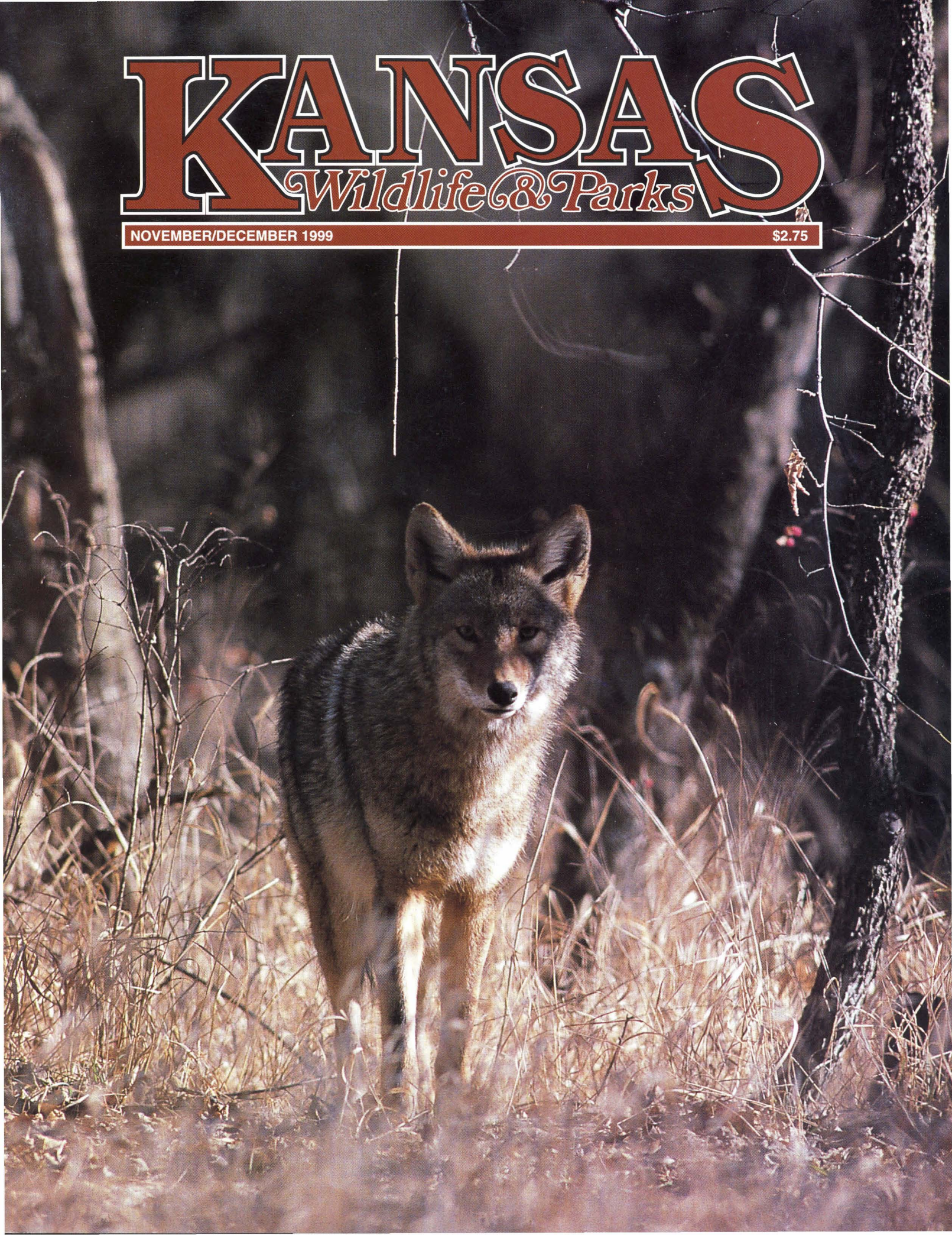


KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999

\$2.75





The View From Here



by Steve Williams

KDWP Online For You

The last autumn of the century should be a memorable time to be afield in Kansas. Waterfowl numbers are up from last year's impressive migration, deer hunters will have unprecedented opportunities, and weather permitting, upland bird hunting looks very promising (check the upland bird forecast on Page 38 for detailed information).

Finding a place to hunt should be easier this fall, as more than 600,000 acres are enrolled in the Walk-In Hunting Area (WIHA) program. The WIHA atlas, upland bird forecast, news releases, and much more can be downloaded from the department's ever-growing web site (www.kdwp.state.ks.us).

The Internet has been an important tool in our department's continuing effort to provide quality customer service to our constituents. Our web site currently offers the following services and information to the public:

Online License Sales

Kansas hunting, fishing, and furharvesting licenses can now be purchased directly from the department's web site. Through software developed by the Information Network of Kansas, anyone with an Internet connection, a credit card, and a printer can purchase and print a valid license from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In addition to the licenses offered, you may also purchase state waterfowl stamps, Harvest Information Program (HIP) stamps, trout stamps, and sandhill crane permits, as well as renew boat registrations, and subscribe to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine.

Waterfowl and Fishing Reports

Waterfowl reports are updated weekly on the web site from early September through March 10. These reports cover the major marshes and waterfowl areas throughout the state. Each report lists the number of waterfowl present, current water level conditions, expected hunting success, and general comments about the area. This season, our biologists are able to enter the information directly onto the department web page, ensuring the information is as up-to-date as possible.

Fishing reports are also updated weekly from April

through July. These reports list the species present, the chance for success, the average size of the fish being caught, and the most successful baits and methods being utilized at that area.

Brochures

The hunting and furharvesting, waterfowl, and fishing regulation summaries can all be downloaded from our web site, along with the WIHA, and Fishing Impoundment and Stream Habitat (F.I.S.H.) atlases. Over 150 brochures on hunting, fishing, state parks, wildlife areas, and nongame animals can also be ordered over the Internet.

Legislative Update

The 2000 Legislature will convene soon and our web site will help keep you informed on issues that affect the natural resources of Kansas. This page is updated every Friday during the session. If the department has provided testimony on a bill, the bill summary includes the department's position as of the date of that report.

While our web site provides a wealth of useful information, our department's successful management of the wildlife and wild places of Kansas will always depend on our dedicated personnel and the political and financial support of our constituents.

As you enter the forests and fields of Kansas this hunting season, please be assured that the department will continue its efforts to provide you with timely and accurate information about our great natural resources. Our intent is to use modern technology to ensure that our hunting heritage is preserved for future generations.

Please do your part by hunting responsibly and ethically. Respect landowner property and rights, always ask permission, and be sure to express your appreciation to your hosts. Hunt safely and enjoy your time afield.

Steve Williams

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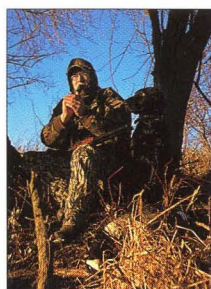


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KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS (ISSN 0898-6975) is published by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 900 Jackson St., Suite 502, Topeka, KS 66612. Address editorial correspondence and subscription requests to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124 (316) 672-5911. Subscription rate: one year \$10; two years \$18; and three years \$27. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted with permission. Periodical postage paid at Pratt, KS and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt KS 67124.



About the covers
Front cover: Mike Blair called this coyote with a mouth-blown predator call and filmed it with a 400mm lens @f/5.6, 1/125 sec. **Back Cover:** With an expectant partner, a goose hunter calls to a flock of Canadas. Marc Murrell filmed the scene with a 35-80mm lens @ f/11, 1/125 sec.



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

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 900 Jackson St., Suite 502, Topeka, KS 66612.





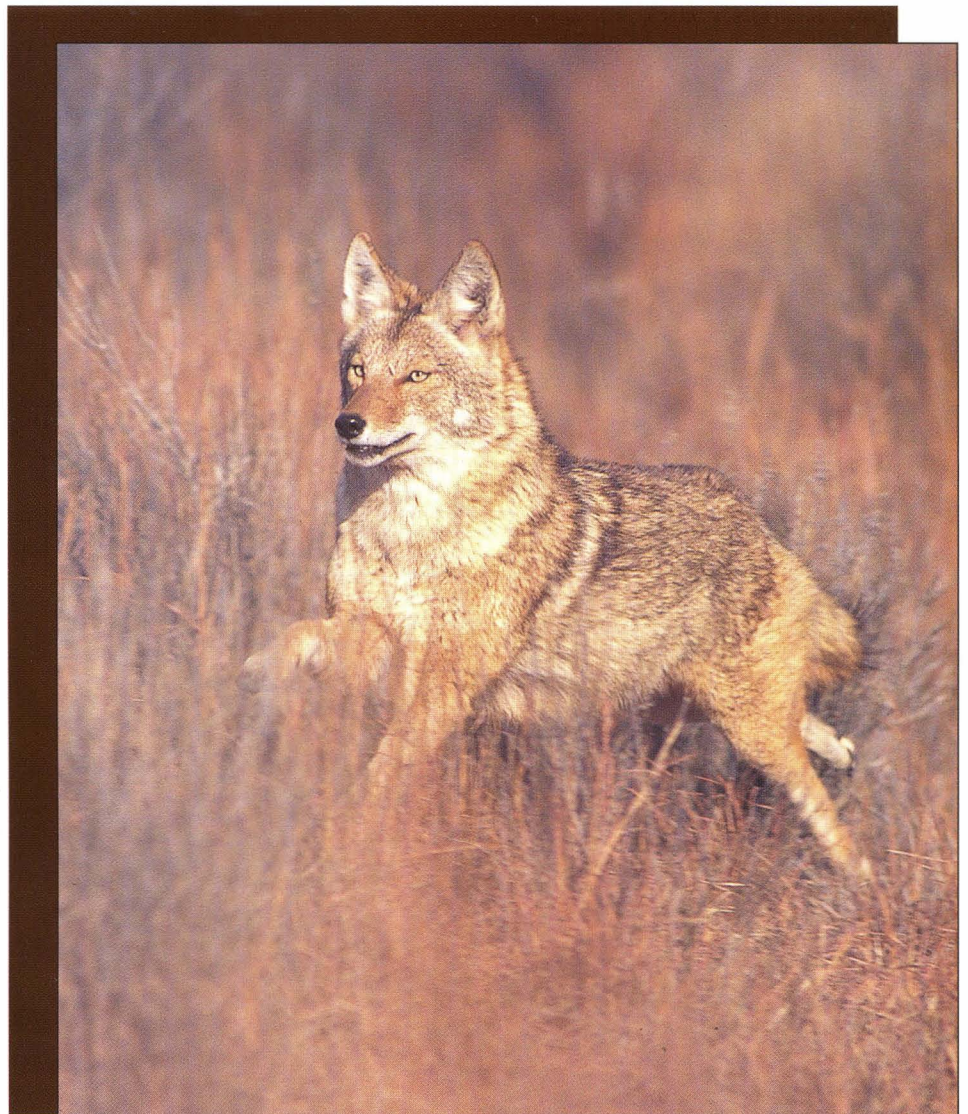
Call Waiting

text and photos by Mike Blair
associate editor/photographer, Pratt

It's the real version, where you call and wait. Sometimes the wait is half a minute, and other times, a week. There's no good explanation why a dozen sets or more go empty, and the next brings a trio of coyotes with a bonus cat. That's just the nature of predator calling.

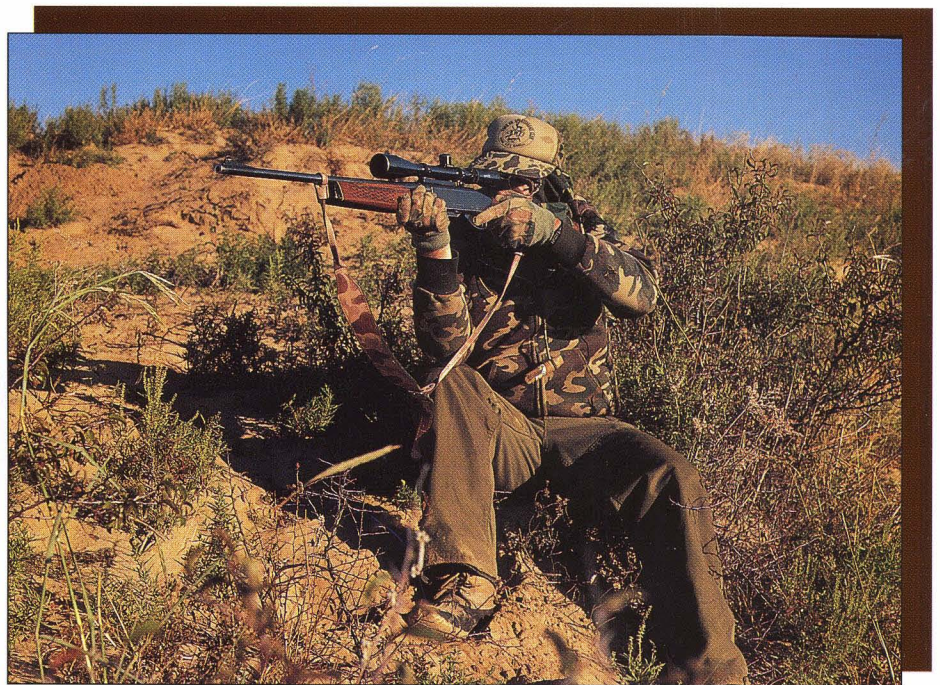
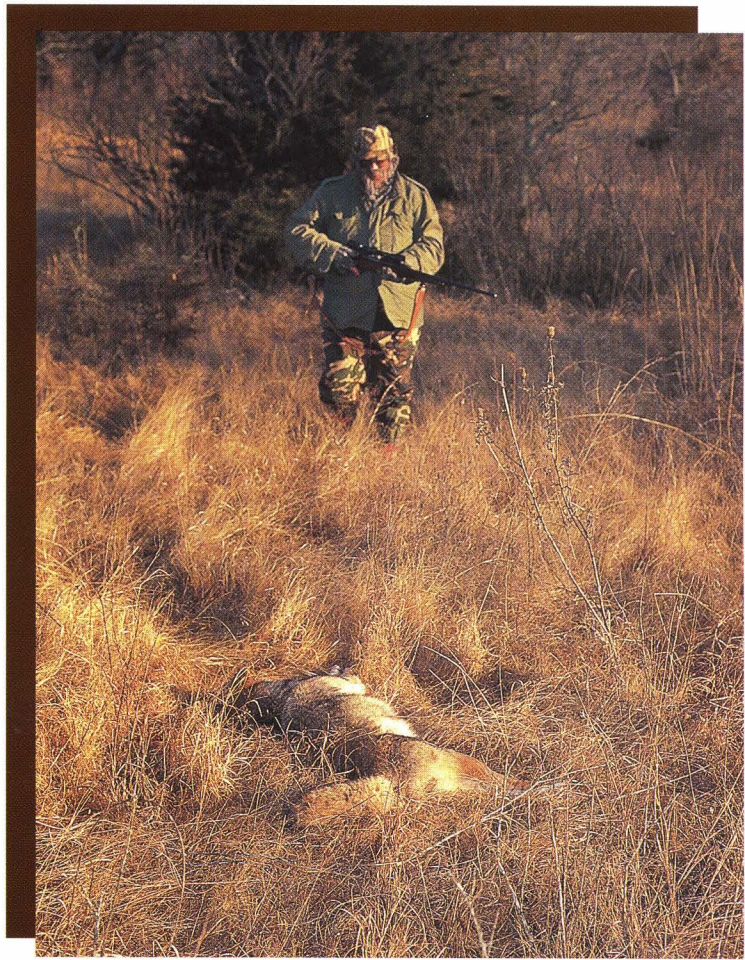
There's nothing like it. Ease over a rise at dawn, and settle against a bush. Listen to the still air before piercing it with sound. Let loose with moans and squalls, mouth-blown or electronic. Then listen to still air again, but listen expectantly. Watch the changeless landscape for signs of life.

It's hunting at its best against nature's sharpest wits. Show yourself? Forget it. Call downwind? You're wasting time. Too much noise? At least you got some exercise.





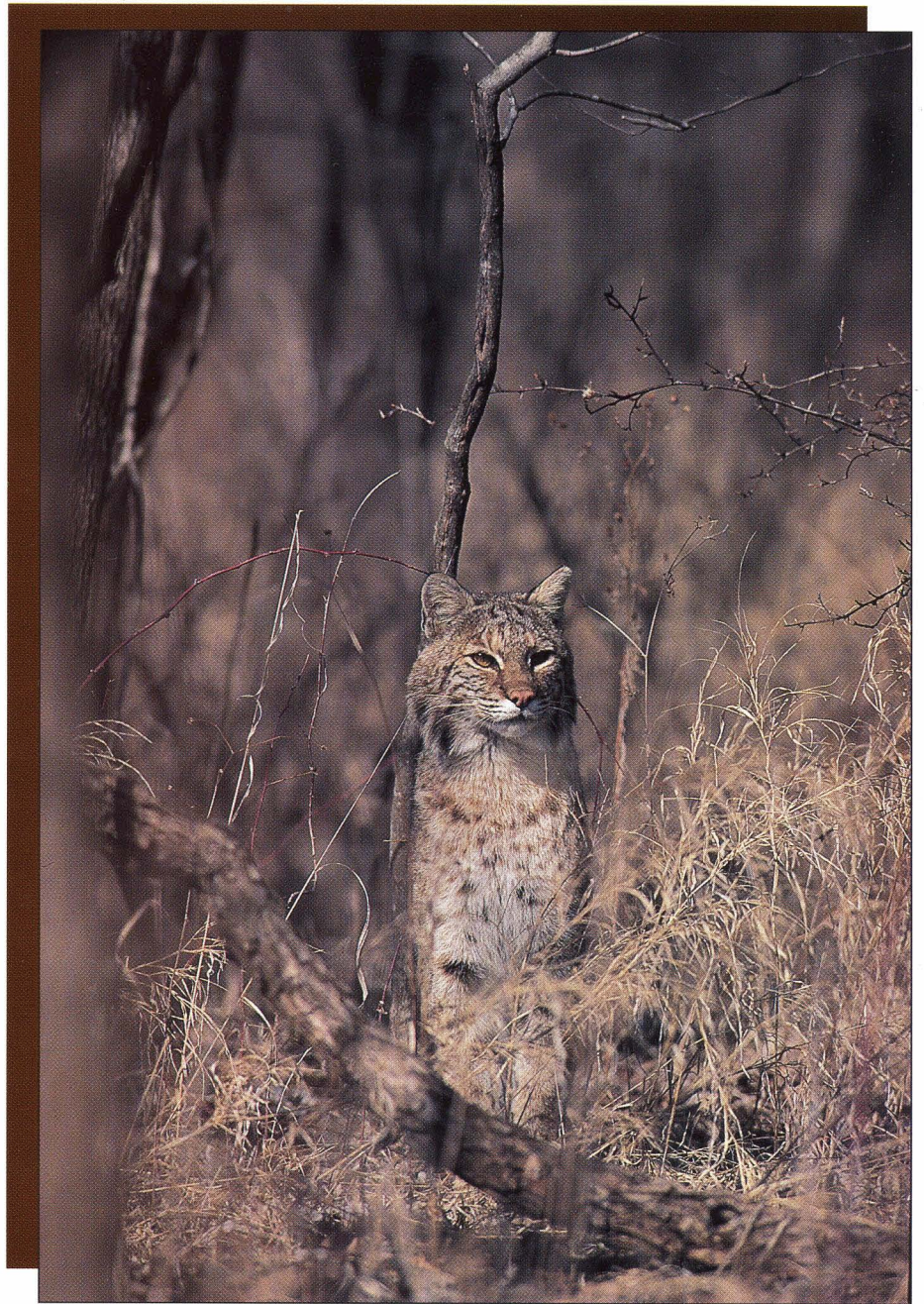
There they are at half a mile, a pair of song-dogs running. Zigging, zagging, flowing together and apart. Adjust your knee and click the safety. Dial the scope to 4 and get ready. Seconds later, they're in your space. The rifle bucks and bucks again. One down, one smarter.



The afternoon is quiet as you stalk the woods for squirrels. Too sunny. Too hot. Too close to noon. So what? It's a good excuse to rest. Pull a predator call from your pocket and settle in a shadow. You moan the rabbit blues, then all is still.

Two minutes and another go. Nothing seems to notice. A brown creeper pecks its way along a trunk, oblivious to the anguished cries. You absorb the January sun and think of getting back to business. Later. Eyes half shut, it feels good to lean against a tree. A blue jay screams across the creek, and now you're up and watching.

Big as life, a bobcat strolls from the underbrush. In no hurry, it sniffs its way along the water, heading closer. Behind a screen of brush, you blow a pair of muffled squalls and pocket the call. Another minute, and the cat appears, crossing the creek on a fallen log. It pauses in the .22's open sights, and there's a skinning job to do. Its spotted fur is beautiful.





Call waiting. Played right, it's pure adventure. Match the call to outdoor conditions. Food? Challenge? Territorial? Listen to coyotes answer your howler, or watch a raccoon bristle onto the scene. See a gray fox pass close by, unwilling to leave a rival in spite of human scent. Thrill to the sight of coyotes, or the ghostly appearance of a spotted cat. Wait each year for the furbearer season with all its excitement.

Call waiting. Hot or cold, windy or calm, it's always new and challenging. It's a choice way to experience the Kansas outdoors. 🐾





State Park In Harmony

by J. Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

Harmony at Crawford State Park comes from more than the annual bluegrass festival. The state park is at harmony with its scenic surroundings, as well as local residents. Park manager Dave Goble credits the Friends Group volunteers with providing many park attractions that could not be possible with current staff and budget.



The highest and best form of efficiency is the spontaneous cooperation of a free people.

Bernard Baruch

I was 15 minutes late when I arrived at Crawford State Park. The day before, I had talked to park manager Dave Goble on the phone. He told me the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) company that built Crawford state lake in the late 1930s was having a reunion the next day, and that they would leave for a tour at 11 a.m. As always, Dave was punctual, and I got sidetracked by a new and unfamiliar highway.

The folks at the marina said that the group had already left, so my wife, two sons, and I raced around the lake in search of a group of vans

filled with senior citizens. The old stone tower was supposed to have been their first stop. Standing in a grove of trees near the entrance on the west edge of the park, the tower is a still-impressive stone obelisk erected by the CCC company more than 60 years ago. It once held a water tank that supplied the needs of the camp. The tank is gone now, and so were our CCC veterans.

For the next 30 minutes or so, we drove around the 150-acre lake, which is surrounded by dense oak-hickory forest and rocky bluffs reminiscent of the Ozarks. At first, my search was frustrating, hurried because I was late and tired from the 4-hour drive. On the way to the park, we had taken a new highway and were 30 miles too far south before we knew it. By the time we backtracked and arrived, we were all a bit grumpy.

But now, as we drove around the park, the beautiful scenery absorbed our stress. The road turned and dipped, offering glimpses and vistas of the clear-water lake in all its green, late-summer glory.

We drove every road and marvelled at the well-kept campsites nestled discretely among the trees along the wooded shoreline. Each had its own new concrete pad that looked more like a patio than a parking spot. There was a harmony of water, rocky shoreline, trees, and campsites that would do the most sophisticated architect proud.

As we crossed the dam for the third time and passed alternating American and state flags — 100 of them blowing in the breeze — my youngest son, Will, commented, “This is going to be a good day, after all, Dad.”

It was, indeed.

For sheer beauty, Crawford State Park is reminiscent of its sister lake to the north, Bourbon State Fishing Lake. However, Crawford has the advantage of being a state park and boasts facilities no state fishing lake can offer. Crawford has another advantage over state fishing lakes and most state parks — ordinary citizens who care for the area as if it were their child. On this, I will elab-

orate later.

We finally caught up with the intrepid sightseers at Farlington Fish Hatchery, adjacent to the park on the north. When I first saw the group looking over the hatchery ponds and waiting for biologist Randy Nelson to speak, I was surprised by their vigor and curiosity. After all, the project they had worked on began in 1934 and ended in 1938. The “men” enlisted in the CCC had to be at least 17, so none of these folks were spring chickens.

I snapped a few photos and then introduced myself to a gentleman who stared curiously at me through my camera lens. His name was Herman Werholtz of Girard. I asked if he had worked on the project.

“Well,” he laughed, “I helped finish her up, but there are lot of guys around here who can tell you more about it than I can. I was only here three weeks. After that, I was sent to Minnesota, back to Kansas, up to Oak Harbor, Washington, and finally wound up at Glacier Park, Montana.”

Not all CCC men traveled so much, and many spent most of their time at the Crawford site, called Farlington Camp No. 788. This was one of the earliest CCC projects. Pete Gilmore, Pittsburg, spent 13 months here in 1938-39, and his brother was with the project when it began.

It all started in 1933 when, responding to the poverty and unemployment of the depression, President Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps, one of the first such emergency agencies. He wanted to reduce unemployment, especially among young men, and preserve the nation’s natural resources in the process.

To accomplish these goals, Roosevelt recommended that the CCC be supervised by the War Department in cooperation with the departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Labor. Many CCC projects involved forestry, flood control, prevention of soil erosion, and fighting forest fires.

For the young men who enlisted,

however, the CCC offered work, much-needed income, and hope. Each enlistee was provided food, clothing, housing, and \$30 per month, \$25 of which had to go back home to their families. Each "tour of duty" lasted two years.

On May 19, 1933, Company 788 of the CCC was formed at Fort Riley. All the recruits were Kansans, mostly from the eastern part of the state. After basic training, the company was transferred to Park Rapids, Minn., where their primary duties consisted of fighting forest fires. From this work, the company was dubbed "Fire Devil," a nickname that stuck throughout the company's history.

On April 9, 1934, Fire Devil Company was transferred to a site near Kalvesta, where they finished work on the dam for what is now Finney State Fishing Lake.

On June 6, 1935, the 788th was transferred to the new project near Farlington, where they were to build an earthen dam 1,350 feet long, 65 feet high, and requiring 284,000 cubic yards of earthen fill. Initially using mules, wagons, and blood, sweat, and tears, the majority



All of Crawford's campsites are nestled among mature native oaks and hickories. Defined by modern, concrete pads, they provide camping opportunities unexcelled throughout the state.

of the project was completed by hand. Trees were cut from the future lake bottom, and clay in the dam was tamped by hand using railroad ties cut in half and fitted with handles.

Roads and a spillway were also built. At the height of activity, the Farlington camp housed men in

more than a dozen barracks and had numerous other buildings.

According to John Spurling, a reporter for the Girard Press who was too young to enlist but watched the project as a boy, the Farlington Camp worked wonders for the local area, as well as the men.

"This camp helped build Girard," Spurling explains. "A grocery, a theater, barber shops, shoe shops — all kinds of businesses grew up around this camp. Local farmers sold hay and oats for the mules. And whenever disaster struck around Girard, the CCC boys were there to help."

The project was completed in 1938 when the lake was placed under the authority of the Kansas Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission as a state fishing lake. The Farlington Hatchery was started in 1939 but not completed until after World War II. Today, three full-time employees operate this facility, producing striped bass, channel catfish, blue catfish, wipers, walleye, saugeye, bluegill, redear sunfish, and grass carp.

So how did the Civilian



The beautiful blue water of Crawford Lake is noted for fishing as well as scenery. The lake, built by the CCC in the 1930s, is 60 feet deep.

Conservation Corps reunion idea get started?

"Since I've worked here," says Goble, "I've had guys come up to me and say, 'Hey, I helped build this lake,' so it's always been an idea in the back of my mind. As encounters grew more frequent, I figured we'd better get it done. John Spurling helped collect names, and he knew some of the locals who were involved, so we sent out invitations. Now what I'd like to do is make a documentary of this project and these folks."

After Randy Nelson finished discussing the hatchery with the CCC veterans, the group loaded back into their vans and returned to the marina, where they were treated to lunch. Then they gathered under shade trees outside and they took turns on a microphone, sharing experiences and reliving old times. All spoke of the hard work, and most shared stories about dances in Girard and other memories of how the community warmly accepted them. Several had not-too-fond memories of working with mules.

Perhaps Paul Pavey, who was at

the camp for one year, expressed the CCC experience best. "I was only 15 when I enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps. I lied about my age. But most of us were just boys, anyway. I may have been a boy when I enlisted, but I was a man when I got out. It made a man out of me."

So began the life of one of the state's most beautiful public areas. In 1965, Crawford became a state park, and today, the area boasts 150 acres of clear water and 500 acres of park. There are 63 utility campsites, 15 acres of primitive camping, 7 picnic shelters, three boat ramp lanes, four restrooms, showers, two hardened hiking trails, a mountain bike trail and a full-service restaurant and marina. A new swing set graces a swimming beach on the west side of the lake.

Boating and fishing are favorite



Crawford's "Avenue of Flags" is a colorful attraction which lines the dam for holidays and special events.

activities at Crawford. Bluegill, channel and flathead catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, walleye, striped bass, and wipers are among the species anglers seek.

The biking trail is 7 miles long and meanders through challenging wooded topography. The short Spider Leg Bridge Hiking Trail offers an interesting bit of Kansas history. In 1860, this area was part of a large parcel of land owned but not settled by the Cherokee Nation. When white people settled in the area, the Cherokees demanded compensation from Washington. President Buchanan, however, found the treasury empty and instead sent troops to remove the settlers.

Troops began their campaign near the southern border of Kansas and drove the settlers north to a point on Drywood Creek just below what is now Crawford dam. After the Civil War, the government bought the land from the Cherokee and sold it to a railroad magnate, who in turn attempted to sell the land back to the settlers.

This, of course, did not set well with the settlers, who still felt the land was theirs. In retaliation, the settlers threatened to burn the railroad bridges, including the one on Drywood Creek called Spider Leg. For two years, the government kept an outpost of soldiers near the bridge to protect it. Foundations and a water well from this outpost may still be seen on the trail.

In addition to well-kept facilities,



New playground equipment provides fun at several locations in the park, including a camping area and the swimming beach. Schools often use the facilities for field trips.



The Civilian Conservation Corps reunion attracted many of the workers who helped to build the earthen dam. Crawford is one of the many CCC projects initiated under the Roosevelt Administration to reduce unemployment while fostering conservation.

unique events such as the CCC reunion, and educational services such as a naturalist program carried into the local schools during the off-season, Crawford hosts three annual celebrations that attract people from across Kansas and Missouri. The first is the Fourth of July celebration, complete with a fireworks display that would rival those in many large towns.

"This is an enormous event," says Goble. "We have a barbecue complete with watermelon and all the trimmings. Just picture an old-fashioned afternoon in the park topped off by a huge fireworks display."

The second event is the Summer Sizzler Triathlon, held in August and now in its 8th year. This year, more than 200 athletes from 14 states vied for top honors in a race that demands 26 miles of biking, 6.1 miles of running, and 1.5 miles of swimming.

Also in its eighth year (this year coinciding with the CCC reunion) is the early September Drywood Creek Bluegrass Festival. Comprised of five local bands this year, the event runs from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. However, visitors can hear

the sound of music throughout the wooded campgrounds much earlier (and, one would assume, much later).

These special events, as well as holidays, are highlighted by the "Avenue of Flags" described earlier, adding bright colors to an already colorful park.

So how does a park with only two full-time employees offer so much? As the old Beatles song proclaims, "I get by with a little help from my friends," and that's exactly



The annual Drywood Creek Bluegrass Festival, held in early September, is a popular park event. The concert is free and provides quality bluegrass music in an open-air setting.

what Crawford State Park is doing.

With help from Dave Goble, who became park manager in 1990, the Friends of Crawford State Park was formed. Comprised of about 30 percent cabin owners around the lake (a unique situation in that some of the land around the lake was owned before the state owned the lake and park), the group has 46 full-time members and many others who just volunteer their time. They run the marina and restaurant and return all proceeds to the park.

Their contribution to Crawford cannot be underestimated, according to Goble.

"Without these folks, we would not be able to do near what we do," he explains. "They help at every level. We even have members in the group who are certified pyrotechnists and handle the fireworks on the Fourth."

The Friends group has helped with recent improvements on the mountain bike and hiking trails. Deer Run Nature trail, complete with interpretive signs, is a memorial for Jason Miller, the son of a Friends member. Member Ron Brower closes his own business one day a week to run the marina free of charge. Marlene Smith and Kay Brower donate their time to run the restaurant's kitchen.

Of course, Crawford's success is not all due to the dedication of the Friends group. The state park staff are enterprising themselves. As an example, park ranger Ed George collected 75 old truck tire rims and convinced St. Paul High School vocational-technical students to weld grills on them for fire rings that would have otherwise cost \$100 each. Through Goble's ingenuity, the National Guard helped build roads as part of training exercises.

Nick Sell works for a printing equipment manufacturer in Pittsburg, but he has lived on the lake for 26 years. He is also president of Friends of Crawford, and he has definite ideas about why this park is run so well.

"One of the biggest jewels in the crown of this park is this man, Dave Goble," he explains categorically. "He honestly knows how to get things done."

Goble dismisses such praise, deferring credit to the Friends of Crawford State Park — all of which lends credence to the maxim, "Anything is possible if you don't care who gets the credit."

The dedication and enthusiasm of both groups is obvious. "Our goal for the next 10 years is to get a major new improvement every year," says Goble. "Local dedication makes so many amenities possible."



The Summer Sizzler Triathlon in August is a popular sports competition held in Crawford's beautiful setting. Competitors come from more than a dozen states.

His affection for Crawford is also obvious. "You should see the redbuds in the springtime around here. It is really beautiful. I think this is the most beautiful park in the state."

I would not see the redbuds on this trip, but even without them, Goble's argument was convincing. While I was talking to him and listening to the CCC vets, my wife, Rose; Logan, my oldest son; and William were on the beach. The boys had a great time swimming and swinging, and Rose relaxed in the shade of a nearby shelter. After

the CCC reunion, we strolled as a family down Spider Leg Bridge Trail. It was reminiscent of primeval jungle. Vines as thick as my arm stretched mysteriously up from the ground, sometimes reaching 40 feet or more before wrapping around a tree limb. Some of the trees had leaves the size of basketballs. The ground was littered with walnuts and acorns, which the boys collected enthusiastically with visions of replanting them back home.

After the walk, we picked our way through the brush and fly-fished a pool beneath the spillway, catching one bluegill after another. These short jaunts were blissful, harmonic moments, progeny of Crawford State Park's enduring tradition of creative, cooperative development and respect for the land.

As we packed our gear and drove slowly out of the park, bluegrass music began to fill the air. We all looked back at the clear water, the trees, the flags waving in the breeze along the dam. I tried to imagine redbuds in blossom, scattered through the trees like garlands woven through a woman's hair.

Next spring, I suspect, we will test the accuracy of this vision. ♡



Crawford State Park is a popular area because of resourceful management and staff, and the hard work of the volunteers who belong to the park's Friends Group.



A Century of Seasons

by Chad Luce
public information officer, Topeka

Hunting regulations have seen many changes in the last 100 years. From our first hunting seasons and bag limits in 1900 with neither license requirements nor game wardens, to the wide variety of opportunities, permits and licenses available today, we've come a long way, baby.

When Kansas sportsmen took to the fields and woods on Jan. 1, 1900, their hunting options were, to put it mildly, wide open. It was still five years before a \$1 hunting license would be required by the state, and there was no need for a regulations summary when nearly all game was fair game.

At the onset of the 20th century, quail, prairie chickens, and sharp-tailed grouse did have established seasons (Oct. 1 - Nov. 30), and doves and most songbirds were off-limits year round. All other wildlife could be taken by any means, in any number. If this did not provide enough encouragement for overzealous "hunters" to harvest game indiscriminately, bounties placed on many species surely did.

Enforcement of the few game laws in existence was at best sporadic. Wardens were hard to come by, considering they were not paid, and the work was largely unpopular (the first salaried Kansas wardens appeared in 1921, when the number of arrests and convictions skyrocketed).

A hunter's paradise? Not by a long shot. While many animals still flourished on the great plains, quail, prairie chicken, and grouse populations were declining. Turkeys, deer,

and antelope were few, and very far between. Bison had vanished twenty years earlier. These were definitely not "the good old days" for Kansas wildlife.

Upland Birds

In 1905, the first daily bag limits were set for prairie chickens (15) and bobwhite quail (20). Prairie chickens could be hunted from Sept. 15 - Oct. 15. Quail season was open from Nov. 15 - Dec. 15. After a few years, further restrictions were imposed. Beginning in 1911, game birds could only be shot while in flight, and legal shooting hours were set at one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset.

Hunting was then interrupted for a time. The 1913 Kansas Legislature closed all upland bird seasons for a period of four years, starting a long trend of see-sawing bird seasons.

Quail and prairie chicken seasons reopened in 1917, and sportsmen were treated to a taste of the future with the opening of the inaugural Kansas pheasant season. All three seasons ran Dec. 1-15.

These opportunities were short-lived, however, as quail and pheasant seasons were again closed in 1921. Also during that year, legal shooting hours were changed to one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Quail hunting was allowed in 1922, prohibited in 1923, then legal again in 1924. Pheasant hunters would have to wait until 1932 for another shot at ringnecks, when a two-day October season was set in only 12 Kansas counties.

The 1930s and 1940s saw several substantive modifications to game laws, but only minor changes in season dates. After reopening in 1932, pheasant season mostly remained two-five days. The hunting "blue law" was repealed in 1935, allowing sportsmen to go afield on Sunday. Prairie chicken season closed from 1936-40, then again from 1944-49. Quail hunters were generally allowed a 10-day season, however starting in 1945, hunting was allowed only during certain days of the week, usually Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday (presumably to give the birds, and the dogs a rest).

Throughout this time period, stringent daily bag, possession, and even season limits were in place for all upland birds. Legal shooting hours for pheasants were usually noon to sunset.

The 1950s and early 1960s generally continued these trends. Pheasant and quail season lengths and bag limits began to slightly increase, but still fluctuated. Prairie



This photograph of successful waterfowl hunters appeared in the Dec. 1940 issue of Kansas Fish and Game. Its caption read, "The Halstead Duck Club goes hunting."

chicken seasons were an on-again, off-again affair; if hunting was allowed, it was usually a one-day season.

In 1971, pheasant and quail seasons opened statewide on the same day for the first time since 1919, with a bag limit of 3 and 8 respectively. The 62-day season (Nov. 13 - Jan.13) marked the longest season ever for pheasant and equaled the previous high for quail.

Pheasant, quail, and prairie

chicken seasons and limits were standardized in 1982 at the current format. Prairie chicken season opens the first Saturday in November, with pheasants and quail opening the second Saturday. All three seasons run through Jan. 31. An early greater prairie chicken season lasting from mid-September to mid-October was added in 1989 and continues today in the eastern half of the state.

Waterfowl

1903 brought the first established Kansas waterfowl season, which lasted from Sept. 1 through April 25. There were no bag limits until 1911, when laws were passed to limit the daily bag to 12 ducks and 6 geese.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act, enacted in 1918, provided Kansas with the first federal frameworks for seasons and bag limits on migratory birds. A 107-day season (Sept. 16-Jan. 31) and a liberal daily bag limit of 25 ducks and 8 geese was in place through 1929.

In 1934, the first federal duck stamp costing \$1.00 was required. Baiting was allowed only by special permit. The following year, live decoys were banned, all baiting was prohibited, and hunters were limited to three shells in their shotguns. The

season was reduced to 30 days (Oct. 21 - Nov. 19) and the daily bag limit was restricted to 10 ducks and 4 geese.

Throughout the late 1930s and early 1940s, waterfowl season lengths were gradually increased to a high of 80 days in 1944 and 1945, while bag limits generally remained constant. In 1948, a split-season was established in Kansas, comprising only 28 total days. The bag limit was set at five ducks and allowed no more than one wood duck, and four geese, including no more than two Canadas or two white-fronts.

Waterfowl seasons grew through the 1950s, peaking at 90 days in 1958. The goose season was separated from duck season, beginning in 1955.

The most dismal duck season in Kansas history occurred in 1962. Season was open for a record-low 25 days. The daily bag limit was two, and allowed no more than one mallard. Redheads and canvasbacks could not be taken.

Early teal season was allowed for the first time in Kansas in 1965. The initial nine-day season (Sept. 11-19) and bag limit of four remains similar to current regulations.

Waterfowling's next major change occurred in 1972, when a point system replaced the traditional duck bag limit. Individual species were assigned a point value. Daily bag limit was reached when the last duck shot totalled a point value at or above 100 points. In 1972, hen mallards, wood ducks, and hooded mergansers were valued at 90 points; drake mallards, hen pintails, and ringnecks were 20 points; and all other ducks were 10 points. This point system continued until 1995, when a conventional bag was re-established.

Also in 1972, Kansas was split into two duck zones for the first time. Separate zones allowed the tailoring of season dates to specific habitats. Zoning provided longer seasons for hunters willing to travel. Zoning continues today, although since 1996, the state has been divided into three waterfowl zones.

Duck numbers generally

Resident's Fee, One Dollar. No. 38887
LICENSE TO HUNT.
 Kan., Dec 21 1914
 BY VIRTUE OF THIS LICENSE,
 Mr. B. Owen
 of Rowdell, County of _____
 is permitted to hunt in the State of Kansas in the
 open season under restriction of the Game Law.
 This License expires June 30, 1915.
 L. L. Dyche Fish and Game Warden.
 J. W. Smith County Clerk.
 DESCRIPTION AND SIGNATURE OF LICENSEE.
 Age 54
 Color of eyes Blue
 Color of hair Dark
 Weight 175
 Height 5-9 1/2
 Occupation Carpenter
 This license is not transferable. Licensee.
 If lost no duplicate can be issued. 5-2197

A magazine subscriber sent this old hunting license to us. The \$1 resident license was issued in 1914.

declined in Kansas during the 1980s and early 1990s. However, since 1994, estimated duck numbers and harvest have increased significantly. The fall flight of 1999 is expected to be the largest in modern history.

Big Game

Deer, antelope, and turkeys were extremely rare at the turn of the century, although none were protected by law. In 1903, the Kansas Legislature awarded antelope full protection, followed by deer in 1908. These statutes were amended in 1911 to close all deer and antelope hunting for a period of 10 years.

In 1921, the wild turkey was protected; however, perhaps by oversight, deer and antelope were fair game from 1921-24. In 1925, full protected status was restored for deer and antelope.

Forty years later, an historic event occurred to forever change the Kansas hunting landscape. On Oct. 1, 1965, the first modern regulated deer season opened. Archers were allowed 46 days (Oct. 1 - Nov. 15), while firearms season allowed five days of hunting (Dec. 11-15). Just over 5,000 permits were sold, and 1,500 Kansas deer were harvested. Muzzleloaders were added as legal weaponry for deer hunting in 1972.

The year 1974 brought more historic firsts, with establishment of season dates and bag limits for antelope and turkeys. The initial three-day firearms antelope season ran Sept. 28-30, closely resembling today's season dates (Oct. 1-4). The first spring turkey season ran April 20-28, with only 123 bearded birds harvested.

A decade after opening, archery deer season increased to 73 days (Oct. 1 - Nov. 30, Dec. 20-31), and firearms season was extended to nine days (Dec. 6-14). Archers could harvest a deer of either sex, while firearms hunters were constrained to the provisions of their drawn permit. Total harvest in 1975 was 4,347 deer.

In 1989, the first muzzleloader-only deer season was set from Sept. 22-30. Muzzleloaders were legal for



In the Nov. 1941 issue of *Kansas Fish and Game*, this photo of Dr. L.L. Cooper, Frank Cook, and I.O. Task of Ft. Scott appeared. The trio had good success during that year's one-day prairie chicken season, Oct. 21. Only six eastern Kansas counties were open.

use during this and the regular firearms season, which by now had expanded to 12 days. Also in 1989, 5,000 Kansas turkeys were harvested during a 19-day season which ran from April 19 through May 7.

As deer populations continued to increase through the 1990s, opportunities followed suit. By 1998, a list of changes in Kansas deer hunting regulations had taken place:

- Nonresident hunters could apply for a permit every year;
- Unit archery permits for whitetail antlerless deer were available statewide;

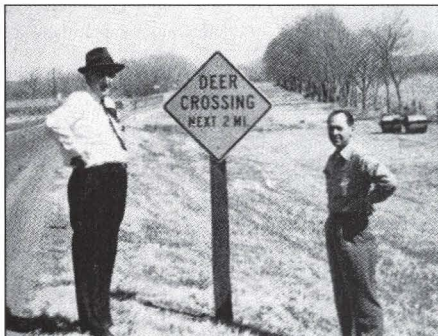
- Up to two game tags for whitetail antlerless deer were available in seven of the eighteen management units; and
- Residents could apply for up to two leftover permits.

During the 1998-99 deer season, an extended statewide season was approved for Jan. 9-10. During this season, all unfilled deer permits reverted to whitetail antlerless-only permits. With the liberalized permit system and season dates in place, more than 80,000 deer were harvested.

Also in 1998, the spring turkey season grew to its present length of 40 days, and more than 17,000 wild turkeys were harvested to set a new Kansas record.

The 1999-2000 deer season will offer additional opportunities. Game tags will be valid in nearly all of the state, and the extended whitetail antlerless-only season expands to 10 days, running from Dec. 31 - Jan. 9, 2000. Department biologists estimate this season's deer harvest will top 100,000 for the first time in history.

The newest Kansas big game season was established for elk in 1987, at the Cimarron National Grassland. While no permits have



Kansas Fish and Game director, Dave Leahy (right), stands next to the first deer crossing sign ever erected in Kansas. It was 1956 in Cheyenne County. (*KFG* magazine, Jan. 1957)

been authorized at Cimarron since 1995, elk hunting continues today on a limited basis, in and around the Fort Riley Military Installation, near Junction City.

No Comparison

A century ago, few regulated hunting seasons were in place, but few game species could be found. Today, with numerous regulations in place and many permits and stamps required, hunting opportunities are comparatively endless.

On Jan. 1, 2000, seasons will be open for abundant deer, elk, pheasants, quail, prairie chickens, ducks, geese, sandhill cranes, rabbits, and

squirrels. Unlike 100 years ago, it is conceivable that hunters could locate and harvest many of these species in the same day.

While weather conditions and land-use will most likely determine the future populations of most wildlife resources, regulated seasons have played a crucial role in bringing Kansas' wildlife back from the brink of extinction.

Administrative History

1905 marked the first significant wildlife legislation in Kansas history. The office of the state fish and game warden was created, replacing the state fish warden, and

the first hunting license was established at \$1.00.

With nearly a 20-fold increase in revenue generated by hunting license sales, the first fish and game warden, D.W. Travis, started the importation and propagation of Mongolian and Chinese pheasants.

In 1925, the department was placed under the supervision of the Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission, composed of the Governor, fish and game warden, and three sportsmen, one from each third of the state. The Commission managed the general administration of the department. However, it did not possess full authority to set season dates and bag limits.

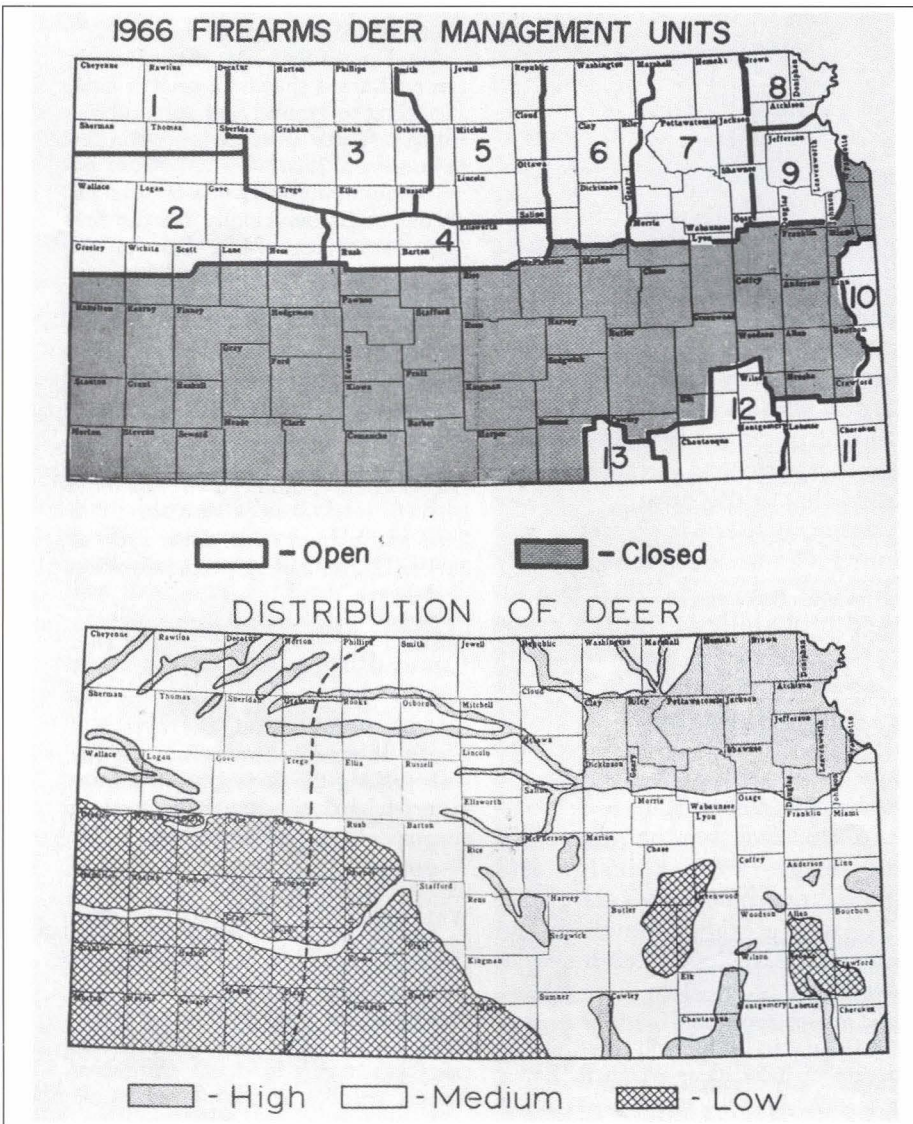
A new Forestry, Fish, and Game Commission was formed in 1939, comprised of six appointed members, equally representing the two major political parties. The new Commission selected the department's first director, Guy D. Josseland.

In 1943, the Legislature finally conceded to the wildlife experts, giving the Commission full authority to set all season dates and bag limits.

The State Park and Resources Authority was created in 1955. The Park Authority is credited with developing most of the properties that are included in our current state park system.

In 1987, Governor Mike Hayden issued Executive Reorganization Order No. 22, merging the Fish and Game Department and the Park and Resources Authority, thus creating the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Governor Hayden appointed Robert L. Meinen the first secretary of the department.

The Wildlife and Parks Commission was also formed under the reorganization order of 1987. The Commission, made up of seven members, with no more than four from any political party, advises the secretary on planning and policy issues regarding administration of the department. Regulations approved by the Commission are adopted and administered by the secretary.

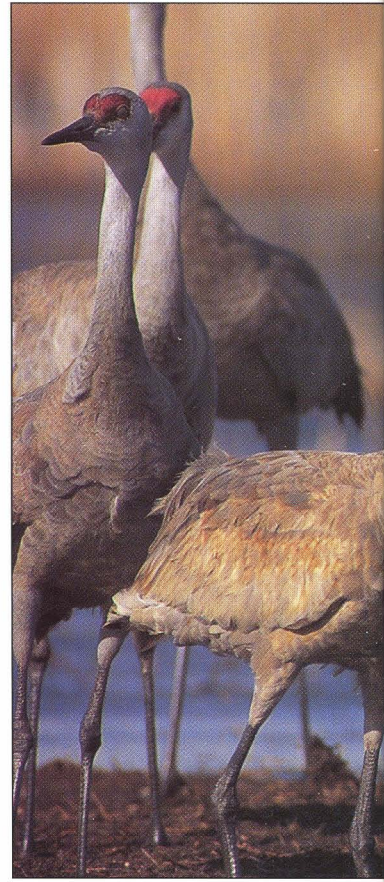


These maps appeared in the Autumn 1966 issue of Kansas Fish And Game magazine. This was Kansas' second deer season, which ran from Dec. 10-14. Exactly 6,000 firearms permits were authorized. In 1965, 1,340 deer were taken by gun hunters.

Sandhill Cranes: The Facts

by Helen Hands
wildlife biologist, Cheyenne Bottoms

Sandhill crane hunting is a relatively new opportunity for Kansas hunters, and those who try it find them to be wary and challenging prey. Harvest is monitored carefully, and surveys show a stable and healthy population.



Sandhill crane hunting is the newest and most controversial of all the hunting opportunities in Kansas. Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has permitted crane hunting in Kansas since 1982, Kansas didn't hold its first crane season until 1993.

Each year, large numbers of sandhill cranes pass through Kansas on their way south. Most of these pass through the central corridor of the state. Birdwatchers look forward to the annual passage as a sign of changing seasons. The peculiar trumpeting of passing birds can be heard for great distances. Urban and rural Kansans alike are generally familiar with these large birds.

Due to birdwatching interest and a lack of hunting tradition, many who don't hunt cranes may wonder if we should. Specifically, some may ask if there are enough cranes to allow a hunting season. Hunters not experienced with cranes may have questions of their own regarding tactics and edibility of these migrants. There may be questions about differences in crane hunting

regulations compared to those of other migratory birds. This article will deal with those questions.

Sandhill crane hunting is not easy. Inexperienced hunters quickly realize that crane hunting is more challenging than duck and goose hunting. Cranes are extremely wary of hunters who aren't well-camouflaged and skilled. Though crane hunting is often a pass-shooting event as birds approach feeding sites, large numbers of decoys are helpful in drawing birds within range. Commercial crane decoys are very expensive and often cumbersome. For this reason, seasoned crane hunters often design and build their own decoys.

Migrating cranes generally eat corn and milo left after harvest. They also eat green winter wheat. They are among the tastiest migratory game birds, more important because of their size. Cranes yield a relatively large amount of meat. The typical crane breast can provide four 6-ounce servings.

Population Status and Monitoring
Sandhill cranes that pass through

Kansas are part of the Mid-continent population which numbers nearly half a million. Population monitoring is easier for sandhill cranes than for other migratory birds, since spring cranes concentrate along an 80-mile reach of the Platte River in Nebraska. This allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to accurately monitor population size with an aerial survey conducted annually during the fourth week of March. Estimates from 1996 and 1997 were the highest ever recorded, and the current Mid-continent population is near its upper threshold of 465,000 cranes.

Although the Mid-continent sandhill crane population is doing well, there has been concern for one of its two subpopulations, the Gulf Coast, and for one of its three subspecies, the greater. Fortunately, recent studies show that the Gulf Coast subpopulation and greater subspecies are doing better than previously thought. Aerial surveys on the Gulf Coast of Texas during December 1996 and 1997 estimated



Mike Blair photo

four times as many cranes (about 120,000) in the subpopulation than previously estimated (about 30,000). In addition, subspecies sampling in Texas and Kansas has found that greater comprise approximately 30 percent of the Gulf Coast subpopulation, three times as many as the 9 percent estimated during the 1980s. These factors have helped dismiss concerns about hunting sandhill cranes.

Since 1975, the harvest of sandhill cranes has been monitored each year with a questionnaire sent to randomly-selected crane hunters. The harvest survey shows that roughly 7,000 crane hunters in nine Central Flyway states are neither increasing nor decreasing. However, the crane harvest is increasing. Since 1982, the North American harvest of sandhill cranes has comprised 2 percent to 7 percent of the spring population as estimated by the Platte River survey. If the number of birds crippled is added to the number harvested and retrieved, then overall harvest represents an average of 7 percent of

the spring population. To put this in perspective, annual young-of-the-year birds in the total population are estimated to be about 11 percent. Since annual production is greater than the harvest in most years, the sandhill crane population continues to grow.

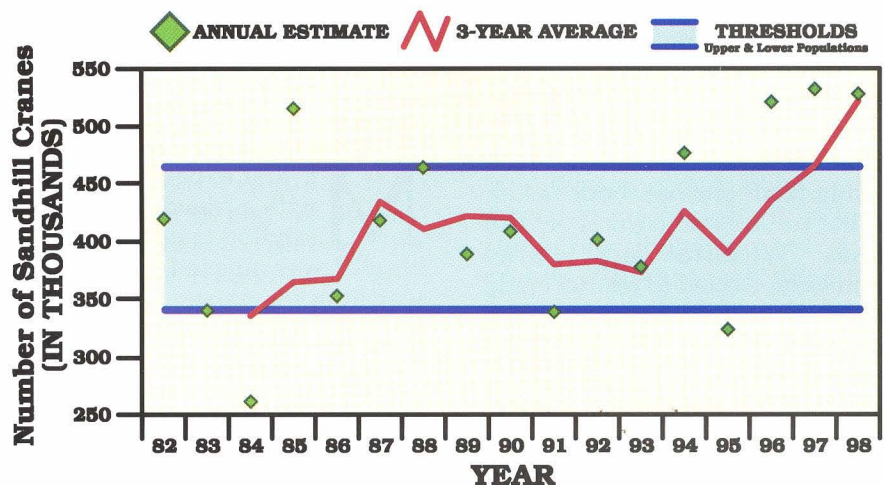
Migratory bird hunters, whether

they hunt sandhill cranes or not, may wonder why crane hunting regulations are so different from those for other migratory birds. Specifically, they may ask: 1) What is the purpose of the sandhill crane hunting permit? 2) Why can't sandhill cranes be hunted statewide? 3) Why can't sandhill cranes be hunted at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge? and 4) Why do shooting hours for cranes start later in the morning than for ducks and geese and end at 2 p.m.?

Hunting Permit and Bag Limit

The federal sandhill crane hunting permit helps to monitor the crane harvest. This permit allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to gather names and addresses of crane hunters so that the Service can send a questionnaire to a random sample of hunters. The crane permit, which costs \$5.50, is needed in addition to a current hunting license and Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.) stamp before going afield. Bag limit is two sandhill cranes a day with a possession limit of four. Crane hunters also need to be aware that endangered whooping cranes may be in areas open for hunting. Any sightings of whooping cranes should be reported immediately. Informational brochures on whooping cranes will be given to hunters when they receive their permits.

Mid-continent sandhill crane populations during 1982-98



Hunting Zone

Hunting regulations for sandhill cranes in Kansas and the other Central Flyway states are based on frameworks set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The frameworks set limits on open hunting areas, bag and possession limits, shooting hours, season length, and season dates. Each state can set its own hunting regulations for sandhill cranes, as long as they are not more liberal than the federal frameworks.

The federal frameworks allow sandhill cranes to be hunted in Kansas west of a line formed by U.S. highway 81, Interstate 135, and Interstate 35. So far, the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission has allowed hunting only in the southwest quarter of the state, where the vast majority of sandhill cranes currently stop during fall migration.

Quivira National Wildlife Refuge

Sandhill crane hunting currently is not permitted at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge because sandhill cranes are not listed as a game species in the Refuge management plan. According to Dave Hilley, manager of Quivira NWR, "When sandhill crane hunting was proposed for Kansas, the Refuge received numerous requests not to allow hunting within this important roost area. Since sandhill crane hunting opportunities would exist on surrounding private lands, the Service did not believe that the benefits of allowing sandhill crane hunting at Quivira outweighed the negatives." In addition, sandhill cranes may stay longer at Quivira and Cheyenne Bottoms if hunting on the roosts is minimized.

Shooting Hours

Shooting hours for sandhill cranes are part of the federal frameworks. These standards allow crane shooting from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. However, the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission elected to restrict crane shooting to hours between sunrise and 2 p.m. The later opening is intended to minimize the risk of unintentionally shooting look-alike, nontarget species, such as great blue herons and immature whooping

cranes. The 2 p.m. closure provides cranes a "refuge in time," so that they will remain in the state longer, which benefits cranes, hunters, and birdwatchers.

If sandhill crane populations, subpopulations, and subspecies are doing well and apparently increasing, why are the hunting regulations more conservative than for ducks, geese, and doves? Sandhill cranes have a lower reproductive potential than all other migratory game birds. That means that cranes start nesting later in life and produce fewer young per year. Fortunately, cranes make up for this slow growth potential by living longer and producing young for a

longer period of time, often from the ages of 8 to 20. Still, the lower reproductive potential means that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and states allowing crane hunting must be very conservative in setting hunting seasons because cranes would be slow to recover from significant declines in their numbers, whether or not related to hunting. The fact that the number of Mid-continent sandhill cranes is at its highest point since 1982 while crane harvest has increased indicates that this conservative approach has successfully maintained the population while providing excellent recreational opportunities.



Dustin Teasley photos

Diary Of A Crane Hunt

by Dustin Teasley
illustrator, Pratt

There's nothing easy about hunting sandhills. They are wary and unpredictable, and luring them into shotgun range can require an ample supply of both decoys and strategy.

My first experience with sandhill cranes came on a fall duck hunt with a friend. While we watched our decoy spread, a lone, juvenile sandhill crane silently glided in and landed just ten yards from our blind. I was amazed at the size and gracefulness of the bird. Constantly watching for danger, the wary crane stalked away from the blind. At 20 yards it paced back and forth on an imaginary line, watching the blind until it became nervous and flew away.

Reflecting on the close encounter, my friend said that sandhill cranes could now be hunted in Kansas, and told of his experience hunting cranes in other states. We became excited about the new prospect and soon planned a crane hunt for later in the fall.

Getting ready for the hunt was part of the fun. We pored through outdoor catalogs and learned that crane decoys were hard to find. The only available shell decoys were expensive — \$30.00 to \$50.00 apiece. Since we wanted three to four dozen decoys, this was not practical. Instead, we began to think about making our own. Many designs for homemade crane decoys were considered. Ideas ranged from dyed pillowcases over plastic buckets cut to shape, to foam or plywood cutouts. Time soon ran short, so my friend borrowed some foam decoys from another crane hunter for our first hunt.

Because sandhill cranes are super-wary, camouflage is important. Camo clothing used for duck hunting is fine, but it must be complete. Hat, face mask, and camo tape or a gun sock should be used to eliminate glare. Although camouflage helps hide a hunter, cranes have very good eyesight to detect movement. We planned our setup carefully to avoid spooking incoming cranes.

Sandhill cranes are wary about everything, and a perfect spread does not guarantee that birds will land among decoys. Thirty-five to 40-yard shots are normal, so heavy guns and ammunition are necessary. Common shotgun sizes used for sandhill crane hunting are 12-gauge and 10-gauge. Large shot sizes such as BB and BBB in 3-inch magnum loads are advised. Modified and full chokes are good choices for crane hunting, holding shot patterns together at longer distances than improved cylinder. Steel shot is required for hunting cranes, and it's wise to pattern various loads through your gun before hunting.

The day before our Kansas crane hunt, we scouted our prospective hunting site with the landowner. The area was perfect, with a quarter-section of green winter wheat adjacent to recently cut milo and corn. Nearby were grassy waterways and a heavily-timbered river where sandhill cranes roosted at night.



Sandhill cranes are wary birds that generally travel in large flocks. Bringing them to gun range requires scouting, proper layout and a supply of hard-to-come-by decoys.

Scanning the fields with binoculars, we saw thousands of feeding sandhill cranes. They looked like a gray carpet spread over the corn stubble and wheat. Sounds of their trumpeting was nearly deafening. We watched for some time. Then, as if on cue, wave after wave of cranes got up and flew toward the river. The landowner explained their morning patterns, and we planned how to hunt them the next day. The promise of a tremendous hunt fanned our excitement.

An early wake-up call next morning was met with greater-than-normal enthusiasm. The 50-mile drive was filled with hot coffee, donuts, and stories, passing in what

seemed like only minutes. Soon we reached our hunting site, and met the landowner and several other hunters. Now the work began.

Unloading decoys in the darkness, we set the spread and moved the vehicles far away. The crane decoys were placed in a manner similar to a decoy spread used for field-hunting geese. Wind and sun direction are important factors in the setup, helping predict how cranes will approach the spread. Because of their larger size, sandhill cranes cannot make turns like ducks and geese, and will often pass low over the decoys to land 50 to 100 yards away from them. Mature birds seldom bother to circle back

into decoys, though juvenile cranes may make the extra effort. Because of this, it's wise to choose shooting stations on the upwind side of the spread where closer opportunities can be expected.

In our case, we set two pods of crane decoys in a feeding area and hid between them in an old fenceline with thick vegetation. We hoped that birds would come in low and land between the decoy spreads to provide close shots.

Before sunrise, sandhill cranes became noisy on the nearby river. Twenty minutes later, the hungry birds began to appear. At first only a few scattered cranes passed above us, ignoring our decoys. This continued for a discouraging 10 minutes, until we began to think that the cranes were moving to a new feeding location. Then, like the evening before, thousands of cranes began to rise in waves and head toward us. As they came closer, a dozen or so



Hunters should scout the roosting and feeding areas sandhills are using. Being where the birds want to be is the best recipe for success.
Mike Blair photo

descended toward our spread. With great anticipation, I clenched my gun and waited. The huge birds approached, beating their wings slowly every two or three seconds. Then, while still 100 yards out, something spooked them. With a couple of rapid wingbeats they were suddenly high above shotgun range. It was exciting, but disappointing. The size and slow wingbeats of the birds made them look deceptively easy.

from our fenceline hiding places. Cranes continued to fly high above on their way to the far end of the section we were hunting. Occasionally the decoys would entice a few birds down within shotgun range. When the morning ended, all of us had our two-bird limits.

Excited about the success and opportunity of this new Kansas hunting experience, we hardly noticed the work it took to gather our decoys and prepare to leave. Back at the road, a biologist from the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks took measurements and weighed the cranes we had taken. Information gathered in this way helps with studies on abundance and harvest rates of the three subspecies of sandhill cranes. Crane hunters receive information about biologist contacts when they purchase a crane permit.

Following examination of the birds, our hunting party headed home with our prizes and the memories of a new adventure. Crane hunting added a new dimension to the fall waterfowling I look forward to each year. Even now, I anticipate the familiar sounds of migrating sandhill cranes soon to fill the air. Reflecting on last year's successful crane hunt, it's not hard to dream of hunts yet to come. 🦃



Sandhill crane hunters must have a \$5.50 federal crane hunting permit in addition to a hunting license and HIP stamp. Waterfowl stamps are not required. Hunters must use non-toxic shot, and larger shot sizes, such as BB or BBB, are recommended.

Mike Blair photo

Bus Stop



Deer Blind

text and photos by Mike Ehlebracht
conservation officer, Great Bend

A simple box blind can provide a great experience for first-time deer hunters, and the blind may improve their chance for success.

I guess the best way to describe my wife's past interest in deer hunting is this: indifference. She'd never hunted deer, and my own passion for bowhunting had little effect on her over the years. When Marla finally agreed to try, I knew I had only one chance to make this, her first deer hunt, an enjoyable experience. More than anything, I wanted her to have a quality hunt.

She applied for and drew an "any whitetail" permit, and we had a few rifle practice sessions. All was going well, but I wanted to do everything possible to help offset her lack of experience. The biggest problems facing new hunters include Kansas' severe weather and the mechanics of getting a shot at a deer. My task was figuring out how to put her in a place that would be protected while offering a shot with a steady rest at a standing deer.

That's when I started designing the "bus stop." If I built a small,

portable deer blind that both of us could sit in, I could solve a lot of problems. I have seen blinds like this in Texas, some elevated and some on the ground. They always reminded me of the little roadside shelters where rural kids waited for the school bus. You don't see them much any more.

Late in the summer, I started construction. With mostly scrap lumber, it was easy to construct a small, lightweight, portable and yet comfortable deer blind built for two. It seemed like a perfect option for the novice hunter. In fact, it's also a good idea for the experienced hunter. The plans are simple.

I used 4-foot-by-4-foot sheets of plywood for the walls, then a slightly larger piece for the roof. Of course, these dimensions could be altered to fit your needs. The roof sloped for drainage, and I cut a door in the back wall along with windows in all four walls. To keep out the biting wind, I installed

sliding plexiglass windows just large enough to see and shoot out of. Finally, I covered the roof with 30-pound felt tarpaper. Since the house wouldn't be left out year-round, the tarpaper would be enough to shed rain without extra weight. I finished the blind with a camouflage paint job.

I scouted for locations during the bow season and found a perfect alfalfa field surrounded by timber. I positioned the blind two weeks before rifle season so the deer would get used to it. I knew it was just a matter of time.

Since Marla and I both work, we couldn't hunt the first few days of season. But the landholder cleared his schedule to hunt on opening day. I suggested he might want to try the bus stop, and he took a buck the first day he sat in it. Then he asked to use the blind to help his daughter get a deer. We had to arrange a reservation system, kind of like a time-share condo.

Our turn came, and we saw several deer. But Marla wanted a buck, so we waited. I have to say, this whole process was as much fun for me as it was for her. Seeing the hunt through her first-time eyes gave me a great feeling. And if you really want to get close to someone, spend long hours with them in a 4-by-4 box.

At one point, I noticed a vehicle making laps around the section we were hunting. After the third lap, Marla turned and asked what was happening. "They're deer hunting," I answered. Then she asked, "Well, where are they going?" I answered, "They aren't going any place. They are deer hunting right now." It occurred to me that this kind of road hunting activity isn't done by first-time hunters, but rather is a learned behavior. I just hoped that this vehicle didn't have a new hunter in it.

Every time a deer was in our view and a vehicle approached, the deer would stand still until the vehicle passed. I was happy to see this did not escape my wife's observation. "Seems to me if they would get out of their trucks and sit still



Marla Ehlebracht's first deer hunt was successful and enjoyable due to preparation, and the fact that the box blind ensured comfort and an accurate shot.

for a while, they would see more deer," she decided. It was my thinking exactly.

On the second day of our hunt, we were glassing the area when I spotted a buck going through the trees. I had a good idea where it would come out of the timber, so I told Marla where to get set. The bus stop hid all of our movements. When she was ready, I said, "just like we practiced." The buck stepped out of the trees at about 175 yards. When he was broadside, I called on my grunt tube to make him stop. He turned to look our way, and Marla took her shot. The deer ran into the woods but went only a few yards. To say Marla was excited is putting it mildly. Our experience with this hunt is one neither of us will forget. And to some extent it will be remembered for what didn't happen. We didn't get too cold, soaking wet, or tired from walking, or stumble with a gun, or take an off-hand shot at a running deer.

I'm not sure why this kind of hunting hasn't been more popular in Kansas. It is a very positive, safe, and productive way to hunt. With two daughters that will want to take their turns, I may be spending a lot of time in the bus stop. I also suspect that it may get used as an antelope and turkey blind. Marla was

talking about deer hunting next year before we got home, so she may be hooked. And she also takes great pride in telling her friends that I always promised to build her a house some day, and I finally did.

I think I got off pretty easy. ♡



A Little Help From a Friend

Three years ago when Topekan Robert Dunn had a stroke that left him with a disability to his left side, he thought his hunting days were over. He applied for a disability permit and hunted deer, but he found it very difficult.

All he felt he needed was a little help -- a buddy. Then in 1998, a

good friend asked Dunn to come look at a new deer blind he was building. The friend, known as the Silver Fox to Dunn, proudly showed off a wooden box blind strategically placed in an ideal deer spot.

Dunn was impressed but was thrilled when he learned that the blind was built especially for him. Placed so that he could drive to within 25 yards of the blind and leave his vehicle hidden, the blind was the ideal solution to Dunn's hunting problems.

The Silver Fox had done his homework. On the second morning in the blind, Dunn blew a soft grunt call. Twenty minutes later, a spectacular buck appeared at 150 yards. One shot, and it was all over. Dunn called his friend and they loaded the big-bodied buck into the back of a pickup with the aid of a block and tackle.

The blind, pictured below, is complete with a seat with backrest, arm and gun rest, and carpeting. It's waterproof, and the outside is painted and covered with cedar bows so that it blends in. Needless to say, Dunn is looking forward to sitting in the same blind again this year.

Box blinds may be the ideal way for young or new hunters to be successful. And they are perfect for hunters with disabilities that prevent them from hunting from treestands or on foot.

Not only does the box provide comfort in severe weather, but the stable gun rest that can be incorporated into the design allows for accurate shots.

Dunn can't really thank the Silver Fox enough, but he has tried. A simple gesture and a little resourcefulness has allowed a good friend to continue his love for hunting after it appeared to be taken away. *Miller*



Duck Boats and Buckets

text and photos by Marc Murrell

public information officer, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita

Duck hunting is walking miles in deep mud with 60 pounds of decoys strapped to your back, then crouching in the cold marsh waiting for ducks, right? Diehard waterfowlers have found a better way.

Waterfowlers are an interesting bunch. They get up in the wee hours of the morning to tromp around in near-freezing water. They sit shivering with hopes of attracting ducks to decoys placed just so. Waterfowling can often be a waiting game, and beginners soon learn that kneeling or squatting in the cold mud can lead to cramped legs and a miserable morning. There is a better way. Boats and buckets can make your waterfowl hunting more enjoyable.

Boats make it easier to get around in the boot-sucking mud

found in most marshes. They provide access to remote areas while keeping everything high and dry. Duck boats are as personal as any item a waterfowl hunter owns. Each may be adapted for a specific type of hunting and all reflect a bit of their owners.

"It's an aluminum canvas," said M.D. Johnson, the outdoor writer liaison for Hunter's Specialties. "I try to be an artist with my boat both inside and out. I take a lot of time to prepare it and paint it with natural stencils. It's always a work in progress."

Johnson's interest in duck boats goes back a long way. He killed his first duck 25 years ago when he was 10 years old and has enjoyed it ever since.

"I like the excitement and the smell of the marsh," Johnson admits. "I probably do 90 percent of my duck hunting out of a boat."

The boats of choice for waterfowlers are varied. Some choose 14-, 16- or 18-foot Jon boats big enough to sleep a family of six. Others opt for smaller versions or even layout boats capable of carrying one hunter, a dog and bag of decoys. As



Now the fun starts. This old marsh boat has seen better days, but it's seaworthy and full of potential. First on the list is new wheels and tires, then break out the paint.

with anything, you could spend thousands of dollars on a boat or simply check the "For Sale" section of any newspaper and pick up a used rig for just a few hundred dollars.

The boat can be powered in several ways, depending on the amount of effort and money you want to put into it. Small boats can be walked to likely hunting spots, if water conditions warrant. A push pole can be used if the distance traveled isn't too great. Others opt for rowing which works except in thick vegetation. An outboard motor can be used in deep-watered marshes but is rendered helpless in shallow or weedy water. Air cooled motors with long shafts, like a Go-Devil, are becoming popular for their versatility.

Once the boat combination is complete, most hunters prefer to paint the boat. This can range from extensive paint jobs complete with cattails to one coat that hides the shine evident on many boats. Either option is acceptable and even the most elaborate camouflage paint job shouldn't cost more than \$50.

"You want to try to match the habitat you hunt in," said Johnson of any paint job. "If you're hunting a cattail marsh, you're going to want to go with greens and browns. And as the season progresses, you can touch up the paint and put

more emphasis on the November dead colors like the browns and tans."

Paint kits are available commercially which contain several natural colors, as well as stencils of vegetation. Hunters can also make their own stencils using a piece of poster board. Simply sketch a design of cattails or marsh grass and cut it out with an exacto knife. It's a good idea to use both pieces (the one cut out and the one cut from) as negative and positive images to create shadows. Avoid creating extremely thin lines and remember you'll have to tape the stencil to the boat for

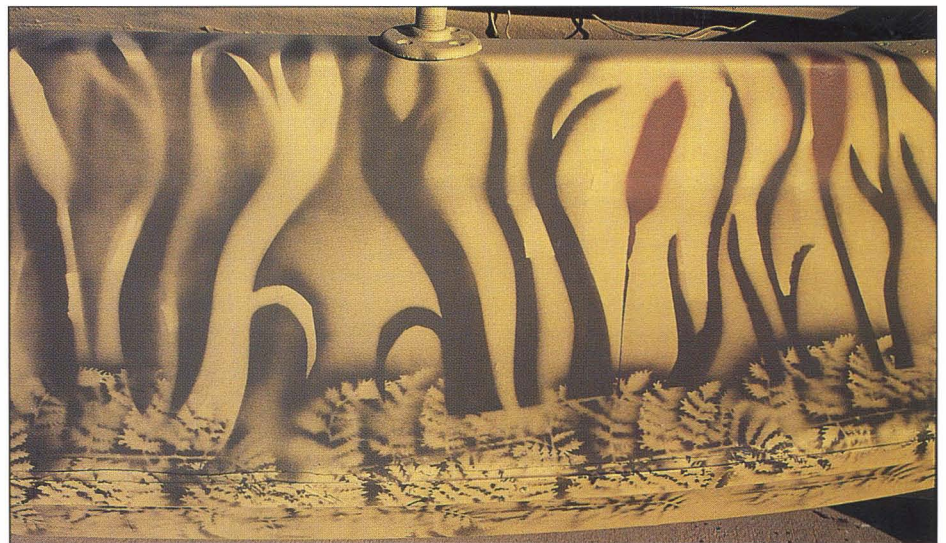
sharper images.

"You can take a chunk of scrap plywood and play with it before you actually go onto the boat and paint it," said Johnson. "The nice thing about painting a boat in camouflage is there really is no mistake. There could be preparation mistakes, but if you prepare the material correctly you'll never have any problems."

Another option to painting is to attach a series of bungee cords or straps to the side of the boat. This allows hunters in the early season to cut natural vegetation like green cattails and stick them all around the side of the boat. Later in the season, dead cattails or tumble weeds can be used to camouflage the boat and match the current conditions.

Hunters interested in trying to create their own duck boat masterpiece should visit with others who have done it before. Veteran duck boat owners are quick to point out what worked well while also admitting things they wished they had done differently. Anyone with an eye for what blends can work on their own boat, and you can always paint over what you don't like.

Another item often customized by duck hunters is a duck bucket. It sounds like something made specifically for duck hunting but it's actually nothing more than an ordinary



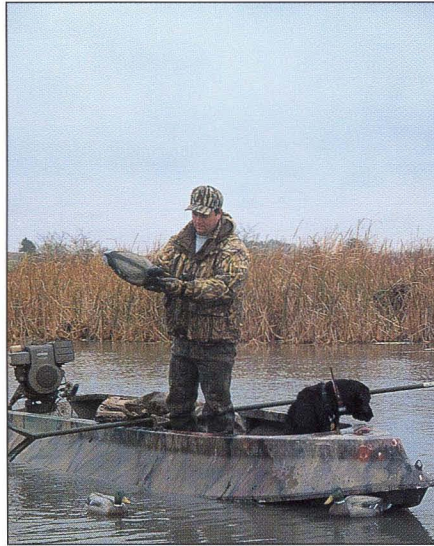
Vegetation stencils can be cut from poster board or acetate. Using both the negative and positive cutouts can give the impression of shadows and depth.

5-gallon bucket. These can also be painted and camouflaged (most buckets come in white or other bright colors) similar to a duck boat.

Duck buckets can be used as a seat whether you hunt in the marsh or out of a boat. Buckets can be made taller to accommodate deep water or tall hunters by cutting the top half off of one bucket, sliding it inside another bucket and riveting it in place. Rivets can also be used to attach hooks for dog leashes, calls and carrying straps. A lid keeps incidental water out while providing a more comfortable seat.

Likely the most important function of a duck bucket is to keep all your waterfowling supplies in one place. Rather than trying to remember everything you need each trip, simply load it at the beginning of the season and replenish shells and such as needed. You'll never have to hunt for hunting gear again. It's also a great way to carry an extra item one of your hunting partners likely forgot or to replace something like gloves that get wet along the way.

What you put in your duck bucket is a personal choice. Some simply use it to carry shells out to the marsh and for carrying ducks on



Waterfowl boats give the hunter mobility in areas where deep water or mud inhibits wading.


the way back. Others like to have everything but the kitchen sink "just in case." A happy medium probably works best but following is a list of the most useful items needed for a duck bucket:

- *Calls and Lanyard
- *Face Mask
- *Gloves (a light pair for moderate days and a heavy pair for cold days)
- *Stocking Hat

- *Flashlight or Headlamp
- *Shells
- *Duck Identification Book (it's a good idea to laminate anything paper in the bucket)
- *Rules and Regulations Booklet (which also has a sunrise/sunset table)
- *Dog Leash
- *Extra Decoy Anchor with string
- *Lighter
- *Fire Starter Block
- *Toilet Paper or Wet Wipes
- *Bug Spray
- *Snacks
- *Game Shears
- *Folding Saw (for cutting blind material)
- *Game Carrying Strap

Waterfowlers like to mess with gadgets. There always seems to be something that makes hunting ducks easier or more comfortable. Customizing a boat or bucket allows waterfowl hunters to tinker and daydream of birds to come before the season gets underway. It's a way of participating without actually hunting. It generally doesn't cost a lot of money and anyone can do it. Plus, it's fun. ♡





Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks 1999 Annual Report

In 1999, the department enjoyed a number of noteworthy accomplishments: Over 600,000 acres were enrolled in the popular Walk-In Hunting Areas (WIHA) program; hunting and fishing licenses were made available over the Internet; a record number of deer permits were offered; and the \$10-million facelift to our state parks' infrastructure continued on schedule.

These achievements, and the other accomplishments listed in this report, deserve recognition. Please take the time to review this report and let us know if we are on target.

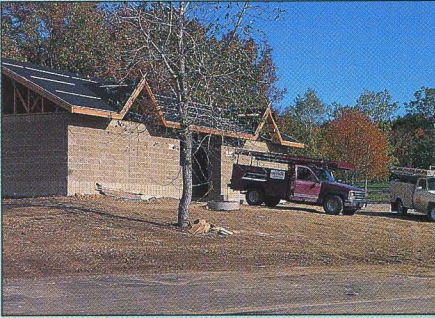
As we head into the next century, the department, and ultimately its constituents, will face some difficult decisions. What services should KDWP continue to provide, and at what level? Many of our consumptive recreation programs have reached their funding limits. Our state park system and nonconsumptive recreation programs remain underfunded. Pending federal legislation may offer future financial assistance to our parks and nongame programs, but there are no guarantees.

Providing quality programs and customer service to our constituents remains a top priority of our department. With tight budgets and work force constraints, this task is often difficult to achieve. However, through the efforts of our dedicated staff, the support of Governor Bill Graves, and the backing of our diverse constituency, I believe KDWP took some definitive steps forward in 1999. Our goal is to become one of the nation's premier producers of outdoor recreation opportunities through the best in stewardship of wildlife and park resources. We believe that our mission is important to the quality of people's lives.



Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

1999 Highlights



State Park Capital Improvements

Major improvements were completed in state parks in the first year of a three-year renovation program. Projects completed during the past year include 200 new campsites; 24 new boat docks, ramps, piers, and slips; 12 new campground buildings; 8 vault toilets; various sewer and water system upgrades; several miles of rip rap and embankment erosion protection; 60 miles of road resurfacing; and several handicapped-accessibility upgrades of existing facilities. The improvements were made possible after the 1998 Kansas Legislature approved Gov. Bill Graves' proposal for a one-time appropriation of \$10 million to address critical infrastructure improvements at each of Kansas' 24 state parks. State park visitation reached 6.5 million in 1998, the second highest year on record. Park income topped \$3.7 million, an all-time high and an increase of nearly \$1 million over 1991.

Hunting and Fishing Access

The popular Walk-In Hunting Areas program grew dramatically. About 635,000 acres were leased from Kansas landowners for the 1999 season, compared with 490,000 acres in 1998. The agency's fledgling FISH (Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats) passed a significant milestone this year, when more than 1,000 acres of water were leased from private landowners to provide public fishing access.

Deer Hunting Opportunity

This year, the department offered more deer permits than any time since the modern deer seasons

began in 1965. About 73,000 deer permits were offered in the drawing for resident rifle and muzzleloader permits. This figure does not include over-the-counter issues such as statewide archery permits, deer game tags, and hunt-own-land permits. With these issues included, the total number of deer permits and tags issued this year is expected to total about 170,000, compared to about 133,000 permits in 1998. The number of resident deer permits issued has nearly doubled in the past five years. Last season's two-day extended season, in which unfilled permits from earlier seasons could be used to take white-tailed antlerless deer, has been lengthened to 10 days (Dec. 31-Jan. 9). The department initiated a Hunter Referral Program to link landowners experiencing deer damage problems with hunters looking for places to hunt deer. The department has also initiated a program to proactively address crop damage by deer.

Inter-Agency Cooperation

Department staff coordinated efforts with the Kansas Department of Corrections to provide thousands of hours of assistance from inmate crews. State parks benefit from the inter-agency cooperation because inmate crews perform a variety of maintenance and cleanup chores, allowing permanent and seasonal KDWP employees to devote more time to critical maintenance and repair projects. In addition, the



Kansas National Guard and U. S. Navy Seabees provided about \$500,000 in assistance on a variety of state park construction projects.



Outdoor Recreation Grants

The KDWP Parks Division administered the first-ever Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant program. The 1998 Kansas Legislature authorized \$500,000 to be awarded, on a 50/50 match basis, to county and city governments to improve outdoor recreation facilities and services. After more than \$3 million in applications was received, the Kansas Legislature authorized the program again for Fiscal Year 2000. The Parks Division also supervised the awarding of \$708,593 in Recreational Trails grants to local entities. This federal program, which was begun in 1991, distributes excise taxes on off-road recreational fuel use to states for development and enhancement of trails.

Law Enforcement

In 1998, KDWP conservation officers conducted a total of 76,793 license checks of hunters and anglers. Officers investigated 1,195 wildlife damage complaints; participated in 395 hunter education classes; provided 471 public programs; and wrote more than 1,200 news releases for local media. State park rangers conducted a total of 159,646 park permit checks and 5,931 hunter/angler license checks. In addition, park rangers, park managers and assistant managers devoted 7,124 hours to night patrol; conducted 1,047 boat inspections; and issued 2,872 citations.

Boating Safety

Boating enforcement officers investigated a total of 78 boating accidents in 1998. The accidents resulted in three fatalities and \$81,981 in boat and property damage. Officers conducted 18,601 vessel inspections and issued 3,419 boating-related citations. The total number of registered boats in the state, as of December 1998, was 101,306.



Fish Stocking

Department fish hatcheries boosted fish populations in public fishing waters. Hatcheries reached a milestone in predator fish production this spring, when they topped the 2.75 million mark. This year, 17 Kansas reservoirs received about 1.96 million fingerling-sized walleye, sauger, saugeye, striped bass, and wipers. Sixty-one community lakes and state fishing lakes were stocked with an additional 442,900 fingerling-sized predators, including smallmouth and largemouth bass. A quarter-million walleye, largemouth bass, and wiper fingerlings were stocked in hatchery raceways to be reared to six to eight inches in length for stocking in public waters this fall.

Urban Fishing/Trout Program

In FY 1999, the Fish and Wildlife Division's Fish Culture Section stocked 115,937 channel catfish in 58 urban fishing lakes and ponds to support enhanced urban fishing opportunities and fishing clinic events. In addition, the section stocked 143,314 rainbow trout at 21 locations for the department's popular trout fishing program.

Hunter Recruitment

The department, in cooperation with a variety of outdoor and sporting organizations, this year launched a long-term initiative to attract and retain hunters. The cooperative venture seeks to increase participation rates for hunting by recruiting new and former hunters, as well as retaining current hunters. One of the program's objectives is to increase the overall Kansas population hunting participation rate to 15 percent by 2005. Among strategies to be employed in the effort are the following: development of an outdoor mentors network, continued expansion of programs to provide hunting access, improved shooting opportunities through existing and new ranges, and continued expansion of "special hunt" opportunities.

Online Licensing

The department debuted its online license issuance system Sept. 1, 1999. The system allows individuals to obtain hunting and fishing licenses via the department's website (www.kdwp.state.ks.us). In addition to receiving hunting and fishing licenses, outdoors enthusiasts are also able to renew boat registrations, and order *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine.

Environmental Services

Through FY 99, the Environmental Services section reviewed 1,619 publicly funded or permitted development projects, providing recommendations to minimize negative impacts to fish and wildlife habitats. Measurable impacts were identified for 28,318 acres of terrestrial habitat, 438 acres of wetland habitat and more than 100 miles of stream channel. In addition, the sec-



tion issued 22 permits to minimize and mitigate habitat losses for state-listed threatened and endangered species. Stream investigation efforts included the survey of 90 locations — 45 sites within the lower Arkansas Basin and 45 sites at western Kansas stream gauging stations.



Angler Education

Department staff conducted more than 600 fishing clinics around the state, providing instruction to more than 17,000 youngsters. Clinics are coordinated by district fisheries biologists, with instructor assistance provided by conservation officers, seasonal staff and volunteers.

Environmental Education

The department's Wildlife Education Service staff conducted 75 workshops, attended by 1,304 teachers and school administrators. Project WILD, Project Aquatic, Investigating Your Environment, and Water Education for Teachers provide educators with methods and materials to incorporate environmental education in their local schools. Nineteen additional Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites were completed during FY 1999, bringing the total number of OWLS statewide to 183.

Nongame Wildlife Partnerships

Department staff worked with private individuals and Western Resources, Inc. to continue monitoring peregrine falcon nesting activity in Topeka, continue the osprey introduction program at Wolf Creek and El Dorado, and enhance the golden eagle reintroduction and distribution project.

Income (1/98 - 12/98)

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks relies on fees paid by the people it serves for most of its income. The sale of hunting and fishing licenses and associated permits accounts for about 43 percent of the department's annual income. Another 21 percent is derived from excise taxes paid on hunting and fishing gear and other outdoor equipment, which is distributed back to the state by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Park permits, boat registrations, and other license and permit sources account for another 21 percent. About 15 percent of the agency's funding comes from state general fund revenues. The tables on this page summarize calendar year 1998 license and permit sales.

FISHING/HUNTING/FURHARVESTING

License/permit	Number sold	Revenue
Resident Fish (\$15.00)	191,989	\$2,879,835
Combination Fish/Hunt (\$30.00)	42,354	\$1,570,350
Nonresident Fish (\$35.00)	8,147	\$285,145
Five-Day Trip Fish (\$15.00)	4,421	\$66,315
24-Hour Fish (\$3.00)	85,133	\$255,399
Trout Stamp (\$7.50)	9,822	\$73,665
Lifetime Fish (\$240.00)	224	\$53,760
Lifetime Comb. Fish/Hunt (\$440.00)	865	\$380,600
Lifetime Fish (payments) (\$35.00)	44	\$1,540
Lifetime Comb. (payments) (\$30.00)	257	\$8,995
Lifetime Hunt (payments) (\$35.00)	115	\$4,025
Lifetime Hunt (\$240.00)	929	\$222,960
Resident Hunt (\$15.00)	93,026	\$1,395,390
Nonresident Hunt (\$65.00)	44,092	\$2,865,980
Nonresident Junior Hunt (\$30.00)	1,505	\$45,150
Controlled Shooting Area (\$13.00)	5,374	\$69,862
48-Hour Waterfowl (\$20.00)	426	\$8,520
Deer Permit (variable)	133,861	\$3,187,565
Turkey Permit (variable)	35,382	\$583,010
Adult Furharvester (\$15.00)	4,882	\$73,230
Junior Furharvester (\$7.50)	178	\$1,335
TOTAL	663,026	\$14,020,606

THREE- YEAR BOAT REGISTRATIONS

Boats under 16 feet (\$15.00)	19,271	\$289,065
Boats over 16 feet (\$18.00)	18,539	\$333,702
TOTAL	37,810	\$622,767

STATE PARKS

Permit Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Annual Vehicle (\$29.50)	27,932	\$823,994
Annual Camp (\$100)	1,841	\$184,100
Second Vehicle (\$14.50)	9,134	\$132,443
Duplicate Vehicle (\$5.00)	799	\$3,995
Exempt/Handicap Vehicle (\$0)	28,015	\$0
Daily Vehicle (\$3.50)	264,023	\$924,080
Daily Handicap Vehicle (\$0)	115	\$0
Daily Camp (\$4.50)	106,128	\$477,576
14-Day Camp (\$50.00)	1,494	\$74,700
Utility (1) (\$5.00)	15,058	\$75,290
Utility (2) (\$6.00)	75,750	\$454,500
Utility (3) (\$7.00)	15,414	\$107,898
Youth Group Camping (\$2.50)	39	\$98
30-Day Camp (\$90.00)	13	\$1,170
TOTAL	545,791	\$3,259,844

FEDERAL AID

Coast Guard (boating safety)	\$ 436,905
Dingell-Johnson (fish)	\$3,254,379
Pittman-Robertson (wildlife)	\$2,967,397
Other	\$2,225,001
TOTAL	\$8,883,682

Expenditures (7/98 - 6/99)

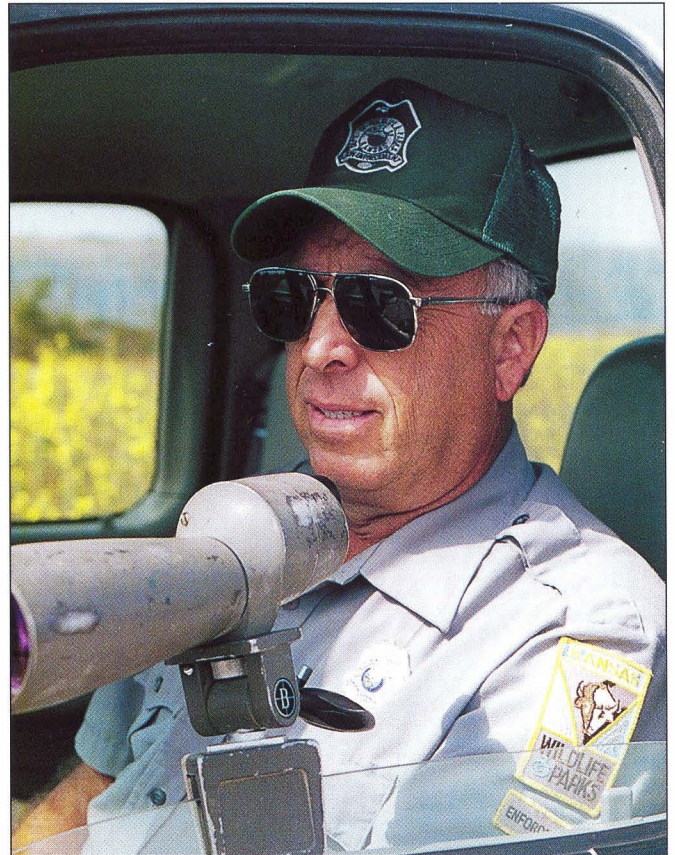


Fish	\$7,658,300	24%
Wildlife	\$11,238,444	36%
Parks	\$8,293,926	27%
Administration	\$3,214,866	10%
Boating	\$829,424	3%
Totals	\$31,234,960	

Wildlife Conservation Officer

text and photo by Mike Ehlebracht
conservation officer, Great Bend

Kirwin CO Larry Stones works in a sparsely populated area of northwest Kansas. However, hunters and anglers attracted to the region's great hunting and fishing ensure that Stones always has plenty to do.



In northwest Kansas there is a place known as the "Goose Capital of Kansas." This area in Phillips County includes Kirwin National Wildlife Refuge. You might call Larry Stones, Kansas conservation officer, the Mayor of the goose capital. Stones is a 13-year veteran of the department and has spent the last 11 years in Phillips County. This area is known not only for great goose hunting, but in recent years it has emerged as one of our best crappie fishing spots, as well as providing good upland bird and deer hunting.

Along with Phillips County, Stones is also responsible for Norton and Smith counties. When I asked him about his busiest time, he had a tough time deciding when he wasn't busy.

Like most COs, Stones entered wildlife law enforcement following his love for the outdoors and nearly all of the activities associated with it. He was also influenced by some of the "game protectors" he knew while growing up. Not surprisingly, while a devoted single parent of one daughter, Stones spends a great

deal of his time working with youngsters who have an interest in the outdoors. He believes that two of his biggest challenges are recruiting new hunters and educating the public that COs do more than check licenses.

Stones has had many rewarding and interesting experiences as a conservation officer. One case, not surprisingly, involved goose hunting. During last goose season, Stones invited another CO to hunt with him from his pit blind. While hunting, the COs witnessed another hunting party attempt to shoot a duck. The duck season had closed three weeks earlier. Although "off duty," COs often find it necessary to take care of a little business. Stones and his guest checked the three shooters and discovered nine federal violations, including a back-dated license that one of the men produced later. All this on their day off.

Another interesting case Stones recalled involved individuals coming to Kansas from another state and illegally taking trophy deer. It was believed that this had

been going on for as many as 13 years. Stones and a CO in a neighboring district brought 32 charges against the hunting camp that resulted in fines of \$11,000. Although the offenders were able to reduce the fines to \$5,000 through plea negotiations, one of them spent his honeymoon in jail, and they lost some of the equipment used in the crimes.

This case illustrates the fact that we never know what's around the next corner. Stones has been involved in the arrests of several wanted felons, including a man who just happened to be fishing on the lake. Another was a man who pulled a gun on a police officer and then fled, only to arrive in Stone's district. And there was the wanted murderer Stones helped search for, canvassing corn fields and vacant farm houses after dark. Which all goes to show that COs really do more than just check hunting and fishing licenses. It's a tough job, and a great job, but somebody has to do it. Stones is glad to be the one doing it. ♡

Edited by Mark Shoup

WHERE ARE PRONGHORNS?

Editor:

I have had the luxury of observing and hunting pronghorns in western Kansas for much of my adult life. For a period of 14 years spanning from 1972 to 1986, I operated the family ranch in Wallace county. During this period it was nothing to see 150 to 200 head divided into three to four herds living on and around the family's land in the northwest portion of the county. The past three years, while hunting these magnificent animals on the family land and adjacent lands, I have been hard pressed to see half the animals seen 10 and 20 years ago. What has happened? Poaching? Disease? Migration? Habitat?

Another concern of mine in regard to pronghorn conservation is the ethics, or lack of them, used by some who hunt them. On, Oct. 1, after harvesting my pronghorn early, I was in my pasture planting seedling trees near the springs. Twice, from approximately 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., I heard bursts of four and five shots fired rapidly just to the north. I had observed a herd of approximately 30 pronghorns earlier in the day roaming the center of sections in this area. I suspect this herd was the reason for these bursts, though by the time I drove up over the hill to investigate, nothing was there to be seen, man or pronghorn. Is there a way to screen applicants for hunting ethics? If there is not, maybe one should be implemented?

Does KDWP have an estimate as to how many pronghorns are wounded and not retrieved each season?

Kansas Wildlife & Parks magazine is a great piece of work. The KDWP does a fantastic job in managing the wildlife of Kansas, in my opinion. I only wish there were money for more conservation officers so that the health of wildlife in Kansas is as good 20 and 50 years from now.

Thomas Hill
Laurence

Dear Mr. Hill:

Historically, the area north of US Highway 40 was the stronghold of the pronghorn population in the state. In recent years, the herds in that area have become fewer, and the average number of animals in each herd has also declined. Today, more animals are seen east of K-27 compared to the distribution 15 years ago.

However, an opinion survey of landowners in western Kansas indicates that 60 percent believe the pronghorn population is increasing and fewer than 10 percent believe it is declining.

Each winter, we use aircraft and fly one mile transect lines over the pronghorn range. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, we would count 1,100 to 1,200 pronghorn in the prime range north of US 40. During the last four years, we have averaged only 750 animals. Pronghorn in the southern portion of the state appear to be more stable.

We estimate that there are about 2,000 pronghorn in the state. The declining population of pronghorn influences the activities of hunters. Kansas hunters harvested 349 pronghorn in 1984, while in 1998 they took only 161.

The total pronghorn population is dispersed over a wider range today compared to 15 years ago. We have not seen significant changes in the habitat in the short term that would cause this population change. We have not seen disease in the herd or changes in the adult mortality rate due to storms or other natural events. Wounding rates during the hunting seasons are not a significant population factor on pronghorn. Fewer than 2 percent of the pronghorn hunters report wounding an animal and being unable to recover it.

Part of the reason for the decline may be a reduction in the recruitment rate. Predation is always a significant factor on a species like the pronghorn that lives in the open prairie. During the annual summer survey in the 1960s and 1970s we would frequently count 80 - 110 fawns for every 100 does in

the population. During the last six years, that ratio has dropped to only 42 fawns per 100 does.

Poaching and vandalism directed against this species has increased in recent years. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Special Agent Mel Madorin says that "Over the last ten years there has been a problem with some landowners and some individuals taking antelope illegally. We are talking about one antelope at a time or even 10 to 20 antelope at one time."

In addition, we do not know how many cases of poaching and vandalism go unreported. "Our officers believe that in the fringe areas of the pronghorn range, the combination of poaching and predation may eliminate the species," Madorin adds.

The answer to your question of whether KDWP screens applicants for hunting ethics is, yes and no. Yes, we promote ethics in hunting and we teach it as a vital aspect of hunter education. A student could fail hunter education. Frequently, the few people with poor hunting ethics also violate laws. In those cases, our officers enforce the laws, and those people may be denied future hunting licenses. The decision is made by a judge. However, the answer is no, we do not screen applicants. Half of the pronghorn permits will go to landowners and half will go to general residents.

Lloyd Fox
Big Game Program Coordinator

HAWK PROBLEMS

Editor:

I would like to comment on the article "Rollover in Andover" (*Kansas Wildlife & Parks*, May/June 1999, Page 35). First, I'd like to say that I like hawks and owls and think that they are good for the balance of nature. I will be the first to say that Mr. Schwartz went far extreme in protecting his birds.

But what about us who raise pigeons and quail as a hobby? We feel we have

no justice in this matter. I raise Birmingham roller pigeons, and I spend \$500 per year to maintain them. It is a battle to protect my hobby from the hawks. It is very sad to train for world competition and have a hawk wipe you out.

This has been my hobby for 40 years. I belong to the National Birmingham Roller Club (NBRC), and I get a bulletin telling of trouble with hawks killing members' birds throughout the U.S. and foreign countries. They cost the roller people alone thousands of dollars every year. I cannot say what the cost is to homer pigeon owners, but I am sure it is very high. Quail and pheasant owners also have a lot invested.

Where is the justice in this? After the migration, there is nothing for them to eat except pigeons and domestic birds, and they are very hungry.

Just a few things I have seen them do to get a meal are go right in my pigeon loft and grab pigeons. They kill as many as eight pigeons but only eat one. They sit around in the trees just waiting for me to turn my birds out. I do not dare turn them out at the same time every day. This has come about within the last three years. It is Cooper's and smaller hawks and some redtails.

We cannot train our birds under these conditions. These birds are lacking natural food. They will even sit in the trees with wild pigeons and not pursue them and still wait for me to let my birds out.

Hawks are costing us thousands of dollars each year. These birds are very expensive to replace. We need equal justice in preserving our birds and hobby, too.

*William E. Black
Sedgwick*

Mr. Black:

I appreciate your predicament. No wants to see someone's hard work and money be destroyed, or have someone's cherished pastime frustrated. However, you do have some recourse. Contact the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services in Manhattan, (785) 532-1549. Tell them what the problem is, and they will come out and assess the situation.

They will suggest non-lethal alterna-

tives and offer shell crackers and other methods first. If this does not work, they may refer your case to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agent in your area, and he may then issue a special permit to take hawks.

This process is not automatic, but it does give you some recourse.

I would add that hawks have rats and mice to eat year round, but once they key on an easy source of food, it could be difficult to keep them away.

-Shoup

PROUD OF DAD

Editor:

I am the very proud daughter of the man featured in the Sept./Oct. issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine (Page 25, "Outdoors At 80"). Yes, that is my Dad. He has contributed much toward educating and sharing the beauty and wonders of the great outdoors with all five of his daughters and many school children and others. I am, in fact raising my own polyphemus moths as he taught me, and am working on my own butterfly and insect collection and hope to continue his work.

However, he can still out fish me. I have shared what he has taught me with my children and my grandchildren and hope they will continue to enjoy and appreciate what a wonderful world we live in. Just thought I'd share this due to the fact that I am so proud of him and his accomplishments.

*Diane Hight
Independence*

REHABILITATOR

Editor:

My name is Ken Lockwood, and I would like to know if you ever do any stories on wildlife rehabilitation. My wife, Susan, is a licensed rehabilitator with Kansas Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. She specializes in owls and ducks.

Last January, her conservation officer brought her a barred owl that had severe wing damage. She has cared for it the last nine months, and finally it is about ready for release. She has done several owls and several small mammals. She has a squirrel that she got when it was just a few days old. For five weeks, she fed it through a small tube, and it is now about ready for release.

We are in the process of opening a place near Wichita and Goddard that people can bring injured and orphaned wildlife.

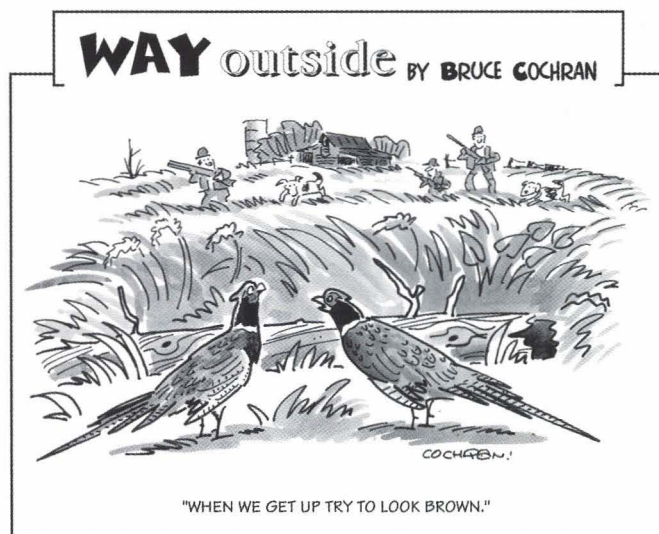
*Ken lockwood
Goddard*

Dear Mr. Lockwood:

We run rehabilitator articles from time to time. The last was in the May/June 1995 issue of *Kansas Wildlife and Parks*. "Born To Be Wild," by Ken Brunson, appears on Page 14 of that issue.

Thanks for the information on your wife and her projects. Perhaps we will be looking at another rehab article not too far in the future.

-Shoup



Wildlife Assault

In December of 1997, I was notified by another conservation officer about an incident that occurred in Bourbon County. Two men hunting deer in an area went onto adjacent property leased by a hunting club, where they didn't have permission. A couple of club members were bird hunting, and one of them challenged the deer hunters, accusing them of trespass and road hunting.

The deer hunters, who had left their rifles elsewhere, were dragging a big buck behind an ATV when one of the bird hunters shot the rope in two. He then threatened one of the deer hunters with his shotgun.

The deer hunters later contacted the local CO and told him they had left the deer there. They provided a description of the bird hunters' truck and license plate number to the CO who then asked me to help because the plate revealed a registration to a Johnson County man.

The next day, I found the vehicle and its owner. He had been with the man who shot the rope and told me where to find him. Both men gave me statements.

They had taken the deer from the scene after gutting it. The man who threatened the deer hunters had illegally put his deer tag on the deer. He and his hunting partner took it to his house and butchered it. They said they made an attempt to call the authorities while at the scene of the incident but were unable to get through with their cell phone. However, they made no further attempt.

The deer hunters had asserted that the deer was shot where they had permission but followed the wounded animal onto the hunt club property. The threatening bird hunter said the deer had been shot on the hunt club property.

I asked the bird hunter who had shot the rope if he considered that an overtly aggressive act. He said he felt somehow threatened by the two deer hunters. He told me he thought he had done "the ethical thing" in his actions.

I asked for the location of the deer meat, and he told me. He also said he

had thrown the antlers away. When I pressed him about this as destruction of evidence, he admitted that he had taken them to a taxidermist. I seized the meat and antlers that day.

One of the deer hunters was a Louisiana man who was cited by the Bourbon County conservation officer for shooting at the deer after he had already filled his tag. The bird hunter who threatened the deer hunters was charged with felony aggravated robbery for taking the deer by force or threat, felony aggravated assault, misdemeanor criminal damage to property, misdemeanor battery, and a misdemeanor wildlife offense of taking and possessing a deer unlawfully.

He also filed a false report with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. He took the deer by force in Unit 11, and tagged it with his tag for Unit 10.

A three-day jury trial began in September of 1998. He was found guilty

on all counts, but his attorney filed a motion for a new trial, and the motion was granted in April, 1999. The prosecutor then notified the court of an agreement on amended charges.

The defendant, a dentist, pleaded guilty to felony criminal threat, misdemeanor battery, and the misdemeanor wildlife crime. He was sentenced to six months in the prison, but the sentence was suspended. Instead, he got two years probation and was ordered to pay fines, fees, and restitution totalling almost \$3,200. He was also ordered to serve 200 hours of community service.

The man was able to continue working in his licensed profession following this outcome. Besides hunting, he had been an active competitor in shotguns sports, but his felony conviction now prevents him from possessing a firearm.

- Bruce Bertwell, conservation officer, Olathe

Kudos To Bertwell

The following is a letter to the department's Hunter Education Coordinator Wayne Doyle expressing appreciation for the efforts of Bruce Bertwell in assisting with hunter education in his area. These comments not only reflect highly on the work of Bruce, they exemplify the outstanding work of conservation officers statewide.

-Shoup

Dear Wayne:

We are all so busy that often times we do not take the time to recognize superior performance. Such is the case with my failure to recognize the consistent superior performance of CO Bruce Bertwell while assisting my hunter education classes.

I am reminded of his professionalism and expertise each time he presents "conservation and wildlife" to my students; however, I tend to take for granted his constant availability.

Late one night in September as I was reviewing my 75 hunter education class evaluations survey, I came upon a first, which inspired this letter. It is not unusual for Bruce to receive the highest rating "5" for his presentations, and it is not uncommon for students to comment that they "liked the best" or "learned the most" from Bruce. However, for the first time ever, a student actually placed a "6" next to Bruce's presentation and circled it!

Wayne, I have included all of the surveys from my last class where students made written comments. You will see our class is rated very high, and Bruce is a significant reason for this. Please pass the word.

-Bob Bergeson, hunter education instructor, Overland Park

HUNT THE NET!

Everyone knows about the internet these days, and the number of online households is growing every day. This provides a perfect opportunity for the Department of Wildlife and Parks to serve its constituents. Because hunters are a big part of this constituency, the department surveyed Kansas hunters to find out just how many were wired and how many used the internet to find out about hunting opportunity. The response was surprising, as the following results reveal. Numbers are expressed as percentages of those responding.

- **Do you have access to a computer?** yes, 78.9; no, 20.7.
- **At what location do you have access?** home, 76.7; work, 57.7; library, 28.9; friend, 26.3; relative, 27.9; neighbor, 7.2.
- **Where do you use your computer the most?** home, 58.7; work, 29.6; library, 2.6; friend, 2.4; relative, 4.0; neighbor, 0.2; other, 2.4.

• **Is the computer you have access to hooked to the internet?** yes, 83.5; no, 15.9; no response, 0.6.

• **Do you use the internet to obtain hunting information?** yes, 39.7; no, 59.8; no response, 0.5.

• **If you use the internet to obtain hunting information, have you looked at the Kansas Wildlife and Parks website?** yes, 58.2; no, 40.1; no response, 1.7.

Two things are clear from this survey: a very large percentage of hunters have access to the internet, but a relatively small percentage (about 40) are using it to obtain hunting information. And of those who do, less than 60 percent have visited the department's website.

If you haven't seen the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' website, come visit us at www.kdwp.state.ks.us. You can even buy your hunting license there and print it on your computer instantly.

—Shoup

HUNTING ACCEPTANCE

A survey in 1997 revealed that a majority (55 percent) of Americans find hunting and the shooting sports to be acceptable and believe them to be popular or increasingly popular. An additional 25 percent said the sports are "probably okay."

The survey was commissioned by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). Among the findings were the following:

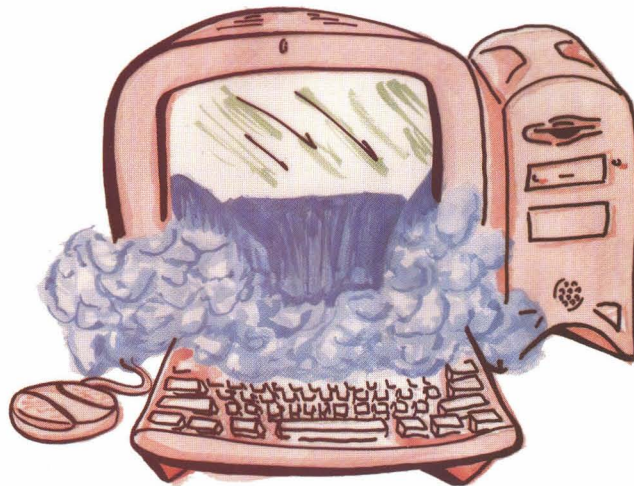
- one in 10 respondents call themselves avid hunters. Another 23 percent go hunting from time to time;
- 62 percent of respondents who said they have never hunted said they knew someone who regularly hunts;
- residents of the Midwest (29 percent) and South (30 percent) are most likely to perceive an increase in hunting popularity; and
- more than 2.5 million women hunt, and women's participation in the shooting sports has increased more than 80 percent in the past 10 years.

—National Hunting and Fishing Review

KS H2O ON NET

Near real-time water-level information for Kansas streams and lakes is currently available on the internet. The information is collected from 103 gaging stations on streams and 24 lakes in the state.

Monitoring stage and stream flow at these gaging stations can tell boaters and other water sports enthusiasts using these waters when conditions are favorable or unsafe. Instantaneous gage-height (stage) and discharge (stream flow) data are processed every six hours, more frequently during floods.



Available information includes station location, long-term median flow, minimum flow, flood stage, and current status of the water source.

This stream flow and reservoir level data is posted on the U.S. Geological Survey website at www-ks.cr.usgs.gov/.

Less technical but more broad-based information on Kansas lakes, including area maps and facilities, may be obtained from Leisure And Sport Review (LASR) at www.lasr.net/lasr/kansas/.

—Shoup

THE PRAIRIE CENTER

The 300-acre native tallgrass prairie and riparian woodland area called the Prairie Center, in Johnson County, first became a project of the Grassland Heritage Foundation (GHF) in 1983. In 1990, Kansas Wildlife and Parks obtained the Prairie Center from GHF. In accordance with the Department's mission statement, Kansas Wildlife and Parks entered into an agreement with the GHF to share resources in order to better accomplish similar goals that pertain the Prairie Center. Under a cooperative lease agreement with Kansas Wildlife and Parks, the GHF operated the 300-acre nature center until October of 1996.

On Oct. 1, 1996, the Department acquired full management responsibilities of the Prairie Center. The center transferred from Public Lands of the Fish and Wildlife Division to the Wildlife Education Service of the Executive Services Division.

The primary goal of Kansas Wildlife and Parks for the Prairie Center is to allow this native tallgrass prairie to endure for future generations to enjoy. A secondary goal is to provide maximum educational opportunities to the public with a focus on hands-on learning experiences for all ages.

Six miles of walking trails meander through the Prairie Center's 300 acres. Most of the trails consist of mowed grass with about two miles of rock all-weather trails. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) has played an integral part in making the Prairie Center accessible. In 1998, KDOT graded trails at the Prairie Center for prairie viewers. Additionally, KDOT spent more than 100 hours mowing the west part of the Prairie Center to help restore the original grasses.

Several stone structures - a house, chicken coop, brooder house, and garage - sit on the northeast corner of the Prairie Center property. With rock quarried on site, landowner George Algire built all buildings on the site in the 1920s and 1930s.

The original house was stucco and burned in the late 1920s.

The Algires lived in the chicken coop and used the brooder house as the kitchen until the current stone house was made inhabitable in the 1930s. The stone house was not finished until the 1950s. Its foundation sits inside the original stucco house foundation.

The harsh Kansas wind and elements took their toll on these buildings, and they began to show their age. Osawatometia Correctional Facility's mobile crew refurbished these buildings. They re-roofed the chicken coop in December of 1998 and have given the stone house much needed attention, too. Members from the crew also refurbished walls and ceilings. The tattered old carpet was removed to reveal wood floors, which have been restored. In the near future, an ADA ramp is scheduled for the house and barn. The stone house will be open to the public for

limited use after all work is completed. The barn is also planned for public use in the future.

The five-acre lake gives visitors a scenic place for the appropriately licensed community to wet a line. Standing on the newly renovated dock surrounded by prairie and woodlands, you might see one of the resident beaver swim past. Kansas City Power and Light and Western Resources' Green Team re-decked the dock in

October of 1998, providing \$2,000 in materials and more importantly, a long day's work. The railing is now fortified with welding courtesy of KDOT.

Many projects remain for the Prairie Center. The Prairie Center's wish list is exceeded in length only by its thank you list for wishes granted. The Kansas City community has come together to restore a small part of history. Many individuals and entities have resurrected what used to be a sea of grass, a true prairie community.

Explore this prairie community. Visit the Prairie Center seven days a week from dawn to dusk. Dogs are allowed if leashed, but visitors may not ride horses, bicycles, or motorized vehicles within the park.

-Mary Kay Crall, Kansas City



Manager's note

As manager of the Prairie Center, it has been quite a thrill to see the major improvements taking place at the center. I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to all who have assisted with the restoration and improvements at the Prairie Center: Kansas Power and Light Western Resources Green Team: Brad Loveless, Mike Nolan, Scott Gilsdorf, and Tom Cowser; Kansas City

Power and Light Environmental Team: Larry Dolci, Joe Werner, Gaylord Robinson, and Kenny Bedford; Grassland Heritage Foundation: members and Groundhog team; Kansas Department of Transportation: Mick Halter, Cliff Lowe (now retired), Mike Perkins, Frank Blancarte, Drake Jennings, and John Turnley; Kansas Department of Corrections: Fritz Young, the KDOC Mobile Crew 1, and KDOC Fencing Crew; KDWP Engineers:

Mike Wilson, Russell LaForce, Fred Badders, Dennis Glascock, and Jesse Moore; and KDWP Big Equipment Crew: Mike Hinz, Duane Simpson, and Louis Bracken

A special thank you to Mike Nolan, Professor Glenn Fell, Marion and Esther Hanson, and countless other individuals. For more information, phone (913) 894-9113, ext. 13.

-Alaine Neelly, Wildlife Education Service

UPLAND OUTLOOK GOOD

Pheasants: Early greenup, delayed wheat harvest, and timely rains appear to have produced a relatively early hatch in much of Kansas and the prospect of good pheasant hunting this fall.

Survey data and other reports indicate very good pheasant populations in most of northcentral Kansas with northwest and southwest Kansas also showing generally good production. Northeast Kansas appears to have improved over relatively poor conditions last year, but the southcentral region is down some from 1998.

Although the overall picture for pheasants looks bright, Kansas has been hit by many severe hail storms this spring and summer. As a result, hunters will likely find a spotty distribution of pheasants.

The largest of the numerous hail

storms started near the Colorado border and tracked almost straight east along Kansas Highway 96 to the Great Bend area. This storm came early in the spring, so significant re-nesting in the affected areas appears to have occurred.

Quail: Persistent rains that prevailed through June caused a general delay in bobwhite production in eastern Kansas, particularly in the southeastern quarter of the state. Then July was dry, bringing drought by August.

Survey data and farmer reports indicate quail numbers are down substantially in the southeast, the Flint Hills, and in eastern portions of the southcentral region. However, there are indications that a significant late quail hatch has occurred in eastern Kansas. This may

improve hunting prospects, but quail hunting will probably be no better than fair this fall in eastern Kansas.

Parts of northcentral Kansas appear to harbor the state's best quail numbers, and the Red Hills and the southern tier of counties in southwestern Kansas should also provide good prospects.

Prairie chicken: Kansas greater prairie chicken populations appeared to have increased slightly and lesser prairie chicken numbers increased modestly this spring. Persistent rains over eastern Kansas in June may have suppressed greater prairie chicken reproduction.

While slightly increased, both species' populations are lower than average.

*Randy Rodgers,
research biologist, Hays*

Regional Summaries

Northwest

Pheasant populations appear to have increased in the region with the best prospects occurring in the eastern and southern counties. The northern tier of counties continue to lag behind other parts of this region after suffering substantial losses in the late October 1997 blizzard and poor reproduction caused by cold, wet conditions in early June of 1998. Spotty severe hail storms have occurred throughout the region.

Quail populations are generally thinly distributed in the northwest, but numbers are much higher than the long-term average. Quail seem to be unusually abundant in southeastern parts of the region. The best quail populations in this region are typically in Rooks, Phillips, Graham, and Norton counties. Cover is generally heavy.

Northcentral

Prospects for pheasant hunting appear to be very good. The northern and eastern tiers of counties probably will not be as good as other counties in this region. Northern tier counties will, nevertheless, be noticeably improved over 1998.

Northcentral Kansas will provide some of the state's best quail hunting this year, with very good numbers for this region.

Northeast

Pheasant populations appear to have rebounded compared to the relatively low numbers of 1998. This increase should bring numbers back to near average for this region, but the northeast is seldom among the better pheasant areas in the state.

Survey data and farmer reports indicate that quail populations are slightly improved over last year, but this still leaves quail numbers

below the long-term average for this region. Weed cover is good, but pastures are providing relatively poor habitat this year.

Southwest

Pheasant populations appear to be significantly improved over 1998. Late July reports indicating excellent pheasant numbers were, however, giving way to reports of more modest increases by late summer as weedy habitats declined.

Quail numbers appear to be similar to last year, which should mean good hunting if normal weather conditions prevail. The best quail populations in this region occur in the southern and eastern tiers of counties, especially in the Red Hills. Cover conditions range from average in the far southwest to generally good farther east.

Southcentral

This region is not among Kansas' better pheasant regions although good pock-

ets do occur, especially in the western and northern tiers of counties. Overall, pheasant numbers appear to be down in this region, but good numbers have been reported in the western counties.

Quail populations in the eastern half of the region are down substantially, but appear to be good in the western counties. Cover conditions are considered good throughout the region.

Southeast

Quail populations appear to be sharply down in the southeast and southern Flint Hills due to persistent rains in June of this year and severe flooding that occurred last fall along several major rivers. Potential for a significant late quail hatch offers some possibility for improved prospects, but that potential will depend on mild weather prevailing in September and October. Either way, quail hunting opportunity will likely be no better than average. Cover conditions are generally good.

Of Y2K and the SPORTSMAN

by Mark Shoup



For months now, everyone has fussed about the upcoming year 2000 and the potential problems associated with computer software and hardware that were not designed to accept the date of January 1, 2000. Most people are miffed that the computer jocks didn't think of something so simple when they were making us simple folk dependent on all these gadgets.

As Douglas Adams says, "We may not have got everything right, but at least we knew the century was going to end."

Even Adams has part of the issue wrong. The problem is called the Y2K bug or millennium bug even though it is not a virus, and Jan. 1, 2000, is not the beginning of the new millennium. That won't begin until Jan. 1, 2001.

Misconceptions typify the confusion and hysteria surrounding Y2K. Folks fear the worst: total breakdown of power grids, investments lost in the computer maze, gas pumps that won't pump, skyrocketing prices on everything, empty toilet paper shelves in supermarkets.

But if these predictions come true, it will be the outdoorsman, not the computer jockey, who must rise to the occasion. If the power grids shoot craps, the lights and adding machines and cash registers and heaters in the workplace will too. That means the worst of all possible scenarios - no one will be able to go to work.

Such dire straits require that the conscientious hunter make every effort to provide for his family. January 1 comes smack in the middle of upland bird season, and many waterfowl seasons run well into January. This means extra time afield. After all, if you can't go to work, you've got to put food on

the table somehow. Thus, Y2K demands that the hunter make the ultimate sacrifice for his family.

Of course, such dedication to duty requires preparation. The hunter must have several cases of ammunition on hand. He might even want to buy an extra shotgun just in case. Y2K will shut the gun shops down, too. An extra rifle would be a good idea because Kansas has an extended whitetail antlerless-only deer season this year from Dec. 31 through January 9. That's nine days into Y2K he'll need to be afield.

To ensure that he's a good provider, the conscientious hunter will also have to make extra practice time between now and January first. Sporting clay, trap, and rifle ranges must be visited at least once a week. I know this is a lot to ask, but remember: it's for the family.

Come to think of it, preparation will require much more than stock-piling ammo and diligent practice. Even the best of hunters come home empty-handed from time to time. That's why they call it "hunting." To ensure that his family doesn't starve come Y2K, the dedicated father and husband should do as much hunting as possible between now and January 1. Game is scarcer in January, and there will be more competition once the date-impaired computers spew their data all over the power grids and fall into unwired oblivion.

Trips to other states appear to be in order. A single elk could carry a man's family through this crisis. To cover all bets, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and pronghorn seasons are offered in many states west.

Perhaps as important as getting the larder stocked is making sure the larder is stocked in a nutritious manner. The wife and children's health are at stake,

and a freezer filled with nothing but red meat doesn't really qualify as a balanced diet, even if it is low-fat. No, your family needs another source of protein - fish.

Keep in mind that come January 1, the gas stations are going to shut down like Congress in recess. Stashed cans of gasoline will be needed to run the generator (and keep those full freezers running). So use all the gas you can between now and then to keep the boat running and on the water. Several trips to northwest Kansas, where the reservoirs are brimming with fat crappie and white bass, will be necessary to help your family survive the winter of 1999-2000. This requires gas for the pickup, as well as the boat - gas that you know won't be around once the New Year rings in.

Walleye, of course, are bigger and also provide excellent table fare. But in cold weather, walleye are harder to find than white bass and crappie, so once again, the outdoorsman must brace himself for the supreme sacrifice of time and effort. Some distances may have to be travelled to reservoirs such as Marion, Lovewell, and Glen Elder. On the other hand, many outdoorsmen live in the Wichita area, which means that several trips a week to Cheney, El Dorado, and Fall River reservoirs may be necessary.

There are many sacrifices a man must make for his family, but they are all part of the package that comes with marriage and children. Rather than getting discouraged, a man must look at Y2K as an opportunity to do his domestic duty as breadwinner, husband, father. Now is the time to start. You are needed, dear sportsman. Don't let them down.

Naturally, all of this depends upon the man being the hunter and fisherman in the family. What with all these Becoming and Outdoors Woman events and more women becoming hunters and fishermen, the sportsman in many families might just be the woman. If such is the case in your family, dear father and husband, not to worry.

This Y2K bug won't amount to anything anyway.

TROUT SEASON

For the sixth year, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks requires a trout stamp for rainbow trout stocked by the department in waters throughout the state. Anyone fishing for trout in these waters from now through April 15, 2000, must purchase an \$8 trout stamp, whether they are required to have a fishing license or not.

The stamp must be carried while trout fishing. Trout stamps purchased earlier in 1999 are valid through Dec. 31 of this year. Although the trout season runs Oct. 15-April 15, the trout stamp is valid for the current calendar year.

In addition to the stamp, all residents 16-65 years old and non-residents 16 and older must also have a valid fishing license. Two areas, Mined Land Wildlife Area Unit #30 (Cherokee County) and Tuttle Creek Reservoir Seep Stream, require a trout stamp year-round.

Trout stamps are available at department offices, most county clerk offices, and some license vendors.

During the 1999-2000 season, trout will be stocked in the following areas: Webster Stilling Basin, Glen Elder Park Pond, Kanopolis Seep Stream, Cedar Bluff Stilling Basin, Lakewood in Salina, Tuttle Creek Seep Stream, Lake Henry in Clinton State Park, Lake Scott State Fishing Lake, Smoky Gardens in Goodland, Cimarron Grasslands Pits, Dodge City's Lake Charles, Garden City's Finney Ponds, Walnut River at El Dorado, Sedgwick County Park, KDOT

East Lake in Wichita, Dillon Pond in Hutchinson, Gunn Park in Ft. Scott, Veteran's Memorial Lake in Great Bend, and Mined Land Wildlife Area Unit #30.

The daily creel limit is 5 trout. The possession limit is 15.

Some local governments have their own trout stocking programs. Many of these require a fee, but the state permit is not required. Local recreation departments should have details.

For more information on trout fishing in Kansas, contact the Fisheries Section of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, (316) 672 5911.

—Shoup

FISHING TERMS EXPLAINED

Catch and Release: a conservation motion that happens most often right before the local conservation officer pulls over a boat that has caught over its limit.

Hook: 1) a curved piece of metal used to catch fish; 2) a clever advertisement to entice a fisherman to spend his life savings on a new boat; 3) the punch administered by said fisherman's wife after he spends their life savings (for example, "right hook," "left hook").

Line: something you give your coworkers when they ask on Monday how your fishing went the past weekend.

Lure: objects that are semi-enticing to fish but will drive an angler into such a frenzy that he will charge his credit card to the limit before exiting the tackle shop.

Reel: a weighted object that causes a rod to sink quickly when dropped overboard.

Rod: an attractively painted length of fiberglass that keeps an angler from ever getting too close to a fish.

School: a grouping in which fish are taught to avoid your \$29.99 lures and hold out for Spam instead.

Tackle: what your last catch did to you as you

LAKE-LEVEL HABITAT

These days, most Kansas reservoirs have plenty of water, but in the early 1990s, this wasn't the case, especially in north-west Kansas. At that time, lake levels were low, and survival of newly-hatched fish was limited. Still, the adult game fish thrived on the rough fish and forage fish during this low-water period because the fish were crowded into a smaller space.

Another benefit of these low water levels was an improvement in water clarity. The exposed sediments on the lake bed consolidated, and when the lakes refilled in the mid-1990s, the water was much clearer.

Also, while the lakes were low, vegetation grew on much of the exposed shorelines. Now flooded, this vegetation has produced ideal nursery habitat for young-of-the-year game fish. All these factors have worked to produce the excellent fishing we now see in north-west Kansas reservoirs.

This mix of increased natural reproduction, improved water clarity, and excellent nursery habitat, combined with well-conceived stocking plans, has produced excellent fishing and should for several years to come.

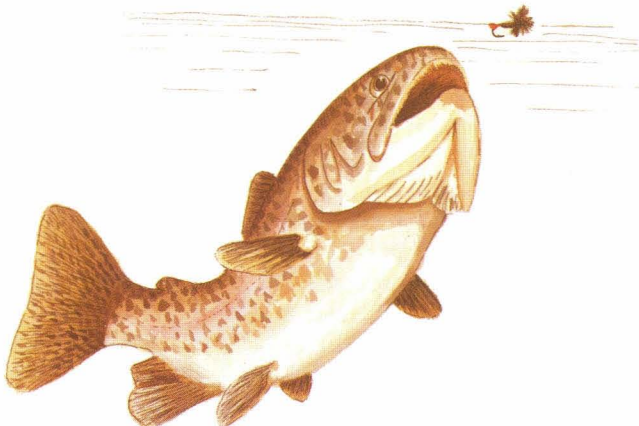
—Doug Nygren, Fisheries Section chief, Pratt

reeled him in, just before he wrestled free and jumped back overboard.

Tackle Box: a box shaped alarmingly like your comprehensive first-aid kit. A tackle box contains many sharp objects so that when you reach in the wrong box blindly to get a Band Aid, you soon find that you need more than one.

Test: 1) the amount of strength a fishing line affords an angler when fighting fish in a specific weight range; 2) a measure of creativity in blaming "that darn line" for once again losing the fish.

—Author unknown



Keep Songbirds Healthy

It will soon be time to start feeding songbirds. During winter, birds flock to backyard feeders to eat the seeds that help them survive the harshest winter nights. A source of fresh water and food will go a long way toward ensuring a yard full of healthy songbirds. But when songbirds are concentrated at only a few food sources, there is a greater incidence of disease.

To prevent or minimize disease problems at your feeders, follow these six easy steps:

1. Give birds space. Instead of one large bird feeder, put out several small ones. This spreads the birds out, lessens the chance of infection, and reduces the stress of overcrowding at one feeder.
2. Clean the area of waste food and droppings. Sweep, or even vacuum the debris.
3. Check the construction of your feeder. Eliminate sharp points or edges that can scratch or cut a bird, which would provide an entryway for disease.
4. Clean and disinfect feeders regularly. Use one part liquid chlorine bleach and nine parts water mixed in a large enough quantity to immerse an empty, cleaned feeder for two to three minutes. Then allow to air dry. Twice a month is good, but weekly is better.
5. Only use food that is free of musty smells, moisture, mold, or fungus. Also, disinfect any storage container that has held spoiled food.

-Farmers and Wildlife

Bob The Cat

Although the bobcat is common throughout Kansas, many people never see one because this native Kansas cat is so nocturnal. In fact, bobcats are so plentiful that they can be found coast to coast from Canada to Mexico.

Bowhunters probably see them more often than any other group of outdoorsmen. Sitting quietly in a tree stand, there is nothing like the thrill of watch a bobcat stalking a rat. This stealthy hunter can creep in absolute silence across the driest leaf litter before pouncing on its unsuspecting prey.

The bobcat, *Felis rufus*, is a member of the lynx family and may be as long as 3 feet and weigh as much as 40 pounds. Males outweigh females about 10 pounds. The cat's black-spotted coat may vary from a reddish brown to nearly white, with a "bobbed," black-tipped tail and tufts on the ears.

In Kansas, the bobcat generally prefers woodlands such as the forested

areas of eastern Kansas and wooded streambanks and shelterbelts in the central and western portion of the state. Because woodland habitat is more sparse in the western portions of the state, fewer bobcats may be found here than in the east.

Bobcats are solitary animals with a large home range. Males may range as far as 42 square miles, female as much as 17 square miles. Except during the breeding season, this roaming is largely



is search of food. Prey includes mice, woodrats, pocket gophers, rabbits, squirrels, birds, opossums, porcupines, and even an occasional bat. The bobcat hunts mostly in evening using keen eyesight and hearing, rather than scent.

During breeding season, the peak of which is February to May, bobcats may be more social. Females may occasionally breed twice a season. Males mate with as many females as possible. The gestation period is 63 days; average litter size is three. Young are weaned at two months and disperse from the female at about seven to nine months. Litter mates may travel together for a some time after leaving the female parent.

Young bobcats may disperse as far as 100 miles from the place of birth. In the wild, a bobcat may live 10 to 14 years.

-Shoup

BACKYARD HABITAT

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' Backyard Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program began in 1985. About 80 percent of Kansans live in or near large cities, and many enjoy watching wildlife and have developed their backyards to attract wildlife.

This may be as easy as adding a few select shrubs and a watering area, or it might be as complex as establishing native prairie, trees, shrubs, and a small pond.

The program has three parts: 1) technical assistance from a department biologist, 2) informational materials and brochures, and 3) the Backyard Habitat Certification Program.

For more information and help improving your yard for wildlife, contact any regional office of the Department of Wildlife and Parks or the Pratt Operations Office, (316) 672 5911. Most of the time, technical assistance may be provided over the phone by a wildlife biologist or information can be sent to assist you.

"Refuge In the City," a four-color brochure describing a number of backyard habitat techniques, is also available to anyone on request.

-Shoup

BROWN COUNTY QU

The Brown County Quail Unlimited (QU) chapter was formed in the fall of 1982 as the first QU chapter in Kansas and just the second in the nation. The chapter started with 13 members and now has an active membership of 70. Each fall, the group holds a banquet to raise funds for wildlife habitat.

Last year, Brown County QU raised \$3,000 for wildlife bundles; \$3,000 for 4H and Boy Scout planting bundles; \$20,000 for the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service to purchase a root plow, no-till drill, and native grass seed; and \$260 for local hunter education programs.

The Brown County Chapter of Quail Unlimited works closely with Wildlife and Parks staff and is a driving force for habitat improvement in northeast Kansas.

—David E. Hoffman, conservation officer, Hiawatha

GRASSROOTS FOR LWCF

Grassroots pressure is creating progress in Congress to revitalize the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Congressional Education Day brought LWCF activists from across the country to Washington for visits with representatives, and many more contacted their representatives by telephone.

Both the House and Senate have included stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR) amendments to their FY 2000 Interior Appropriations Bills. Last July, the House passed two amendments that would add \$30 million in funding for stateside LWCF and \$4 million in funding for the UPARR program. The Senate has included a \$20 million stateside LWCF amendment and a \$1.5 million UPARR amendment to its Interior Appropriations bill.

The next step for Congress will be to reconcile the House and Senate bills through a conference committee. The schedule for that action will be determined by Congress' success in moving

forward its other appropriations bills.

The current stateside and UPARR amendments will add monies only to the next fiscal year's budget, not on a permanent basis. Grassroots efforts will continue to urge Congress to pass permanent LWCF legislation.

Americans for our Heritage and Recreation (AHR) is coordinating a coalition to urge Congressional action on the bills. They are urging all supporters to call or write their congressional representatives and to encourage local elected officials to contact their representatives, as well.

—Jerry Hover, Parks Division Director, Pratt

MARATHON FLYER

How long would it take you to go from the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge to El Rosario, Mexico? A monarch butterfly left the refuge on Sept. 19 last year and was found in Mexico 100 days later, having traveled 1,267 miles. The tag on the recovered butterfly was placed on it during Monarch Mania in 1998. This was quite a coup for the Friends of Quivira, considering how few of the thousands of butterflies tagged are ever seen again.

—St. John News

Y2K LICENSES

The 2000 hunt, fish, and furharvester licenses; annual vehicle park permits; trout stamps; annual camping permits, and annual rail-trail permits will go on sale Monday, Dec. 20, 1999 and will become effective on the date sold.

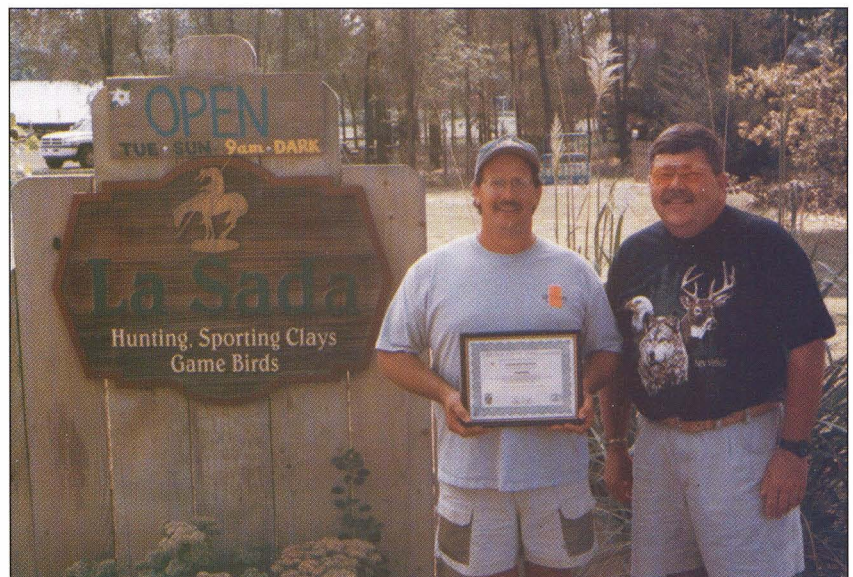
This early license sale is both a convenience and a bargain. Those who buy their Kansas licenses and other issues on or after Dec. 20, 1999, will not have to purchase another until Jan. 1, 2001.

—Shoup

SPORTING CLAY EDUCATORS

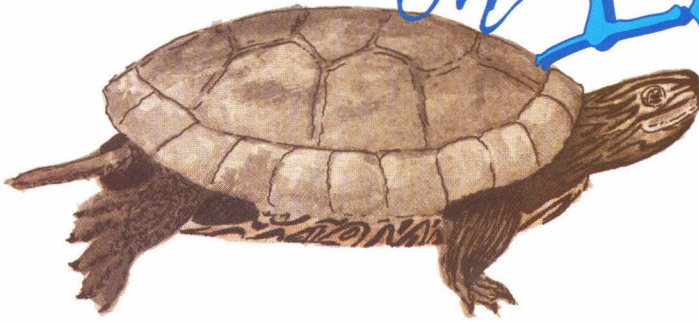
Last August, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks recognized Scott Young, owner of LaSada Sporting Clays, near Russell, for his support of hunter education. Scott and his father, Ron Young, are certified Kansas hunter education instructors who use their shooting range for hunter education programs in the Russell area. Presenting Scott with a Certificate of Appreciation from the department was Dave Baldwin, area coordinator for hunter education in Russell County.

—Greg Salisbury, conservation officer, Salina



TURTLE

on ICE



The painted turtle gets its name from the colorful red markings on its lower shell. It is native to Kansas, but its range extends farther north than any other land or freshwater turtle. It survives even in southern Canada in winter.

In mid-summer, a painted turtle female leaves the water, locates a sunny place where she can dig a hole, then lays a "clutch" of about 10 eggs. The eggs hatch in two to three months. If the eggs hatch in the late fall when the weather is cold, the hatchlings do not dig themselves out of the nest. They stay put until the next spring. By staying hidden in the nest, they avoid a harsh season of little food and hungry predators. However, they are not buried deep enough to

avoid freezing ground temperatures.

So how do hatchling painted turtles survive freezing temperatures? Strangely enough, they freeze, but it doesn't kill them. Their body fluids stay liquid until it falls to 26 degrees Fahrenheit. As the temperature drops, the turtles lose circulation. There is no muscle movement, breathing, heartbeat, or bloodflow.



BOTTOM



TOP

Special biochemical actions save the turtles at this time. Jagged ice crystals forming inside cells would tear them apart, but sugars within cells concentrate to form a natural antifreeze. Outside the cells, the blood plasma is encouraged to freeze, but the inner cells remain healthy down to 18 degrees Fahrenheit. Amazingly, soon after thaw all the turtle's vital signs will return. After the hatchlings emerge and find their way to a river, pond or lake, they will never

again be able to withstand such cold temperatures.

Adult painted turtles will spend the winter lying on the bottom or buried in the mud. They prefer water temperatures close to 40 degrees and shallow areas that warm quickly in spring. If the temperature falls too low, they will swim under the ice to a deeper pool and may bury themselves in 18 inches of mud.

Like other mammals that hibernate, adult turtles can slow their body functions to a fraction of their active state to survive the harsh winter environment. This reduces the use of body fuel to about one-tenth its normal rate. But even hibernating animals burn some energy, and most require oxygen to stay alive.

How do turtles get oxygen when they can't swim to the surface for a breath of air? Like frogs, aquatic turtles can get oxygen without breathing by direct exchange of oxygen from the water through their skin. There are times, however, when oxygen is absent under the ice or in the mud where the turtle is buried.

Then a different energy-generating system takes

over the turtle's body. This system doesn't require oxygen. It uses a fuel called glycogen that is stored in the turtle's organs.

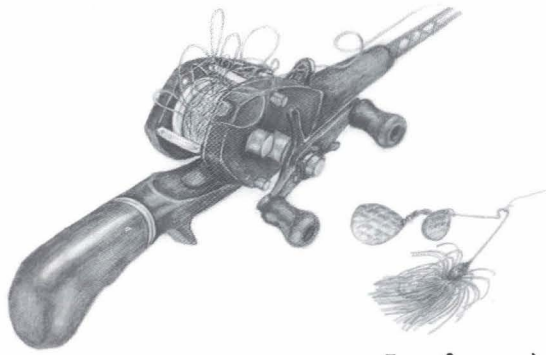
Glycogen provides energy. In the process, lactic acid builds up in the muscles. This lactic acid can actually poison the turtle's cells. The turtle avoids this cell damage by releasing calcium and magnesium from its shell and bones into its blood stream. These elements buffer the acid and prevent it from becoming poisonous.

The painted turtle's winter adaptations are of interest to medical researchers who

are trying to find ways to keep human organs healthy when they are being saved for transplant to other humans. They also hope study of painted turtles might reveal ways to treat humans who have become exposed to the cold too long (called hypothermia).

This winter, look closely when you are near a pond covered with clear ice. You might get lucky and see the rare under-ice movement of a creature that can survive where you can't.





Backlash

by Mike Miller

It's November.

Do you know where your children are?

Remember that old television public service announcement? *It's eleven o'clock. Do you know where your children are?* Well, the theme of the campaign works for me and the coming hunting seasons. I guarantee my Dad didn't have to look for me in November, although there were probably a few Saturday mornings at 5 a.m. he wished I would get lost.

Opening day of pheasant season was for me, at 12 years old, as anticipated as Christmas morning. Sleep was almost impossible the night before. Though I was typically tough to rouse from bed on school days, I bounced out on the weekend during pheasant season. I could hardly contain my anticipation on those November mornings, and I suppose I was proud that Dad included me. I was usually the only youngster.

Dad and I still hunt every opening day. It's much more leisurely now, and I don't have as much trouble falling to sleep the night before. But the hunts are still treasures — tweaking memories from those early hunts and spending time together.

The hunt was in my blood, even though I lived the urban life my first few years. It wasn't until we moved to the small rural Kansas town that I started hunting. And even though I believe I would have hunted with or without that move, my initiation to hunting has impacted the way I feel about hunting today. Hunting is synonymous with Dad, Grandad, friends, and good times. Hunting is adrenaline-pumping excitement, but it's also highly social. That solid base of hunting experiences has followed me through life. When I was old enough to drive, in addition to hunting with Dad, I hunted with high school friends. At college, I made lasting friendships with several classmates who had the same love for hunting. As an adult, my closest friends are my hunting partners.

Hunting will always be an important part of my life. But it's more than just spending a Saturday morning hunting pheasants. It's talking about a big buck sighting with one of my friends at work. It's having a bird dog that's spoiled rotten. It's scanning through a Cabela's catalog each fall looking for gear I "need." And it's planning opening day with Dad.

Hunting has taught me to enjoy all aspects of the out-

doors — sunrises, cool autumn breezes, the call of white-fronted geese, or the tick of an Osage orange leaf breaking free on a frosty morning. I wouldn't appreciate these treasures without my hunting background, nor would I be as concerned about conserving them.

Every child who has an interest in hunting should get the chance to experience it. And, ideally, they should learn to hunt with a parent or trusted relative. Today, there are countless activities that young people are involved in, and hunting can get left out. But as a parent, consider the quality time hunting allows with your children. Youngsters are sponges when it comes to the outdoors, and hunting can be an excellent way to instill an appreciation for wild resources. Hunting together builds bonds, as well as lifetime memories. The process of hunting ethically and safely requires responsibility and maturity. There are valuable lessons to be learned while hunting.

Take a youngster hunting this fall. If you haven't hunted in a while, it's time to rekindle your fire and light a spark in a young hunter. If you haven't already, enroll your children in a Hunter Education Course, and sit through the class with them. You'll both learn, and it will be more meaningful for the children if you're there.

There are quality hunting opportunities available for new and young hunters, including youth hunting days, and special public lands hunts. For more information, contact your nearest Wildlife and Parks office, or get in touch with a local conservation group such as Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, or the National Wild Turkey Federation. Local chapters of these groups often sponsor youth hunts, and experienced members can help get you and your children started hunting.

Give your children a gift that will last the rest of their lives. Pass on the hunting tradition. You, and they, will be glad you did.

