules of the Road," which help operators make decisions that prevent accidents on busy waters.

The U.S. Coast Guard considers PWCs to be Class A boats, and they are subject to many of the same laws and requirements as larger boats. More than 90 percent of recreational boats in the U.S. today are less than 20 feet long, and more than half of those are less than 16 feet long. PWCs fall in to the category of boats less than 16 feet long and consequently are required to operate in accordance to the laws and regulations established for boating.

While PWCs make up only a tiny percentage of the boats registered in Kansas, they are involved in more than 50 percent of the accidents. The



Personal watercraft, also called jet skis or wave runners, are easy to tow, affordable and fun on the water. They are also fast and maneuverable. Some models are capable of reaching speeds of 50 mph. They are not water toys.

best way to make your day at the lake safe is to take a boating education course. You'll learn boating regulations, PWC operation guidelines, rules of the water and more.

PWCs are jet-powered vessels and as a result have unique operating characteristics. The jet drive makes the vessel highly maneuverable, but it must be under power to turn. If you let off the power, you can't steer. Here are some handling guidelines:

- * Don't approach objects head-on — approach at an angle.
- * To avoid obstacles, keep your power on and turn.
- * Always keep a good lookout ahead, to both sides and behind you, especially when doing dynamic maneuvers.
- * Never follow directly behind another jet boat or personal watercraft.
- * Don't keep operating in the same area for extended periods of time.

Another growing problem with PWCs is the impact they have on other lake users. It only takes a few irresponsible PWC riders to ruin the fun of anglers, pleasure boaters and skiers. Not abiding by rules of the water, not being aware of other boats, jumping the wakes of larger boats, and doing dynamic maneuvers in the path of other boats is dangerous and puts everyone at



Personal watercraft operators must be aware of other boats when doing dynamic maneuvers. In recent years, watercraft collisions have resulted in serious accidents.

risk. PWCs are also noisy, and excessive noise can disrupt the enjoyment of shoreline campers, swimmers and fishermen. The law requires no-wake speeds within 100 feet of fishing boats, moored boats, boat docks, launching areas, swimming areas or within designated no-wake areas. Common sense and basic courtesy by PWC operators will help other lake users accept the craft. Consider how you would feel if while enjoying a relaxing evening camping, a dirt bike was continually racing through the campground.

PWCs are affordable, easy to tow, and fun on the water, and their popularity will continue to grow. It will become increasingly important that riders accept the responsibility of riding safely and wisely. There is a growing resentment to PWCs by other lake users, and lake associations in other states have attempted to ban PWCs from the water because of the added noise and risk. With education, common sense and courtesy, everyone can enjoy our lakes. ♡

Where to call for boating information

Boating Education Coordinator
Kansas Wildlife and Parks
900 SW Jackson, Suite 502
Topeka, KS 66612 (785) 296-2281

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Operations Office
512 SE 25th Ave.
Pratt, KS 67124 (316) 672-5911

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Region 1 Office
P.O. Box 338
1426 Hwy. 183 Alt.
Hays, KS 67601 (785) 628-8614

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Region 2 Office
3300 SW 29th
Topeka, KS 66614 (785) 273-6740

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Region 3 Office
1001 W. McArtor
Dodge City, KS 67801 (316) 227-8609

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Region 4 Office
6232 E. 29th St. N
Wichita, KS 67220 (316) 683-8069

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Region 5 Office
P.O. Box 777
1500 W. 7th
Chanute, KS 66720 (316) 431-0380

Harvest Information Program (HIP)



Dustin Teasley photo

When you buy your 1998 hunting license, the clerk will ask you if you plan to hunt migratory birds. Migratory birds include doves, rail, snipe, ducks, geese, woodcock, sandhill cranes, coots or gallinules. If you answer yes, you will be asked to purchase a 50¢ Harvest Information Stamp (HIP).

The stamp will indicate that you are HIP certified. What is HIP and why is it required?

HIP is a federally-mandated and cooperative state program to improve and expand our data base for harvest surveys of all migratory game birds. It will allow wildlife management agencies to improve management of these species, improve hunting opportunities and protect hunting from potential legal challenges.

HIP certified hunters will be surveyed each season so wildlife managers can gain valuable information about harvest trends of migratory game species. Inadequate information about the impacts of hunting on species has been used to challenge hunting regulations in some states. Wildlife agencies need harvest data to defend management practices. This information is extremely important to the future of hunting.

For a number of years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has surveyed a small number of federal duck stamp buyers about their harvests, but the accuracy of these waterfowl harvest estimates needed to be improved. Different survey methods and timing of state surveys made it impossible for the regional and national estimates to be as accu-

rate as necessary. And the surveys didn't provide necessary harvest information from hunters who hunted doves, woodcock and other migratory game birds.

Beginning in 1998, anyone who hunts migratory birds in Kansas must be HIP certified. Only those exempt from buying a license are exempt from this requirement. Lifetime license holders will receive notification and be required to purchase the 50¢ HIP stamp.

When a migratory bird hunter purchases a hunting license for this fall, the clerk will ask about last year's hunting experiences. That information, along with the hunter's mailing address will be recorded and sent the USFWS. If you indicate that you don't plan to hunt migratory birds when you purchase your license but change your mind later

in the season, you can get HIP certified at any time through the license vendor or department office.

HIP certified hunters will be collected into a pool of nationwide hunters from which samples will be surveyed each year. The information you provide about last year's hunting seasons will be used to categorize you according to harvest levels. Lists of migratory bird hunters may also be used by the state to assess hunter preferences, as well as enhance opportunities.

The cost of HIP is 50¢, which pays for the department's cost of establishing the data base. The questions take only a minute or two to answer, and the whole process of becoming HIP certified is relatively painless.

There are basically three questions you'll need to answer:

1. Do you intend to hunt any migratory game birds (ducks, geese, doves, sandhill cranes, coots, gallinules, woodcock, rails or snipe) during the coming hunting season?

2. About how many of these did you harvest last season?

Ducks __, Geese __, Doves __.

3. Which of these types of migratory birds did you hunt last year?

Coots __

Snipe __

Rails/gallinule __

Sandhill cranes __

Woodcock __

Each year, about 1 percent or 2 percent of the nationwide HIP certified hunters will be selected by the USFWS to represent migratory bird hunters. The selected hunters will receive hunter cards prior to the migratory bird hunting seasons. The survey cards will ask the hunters to keep records of daily harvests of various migratory game birds. The card will then be returned to the USFWS at the end of the seasons. This survey will provide management biologists with much more accurate harvest information than previous surveys. The data will allow the USFWS and the Department of Wildlife and Parks to better manage these species and provide better hunting opportunities. ♡

Attention Hunters

If you plan to hunt any of the migratory game birds pictured below, you need to be HIP certified before the 1998 seasons.



Snipe



Mourning dove



Sandhill crane



Gallinule



Coot



Rail



Duck



Goose



Woodcock

Edited by Mark Shoup

FARMER FOR DEER

Editor:

This letter is in regard to the March/April issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* magazine's article on "Deer Seasons At Issue". As a hunter and a landowner, I would like to give some of my opinions about a few of the topics in the article. I have shot since I was old enough to carry a BB gun and have hunted deer since I was 14. That is 16 years now. I remember the season going from nine days to 12 days. As I recall, this was brought about so the farmers/landowners would have an opportunity to have three early days before the opening weekend. Although this did not affect most people who worked a regular hour-to-hour job like myself, it was a great move for the full-time tenants to harvest deer they feed and watch all year.

In regard to extending the season, I have mixed feelings and some other ideas. First, I want to agree as a hunter that I'd hate to see the day that we have to really limit permits due to decreased deer population. As a farmer/landowner and an active part of a successful family farm, I don't feel we have an overpopulation of deer at this time. I hear so many negative comments about deer when rut begins and the car/deer collisions increase. Deer are a part of Kansas driving as are elk in Colorado, moose in Canada, and armadillos in Texas, and if you don't want to see them or watch out for them, move somewhere you don't have to. (Yes, I have paid a couple of deductibles on deer collisions, and I still don't blame it on the deer.)

As for damaged crops, I have been on the farm all my life and not only do we not complain about the very small amount of lost yield along the edge of the fields, we leave feed and cover each fall for wildlife.

We in Lincoln County have more damage from the ungrateful hunters who slaughter deer and coyotes from their pickup windows than 10 years of deer

damage. If it weren't for this problem, I can't name a tenant who would not allow deer hunting in a reasonable, responsible manner. The land my family manages is posted so we are able to fill our two to four permits before we allow those people who ask permission to hunt. Unfortunately, neither our family or those who ask permission are the first to hunt the land. By opening weekend, the pickup and four wheeler-tracks are throughout the land.

I know for the health of the deer and wildlife we need to hunt deer, and the game biologists would know, better than I, what the healthy population is. I am for extending the season or opening it over a holiday weekend like Thanksgiving when more of the existing permit holders have time to hunt. Let's place stiff fines and penalties on those who are running deer down with pickups until they are too exhausted to run. Yes it's happening, and I've seen it.

I think your department does an outstanding job of wildlife management, and those field men like Jim Cherry in Lincoln and Ellsworth counties are exceptionally professional, and we appreciate that. Let's stop those who slaughter multiple deer each year and give us who plan, sit, and walk patiently more days to hunt or a more convenient time to hunt during the 12 days of season.

Thank you for the job you all do.

*Devon B. Walter
Lincoln*

TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Editor:

[In the May/June issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks*, Page 33], Mr. Steve Stackhouse advises that "technically" only public rivers and streams associated with federal reservoirs do not require landowner permission for access, that "technically speaking" landowners control trespass and that setting foot on privately-owned land is "technically trespassing."

The use of the term "technically" repeated so often throughout the short

response can be considered neither coincidental nor innocuous. The clear implication is that trespass laws will not be vigorously enforced in Kansas, at least as it relates to canoeists.

Worse, Mr. Stackhouse makes this representation in his official capacity as director of your Law Enforcement Division. Under what authority does Mr. Stackhouse presume to decide which of the laws passed by our elected representatives should be actively enforced? I suspect my state representatives and your oversight committees would find this position as alarming as I believe that you will.

I hope that Mr. Stackhouse will not insult your intelligence by attempting to explain away the term "technically" as a mere semantic of no particular significance. Given the context and nuances of the writing as a whole, I doubt that any court would agree. Speaking of which, you may wish to consult your legal department regarding the extent to which Mr. Stackhouse may already have placed the taxpayers at risk in the event that any trespasser incurs injuries in the course of relying on his (mis)representation.

At minimum, I would hope for an unambiguous full retraction by Mr. Stackhouse in a prominent position of the next *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* magazine.

*R.G. Seibel
Goddard*

Dear Mr. Seibel:

The letter you cite was a response to an individual wanting to be sure that he complied with the law if he floated Kansas streams in a canoe. The term "technically" was used to clarify that the answer is given as a strict reading of the law. We must speak technically, or relate the "letter of the law," to ensure that the law is properly represented.

Trespass laws can only be enforced if there is a complainant (landowner) willing to file charges. Records show that landowners in Kansas rarely, if

ever, press charges against someone floating by their property on an adjoining stream. In a manner of speaking, then, it is the landowner who doesn't "enforce" this law. This does not make it legal for someone to do so because permission to enter and remain upon the land of another is required by law. If a landowner is having problems with trespassers, the landowner is properly advised to call the sheriff's department because they handle most crimes against people. However, our conservation officers handle trespass complaints at times, and our agency takes ANY trespass violation very seriously.

You may be disappointed to know all of the conditions that must be met to qualify as trespass (K.S.A. 21-3720), but I am confident that a trespass complaint against a canoeist would be handled locally in the same manner as other trespass complaints.

I am sorry if the word "technically" was confusing to you or clouded the message. Its use only serves notice to the reader that this is the letter of the law. Individual interpretations of hidden meanings of this is beyond my control.

*-Steve Stackhouse, Law Enforcement
Division director, Pratt*

DOG SHOOTS HUNTER?

Editor:

It is with sadness that all Kansas wing shooters note the death of a 19-year-old boy and the near-fatal wounding a Dodge City dentist. Wichita Eagle writer Marianne Kerner indicated "dog shoots dentist" is a rare/freak bird hunting accident. Rare, yes. Freak accident, no.

There have been hundreds of bird hunters shot by their bird dogs all over North and South America during the last 80 years, coincident with the advent of the pickup truck and the auto-loading shotgun. It usually goes something like this: bird hunter places loaded shotgun on tailgate or in bed of pickup truck, and bird dog, which has been trained to jump into the dog box, presses the safety of the shotgun off with his pad and then fires the gun with one of his toes. The dog's blast usually catches the bird hunter in the upper abdomen or chest

with fatal or near fatal results.

The same scenario can be enacted when the bird hunter kneels to receive pup with bird in mouth. Perhaps pup does not want to release bird or is otherwise difficult to manage. Bird hunter lays gun down, safety up; pup dances around, steps on shotgun, spins it around at the bird hunter, depresses the upturned safety with his pad, and pulls the trigger with one of his toes. His boss is a goner.

The hunter safety courses and guidelines from various state game commissions are, in some small part, responsible for some of these accidents.

These [should be] rules for birders:

- all guns are loaded all of the time;
- no gun is pointed anywhere but down until the last moment;
- all that loading and unloading the gun with regard to vehicles and fences is counterproductive, even dangerous if it is done dozens of times each day. After a while, nobody knows what is loaded and what is not;
- limit two loaded shotguns resting on the front seat of the pickup with the muzzle pointed forward against the floorboard at a 45-degree angle - maximum of three wing shooters to the vehicle, two with always-loaded shotguns and one driver; and
- never rest your gun against the truck or put it in the bed of the truck.

In summary, all that loading and unloading and reloading of multiple shotguns per truck is inherently unsafe. It's better to get a ticket for having a loaded shotgun while bird hunting than to shoot one of your hunting partners or to get shot by your own bird dog. Keep that gun loaded once you're on location.

*George Meredith, MD
Great Bend*

Dear Dr. Meredith:

I was dismayed to read this letter [which also appeared in the Great Bend Tribune] in which you recommend that hunters carry loaded firearms in their vehicles. This practice is very unsafe and is a common cause of "hunting" accidents. It is condemned by hunter education authorities nationwide.

A loaded firearm should never be carried in a vehicle. Within the close confines of a motor vehicle, there is

much potential for accidental discharge, with hunters (and even dogs) moving around, jostling, and climbing in and out. Hunters should unload their firearms before they reach their car or truck, and keep them unloaded, breach open, until after they are away from it. The unloaded firearm should be placed in a safe, secure position, preferably in the trunk or the rear of the vehicle.

Because a large percentage of accidents occur when loaded guns are placed in vehicles, common sense tell us to develop the habit of unloading before putting the gun in the car. There is no excuse for not knowing if a gun is loaded or not. All you have to do is check. If all hunters practiced this simple principle of firearm safety, many tragic accidents could be avoided. None will be avoided by encouraging loaded guns in unsafe places.

*-Ross Robin, former hunter
education coordinator, Pratt*

TURKEY DOUBLE

Editor:

On May 17, my 12-year-old son, Landon, and I were turkey hunting in Nemaha County. We sat up on a gobbler that had left the roost and walked away. After about 15 minutes of calling and consistent answering gobblers, we watched the bird - and his buddy - walking directly at us from 75 yards.

Dad: "Landon, they are both gobblers, your choice. Son: "OK." Dad: "The one on the right is bigger." Son: "OK." Dad: "They're both in range now." Son: "OK." Dad: "Son, they're going to cross; you can get 'em both." Son: No response, BOOM.

The birds fell at 14 and 16 yards, my son's first and second turkeys. Not a pellet was found below the neck of either bird. Not a bad way to fill your tags and begin your turkey hunting career. In all fairness to my son, we have been turkey hunting for four years. The day before, he passed twice on gobblers that were well within range but "it didn't feel right." He is a very cautious and conservative hunter, and I am proud to have helped him bag his first birds.

*Bob Foreman
Harrisonville, Mo.*

SWAN KILLING UPDATE

In the March/April issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* (Page 35), we reported the killing of six trumpeter swans near Topeka. There has since been activity with this case, and we are taking this opportunity to review the original case and report recent action that has occurred.

On the morning of Christmas Eve, 1997, two young men were cruising the countryside when they found trumpeter swans on a small watershed lake southwest of Topeka. Nine swans had been staying on the lake, to the enjoyment of area residents, but the two men killed six of them.

A few days after the shootings, a tip to Wildlife and Parks Region 2 Office led conservation officers to two suspects, Jeremy Brown and Dustin Fisher. Officers interviewed the two, which led to their confessions and seizure of weapons.

A plea bargain was arranged with the suspects by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Attorney's Office in which each man was fined \$1,500 along with forfeiture of their rifles. They also had to make written apology to the citizens of Kansas, which were published as part of the March/April article.

A late January court date was set for Brown and Fisher to pay their fines or make arrangement for payment. That date passed without Dustin Fisher contacting the U.S. District Court in Topeka, a violation of his agreement. In early February, the department's Region 2 Office received information that Fisher had moved to Tucson, Arizona, to avoid prosecution.

We contacted the USFWS with this information, which they verified, and special agents contacted the U.S. Attorney's Office, which in turn contacted the court. A warrant was issued, and Fisher was arrested by special agents in Tucson and was required to post a cash bond.

A new court date was set for May 26 in Topeka to hear the case of illegal taking of a protected species, a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1972.

Fisher pled guilty, received a \$2,500 fine, was placed on supervised probation for three years, and lost hunting privileges for three years. This penalty was substantially more than the original plea bargain. The federal district judge made it clear that he did not want to see Fisher again.

This final disposition brings closure to a case that outraged many people and brought enhanced attention to wildlife and the seriousness of wildlife crimes.

—Jim Dunn, assistant law enforcement supervisor, Topeka

VETERAN OFFICER TAKES AWARD

Richard Ryan, Lyndon, has received the Shikar-Safari International Award as 1997 "Wildlife Officer of the Year."

A 28-year veteran of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Ryan was recognized for a variety of achieve-

ments. As training officer for his division, he provides instruction to other officers on a variety of law enforcement-related skills. He also has been awarded the Order of the Buffalo for his contributions to the Kansas Hunter Education Program, and developed strategies that dramatically improved enforcement at public recreation areas in his district, Osage County.

The Shikar-Safari Club International, founded in 1952, supports a variety of conservation projects around the world.

—Mathews



NEEDS BIGGER TREE

In spring, redbuds bloom, birds sing, and hunters and anglers search for crappie, morels, and, of course, turkeys. That first gobble that echoes through the timber is a sign that spring is in the air.

On such a day, CO Dan Melson, Severy, and I were patrolling southeastern Kansas. The crappie had not yet begun to spawn, so we turned our attention to turkey hunters. As we travelled south from Elk County, we went down a dirt road and noticed two vehicles. As we slowed, we noticed four people in camo, all carrying shotguns. Before Dan could say "turkey hunters," they began to run for the trees. We looked at each other and realized that something wasn't right.

We approached the group and caught two of them before they reached the trees. We asked where the other two were, but behind some jack oaks, we could see them hiding - each about 6 feet, 2 inches

tall and weighing more than 200 pounds. One hunter was peaking around to see what had become of his buddies.

I hollered at them to come out of the trees with their shotgun actions open. One of the hunters came up the hill dragging his shotgun by the barrel, and both mumbled at the circumstances. When asked if they had licenses, they dug through their wallets to no avail.

We seized their guns and escorted them to the local post office, 22 miles away, where they mailed their bonds directly to the District Court of Sedan.

After the business at hand was taken care of, one said, "I didn't think we would ever get caught this far out." It doesn't always happen this easy with most cases, but I'm glad this one did.

—Brian Hanzlick,
conservation officer, Sedan

A GOOD YEAR IN LAW

The 1998 legislative session was, on the whole, a productive one for the Department of Wildlife and Parks. The Kansas State Legislature, which completed its annual business on May 3, 1998, approved several measures that could have long-lasting positive impacts for outdoor recreational opportunities in Kansas.

For many outdoor enthusiasts, this year's session may long be remembered for the dedication of \$10 million to repair and update state parks. The work made possible by this budget appropriation -- such as replacing shower houses, upgrading campground utilities, making buildings handicapped-accessible, and many other pro-

jects -- has been long overdue. These funds will be used primarily to fix what already exists, rather than to construct new facilities, and will include each of the 24 state parks. Renovations and improvements are scheduled to be completed over the next three years.

This infusion of funds was originally recommended by the Task Force on Outdoor Kansas appointed by the Wildlife and Parks Commission. Governor Bill Graves stressed the importance of this request in his State of the State address to open the session, and legislators agreed. The appropriation represents a clear statement by the Legislature of the importance of our state park system to the people of Kansas.

Another notable piece of

legislation was approved on the final day of the session. HB 2868 provides more flexibility in allocating nonresident deer permits, including removal of the restriction regarding leftover permits in a given unit the previous year, as well as flexibility to allow nonresidents to purchase statewide archery permits. However, the bill retains the restriction that, once resident permit numbers have been established, a maximum of 5 percent additional permits may be allocated for nonresidents in any given unit. KDWP also has the authority to issue fewer or no nonresident permits in units it believes appropriate. The bill was proposed by the Kansas Farm Bureau, the Kansas Livestock Association, and the Travel Industry Association of Kansas, in

cooperation with KDWP and with other concerned organizations, to ensure that the bill's language would not negatively impact resident hunting opportunities.

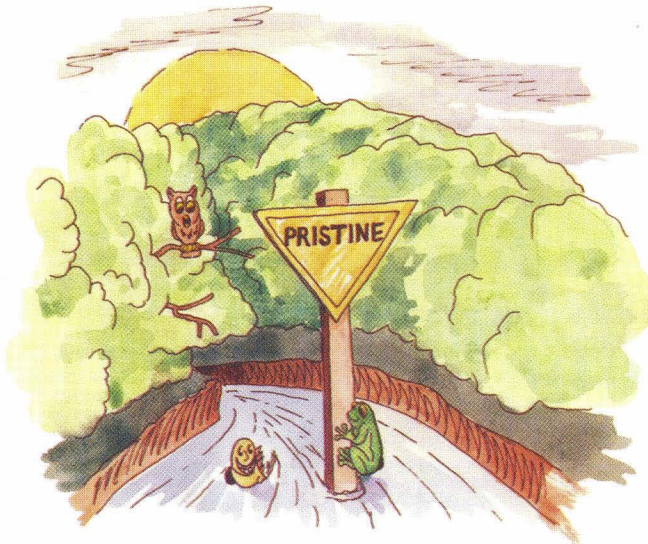
The Legislature unanimously approved HB 2783, which provides authority for KDWP to enter into an agreement with the U.S. Corps of Engineers for the development of wetlands near Milford Reservoir. Through a separate budget appropriation, the Legislature approved \$361,512 as the state's matching share for development of the first phase of this project. (The rest of the state's share will be funded through private donations.) HB 2783 also named a portion of the wetlands the "Steve Lloyd Wetlands," in honor of the former legislator and chairman of the House Committee on Environment from Clay Center. Representative Lloyd, who had been a strong supporter of the project, passed away from stomach cancer before the end of the session but was able to attend the House session on the day HB 2783 was addressed in that body.

The Legislature also approved HB 2899, concerning the development of lake resorts near certain state parks. After receiving the report on the lake resort feasibility study called for by the 1996 Legislature, the 1998 Legislature directed that KDWP, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Commerce and Housing, create incentive plans for resort development at state parks with federal reservoirs. The bill also provides authority to

Pristine ARK RIVER?

For Vaughn Weaver, a water quality specialist with the city of Wichita, a three-year quest to find signs of pristine water in the Arkansas River ended on a tiny creek under a busy street on the east side.

In early March, Weaver was wading through tributaries of the Arkansas, looking for trash for an urban pollution exhibit, when he pulled up a yield sign lying face down in a creek. He was ready to add it to the trash display when he noticed an odd growth covering the sign. At first, he thought it was mold. Then he saw the intricate



pattern and squishy texture of a freshwater sponge, the kind that survives only in pristine water.

Despite its muddy-brown color, the Arkansas and its

tributaries haven't been this clean since Wichita was founded in 1870 and began dumping raw sewage into the river.

—Wichita Eagle

negotiate and accept bid proposals and to issue revenue bonds for the construction of a lake resort.

Additionally, the Legislature approved HB 2876, which creates a Kansas Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant Program to be administered by KDWP. These grants would be matched equally by local governments and would fund capital improvement projects for outdoor recreational facilities, including projects to meet ADA guidelines. An initial appropriation of \$500,000 was approved to fund the grant program.

-Clint Riley, attorney, Office of the Secretary, Topeka

PESTICIDES AND BIRDS

The following is from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) research:

- Approximately 344 million pounds of pesticides were exported from the U.S. between 1992 and 1994. Pesticide exports include many chemicals that have been banned or severely restricted in the U.S. Nearly 109 million pounds of these compounds went to Latin American nations, which harbor birds that migrate through the U.S.

- In 1995, 20,000 Swainson's hawks, 5 percent of the world's population, were killed from pesticide poisoning in the agricultural pampas region of Argentina, largely from chemicals produced in the U.S. but banned for use here.

- Each year, approximately 672 million birds are exposed to pesticides in the U.S. Of these, more than 67 million are presumed to die

as a result. This figure does not include birds that perish due to ingestion of poisoned insects, or eggs left unhatched and fledglings left to starve when adults die.

- Even legal use of many pesticides has been shown to harm migratory birds. Die-offs of birds have been reported throughout the U.S., including every species from hawks and owls to songbirds.

- Since World War II, manufacture of pesticides in the U.S. has increased tenfold. Approximately 4 million tons of pesticides are applied each year in this country.

- More than 40 pesticides, most of which can be used in the U.S., are known to kill birds even when applied according to label instructions. Compounds most often implicated are carbamate and organophosphorus compounds.

- Alternatives to pesticide use include release of beneficial insects, composting, planting native plants, and crop rotation.

-USFWS release

ESA WORKS

Declaring that the Endangered Species Act works, the administration says two dozen birds, plants, and animals, including the bald eagle, are on their way to recovery and may soon be removed from the law's protection.

The proposal by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt marks the first time in the law's 25-year history that such a large number of species would be earmarked for removal from the endangered list, even though it would be done over two years. Such species as the

peregrine falcon, bald eagle, eastern timber wolf, and Aleutian Canada goose would be among those species removed.

-Wichita Eagle

FEDERAL AID TO KANSAS

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt wrote the following note to state fish and wildlife agencies announcing the fiscal year 1998 apportionment of federal aid to the states under the Sport Fish Restoration Act:

"Pursuant to the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act . . . I have, at this time, apportioned \$272,028,441 to the states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District of Columbia.

"The amounts apportioned to the states are as provided by Section 4 of the Act and adjusted so that no state shall receive more than 5 percent or less than 1 percent of the total amount apportioned.

"The amounts apportioned to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District of Columbia are as provided by Section 12.

"Therefore, in accordance with the above, the final apportionment of Federal aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds for fiscal year 1998 is as shown on the attached tabulation."

In a similar memo, Babbitt explained that \$154,808,373 was being apportioned to the states, commonwealths, and D.C. under the Federal Aid in

Wildlife Restoration Act.

The "attached tabulation" shows that Kansas received \$4,004,336 for fisheries projects and \$2,624,336 for wildlife projects, of which \$276,481 is to be used for hunter education.

-Shoup

KANSAS WETLAND ALLIANCE

The Kansas Wetlands and Riparian Areas Alliance (KWRAA) was formed to provide an opportunity for a diverse group of individuals, agencies, and organizations to promote wetland and riparian area conservation.

To date, KWRAA has focused its activities on three areas:

- education -- development of material to communicate the benefits of wetland and riparian resources;

- communication -- development of information, concepts, and tools for KWRAA members that provide a consistent message and coordinated approach to wetland and riparian area activities; and

- research and data collection -- sponsoring research, gathering data, and communicating that information to landowners, government officials, service providers, and the public.

KWRAA membership is free and open to any individual, organization, or agency. For more information, contact Paula Ford, KWRAA coordinator, 2610 Claflin Road, Manhattan, KS 66502, phone (785) 532-3306, or e-mail pford@oz.oznet.ksu.edu

-Mathews

HATCHERY ADD-ON

Pratt Fish Hatchery staff were busy last spring putting the final touches on a new 1,600-square-foot addition to their fish house. The addition, which was constructed on the south side of the existing fish house, will contain the walleye and channel catfish hatching and channel catfish fry feeding equipment. A new water boiler that will heat recirculated well water should make walleye and channel cat rearing more efficient.

With the additional space, walleye hatching units and catfish hatching equipment will be permanently set up. Because of space limitations in the old fish house, this equipment had to be assembled and disassembled each spring. An additional walleye hatching

unit may be built to increase hatching capacity.

—Mathews

LIBRARY LOANS FISHING EQUIPMENT

Want to go fishing? What better place to start than the local library – not for reading but to actually get started.

In one of the most innovative and unusual fishing programs in Kansas, the Valley Center Library is offering rods and reels and tackle boxes complete with hooks, bobbers, and lures. As a bonus, you'll get to keep the tackle box when they check the rod and reel back in.

The program, sponsored by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) and supported by the federal

Sport Fish Restoration Program (from excise taxes on fishing and boating equipment), was initiated by Steve Sorenson and Ken McCloskey out of KDWP's Region 4 Office in Wichita. It is one of a number of programs designed to introduce people of all ages to angling.

"Steve took this idea to the Valley Center Library, and they liked it," says McCloskey. "It works kind of like our park Rent-A-Camp program. Except with this, they have something to take home that will help them get started fishing on their own. They even get fish trading cards and a booklet on knot tying."

For more information on the program, contact McCloskey or Sorenson at the Region 4 Office, (316) 683-8069.

—Shoup

Moby Flathead

For years, there have been stories of flathead catfish big enough to eat a man in Kansas reservoirs. And anecdotes from early pioneers are filled with claims of flatheads weighing well over 100 pounds. Still, no flathead even close to that size has been officially recorded in modern times. The National Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame has been keeping records for 125 years, and their all-tackle record flathead weighs 92 pounds. Another fish record-keeping organization, the International Game Fish Association, maintains a 91-pound flathead as the world record for all tackle.

But pending approval from these organizations and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the record books will not only be broken, they'll be shattered, and the pioneer legends will be vindicated.

At 7:15 a.m. on May 14, Ken Paulie, Caney, was crappie fishing off the dam face at Elk City Reservoir. Standing on a rock in shallow water, he hooked what at first seemed to be a rock or a log. Ordinarily an ultralight fisherman, Paulie was using a Zebco 33 reel and rod with 17 pound-test line to avoid constantly breaking line in the rocks. Lucky for him. The "log" turned out to be one of those mythical flatheads.

"The wind was blowing hard toward me, and I was kind of mad because I thought the crappie fishing would probably not be too good," Paulie relates. "But I think that helped me bring it in. That, and I was able to get him right between two rocks in the shallow water so he couldn't move. It took me 10 or 15 minutes to bring him in. Then I grabbed him by the mouth, pulled him near shore, and tied a rope on him.

"It's funny because I don't flathead fish, but I have friends who do, and I've seen several 45- or 50-pounders this year. I fig-

ured this one was about 75 or 80, so I ran to the wildlife area office. I knew when I told them how much I thought it weighed that they were thinking, 'Yeah, right. We've heard that before.'"

But when Paulie and fisheries biologist Sean Lynott got back to the bank, Lynott acknowledged that the fish was for real.

They found out just how real when they struggled to carry it up to the bank. But even this effort didn't prepare them for the numbers that tipped up when they put it on certified scales at nearby Star Mill – 121 pounds.

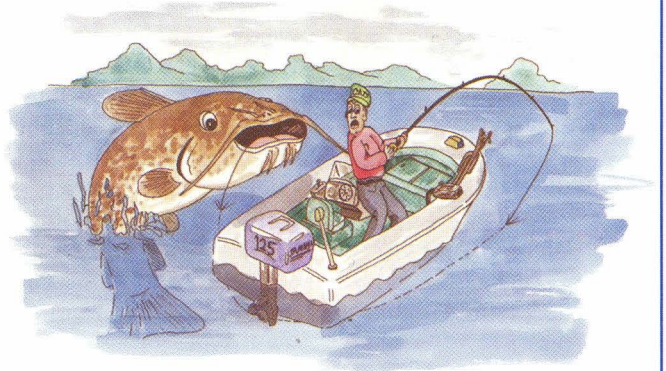
Not only would this break the state record of 90 pounds and the national all-tackle records, it would break line-class records, as well.

While Paulie, the son-in-law of Wildlife and Parks Region 5 Public Lands supervisor Doug Blex, is very excited about the catch, he's also philosophical:

"What's weird is that I just don't flathead fish. I haven't spent hours out there on the river at night. I guess I was just in the right place at the right time."

And using the right, albeit unconventional, equipment.

—Shoup



A Gardening VIRUS?



by Mark Shoup

During a conversation about chickens, my 6-year-old son, William, announces out of the blue, "We're cremating eggs in our kindergarten class!"

I double-take, then stutter, "Wha . . . What? You what?"

"We're cremating eggs," he repeats, as if I'm missing the obvious.

"What do you mean you're cremating eggs?" I ask. "What are you trying to do?"

"We're going to hatch them out into little chicks," he declares proudly.

While Will may not have all the words down yet, the concept of growing things is incubating in his mind. In fact, the excitement of growing things has infected the entire family since we've moved to the country. We notice the cycles of life imbedded in changing seasons more profoundly, and because we have so much space, we've become a part of it through gardening.

Prior to this year, the extent of my gardening experience was a couple of anemic tomato plants and some hot peppers that would incinerate nose hair. But one day in early April, I am swathing the lawn and decide to clear two corrals that once harbored sheep but have since become overgrown with lamb's-quarters and ragweed. It starts as a neatness virus, the sort of thing that overcomes a man on a big mower, but once the corral is cleared I think, *This looks tidy, but what am I going to do with it?*

Because the sheep surely made fertile soil here, the obvious answer is a small garden - a few tomatoes, some bell peppers, maybe some beans. It will be good experience for the kids, and Rose loves to garden.

So I borrow a tiller. It won't take long, just a few passes large enough for the plants. But first, Rose wants some flower garden space tilled by the house. (After all, I have the tiller, which is much easier than digging.) This doesn't take too long, and now I start on the south corral. The plan is to till an area in the center just large enough for a small garden.

Then something happens that I can't explain. Perhaps it's akin to the mower virus, but the tiller takes possession of me. I till the entire corral, and it looks so neat, so clean, as if

it's saying "Plant me!" And the other corral looks so forlorn. I can't help myself. The tiller rumbles into the next corral, and two hours later, I'm almost ready to start a truck farm. Then my neighbor stops by to admire my handiwork. Everything is just so neat that yet another corral - at least an acre lying fallow in pigweed and kochia - inspires us.

"That would be great place for pumpkins," I think out loud, "but I'd never be able to till that much."

"Oh, heavens," my neighbor replies, "I can clear that in about 15 minutes. Next time we've got an implement on, we'll just stop by and disc it for you." This guy is really a prince of a man. He suffers from hay fever and has to run cattle through a holding pen right next to that corral. How can I refuse?

Within a week, we've all got gardening fever. The boys are planting potatoes and beans; Rose is planting squash and tomatoes. Each time we go to town, another packet of seed appears in the grocery bag. By May, we have 10 tomato plants, a dozen squash, climbing beans, itty-bitty pumpkins, cucumbers, herbs, 18 hills of watermelon, sweet corn, 10 hills of pumpkins, and six hills of cantaloupe. It's a lot, but I think we need more cantaloupe.

Now we're weeding and pilfering rotten hay from the neighbor for compost, watering every day, simply working our tails off. The frightening part is that it's fun. I'm thinking about this one night as I hoe the corn. Why do we garden? Certainly, we can buy all we need at the supermarket much easier.

And the answer dawns on me: for the same reason we hunt.

If you like to garden but don't understand hunters, think about it. Humans have been involved in both activities for thousands of years. Although we've hunted longer, we've always gathered, which is akin to gardening. Both activities satisfy the deep-seated instinct to survive, to provide for self and family. It's genetic. Because they've been exposed to it at a young age, my boys take to gardening much like they have hunting. One is as natural as the other.

But don't think I'm looking at this gardening business through rose-colored glasses. I know that as the melons vine, hoeing will be tough. I'm already searching for the hole in the fence where Peter Cottontail slipped through. The cat has found his new litter box, and the dog, loving people as she does, jumps the fence and beds down in the zucchini. Next will come the coons, and I'll be camping out by the corn at night with shotgun in hand. I may even buy a straw hat and overalls.

Finally, there's harvest and farmers market, then begging my office mates, "Come on, surely you need some more tomatoes. How about some cucumbers. I'll just leave them on the table in the break room." Knowing all this, it's still a labor of love that satisfies something deep inside me; it is not another a virus.

But when I get on the mower, instinct cannot explain my actions. It's a good thing I'm not a barber.

**JANUARY
DEER HUNT DAYS**

An additional two days of deer hunting will be allowed next January. The change will allow any person with an unfilled deer permit or game tag to take an antlerless white-tailed deer during the two additional days - Jan. 9 and 10, 1999. Regardless of what type of unfilled permit they have, it will revert to an antlerless white-tailed permit for that season.

The extension of the deer season culminated several months of investigation and public discourse on a variety of alternatives aimed at stabilizing Kansas deer populations. Hunters participating in the two-day season will be restricted to the equipment specified on their permit or game tag, and must wear blaze orange clothing.

The two-day extension complements expanded deer hunting opportunities approved by the Wildlife and Parks Commission at their January public meeting. At that meeting, the commission authorized a regulation allowing hunters to obtain as many as two leftover deer permits, which may be used with legal equipment in any deer season - archery, muzzleloader, or firearms. Season dates are as follows: Firearms - Dec. 2-13, 1998; Muzzleloader - Sept. 19-27 and Dec. 2-13, 1998; and Archery - Oct. 1 through Dec. 1 and Dec. 14 through 31, 1998.

It is estimated that 129,500 deer permits and game tags will be issued for the 1998 season, an increase of 33 percent over last year. Nonresidents may obtain statewide archery permits and game tags (antler-

HUNGRY PHEASANTS

Although young pheasants are still smaller than adults during September, they eat as much food. The young consume only two-thirds as much crop grains as adults but nearly twice the weed seeds and more than two and one-half times the insects.

The higher protein diet enables the young to continue their growth to adult size. The adults use energy to produce feathers and fat while the young use it to build muscles. When only two to six weeks old, the chick's diet is 36.3 percent insects, but by September, it only includes 22 percent insects (compared to 8.3 percent for adults).

A large part of the pheasant's increased energy intake in September goes to producing feathers for the hen. The adult hen starts molting her feathers in July and regrows her entire plumage by October. The energy cost of feather production is unknown.

For songbirds, feather regrowth requires a 7.6 to 13 percent increase in energy intake.

*-Ken Solomon, Pheasants Forever
regional representative, in Farmers and Wildlife*

less-only permits in selected units). [Game tags for nonresidents had yet to be approved by the commission as of this writing but were expected to be approved at the June 25 meeting.]

-Mathews

**GOOD
HUNTER-ED YEAR**

The 1997 hunting year was among the busiest on record, due largely to the efforts of Kansas hunter education instructors. During the year, 10,851 students were certified; 298 courses were taught; the average class was 12 hours long; 30 percent of courses used live firing; 80 percent of the classes were more than 10 hours long; volunteer instructors totalled 1,120; and 41 instructor workshops were conducted.

-Mathews

**SHOOTIN'
ON THE WEB**

Shooters can now surf the Internet to locate new places to shoot by visiting the National Shooting Sports Foundation's (NSSF) "Where

to Shoot" website, www.wheretoshoot.org. More than 1,380 public shooting ranges, sportsman's clubs, and hunting preserves are featured on a state-by-state basis, with additional sites being listed daily. Locations may be searched by facility name, state, area code, type of shooting, or type of facility.

Each facility listing includes travel directions, types of available ranges, activities and tournaments, instruction, and special services and features such as equipment rental and handicapped access. Phone and fax numbers and contact names are also included. If the facility has its own website, a link is provided.

Graphic icons indicating shooting disciplines featured at each facility are also links to fact sheets with more information about that discipline. Click on the sporting clays icon, for example, and you'll get a complete run-down on the game, including history, rules, equipment needed, illustrations, articles, and other useful information.

In addition, the "Where to Shoot" website is linked with the Shooters' Online site, the largest shooting-related website in the world, as well as the NSSF's home page.

*-National Shooting Sports
Foundation*

NEW HUNT-ED COORDINATOR

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is proud to announce the appointment of a new hunter education coordinator. Wayne Doyle, formerly of Leavenworth, has moved to Pratt to fill the position, which requires coordinating all hunter education activities throughout the state.

Doyle, a retired lieutenant colonel in the Marine Corps, has been an outstanding volunteer instructor in the Leavenworth area for 14 years. He also has served the program as an area coordinator since the position was created.

Doyle replaces Ross Robins, who is the new chief of education.

--Shoup

HABITAT ENHANCEMENT HELP

Have a piece of property that you'd like to improve for wildlife but don't know where to get help? Start here:

County Conservation Districts

The county conservation districts administer the state Riparian and Wetland Protection Program. Each conservation district develops a plan to protect and restore riparian and wetland areas. Cost-share assistance to Kansas landowners is available for long-term conservation practices, such as tree planting, and fencing.

Look for "soil conservation district" under County Government in the phone book.

State and Extension Forestry

State and Extension Forestry provides technical and financial assistance to landowners for management of forested riparian areas. The program focuses on proper management, water quality improvement, and erosion reduction.

Contact State and Extension Forestry, 2610 Claflin Road, Manhattan, KS 66502, (785) 537-7050.

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Wildlife and Parks helps landowners improve wildlife habitat on their lands. Funds are available for grass seed, forb seed, trees, and shrubs. Field staff provide technical assistance and, sometimes, labor and equipment.

Landowners can enroll their riparian areas into short-term

or perpetual conservation easements.

Contact KDWP, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124, (316) 672-5911.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Health and Environment provides public information and technical assistance in using vegetative management and land management practices to protect water resources from non-point source pollution.

Contact KDHE, Nonpoint Source Section, Forbes Field, Bldg. 740, Topeka, KS 66620, (785) 296-5573.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The USFWS Partners for Wildlife Program is designed to provide landowners with opportunities to restore, enhance, or create wetlands and riparian areas at minimal cost. Technical advice and partial payment for construction is provided. Recommendations are made for enhancing habitats.

Contact USFWS, Kansas State Office, 315 Houston St., Suite E., Manhattan, KS 66502, (785) 539-3474.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The NRCS provides technical assistance to land users who develop and apply soil and water conservation plans. These plans offer land users alternatives that enhance riparian and wetland areas. Financial assistance may be available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Contact your local USDA Service Center.

—*Kansas Riparian Area Management brochure*

KANSAS Eagles

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) received its common name from American colonists when bald, or "balled," meant white, not hairless. Bald eagles are found only in North America. These large raptors eat fish, waterfowl, small mammals, and even carrion.

Experts believe there were as many as 75,000 bald eagles in the lower 48 states when it was adopted as our national symbol in 1782. But habitat destruction, illegal shooting, and contamination of its food – mostly by the pesticide DDT – caused a significant reduction in the population. By the early 1970s, their numbers had decreased to approximately 2,000 with less than 420 nesting pairs.

But the number of bald eagles has rebounded since it was placed on the original federal Endangered Species

List in 1967. [Also, DDT was banned in 1970.] Today, biologists estimate there are more than 10,000 bald eagles in the lower 48 states with more than 4,300 nesting pairs. This increase can be attributed to pesticide regulation



and federal protection. Today, the bird's status continues to improve. (See "ESA Works" in "Issues.")

The bald eagle population in Alaska remains healthy with more than 40,000 eagles and 10,000 nesting pairs.

Bald eagles have historically migrated through Kansas in winter. Today, 800-1,000 eagles spend their winters here, many of them nesting in spring. The first successful modern day nest was documented at Clinton Reservoir, near Lawrence, in 1989. This pioneering pair was critical to the nesting eagle population in Kansas because juveniles usually return to nest within 100 miles of where they fledged.

In fact, the first two eagles fledged at Clinton are now nesting at Perry and Hillsdale reservoirs. Between 1989 and 1996, 48 eagles were hatched and fledged from 5 nesting territories in Kansas.

The entire length of the Kansas River has been designated as critical eagle habitat. The section between Lawrence and Topeka is used heavily by bald eagles, especially in the winter. This is an excellent area to view and photograph eagles with easy access provided by the "scenic river road."

—*from Bald Eagles Along the Kaw*

**HUNTER EDUCATION
TURNS 25**

The Kansas Hunter Education Program turns 25 this year, and on July 18, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks will celebrate the occasion with an all-day event at the Webster Conference Center in Salina. The center has classrooms, conference rooms, a kitchen, a banquet hall that seats 500, and substantial grounds for outdoor activities, weather permitting.

The event will begin at 1 p.m., and an evening banquet will begin about 7 p.m. Vendors will man booths and exhibits throughout the day, and various workshops will be held. A tentative list of workshop topics includes game calling, antler scoring, flint knapping, and archery. The DART computerized shooting system (both gun and archery) will also be on hand, and department officials hope to enlist a shooting expert for demonstrations. Door prizes will be given away.

Approximately 140 hunter education instructors have been active for 25 years, and they will be given special awards during the day. The event will be open to all

instructors and their families.

About 12,000 students pass through the Kansas Hunter Education Program each year, learning respect for hunting, natural resources, firearms, law, wildlife, and landowners. The 25-year instructors are among more than 1,200 volunteers essential to these efforts.

"Hunter education just can't be done without these volunteers," says statewide hunter education coordinator Wayne Doyle. "If you had to pay for it, it would be impossible. I see my job as supporting instructors, not the students. The instructors are incredibly dedicated when you consider the time, effort, and money that they put in.

"This celebration is a giant 'Thank you' to them. It's great that the program is 25 years old and that some 140 instructors have stuck it out all this time. This is for them and all the others who volunteer."

The following list details just a few of the Kansas Hunter Education Program's accomplishments in the past 25 years.

- Approximately 350,000 students have been trained.
- More than 12,000 students are trained each year.

- About 1,200 volunteer instructors are currently active.

- 140 instructors have been active for 25 years.

- The program has received four NRA Awards of Achievement, the NRA 100,000 Club Award, and the NRA Top 10 Award for one of the best programs in the nation.

For more information on the Kansas hunter education program, contact Wayne Doyle at (316) 672-5911 or visit the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks website at <http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us>

-Shoup

**ADOBE FUND RAISER**

Charlotte Kindall, Norton, was awarded the 1998 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation. Ms. Kindall was nominated for the award by Prairie Dog State Park manager Steve Mathes and regional parks supervisor David White. The award was presented at the Kansas History Center in Topeka May 13.

Mathes and White nominated Kindall for raising community awareness of the importance of the adobe house at Prairie Dog State Park, as well as her efforts in organizing special events and fund raising.

-Mathews

WAY outside BY BRUCE COCHRAN

"GEORGE WASHINGTON NEVER TOLD A LIE?
HE MUST NOT HAVE BEEN A FISHERMAN."

HERDS AND KIDS

HERDS? KIDS?

The English language is always changing. Sometimes words are added, and sometimes others are forgotten. At one time, there were many words to describe groups of animals and their young. Today, there are not so many. Sure, we all know that cattle come in herds and their young are called calves, but there are many more interesting descriptions of groups and young.

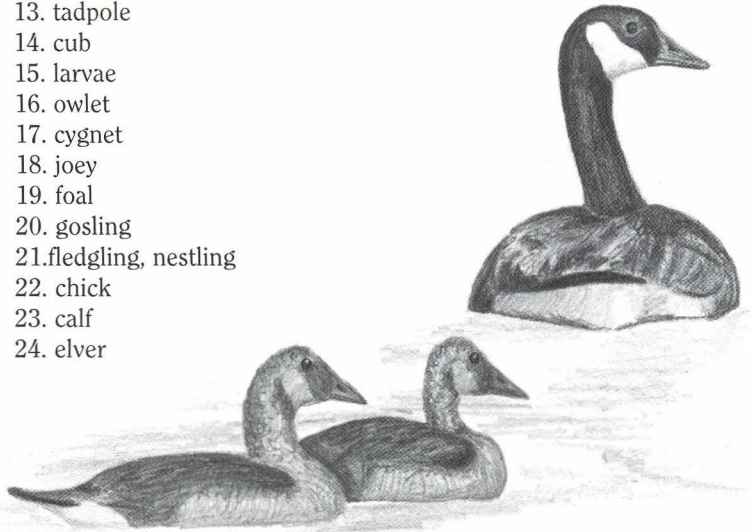
See if you can match the young and adults on this page and the species and groups on the next. (Note that two of the young names match with the same adult name.)

Adult

- _____ bear, lion, shark, tiger
- _____ bird
- _____ fox, beaver, rabbit, cat
- _____ goat
- _____ swan
- _____ turkey
- _____ kangaroo
- _____ duck
- _____ owl
- _____ fish
- _____ eel
- _____ chicken, ostrich
- _____ frog
- _____ insect
- _____ eagle
- _____ hog
- _____ pigeon
- _____ goose
- _____ buffalo, antelope
- _____ dog, fox, seal, coyote
- _____ deer
- _____ zebra, horse

Young

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. squab | 13. tadpole |
| 2. eaglet | 14. cub |
| 3. caterpillar | 15. larvae |
| 4. fawn | 16. owlet |
| 5. duckling | 17. cygnet |
| 6. pup | 18. joey |
| 7. kit | 19. foal |
| 8. shoat | 20. gosling |
| 9. kid | 21. fledgling, nestling |
| 10. poult | 22. chick |
| 11. fry | 23. calf |
| 12. whelp | 24. elver |



Answers: squab = pigeon; eaglet = eagle; caterpillar = insect; fawn = deer; duckling = duck; pup = dog; foal = dog, fox, seal, coyote; kit = fox, beaver, rabbit; shoat = hog; kid = goat; poult = turkey; fry = fish; whelp = dog, fox, seal, coyote; tadpole = frog; cub = bear, lion, shark, tiger; larvae = insect; owlet = owl; cygnet = swan; joey = kangaroo; foal = zebra, horse; gosling = goose; fledgling, nestling = bird; chick = chicken, ostrich; calf = buffalo, antelope; elver = eel.

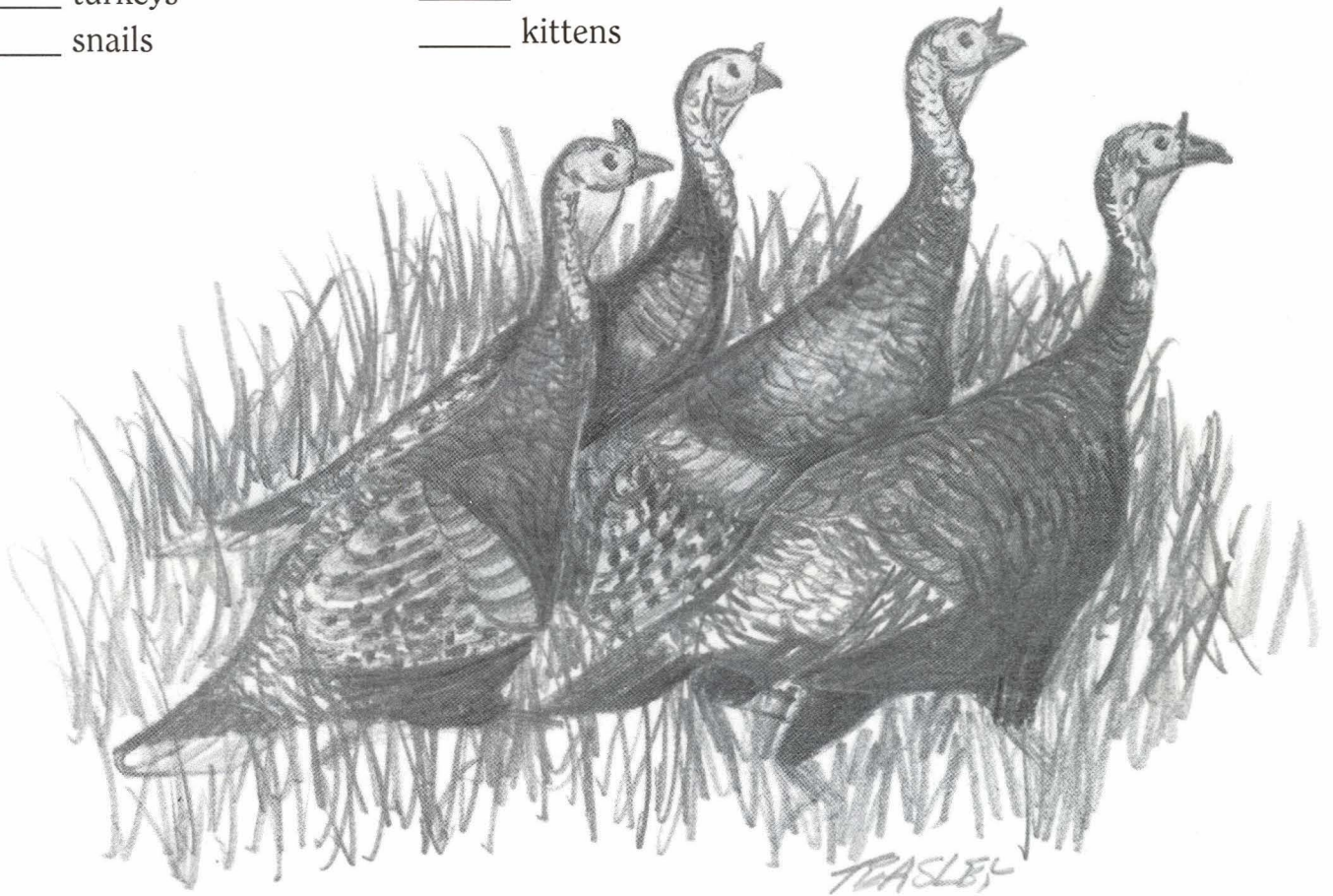
Species

- _____ peacocks
- _____ hounds
- _____ whales, seals
- _____ lions
- _____ bears
- _____ fish
- _____ goats
- _____ kangaroos, monkeys
- _____ birds
- _____ worms
- _____ turkeys
- _____ snails

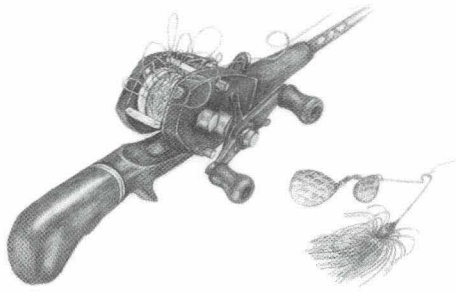
- _____ leopards
- _____ quail
- _____ gorillas
- _____ ducks
- _____ hawks
- _____ cats
- _____ chicks
- _____ ants
- _____ coots
- _____ swine
- _____ sheep, cattle
- _____ geese
- _____ whales
- _____ elephants
- _____ hares
- _____ kittens

Group

- | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. band | 11. gam | 21. shoal |
| 2. brace | 12. herd | 22. tribe |
| 3. cast | 13. warren | 23. troop |
| 4. clowder | 14. kindle | 24. volery |
| 5. clutch | 15. leap | 25. clew |
| 6. colony | 16. muster | 26. rafter |
| 7. covert | 17. mute | 27. walk |
| 8. drift | 18. pod | 28. covey |
| 9. drove | 19. pride | |
| 10. gaggle | 20. sleuth | |



Answers: a band of gorillas, a brace of ducks, a cast of hawks, a clowder of cats, a clutch of chicks, a colony of ants, a covert of coots, a drift of swine, a drove of sheep or cattle, a gaggle of geese, a gam of whales, a herd of elephants, a warren of hares, a kindle of kittens, a leap of leopards, a muster of peacocks, a mute of hounds, a pod of whales or seals, a pride of lions, a sleuth of bears, a shoal of fish, a tribe of goats, a troop of kangaroos or monkeys, a volery of birds, a clew of worms, a rafter of turkeys, a walk of snails, a covey of quail.



Backlash

by Mike Miller

Boating Deficit Disorder

Everybody has some kind of disorder these days. Whatever their faults, it's not their fault. Until recently, I thought I was a poor dog trainer. My Black Lab is a great dog, but he was easily distracted during early training sessions. He could pay attention for about one retrieve, but then a butterfly or dandelion would catch his attention, and the session would be over. I finally gave up and considered him to be mostly a good pet. I've decided that he is stricken with Dumb Happy Lab Disorder (DHLD). I'm relieved it wasn't my fault.

Now I'm looking for a disorder that would explain my irrational obsession with fishing boats. It started soon after I began working full-time and thought I had enough expendable income to purchase a boat. Before that idea was spawned, being just out of college and newly married, I considered a boat to be out of my financial reach. I made due with a cheap float-tube — my poor-man's bass boat. But when my wife and I were both working full-time, I considered a boat to be within reach. From that second on, I was obsessed.

I stashed Bass Pro Shops catalogs everywhere. Whenever I thought no one was looking, I slipped a catalog open to the boats section and began fantasizing. I was somewhat realistic, and my expectations were low, but I was looking at a motorboat, fully rigged for fishing. A good friend took pity on me and sold me his 16-foot Alumacraft bass boat with trolling motor, flasher and 50 horsepower Evinrude.

Instead of appeasing my obsession, it made it worse. I spent hours piddling with my boat, parked in the backyard. I sat behind the steering console and "worked" on the boat, so it would be ready at a moment's notice. When it was on the water, I felt truly part of the elite, fishing from a cushioned pedestal seat, rod in hand and one foot on the trolling motor foot pedal. I earned my boating stripes in that old Alumacraft, learning about wheel bearings, aluminum props, deep-cycle batteries, battery chargers and other costly boating accessories. But after three years, my condition had worsened to the point that I was compelled to buy a bigger, faster, prettier boat. I had a new job with a little more money.

For me, going to a boat show in a convention hall full of boats "marked down to show prices" was like a pro

bass angler in an embroidered patch factory. I visited all the poor homeless boats and made friends with a shiny red and white, fiberglass bass boat with a sleek 80 horsepower motor, and it followed me home.

The 17-foot Skeeter was a fine craft. It floated on many Kansas reservoirs, and I must have waxed it two or three dozen times in the seven years it took for me to need a new fix. I rationalized that I needed a deep-V for the winds that often plague Kansas reservoirs. And of course, I needed more horsepower for the bigger, heavier deep-V. I sold the Skeeter to a friend, first making sure he had a warm, comfortable place in his garage for my baby. Then I went to another boat show.

This time a Ranger deep-V Fisherman model with a 115 horsepower motor, 24-volt trolling motor, graph, and two flashers looked at me with those big metal-flake stripes, and I couldn't resist. You couldn't ask for a nicer boat. And I haven't yet, but it's only been four years. I make it one day at a time.

My wife is partly to blame because without her support and superior earning power, I could have never afforded even the first boat. She likes to boat, but she hardly gets her money's worth on a few trips each summer. The Ranger sits comfortably in the garage where my pickup should be, and I make a point to spend time with it when I can't take it fishing. There's no greater satisfaction for me than to be on the lake in the boat, but I never get out as much as I'd like. It seems my condition requires that I have the boat. Just knowing it's there and ready at "a moment's notice" is a comfort.

I've decided that with no disorders that accurately match my oddities, I'll have to coin my own — Boating Deficit Disorder, or BDD. It fits because it seems that the boat you own, while providing soothing comfort, is never enough. There's always a new model that's faster, more comfortable, better in rough water and better looking. While I can hide most of the symptoms most of the time, the biggest obstacle is the money. Each fix gets considerably more expensive. So far I haven't had to resort to anything illegal or sell any of my belongings, but I worry. I know that someday, I'll go to another boat show, and another boat will try to follow me home. ♡

