

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2000

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2000 Photo Issue

Everyone has an outdoor experience that is remembered throughout life. Hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, watching wildlife — the Kansas outdoors offers many opportunities for beautiful and meaningful memories. This 2000 millennium photo issue brings to mind such moments, portraying the land with color and mood.

Photographer Mike Blair shares some of Kansas' rich and diverse scenes, from color-filled scenics to solitary encounters with wildlife. This issue chronicles another year outdoors, and is sure to inspire the discovery of Kansas memories yet waiting to be uncovered.



Dear Reader,

Heading into the sunrise of each new day, I'm always thrilled by a sense of opportunity and adventure. My job takes me onto the vast stage of life, where everything is busy living, changing, and dying. Kansas' land, seasons, weather, and wildlife form a fascinating web of energy constantly in motion, whether noticed or not.

My cameras are simply tools of record. They gather brief glimpses of the beauty that surrounds us all. I'm thankful for a job alive with discovery, and humbled at the magnificent works of the Creator. Through these images, I hope you'll share an appreciation for the beauty and wonder of our state.

Photographer, Mike Blair



About the covers

Front: A snowy egret dances in the shallows as it competes for hunting water with other egrets. Mike Blair photographed the scene with a 600mm lens, @ f/8, 1/125 sec.

Back: A young tom turkey pauses before disappearing into the timber. The scene was photographed by Blair with a 600mm lens, @ f/8, 1/500 sec.



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

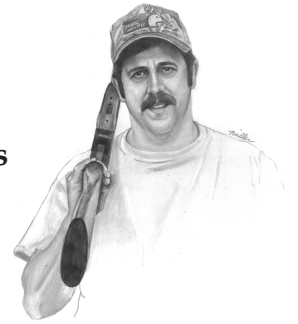
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The View From Here

Steve Williams



A Partner In Conservation

For nearly a decade, the KANSAS WILDSCAPE Foundation has helped our department provide outdoor recreation and education opportunities to the people of Kansas. This private, non-profit organization is guided by an active Board of Directors, one full-time employee, and two contract employees.

The relatively small WILDSCAPE staff not only ensures that contributions pay for programs, instead of administrative costs, it also allows these dedicated individuals to remain focused on their mission: "To conserve and perpetuate the land, the wild species and the rich beauty of Kansas for the use and enjoyment of all."

Executive Director Harland Priddle, joined WILDSCAPE in May, 1999. A veteran of both the military and government affairs, Priddle served the state of Kansas as the Secretary of Agriculture from 1982 through 1986 and as Secretary of Commerce from 1987 through 1991. His vast experience with Kansas' natural resources and economy have already proven an asset to the Foundation.

Priddle joined WILDSCAPE in the midst of their biggest fund-raising challenge to date, providing nearly \$1.2 million dollars in private funds to develop a 2,300-acre wetland at Milford Lake. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing matching funds (75-percent federal, 25-percent private) to complete the project. The Foundation has raised a significant amount of the money, sufficient to launch the project within the next year.

Once completed, the Milford Wetlands will stand as the largest wetland complex in the northern-half of the state. This area will provide excellent habitat for migrating water-

fowl and shorebirds, as well as countless local wildlife species. It will also offer outstanding hunting and wildlife watching opportunities.

WILDSCAPE has also been a crucial partner in the development of Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites (OWLS) across the state. OWLS are located on or near the grounds of Kansas schools and feature natural habitats, including woodlands, grasslands, and wetlands, to attract wildlife for studies by students and teachers. Each of the 168 OWLS involve students in hands-on activities designed to increase their appreciation of wildlife and their understanding of wildlife's dependency on certain habitats.

KANSAS WILDSCAPE is about people like you working to expand outdoor opportunities for all Kansans. As we begin the new millennium, the Foundation's success in future projects will depend on the number of contributing members they attract. All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

If the tenets of WILDSCAPE appeal to you, I would encourage you to join this conservation organization (membership information can be found below). With your help and participation, WILDSCAPE hopes to create local chapters of members that will focus on community projects and work directly with the Foundation to achieve future goals. Goals, when reached, that will continue to provide more wild places for the people of Kansas.

Steve Williams

BE OUTDOOR ACTIVE

- Please contact me about tax favored planned giving.
- I would be interested in a Wildscape staff member making a presentation to my civic organization.

RETURN TO:
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Members Receive

- ___ Individual \$35 *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*
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Landscape

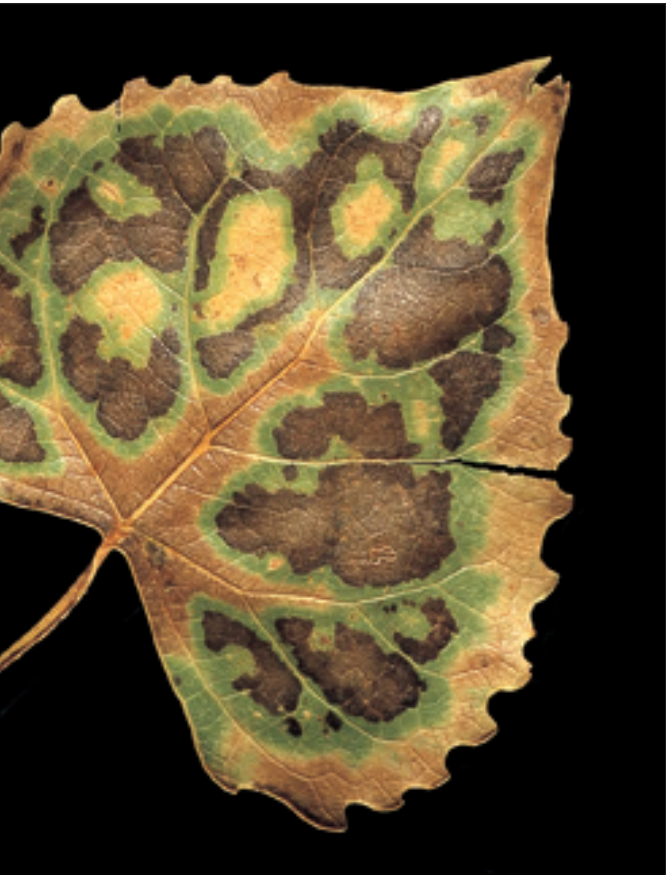


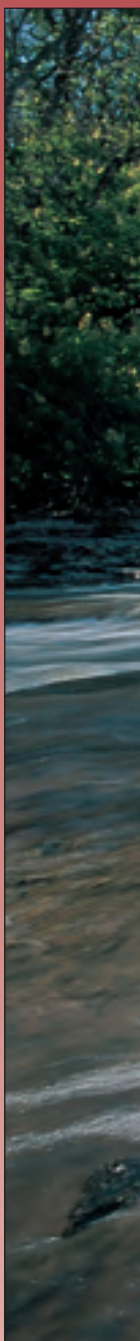


Wildlife & Parks Skyscapes



Seasons are the spice of life. Each transition redecorates the land. Fall stirs the hunter's heart and splashes color; Winter air purifies the lungs and snow cleanses the land; Spring is warmth and new life; Summer is lazy, the drone of cicadas, and a necessary wait between spring and fall.















Wildlife Encounter

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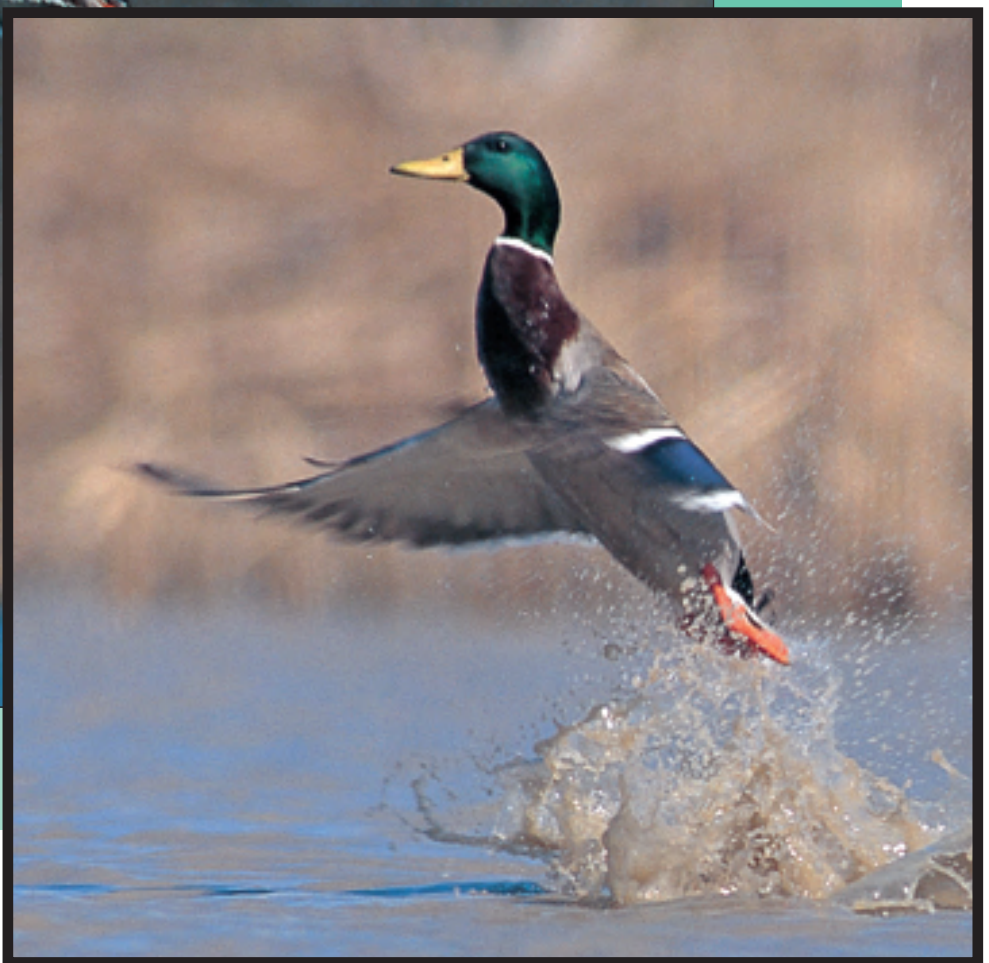
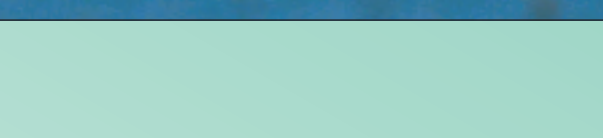
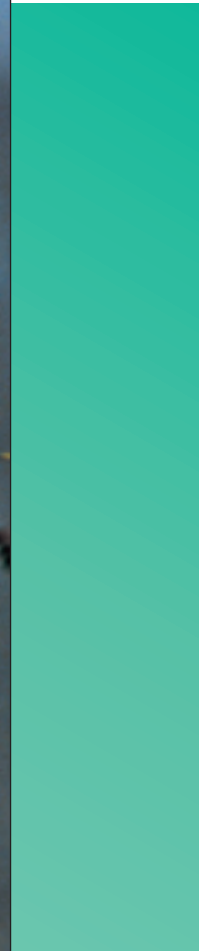
Birds are magical. They are delicate yet durable, brilliant or camouflaged, rare and elusive or profuse and conspicuous. Best of all, they lift our spirits as they soar the winds.















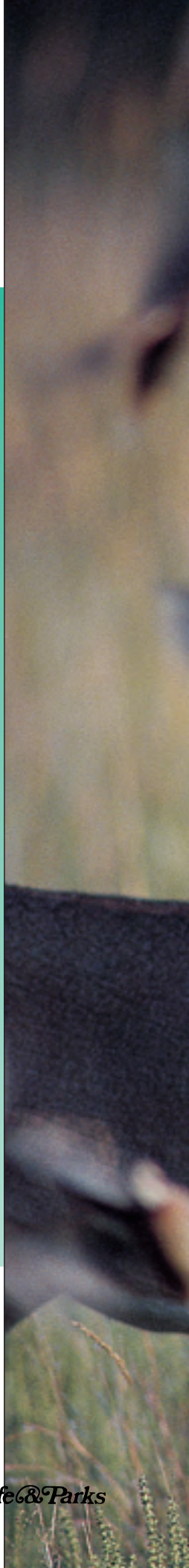






Deer, elk, and antelope descend from a long line of prairie bloodlines. They belong on the Kansas landscape. Miraculously, they have returned from near extermination. Chance encounters are thrilling and remind us of a once wild grassland.













Predators work behind the scenes. Nocturnal, exquisitely disguised and stealthy beyond comprehension, they hunt and scavenge in a necessary role of natural balance.





*S*pecial skills or adaptations make some species especially fascinating. Each unique attribute allows that species to survive and fill its niche.





Insects await to inherit the earth. No other creature exists in such variety or numbers. Less admired than other wild fauna, insects are yet colorful, ingeniously equipped, and tenacious in perpetuation.









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9 Experience



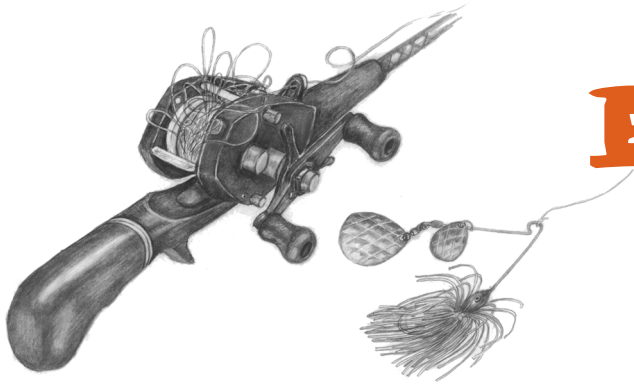
Rewards of a well-kept environment are infinite. Wildlife and wild places are ingredients to the quality of life. Without outdoor experiences, we lose touch, forget, and neglect our natural heritage.











Backlash

by Mike Miller

The Imposter

I've been conned. No, I didn't lose my life savings to one of those get-rich-quick schemes. I wish. If that were the case, I'd only be out \$143.96. It's worse than that. I'm afraid my bird dog is an imposter. He looks like a Brittany. He walks like a Brittany. He even barks like a Brittany. But he ain't a Brittany.

I know you're wondering how I could be so gullible, but this condog is good. As a puppy, he had cute down to perfection. And he has the disguise — white with orange spots, long feathering on the backs of his legs, and a stubby little tail. He knew which buttons to push to make sure he became a permanent part of our family. Once he felt firm in his household position, he started letting his true identity show.

I should have been suspicious when he outgrew our Lab within the first year. Then he slipped up on a pheasant hunt when he was about two. He'd been feigning hunting birds all morning. He even acted excited trailing a running rooster and flushed it far out of shotgun range. I would have sworn he was a Brittany then. But his true colors showed when a skunk waddled out of a brush pile in front of him. I yelled for him to come back, my hunting partners howled, but he beelined it to the skunk, stuck his nose in the wrong end and was promptly squirted.

I reasoned that he was still young, that he'd learned his lesson on skunks. And if the nauseating odor wasn't deterrent enough, I made sure he wouldn't forget the odor-removing process. I bathed him in dish soap, vinegar, baking soda, tomato juice and hydrogen peroxide — every sure-fire skunk remedy I'd ever heard of. If the baths weren't torture to him, they were to me. He only smelled like a skunk for a couple of months afterward. Then for the next three months, he only smelled like a skunk when he got wet.

Things were pretty normal for the next year. He acted like a Brittany. Then during his third hunting season, he had another slip up. In heavy grass he locked on point. As I walked in expecting to flush a quail, something moved in the grass. The condog held his point, briefly glancing at me like, "get it before it gets away." As I moved closer I leaned forward to see down into the thick

grass. Just before I got too close, I saw the familiar black and white colors and jumped back. I grabbed the dog and dragged him away before I realized how close I had come to getting sprayed in the face. Trapper was unfazed and went back to the bird hunting act the rest of the morning. My suspicions were growing.

A credit to his con skills, the dog kept up the facade without a problem for another year. Blinded by hopes he would become a good bird dog, I ignored my suspicions. Then last season, another episode. I'd brought along a newspaper writer, hoping to show him a good quail hunt. In two hours, we'd seen not one bird. When Trapper finally pointed, I was desperate for a flush. As I approached, Trapper lunged into the thicket, and I saw black and white fur. Knowing the drill, I whirled and ran. Looking back from a safe distance, I saw an embarrassed looking dog with two large yellow, wet spots on his head — direct hits. Embarrassed, I realize now, not because he pointed a skunk, but because he got hit. I was embarrassed he pointed a skunk and made excuses the rest of the afternoon.

That was the last straw. All of the things that didn't fit began to add up. I'm searching the Internet for rare, European dog breeds that specialize in hunting game other than birds. I know that there were breeds developed to hunt badgers, wild boar, and other species, so I'm determined to find one that specializes in skunks.

Surely there's a breed called something like the Sussex Chameleon Polecat Pointer. A breed developed in Europe to hunt polecats, which aren't really skunks but are musky and a member of the same family. Then, maybe, after a crash in the polecat fur market, there wasn't much demand for polecat pointers, and they were cast out. To survive, the breed adapted by changing its appearance and behavior to imitate more desirable breeds. It could happen.

Polecat pointers couldn't be recognized by the AKC because they wouldn't have common physical characteristics. The only common traits include an affinity for skunks and talent for deceit. Yeah, that's the ticket. Anyone want to buy a rather large, musky smelling "Brittany?"

