



KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

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The View From Here

by Steve Williams



Spring Walk-In Hunting and Fishing

You know the old saying, "If it isn't broke, don't fix it." I believe in that statement, so I will choose the following words carefully. Our department is improving, fine-tuning if you will, the Walk-In Hunting Area (WIHA) program by adding a spring season component.

As I am sure many of you are aware, WIHA has been one of the most successful programs the department has ever undertaken. Started as a pilot project in 1995, the program opens up private lands for public use during the hunting seasons. Landowners are compensated for enrolling their property, and hunters gain open access.

Thanks to the responsible behavior of hunters utilizing WIHA properties, the program is embraced by an overwhelming number of landowners, with nearly 700,000 acres enrolled this past hunting season. Hunters fund the program through license and equipment purchases. WIHA is truly a "win-win" program.

Hoping to build on that success, a Spring Turkey WIHA program was established in northeastern and southeastern Kansas. More than 42,000 acres were enrolled for spring turkey hunting. Spring WIHA lands will be open April 1-May 31. The spring turkey season is April 11-May 20. A free Spring WIHA atlas lists all enrolled lands by county and the size of the property in acres.

There is an important distinction between the fall and spring programs. Areas enrolled in Spring WIHA will be marked with a different sign (see the inset photo). Enter land only if it is posted with this red-lettered sign. Fall WIHA signs are left up year-round to cut down on the costs associated with posting the areas. However, these areas are not open to turkey hunting unless they are also posted with the red and white spring WIHA signs. If you are not sure if an area is enrolled in Spring WIHA, assume it isn't.

All of the rules that apply to the fall and winter WIHA properties will remain in effect. Remember, obeying the rules of WIHA properties will help ensure the program's

continued success. Don't hunt an area unless it is clearly marked with the red and white signs. Do not damage standing crops and be sure to take all of your trash, as well as any trash left by others, with you when you leave. Do not attempt to contact cooperating landowners for the

purpose of hunting other portions of their land. Some landowners enroll in WIHA to reduce contact with hunters. Please consult the Spring WIHA atlas for a complete list of rules.

Now, while your scouting for spring WIHA areas, there is another sign to look for. The Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats (FISH) program signs. Patterned after WIHA, FISH opens private ponds and streams to public fishing. FISH began in 1998 and properties are added each year. A free FISH atlas that lists all enrolled properties

by county, size of impoundment, and species present is available at your nearest KDWP office.

All FISH properties are open to the public from March 1 to October 31. Like WIHA, FISH properties are marked with signs. All you have to do is drive up, park the car, walk in, and start fishing. Whether you want to tangle with a lunker bass, or introduce a youngster to the excitement of landing a bluegill, this program is for you. Remember, as with WIHA, the future of FISH depends on anglers' respect for private property.

If you are having trouble finding a spot to hunt or fish, or would just like to try a new area, I encourage you to give Spring WIHA and FISH a try. I believe all outdoor experiences are enhanced when shared with a child or a friend who is new to the sport. Be sure to extend an invitation to others whenever possible.

For a free copy of a Spring WIHA or FISH atlas, call the department at (316) 672-5911. You can also request a copy, or download the atlases, from the department's website at www.kdwp.state.ks.us.



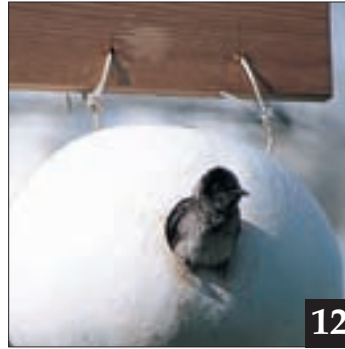
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Wildlife & Parks

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Vol. 58, No. 2

- 1** **The View From Here**
Spring Walk-In Hunting And Fishing
by Steve Williams
- 2** **Arikaree Breaks Dancer**
This rugged land of northwest Kansas is as fascinating as the man who keeps its history alive.
by J. Mark Shoup
- 8** **2001 Fishing Forecast**
by Doug Nygren
- 12** **The Houses That Franklin Built**
People may benefit as much as purple martins from one man's labor of love.
by Mike Blair
- 15** **Let's Catch Crappie**
Guide for beginning crappie anglers.
by Leo Shell
- 24** **Miami State Fishing Lake Renovation**
Repairs to the dike will protect this picturesque and popular fishing lake in Miami County.
by Tim Schaid
- 27** **Wildlife Research Headquarters**
KDWP's office in Emporia houses biologists who help us learn more about Kansas wildlife.
by Roger Applegate
- 29** **Meaningful Moments**
A daughter's first turkey hunt provides her father with an unforgettable moment in life.
by Mike Ehlebracht
- 30** **Ninja Chicken**
Psychotic prairie chicken photo essay.
by Marc Murrell
- 32** **Conservation Officer Profile**
Continuing series profiling the men and women who enforce wildlife-related laws.
by Matt Stucker
- 33** **The Wild Currents**
edited by J. Mark Shoup
- 45** **Backlash**
Reel Rehab
by Mike Miller



12



15



30

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About the covers

Front: A view of Devil's Gap, an important landmark on the Indians' march from Cherry Creek to Julesburg. Mark Shoup photographed the scene with a 50mm lens @f/11, 1/125.

Back: Proud father Mike Ehlebracht, snapped this photo of his daughter Amy with her first turkey.



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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Arikaree Breaks Dancer

text and photos by J. Mark Shoup
associate editor, Pratt

Arid, rugged badlands are carved into the pale soils of Cheyenne County in northwestern Kansas. Awe-inspiring views are equaled only by the region's colorful history, kept alive by one man's dedication and love of the land.

Imagine if you will that there is a Kansas Grand Canyon. In fact, there is — at least a “miniature” version of the famous spectacle. Commonly called the Arikaree Breaks, this Kansas panorama spans half of Cheyenne County in the northwestern corner of the state. The steep canyons carved here actually follow the breaks of the South Fork Republican River and its many tributaries, of which the Arikaree River is just one.

And there is one man who knows the Breaks like the back of his hand — Tobe Zweygardt. Zweygardt may be 84 years old, but he still can “break dance.” In fact, he may have invented the art form, at least as it’s practiced in this magnificent corner of Kansas, where folks travel from across the country to explore the unique landscape. He guides about 300 people a year on bus tours from places as close as Goodland, Oakley, Hays, and Garden City and as far away as Pennsylvania.

As a tour guide for this area, there could be none better; he has spent a lifetime studying its landscape and history. Along 60 miles of maintained roads, he has placed some 350 signs marking the locations of former cemeteries, schools, homesteads, way stations, and battles. At one time, there were 78 school houses in the county, most of which he has marked.

It is early September when I am blessed with one of Zweygardt’s tours, arriving at his home in St. Francis about 9 a.m. It’s a bluebird day, and as we drive out of town, Zweygardt tells stories of growing up in this area and about the great flood of 1935, when the Republican River rose into town.

Our first stop is about a mile north, where Zweygardt has placed a sign for a one-mile river walk among the cottonwoods and willows of the Republican. The next stop is the Grand Army of the Republic Cemetery, established in 1889 to provide destitute veterans of the Civil War an honorable burial. Next is Spring Creek, a popular homestead site because this natural spring has always provided water.

Between each site, the country gets more and more rugged, and although I am already enthralled by the landscape, the best is yet to come.



At Hackberry Creek, we stop and visit. Zwegardt hints at the wealth of historical information stored in his brain and of which he will reveal more later:

“George Bent was a survivor of the Sand Creek Massacre, and he came to Cherry Creek,” he explains. Of Russian Volga-River German descent, Zwegardt still speaks with the endearing accent of his ancestors. “We’ll go by there later, but anyway, he was educated, and he kept a diary. You can read it in the book, *The Life of George Bent Written From His Letters*, by George Hyde.” Zwegardt explains that Bent’s letters were discovered by Hyde in a library in Denver in 1956. The letters were the first historical mention of an Indian encampment on Cherry Creek, and their long absence is the reason that earlier books on the history of plains Indians don’t mention Cherry Creek.

“There’s a map in there, and he showed the route of Indians coming to Cherry Creek through Devil’s Gap on the way to Julesburg for a raid up there and back to Cherry Creek again. It shows the beginning of Hackberry, and that’s where he made his map of the trail they took.”

Then, seeming to sense my curiosity before I can express it, he

explains his interest in all this.

“When I grew up on Cherry Creek, my dad and I hunted coyotes, and I walked up and down Cherry Creek and hunted and fished, and by golly, I was just always interested in history, but I didn’t even get to go to high school. I had to help my dad back there in the thirties. I always enjoyed talking with older people, and I kept all these stories in my mind. Then after I retired, I just took it on myself to really study history. I made contact with the Indians and began taking people out. I never charge anybody. I just enjoy doing it. It keeps me out of the pool hall.”

Several miles north of town, the landscape levels out somewhat, and farmland appears. Here, Zwegardt asks if I want to take a detour to Horsethief Cave. Whatever that is, the name is intriguing enough to inspire a “yes.” Before we get there, however, we are distracted by a large animal running in the road ahead of us. At first, I think it’s a badger, but it’s too big. Then I realize it’s a critter I’ve never seen in the wild — a porcupine. A huge one, it must weigh 40 pounds.

I hop out with my camera and chase it around the field for a bit, snapping pictures, and Zwegardt keeps right up, heading the animal off so it turns toward me for a better

shot.

This unusual experience complete, we continue the drive, and the landscape once again changes from farmland to deep gullies and canyons. In the back of one canyon lies a two-chambered cave once used by horse thieves to hide their bounty. I take some photos of the cave, and then Zwegardt and I stroll along the road, admiring the beauty and musing about thieves and sheriffs and the various plants, some unfamiliar to me.

Zwegardt picks up a familiar one and declares that it’s going to be a hard winter. “Mature cockle-burs,” he exclaims. “They never get caught with their pants down.” Then he picks up a dried-out piece of gray, fibrous root. “This is a yucca root. The Indians used yucca for everything. They used the blades for paint brushes and made shampoo out of the sap. The roots could be made into rope, or dried-up stuff like this was used for fire starter and even diapers.”

Now we get back into the truck and backtrack, then head north into the Breaks. About 100 yards from a rising curve in the road, Zwegardt has me stop and walk up to a ridge where the view on the other side is hidden. When I reach the top, I am breath-taken. “Grand Canyon” is the only comparison to be made with this view. The color is different, and the scale is not nearly so large, but it is, indeed, grand. It’s as if the shortgrass prairie had been carved and sculpted with a giant fork.

The landscape is characterized by rolling loess hills with canyons cut by the South Fork and its tributaries. (Loess is a fine-grained silt, like a rock flour.) During the Wisconsinian period, glaciers covered much of the central United States but stopped several hundred miles short of Kansas. As those glaciers melted, they created streams with broad river plains. When the streams dried up, they left behind dusty channels, and the wind whipped the silt into these huge hills.

Erosion eventually carved the



Tobe Zwegardt has placed more than 350 signs throughout the Breaks. This marker alerts travelers to a particularly stunning view of the area’s trademark landscape.

canyons, but the arid climate of western Kansas made this a slow process. As the loess gradually sloughed off, it left steep, vertical slopes that tended to be stable. As the waterways drained, the rolling hills gave way to steep canyons.

According to the Kansas Geological Survey, rock formations also grace the Breaks:

“Erosion exposed the Pierre Shale, deposited late in the Cretaceous Period, and the Ogallala Formation, which is composed of rocks that eroded off the face of the Rocky Mountains and were washed by streams onto the plains of western Kansas. At the surface, those rocks have often been naturally cemented together to form a hard, tough rock called mortar beds.”

Because of the arid climate here, vegetation is primarily shortgrass and yucca, and from my current vantage point, I can see for miles, an occasional tree sprouting from the canyon floor like an afterthought.

My first view fully absorbed, we drive deeper into the breaks until we finally emerge onto flatter land across the Nebraska line, then head west some 10 or 15 miles before driving back south. On this western side of the Breaks, we finally descend into the Arikaree River breaks. Near the river, Zweygardt has me stop the truck by an old foundation. We are now some 25 miles from St. Francis — in the middle of nowhere for sure if you had to find this place on horseback. The foundation, Zweygardt explains, is the remains of a gambling joint owned by one Ed Lake in the 1890s.

We now enter the property of Rex Daniels, a self-taught pilot who owns the property where Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska unite — the Three Corners. As we traverse the winding road to the marker that identifies the junction of these three



Canyons are carved throughout Cheyenne County along the South Fork Republican River and its tributaries, including the Arikaree River. Vegetation is mainly shortgrass and yucca.

borders, Zweygardt points to a rock about 150 yards south of the marker.

“In the 1870s, the people who surveyed the Colorado line came down through here, and they said that that’s where the Kansas-Nebraska line was, but they couldn’t find the marker that was put down by the original surveyors in 1859. So they measured out and placed the point where that rock is now. Well, when satellites came out in 1990, they said, ‘Well, gosh, that

isn’t right. We’ve got to establish the right spot.’

“Well, I was here when they had their TV set and equipment out here. When they got near the right point, they got to digging around and found the bottom part of the original rock from 1859. So they got to looking around and found the top part way off on top of a hill. They figured what happened was that there were still a lot of Indians around here in 1859, and they didn’t want the white man to mess the

deal up, so they broke the top part off and dragged the rock way up there. It still had the markings on it, so they buried it next to the bottom part."

Then Zwegardt wags his finger at me. "Now I want you to be a thinkin' about this. Surveyed in 1859 with whatever equipment they had, they came across all these hills here, clear across the breaks, and how far do you think they were off according to the satellite?"

"Probably not far from what you tell me here," I lamely reply, expecting maybe 50 yards or so.

"Eight inches!" Zwegardt exclaims. "Eight inches! That is unbelievable! With the equipment they had in 1859? Them guys was good!"

Zwegardt goes on to explain that the satellites also established that Baseline Road in Boulder, Colo., lines up perfectly with this point. This man of history is also fascinated with the wonders of modern technology.

Zwegardt has explained all this to me as we approach the Three Corners marker. Once there, I stand on the marker, proudly noting that I am in three states at once.

After leaving Three Corners, we head for what is perhaps the most



Zwegardt stands in Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado at once — the Three Corners Marker.

interesting historical site in the Breaks — the Cherry Creek encampment. This site is significant because of the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, in which Colorado militiamen under Col. John M. Chivington attacked a peaceful encampment of Indians. The surprise attack, during which hundreds of Cheyenne warriors, women, and children were killed, occurred after their leader, Black Kettle, had agreed to an armistice with the U.S. Army. After the attack, the Indians fled to this site.

When we get there, Zwegardt explains the history in more detail:

"There were more than 3,000 Indians camped in here in 1864 and 1865. Indians came from Sand Creek to the Smoky Hill and then to Cherry Creek because here is where the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers had their campsite and did their hunting up and down Cherry Creek. There was always running water in Cherry Creek, and the rocks along here always had chokecherries, wild plums, wild grapes, and currants. There was a pond about every hundred yards or less where they could catch bullheads and sunfish and turtles, so they always had plenty to eat."

Food was not the only benefit of living in the area. Bark from red willows along the creek could be chewed to relieve a headache, much like aspirin. Indian pod and a variety of other herbs, when dried and inhaled, would relieve the symptoms of asthma and migraines. (In 1990, Zwegardt took a group of Indians to this



An accomplished metal sculptor, Zwegardt created this marker commemorating an event in Plains Indian history.

area, and one of the priests climbed the rocks and collected these elements for this purpose.)

As if to emphasize our physical presence in a profound historical context, he reiterates, "This is where the Indians camped." (Pointing to the dark sandstone cliffs along the south side of Cherry Creek, Zwegardt says somewhat wistfully that this is also the place where the white man killed the last buffalo in the area, driving it over the cliff.)

The Indians' stay at Cherry Creek would be short-lived, however. "Spotted Tail and Pawnee Killer smoked the war pipe," Zwegardt tells me, "and they led the people up to Julesburg, Colorado, where they burnt the whole town in retaliation for the Sand Creek Massacre, and then they came back here."

According to Bent's letters, this site on Cherry Creek is "where the Plains War between the Indians and whites began — a war that lasted 12 years and culminated at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in Montana in 1876."

After the raid on Julesburg, the groups split up.

"Black Kettle and his bunch went south, and the Sioux, Cheyenne, and part of the Arapaho went north," Zwegardt explains. "They're up there in Montana now. Of course, Black Kettle went down to Oklahoma, and Custer killed him

and his wife down there.”

In 1990, Zwegardt held a dedication ceremony at this historic site in honor of the victims of the Sand Creek Massacre. He contacted the Cheyenne Nation, and descendants of Sand Creek survivors attended the ceremony. Zwegardt, a skilled metal sculptor, had placed tepee, buffalo, and prairie dog sculptures in a small handmade corral and a life-sized metal silhouette of an Indian chief on horseback overlooking the scene from the rocks above. (In a mailbox, he keeps a visitor’s sign-up notebook filled with names and addresses from across the nation. Many notations are from Native Americans.)

Zwegardt tells a remarkable story about the drive to the site, a spot called Devil’s Gap (a landmark on the route the Indians took to Julesburg), and one of his passengers, a Cheyenne chief:

“He had heard about this site from his ancestors back. He had never been here, but he wanted to come one time to see this. He sat in the back of the car and never said a word until we ‘pert near got to Devil’s Gap. Then he said, ‘Stop! I want to get out.’ And he got out and said, ‘This is it! This is it!’ And he walked up the road about a couple hundred yards to Devil’s Gap. He had all that in his mind, from stories



A large porcupine, unbothered by the region’s lack of trees, is a surprise encounter during the tour.



Mike Blair photo

The Breaks are named for the Arikaree River, but this river is just one of many responsible for the rugged canyons that mark this region.

handed down, exactly what that looked like. And he’d never been there before. And that’s the reason we know that George Bent was pretty accurate with his maps.”

There were several other notable Native Americans who made the trip, as well.

“The Keeper of the Sacred Arrowheads and the Elkhorn Scraper came from Montana, and from Oklahoma there was a chief and two priests who came. This Keeper of the Sacred Arrowheads said, ‘I’ve got to tell you a story. I’ve never been to Cherry Creek before, but this story has been handed down to me from my great-grandmother that when the Indians were here, a white man came through and we killed him. But he had gold in his saddlebags.’ They decided to make trinkets out of that gold, but the chief told them not to wear the gold trinkets because if a white man saw them wearing them, they would know they had killed this guy. So they buried the gold in the rocks of Cherry Creek.

“He wanted to see those rocks, but there’s about 13 miles of them, so that gold is still buried in those rocks.” Zwegardt’s voice becomes animated. “These are the

kinds of things you find out if you just visit with people.”

The Native Americans who Zwegardt has taken through the area appreciate his efforts, he says. “Last year they invited me down to Colony, Oklahoma, and when I got down there, they gave me a blanket.” In appreciation for all Zwegardt had done for them, the chief also gave Zwegardt a beaded hat.

Our trip is nearly at an end now, so we leave Cherry Creek, the rugged canyons and yucca gradually giving way to gentler inclines and cropland. I am pensive now but thoroughly satisfied. I have seen the rich grasslands of the Flint Hills; the rugged woodlands of the Chautauqua Hills and the Ozarks; the western-movie Red Hills reminiscent of Rocky Mountain Foothills; the hazy, rolling Smoky Hills of central Kansas; and the vast stretches of shortgrass prairie on the high plains of western Kansas. Each has filled me with awe, yet I know there are other places hidden away in this great state, places that I have yet to explore. Each, undoubtedly, will have its own story to tell, if I can find the storyteller.

Tobias Zwegardt has given me a gift. It’s amazing the kinds of things you find out if you just visit with people. ♡

Fishing 2001 Forecast

Use this handy guide to find the fishing you desire. The 2001 Fishing Forecast is available in brochure form from the department's Pratt office, or you can access it from the department's web page at www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

Here's how it works. Data is collected by fisheries management biologists through annual test netting and electroshocking. (Not every lake is sampled each year, so some lakes are not included in the tables.) The data is separated into two impoundment categories — reservoirs (water bodies larger than 1,000 acres) and lakes (water bodies less than 1,000 acres) — because sampling on small lakes may not be comparable with that on larger reservoirs.

The forecast includes tables for 17 popular game fish species. Each is given a numerical ranking for **Density Rating**, **Preferred Rating**, **Lunker Rating**, **Largest Fish**, and **Biologist's Rating**.

The **Density Rating** is the number of fish, quality-sized or larger, sampled per unit of sampling effort. Quality size, listed in parentheses at the top of the column, is the length of fish generally considered acceptable to most anglers. It is different for each species. For example, a crappie longer than 8 inches is considered to be quality-sized, while a walleye longer than 15 inches is considered



to be quality-sized. Theoretically, the higher the **Density Rating**, the more quality-sized fish per surface acre in a lake, so a lake with a **Density Rating** of 30 would have twice as many quality-sized fish per acre than a lake with a **Density Rating** of 15.

The **Preferred Rating** identifies how many above-average-sized fish a lake contains. If big fish are more important to you, use the **Preferred Rating**. For example, a lake may have a high **Density Rating** for crappie, but few fish longer than 10 inches. Look for a lake with a higher **Preferred Rating** to target larger fish.

The **Lunker Rating** goes a step further, indicating which lakes have higher densities of lunker-sized fish. The lunker designation for each species is determined to be the size of fish most anglers consider a trophy. Some lakes may have a **Lunker Rating** of 0, but this doesn't

mean they have no lunker-sized fish. It just indicates that no lunker-sized fish were caught during sampling, and that lunker-sized fish may be less abundant than in lakes with a positive rating.

Use these ratings together to find lakes that provide the kind of angling opportunities you desire. A lake with a respectable **Density Rating** and a high **Preferred Rating** has the potential to provide good opportunities for both numbers and keeper-sized fish. If you're after trophy-sized fish, pay more attention to the **Lunker Rating**.

The **Biggest Fish** column lists the weight of the largest fish caught during sampling. This rating simply gives the angler confidence that truly big fish are present.

The **Biologist's Rating** adds the human touch. Each biologist reviews the data from annual sampling, then considers environmental conditions that may have affected those results. They also consider the previous year's data, then provide their opinion of the quality of opportunity with a **P** (poor), **F** (fair), **G** (good), or **E** (excellent) rating.

Once you have decided on a lake, consult the *2001 Fishing Regulations Summary* for length and creel limits, as well as other fishing regulations. Fishing regulations pamphlets are available from all KDWP offices or wherever licenses are sold.

Good luck!

BLUEGILL					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>6")	Preferred Rating (>8")	Lunker Rating (>10")	Bio Rating
LACYGNE	0.3	55.1	0.0	0.0	E
PERRY	0.4	21.9	0.0	0.0	F
LAKES					
ATCHISON CL #1	0.4	258.0	0.0	0.0	G
ATCHISON CL #3	0.5	180.0	5.0	0.0	G
RICHMOND CL	0.3	150.0	0.0	0.0	E
HOLTON-ELKHORN LAKE	0.4	93.3	2.2	0.0	G
JONES PARK MIDDLE POND	0.3	90.9	0.0	0.0	G
MELVERN RIVER POND	0.5	89.3	3.6	0.0	F
BROWN SFL	0.6	81.1	18.9	0.0	G
EMPORIA-PETER PAN PARK	0.3	76.0	0.0	0.0	G
PLEASANTON EAST LAKE	0.8	70.8	6.6	0.9	E
NEW STRAWN CL	0.5	64.1	5.1	0.0	G
GARNETT CL-SOUTH	0.4	62.5	0.0	0.0	G
NEBO SFL	0.4	59.2	0.8	0.0	G
ATCHISON SFL	0.5	58.7	5.0	0.0	G
NEOSHO SFL	0.3	49.3	0.0	0.0	G
GARNETT CL-NORTH	0.4	49.0	0.0	0.0	G
BOURBON CO. LAKE	0.4	47.2	0.8	0.0	G
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LK	0.5	44.8	2.9	0.0	G
YATES CENTER-S. OWL LK	0.6	44.0	10.0	0.0	P

CHANNEL CATFISH					
IMPOUNDMENT LAKES	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>16")	Preferred Rating (>24")	Lunker Rating (>28")	Bio Rating
BOURBON SFL	12.3	52.0	9.0	3.0	E
PRATT CO. LAKE	10.7	45.0	6.0	1.0	E
LEBO CL	5.4	37.0	2.0	0.0	E
PLEASANTON EAST LAKE	7.3	37.0	9.0	0.0	G
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK	11.6	36.0	3.0	0.5	G
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LK	15.1	32.5	4.5	2.0	G
SABETHA CL	5.0	24.0	0.0	0.0	G
WOODSON SFL	27.0	24.0	11.0	4.0	G
CENTRALIA CL	10.2	23.0	16.0	7.0	G
CHANUTE CL	11.4	23.0	4.0	2.0	E
PLEASANTON WEST LAKE	4.4	3.0	0.0	0.0	G
ESKRIDGE-LK WABAUNSEE	5.3	22.0	1.0	0.0	G
BARBER SFL-LOWER	6.6	21.0	1.0	0.0	G
BUTLER SFL	7.9	20.0	3.0	0.0	E
CARBONDALE CL - EAST	11.4	18.5	7.0	2.0	E
EUREKA CL	5.3	18.0	0.5	0.0	E
YATES CENTER CL-NEW	11.5	18.0	5.0	1.0	E
CLARK SFL	10.1	16.0	3.0	0.5	G
JAWHAWK BOY SCOUT LAKE	7.9	16.0	5.0	0.0	G
FORD SFL	7.7	15.0	1.0	0.0	G
HERINGTON CL-NEW	7.1	14.0	3.0	1.0	F
MELVERN RIVER POND	18.8	14.0	5.0	1.0	G
SHERIDAN SFL	4.2	14.0	0.0	0.0	G

REDEAR SUNFISH					
IMPOUNDMENT LAKES	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>7")	Preferred Rating (>9")	Lunker Rating (>11")	Bio Rating
CHERRYVALE CL - TANKO	0.6	16.0	2.0	0.0	G
NEOSHO SFL	0.5	11.0	0.0	0.0	G
MEADE STATE LAKE	1.1	11.0	9.0	0.0	E
COWLEY SFL	0.8	9.0	5.0	0.0	G
MONTGOMERY SFL	0.5	7.5	0.0	0.0	E
WOODSON SFL	0.8	7.0	6.0	0.0	G
LEBO CL	0.5	6.0	1.0	0.0	E
OSAWATOMIE CL	0.0	6.0	0.0	0.0	G
LEAVENWORTH SFL	0.8	5.5	1.5	0.0	G

FLATHEAD CATFISH					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>16")	Preferred Rating (>24")	Lunker Rating (>28")	Bio Rating
WEBSTER	23.3	8.0	6.5	2.5	E
KIRWIN	15.4	2.5	2.0	1.5	G
MILFORD	25.9	2.2	1.0	0.4	G
SEBELIUS	15.4	2.0	2.0	1.5	G
BIG HILL	3.8	1.0	0.0	0.0	G
ELK CITY	3.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	F
PERRY	18.2	1.0	0.8	0.5	F
TORONTO	8.4	0.8	0.3	0.0	E
TUTTLE CREEK	7.6	0.8	0.3	0.0	G
CHENEY	11.8	0.5	0.5	0.3	P
COUNCIL GROVE	3.8	0.5	0.0	0.0	F
HILLSDALE	14.6	0.5	0.5	0.3	F
LOVEWELL	6.8	0.5	0.2	0.0	F
CEDAR BLUFF	16.4	1.8	0.4	0.8	G
GLEN ELDER	9.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	F
WILSON	19.0	0.3	0.3	0.3	F
EL DORADO	1.9	0.3	0.0	0.0	G
MARION	3.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	G
LAKES					
LEBO CL	3.7	4.0	0.0	0.0	G
CHANUTE CL	10.6	2.0	1.0	0.0	P
HERINGTON CL-OLD	11.8	2.0	1.0	1.0	F
WINFIELD CL	2.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	G
BROWN SFL	10.6	1.0	1.0	1.0	F
CLARK SFL	7.2	1.0	0.5	0.0	P
HERINGTON CL-NEW	11.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	F
HORTON-MISSION LAKE	20.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	F
KIOWA SFL	3.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	P
MADISON CL	4.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	P

CHANNEL CATFISH					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>16")	Preferred Rating (>24")	Lunker Rating (>28")	Bio Rating
SEBELIUS	12.9	25.0	14.0	3.5	E
KANOPOLIS	10.8	13.8	1.0	0.3	E
COFFEY CO. LAKE	7.9	11.1	0.1	0.0	E
ELK CITY	5.3	11.0	0.5	0.0	G
CHENEY	7.4	8.8	1.0	0.0	G
GLEN ELDER	11.5	8.5	1.5	0.3	G
MILFORD	12.2	8.4	0.8	0.2	G
PERRY	8.4	7.8	0.8	0.0	G
CLINTON	14.1	5.8	1.0	0.5	G
TUTTLE CREEK	13.3	5.0	0.5	0.3	G
COUNCIL GROVE	7.7	4.0	0.5	0.0	G
KIRWIN	25.7	4.0	2.5	2.5	G
MARION	8.1	4.0	1.0	0.3	E
BIG HILL	10.1	3.3	0.3	0.3	G
TORONTO	7.7	3.0	1.3	0.3	G

LARGEMOUTH BASS					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>12")	Preferred Rating (>15")	Lunker Rating (>20")	Bio Rating
LACYGNE	8.9	176.9	133.3	16.7	E
SEBELIUS	5.5	170.3	39.5	1.0	E
CEDAR BLUFF	6.0	56.8	29.9	1.3	E
BIG HILL	6.3	39.3	24.2	3.8	E
WEBSTER	5.5	45.7	32.6	0.9	G
KIRWIN	3.9	38.8	25.1	0.0	G
TORONTO	3.9	14.0	7.0	0.0	F
TUTTLE CREEK	3.4	13.8	7.7	0.0	F
WILSON	5.3	13.0	9.1	0.5	G
MELVERN	3.8	10.7	8.4	0.0	F
EL DORADO	3.4	10.1	3.8	0.0	F
KANOPOLIS	4.2	8.7	6.7	0.7	F
GLEN ELDER	4.1	8.2	4.7	0.0	P
HILLSDALE	6.2	8.2	3.3	0.9	G
MARION	3.6	7.9	3.5	0.0	F
FALL RIVER	3.0	7.5	3.7	0.0	P
PERRY	5.5	7.1	4.3	0.1	F
MILFORD	5.8	6.1	4.1	0.2	F
CLINTON	4.6	6.2	1.8	0.0	P
COFFEY CO. LAKE	2.6	2.9	1.2	0.0	P
LAKES					
RICHMOND CL	3.1	325.0	112.5	0.0	E
NEW STRAWN CL	4.2	228.2	61.5	0.0	E
LACROSSE-WARREN STONE	3.4	147.1	41.2	0.0	G
PLAINVILLE LAKE	6.1	145.5	81.8	3.0	G
LOGAN CL	5.8	138.9	33.3	2.8	G
SHERIDAN SFL	5.8	132.0	12.0	1.3	G
SCRANTON CL	4.6	114.3	28.6	7.1	G
BUTLER SFL	3.6	111.2	55.0	0.0	G
BROWN SFL	1.9	108.9	2.2	0.0	G
ALMA CL	3.0	98.0	60.0	0.0	G
SEVERY CITY LAKE	3.5	91.3	21.7	0.0	E
OSAWATOMIE CL	5.7	87.3	7.9	3.2	G
ROOKS STATE LAKE	4.1	84.4	44.4	0.0	G
GARDNER CL	6.0	83.2	60.0	8.4	G
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LK	5.1	82.7	4.0	0.0	G
LEAVENWORTH SFL	4.8	82.3	5.0	0.0	G

SAUGEYE					
IMPOUNDMENT LAKES	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>14")	Preferred Rating (>18")	Lunker Rating (>22")	Bio Rating
ESKRIDGE-LAKE WABAUNSEE	5.0	22.0	16.0	9.0	G
WASHINGTON SFL	7.1	21.0	10.0	6.0	G
HARVEY CO. LAKE-EAST	1.9	19.0	0.0	0.0	G
SHERIDAN SFL	3.2	19.0	1.0	0.0	G
PARSONS CL	4.1	18.0	5.0	0.5	G
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	4.4	10.5	6.5	2.0	G
GEARY SFL	3.5	7.0	2.0	0.5	G
BOURBON SFL	2.4	6.0	3.0	0.0	G
CHASE SFL	2.8	6.0	1.0	0.0	F
WELLINGTON CL	4.3	5.0	1.0	1.0	F
EUREKA CL	3.5	4.5	3.0	0.0	G
SEDAN CL-OLD	1.7	3.0	0.0	0.0	G
LEAVENWORTH SFL	5.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	P

SMALLMOUTH BASS					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Bio Rating
WILSON	2.1	14.5	3.5	0.0	E
COFFEY CO. LAKE	3.9	14.0	7.5	0.7	E
BIG HILL	2.8	9.5	4.3	0.5	E
GLEN ELDER	1.9	9.4	3.5	0.0	F
MELVERN	1.9	5.3	3.8	0.0	G
CEDAR BLUFF	1.7	3.3	4.0	0.0	E
MILFORD	2.8	1.8	0.2	0.2	G
EL DORADO	1.5	0.8	0.3	0.0	P
WEBSTER	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.0	F
LAKES					
JEFFREY ENGY-MAKE UP LK	1.2	7.0	1.0	0.0	G
GRIDLEY CL	1.3	4.4	3.3	0.0	F
FT. SCOTT COM. COLLEGE PD	1.1	3.7	0.0	0.0	F
FT. SCOTT-GUNN PK E. PD-FERN	0.7	3.4	0.0	0.0	F
LEBO CL	0.7	2.6	0.0	0.0	G
PLEASANTON WEST LAKE	1.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	F
WOODSON SFL	1.4	1.2	1.2	0.0	P

SAUGER					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Bio Rating
PERRY	2.2	11.3	6.8	1.0	G
MELVERN	2.4	4.7	4.0	1.2	F

SAUGEYE					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>14")	Preferred Rating (>18")	Lunker Rating (>22")	Bio Rating
SEBELIUS	8.5	35.0	8.0	3.0	E
KANOPOLIS	9.6	27.7	9.3	3.5	E
COUNCIL GROVE	6.2	15.5	10.5	2.5	G
TUTTLE CREEK	1.8	7.7	0.0	0.0	G
GLEN ELDER	5.0	1.3	1.0	0.2	P

SPOTTED BASS					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>11")	Preferred Rating (>14")	Lunker Rating (>17")	Bio Rating
MELVERN	1.8	10.7	3.1	0.0	F
CEDAR BLUFF	1.6	6.4	0.6	0.0	E
GLEN ELDER	2.5	3.5	2.4	0.0	P
SEBELIUS	2.9	5.1	4.1	0.5	F
EL DORADO	1.4	1.5	0.8	0.0	F
MILFORD	2.4	1.4	0.6	0.0	F
WILSON	1.4	0.8	0.2	0.0	P
LAKES					
WILSON SFL	2.6	65.2	28.8	3.0	E
BOURBON SFL	3.7	53.8	3.8	1.3	E
CRAWFORD SFL	1.7	14.3	4.3	0.0	F
EMPORIA - LAKE KAHOLA	1.7	11.0	1.0	0.0	G
CHANUTE CL	1.3	7.8	0.0	0.0	P
EUREKA CL	1.3	7.2	1.2	0.0	F
GARNETT-CEDAR CREEK LK	1.4	5.8	3.8	0.0	P

WALLEYE					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>15")	Preferred Rating (>20")	Lunker Rating (>25")	Bio Rating
CHENEY	5.4	46.5	7.0	0.0	E
KIRWIN	7.3	41.5	4.0	2.0	E
COFFEY CO. LAKE	4.0	23.0	0.1	0.0	E
HILLSDALE	8.8	20.8	2.3	1.3	G
MARION	6.3	17.3	7.0	0.8	G
WEBSTER	8.3	14.5	5.0	2.0	G
MILFORD	6.2	13.0	7.0	1.6	G
CEDAR BLUFF	5.2	11.5	0.8	0.3	G
EL DORADO	7.3	11.0	0.3	0.3	F
LOVEWELL	7.0	8.8	1.5	0.8	F
GLEN ELDER	9.8	7.5	2.3	0.9	F
WILSON	6.5	6.1	0.9	0.7	G
CLINTON	6.4	4.3	2.0	0.0	F
MELVERN	5.2	3.7	1.3	0.0	G
KANOPOLIS	6.2	3.3	2.3	0.3	F
SEBELIUS	2.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	P
BIG HILL	6.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	P
LAKES					
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LK	4.6	37.5	1.5	0.0	G
EMPORIA - LAKE KAHOLA	1.6	27.0	0.0	0.0	G
HERINGTON CL-NEW	1.8	24.0	0.0	0.0	G
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	2.8	19.5	0.5	0.0	G
WINFIELD CL	6.3	15.5	0.5	0.5	F
GRIDLEY CL	1.8	14.0	0.0	0.0	F
LEBO CL	1.7	14.0	0.0	0.0	F
ALMA CL	6.3	13.0	1.0	1.0	F
JEFFREY ENGY-MAKE UP LK	9.6	12.0	8.0	2.0	G
HOLTON-BANNER CREEK LK	2.2	11.0	0.0	0.0	G
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #2	4.4	11.0	2.0	0.0	F
WOODSON SFL	3.5	9.0	1.0	0.0	F
LEAVENWORTH SFL	3.7	8.5	2.0	0.0	G
CLARK SFL	3.3	7.5	0.5	0.0	G
ATCHISON SFL	7.4	7.0	5.0	3.0	F
PAOLA CL	8.6	7.0	4.0	2.0	F
JEWELL SFL	6.5	6.5	5.5	1.0	F
BARBER SFL-LOWER	5.3	5.0	1.0	0.0	G
PRATT CO. LAKE	4.0	5.0	1.0	0.0	F
SHAWNEE SFL	1.7	5.0	0.0	0.0	F
CENTRALIA CL	7.1	4.0	3.0	2.0	F

WHITE BASS					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>9")	Preferred Rating (>12")	Lunker Rating (>15")	Bio Rating
PERRY	1.4	36.0	3.0	0.0	G
LOVEWELL	1.8	35.5	25.3	0.3	E
CHENEY	1.6	33.5	24.8	0.8	E
TUTTLE CREEK	3.0	33.5	6.5	2.5	G
GLEN ELDER	1.8	28.3	15.9	0.2	E
EL DORADO	1.4	24.0	10.5	0.0	G
COUNCIL GROVE	2.1	22.5	12.5	0.5	G
MILFORD	2.4	22.0	11.2	0.4	G
BIG HILL	1.8	21.3	9.7	0.7	G
CLINTON	1.8	21.0	11.5	1.5	G
KANOPOLIS	2.7	20.3	6.3	0.3	G
CEDAR BLUFF	2.1	34.8	17.0	1.8	E
COFFEY CO. LAKE	1.4	24.7	11.9	0.9	E

WHITE BASS					
IMPOUNDMENT LAKES	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>9")	Preferred Rating (>12")	Lunker Rating (>15")	Bio Rating
CLARK SFL	2.1	89.0	38.5	2.0	G
HERINGTON CL-NEW	1.2	56.0	36.0	0.0	E
FORT SCOTT CL	3.5	42.5	40.5	18.5	G
JEFFREY -AUX. MAKEUP LK	1.4	42.5	39.0	0.5	F
JEFFREY ENGY-MAKE UP LK	1.3	30.0	13.0	0.0	G
WINFIELD CL	1.2	22.0	16.0	0.0	F
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	1.3	19.0	11.0	0.0	F
HERINGTON CL-OLD	2.2	18.0	17.0	2.0	F
HARVEY CO. LAKE-EAST	2.0	17.0	16.0	4.0	G
CENTRALIA CL	1.1	16.0	4.0	0.0	F
PAOLA CL	2.5	11.5	9.5	2.5	F
CHASE SFL	0.9	9.0	7.0	0.0	F
YATES CENTER CL-NEW	1.1	6.0	6.0	0.0	P
WILSON SFL	0.9	3.5	2.5	0.0	F
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.0	P
GARDNER CL	2.9	1.0	1.0	0.5	P
OSAGE SFL	1.8	1.0	1.0	0.5	P
SEDGWICK CO.-LAKE AFTON	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.0	P
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LK	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.0	P

STRIPER					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>20")	Preferred Rating (>30")	Lunker Rating (>35")	Bio Rating
WILSON	10.8	7.6	0.3	0.0	E
CHENEY	19.8	1.5	0.3	0.3	F
CLINTON	4.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	P

WHITE CRAPPIE					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Bio Rating
HILLSDALE	0.8	50.6	12.9	0.4	G
PERRY	1.6	38.1	15.1	0.8	G
COUNCIL GROVE	1.5	26.3	15.8	1.6	G
CEDAR BLUFF	1.6	21.5	12.3	1.9	E
FALL RIVER	2.2	18.8	5.6	1.5	G
CLINTON	1.5	16.5	6.6	0.7	F
SEBELIUS	1.3	14.1	10.6	1.4	G
TORONTO	1.7	7.3	7.1	2.9	G
TUTTLE CREEK	1.3	6.4	1.5	0.7	G
COFFEY CO. LAKE	2.0	5.1	2.5	1.9	G
BIG HILL	0.9	4.9	1.3	0.3	G
KANOPOLIS	1.4	4.5	2.1	0.4	G
KIRWIN	1.7	4.3	3.2	0.9	F
EL DORADO	1.0	4.0	1.7	0.1	F
GLEN ELDER	1.8	2.0	1.4	0.4	P
WEBSTER	1.0	1.3	0.8	0.1	F
WILSON	1.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	F
LAKES					
LOGAN CL	1.6	95.8	32.0	4.8	G
JEWELL SFL	0.9	50.9	8.6	0.7	F
PLAINVILLE LAKE	1.4	50.5	44.3	11.5	G
OTTAWA SFL	3.2	44.5	14.0	0.5	E
SHERIDAN SFL	1.0	43.8	29.5	2.8	E

WHITE CRAPPIE					
IMPOUNDMENT LAKES	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Bio Rating
HOLTON-PRAIRIE LAKE	1.4	41.3	6.0	1.0	G
SABETHA CL	1.0	34.3	5.3	0.8	G
OLATHE-CEDAR LAKE	1.4	33.0	3.0	1.5	F
CHNR	1.0	4.7	0.3	0.3	P
ANTHONY CL	1.0	6.5	2.5	0.5	P
JEFFREY ENGY-MAKE UP LK	0.8	29.8	16.5	0.5	G
MOLINE NEW CL	1.4	27.5	17.0	2.5	E
POTTAWATOMIE SFL #1	0.9	23.0	1.5	0.3	F
CHANUTE CL	0.8	21.0	3.0	0.0	F
HORTON-MISSION LAKE	1.5	20.5	5.0	3.3	F
CHERRYVALE CL - TANKO	0.9	20.0	16.5	0.0	G
EUREKA CL	1.6	19.3	0.3	0.3	G
SEDAN CL-OLD	1.4	17.3	2.5	0.8	G
GARDNER CL	0.6	14.0	2.3	0.0	F
EMPORIA-ALEXANDER PD	0.4	9.0	2.0	0.0	F
CHASE SFL	0.8	7.8	6.0	0.5	F
SHAWNEE SFL	1.0	7.5	3.5	0.5	F
ATCHISON CL #3	0.8	7.0	7.0	1.0	F
JO CO.-HERITAGE PK LK	1.1	7.0	3.7	0.7	F

BLACK CRAPPIE					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Bio Rating
MOLINE NEW CL	0.8	4.3	3.5	0.0	P
HOLTON - BANNER CREEK LK	0.8	3.9	1.6	0.0	F
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	0.5	3.2	0.2	0.0	F
FORT SCOTT CL	1.2	3.0	2.9	0.8	F
SABETHA - PONY CREEK LK	0.8	2.8	2.0	0.0	F
WILSON SFL	0.6	2.7	1.3	0.0	F
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LK	0.4	2.5	0.0	0.0	P
HOLTON-ELKHORN LAKE	1.2	2.5	2.0	0.5	F
OSAWATOMIE-BEAVER LAKE	0.5	2.5	0.0	0.0	P
SHAWNEE SFL	0.5	2.5	0.5	0.0	F
EMPORIA - LAKE KAHOLA	0.8	2.3	0.8	0.0	F

BLACK CRAPPIE					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>8")	Preferred Rating (>10")	Lunker Rating (>12")	Bio Rating
WEBSTER	1.3	8.6	7.2	3.6	F
SEBELIUS	1.3	5.9	3.0	0.8	F
KIRWIN	1.8	3.3	2.4	1.1	F
GLEN ELDER	1.4	2.6	0.6	0.3	P
HILLSDALE	0.5	1.1	0.1	0.0	F
KANOPOLIS	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.1	F
CEDAR BLUFF	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.0	F
PERRY	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	F
BIG HILL	0.6	0.3	0.1	0.0	P
CLINTON	0.8	0.3	0.1	0.0	P
WILSON	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	F
EL DORADO	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	F
TUTTLE CREEK	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	P
LAKES					
PLAINVILLE LAKE	0.5	38.0	0.3	0.0	F
HOLTON-PRAIRIE LAKE	0.8	35.0	0.8	0.0	G
ALMA CL	0.8	30.0	3.5	0.5	G
POTTAWATOMIE CO. LAKE	0.5	30.0	0.0	0.0	G
LOGAN CL	0.4	25.0	0.0	0.0	F
CENTRALIA CL	0.6	21.0	1.7	0.0	G
NEBO SFL	0.4	18.5	0.0	0.0	G
LEAVENWORTH SFL	0.5	8.2	0.3	0.0	G
BOURBON SFL	1.2	16.8	9.3	1.0	E
GRAHAM CO.-ANTELOPE LK	1.4	15.8	12.8	2.5	E
BROWN SFL	0.8	13.5	5.8	0.0	G
ATCHISON SFL	0.5	10.0	0.8	0.0	G
GARDNER CL	0.5	8.0	0.8	0.0	F
COWLEY SFL	0.5	7.5	0.5	0.0	F
ATCHISON CL #23	1.0	7.3	6.7	0.3	G
WYANDOTTE CO. LAKE	0.6	5.6	3.3	0.0	F
SHAWNEE CO.-LK SHAWNEE	0.6	5.3	1.8	0.0	F
CHANUTE-HIGHLAND PK PD	0.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	F
NEOSHO SFL	0.6	5.0	0.3	0.0	G

WIPER					
IMPOUNDMENT RESERVOIRS	Biggest Fish (lbs.)	Density Rating (>12")	Preferred Rating (>15")	Lunker Rating (>20")	Bio Rating
WEBSTER	15.8	49.5	49.0	21.0	E
SEBELIUS	9.7	42.0	10.5	2.0	E
CHENEY	4.5	20.5	10.3	1.3	G
COFFEY CO. LAKE	4.1	12.0	12.0	5.3	E
LOVEWELL	5.8	11.7	10.3	0.7	F
KANOPOLIS	3.8	6.8	5.0	1.0	F
MILFORD	11.9	4.8	3.6	1.2	F
KIRWIN	4.3	4.5	2.0	0.5	G
CEDAR BLUFF	7.0	6.3	6.3	5.5	E
MARION	4.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	F
LAKES					
GREAT BEND-STONE PARK LK	3.5	91.0	19.0	0.0	G
GRIDLEY CL	4.4	77.0	52.0	5.0	E
JETMORE CL	6.9	68.0	22.0	12.0	G
SN CO.-LAKE SHAWNEE	4.3	33.0	6.5	1.0	G
JO CO. SHAWNEE MISSION LK	5.0	26.0	10.0	3.0	G
JEFFREY ENGY-MAKE UP LK	8.8	25.0	16.0	8.0	G
LEBO CL	2.1	25.0	15.0	0.0	E
STERLING CL	7.4	25.0	25.0	15.0	E
MIDDLE CREEK SFL	3.4	21.5	8.5	0.5	G
OSAGE CL	1.8	17.0	1.0	0.0	F
PAOLA CL	5.3	14.0	11.0	7.5	G
DOUGLAS CO.-LONESTAR LK	4.4	13.0	1.0	0.5	G
GARNETT CL-NORTH	5.1	13.0	9.0	7.0	F
COLDWATER LAKE	2.9	12.0	9.0	0.0	F
SHERIDAN SFL	3.2	10.0	8.0	0.0	F
WINFIELD CL	3.3	8.5	8.5	0.0	F
ANTHONY CL	2.7	8.0	1.5	0.0	F
WICHITA-WATSON PARK LK	1.3	8.0	1.0	0.0	F
OSAGE SFL	4.2	6.5	2.0	0.0	P
CHANUTE CL	1.1	6.0	0.0	0.0	F
PLEASANTON EAST LAKE	1.5	6.0	1.0	0.0	F
WOODSON SFL	3.4	3.0	3.0	1.0	G
EUREKA CL	1.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	G
KIOWA SFL	0.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	F
ELLIS CL	1.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	F
HERINGTON CL-NEW	3.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	F
HORTON-MISSION LAKE	7.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	P
PRATT CO. LAKE	3.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	P
WELLINGTON CL	3.1	1.0	1.0	0.0	P
YATES CENTER CL-NEW	1.1	1.0	0.0	0.0	F



The Houses That Franklin Built

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

Residents and visitors to the small town of Clinton enjoy and benefit from one man's labor of love and the unique birds he has built homes for.

A peninsula juts into Clinton Reservoir where stands the tiny town for which the lake is named. Surrounded by water, the island setting provides ideal habitat for bloodthirsty insects. It used to be that mosquitoes were a problem for the town's 70 residents. Not anymore. Now, mosquitoes are rare, thanks to a ten-year project that the retired instigator jokingly calls "a form of insanity." Franklin Bidinger brought purple martins to town.

We're not talking about a few birds here. Sure, purple martins had nested in Clinton before. In fact, Bidinger's dad kept a martin house occupied by a few pairs of the friendly fliers for 20 consecutive years. But then, in the odd manner often reported by those who keep

purple martins, the birds failed to return when their benefactor died. Though Bidinger cleaned and prepared the nest house in his father's absence, it remained empty and was never used again. The son, who lived just up the street from his dad's place, decided to try at his own home.

It began simply. Bidinger put up a single aluminum martin house in the open yard of what had once been the Clinton School. Interestingly, he had helped to build the small schoolhouse in 1942, when just 16 years old. "I was a gofer," he said, "someone to carry tools and lumber. It was my first paying job besides farming, and they withheld Social Security from my paycheck. I went to the boss and asked why some of my money was

missing. He said, 'that's to take care of you when you get old.' Wouldn't you know it? The school was converted to the house I lived in at retirement when I got my first social security check."

The martin house failed to attract nesters the first year and for the next six years after that. It was eight years before the first pair of purple martins moved in, and then the dominant male prevented other martins from sharing the spacious quarters. Even so, Bidinger was excited that the birds had come at last. The next year, he erected several new martin houses to go with the first, and was rewarded with six pairs of birds. During that winter, he read that martins like to nest in hollow gourds, so he prepared and hung a number of these natural nest

sites along with his martin houses. The following spring, he gained an extra 20 pairs of birds, making a total of 26 martin families. By now, he was on his way to becoming a nationally recognized martin landlord and an expert on the species.

“Purple martins are the only bird species almost entirely dependent upon man for nesting spaces,” Bidinger says. “Even so, they are fairly particular. You need to erect a nesting structure about 12-14 feet above the ground and within 100 feet of your house. The birds like an easy approach path, so keep it at least 40 feet from the nearest tree limbs. Don’t plant flowers or vegetation around the nest pole, since the birds are wary of places where predators might hide.”

Using these parameters, Bidinger continued to add to his martin houses during the past decade. Now, 150 pairs of martins nest in his provisions at Clinton. The large numbers of birds attract groups of people to view them. During the nesting season, which lasts from late April until August, it’s common for evening visitors to sit in a row of chairs beside the nest houses and watch the show, as hundreds of purple martins swoop and dive. The colony has become a local gathering point, where Clinton residents and passing travelers may visit, learn about the birds, and eat the cakes and cookies that Bidinger’s wife, Bethany, provides. The site has become famous since being featured in *Audubon* and other magazines. Douglas County has also officially declared Bidinger’s home as the “Purple Martin Sanctuary of Douglas County.”

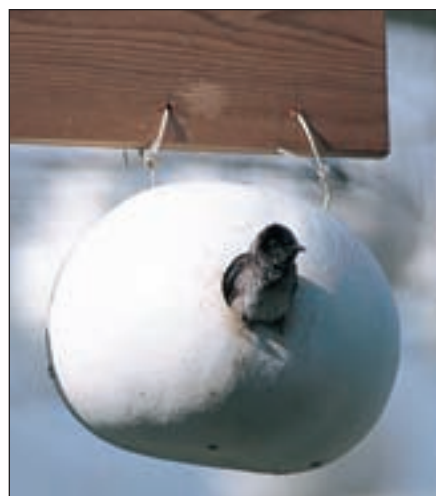
Purple martins are appealing for a variety of reasons. First, they are voracious insect eaters, keeping a home and garden situation virtually free of pests. They catch their prey on the wing and are impressive



Purple martins arrive in Clinton by mid-March. Known for voracious appetites, they can keep entire neighborhoods free of insect pests. Most return to the region where they were hatched.

aerialists, entertaining to watch. They are vocal birds, adding their natural sounds to a city or country landscape. They are friendly and allow close viewing. Beyond that, their natural history provides an interesting look at a species that travels between two hemispheres.

Purple martins overwinter in Brazil or other parts of South America, flying 4,000 miles to



Gourds provide inexpensive nest houses, superior to commercial models.

return to nesting sites throughout the eastern United States. Northward migration varies with weather, but the birds usually return to Kansas by mid-March. Migration occurs in several phases. Older birds, which range up to 5-7 years old, return first. These rest for several weeks before building nests and raising young. Later flights of younger martins arrive during the next four to six weeks. About 10 percent of yearling birds nest in the colony where they fledged, with the remaining birds establishing new territories within a 50-mile radius of where they were hatched. This provides new opportunities for homeowners wanting to attract the birds.

There is a myth that purple martins send advance scouts to find good nesting sites, but Bidinger says this isn’t so. “Migrating martins sometimes stop to rest as they return to their traditional homes. They might visit your martin box and stay for several days, feeding and gaining strength before moving on. These aren’t scouting — they’re just resting,” he says. “If they don’t

stay, they had somewhere else to go."

Martins construct their nests with mud and grasses, so Bidinger provides a mud furrow and straw near his nest houses. Each morning, he waters the soil to provide easy access to mud, and dozens of the birds daily utilize these raw materials during the nest-building season.

Once nesting begins, the female lays an egg a day for four to six days. Both parents take turns with incubation. Hatching occurs in 15-16 days. Young birds stay in the nest for about 28 days, during which time both parents feed and care for them. At first, the adults feed their tiny young by regurgitating small insects into their crops. Later, the nestlings are fed large insects. "Martins really like to catch dragonflies from the lake," Bidinger says. "At the nest boxes, they pull the wings off before feeding their young. The ground usually glitters with shiny dragonfly wings by the time the young birds fledge."

Due to staggered arrival times, nesting continues over a several-month period. However, when the first group of fledglings leaves the nest, there is a major martin celebration. "It's very noisy, and there is lots of activity," Bidinger says of his favorite time. "The old ones make the young ones fly. They feed them for several days, but the young birds quickly learn to hunt on their own."

As successive groups of young are fledged, they and their parents move to communal roost sites that may contain up to 100,000 birds, depending on locale. Within a week or so, they begin the long migration southward to winter homes.

"We used to have many pairs that

remained until early September," says Bidinger, "but now most of our birds leave in mid-July." According to Louise Chambers at the Purple Martin Conservation Association in Edinboro, Pa., this may be explained by the increasing percentage of older birds that occupy Bidinger's houses, arriving to nest earlier than average and also leaving the same way. Younger nesters, typically late to arrive, tend to stay longer.

Bidinger believes that much of his success attracting purple martins depends on the use of gourds as nesting spaces. Sparrows commonly fight for room in martin houses, building large, trashy nests that crowd out desirable tenants. A martin landlord must constantly remove these nests to enjoy greatest success with the intended birds. At the same time, territorial disputes can occur among the martins themselves. Generally in a commercial martin house, the male bird must stay in a nest hole other than its own, since a family of birds is too large for one space to accommodate

both parents. This means that the typical wood or aluminum house will seldom enjoy more than 50 percent nesting occupancy by purple martins.

Gourds, however, are large enough to accommodate an entire family. Individual nests are separated by greater distance, and gourds sway with the breeze. Sparrows do not like a swaying nest site, reducing potential competition. Gourds also allow more martins to nest in small areas without fighting.

In the beginning, Bidinger tried to grow his own gourds, but numbers of hungry martins made it nearly impossible to achieve necessary insect pollination. The birds ate all the pollinators. Now, he obtains his gourds from a grower in Georgia, buying fruits of a particular size that have thick walls. The gourds are allowed to dry in the fields before harvest.

Bidinger prepares the raw gourds by first drilling a nest hole 2-1/8 inch in diameter. From this, a special tool allows the insides of the gourd to be scraped clean. Four



Martins are among the bird kingdom's most agile fliers. They eat only on the wing, which can create devastating problems in years when late cold snaps destroy flying insect populations.

5/16-inch holes are drilled in the gourd's bottom to allow drainage, and four more holes of equal size are placed at the top to allow aeration and hanger holes. The gourds are then soaked for an hour in a copper sulfate solution, which preserves them for up to 30 years. They are dried, given a coat of primer and two coats of white paint. White is a color that attracts purple martins and also reflects heat and sunlight. Each gourd also receives a teaspoon of sulphur to control mites during the nesting period.

By popular demand, Bidinger's gourds are sought by martin landlords throughout the U.S. nesting area. He sells ready-to-hang martin gourds for the modest fee of \$6 each, plus shipping. "I don't do this for the money — I do it to help others establish their own martin colonies," he says, noting that it's not a break-even proposition. "Right now, you can pay \$180 for a commercial martin house and go for years before you get a start. I send free plans that show how to attract martins for less than \$50 with my gourds. Bidinger sends free plans along with 25 free gourd seeds to anyone who requests and sends a self-addressed, stamped envelope. He has sent more than 1,200 such



Purple Martin Day draws a big crowd to the small town of Clinton. Participants can learn techniques for attracting nesters, share information, and purchase nest gourds.

letters nationwide.

In spite of his success attracting large numbers of purple martins, Bidinger has faced several challenges. "The weather can be a real killer," he explains, remembering several times when numbers of

birds died of starvation. "A late cold snap in March stops the insect hatches, and then martins have nothing to eat. Since they're already stressed from a long migration, they can live only about three days without food. Numbers of adult birds may gather in one gourd to stay warm, and one person told me he watched 27 martins come out of a single gourd after a cold spell. But they eat only on the wing and must catch flying insects. A few years ago, I picked

up 120 dead purple martins on the ground beneath my nest boxes. They simply starved to death."

A second problem was owls. As the martin colony grew, great horned owls became regular visitors. The predators used two methods of attack, either hanging by one foot to reach into a nestbox and snatch out parents and young, or standing atop the nestbox and grabbing young birds as they stuck out their heads. Bidinger devised an ingenious system to exclude the predators, boxing in nest houses or gourds with 2 X 4-inch mesh wire through which the martins could pass. This presented a slight obstacle for nest builders, since stiff grasses and twigs could not pass through the wires. For this reason, Bidinger supplies soft straw that the birds can utilize for nesting.

All nesting houses and gourds are now hung on pulleys that allow them to be lowered for easy cleaning. The boxes are stored in their lowered positions throughout the winter, and are regularly used as winter quarters by many species of birds.



The Bidinger's efforts have earned Clinton the official title of "Purple Martin Sanctuary of Douglas County."

Bidinger continues to improve his techniques, and willingly shares his knowledge with other birders from across the country. He and Bethany have hosted several popular “purple martin days,” where hundreds of visitors have gained valuable information on attracting and keeping purple martins. The event will be held again this year on April 29 at the Bidinger’s home in Clinton.

Besides these open houses, there are daily calls and visits to Bidinger’s gourd shop. One recent call produced a surprising coincidence for Bidinger, who in his youth played on a men’s fastpitch softball team that made it to the national finals in Clearwater, FL. “I got a call from a man in Lake Charles, La., wanting to buy some martin gourds. We had played Lake Charles in the championship game in Florida, and I mentioned playing in that game as a catcher. It’s hard to believe, but it turned out that he was the catcher for the other team in

the very same game! He ordered some gourds, and we’ve talked several times since then.”

Another interesting recent visit occurred when a number of Amish-Mennonite families from southern Missouri traveled to Clinton to obtain information about attracting martins. They ran a large turkey operation, and flies were a major problem. They arrived on a bus owned by one of the families, had a picnic in Bidinger’s yard, and studied his system for keeping martins. Then they purchased gourds and returned home. Later, Bidinger learned that they had established a colony of martins and greatly reduced their fly problem.

“We visit with interesting people from all over the country,” Bidinger says. “Some of our contacts come from the Purple Martin Conservation Association, where we keep up with new information. We’re always glad to help new martin enthusiasts, but we tell them it takes some work. Martins are

becoming a status symbol in some areas, and there are people who simply want to ‘buy’ a new martin colony. It never works that way.”

As the Bidingers continue to enjoy the pleasant sights and sounds of their purple martins, they grow even closer to the Kansas outdoors. “We love nature,” Bidinger says. “And sitting to watch in the evenings with visitors and friends is always special. The birds have given to us in many ways, and we always miss them when they leave.”

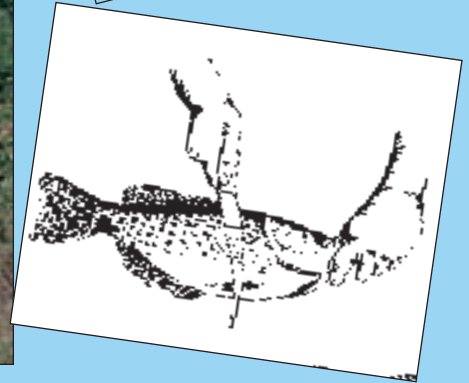
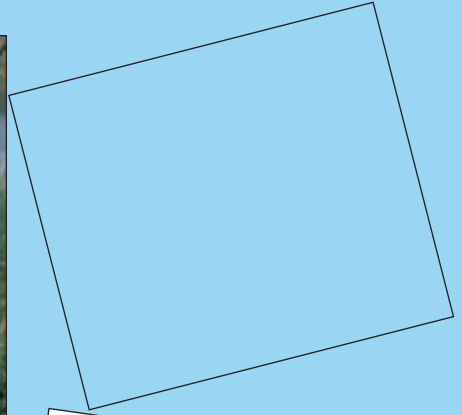
Truly, Bidinger’s purple martins make Clinton a special place. ♡

For more information on purple martins, free plans, or free gourd seeds, contact Franklin Bidinger, 607 N. 1190 Rd, Lawrence, KS, 66047 (785)748-9820. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for materials.



Thick-walled gourds of particular size are needed for purple martin houses. Bidinger orders gourds from Georgia, then finishes them in a time-consuming process that includes primer and two coats of white paint. He sells the ready-to-hang gourds for \$6 each.

Let's Catch



Crappie!

text by Leo Shell
photos by Mike Blair

Crappie is the most popular fish in the United States — especially in the spring. Most anglers place it at the top of the list for good eating, and during spring months, crappie are easy to catch, even by “bankstompers” and beginners. You don’t need to spend \$100 on fancy equipment. Nor do you need a boat.

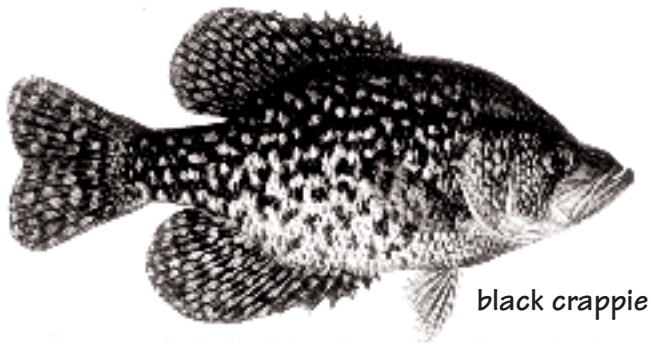
There’s a thrill to seeing your bobber disappear under the water. There’s an even bigger one in landing your catch. You’re a winner! And you’ve learned a skill and a recreation that can last a lifetime.

Even if you go fishing several times and don’t catch a single crappie or get a bite, you can still have fun and find satisfaction in several things. Every time you go

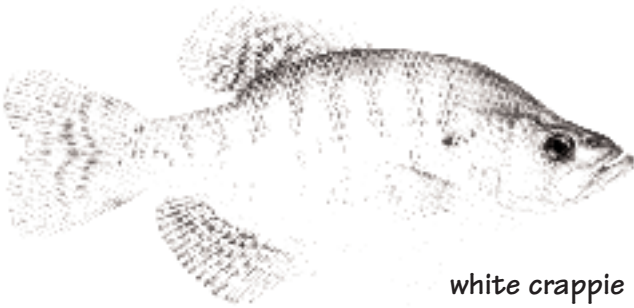
fishing you will learn how to be a better angler. You will learn about patience and perseverance, things that will help you throughout life in all situations. You will learn to enjoy and appreciate the wonders of nature. You’ll be a better person just by going fishing — whether or not you catch any crappie.

But in the right conditions, you’ll catch fish. And there’s no better way to spend a day than catching crappie with family and friends.

There are two kinds of crappie in Kansas: the black crappie, and the white crappie. Most crappie caught in Kansas are white crappie. Notice that they have dark, vertical bars on their sides. Most reservoir crappie are



black crappie



white crappie

whites, since this species does well in murky water. Pond crappie are usually black crappie. They usually appear to be speckled (see illustration) This species does better in clear water. The males of both species turn black at spawn, so this makes identification harder. But it really makes no difference. Both species are equally good to catch and eat.

In Kansas, crappie are easiest to catch from about the middle of April in southern Kansas to the end of May in northern Kansas. This is the time that both male and female crappie come near the shore to nest and lay eggs (called spawning.) For best success, know when to go as well as where to go.

It is important to know and follow fishing laws. Some lakes have limits on how long a crappie must be or on how many you can keep. You can get a free copy of Kansas Fishing Regulation Summary where fishing licenses are sold.

Gear

To start, you'll need some basic equipment. Most combinations of rod, reel, and light line can do the trick, and they don't have to be fancy or expensive.

The reel is more important than the rod. You can catch crappie with a hook and line tied to a tree limb or even with just a hook tied to a line. But without a reel, try casting or landing a crappie!

The spincast — or closed-faced reel — is best for beginning fishermen. Learning to cast with a spincast reel is easy, and they're not expensive. However, it's best not to buy the plastic toy reels with plastic gears that quickly wear out. A medium-quality spincast reel sells for \$10 to \$20 and can last for years. More experienced

anglers may prefer a spinning reel. This is an open-faced reel that has smooth action and may be more expensive. Spinning reels are more difficult for youngsters to cast.

The best crappie rod is a 5- to 6-foot ultralight. A stiff rod can jerk the hook out of a crappie's soft mouth when the hook is set (crappie are sometimes called "paper mouths" because parts of their mouths are so thin.) The thinner and more flexible rods are gentler and won't do this because they'll bend and "give" when a fish is hooked. A medium-quality ultralight rod will cost \$12 to \$20.

Be sure to match the proper rod to your reel. A casting rod with a pistol grip handle should be used with a spincast reel. The spinning reel is best matched with a spinning rod.

Most beginner-level reels come with line already on them. Line is rated by how many pounds of pressure it takes to break it. Many reels come equipped with 8-pound to 15-pound test line. That's OK for starters, but 4-pound-test line is better for crappie. Light line is thinner. Crappie have good eyesight and avoid things that don't look natural in the water. Thin line is harder for crappie to see and also allows a baited minnow to swim naturally.

The best crappie hooks are fairly small. They come in many sizes, styles, and colors. The best hooks are sizes 6, 8, or 10. Color makes little difference. Long shank hooks are easier to remove from a crappie's mouth because you can grab hold of them more easily with your fingers. But short shank hooks are OK, too.

Sinkers are important when using minnows for bait. They keep the minnows at the right depth. Without a sinker, the minnows will swim to the top of the water.



Also, when the wind is blowing, sinkers keep your line in one place, and your line won't drift as much with the waves.

Buy split shot sinkers with little "ears" on them. You can easily take them off your line by squeezing the "ears." If you buy a plastic box of sinkers, they probably won't have this feature. Also, some in the box will be far too light and some far too heavy. Buy a sack with only one size sinker in it.

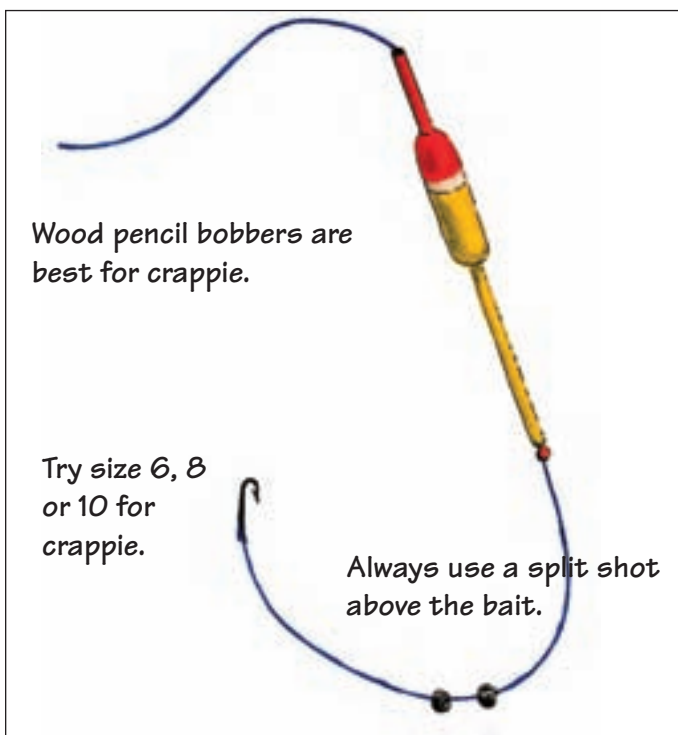
Just like hooks and lines, sinkers come in several sizes. You need two sizes: B and 3/0. Buy a sack of each. On calm days, you may need only one size B sinker with a pencil bobber. On windy days, you'll need one, two, or even three of the 3/0 sinkers on your line keep your bait in one place. Experiment with a combination of sinkers to find the best weight. But remember, too many sinkers will "sink" your bobber. Put sinkers several inches above the hook so that the minnow can swim naturally.

Bobbers are necessary for two reasons. They keep the minnow at the same depth on each cast. This is important because if you catch a crappie, you want to go back to the same depth on your next cast. Secondly, they tell you when there's a bite. There is nothing more exciting in fishing than watching a bobber disappear when you get a bite!

Fixed bobbers are best for beginning fishermen. They come in two shapes, round (globe) and pencil. Pencil bobbers are best because a crappie can pull them under and through the water more easily. This helps keep a crappie from detecting something unnatural, causing it to spit out your minnow before it is hooked.

Buy wooden pencil bobbers, not the cheap plastic ones. Thin fishing line is very slick, and cheap plastic bobbers often slide up and down the line. The wooden bobbers cost more, but are worth it. Be sure to buy at least two or three bobbers. You're bound to get a snag because crappie often congregate around sunken brush-piles, making it easy to break your line and lose your bobber. Without a spare, your fishing could be over for the day.

Besides fishing tackle, you'll also need a stringer, a

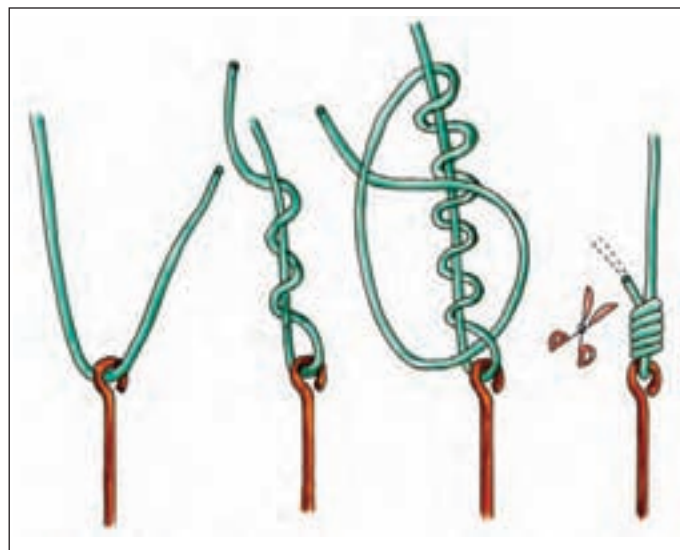


styrofoam minnow bucket, and a hook remover or pair of long-nosed pliers.

Rigging

Once you have the right equipment, you must learn how to tie and bait the hook. Fishing line is slicker than any rope or string. If you tie just any old knot on it, the knot will come apart. This usually happens when you're trying to reel in a big crappie!

The improved clinch knot is best for beginners. Often you'll get snagged and have to break your line, then tie on a new hook. Practice tying this knot before you go fishing so you can do it quickly. Special note to adults:



When a hook needs to be tied to a line, you'll have to do this for younger children. So become an expert before you go fishing.

Tie the improved clinch knot by pulling the line through the eye of the hook (see illustrations.) With the loose end, make 4-6 turns around the line. Hold the coils with your finger tips. Push the end of the line through the first loop above the eye. Then push it through the big loop. Wet the knot with a bit of water or spit. Above the knot, hold onto both the loose end and the line. Pull slowly on the line so that the coils slide together. Coils should spiral, not lap over each other. Slide the coils tight against the hook eye, and cut off the excess loose end.

Remember: Practice tying knots before you go fishing. Crappie fishing leads to snags and broken lines. Ordinary knots won't work. There's nothing more frustrating than breaking your line when everyone else is catching fish.

Bait

The best crappie baits are live minnows. Artificial lures like jigs imitate minnows, and they also catch a lot of fish. However, minnows will catch crappie



when jigs fail. Live minnows in a styrofoam bucket are an important part of the beginning crappie angler's tools.

You have to hook a minnow so it stays alive. Why? Sunlight bounces off the shiny silver minnow as it swims. Crappie see this flashing light and know it means food. And they can tell the difference between a live minnow and a dead one. They'll investigate a dead minnow but usually won't grab it. If you want more bites, hook a minnow so that it stays alive.

The best place for beginners to hook a minnow is through the middle of the back. Keep the hook above the abdomen so that it kill the minnow. Some anglers hook the minnow in front of the tail.

Crappie experts say that small minnows catch more fish than do bigger ones. But they're harder to put on the hook. These experts also agree that larger minnows catch bigger but fewer crappie. Larger minnows are easier to put on the hook. Small? Or large? There's no one answer. Experiment.

Fishing

Now for the important part — the actual fishing. Before you go fishing for the first time, scout several good locations. Know where you're going; don't just "head for the lake." How do you find good crappie fishing places? Ask at a sporting goods store or bait shop. Ask friends to recommend fishermen they know, and then ask these fishermen. Call the nearest office of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, or visit with the sports editor of your local newspaper. If there's a fishing club in your area, call one of the members.

Several good references that help to pinpoint fishing spots are *Fishing Guide to Kansas* and *Kansas Fishing Forecast*, published by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. You can also check out weekly fishing reports on KDWP's website — www.kdwp.state.ks.us.

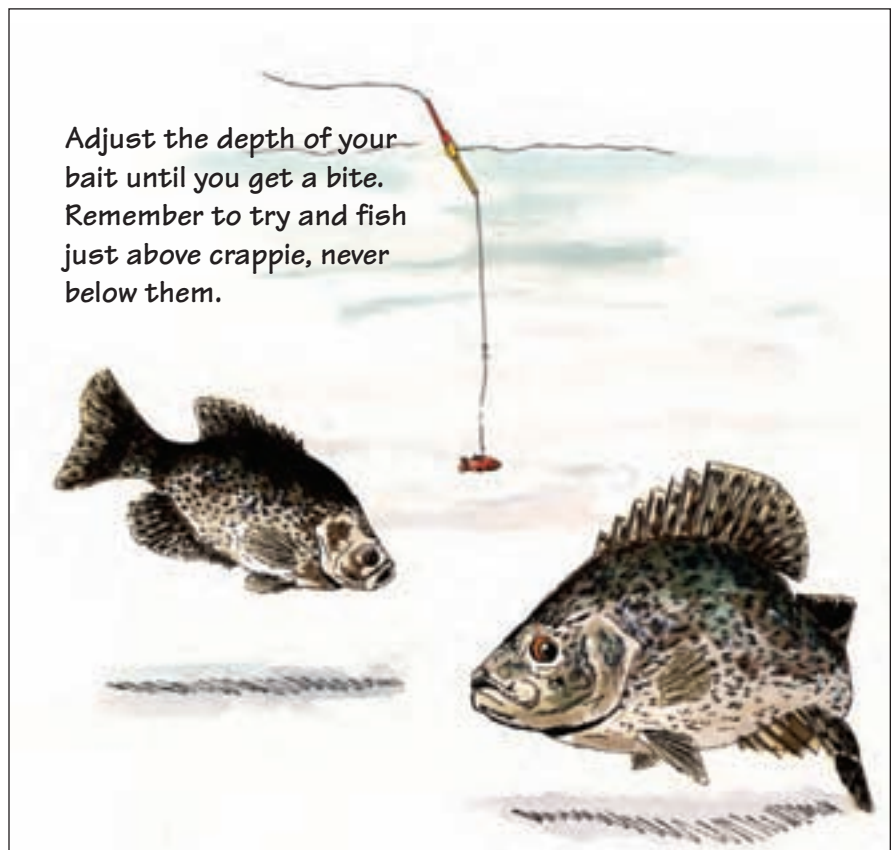
While these sources can help direct you to a good crappie lake, finding the fish requires a more detailed search. Look for coves that are protected from wave action. Look for structure/cover such as brush, stumps, rocks, rip-rap, and boat docks. Some state and county lakes have feeding stations that are worth a try. Banks with a sharp drop-off are better than ones that drop off gradually.

Depending on temperature, crappie move from deep water to shallow. Knowing how deep to fish is a great help (see chart.) In early spring, crappie hold in deeper water, then move shallow to spawn. By mid-May, the fish are found along banks where they are easy to catch by beginning anglers without a boat.

Crappie see much better straight ahead and above them than they do below them. They will come up to strike but won't go down. If you fish below them, they won't see the minnow. So start fishing shallow. If you get no bites, move the bobber 6-12 inches up the line and try it slightly deeper. Repeat this until you find the fish.

Water clarity affects crappie fishing. The muddier the water, the more shallow crappie will spawn. For example at Tuttle Creek Reservoir which is usually muddy, crappie are often caught in water only 2-3 feet deep. But at Pottawatomie State Fishing Lake #2, which is clearer than Tuttle Creek, you may catch crappie 3-4 feet deep.

Adjust your depth of fishing to the temperature of the water, the time of the spring, and the clarity of the water. Experiment! If one depth doesn't work, change



depths, cast out farther, or bring your bobber closer to the bank.

Time of day can also affect crappie fishing. Crappie are unpredictable. The best times to go are very early in the morning — dawn or even 5:30 a.m. — or after supper. However, at times they may be caught in the middle of a hot day. Crappie move in schools during the day, so that one minute you're catching them and the next they stop biting. Or vice versa. That's just crappie fishing.

When crappie are spawning, you might be able to catch lots of them. The daily creel limit (the number of crappie you can keep in a day) is 50 per person. But you should only keep what you and your family want to eat. You can keep fishing by practicing catch and release. If you do release crappie, handle the fish as little as possible and hold it by the lower jaw, not around its middle. Quickly place the fish back into the water, rather than throwing it back in.

Hooking and Landing Fish



After casting a minnow, reel in any slack. Too much slack makes it hard to set the hook. Wait for several minutes before moving your bait. If you don't get a nibble, slowly begin to reel in the minnow. But do so in a "jerky" manner, not a steady one. This is called jigging with a minnow. Slowly raise the rod tip a few inches and slowly drop it. Reel in the slack and repeat the procedure. Crappie may be attracted by the movement and sound when jigging. Be ready for a strike.

When your bobber starts bouncing, don't get "buck fever." Don't try to set the hook too soon. Crappie touch the minnow before inhaling it. This causes the bobber to bounce once or twice. Don't pull on the first bounce. Wait until the bobber goes under or starts to move away. Then set the hook.

Set the hook gently but firmly. As the fish fights, keep the line tight by holding the rod tip high, not pointed at the water. Don't reel as fast as you can. Instead, turn the crank slowly to avoid breaking the line or pulling out the hook. Remember "papermouth?"

To land the fish, pull it onto the bank; don't lift it into the air. If that isn't possible, grab a crappie by the lower jaw and lift it out of the water. Hold tight, because it may flop around. When taking a crappie off the hook, turn your back to the water. Why? If it wriggles out of your hand, it'll land on the bank, not in the water. If a crappie swallows the hook, cut the line and tie on a new hook. Tearing out a deep hookset will kill the crappie before you're ready to leave.

Run the stringer through the lower jaw of a crappie, not through the mouth and out the gill slit. Gills are delicate and you'll harm them and kill the fish. Wrap or tie the stringer firmly to a branch or rock. Crappie flop around and try to swim away. If not tied properly, they can swim away with your stringer.

AFTER THE CATCH

Don't discard leftover minnows if you're going fishing within the next week or so. Especially, don't dump minnows into the water where you are fishing. Some types of minnows aren't natural there, and could compete with native fish. Instead, keep your minnows alive at home.

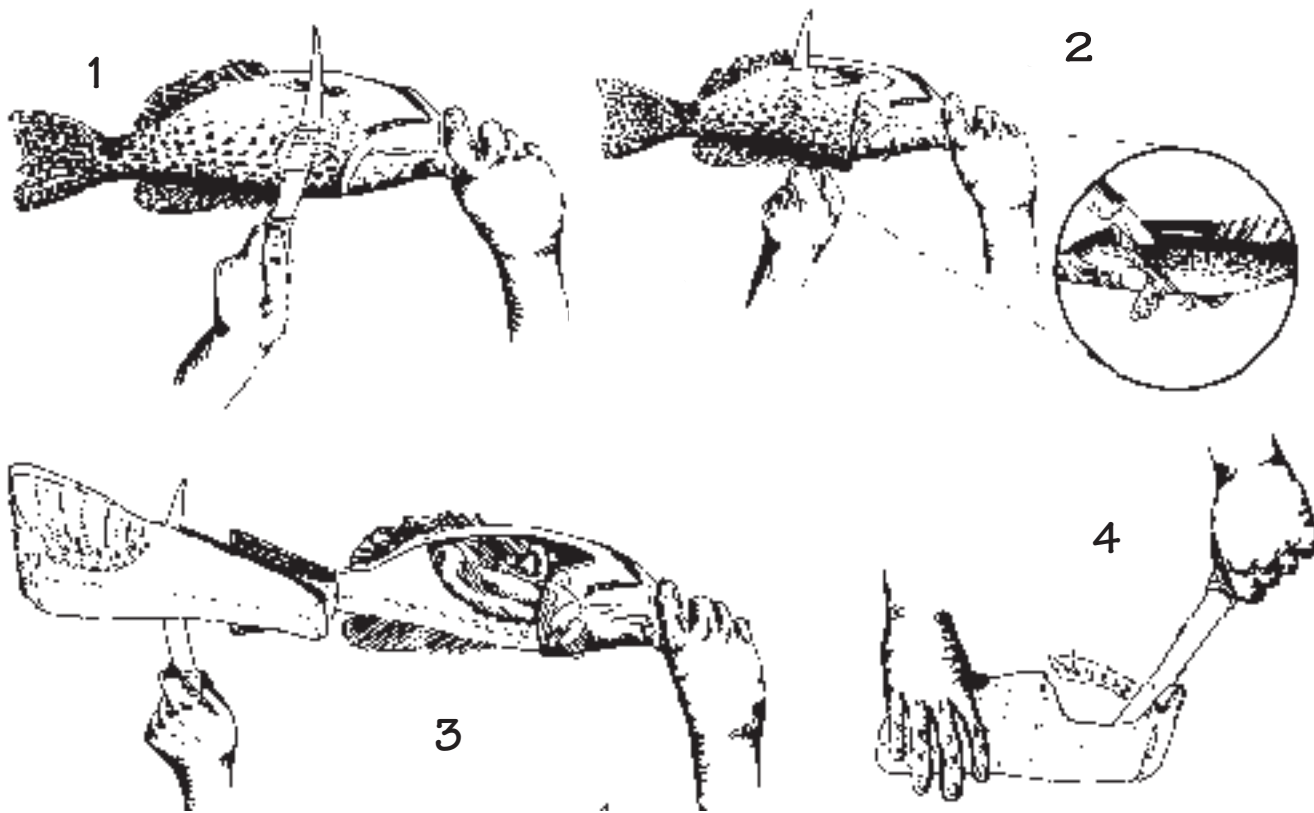
Minnows can live in a bucket for at least a week and maybe two. Fill a 5-gallon bucket with water and let it sit for 24 hours to remove any chlorine. Freeze a small plastic container of this dechlorinated water. Place this ice in the water along with the minnows. Minnows will be inactive in the cool water and not use up the oxygen. Neither will they need food. Keep a lid on the bucket to help it stay cool. Check the minnow bucket each day to remove any dead minnows. Add dechlorinated ice as needed to keep the minnows cool.

Leave enough time at the end of a trip to clean the catch. Crappie are good eating and a nice meal is the perfect way to remember a fun day on the water. The best way to clean crappie is to filet them. This way, there are no bones to fuss with while eating.

There are several ways to filet crappie. This is the one I like best.

First, get a solid surface such as a table or bench, at a good working height so you don't have to bend over. Be sure there is good light. Spread newspaper on the surface, and spread some more onto the floor to hold the fish remains.

Next, place the crappie so that its back is toward you and its head faces left. With your left hand, hold the crappie by the gill cover. Just behind the gills, insert a thin-bladed filet knife and cut down to the backbone.



Don't cut through the backbone! Turn the knife and cut along the backbone toward the tail. Cutting through the ribs requires some pressure. You can feel the backbone as you cut. Cut the fillet free.

Turn the fish over and repeat the process on the other side. Now hold a fillet down on the tail end, put the knife blade between the skin and the meat, and wiggle the knife slowly toward the front of the fillet. Try not to slice through the skin.

Cut out the rib section from each skinned fillet, and wash. The filets may be cooked immediately or wrapped and frozen for later use. Wrap all fish remains in newspaper and dispose of properly.

After cleaning your catch, check your gear. Replace any bent hooks. Replenish any equipment you used, such as split shot, hooks, and bobbers. Be ready to go fishing again in the near future upon a moment's notice.

GROWING AN ANGLER

Growing an angler isn't all that easy. Here are some tips for adults who take children on their first fishing trips.

Try to ensure that first trips are successful. Scout out a good spot before you go, and go on a day crappie are likely to be biting. Weather has a lot to do with crappie activity. Sunny, warm weather is ideal for fishing, while, cool, cloudy, and windy weather sends crappie deep, where they are harder to catch. Barometric pressure plays a role. Crappie bite best when the barometer is

steady between 29.80 and 30.20. They may bite when the pressure is rising, but won't bite while it is falling. Crappie bite best in calm weather, so watch out for windy conditions. A change in water level, such as a recent heavy rain or a sudden release of water from a reservoir, may stop crappie from biting. Watch the long-range weather forecast and call for water conditions before planning a trip.

Start with a short trip to a nearby spot. There's nothing drearier for a 6-year-old than a long ride home after being "skunked." If the fish aren't biting where you start, try another spot. If they still aren't biting, go home early.

Practice casting and knot-tying beforehand. Don't plan to fish yourself. Give kids all the help they need. Bait the hook, cast the line, and even help set the hook at the right moment. Be a teacher, not a fisherman.

Be patient and encouraging. If the line gets snagged, don't get exasperated and scold the child. Instead, calmly get it unsnagged or cut the line and start over. Tell the child that even adult anglers do the same thing. Have fun yourself: Laugh, encourage, praise, and celebrate. Enjoyment easily transfers to youngsters.

Crappie fishing can provide a lifetime of enjoyment. Being outdoors and watching a bobber slip under the water is fun for kids of all ages. A good day fishing can set a youngster on a growing pursuit. Get involved! Get in on the fun! It's a Kansas tradition. ♡

Miami State Fishing Lake Renovation

by Tim Schaid

public lands manager, Paola

photos by Mike Blair

Miami State Fishing Lake's future was threatened as the Marais des Cygnes River eroded the dike. Repairs should ensure the lake's future and its place as a favorite local fishing hole.



The Miami State Fishing Lake is a popular fishing hole nestled between the Marais des Cygnes River and wooded hillsides of southeastern Miami County. If one ever wanted a place to get away from it all, this is it. It has the kind of view that makes you want to stand and stare for awhile. Tall cottonwoods and the white-barked sycamores break up the skyline and provide perches for eagles and red-tailed hawks. The normally slow-moving river is bounded by 40-foot banks scarred with the occasional snag or log pile left from high water. In the fall, the oak-maple deciduous mix provides a combination of red, yellow, and orange that competes with the best of sunsets. In addition, the fishing can be some of the best in the state. Unfortunately, the Marais des Cygnes River recently threatened to

breach the dike of this 118-acre paradise. As a precaution, the lake is undergoing needed repairs, which include rebuilding a portion of the dike and protecting it from further erosion.

The Miami State Fishing Lake originated in the early 1930s as a duck marsh for a local sportsmen's club. Charles Murray is credited with first developing the area into a lake. Locally, the lake is still referred to as Murray's Lake, and area history includes tales of dances being held at the lake in the early days. The lake and 152 acres of land were purchased March 21, 1941, by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission from Alfred and Lily Black for \$6,348.

A visit to the Miami County Swan River Museum in Paola led me to Bill Massey. He remembers going to dances at the lake, dancing

on an open air platform built over the water. Massey also remembers lumber was cut from the area. Before the lake was built, the floodplain timber had been harvested. Old stumps are visible today in many parts of the lake bottom. He described a "swinging-type" bridge that was built across the river to move the cut trees to the nearby town of Fontana. Several fishermen have mentioned a homesite located on the lake property. Remnants of an old foundation remain on a steep hillside overgrown with brush and hidden from view.

During the summer of 1998, area history seemed to repeat itself. Soldiers on horseback and wagons of the 1860s vintage could be seen near the lake. Several scenes from the movie "To Ride With the Devil" were filmed at the Miami State Lake and adjacent private property.



The Marais des Cygnes River eroded its way close to the Miami State Fishing Lake dike. Borrow to rebuild and fortify the dike was taken from the lake bed, reducing the project's impact on the surrounding area and creating better fish structure.

Movie historians were drawn to the beauty of the tall, open woods with the lake and river in the background. Who knows? Quantrill's raiders could have been through this area.

With time, the river has cut its way closer to the lake. Recent engineering reports show that the river has moved at least 30 feet toward the lake since the 1940s. Soil conservation measures were implemented in 1946 to protect the river bank from erosion. Large trees, cut from the opposite side of the river, were fastened with cables to the river bank in areas subject to erosion. The trees and cables were attached to the shore with a series of 20- to 30-foot pilings driven 15-20 feet into the riverbank. Erosion has left many of the pilings exposed, like monuments to past conservation efforts.

Between 1974 and 1978, the Kansas Fish and Game Commission began turning "Murray's Lake" into a quality state fishing lake. The lake was drained, 14 fishing piers were constructed, and the dam was raised two to four feet. The surface area of the lake was increased to 118 acres, and a 36-inch principal spillway and outlet control structure were installed. This allowed

improved fisheries management through water level control. Other improvements included a 150-foot bottom concrete spillway, a cinder block toilet, and a small boat ramp and dock. Fish were stocked into the lake and the lake was re-opened and managed as a state fishing lake.

Since the enhancements, the lake has been a good fish producer, and the new fishing piers provided anglers with easy access. Crappie, bass, and channel catfish provided the majority of angling opportunities. In recent years, the lake has provided outstanding crappie fishing. Fisheries biologist Richard Sanders worked to improve it even more. His focus the last several years has been controlling the high shad population which exceeded beneficial levels. Reducing shad numbers provides more room for crappie and bass. Crappie were coming on strong in 1998 and 1999. It is not like a fisheries biologist to brag, but Sanders' 1999 data indicate that the Miami's combined white and

black crappie populations ranked in the top five of all lakes in the state. Sanders is already making plans for improving fishing opportunities while the lake is drained for current repairs. If history repeats itself, high crappie numbers and good fishing opportunities at Miami will be a welcome recurrence.

The intrinsic value of Miami State Fishing Lake is its proximity to the Marais des Cygnes River. Ironically, this what finally threatened the lake. The river tried to shorten its course by gradually cutting through the lake. Earlier attempts to protect the dike have lasted 50 years. Engineers are currently trying to repeat history and provide fishing well into the new century.

Recent attention to engineering plans, alternative designs, and construction methods has focused on the less familiar beauty of Miami. Several threatened or endangered species of wildlife may live in the wooded habitat adjacent to Miami Lake. Bill Busby of the Kansas Biological Survey has reported that the habitat is suitable for a variety of protected species. Bald eagles are known to frequent the tall trees adjacent to the lake, attracted by the abundant shad and occasional



Stringers of black crappie like this were common before renovation. Anticipation is high for excellent crappie fishing after the lake refills this summer.

waterfowl. During planning and construction, specific consideration was given to those species that are important components of our diverse surroundings.

Several alternatives were evaluated prior to the final decision to repair the lake. The easy answer was to breach the dike and manage the lake as a marsh, much like it was many years ago. After all, the river will always be waiting for its opportunity to take the lake and repeat history. A second alternative was to simply patch the damaged areas on the dike, but new erosion areas were appearing. Another alternative was to cut the trees from the dike and manage "as is" until the river breaches the dike. Then the area would revert back to a wetland.

Public meetings were held, and the overwhelming desire of the public was to somehow repair the dike. Planners and engineers felt that if the dike was to be repaired, it should be repaired to last. A simple patch job would not be wise use of money. The costs for major repair would be high, but the price of land, engineering, and construction of a new lake would have been even more.

The most reasonable fix that would last at least 20 years required 1,700 feet of the dike to be completely rebuilt. The center of the dike was moved 60 feet back from the river, and the banks were resloped on the river and lake sides. As a final protection from erosion, the entire disturbed area was covered with large diameter stones.

Water level within the lake was controlled by a 36-inch valve installed in 1976. The valve has since rusted and become very difficult to operate. Current plans include replacing the valve and restruc-

turing the outflow area to reduce erosion and meet current state requirements. Once the dike is fixed, plans are to allow anglers to use boats. Since 1993, boats have been prohibited because of safety concerns. The existing boat ramp will remain, with the addition of a parking area and a new boat dock.

The project's effect on endangered species was an important consideration during final planning. For example, a portion of the entrance road is very steep and rough. Originally, it was hoped that the slope of the entrance road could be reduced as part of the project. However, to fix the road or to borrow rock and fill material on-site would have required substantial disturbance to adjacent sensitive habitat. These options were ruled out to allow the project to proceed. Borrow for the dike came from the lake bottom. Rock to cover the repaired dike was purchased off-site. These stipulations to the project were made to protect the upland habitat that is suitable for protected species. Dike repair required that all trees along the affected dike be

removed. The trees on the dike are important, especially for the eagles. But if the dike were not repaired, the trees would soon wash into the river anyway. Final plans were made to proceed and repair the lake.

To enhance fish habitat, many of the cut trees will be set into the lake to provide structure. The borrow area will improve fishing opportunities by increasing diversity of the bottom substrate. Rock piles and brush piles will also further enhance fish habitat.

If weather cooperates, the project should be completed by the summer of 2001. Once the lake is filled, it will be stocked with an appropriate mix of fish and should be opened to the public in the summer of 2002. Crappie, bass, channel cat, red ear, and sauger are being considered.

Once current repairs are complete, the Miami State Fishing Lake and the Marais des Cygnes River can provide memories for visitors well into the new century. Come and enjoy the view, catch some fish, and make your own memories. ♡



Public input made it clear that Miami was a popular fishing hole. Known for outstanding crappie fishing prior to renovation, the lake should be ready for anglers by the summer of 2001.

WILDLIFE RESEARCH

HEADQUARTERS

by Roger D. Applegate

small game coordinator/office supervisor, Emporia

photos by Mike Blair

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' office in Emporia houses biologists who uncover the mysteries of our wildlife resources. Research directed from this office plays a key role in many management decisions.

The Research and Survey Office of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks may be one of the least known and least understood units of the agency. It is located on the campus of Emporia State University and is readily accessible to the city of Emporia and surrounding communities.

The Research and Survey Office is unique among department facilities in that it serves as headquarters for all of the agency's research per-

sonnel. The office houses four permanent wildlife and three permanent fisheries research biologists and a permanent office manager. In addition, there are generally several student research assistants and temporary technicians participating in various research projects or data entry.

Like all department offices, Emporia offers point-of-sale for various licenses, permits, boat registrations, and other issues. Office

personnel disseminate a vast amount of information to customers who call, write, or visit the office. Several thousand permits, licenses, stamps, and boat registrations are issued by the Emporia office each year.

Emporia houses only Fisheries and Wildlife Division personnel. With no Law Enforcement Division personnel in the office, we are reliant on personnel from other offices to assist. Expertise found at Emporia includes waterfowl, small game, big game, furbearer, and fisheries research specialists. Two additional wildlife research personnel are housed at the Region 1 Office in Hays and at the Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Management Area but are supervised by Emporia staff.

The Emporia Research and Survey Office coordinates numerous population and harvest surveys of fish and wildlife. Population surveys include the Rural Mail Carrier Survey (RMCS) which monitors several gamebird and mammal populations, the Mourning Dove Call-count Survey, Prairie Chicken Booming Ground Survey, Pheasant Crow Count, Quail Whistle Count, Pheasant and Quail Brood Survey, Waterfowl Migration Count, Archery Deer Hunter Survey of furbearers and turkeys, Road Kill Survey of furbearers, and Canada Goose Survey. Harvest surveys include Furharvester, Small Game Harvest, Deer, Turkey, Pronghorn, Elk, Fur Dealer, Mussel Harvester, Fish Tournament, and Bobcat Tagging, among others.

Emporia staff also conduct periodic special surveys of fish and wildlife users to determine constituents' attitudes and preferences. These include surveys of deer hunters, quail hunters, and turkey hunters, as well as assessing public attitudes toward black-tailed prairie dogs.



Biologists at the Emporia office collect data on various wildlife species from meadow larks to swift foxes, often cooperating with students and faculty from universities.

Data collected by Emporia staff are used to develop proposals for fish and wildlife regulations that are presented to the Wildlife and Parks Commission. In addition, Emporia staff have played important roles in the preparation of multi-state conservation plans for lesser prairie chickens, swift foxes, and black-tailed prairie dogs.

Research projects are crucial to the department for identifying wildlife and habitat trends, as well as the possible causes of population declines. The primary goal of research is to provide reliable information to assist department managers and the public in managing the wildlife resources of Kansas. The study of population dynamics, which includes birth, death, and survival of fish and wildlife, as well as habitat use, movements and home range, are essential for identifying management strategies. Studies of behavior and other so-called "basic" research topics also aid in identifying processes driving wildlife and fish populations and trends.

In addition to department-funded projects, Emporia personnel

also cooperate with faculty and students at several universities on projects which have potential value for management. Examples include a project looking at internal parasites of wild turkey gobblers and their relationship to beard length, spur length, and other male characteristics. Other projects examine fox squirrels' occupation of different-sized woodland tracts, grassland and riparian bird ecology, diseases and antibiotic-resistant bacteria in wild turkeys, and the distribution of river otters.

Emporia staff sift through large amounts of survey and research data to provide scientific management of Kansas' fish and wildlife resources. Staff in the Emporia Office represents more than 150 years of professional experience. Information on any KDWP research or survey project may be obtained by writing the Research and Survey Office, P. O. Box 1525, Emporia, KS 66801. ♻️

Recent or Ongoing Wildlife Research

- Effects of Hunting on Bobwhite Population Dynamics
- Ecology of Wild Turkeys in Southwestern Kansas
- Trap Research, Denning Ecology of Swift Foxes
- Changes in Habitat of Prairie Chickens in Eastern Kansas
- Ecology of Lesser Prairie Chickens in the Sand-sagebrush Rangelands
- Evaluation of Walleye Stocking
- Spotted Bass Investigations
- Genetic Listing of Kansas Fishes
- Black Bass Tournament Studies
- White Bass Investigation
- Largemouth Bass Length Limit Studies
- Channel Catfish Research
- Crappie Research
- Establishing Aquatic Vegetation in Reservoirs.



Bobwhite quail research will help the department manage this important species for the future.

Meaningful



Moments

text and photos by Mike Ehlebracht

wildlife investigative unit supervisor, Wyoming Department of Fish and Game

Passing on his love of hunting and the outdoors, a father ensures his daughter makes the connection, and in the process, makes a connection of his own.

While growing up in eastern Kansas, I had three brothers. In the corner of our yard, there was a big tree with bark missing on one side. The bare spot was where Dad would destroy our BB guns when we got in trouble shooting BBs. We would spend weeks to earn enough money to buy

BB guns, but sooner or later, one of us shot something that wasn't supposed to be shot. I can't remember any of the actual deeds, but I remember the unceremonious deaths of many BB guns. Of course, Dad would always say, "If you want another one, you better find a job." And the base of that tree was

always a good source for spare parts.

Nobody encouraged me to become a hunter. If anything, my parents may have preferred that I wasn't in such a hurry to become one.

A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then, and now I

have two daughters of my own. I don't care if they become hunters, but I would like them at least to give it a try. When Amy, my oldest, was 10, I took her to a hunter education course. She did well with the course, but I felt she wasn't quite ready to actually hunt. We shot air rifles, archery equipment, and she participated in the 4-H Shooting Sports Program. I took her with me on scouting trips so she could experience what went on in the field. Then one day, a friend called. Suzy had taken her first deer with a bow and was unsure about field dressing it. She wanted help. I took Amy with me, hoping that she might be inspired by another woman's success. She had seen me bring home game, but actually field dressing a big game animal in the field would be different.

I've dressed enough deer to believe I could do it in my sleep, but

I understand that if you've never seen it, it can be shocking, especially to a 10-year-old girl. And Amy is bright and wanted explanations for everything I did. So, I went through it for her step-by-step. The best part of the experience was that Amy saw the excitement and joy on Suzy's face. I thought we were headed in the right direction.

Then last winter, when Amy was 11, I decided she was ready to try rabbit hunting. We lived in the country and had more rabbits than my wife's garden could stand. After a good snow, I asked Amy if she was interested in rabbit hunting. Her face lit up, and she said yes. Armed with a .22 rifle and a wooden bipod I made for her, we stalked through the tree belt. It took us all of four minutes to find our first cottontail. I had Amy sit down, put the gun on the shooting sticks, and shoot like we'd practiced. She

missed twice, but the third time was a charm. At that moment she made a connection with the land, the wildlife, and this rabbit. And I made a connection of my own. Only a tiny portion of any person's life is taken up by meaningful moments. For me this was one of them. I wasn't sure how she'd react, but her reaction was that she wanted more!

We hunted rabbits several more times that winter, but I was thinking ahead for more exciting hunts. I was thinking turkey. Amy turned 12 in May, so she'd be eligible to purchase a permit. I knew turkey hunting would be more difficult late in the season, but I was willing to try if she was. I was thrilled when she agreed.

Even though the weeks leading up to her birthday were agonizing for both of us, we had plenty to do. I have a youth model 20-gauge, and she needed some practice sessions. I wanted her to be ready.

Finally, the day came — a Sunday morning that arrived clear and quiet — too quiet. The turkeys were silent. Still, I managed to call in a tom with three hens — either that or they were heading in our direction anyway. But to make a long story short, they spotted Amy as she moved to get a shot. I thought, "This is okay. She needs to know that it doesn't always work out in our favor. That's hunting."

Our next opportunity came on an after-school hunt. I had set up a blind between a feeding area and a small pond that turkeys were using in the evening. We sat in the blind from 4:30 until 7:30, seeing a total of 14 hens come to the pond for a drink. Imagine that. How many parents remember a time when they gave one of their children three hours of undivided and uninterrupted attention? Finally, a jake came into view and made its way to the pond. When it reached the perfect yardage, I yelled on the call. The jake stopped, raised its head like a periscope, and the rest is history.

To say Amy was excited is putting it mildly. She was visibly shaking and couldn't talk clearly. We went to collect her prize, and she had lots of questions. Then it happened again. We both made our connections and I experienced another meaningful moment. This time I wondered if she felt the same way. Time will tell. I feel sorry for kids, and parents, who don't get to share this kind of experience. I'm sure there are other ways to get the same benefit, but I can't imagine that it would have the same level of intensity. I don't know if Amy will continue to hunt into adulthood. Maybe she will only hunt with me. I can live with that. Amy's younger sister, Maggie, is next. As for Amy, I'm already planning an antelope hunt! 🦌



Amy Ehlebracht holds her first cottontail. Teaching children about hunting requires undivided attention and forms deeply personal bonds through mutual experiences.

Ninja Chicken

by Marc Murrell

manager, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita

Working for the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for the past 11 years, I thought I'd heard it all. Calls to our office claim unusual and amazing things being done to, or by, wildlife of all species. Most of the calls don't pan out, but occasionally, one like this comes along.

I first heard about the "ninja chicken" from an acquaintance. He knew a guy who checked oil wells, and a greater prairie chicken was attacking his truck and him every morning.

"The guy says it has been going on for several weeks, and the chicken is there every day!" my friend related.

I figured it was just another wild goose chase, but out of curiosity, I called the gentleman who'd been battling the prairie chicken. He confirmed my friend's story, but I was still skeptical.

For the heck of it, I decided to check it out. I took wildlife photographer and Great Plains

Nature Center Director Bob Gress and KSNW photojournalist Scott Dietz along to the Cowley County pasture.

We arrived at the site shortly after sunrise, parked, and watched the scene unfold. The oil pumper pulled his truck to where he normally parks and got out. Sure enough, to our amazement, a prairie chicken emerged from the knee-high grass and started toward him. The chicken strutted and boomed, occasionally bumping the man's leg just as if defending its booming territory from other chickens.

Gress and I had to laugh at the surreal scene. Dietz, however, already had the video camera rolling. The three of us slowly approached on foot. The chicken never missed a beat. The bird challenged each of us, booming and strutting and letting us know we were in its territory. While Dietz continued the shooting video, Gress and I took still photographs.



"I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. Gress"



Marc Murrell photos

"The bigger they are, the harder they fall"



Bob Gress photos

"I ain't afraid of no chicken . . ."



. . . yes I am, yes I am!"

Conservation Officer

by Matt Stucker
conservation officer, Larned

***Continuing series profiling the men and women
who enforce our wildlife-related laws.***



Bob Funke has been with the State of Kansas since January of 1985. He started as a Park Ranger at Toronto/Fall River State Park. When Governor Mike Hayden combined the Park Authority with the Kansas Fish and Game Commission, Funke was one of 15 Park Rangers that transferred to the Law Enforcement Division. At the time of his transfer, Funke will tell you that he had some of the best training in the state. Southeastern Kansas was full of “long-timer” wildlife officers, and he feels the experience that they imparted to him has been an invaluable asset. In April 1997, he took the position of district supervisor and now supervises six other conservation officers, as well as covering his assigned area.

In the southeastern part of Kansas where he works, there is plenty of water. During the warm-weather months, boating, fishing and mussel harvesters keep him busy.

He remembers one case in particular. On May 13, 1994, Iowa resident Rodney Johnson was ticketed for park and boating violations and another man was ticketed for mussel fishing violations. Evidently Johnson didn't learn his lesson because just a little over a month later, he used the address of the motel where he was staying to apply for and receive a resident mussel harvester permit. Johnson was subsequently charged and

found guilty of misrepresentation to buy the permit. Since he had already returned to his home state, a felony commercialization warrant was issued, and Funke went to Iowa and brought him back to Elk County. Johnson paid almost \$2,500 in fines, court costs and restitution. Officers from five states worked on this case for 17 months.

Despite this kind of activity during summer months, the fall months are most hectic. Deer, prairie chicken, quail, waterfowl, turkey, squirrel, and rabbits are all popular game animals and bring a large number of nonresidents to Funke's part of the state. He admits that deer season is probably the busiest time. Deer season runs from mid-September through January with long days and late nights, working spotlighters, decoy operations, check lanes, and various other investigations.

Another case that Funke recalls concerned a complaint of late deer hunters. He observed a truck in which the passenger was using a spotlight. Funke followed them for several miles before they turned around and spotted him. He turned on his red lights and tried to stop the truck, but they ran. In spite of several other law enforcement officers coming to help, they got away. Funke went back the next day and found a .30-06 rifle that had been thrown out and also took pictures of tire tracks where the pickup had turned around. He knew that it was

a blue pickup with a matching topper. Three months later, after trying to track down the owner of the gun and following tire dealer leads, Funke received a statement from one of the individuals who was in jail for other crimes. Both individuals were charged and found guilty. Sometimes perseverance pays off.

Conservation officer duties include more than finding and ticketing violators. During a flood in November of 1998, the sheriff of Wilson County enlisted Funke's help to rescue a family stranded in their house along the Verdigris River. They drove more than a mile with water over the hood of the truck. Funke had to get out twice to move floating trees off the road. They got to within half a mile of the house when the water got too deep, and they had to turn back. The family was later rescued with a 6X6 military vehicle. During emergencies, officers are sometimes put in these dangerous situations to protect the public's safety.

Funke believes his biggest challenge will be the balance between covering his area and adequately supervising the men assigned to him. With job requirements and points of emphasis constantly changing, this could be a big task. I'm betting that with Funke's determination and work ethic, these challenges will be just some more stories to tell the newcomers when Funke is considered an long-timer. ♡

Edited by Mark Shoup

STALKED HUNTER!

Editor:

I was bowhunting whitetail last fall north of Mound City, in Linn County, and had an experience that I want to share with you. At approximately 4 p.m., I was walking to my stand and saw two bobcats. The funny thing about my sighting was that they were stalking me (approximately 30 yards from me). Both cats were low to the ground and headed in my direction. When I first noticed them, the larger one immediately took off and ran away from me. The other one (which was very small – slightly larger than a big house cat) ran directly at me as if it was going to attack me.

About 20 feet from me, it started pouncing high in the air as if it was trying to decide if it was going to jump on me. At about 10 feet, I started waving my arms, and it bolted around me and climbed a tree 20 yards the opposite side of me. When it got in the tree, it simply stood on a large limb and stared at me, as if trying to figure out what I was, before jumping out of the tree and running down a ravine.

After this weird encounter, I proceeded to my tree stand to continue my hunt. Approximately 30 minutes after I got settled into my stand, I started hearing what sounded like a small dog with a muffled bark. Pretty soon, what I think was the same bobcat that ran at me walked right under my stand making the weird sound that I was hearing. For the next couple of hours, I saw the same bobcat a total of four times, and each time it was making the same noise. At times, it got very loud, sounding more like a crow than a cat. (I know that really sounds weird.)

My theory is that my first encounter with the bobcats was the result of them smelling the fox urine on me, and because I was completely camouflaged, they thought I was a fox and were stalking me. I also think that the small bobcat was an offspring of the other

larger bobcat, and my encounter with them separated them. The small bobcat was then walking around trying to locate its partner/mother.

That experience was one that I will never forget.

*Mark A. Douglas
Olathe*

PASS IT ON

Editor:

I wanted to send a note to tell you that this Kansas hunter is most grateful for your Pass It On Program. Although my daughter is not quite old enough this season, she is getting quite close. I have been looking forward to introducing her to the wonderful things that Kansas has to offer, and this program will make it all the easier. Keep up the good work!

*Kirk M. Keller
Paola*

TWICE A BOY

Editor:

I had forgotten how long I've been reading *Kansas Wildlife and Parks* magazine until my son recently came home from school with a Kansas Day paper assignment that he wanted to do on the restoration of the wild turkey to Kansas. Recalling an article or two, I started digging through my stack of back issues and sure enough found the pertinent articles.

Over the years, the magazine has been a great source of education for me, and now my son. Also, I can confidently say that Mike Blair's photographic/outdoor talents are absolutely world-class. As an accomplished professional photographer myself, I receive tremendous pleasure from his images and admire to the point of jealousy his abilities. The Jan./Feb. 2001 issue is awesome.

Yet with all this said, I was not inspired to write you until I read Mark Shoup's, "Once a Man, Twice a Boy" (Nov./Dec. 2000 issue, Page 39). It literally brought me to tears. My father was not an outdoors sportsman, but his life of hard work on the farm gave me the

opportunity to enjoy a lifetime full of the Kansas outdoors and to pass it along to my son. And with a little luck some day, perhaps his son.

This article was a spiritual experience for me as often times is the out-of-doors. Thanks so much to the management and staff for all your hard work and dedication to your profession and our wonderful state.

*Gary Fail
Chanute*

GREAT GEESE

Editor:

Thanks for bringing the light goose season back into October. I have missed it the last several years here in southeast Kansas. I know that some years, like last year, are very warm, but my first experience hunting waterfowl occurred in October of 1991:

Halloween weekend saw a hard cold front sweep down across the plains, and temperatures dipped into the single digits at St. Paul on Sunday morning. We could hear the geese from miles away to the north, and sometimes it would take us a couple of minutes to locate them. When we did, they looked like salt and pepper on a blue plate. When they got overhead, they started maple-leafing down.

They would literally fall all the way to us. It was magic, and I was hooked on waterfowl my first weekend out. I still can see the images of those geese as their wings flashed from thousands of feet up. I have learned a lot about waterfowl since, but I don't consider myself an expert. Still, I have seen the reports that continue to show increases in the numbers of snow geese. I have seen the video and still images of the tundra that has been devastated by these hungry and growing geese after they hatch. Thankfully, the USFWS has recognized the plight of the mid-continent snow goose population and has taken steps to reduce their numbers.

My hope is that the conservation season will work, and that for years and even centuries to come, the mid-continent

snow goose will continue to make its annual migration and some lucky sportsman or woman will be able to lay in a field and hear the sounds that I heard that day, that they will see what I saw that day, and that they will enjoy time in the field with good friends, good dogs, and fantastic game, all provided by God, and wisely managed by man.

*Chris Diller
Chanute*

WALK-IN WORTH IT

Editor:

I want to congratulate the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks on the Walk-in Hunting Program. This program has made the nonresident license worth every penny and is one of the main reasons we continue to plan our annual hunting trips to your beautiful state.

All hunters are faced with the problems associated with gaining access to high-quality hunting areas. In many areas of the country, this is becoming the major issue for hunters. The time associated with trying to get permission, and in some areas the prospect of access for a fee, has caused my hunting partners and me much concern.

Kansas has eliminated that concern through this program. My hope is that the state will continue to enroll additional tracts of land and that the program continues to benefit both the landowners and the hunters and therefore ensure its continuing success.

*Herb Reid
Fairfax, Virginia*

REQUESTS FILLED

Editor:

I just received a package that included the Walk-in Atlas; 2000 hunting regs; Kansas hunting guide; flyers on prairie chicken, quail, and pheasant; and of course, your website (www.kdwp.state.ks.us), which is great.

I believe my cousin must have ordered this package for me, probably to get my blood pumping, which it sure has. Since I moved to Dallas in 1993 from Michigan, most of my hunting time is spent hunting in Kansas.

I must thank all the folks in the

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, for doing such a great job.

*Randy L. Cole
Dallas, Texas*

LOVIN' WHA

Editor:

I just wanted to provide some feedback about the Walk-In Hunting Program in Kansas. I have family in Kansas and went to Kansas State University from 1993-1998 and recently moved to Oklahoma. Since moving to the "best quail hunting" state in the nation, I have found that although there may be birds down here, it is very difficult to get access to hunt them. I have since come to greatly appreciate the Walk-In Hunting program in Kansas.

Last winter, I went back to the Dodge City area for the holidays and while there, I hunted 10 days, four of which were on Walk-In Hunting land. My family, my dog, and I had a very positive experience with the Walk-In Hunting land. We visited about 30-40 areas but hunted only eight. We found good habitat and also found some birds, which always makes a hunt more enjoyable.

One very nice benefit to hunters that is hardly mentioned is that if a hunter would like to try different areas of the state to see what type of hunting is to be had there, he can. And he can do so without trying to round up written permission from total strangers away from his home area. If a hunter decides that he likes what he sees in a certain area of the state, during the off season he can go about trying to obtain more private land in that area to hunt.

I also like the approach that Kansas has had in increasing the amount of available land enrolled in the program while lending a helping-hand to its private management instead of trying to acquire more government land and trying to manage it themselves.

I have family in Nebraska who actively participate in wildlife conservation programs annually through the state of Nebraska and who dedicate a lot of time to being members of such conservation joint-ventures. Because the majority of the land in most states is owned by private individuals, the way to halt the destruction of existing habitat, preserve what we

do have, and create more habitat is to reward the private landowner.

I think that Kansas has done a fantastic job in creating probably the best public hunting program in the Midwest. I hope that other states can successfully implement programs similar to the one in Kansas. It is a win for the public, a win for the landowners, and a win for the state and its wildlife.

*Josh Andersen
Comanche, OK*

COTTONWOODS & CORRECTNESS

Editor:

Question: Is there any rule or regulation in planting/trans-planting cottonwood trees? It seems I remember hearing it was not allowed.

Comment: As mentioned above, I love your magazine. I am not a hunter, nor am I opposed to hunting. However, because your creed is "to promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources" (of which hunting is one of those uses), I would suggest you could expand your readership and appeal by changing the illustration on Page 2 of Steve Williams holding a gun to Mr. Williams holding a fishing pole. Being a state-funded entity, it would just make more sense to be more "middle of the road." We all know of the emotional gun-debate issues, but I'm not aware of any strong anti-fishing movements. It just seems to be it would be more politically correct, broaden the appeal, and yet would still meet your objectives.

*Doug Clopton
Lenexa*

Dear Mr. Clopton,

Removing cottonwood trees from state parks or wildlife areas is illegal.

We are not a truly state funded entity. Less than 10 percent of our budget comes from the State General Fund, and that goes to state parks. Most of our budget comes from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses and permits and federal excise tax on hunting and fishing equipment.

-Miller

DUMPERS BAGGED

One July evening, Troy Smith, public land manager at Kingman State Fishing Lake and Byron Walker Wildlife Area, answered a knock at the door to find a local fisherman whom he frequently sees at the lake. He was somewhat agitated, reporting that he and his son were bike riding below the dam and had just witnessed two men in a white pickup throwing boxes into an oxbow lake near the Ninescah River.

The biker said that when the men saw them, they quickly jumped into their pickup and fled the scene, driving right past them on the road. As the vehicle passed, the biker quickly noted the company name on the door of the pickup, and license plate number. He scratched both of them into the box for his tire patch kit using his vehicle key as a pen. The man and his son then returned to the oxbow and found several boxes floating in the water.

Smith investigated the site and found several boxes of fluorescent light bulbs either floating or sunken in the water. Conservation Officer Rodney Albright, Pretty Prairie, and Smith collected evidence at the scene, consisting of photographs and UPS shipping bar codes from the boxes. They also traced the vehicle plates on the white pickup to an electrical contracting company in Duncan, Okla.

Albright located their phone number and spoke with the company manager, who verified company ownership of the vehicle and said that the company contracted light bulb replacement in department stores in several states. The crew had just completed a job in Independence, Mo., and had arrived in Liberal, Kan., to begin their next job. He promised to contact the crew and find out if they were involved and promised to cooperate.

Michael Craft, from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, was also contacted because of a concern that the light bulbs contained mercury, a potential pollution threat. According to Craft, out-of-state commercial dumping of toxic waste had become a significant problem in Kansas and KDHE wanted to be involved in the investigation.

Later, the company manager called Smith and admitted that his crew was responsible for the dumping incident. Albright contacted the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks Law Enforcement Division's Regional Supervisor Jim Kellenberger in the Dodge City office, and Conservation Officer B. J. Thurman, Elkhart, was dispatched to Liberal to interview the suspects.

Following the Thurman interview, the three suspects were escorted back to Kingman to answer charges. The company manager; the three suspects; Craft; Chris Lake of KDHE; conservation officers Dan Heskett, Haven, and Scott Hanzlicek, Hutchinson; and Smith met at the Kingman State Fishing Lake headquarters. During interrogation, the three suspects admitted to the dumping and were booked into the Kingman County Jail. Each suspect was charged with illegal dumping of toxic waste. The crew foreman and his senior employee were sentenced to 30 days in jail. Each paid a \$500 fine and both are to serve 100 hours of community service in Kingman County. The third suspect paid a \$500 fine and will serve 75 hours of community service.

The two cyclists, father and son, are being recognized by KDHE and given a plaque for their service. The case is still pending possible action before KDHE, subsequent to a final hearing.

*—Troy Smith, wildlife manager,
Kingman State Fishing Lake*

POCKETKNIFE KILLS DEER

Paul Cheatham of Herrin, Illinois, was not deer hunting on the weekend he got his deer. It was either him or the deer, the way he tells it.

A peaceful walk through the woods last fall turned into a fight for Cheatham's life when a six-point deer charged the 61-year-old man north of the No. 9 area in Williamson County.

"I grabbed him by the horns," Herrin said of his defensive tactics. "I knew if I let him go, he would kill me. I hung on and got my legs around his neck. We wrestled around quite a while. I didn't know what to do.

"He was kicking my legs real bad. Finally, when he gave out, I held him with one hand and opened my pocketknife with my mouth and jabbed him in the rib cage."

With a 3-inch blade in hand, Cheatham, who outweighed the deer by roughly 30 pounds, stabbed the deer numerous times until it was dead. Barely able to move for a week, Cheatham, an electrician, was able to find enough strength to return to work. He had bruises across his body but did not seek hospital care.

Few people have believed his story, but conservation officer Phil Boston of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources confirmed certain notables. Cheatham did have bruises across his body; there were numerous stab wounds to the deer, and those wounds were about 3 inches deep.

"I was not able to prove otherwise," said Boston, who was called to the scene after relatives of Cheatham called state police about the incident. Boston concluded that the deer was not unlawfully killed. He estimated the deer weighed

about 130 pounds.

Though uncommon, deer have been known to attack humans. However, there are not enough cases to suggest to people what to do when an attack occurs, Boston said. He did suggest (other than having a hunting permit and a shotgun) to walk away from the animal in the event of coming into close range with it, especially during rut.

Cheatham was reluctant to receive any publicity on the weekend fracas, declining to have his photo taken and wanting to avoid any reminders except for those he can't avoid, like those bruises the deer left behind.

"I just fought for my life is all I did," he said.

*—Illinois Department of
Natural Resources*

Bucks for Quail Habitat

A new program designed to improve quail habitat will also benefit landowners in Allen, Bourbon, Crawford and Neosho counties. The Southeast Kansas Quail Working Group (SEK QWG), in cooperation with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), is offering up to \$2,000 annually per cooperator as incentive payments or cost-share payments for creating and enhancing habitat beneficial to quail.

SEK-QWG was established to address dwindling populations of bobwhite quail, this region's most important game bird. Made up of representatives from Kansas Farm Bureau, SE Kansas R C & D, theNatural Resource Conservation Service, Pittsburg State University, Kansas State Extension Service, Quail Unlimited, private landowners and KDWP, the group has identified land-use practices that



have affected quail populations, as well as habitat enhancements that benefit quail. Habitat improvements eligible for payment include replacing fescue, establishing native grass, hedgerow renovation, strip discing, early burning of native grass, establishing food plots or leaving some grain unharvested, planting shrubs, excluding livestock from borders and odd areas, and using conservation headlands (a narrow field perimeter area left uncultivated and free of pesticides).

To be eligible for payment, habitat improvements must be designated in a plan written or approved by KDWP. Interested landowners should contact the KDWP regional office in Chanute at (316) 431-0380. Information may also be obtained from USDA offices in those targeted counties. Informational brochures will soon be available throughout the four-county target area.

Primary funding for these incentives comes from a KDWP project dedicated to this effort. These funds will be supplemented by a challenge grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, donations from local and statewide Quail Unlimited chapters, and landowner contributions of labor and planting materials. Other funding sources may develop as the program proceeds.

—Shoup

INVESTMENT IN TOMORROW

In an unprecedented act of unity and commitment, leaders in the hunting and shooting sports industry rolled up their sleeves last year at the 2000 Shooting Sports Summit and forged a comprehensive "Declaration of Investment in Tomorrow," setting forth a compelling list of goals and commitments for the future of our outdoor traditions.

Nearly 170 leaders from the hunting and shooting sports industry, state wildlife agencies, conservation organizations, and media participated in the summit, officially known as the Fourth Strategic Conference on the Hunting and Shooting Sports.

The intense three-day conference featured presentations by 15 experts addressing issues such as hunter recruitment/retention, public image, shooting range development, promotion of target shooting and political action. These presentations were followed by nine hours of professionally-facilitated discussions using interactive computer technology that allowed all participants to provide input and to rank the various ideas and action plans discussed.

"I was so energized and impressed by this event that I called our CEO at home on Saturday to urge that we sign on to the declaration," said Lew Deal, director of Outdoor Sports Development for Paralyzed Veterans of America. "We were proud to sign on and now look forward to playing our part in achieving the vision of this meeting."

Kansas Wildlife and Parks Secretary Steve Williams added, "In my business you attend a lot of conferences and, more often than not, nothing results from them. These summits are different. The combination of the right people and the emphasis on commitment made this one of the most effective meetings I have ever attended."

In keeping with the theme of "Focusing Our Vision and Actions," summit participants hammered out 37 specific action points aimed at removing barriers to first-time participation in target shooting, increasing participation in hunting, regaining the rightful and responsible image of hunting and shooting, increasing access to top-notch shooting facilities and affecting the upcoming elections.

—National Shooting Sports Foundation

LIGHT GOOSE HARVEST

Preliminary harvest data for mid-continent light geese compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) suggest that U.S. hunters harvested more than 1.3 million birds during the 1999-2000 hunting season and during a special conservation order that allowed additional harvest after the traditional close of the season.

Combined with the expected harvest by Canadian hunters, the total harvest of mid continent light geese most likely exceeded 1.4 million birds, the level researchers believe is needed to reduce overabundant light goose populations and halt destruction of the birds' over-

grazed arctic breeding grounds. Last year's U.S. harvest is a sizeable increase from the 1998-99 harvest of 1.07 million light geese. It also represents an 80 percent increase over the 730,000 birds harvested in the U.S. during the 1997-98 season, the last season that special conservation measures were not taken.

These increasing harvest levels are good news for the long-term health of the mid continent light goose populations, as well as that of dozens of other migratory bird species that depend on the arctic breeding grounds and migrate through or winter in the U.S.

With preliminary reports from most states in the Central and Mississippi flyways tabulated, the total harvest of lesser snow and Ross' geese, including harvest during both the regular season and the

Goose Habitat Working Group of the Arctic Goose Joint Venture recommended that the number of mid-continent light geese be reduced by approximately 50 percent by 2005 in order to halt the destruction of arctic breeding habitat caused by overgrazing. A recent report by arctic goose researchers estimates that reaching that target requires an annual harvest of 1.4 million geese.

Increasing agricultural and refuge development along waterfowl flyways through the Midwest and South has provided light geese with ample forage during their yearly migrations. As a result, adult mortality rates for light geese have fallen steadily over the past three decades, triggering explosive population growth.



special conservation order, totaled 1.32 million birds, an increase of more than 23 percent over the nearly 1.1 million birds harvested during 1998-99. The preliminary estimate of harvest during the conservation order alone increased to more than 578,000 birds, from less than 342,000 birds harvested during the spring of 1999.

A 1997 report authored by the Arctic

States have been given the authority to implement a conservation order under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that would allow hunters to take light geese outside of traditional migratory bird hunting season frameworks – in Kansas, Feb. 4-April 30, 2000.

-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

What many are calling an overpopulation of deer, Christians are calling manna from Heaven. Farmers and hunters, with the financial support of churches, businesses, organizations, processors, and individuals have joined for the common purpose of distributing this renewable food resource to the hungry of Maryland and other states. Formed in 1997 as a pilot program in Washington County, Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry (FHFH) used Virginia's successful Hunters For the Hungry as a model.

With the growing number of deer in Maryland, crop and property damage permits are being issued to farmers, airports, military installations, and agricultural facilities. In addition, liberal bag limits and extended seasons are putting hunters in the position of being able to harvest more deer than they can personally consume.

Successful farmers and hunters follow normal check-in or crop damage permit procedures defined under Maryland Department of Natural Resources regulations. Farmers and hunters deliver the harvested surplus deer to participating meat processors in each county. Donations from churches, clubs, businesses, and individuals cover the costs of processing, packaging, and freezing the meat.

The meat is picked up from the participating meat processors and delivered free of cost to food banks located throughout the state. This low-fat, high protein meat is then distributed and/or cooked by hundreds of community agencies such as church pantries, church feeding ministries, Salvation Army, community food banks, emergency assistance programs, Rescue Missions, and children's homes.

For more information on Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry, visit their website at www.fhfh.org.

-FHFH news

KANSAS QUAIL UNLIMITED IS UNMATCHED

During the Quail Unlimited (QU) National Convention in St. Louis, Mo., last fall, several Kansas QU chapters received top awards. Winning the Top Gun award in Division A was the Kaw Valley Chapter of Topeka. The Top Gun award is calculated on a number of criteria, including funds raised, fund-raising efficiency, members, youth programs, and habitat programs. Winning third place in the Top Gun competition was the Ark Valley Chapter in Wichita.

The Division 1 National Habitat award went to the Ark Valley Chapter, as well. The National Habitat Award is given based upon the number and diversity of habitat projects completed by a chapter. Ark Valley QU also won the Great Plains Regional Youth in Conservation award.

President's Club awards were earned by Ron Whitney, Emporia Area QU; Steve Damron, Kaw Valley QU; Mike Christensen, Ark Valley QU; Doyle Angleton, Neosho Valley QU, Chanute; and Larry Adams, Upper Neosho Valley QU, Council Grove.

Kaw Valley was recognized for recruiting more than 50 sponsor members with a total of 89, and the Ark Valley Chapter made the top 10 in the Net Income For a Banquet category.

In addition, the Kaw Valley Chapter was awarded the Chevy Truck award for the most dependable, longest-lasting Quail Unlimited chapter.

Dan "Boone" Vidricksen, of the Tri Rivers Chapter in Salina, won the Golden Quail award for individual commitment to Quail Unlimited and long-standing service to a chapter.

All in all, it was a very good year for Kansas Quail Unlimited chapters.

-Shoup

YOUTH EXPERIENCE THRILL OF DEER HUNTING

You could almost taste the anticipation as 18 young hunters gathered at the Anthony Gun Club in southcentral Kansas on Sept. 30. The lucky youth, three girls and 15 boys, were selected to participate in a special youth deer hunt that was held during the first-ever youth deer season, Sept. 30-Oct. 1.

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks district wildlife biologist Brad Odle organized the hunt, beginning last November. Odle started by talking to landowners in the Anthony area, as well as local sportsmen's groups about helping with the event. He was not disappointed.

"I was really overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and cooperation this hunt generated," Odle said. "The local chapter of Quail Unlimited volunteered to provide a hamburger feed on Saturday, and I was able to secure permission for up to 20 hunters from 12 different area landowners."

The Anthony Gun Club offered its facilities for the pre-hunt event, which included sighting in rifles. The Attica Locker offered half-price processing and helped get the deer to coolers quickly on the evening and morning of the hunt. And the City of Anthony opened some facilities at the Anthony City Lake for hunters who stayed overnight.

"The hunt wouldn't have happened without the help and generosity of a lot of people," Odle added.

The hunters began arriving at the Anthony Gun Club early Saturday afternoon. After a brief introduction, the youngsters learned about hunting safety, hunting techniques, shot placement and deer biology. A rifle range was set up so all could sight in and get comfortable with their rifles. After supper, guides, youth and accompanying adults slipped on orange vests and hats and prepared for an evening hunt. Eighteen trios traveled to different locations in Harper County where Odle, after weeks of scouting, had placed blinds to hide the hunters.

Even though the warm, windy weather wasn't ideal for deer hunting, nearly every group saw deer, and five lucky hunters tagged their first deer that evening. All met back at the gun club where stories flowed from excited youngsters and congratulations gushed from equally excited adults. After several photo sessions, the deer were taken to the Attica Locker.

On Sunday morning, 13 sleepy youngsters with unfilled deer tags gathered for breakfast before returning to their blinds. Four more tags were filled, and several young hunters had opportunities. But the success of the hunt was measured more by the participants' fun and enthusiasm than by the number of deer taken. Everyone involved – guides, parents and young hunters – left with a smile.

The youth hunt and special youth deer season were part of the department's "Pass It On" program, which is designed to reverse the declining trend in the number of Kansans who hunt.

Hunting is a treasured Kansas heritage that must be passed down from one generation to the next. It is also the most effective wildlife management tool, providing millions of dollars to the economy annually, as well as long-term funding for wildlife management and wildlife law enforcement through the sale of licenses and permits.

Fewer hunters means less social, political, and financial support for hunting. But more alarming is the fact that as the number of active hunters declines, fewer youngsters will experience hunting each fall. Hunting provides parents and mentors the opportunity to spend quality time with young people. The one-on-one attention hunting requires bridges the generation gap, and hunting teaches children compassion, respect, responsibility, and the value of our wild resources.

"Pass It On" provides many special opportunities to pass on the hunting heritage. For more information on the "Pass It On" program and youth hunting seasons, contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, (316) 672-5911.

-Miller

Millennium Pheasant



by Mark Shoup



The last day of the 20th Century was a rowdy one at the Shoup homestead. We rolled out of our bunks bright and early to make town in time for Sunday worship, this being the last Sunday of the millennium.

A norther supposedly headed our way, I asked my folks to leave home early if they had a notion to spend the holiday with us. I figured Dad would fuss about the weather, but that just inspired Mom to hustle him out and drive down while we were in town. Rose had after-church business to tend to, so the boys and I came home in time to meet my folks at the door.

I nearly came unglued at both ends when I opened the door and was greeted by the cat, Patches – a fierce mouser at home in the barn, not the house. “Boys! You’ve got to keep the door closed when that cat’s around!” I scolded.

“I didn’t do it!” they harmonized.

But the cat was soon forgotten as we unloaded pumpkin pie, nuts, chips, and other grub to help us make it through the day. Soon, the aroma of hot coffee filled the kitchen, and Dad was firmly planted in a chair at the table, munching on peanuts. Muted sunlight poured through the windows, and the music of conversation energized the house as 12- and nine-year-old footsteps drummed in every room at once.

Then came the discovery: “Dad!” Will exclaimed excitedly. “Patches pooped on Grandma’s bed!” This was apparently more interesting than watching a friend get his tongue stuck on a frozen flagpole. The grievous violation was strategically placed, however, so cleanup amounted to little more than washing the comforter.

“Dad!” Now it was Logan’s turn for news. “It’s snowing!” Sure enough it was, but not the blanket-ripping blizzard we had feared. These were large flakes, drop-

ping vertically as if lowered by invisible puppet strings in gentle descent.

The temperature nudging 30 degrees, it was a Hallmark-card day in the country, and Dad was getting restless (having been gone from home more than two hours). As I poured a cup of coffee over the kitchen sink, he hobbled over to me and mused, “I sure would like to have a pheasant.”

Then as if on queue, seven longtails flew into the weeds on the west end of the corral 200 yards away. I watched them through the window and I smiled wryly. “Well, how ‘bout I just go get you one?” I threw on a sweatshirt, grabbed my shotgun from the safe, and marched out the door with a wink.

The bright air was crisp and silent in the light snowfall, not even cold enough to require a hat. Within minutes, I kicked an old rooster out of the weeds and killed him dead with one shot. But I did not want to go in.

From the kitchen (I would later learn), Mom watched me trundle past the pond toward the tall cottonwood shelterbelt. “Looks like he’s carry something,” she told Dad.

Stalking the grass and weeds north of the belt, I flushed nary a feather but didn’t care. My head was clear, my senses as sharp as a snowflake’s crystal. I rounded the trees just as Rose arrived. She signaled thumbs-up from the porch as I proudly raised the bird. *What a day!* I thought. *A fine New Year’s Eve.*

“I wish you could have been there,” I told Dad as I displayed the bird in the kitchen. His eyes lit up.

“Oh, I would’ve loved to been,” he smiled, obviously delighted at the prospect. “Those days are over for me, though,” he added, as if discussing the hooves of a worn out stallion. It was not regret that he expressed, so much as

reminiscence.

I pulled the longer tail feathers for Rose and cut the spurs off for the boys. Then I cleaned the bird carefully and salted the hide. The New Year’s Eve pheasant would be saved for posterity.

As the millennium’s last light faded on dwindling snowflakes, I fired up the grill and sizzled venison backstrap and pheasant while Mom and Rose bustled around Dad in the kitchen, he telling the boys stories and teasing Mom while a potato casserole bubbled in the oven.

After supper, I lit a fire, and Rose, Mom, the boys, and I convinced Dad to participate in a game of Gunfighters and Trailblazers, a trivia game about the Old West. Dad didn’t really want to play, but he knew more answers than any of us. I think he won the game on this question:

“Cowboys called them ‘deceitful beans’ because they did what?” The answer? “Talked behind your back.” Only Dad would know that one.

Then with the fire flaming high, we switched on the TV to see what was happening in the big cities, where droves gathered in the streets. There must have been a million in Times Square, where Dick Clark (who actually remembers the Old West) cheered the crowds on.

Rose was the first to turn in, and with goodnights to her, we all allowed as how we were happy to be here on the farm and not in New York City. Dad was soon to follow, and Will conked out on the floor, rolled in his blanket. About 11:30, Logan mumbled through droopy eyes, “Wake me up when it’s midnight.”

As the bells tolled the new year and lights, whistles, and cheers filled the streets of cities far away, Mom and I clinked a champagne toast before she shuffled off to bed. Merely embers now, the fire’s warmth filled the room, and I tucked the boys in for the night.

Before I gave up the ghost, I had to inhale one more deep breath from the back stoop. The clouds had cleared, and the winter sky shimmered above white earth. Then I heard one stubborn pheasant crow in the distance, as if claiming the new year for himself.

“Good night, Long-tail,” I whispered, and slipped back into the warm silence of the house where the day’s memories rested, waiting for dawn.

MILFORD CAT MAN

As I read the new *In-Fisherman* "2001 Catfish Insider Guide," I could not believe what I was seeing. Milford Reservoir was rated a top-three lake in North America for channel catfishing.

After doing a little research, I discovered why our lake is getting this national recognition. A one-man catfishing machine is largely responsible, for Jim "Catfish" Leonard of Junction City was born to catch catfish. If you don't believe me, ask to look at his awards book. He has more than 100 state and national awards for catching giant channel catfish.

I recently sat down with Leonard and asked him to share a few tips with me. "As soon as the ice clears off Milford Lake, you can catch catfish," he said. "I'll fish in 45 to 55 feet of water during the colder months, usually in or near the river channel.

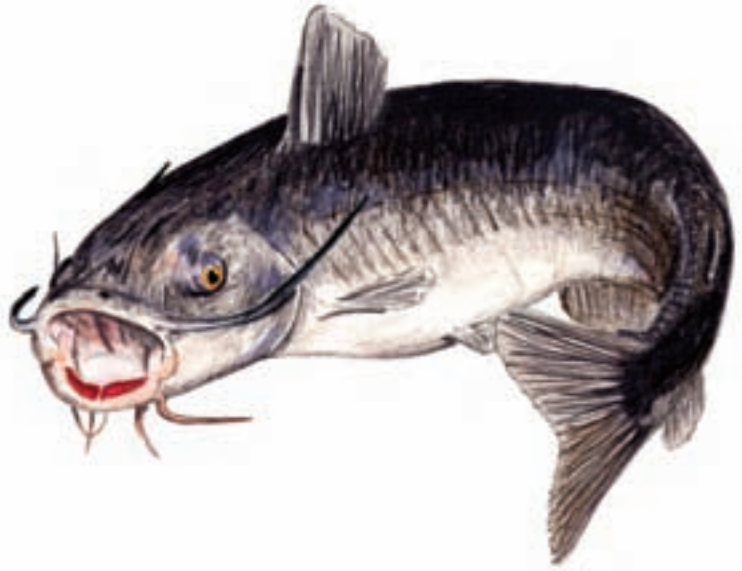
"My favorite baits are shad guts and sour shad," he added. "I pick up my shad as they wash to the bank or net them. Some anglers like to use store-bought baits, but it's hard to beat shad from Milford Lake. As the water gets warmer, I move closer to the bank. Always try to fish a windward bank because it gets the catfish feeding."

When I asked Leonard to share a secret to catching big cats, he said to use the lightest sinker you can.

In-Fisherman magazine is well respected in the fishing field, and just being listed is an honor. Milford was rated the No. 3 lake in North America as a channel cat fishery, No. 3 in the "Hot List for Trophy Channel Cats in North America," and No. 4 on size. The top-rated months were September and October. If you want to talk to Leonard, just look for a custom built catfish boat on Milford Reservoir. Don't worry; you'll recognize the boat by the painting on the side – Catfish Fever.

If you need free maps of Milford Reservoir and vicinity, phone the Geary County Convention and Visitors' Bureau toll-free at 1-800-528-2489.

– Rick Dykstra, marketing director,
Geary County Convention
and Visitors' Bureau



STATE FISH

ART CONTEST

Hey Kids! Sharpen your pencils and clean your paintbrushes! The deadline for the 2001 State-Fish Art Contest is March 31! The Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest is open to all students in grades 4 through 12 who attend public, private, or home-schools in the United States. Only one entry per child will be accepted.

Portfolios will be judged on the quality of the artwork. The artwork must call attention to the official fish of the student's home state. If the home state does not have an official fish, that state's fisheries department has selected an alternative fish species (called a "preferred native"). Kansas kids should use the channel catfish. The fish must be depicted in its natural habitat. Information about each state fish is available at www.statefishart.com.

All artwork must be the contestant's original, hand-done creation. Photographs and computer-generated artwork will not be accepted. All artwork must be horizontal, 8.5 x 11 inches without a mat, frame, cover sheet, or border. Art techniques may include scratch-board, pointillism, chalk, charcoal, dry brush, watercolor, cross-hatch, lead, collage, linoleum printing,

or crayon. (Please note: if contestants use chalk or lead they should seal it with an adhesive).

All artwork must not exceed 1/4 inch in total thickness. No lettering, signatures, or initials may appear on the front of the design. Any artwork with such identifying characteristics will be disqualified and eliminated from the competition.

Completed portfolios must include a typed composition or theme paper not to exceed one page. Compositions should be related specifically to the characteristics of the state fish, its habitat, behavior, or efforts to conserve it. The composition must include the student's name and address.

Entries must be postmarked by March 31, 2001, and include a completed entry form, the artwork, and the one-page composition. (Please include your name and address on your composition.)

Entry forms are available by calling toll-free 1-877-FISHART (877-347-4278. (please allow two weeks by mail) or may be downloaded from www.statefishart.com. Entry forms must be completed, signed by a parent or guardian, and glued to the back of the original artwork.

Completed entries should be mailed to Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest, 10365 W. 70th St., Eden Prairie, MN 55344. Wildlife Forever

BEST BIRDS

Here is the list of 10 “best” birds, as reported last year and presented at the fall 2000 meeting of the Kansas Ornithological Society (KOS).

10. Wood Stork - This juvenile bird was found at the duck ponds in Lee Richardson Zoo in Garden City on June 19.

9. Calliope Hummingbird invasion - Reports were submitted by Mark Corder (8/9-8/12) for a bird in Pawnee County. Mike Rader submitted reports for birds in Haskell (8/21) and Stevens counties (8/22). Leonard Rich submitted a report for a bird in Finney County (7/28).

8. Pyrrhuloxia - Two reports of this southwestern species were received. Joyce Davis observed an adult male in Dodge City on May 1, and Lou Winterfield of Mesa, Arizona, reported an adult female at Quivira NWR on May 24.

7. Cassin's Finch - This species was reported several times in September and

October 2000.

6. Pygmy Nuthatch - A bird was reported from Rush County on Sept 10. Another was seen in Morton County and reported on Sept. 23.

5. Williamson's Sapsucker - Reported on Sept. 23, apparently seen by “many observers.” This bird is on the state checklist on the basis of a single record in 1935.

4. Long-billed Thrasher - This species was reported from Morton County on June 2.

3. Painted Redstart - C. Fred Zeillemaker and his wife Melly (of Ola, Idaho) were passing through Quivira National Wildlife Refuge on April 5 when they saw this bird. The Zeillemakers had just spent a couple of weeks in SE Arizona and were quite familiar with the bird. A report was received on April 6. This, coupled with the Pyrrhuloxia report noted above, indicates that out-of-state birders can find the KOS website and can successfully report a rare bird. This

would be the first record of this species for the state.

2. Juniper Titmouse - Sighted by Scott Seltman, Mike Rader, and Ted Cable in Morton County (Sept. 30). Sebastian Patti saw the bird again on Oct. 7. The juniper titmouse was a recent addition to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list of North American Birds, resulting from a split of the plain titmouse into juniper and oak titmouses. This would be a first record of this species in Kansas.

1. Flammulated Owl - Seen on May 20 by Sebastian Patti, Alexis Powell, Mike Rader, and Scott Seltman at the Fish and Wildlife Service Work Station at the Cimarron National Grasslands in Morton County. This record of flammulated owl would be the first state record for this southwestern species.

To report rare birds, visit www.ksu.edu/audubon/rarebirdform.html

-Kansas Ornithological Society
website www.ksbirds.org

UNWANTED GUESTS

Bats that fly into human living quarters often leave on their own if a window or door to the outside is opened while others leading to the rest of the house are closed.

An exit can be hastened by catching the bat in flight with a hand net (swung from behind), or when the bat lands, covering it with a coffee can and slipping a piece of cardboard over the opening, and then simply releasing it outside. Or you may also catch it by hand, using leather work gloves to avoid being bitten. As with any wild animal, bats should not be handled with bare hands.

Bats can be excluded from living quarters by covering chimneys and vents with half inch hardware cloth screens, by installing draft guards beneath doors, and by sealing any other possible access routes, especially around screen doors, windows, and plumbing. Entries can be plugged with silicone caulking, steel wool, or temporarily with tape.

If a large bat colony must be evicted from a wall or attic, careful observations should be made at dusk to find entry holes. The bats must emerge each summer evening to feed. Once entrances have been located, the bats can be excluded although this should not be attempted when flightless young may be present (usually June or July).

There is a relatively simple exclusion technique that can

be used after young are flying but prior to the winter months. Inexpensive light-weight polypropylene netting with a mesh-size of 1/4-inch or smaller (1/6-inch is preferred) can be obtained in quantity

to cover areas of nearly any size. It can be hung during daylight hours above areas where bats emerge using duct tape or staples.

A strip of netting at least two feet wide, hung 1 to 2 inches in front of bat exit holes and extending at least two feet below and to the side of exit points, will allow the bats to emerge, but later they will be unable re-enter. Thus, the netting acts as a simple one-way excluder until repairs can make the exclusion permanent. A sheet of clear, heavy-weight plastic will have the same affect. The netting (or plastic) should be left in place for two to three days to ensure that all bats have left the roost.

For more information about bats, visit www.batcon.org.

-Bat Conservation International



SONGBIRD BUNDLES

A special "Songbird Bundle" is available through K-State Conservation Tree Planting Program. The bundle contains three trees and 17 shrubs including three eastern redcedar, three Peking cotoneaster, five common ninebark, five fragrant sumac and four golden currant seedlings all selected for their attractiveness to various songbirds.

"Common ninebark is new to the bundle this year," says Bill Loucks, forester with the Kansas Forest Service. "It is native to north central United States and as far south as Missouri."

Loucks says that ninebark is effective in attracting songbirds. Its flowers attract butterflies and other insects which in turn attracts various songbirds. Its name is taken from the way the mature bark curls away from the stem resembling the figure 9. The attractive flowers are white or pinkish in terminal clusters in mid-spring. The small, red fruit is produced in the fall and is not commonly seen. Overall, the plant may remind you of Vanhoutte spirea.

"Ninebark will grow throughout Kansas, on dry, sandy soils as well as heavy clays," says Loucks. "It is very tough, drought tolerant and will grow in full sunlight or partial shade."

The Songbird Bundle will give you a small island, providing some year-round cover and supplemental food

during late summer, fall, and winter. You can further enhance an area for songbirds by careful selection of other plants that are beneficial to wildlife. A tall specimen deciduous tree or two may be desirable, or perhaps a vine-covered fence or arbor. Because insects are an important part of the diet of many birds, annual and perennial flowering plants should be included in wildlife plantings. Concentrate on blossoms that are attractive to butterflies and other insects as well as hummingbirds. Flowers that produce seeds for birds to eat can also be included.

The Songbird Bundle costs \$14.50 plus handling and shipping. The cost of the bundle is partially financed by the Department of Wildlife and Parks from contributions to the Chickadee Checkoff on state income tax forms.

For help with ordering Kansas Forest Service's Songbird Bundle or other low-cost conservation trees and shrubs, contact your local county conservation district or county extension office.

--Kansas Forest Service

SPORTFISHING CERTIFICATION

On March 16-18, the Kansas 4-H Sportfishing Certification Workshop will be held at the Rock Spring 4-H Center, near Junction City.

The workshop starts on Saturday at 8 a.m. and concludes on Sunday at 1:30

p.m. Those who have a long distance to travel are welcome to come on Friday, March 15. The cost for Friday evening through Sunday is \$95, which covers meals, lodging, refreshments, breaks and project materials. The cost for Saturday through Sunday is \$85.

Early registration is encouraged. Questions may be directed to Dana Belshe, Sportfishing Committee Chair, Sherman County Extension Office, (785) 899-4880, or to Conall Addison, Southwest Area 4-H Specialist, (620) 275-9164. Please make checks payable to the KSU 4-H Foundation.

--K-State Cooperative Extension Service

BACKPACKER SCHOLARSHIP

Backpacker magazine is offering its annual outdoor scholarship program. The program awards college juniors and seniors \$1,000 scholarships. Backpacker looks for students who have demonstrated exceptional talent, dedication, and accomplishment in one of two categories: 1) outdoor writing and communication, and 2) outdoor/environmental leadership. Contact Lori S. Ball, Backpacker magazine, 135 N. Sixth St., Emmaus, PA 18098, or phone (610) 967-7771, fax (610) 967-8181, or email lball@backpacker.com.

--Outdoors Unlimited

HUNTER ED GROUP HONORED

Continuing with the custom initiated by Fort Scott Mayor Ken Lunt, the first volunteer group recognized in 2001 by city officials was the group of men who provide hunter education in Bourbon County. With several of the volunteers sitting in the City Commission meeting audience last January, Lunt said, "We think you're doing an outstanding job by helping hunters to hunt in a safer manner."

"The group we are recognizing provides an outstanding service to our area's young men and women," Lunt continued. "Participants will remember for a lifetime the important instructions learned in Bourbon County's Hunter Education Program. Hunter education is an excellent program, and Bourbon County is fortunate to have a group of volunteers dedicated to teaching our youngsters the proper use of firearms."

Accepting the framed certificate of appreciation, Larry Coiner, area coordinator, thanked the group of people he attributed to helping make the program what it is today.

Bourbon County presently has 13 volunteer instructors, some of which have 28 years of teaching experience. Each year, these volunteers conduct eight to 10 classes and certify some 200 students.

--from "Group Teaches Hunter Safety," by Lynn Johnston, Fort Scott Tribune

by Mark Shoup

Oh, Give Me
A Home




... where the buffalo roam,
where the deer and the antelope play.

Every Kansas elementary school student is familiar with these lyrics; they're from the official Kansas state song, "Home On the Range" (lyrics by Dr. Brewster Higley, music by Daniel Kelley). It's the official Kansas state song because the Kansas Legislature made it so in 1947.

Most official Kansas symbols evoke the outdoors. The Sunflower State, as we are often called, officially gained statehood on January 29, 1861. It was named after the Indians that the Sioux called the Kansa, meaning "people of the south wind."

The official Kansas flag has a dark blue background with the state seal in the center. A sunflower on a bar of twisted gold lies above the seal. The seal contains a landscape that includes a rising sun, a river, and a man plowing a field. A wagon train heads west, and buffalo are seen fleeing from two Indians. Around the top of

the seal is a cluster of thirty-four stars. The state motto - Ad Astra per Aspera - appears above the stars.



Even this motto evokes the outdoors: "To the Stars through Difficulties."

The actions of one elementary school show one way a symbol becomes official. Caldwell,

Kansas became the official ornate box turtle capital of the world in 1986 after a massive campaign by the 1985-86 Caldwell 6th grade class to have the ornate box turtle named the official state reptile. The turtle was named the state reptile on April 14, 1986, when Kansas Gov. John Carlin signed the official bill passed by the legislature.

In 1994, a similar effort by Wichita school children resulted in the barred tiger



state mammal? Of course, it's the first critter named in the state song – the buffalo, more correctly called the American bison. This great animal once roamed the Sunflower State by the millions.

In 1937, the Kansas legislature proclaimed one of our more familiar wildlife, the meadowlark, the state bird because it is “preferred by a vote of Kansas school children.”

And who could ignore the state flower: “She's a sunflower,/She's my one flower/She's a sunflower from the Sunflower State,” as the song goes, and the sunflower holds a special place in the hearts of all Kansans. Thus, the legislature reasoned in 1903:

“This flower has to all Kansans a historic symbolism which speaks of frontier days, winding trails, pathless prairies, and is full of the life and glory

of the past, the pride of the present, and richly emblematic of the majesty of a golden future.”

The legislature specified only the genus *Helianthus*, so take your pick of the several sunflower species found in Kansas.

As the Great Seal of Kansas depicts, Kansans are an industrious people, so what more appropriate symbol for the state insect than the honeybee? This interesting and beneficial animal was declared the state insect in 1976.

But if you were asked to pick a symbol of strength and majesty closely associated with images of the prairie, none would be more endearing than the giant cottonwood tree, found throughout Kansas. In 1937, the Kansas Legislature named this popular tree a Kansas state symbol.

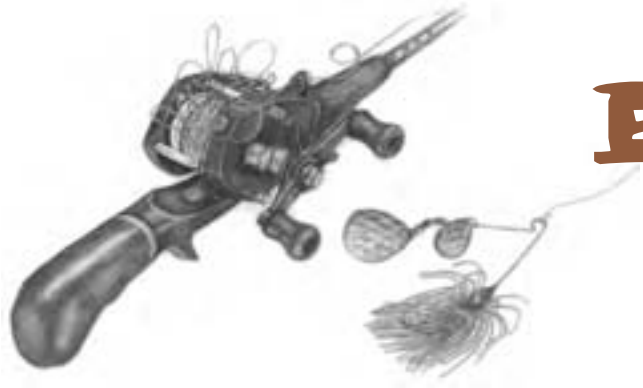
Believe it or not, Kansas has a state soil. Harney silt loam was adopted as the Kansas

State Soil on April 12, 1990, when Governor Mike Hayden signed Senate Bill 96. Kansas is one of only seven states to have named a state soil. It took five years through a strong grassroots effort to get Harney named as the state soil.



Is there anything left? Other suggestions for state symbols have been made, such as a state fish and a state fossil, but so far, they have not joined the elite – the symbols of a great state.





Backlash

by Mike Miller

Reel Rehab

Lennie showed up on my doorstep the other evening with a forlorn look on his face. He was carefully cradling a small shoe box.

"Please tell me it can be saved," he said, his voice wavering. "It looks bad, but could you take a look and give me your honest opinion?"

Half afraid to look in the box, I warned Lennie that I probably wasn't the right person to ask.

"I'm not a vet, Lennie. But I'll have a look if it will make you feel better," I said, full of compassion.

Lennie wrinkled his brow like he hadn't the slightest idea what I was talking about. He pushed the box toward me, and I carefully cracked the lid.

"It's not going to jump out. Jeeze, it's just a fishing reel," he said with a chuckle.

"Well, good grief," I said, embarrassed. I grabbed the box from Lennie and threw open the lid. There in a disassembled mess was what used to be a casting reel — tiny screws, springs, washers, and other parts mixed together. Lennie went on the defensive.

"It was sounding kind of rough, and I figured I could take the cover off, dab some oil and grease on the gears and fix 'er right up. But when I took that cover off, stuff started springing out. I tried to save all the parts, but I'm not sure. I've spent the last two hours trying to squeeze it back together, and I'm about to tear my hair out. It's my favorite casting reel, and you can't buy 'em like that anymore. You were the only one I could think of."

"Take it easy, man. It's going to be alright," I said, only half in jest. I knew Lennie didn't have the patience to work with tiny reel parts, but I never dreamed he was so attached to this reel.

"I've got a reel just like this, Lennie. If we can't figure it out, we'll open mine and see how it goes back together. We'll have it working in no time," I said trying to comfort him.

"We?" Lennie said sheepishly. "I, uh, I have to, well, some of the guys need a fourth for their pitch game, and I kind of told them I'd be there. You don't want me around, anyway. You know how impatient I am with these things. I know you can do it," he said, in a weak attempt to flatter me as he walked down the driveway.

"Fix it tonight, and we'll run out to Shuck's pond and catch some those hawg bass this weekend."

There was a good chance I could get Lennie's reel back together. I'd reassembled several of my own, and unfortunately, I'd bragged about it to Lennie. What Lennie didn't know is that I had several shoe boxes just like his — reels I'd taken apart and couldn't save. I kept that to myself, not wanting to throw Lennie into a panic, which I figured might last at least until the pitch game started. As he smiled and drove away, I realized he wasn't as sentimental about the reel as he was worried about what a new replacement would cost.

I took down my own shoe box so I'd have some spare parts in case some of the jumping springs and washers had escaped Lennie. And I grabbed another secret: an owner's manual with a schematic drawing of the reel and all its parts. I know it breaks some male genetic code to consult directions to reassemble something mechanical, but some reels require drastic measures.

The reconstruction was a success, and Lennie's reel is working again. It took three tries before everything worked, or I found a leftover washer or spring after I'd tightened the last cover screw down. Lennie will never know.

"Piece of cake," I chirped, as I handed Lennie his cherished reel. "You just have to have patience, and of course, superior mechanical aptitude. You owe me big time, now."

Lennie's attitude changed as he tightened the reel back on his rod.

"Thanks," he said casually. "I figured it wouldn't be that big of a deal. In fact, I would have done it myself, but I know you hate to play pitch and needed something to do. I know you like working on reels and that you'd want to go fishing soon, so in a way, I was doing you a favor."

"Favor, my foot!" I said, exasperated. "Naahh, you owe me. In fact, you'll owe me even more when I'm finished showing you how to catch some of those Shuck pond fish. Get your stuff. We're going right now, before you find a way to weasel out." ♡

