

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks

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On Point

by Mike Hayden



Change For The Better

“The Missouri was a buckskin river, a wild river drawing its medicine from the Big Sky. More men went up it than came back down — but they sent back the gold and beaver plew to prove they got there.”

John Madson, Out Home

The Missouri River was powerful, rich in resources, and full of mystery and adventure in 1800. It was the lifeline of one of the most amazing journeys ever chronicled when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out to discover a passage to the Pacific Northwest in 1804. The great river has since been dammed, channeled and harnessed into a much different resource.

In the September/October 2008 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine, we reprinted an article from *North Dakota Water* magazine entitled “1944 Flood Control Act Doesn’t Make Good on Promises.” This is an important issue to people who live along and enjoy the Missouri River, but it is also important to Kansans who enjoy Milford, Tuttle Creek and Perry reservoirs, since they are affected by Missouri River management decisions. The article basically said that it is time for change. The 65-year-old legislation is clearly outdated.

In this issue, you will read the second of the two-part series, also written by Angela Magstadt with The North Dakota Water Education Foundation. Part Two talks about changes in management practices that are needed.

The Flood Control Act of 1944 promised flood control, low-cost hydropower, irrigation, municipal water, and jobs. The package was attractive to our country at that time. However, other than flood control, the plan has never lived up to its promises. Now we’re in a very different time, and expectations from such an important law are much different.

A new Act should be developed that incorporates today’s values, as well as changes in water usage and climate. The Act should also provide flexibility in operations and management so that it doesn’t unduly bind future generations with the visions of this generation. Issues that must be addressed include fish and wildlife, ecological restoration, recreation, hydropower, municipal

water supplies, sedimentation, tribal issues, and climate change. A balance can be found that will better serve the basin as a whole, better protect and restore our natural resources and better ensure that all users of the Missouri River are provided for.

There are many stakeholders that should be heard and new issues that must be addressed. The old law must be changed, and while change is never easy, it is a far better path to follow than doing nothing. The economics alone justify the changes, especially when you look at potential expenditures for endangered species habitat, mitigation for critical habitats lost, and the impact of drought on recreation.

The Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST) has made a request for Congress to review this archaic law and the current stakeholders have a list of issues they believe deserve consideration. While all are important, this agency is highly interested in seeing changes made to accommodate wildlife and recreation concerns.

All along the Missouri River, more than 4 million anglers, hunters, campers, and boaters spend tens of millions of dollars every year. In Kansas, the reservoirs affected by Missouri River management — Milford, Tuttle Creek, and Perry — are three of our most popular recreation areas. Communities near these state parks, lakes, and wildlife areas benefit economically as a result of this recreation. Demands made for water, particularly during dry weather cycles, can have a tremendous negative impact on visitation and income, as well as the communities that depend on these lakes for water supply.

KDWP has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on mitigation projects designed to replace crucial habitats. However, it makes good sense to incorporate management actions that in some cases might actually allow the river to mitigate itself, at a much lower cost.

Through MoRAST, Kansas’ interests will be represented, and we will continue to work toward cooperation and change to benefit not only this generation but generations yet to come. ♡

- 1 On Point**
Change For The Better *by Mike Hayden*
- 12 2007 KDWP Annual Report**
- 14 Kansas' Other Quail**
The scaled quail is a unique bird that inhabits about a dozen counties in southwestern Kansas. This beautiful upland game bird offers Kansas hunters and birdwatchers a rare opportunity. *by Jim Pitman*
- 22 Working Together For The Good Of All**
This is the second of a two-part series on the Flood Control Act of 1944. The outdated legislation includes the Master Manual that guides Missouri River management. *by Angela Magstadt*
- 27 Keeping An Eye On Wildlife Health**
KDWP biologists take thousands of samples from wildlife specimens each fall so that a variety of wildlife diseases can be detected, monitored and their spread prevented. *by Ruby Mosher*
- 35 Any Hat Will Fit**
The author spent some time riding with a natural resource officer, or game warden, and learned that the job is anything but boring and much more than just checking hunting licenses. *by J. Mark Shoup*
- 40 Huntin' On The Fort**
The Fort Riley Military Reservation trains thousands of this country's best soldiers. But the expansive reservation also provides some outstanding hunting and fishing opportunities. *by Alan Hynek*
- 45 Backlash**
Defining Success *by Mike Miller*



14

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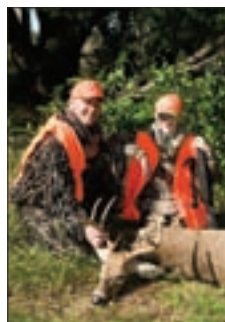
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40



Front Cover: This scaled quail was photographed near Garden City by Mike Blair. 600mm lens, f/4 @ 1/250 sec. **Back Cover:** The Kansas youth deer season provides an early opportunity for youngsters to harvest a Kansas deer. Mike Blair photographed this successful hunt with a 50mm lens, f/11 @ 1/500th sec.



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HUNTER LOSS

Editor:

I haven't written for several years, but I would like to comment on Mike Miller's article (September/October issue) on lack of hunters.

I've been hunting for over 50 years, so I have a pretty good perspective on the lack of interest in hunting today. I am also a landowner and farmer.

Mike is correct in that loss of population to rural areas has affected the amount of hunters. Hunting in rural America is a huge sport and most have left the farm to seek a better standard of living. This in turn affects the city dweller not having the contacts to private hunting privileges because there are fewer rural people to contact for permission and loss of anyone he or she personally knows.

Landowners are less tolerant and trusting than they used to be. When I was young, I grew up in Furnas County Nebraska, I could hunt or fish on anyone's land, except one person. There was an abundance of game, and everyone enjoyed seeing young and old out hunting, especially on opening weekends. Today, getting permission is very hard on private property, even if they know you well.

Money! That's what happened to hunting. Almost everyone who owns any amount of decent hunting wants paid. You've just eliminated 75 percent of the average working families wanting to hunt. Add the price of \$4 gas, \$1,000 guns, high-



HUNTING

with Wayne Doyle

HERITAGE

Load Your Brain Before You Load Your Gun

As you read this, the season of the hunter is here. Enjoy your time in the field by staying safe. Much of what Hunter Education teaches is responsible hunting. You can not be a responsible hunter and be an unsafe gun handler.

"Load Your Brain Before You Load Your Gun." This phrase was drilled into me when I was young. It was meant to make me think constantly while handling a firearm — all the time, every time. It helped me remember the four rules of safe gun handling:

1. **Always control the muzzle of your firearm.**
2. **Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.**
3. **Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.**
4. **Be certain of your target and what lies beyond it.**

If every hunter loaded these rules into their brain before loading their gun, we would never have a hunting incident.

The most common incident in Kansas is a violation of rule Number 4: swinging on game. One hunter fails to see another, swings on a bird, and some of the shot strikes the victim. Remember, you are responsible for every inch that your shot charge or bullet travels. A bullet rarely stops in a deer and not all of the shot strikes a bird. A typical 12 gauge pheasant load could have almost 300 No. 6 pellets in it. As few as two pellets could hit the bird. The rest have to go somewhere. It is your responsibility to know they will not hit something you don't want them to hit.

The second most common incident involves careless gun handling. Every year someone loses digits when a gun goes off unexpectedly while a hand covers the muzzle or the muzzle rests on a foot. It is amazing how many times, after an accident, guns are found with the safety off.

Every year someone is injured or killed when a firearm is being taken out of or put into a vehicle. There is no reason for a loaded shotgun or rifle in a vehicle. There is plenty of time to get out of the vehicle and hunt responsibly.

Road hunting, or better yet road "shooting," caused the death of a young man last year when he was hit by a bullet fired from a nearby road while lying in goose decoys. Each year, landowners, other hunters, livestock, and property are endangered by people who fire random shots into trees or other cover to see what runs out. On the list of irresponsible, unsafe and incredibly stupid things to do, road shooting is at the top.

Hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities. Nineteen incidents in two and one-half million Kansas hunting days last year shows just how safe hunting is. Just be sure to:

LOAD YOUR BRAIN BEFORE YOU LOAD YOUR GUN!

Letter Continued . . .

priced ammunition, along with travel expenses and you have the answer. I hunted free in Barber County for 12 years. I introduced my sons to the area and brought my grandsons up to learn and appreciate the great outdoors. A ranch to the south started fee hunting, so we moved to the north ranch. The north ranch owner said he would never charge. But alas, three years later, he wanted \$4,000 for a lease, and \$5,000 the following year. So my dreams of a family hunting camp for generations came to an end. I am a very small farmer, so we now have quit hunting as a family unit. We hit and miss hunt on what little private land is not posted or leased. Some of my family have quit hunting and will fish instead, due to the ease of fishing access publicly and for less expense.

I'm sorry, but the big bang about public hunting access just doesn't cut it. I'm sure there are some areas that are good, but 95 percent of the areas I've tried are over hunted, have low game numbers, and poor habitat. Most people I know would rather stay home than hunt public land.

So, in a nutshell, that is my perspective on the current situation of hunting. I am truly sad about it, for I believe that it is the greatest sport on earth, and every child should be able to learn about hunting and experience it.

*Tom A. Martin
Wichita*



For birders, winter means the opportunity to bundle up and get back out into the field. Participation in Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) can be a great way to make new acquaintances, renew old friendships, and learn more about birds and bird watching in Kansas.

This is the 109th year for organized Christmas Bird Counts and more than 2,000 counts will be conducted across the U.S. this winter. Kansas averages 52 counts annually. Last year was a low for counts (45), mainly due to the ice storms and other inclement weather. Many counts are concentrated in the eastern and southern parts of the state, but in recent years, more have been conducted in the west.

An individual count starts with a circular census area 15 miles in diameter. These areas stay consistent year-to-year to ensure data show population trends.

All you need to participate is a pair of binoculars, a good field guide, and appropriate clothing and footwear for possible extreme weather conditions. It's usually a

good idea to study expected species for your location. If you are counting in an area with a lake, a spotting scope can be helpful in identifying birds at long distances.

The official Audubon Christmas Bird Count period is always Dec. 14 through Jan. 5, no matter the day of the week those dates fall on. A \$5 fee is required of all those over 18 who participate in an Audubon-sanctioned count, with the money paying for data publication. However, there are many counts in Kansas that only send data to the Kansas Ornithological Society, making them free of charge. The KOS will accept data collected on counts from Dec. 13 through Jan. 18, giving counters two more weekends to help survey their favorite areas.

Information about Kansas CBCs can be found at the Kansas Ornithological Society's website: www.ksbirds.org, or by following a link from KDWP's website or in the KOS Newsletter, *The Horned Lark*.

Letter . . .

ENJOYED BACKLASH

Editor,

Loved your stories in the Backlash. The Brittany talking to her pups was a great story. Of course, I'm a dog lover. My husband loved to hunt. We had numerous German Shorthair Pointers. Lady (lots of Ladies), Pinky, Boo . . . Boo played football, tackling, stealing the ball. She practiced so much with my son Darin, he won a football scholarship. Then we had Brittany's, Lady, Sport – all good hunters.

My father died this year at 93. He owned land on the Arkansas River, and when we fished, we took Boo with us. We would set trotlines on the sand banks and start a pot of coffee. Boo could catch toads for us to use for bait. She knew as much about fishing as hunting. As soon as Boo heard a fish on the line, she'd bark and it was time to go get it and catch more toads. She was a good all-round dog — hunting, fishing, and football. The toads she just put her big paw on and held them until help came.

Love to get your magazine.

Wanda Meier
Burrton

WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



"I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HUNTED TO GET YOUR MIND OFF YOUR WORK."

IT'S THE LAW

with Kevin Jones

Hunter Responsibility

An old adage tells us that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. As I review arrest data, it is apparent the top three hunting-related violations can be avoided with some simple preventative actions.

The most common hunting violation is hunting without a license or permit. Obviously, checking to see if you have a hunting license or permit before you start hunting is simple insurance to avoid a ticket. Over the years, I have heard many excuses from hunters who didn't have hunting licenses. However, it would have only taken a quick check to see if they had their license or permit.

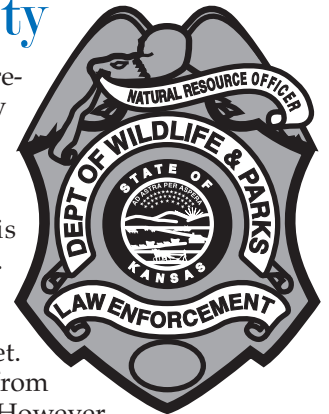
The violation that places a close second is trespass. In Kansas, 97 percent of the land is privately owned and hunters need permission to hunt on this land whether or not it's posted. It is the hunter's obligation to get permission before the hunt starts. The hunter is also responsible to know where he has permission to hunt. Make sure you have a clear understanding of where you can hunt and be sure to stay within that area. Again, a little time spent in preventing a trespass is worth more than the problems that can occur after the violation.

We are lucky to have landowners who support hunting and allow access to their land. They deserve our respect and thanks for providing wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities.

If you don't have permission to hunt private land, there are more than 100 state-owned wildlife areas and more than 1 million acres in the Walk-In Hunting Access program. However, some management areas have refuges where hunting is not allowed, or there may be a requirement for the hunter to register to hunt on the area. In addition, an area may have certain restrictions, such as only allowing non-toxic shot. Be sure to check the rules for that area before hunting. These area-specific rules are posted on the kiosks found at the parking lots.

Finally, the third most common violation is failure to wear hunter orange. The only time a hunter is required to wear orange is when hunting either deer or elk in a hunt unit where a firearms season for either deer or elk is open. The law requires an orange cap or hat and at least 100 square inches of orange displayed in the front and 100 square inches of orange displayed on the hunter's back, a rather simple rule that if followed will prevent a ticket being issued. It also makes sense. Wearing hunter orange has been proven to decrease hunting accidents.

Think ahead, be sure you have what you need, and then enjoy your hunt.



DIGITAL IMAGE

with Mike Blair

Don't be Fooled by Your Camera's Light Meter

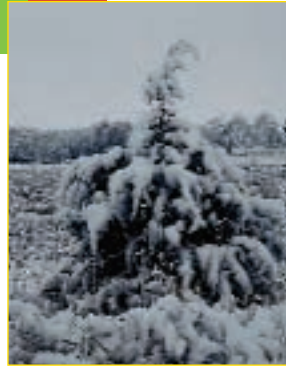
Snow and ice make dazzling photographs, but a white world can fool a camera meter into producing poor results. Fortunately, it's easy to fix this problem either in-camera or through later adjustment using Photoshop or other image software.

Camera light meters are designed to read all images at an average value of 18 percent gray. For most scenes having a balance of light and dark areas, this is about right. However, when the meter "sees" a frame full of white snow, it thinks the snow is average gray. Therefore, it varies exposure to produce a picture with a muddy gray cast. Dark tones in the scene are further darkened, so that the photo is badly underexposed.

Fix this problem in-camera by setting the exposure value adjustment scale for about +1.3 EV. This adds just over one f/stop of light and balances the scene correctly for snow. Then, shoot without fear for all shots where much of the image includes the white background. Consult your camera manual for instructions.

If your digital camera does not have an exposure value adjustment feature, underexposed snow photos can be "fixed" by adjusting them on your computer. Download the photos and open them with your image software program (such as Photoshop.) Use "levels" to adjust the tonal scale so that white appears white and the photo is balanced. Then save the image in its correct form for printing or storage.

Using these tricks will help avoid disappointing results for snowy scenes printed directly out of the camera when winter comes to Kansas.



The New "Wildspeak"

THAT'S WILD
with Ken Brunson

For those born far enough in advance of 1984 to have been assigned reading of a book with that name, this is for your amusement. Or perhaps you were just curious enough to have read this classic from George Orwell without professorial prompting. Unfortunately, the term, "Orwellian," is referenced way too frequently — especially with all the election spin which can easily be classified as "Newspeak" as per the 1984 lingo. It's a bit frightening that ole George predicted the future so accurately. It is clear we are living in that regretful age, not only in politics but in many other arenas, including conservation. However, a couple decades before Orwell penned his famous tome about a dystopic society, Aldo Leopold had most eloquently exposed profound misbehavior in the land and wildlife conservation ethic.

It seems all too customary for wildlifers and organizations, as part of applying "Newspeak," to drop the Leopold name in order to add credibility to some latest dysfunctional idea which happens to run counter to the ideals professed in Leopold's most famous work, *A Sand County Almanac*.

As the father of modern wildlife management, Leopold expressed concern for the quandary of ecologists: "One of the penalties of an ecological education is



that one lives alone in a world of wounds. Much of the damage inflicted on land is quite invisible to laymen. An ecologist must either harden his shell and make believe that the consequences of science are none of his business, or he must be the doctor who sees the marks of death in a community that believes itself well and does not want to be told otherwise."

Beware of false conservation prophets who casually espouse the Leopold name while hefting Newspeak to even more lofty levels. When you hear about "green" energy or climate change, look for money trails and find the sources. Sure, there are pressing wildlife conservation issues we are facing, but perhaps none so threatening as the possible extinction of reasoned thought and impartial science.

On The Web with Mark Shoup

More than one way
to skin a cat



While many people come to the KDWP website (www.kdwp.state.ks.us) just to see what's there, others come looking for specific information. When doing this, website visitors should be aware that there is more than one way to find the information they need.

It's hunting season, so let's say you are looking for the season dates and bag limits for pheasants. You get to the website and see a box at the top that says "Hunting." You click that box and are brought to a page that has a number of articles on hunting, but if you look to the "Hunting Menu" in the left-hand column, you see an item entitled "Upland Bird." You click that and immediately see several links on upland bird hunting, one entitled "Seasons." Click that, and you have the information you were looking for.

The KDWP website also has a search box, and sometimes this can get you where you're headed more quickly. Type "upland birds" in that box, and you will immediately be

shown a link entitled "Upland Game Birds." Click the link, and there you have the same information.

For those who like to explore or are more research-oriented in their approach to finding information on the internet, click "Site Map" at the bottom of the home page. This gives you a large list of links under topics ranging from "Hunting" to "Other Services." If you click the "Upland Birds" link under "Hunting," you are once again taken to the page on

upland bird seasons and bag limits. Those who are curious, however, may find the Site Map an interesting overview of the KDWP website — which includes about 6,000 pages — and discover the wide array of topics found there.

No matter what your approach, information on the KDWP website is easy to find. Stay awhile; you may find more that you imagined.

ALL ABOUT BIRDS

If you're watching birds out the window this winter and discover that you've misplaced your favorite ID book, not to worry. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has just what you are looking for on its "All About Birds" website:

www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide.

Using two different search engines, you can look for a bird you don't know or find a good photo of one you do, with common or scientific names. Quick links to such subjects as how to ID birds, report observations, online field guide, using field marks, and using habitat clues help you become involved in the birding community nationwide.

If you are just getting interested in bird watching, the Cornell site has a menu that covers the basics, including "Birding 123," "Bird Guide," "Gear Guide," "Attracting Birds," "Conservation," and "Learn About Birds."

Winter bird feeding and watching is a fascinating hobby, and there may be no better place to get started than Cornell's "All About Birds" website.





Hunger Kills the Thrill



As sportsmen, we dedicate time and money for our adventures in the field. We wake before daybreak and get back after dark. Often hunger and thirst are accepted inconveniences of a long day. The pack for day-trips probably consists of a granola bar, peanuts, and jug of water.

Every hunter that is a parent hopes to be able to spend quality time in the field with their son or daughter. But a sure-fire way to spoil that fun is to stay too long without food or drink. That old granola bar from the bottom of your pack or water that's been in the truck since September that you share with dog

won't cut it. One bad trip, and staying home to watch Saturday cartoons will sound like more fun.

Plan ahead and designate a small cooler just for the youngster. Pack it full of tasty stuff like fruit snacks, jerky or sausage, apples, and oranges. (I leave out bananas since they make everything smell and taste like bananas.) Pack their favorite pop or juice. Let them access it when they want to. Also, put some of their favorites in your cooler in case they run out. Always keep fresh water available. Pop and juice just won't quench thirst like water.

This will make them feel more comfortable when embarking on new or long adventures. You want them to remember the deer that came by at 10 yards or the group of mallards that lit right in front of them, not that their stomach growled 10 minutes into a hunt or that they were thirsty from walking half a mile through a disced or muddy field.



FISHIN' with Mike Miller

Winter Fishing = Structure

Fishing during the fall and winter can be outstanding, but it tends to be boom or bust. You either catch them or you don't. However, when you hit it right, you'll never find it better.

If there's a key to winter fishing it has to be structure. While many reservoir sport fish may cruise open water chasing shad through the summer, in late fall and winter they hang out around structure. Ideal submerged structure includes trees/brush piles, channel breaks, humps or submerged islands, bridge pylons, or rock piles.

The most popular fall and winter species include crappie, white bass, and wipers since those species often congregate in large schools and feed aggressively on the year's production of gizzard shad. Other popular game fish such as walleye, channel catfish and black bass also feed heavily in the fall and offer good angling opportunities.

Good fall and winter fishing will depend upon finding the right structure, water depth, and matching the "hatch." In Kansas reservoirs, gizzard shad are the

In early fall, shoreline structure, especially rip-rap can be excellent, but as the water cools, the shoreline structure becomes less attractive. Most fish will be caught in water 10-25 feet deep.

primary forage species, so any lure that matches a 3-inch silver/white gizzard shad will work. Remember that as the water temperature cools, cold-blooded fish slow down. They still feed, but your presentation will need to slow down. Vertical fishing is often the method of choice in very cold water. It may take several trips before

you find the right structure at the right time, but when you do, it's worth it.

LOOK BACK

with Bob Mathews

HUNTERS AND ANGLERS: CONSERVATION PIONEERS

The most successful conservation program in history originated in the troubled hearts and minds of American hunters and anglers more than a century ago.

They had witnessed the plunder of their young country's wildlife and wild places. Commercial exploitation of fish and wildlife helped feed and

clothe the country's growing population, but at an unacceptable price. Bison, deer, antelope, elk, wild turkey, furbearers, wood ducks, and hundreds of other species were reduced to scattered remnants. In the mid-1800s, wildlife was rapidly fading from the American landscape. It's our good fortune that a dedicated corps of

early hunters and anglers responded with a revolution in values.

As the 20th century arrived, sportsmen's groups were lobbying for new legislation and for enforcement of the few existing laws aimed at protecting these wild resources. They urged legislators to enact and enforce laws that restricted the very activities they passionately pursued. They called for laws restricting commercial slaughter of wildlife. They urged sustainable use of fish and game, creation of hunting and fishing licenses to provide the financial resources

for the job, and lobbied for taxes on sporting equipment to provide funds for state conservation agencies.

These actions were the foundation of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, a science-based, user-pay system that has yielded the most dramatic conservation success of all time. We owe our gratitude to earlier generations who articulated and reinforced the notion that wildlife belongs to future generations as much as to us.

**PARK
VIEW**



with Kathy Pritchett
**State Parks
Personnel Respond**

Publicity on recent reservoir drownings highlighted the occasionally negative side of outdoor recreation. However, patrons are in good hands when relaxing at a Kansas state park. Parks law enforcement officers (managers and rangers) are fully-certified with statewide authority. Park officers have jurisdiction throughout the state and work closely with local law enforcement.

Rangers assisted the Butler County Sheriff with a search for a missing girl from El Dorado last year. Over several days, officers searched the ditches and side roads off US Highway 54. Eventually, the body of the young girl was found, and the suspect was apprehended. Meade State Park officers pursued a kidnap/rape suspect and his 12-year-old victim into Oklahoma. His arrest cleared up six warrants from Meade, Ford and Seward counties under four different aliases. Parks officers responded in Osage County to a possibility of a bomb at a school.

Law enforcement in the parks is proactive and service-oriented; officers stand ready to respond in any capacity necessary. Most park officers (and often office and maintenance staff) are EMTs or first responders. Crawford State Park and Farlington Hatchery staff, assisted by county emergency workers, made headlines rescuing a couple stranded on top of their car by floodwaters. Prairie Spirit Trail

manager Trent McCown assisted with four separate water rescues last spring, including searching for individuals from his personal kayak at midnight when the cell phone signal from trapped motorists faded. Prairie Spirit ranger Phil Bures participated in two water rescues. Ranger Jeff Ostlund and NRO Sam Allred rescued three people in flooded areas in Reno County. Cheney State Park manager Jody Schwartz and rangers Ryan Stucky and Jake Hunninghake assisted with rescue efforts along the Arkansas River on May 8 after levees broke. At a house surrounded by flood waters, manager Dale Schwieger, on a personal watercraft, rescued a couple and a horse.

Park managers and rangers from around the state, in addition to personnel from the other divisions, worked security shifts in Greensburg after last spring's devastating tornado. McCown's extensive training in incident command systems enabled him to work through the logistics to place an AmeriCorps crew in Greensburg for the entire summer. For two weeks, McCown worked as the logistics officer in the Miami County Emergency Operations Center, providing logistical support for flood operations in the city of Osawatomie.

In addition to law enforcement authority, park managers are the CEOs of their parks. They manage personnel, budgets, construction projects, maintenance issues, and special events. Most look at it as just part of the job. They may be heroes to those they assist, but to them it is, as one manager put it, "nothing out of the ordinary."

PROFILE: with Mark Shoup

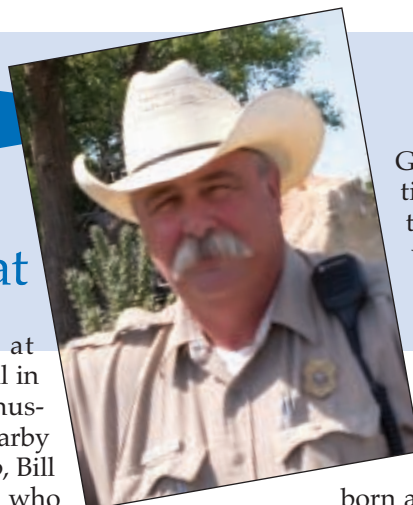
Man In the White Hat

Mark Goldsberry sits at his desk at Meade State Park, squeezing a tennis ball in his thick right hand. With his bushy mustache and white Stetson resting on a nearby shelf, he could easily pass for Wyatt Earp, Bill Tilghman, or a dozen other tough men who tamed the West. His hands look as if they could rip a deck of cards in half, and I wouldn't be surprised if they could. But when he speaks, a gentle baritone reveals the heart of this man who has cared for the rough landscape of southwestern Kansas for almost 30 years.

A combination of frontiersman, psychologist, and theologian, Goldsberry told me years ago, when speaking of nearby Big Basin Prairie Preserve, "This land was here before God said, 'Let there be light.'" I've never forgotten that comment and how much it says about the man's love for the landscape he nurtures.

"What this property provides is a touch to nature, an oasis, if you will, in an area where such places are rare," he says about the state park he manages. "A young person needs such places, and it needs respect. That's why we have the 'wild' in Wildlife and Parks. When you think about it, here at Meade, we're treating nature deficit disorder."

Meade State Lake was blessed with artesian springs that filled the lake until 1983, when the lake went dry. Today, largely through the efforts of Goldsberry and other KDWP staff, the lake holds water through a combination of pumping and annual rainfall. The grounds are pristine, and a new visitor's center has added another dimension to the Meade State Park experience. Unique in this part of the state, the park is truly an oasis in arid southwestern Kansas.



A former Marine and Vietnam veteran, Goldsberry gained experience in construction, welding, and as a seasonal worker at the "Buffalo Pasture" near Garden City while earning a degree in administration of justice from Wichita State University. He was hired by the Kansas Park and Resources Authority in 1979 and spent his first two seasons as a ranger at Cedar Bluff State Park. In December of 1980, he was transferred to manage Meade State Park, in the same county where he was

born and only 1 ½ miles from the place his great-grandfather had once homesteaded. Needless to say, the shortgrass prairie is in his blood.

While Goldsberry loves the area where he works, he loves working with people just as much. When asked about a favorite memory, he falters.

"There's so many things," he says. "I love contact with people, watching families grow and change from year to year, and I love watching the landscape change through the seasons and years. I feel fortunate to have worked with some of the old-timers, such as Larry Kerr, Joe Bronson, Elmer Kruetzer, Don Dick, Richard Harrold, and others. These are the far-sighted people I gleaned information from in my early years."

With his many years of service, Goldsberry realizes retirement will come some day, but right now his thoughts and hopes are for a broader future than his own. "Hopefully, KDWP staff will always realize that it's the public that makes us who we are. We need to listen to them. But with so little public land in Kansas, we also need to keep wild places wild."

When pressed on retirement, his answer says more about the man and what he's doing than what the future may bring. "I've been retired since 1979," he says with a twinkle in his eye. "If you're enjoying what you're doing, you'll never work a day in your life."

POACHER SENTENCED

Last December, 18-year-old Beau Arndt, Americus, was shot and killed in a layout blind among a large spread of goose decoys. The lethal shot was fired from a road 150 yards away, and a jury decided Theron Kent, Topeka, was responsible. The incident resulted in the state's first conviction for a hunting-related death in Kansas.

Kent was convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to 32 months in state prison. Kent was also convicted of illegal hunting and

illegal discharge of a firearm and sentenced to 30 days in jail on each count, to be served concurrently with the involuntary manslaughter sentence. This is to be followed by 24 months probation, loss of firearm hunting privileges for life, \$11,000 restitution to the family, and all court costs.

Shortly after the funeral, the boy's father, Bob Arndt, contacted the KDWP's Hunter Education Program coordinator, Wayne Doyle, searching for a way to bring some-

thing positive out of this tragedy. Doyle suggested an educational video depicting the tragedy.

With cooperation of the Arndt family, the landowner, local law enforcement, and KDWP, the video was produced and is now available for viewing online. Go the KDWP website, www.kdwp.state.ks.us. Click "Hunting" then "Hunter Education," and the video clip will begin playing automatically. A DVD is being distributed to all Kansas hunter education instructors and natural resource officers.

—KDWP news

HUNTING SPOTS

with Marc Murrell

SPECIAL HUNT ABOUT MORE THAN DEER

The official title of a hunt geared towards hunters with disabilities is called the "Marion Muzzleloader Deer Hunt for Disabled Hunters." Deer hunting is the reason they've got together for 12 years now but the benefits go well beyond hunting.

"I think they really enjoy the camaraderie of the group, the camping aspect, and just getting together to have a good time," said Neal Whitaker, park ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Marion Reservoir.

Whitaker, along with fellow employee Terry Holt and KDWP natural resource officer Marvin Peterson came up with the idea to sponsor an outing for hunters with disabilities.

"It's been real popular, and we generally have 7-10 hunters," Whitaker said. "We also have upwards of 40 volunteers from the Marion and Hillsboro area and a lot of them have been here since the beginning."

The Marion Lake Association also helps sponsor the event and money raised goes to purchase supplies and equipment. Whitaker said \$450 of unsolicited funds was received for this year's hunt. The Vo-Ag class in Hillsboro constructed a special trailer for hunters who can't leave their wheel chairs.

Many of the hunters camp at the lake as do some of the volunteers. They all get together and fish out of several boats for a day of catfishing. The hunt is an annual event they all look forward to, and that "deer camp" feel is what keeps some of them coming back. The group typically kills 2-6 deer each year during the early muzzleloader season out of specially constructed blinds or trailers. They are allowed to hunt in the waterfowl refuge near the reservoir. Hunters are assisted to and from their blinds by volunteers.

"We'd like to see more disabled hunters get involved," Whitaker concluded. "We could handle 10-12 hunters, so if anyone is interested they can give us a call."

For more information on the hunt, contact Whitaker at (620) 382-2101.

The Marion Muzzleloader Deer Hunt for Disabled Hunters is in its 12th year. The group of 7-10 hunters generally harvests from 2-6 deer. Jeff Christensen was one of the lucky ones this year as he bagged this nice doe with assistance from Garry Vogel.



Photo by Marc Murrell

Participants are treated to a day of catfishing with assistance from volunteers in several boats on Marion Reservoir. Torey Hett had the hot hand during this year's outing, boating several nice cats like this one.



Photo by Matt Farmer

Passing It On

by Mark Shoup

For six years now, the Riley County Fish and Game Association and the Friends of Fancy Creek Range have organized and conducted a youth/disabled deer hunt around Tuttle Creek Reservoir. The event is made possible by help from KDWP and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers staff, as well as monetary and other support from the Tuttle Creek Lake Association, the Safari Club International Kansas City Chapter, Armour-Swift, Dillon's, GTB Custom Meats, Alta Vista Locker, Clay Center Locker, and the Kansas Wildlife Officer's Association.

About a week before the hunt, volunteers, guides, and hunters gather at Tuttle Creek State Park's Fancy Creek Range to sight in rifles and receive a briefing on the upcoming hunt. In addition to firearms safety and shooting tips, the group is treated to a barbecue dinner.

In its first year, the event only drew five hunters, but this year, 49 applied. Because the group could only accommodate 25 hunters, priorities were set for those chosen. Disabled hunters were given first priority, followed by those who had never had the opportunity to hunt.

The Sept. 13-14 hunt started with a 5 a.m. breakfast at the Tuttle Creek Lake Corps office, after which hunters and guides dispersed to stands on Corps, KDWP, and private land in the area. Permits, rifles, ammunition, and meat processing were paid for by the various organizations involved in the event, which boasts a hunter success rate of about 75 percent.

The following is an account of one young hunter's experience the first day of the hunt, written by his volunteer guide, Tony Rock, Manhattan. The hunter's name is Kevin Dunham, also of Manhattan, and he's pictured here with his quarry.

Kevin and I sat in our blind in pitch-black darkness, having arrived at 6 a.m. It was too dark and too early to load the gun for the 6:35 a.m. legal shooting time. From experience, I knew it would still be too dark at 6:35. At about 6:25, I noticed a dark spot in the tall, lighter-colored grass of the clearing in front of us. I looked through my binoculars, which gather some light, and saw a nice doe feeding just 20-25 yards in front of us.

I asked Kevin if he had loaded the gun. He whispered, "Not yet."



The morning kept getting brighter, and the doe bedded down in the grass in front of us. I asked Kevin if he had taken the lens covers off the telescopic sight, and again he whispered, "Not yet." The doe eventually got up and walked in front of us and off into the woods without us ever loading the gun.

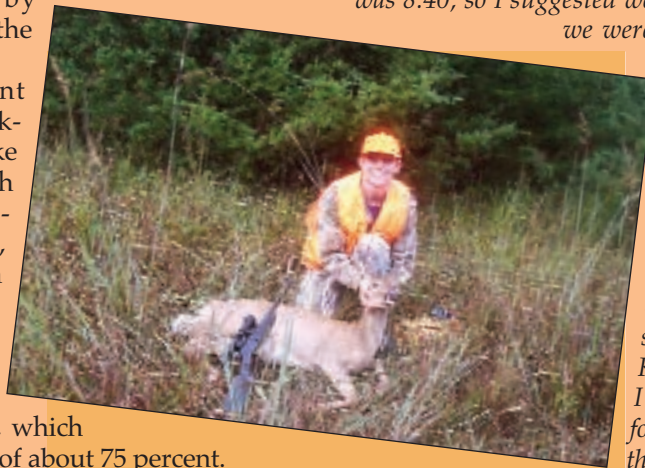
Then we loaded the gun and sat for another two hours without seeing anything. When I asked what time he thought we should quit for the morning, Kevin said he didn't know, but I could tell he had about had enough. It was 8:40, so I suggested we stay until 9. At exactly 9 a.m., we were leaning to get up when Kevin

saw something off to the left, at an angle I couldn't see.

Finally, it moved into my field of view, and we both thought it was the same doe from earlier. Kevin raised and aimed the rifle. I put my fingers in my ears and tried to keep my eyes open and on the deer, so I could see where it went at the shot. Kevin aimed and aimed and aimed. I wondered whether he was waiting for me to tell him he could shoot, then BOOM! and the deer dropped.

When Kevin and I began the field dressing, it became apparent that this deer was not the doe but a button buck. I think Kevin is very happy with his hunt, but not much happier than I. It worked out for the best. If he had shot the doe, our hunt would have been over in less than 30 minutes.

Like many such hunts across the state, the Tuttle Creek youth/disabled hunt was a big success. Of the 25 hunters, 15 deer were taken, and everyone had a great time. KDWP staff want to thank everyone involved and hope they are looking forward to next year.



KDWP

2007 Annual Report

The value of fish, wildlife and state park resources to Kansans is evident in the support they provide for the maintenance and perpetuation of those resources. As the tables on the following page illustrate, more than 80 percent of the department's operating revenue is supplied by the people who hunt, fish, boat, and use state parks.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks is a cabinet-level agency with a secretary appointed by the governor. A seven-member, bipartisan commission – also appointed by the governor – advises the secretary and sets regulations governing outdoor recreation. The commission conducts business in regular sessions that are open to the public.

KDWP employs a staff of 416.5 full-time employees in five divisions: Fisheries and Wildlife, Law Enforcement, Parks, Executive Services and Administrative Services. Following is a summary of those divisions and the programs they administer for the people of Kansas:

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Eighty-one employees staff this division, which is responsible for enforcing the state's wildlife, boating and natural resource laws and regulations. Natural resource officers perform a variety of tasks in addition to law enforcement, from inspection and licensing of game breeders and controlled shooting areas to teaching hunter education classes.

FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

With 127 full-time employees, this division provides the technical expertise and on-the-ground projects to manage fish, wildlife, and public land resources in the state. The Research and Survey Section evaluates fish and wildlife populations, conducts research, monitors environmental conditions, surveys recreationists, and recommends adjustments in fish and wildlife regulations.

The Fish Culture Section operates four hatcheries, producing and stocking millions of sportfish in public waters across the state each year. The Public Lands Section manages department lands for optimum wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for hunters, anglers, birders, and hikers.

PARKS

With 111 full-time employees, this division operates 23 state parks (a 24th park – Kaw River State Park – is currently under development) and the Prairie Spirit Rail-Trail, hosting millions of visits annually. Parks staff enforce state park regulations, build and maintain facilities, present educational programs, host major events, and improve access to the lands and waters around state parks.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

With 21 full-time positions, this division oversees business management, accounting, planning, and budget efforts of the department. In addition, Administrative Services staff develop and manage the licenses and permits purchased by hunters, anglers, trappers, boaters, and park visitors.

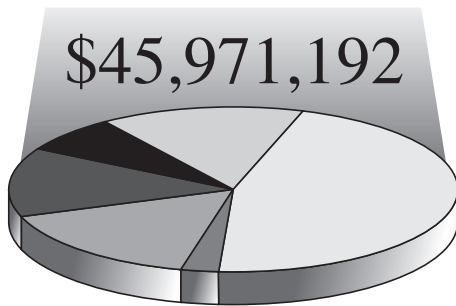
EXECUTIVE SERVICES

This division comprises 76.5 full-time employees. The division includes Information and Education, Engineering, Information Technology, Environmental Services, regional office administrative specialists, Federal Aid/Planning, Human Resources, and Legal Services staff.

Engineering Services administers construction and maintenance of facilities on all department-owned lands. The Environmental Services Section reviews public-funded development projects across the state, advising developers of state and federal regulations and minimizing impacts on fish and wildlife habitats. The Information and Education Section informs the public through "Kansas Wildlife and Parks" magazine, the department website, numerous printed brochures, and media releases. The section also administers the hunter, furharvester, and boater education programs of the department, provides environmental education services to schools, and manages nature centers at four locations in the state.

The department offers its gratitude to the people of Kansas, who provide the means that makes our work possible — and for their dedication to ensuring future generations the same rich variety of outdoor recreation that makes Kansas a great place to live, work, and play.

Revenue



Hunt/Fish License Sales	\$20,403,722	44%
Hunt/Fish Federal Aid	\$8,617,064	19%
Park Permits	\$3,713,648	8%
Boat Registrations	\$996,600	2%
Other Federal Aid	\$5,370,504	12%
State General Fund	\$6,869,654	15%
Totals	\$45,971,192	100%

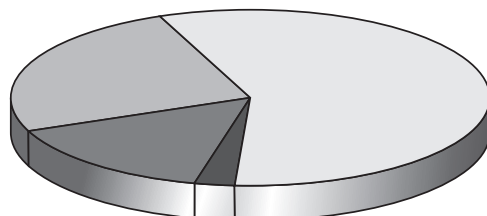
FISHING, HUNTING, FURHARVESTING		
License/permit	Number sold	Revenue
Resident Fish (\$18)	158,110	\$2,845,980
Nonresident Fish (\$40)	8,638	\$345,520
Resident Combination Fish/Hunt (\$36)	37,876	\$1,363,536
Nonresident Combo Hunt/Fish (\$110)	820	\$90,200
Five-Day Trip Fish (\$20)	4,884	\$97,680
24-Hour Fish (\$5)	42,327	\$211,635
3-Pole Permit (\$4)	14,654	\$58,616
Trout Stamp (\$10)	9,893	\$98,930
Lifetime Fish (\$440)	163	\$71,720
Lifetime Comb. Fish/Hunt (\$880)	301	\$264,880
Lifetime Hunt (\$440)	616	\$271,040
Resident Hunt (\$18)	70,082	\$1,261,476
Nonresident Hunt (\$70)	56,787	\$3,975,090
Nonresident Junior Hunt (\$35)	2,245	\$78,575
Controlled Shooting Area (\$15)	10,157	\$152,355
48-Hour Waterfowl (\$25)	516	\$12,900
Resident Deer Permits/Tags (variable)	136,519	\$2,718,325
Nonresident Deer Permits/Tags (variable)	23,491	\$4,748,105
Resident Turkey Permits/Tags (variable)	57,503	\$890,900
Nonresident Turkey Permits/Tags (variable)	21,806	\$570,820
Resident Furharvester (\$18)	6,178	\$111,204
Nonresident Furharvester (\$250)	47	\$11,750
Junior Furharvester (\$10)	190	\$1,900
Nonresident Bobcat License (\$100)	61	\$6,100
Other Big Game/Special Permits (variable)	8,277	\$144,485
TOTAL	672,141	\$20,403,722

THREE- YEAR BOAT REGISTRATIONS		
Registration Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Boats (\$30)	33,220	\$996,600
TOTAL	33,220	\$996,600

STATE PARKS		
Permit Type	Number Sold	Revenue
Annual Vehicle (variable)	43,113	\$787,476
Annual Camp (\$150)	3,527	\$529,050
Second Vehicle (variable)	16,349	\$155,931
Duplicate Vehicle (\$10)	245	\$2,450
Daily Vehicle (variable)	241,767	\$624,614
Daily Camp (variable)	69,342	\$614,446
14-Day Camp (variable)	968	\$87,754
Utility (1-\$5.50)	8,980	\$49,390
Utility (2-\$7.50)	87,690	\$657,675
Utility (3-\$8.50)	14,436	\$122,706
Prime Sites (#2)	36,101	\$72,202
Group Camping (variable)	446	\$6,000
Annual Trail Permits (\$10)	345	\$3,450
Daily Trail Permits (\$2)	252	\$504
TOTAL	523,561	\$3,713,648

FEDERAL AID	
Coast Guard (boating safety)	\$704,185
Dingell-Johnson (fish)	\$4,414,305
Pittman-Robertson (wildlife)	\$4,202,759
Other	\$5,370,504
TOTAL	\$14,691,753

Expenditures



Fish & Wildlife	60%
Parks	28%
Administration	9%
Boating	3%
Totals	100%



Kansas' Other Quail



by **Jim Pitman**

wildlife biologist, Research and Survey Office, Emporia

photos by **Mike Blair**

associate editor/photographer, Pratt

Tucked away in the far southwestern corner of Kansas, the scaled quail is not nearly as well-known as the bobwhite. Adapted to arid, sandsage prairie, the scaled quail is a remarkable upland game species.

Most Kansans are familiar with our most common quail species, the bobwhite. However, few know there is actually another quail that occupies a small portion of the state. The scaled quail has been documented in 12 Kansas counties and occurs primarily along the Cimarron and Arkansas rivers in far southwestern Kansas. This small Kansas population is at the northern edge of the scaled quail range. Scaled quail have evolved to occupy arid environments where annual rainfall is typically less than 18 inches. Scaled quail can be found in part of eight states, with the largest populations found in Texas and New Mexico. In southwestern Kansas and other portions of its range, the scaled quail co-exists with bobwhites, and rarely, the two species even hybridize.

The scaled quail is bluish-gray in color and has a breast feather pattern that looks like fish scales. It also has a distinctive, cream-colored "topknot" on its head. These characteristics have led to additional common names for the bird, including "blue quail" and "cottontop." Scaled quail are slightly larger than bobwhites, and males and females are similar in appearance. The sexes can be identified with close inspection, but not at a distance or when the birds are in flight. Males have a cream-colored throat, whereas females have a brownish-colored throat with several faint lines running up and down it.



Scaled quail are fast on their feet and prefer to run, rather than fly, from danger. Hunters find them difficult quarry because of this.

The scaled quail prefers to run rather than fly when trying to escape danger. This behavior makes scalies particularly difficult to hunt because they take flight only as a last resort. If you are lucky enough to get a good flush of a blue quail covey, it will likely contain more birds than a typical covey of bobwhites. Blue quail commonly form coveys of 20-50 birds in the fall. Coveys of more than 100 birds have been documented in parts of the bird's range.

Scaled quail begin forming pairs in mid- to late-March and mate about a month later. The females usually start laying eggs in early May and lay about one egg per day. A full clutch usually contains 12-14 eggs. Incubation lasts 23-24 days, so in Kansas, the peak of hatching occurs in mid-June. The specific timing of the breeding season is dependent on the amount of precipitation and its effect on plant growth. During wet springs, the hens nest a little earlier than during average or dry years. Less than half of all nests are successful, but scaled quail hens will readily renest if their first nest fails.

Second nest clutches are generally smaller



Good scaled quail habitat includes residual grasses 12-15 inches tall with sagebrush interspersed. Forbs are important for the seeds they provide, as well as the insects they attract in early summer. Newly-hatched chicks depend on insects the first two weeks.



Managing the grassland habitat will benefit scaled quail more than any other effort. However, manmade brushpiles can provide valuable escape cover. While scaled quail get necessary water from the foods they eat, they will use a water source.

than first attempts and usually contain fewer than 10 eggs. Most failed nests are due to predation by coyotes, badgers, raccoons, armadillos, cotton rats, or snakes. Recently hatched young are extremely susceptible to predation and weather extremes because they can't fly or regulate their own body temperature until they are about two weeks old. Annual survival of adult scaled quail is typically less than 20 percent, with most mortality caused by coyotes, bobcats, and various raptors. On a large scale, hunting is rarely a major source of mortality for scaled quail, or other gamebirds, for that matter.

Because survival of scaled quail is naturally low, the impor-

tance of annual production is apparent for maintaining good numbers of birds from year to year. The habitat quantity and quality, along with weather conditions from May through August, dictate how many birds there will be each fall. Scaled quail are more tolerant of drought than bobwhites, so their populations don't typically boom and bust as erratically as their smaller bobwhite cousins.

Good habitat for scaled quail contains four major components: nesting cover, brood cover, protective cover, and food. Good nesting cover in Kansas consists of 12-15 inches of residual grass cover with sagebrush interspersed. Nests are generally

located at the base of a sagebrush plant or in a clump of residual grass.

Brood cover should be more open with lots of bare ground and forbs (broadleaf herbaceous plants). Forbs are critical for chick survival because they attract insects, which are the sole food source for developing chicks. An abundance of bare ground is important because it is difficult for small chicks to locate food or navigate through thick grass. Areas that have been disturbed by grazing or machinery generally provide good brood-rearing cover.

Protective cover is also important to shield scaled quail from predators and extreme heat or



It's easy to see where scaled quail get their name – the unique scale pattern of the breast feathers. They are slightly larger than bobwhites, and both sexes have a cream-colored top-knot. Males have a cream-colored throat, while females have a brownish throat.

cold. Protective cover in Kansas generally consists of sand plum thickets or stands of sand sagebrush with 15-25 percent canopy cover. However, scaled quail will even use old buildings, board piles or farm machinery as protective cover when they are available.

Full-grown scaled quail eat

primarily green vegetation, insects, small grains, and the seeds from several different forbs, depending on the time of year. Grasses provide little or no food for scaled quail, so it is critical that a diversity of forbs be available in good quantity. Brood-rearing habitat will generally provide most of the food

required by adult birds in addition to the food it provides for the young. Because scaled quail have somewhat limited mobility, it is important that all these habitat components are close together.

Scaled quail are generally declining in most parts of their range. It is not known for certain why these declines have

occurred, but it is believed that overgrazing has played a major role. Overgrazed pastures result in little or no nesting cover and reduced amounts of protective cover. Managing grazing pressure is probably the single most important tool to benefit scaled quail. Prescribed grazing with light to moderate stocking rates in a deferred rotation system benefits scaled quail and other wildlife. Scaled quail occur in more open habitats than bobwhites, but this type of grazing system provides habitat for both species where their ranges overlap in southwestern Kansas.

Lack of protective cover is sometimes a problem in Kansas, and planting shrubs would benefit the birds in some situations. Of course, scaled quail occur in arid environments, so plantings might require irrigation until they get established, along with protection from livestock and other wildlife. Artificial brush-piles may also be useful in some situations when woody cover is lacking. Soil disturbance may benefit scaled quail where good brood cover is lacking. Soil disturbance stimulates growth of forbs, and one way to accomplish it is by disking 3-6 inches deep. For best results, these areas should be disced in January or February and should be in close proximity to good protective cover.

Several other practices are commonly used to benefit scaled quail, but their effectiveness is more questionable. These include artificial water development, food plots, and supplemental feeding. Providing supplemental water with guzzlers is done frequently in the southwestern United States, and to a lesser degree in Kansas. Several



Kansas is the northern edge of the scaled quail's range, and they are found in a dozen southwestern counties, most commonly along the Cimarron and Arkansas rivers.

research studies have assessed the value of supplemental water on populations of scaled quail, and none of them found a relationship between water availability and population size. Scaled quail do use supplemental water, but they seem to do fine without it because they get all their required moisture from the plants they eat.

Food is seldom a major lim-

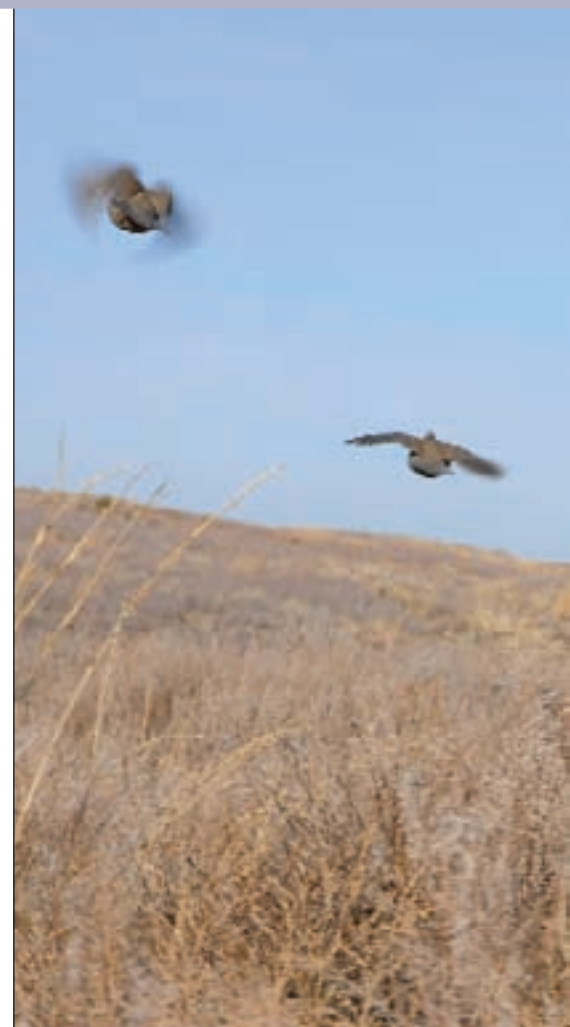


iting factor for gamebirds, including scaled quail. However, the planting of food plots is a common management practice, especially for bobwhites. Quail sometimes benefit from food plots that are adjacent to good protective cover. Unfortunately, food plots are most beneficial during dry years, and in scaled quail range, a food plot won't grow during a dry year. When there is suitable moisture, natural foods are abundant, so food plots have little value.

Supplemental feeding is also a popular practice in quail man-



You can see an interesting video of scaled quail taken in Finney County by going to the department's website and clicking on "KDWP TV." Mike Blair shot and produced a short video news story on this uncommon and fascinating bird.



agement. It is more commonly aimed at bobwhites, but it is done occasionally in scaled quail range, too. Supplemental feeding has been shown to slightly increase breeding season survival of female scaled quail in New Mexico. However, feeding is very inefficient because the majority of the food is generally consumed by other wildlife species. Thus, supplemental feeding is an expensive practice and provides only minimal benefit.

It probably doesn't hurt to provide additional water or food, but these should be secondary considerations. The primary management practices should always focus on providing habitat for nesting and brood rearing. This is true not



Like bobwhites, scaled quail are powerful fliers, when they finally decide to flush. However, they are likely to be found in much larger coveys than bobwhites. It wouldn't be uncommon to flush as many as 50 birds in a covey of scalies, and in some portions of their range, coveys of 100 birds have been documented.

just for scaled quail, but for any of the Kansas gamebirds.

Scaled quail offer limited hunting options in Kansas, but our populations are typically much lower than what can be found in Texas and New Mexico. The Cimarron National Grasslands offers the most popular Kansas hunting place for these birds. The Grasslands is operated by the U.S. Forest Service and offers more than 100,000 acres of public hunting. Several tracts enrolled in the department's Walk-In-Hunting Area program in Morton, Stevens, Stanton, Grant,

Hamilton, and Kearny counties offer occasional blue quail hunting, as well. Private ground along the western portions of the Cimarron or Arkansas Rivers can be productive where hunting permission is obtained.

Most scaled quail shot in Kansas are harvested by people who are hunting bobwhites. If weather patterns are favorable, southwestern Kansas can offer some really good bobwhite hunting with the added bonus of possibly shooting a few blue quail. However, there probably won't be a lot of quail this fall in extreme southwestern Kansas

because that area has endured a severe drought for nearly a year.

Scaled quail are one of Kansas' least-known game species. Their numbers aren't usually great, and they only occupy a small portion of the state, but even so, their presence occasionally provides unique encounters for hunters and wildlife enthusiasts. This species is a great example of the wildlife diversity to be found in the Sunflower State. ♡



Working Together for the Good of All

Efforts Underway to Amend 1944 Flood Control Act

by **Angela Magstadt**
North Dakota Water Education Foundation
(reprinted with permission from North Dakota Water)

photos by **Mike Blair**
associate editor/photographer, Pratt

This is the second article in a two-part series about amending the 1944 Flood Control Act and the Master Manual it uses to manage the Missouri River.

It has been said that we should learn from our past, not live in it. But there are still some laws on the books that many consider to be a bit outdated. For example, Kentucky law requires a person to bathe once a year. In Vermont, women must obtain written permission from their husbands to wear false teeth. And just last year, North Dakota's anti-cohabitation law, one that has been in place since statehood, was repealed. While not as outlandish as these, there is another law that many feel is outdated and in dire need of revision – the 1944 Flood Control Act.



Managing in the present with a plan of the past:

In a July 10, 2007 letter to John Paul Woodley, Jr., assistant secretary of the Army (Civil Works), South Dakota Governor M. Michael Rounds said, "The Corps [of Engineers] finds itself in the unenviable position of having to operate a reservoir system in the 21st century constrained by the statutory and legal requirements of a 1944 vision. It is an unfortunate reality that the 1944 Flood Control Act ties the Corps to this outdated vision."

Why change?

There is currently an effort backed by many with very different viewpoints from liberal to conservative, with the lofty goal of revising this 64-year-old law. Advocates of this change point out that many of the visions authorized by the Act, including irrigation and navigation, have never materialized to the extent they were projected in the early 1940s. Current management does not effectively use river functions or conserve its water. Modernization of the 1944 Flood Control Act would allow the Corps to focus on the areas of use that are contemporary and have even surpassed early projections, including the huge recreation industry that was created with the construction of the Missouri River reservoirs. The goal of a revised law would be to uphold the ecological, economic, and cul-

tural values and focus on flexibility and long-term objectives. The modernized law would also require that the Corps work with the citizens of the Basin to effectively implement practical recommendations regarding the operation of the system to meet its contemporary needs.

Some of the proposed changes would help cure the problems the Basin is facing, including:

Fish and wildlife

A revised law could establish fish and wildlife restoration and flow enhancement programs to address habitat that was either lost or impacted with the construction and operation of the dams, and navigation channel. It could also establish a biological monitoring system to focus on the entire system's ecological health – not just that of threatened and endangered species.



Recreation was one of the “indirect” benefits of the Pick-Sloan plan in 1944, but it has become a much larger priority in the past 20 years. Current management practices may cost local communities as much as 50 percent of the revenues they could be enjoying.

Endangered species

Millions of dollars have been spent building habitat for endangered species. If the Corps is not constrained by the need to support navigation, much of this habitat could be created naturally, letting the river do the work.

Environmental restoration

Congress currently allocates \$50-\$100 million per year to the ecological restoration of the Missouri River, and the Corps says \$1-2 billion will be needed over the next 20 years to complete this task. A revised law would use the river’s natural ability to improve the basin’s environmental integrity and save taxpayers millions of dollars.

Recreation

Recreation was one of the “indirect” benefits of the proposed Pick-Sloan Plan, but it has significantly surpassed the expectations of the original plan. Outdated management of the Missouri River reservoirs is costing an estimated 50 percent of the income once realized by communities along the reservoirs. An amended law could bring this purpose into balance with other uses, thus maintaining the levels in the lakes and offering huge potential for recreation development in the lower Basin.

Hydropower efficiency

A revised law could address contemporary water supply and power production needs, give

federal assistance for intake modifications for municipal and power plant needs, and improve efficiency for hydropower operations with higher lake levels.

Municipal water supply and irrigation intakes

Many communities in the Missouri River Basin rely on the river for their drinking water, and many farmers use it for irrigation. Because of the lack of adaptive management during the current drought, thousands of citizens are experiencing problems with their intakes, some to the extent of requiring federal assistance to local communities with water supply infrastructure impacted by the river’s operation.

Sedimentation

Every year, some 92,500 acre feet of sediment (10 square miles of mud 14.5 feet deep) accumulate in deltas above the Missouri River dams. The sedimentation, which is especially prevalent on the river at Williston, Bismarck, and Pierre, S.D., creates problems for flood control, hydropower, municipal water supply intakes, recreation, and personal property just to name a few. A revised law could authorize work on a solution to move the sediment, which is desperately needed in the Gulf Coast wetlands to protect New Orleans from the next hurricane.

Tribal issues

According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, more than 350,000 acres of land were flooded in seven Indian reservations in North and South Dakota with the construction of the five dams in the states. A revised flood control act could establish a renewed emphasis on addressing impacts to all tribal land and cultural resources caused by the Pick-Sloan project along the Missouri River.

Regional climate shifts

Climate change is causing the amount of snow that accumulates in the mountains to decrease, and since the Missouri River depends on the mountain runoff for much of its water, all uses on the river are affected. This reduction in flow requires modification of the current management. A flexible management plan created by an updated law can adapt to changing conditions to best meet the contemporary needs of the basin.

Benefits to Missouri

Historically, any proposed changes from North Dakota and other upstream states have been met with opposition by the state of Missouri. Those who are promoting the revision of the 1944 Flood Control Act say that downstream states would see a vast improvement in their situations, as well, including:

Navigation

One of the proposed changes could, in exchange for summer flows on the Missouri River, allow the navigation industry to benefit from fall flows on the Mississippi River, which is 100 times larger than on the Missouri.

Municipal water supply

A revised law would provide a guaranteed water supply for the future of large Missouri cities such as St. Louis, Jefferson City, and Kansas City.

Ecological restoration, and its huge potential for recreation development offer great economic and social benefits for the lower basin. Environmental restoration will also increase diversity of local economies.

Active participation

Like the rest of the Missouri River Basin, downstream states would have an increased voice in how the river is operated.



Recreation on Kansas reservoirs is the most obvious impact the Pick-Sloan plan has on Kansans. There are many other issues affected by the current management plan, including endangered species, municipal water supplies, irrigation and tribal lands.

Working together to make a change

Five out of the eight states the Missouri River significantly affects have passed resolutions to attempt to change the 64-year-old law. And, in February, the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST) took action, requesting that the Corps conduct a study to determine if the Act is meeting the current needs of the Missouri River Basin. If the study finds that it isn't meeting current needs, the Corps can budget for a General Investigation Study, a project specific study, which is cost-shared 50-50 between the Corps and a non-federal sponsor, but because of the scope and breadth of this request, it is likely Congressional authorization would be necessary.

Al Sapa, past-president of the North Dakota Chapter of the Wildlife Society, a leader in the

effort to amend the Act, says that when he and other proponents of the change met with North Dakota's Congressional delegation, their advice was to work within the basin and gain support from all sources. "One by one the states and user groups are recognizing how an updated Flood Control Act can result in benefits to all the uses in the Missouri River Basin, and sustain those values for the future. While we still have to make progress politically in Missouri, there is editorial support in many lower basin newspapers," Sapa says.

Another indication that the effort is getting Missouri's attention is that Rep. Kenny Hulshof (R- Mo.) has introduced a House resolution that seeks endorsement of the status quo on navigation, and Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) has written the Corps and asked that they view a study of the river management with a skeptical eye.

"Congress is not likely to change a statute of this magnitude

without significant evidence that it isn't working," says David Pope, MoRAST's executive director. "And Congress doesn't make changes without a careful review, considering environmental, economic, and social impacts, and probably even an Environmental Impact Statement."

Proponents of changing the Act agree that the only way to be successful in this effort is to work together. "Change is never easy," Pope says, "but we're optimistic something can be done. There is a compelling case for change."

The Missouri River Basin covers one-sixth of the United States. Many of those who are working diligently to change river management in the Missouri River Basin, believe that, through a collaborative process, the citizens of the Missouri River Basin will be able to look back and see the 1944 Flood Control Act as an outdated law that has finally been changed to reflect current and future needs. ♡



Keeping An Eye On Wildlife Health

by Ruby Mosher

DVM, Research and Survey Office, Emporia

photos by Mike Blair

Each fall and winter, KDWP biologists take samples from wildlife specimens for testing to monitor certain wildlife diseases. Findings help biologists and managers make management decisions and educate hunters on safely handling game meat.

Full hunting season. Crisp weather. Abundant game. It's a time of bounty for sportsmen and sportswomen in Kansas.

It's also a time of bounty for the biologists at the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks who monitor the health of our Kansas wildlife. It's no coincidence that hunting and major disease surveillance activities occur at the same time. KDWP disease biologists plan their year around the fall hunting seasons because hunters are vital to the effort.



Hunters are partners

Hunters are integral to KDWP's disease surveillance program for several reasons. First, hunters share a great concern for maintaining the health and sustainability of Kansas wildlife. That makes them natural partners with our agency.

Hunters are also helpful in monitoring disease by supplying more eyes in the field. With hunters out and about, more people are actively watching wildlife, so it is more likely that sick animals will be noticed and reported to the agency. These are the most important animals to check for disease, because something is obviously wrong with them.

Finally, disease testing activities are most efficient and economically feasible when hunters harvest game. Unlike domestic animals, which can be caught, tested, and released relatively easily, wildlife is another matter entirely. Wild animals are able to run, fly, swim, scamper up trees, burrow underground, jump over fences, and just generally make it hard for a scientist to catch them for disease testing. Although it is sometimes possible to trap, test, and release wild animals, it is too expensive and time-consuming to do this on a large scale. So biologists often take advantage of the fall harvest to ask hunters for the opportunity to collect specimens from their kills.

Is wildlife disease a concern for hunters?

At this point, hunters might wonder if they should be concerned when biologists want to test their harvested animals for disease — especially if that game is intended for Sunday dinner. Hunters can be assured that testing does not affect the quality or edibility of meat. Diagnostic samples are quickly collected from parts of the animal that most hunters would discard anyway.

Testing does not necessarily mean that a given disease is even present in an animal population. Biologists often check for diseases simply to determine if they are present. Many healthy animals must be tested to determine that distribution.

Routine surveillance is also carried out on healthy animal populations to detect a disease when relatively few animals are infected. This early detection gives managers the best chance to prevent the disease from spreading. Again, unlike confined domestic animals, free-ranging infected wildlife can spread disease as far as they can roam. Then other wild animals can pick up the disease and continue the spread. Early detection, providing public information, and collecting data to learn about wildlife diseases are major goals of KDWP surveillance programs this fall.

Knowing this, hunters should not be concerned if biologists wish to take diagnostic samples from their harvests. It should be remembered, though, that certain diseases such as tularemia can be transmitted to humans by improper handling of infected animals. Just as people must be careful when handling domestic meats, similar precautions should

be taken when processing venison, ducks, geese, rabbits, and squirrels. Certain diseases that can be transmitted by ticks and mosquitoes also require hunter precaution.

Are there cases where wildlife disease could be a cause for concern for hunters? Yes. Although most wildlife diseases have been around for a long time, and animals have adapted to exist with

them, a few emerging diseases are worrisome for one reason or another. Depending on the disease, concern may be for the population of wild animals themselves or because the disease may spread to humans or domestic livestock. Two such diseases, avian influenza and chronic wasting disease, are at the focus of KDWP disease surveillance during the 2008 hunting season.



KDWP biologists need hunter cooperation to get test samples for disease monitoring. Each fall, biologists take samples from deer and waterfowl taken by Kansas hunters.

Avian Influenza

Avian influenza, or “bird flu” as it is commonly called, is a naturally occurring disease in wild waterfowl caused by various strains of avian-type influenza. In the past, the disease was of little concern to wildlife biologists, because it usually involved only mild sickness in most birds. In domestic poultry flocks, however, some strains of avian influenza are deadly to the birds and are thus classified as “highly pathogenic.” This is the case with the current strain of avian influenza (also known as “Asian Bird Flu,” “Highly pathogenic H5N1,” and “HPAI H5N1”) currently circulating overseas.

The Asian bird flu does not affect all birds with equal deadliness. Some species of wild birds, such as mallards, can carry the Asian strain of avian influenza without becoming ill; other species, such as swans and wood ducks, are very sensitive to the virus and are more likely to sicken and die.

The current overseas strain of avian influenza is different than usual for several reasons. Most notably, not only has the virus been deadly to chickens, but it has killed people, as well. Fortunately though, the virus has not been able to infect man easily. Although several hundred highly-publicized cases have occurred overseas, this number is exceedingly small compared to the overall human population there. For reference, the U.S. Center for Disease Control estimates that in the United States alone, approximately 36,000 people die every year from human strains of influenza, or “the flu.”

So why are the relatively few deaths overseas from the Asian bird flu so highly publicized? It is because the percentage of people



While it has not been found in the U.S., state and federal wildlife agencies collect samples from hunter-harvested birds to ensure early detection of the Asian bird flu.

who have died after contracting the virus is high. There is also concern that the virus could mutate into a human disease and thus become an agent for a human pandemic.

But again, it is important to remember that the virus has not been able to infect man easily, nor is it easily passed between people. So, even if the Asian bird flu does find its way to the United States, it would not be a human health concern at this time. It would primarily affect domestic poultry and in that way cause economic loss.

Asian bird flu could find its way to the United States in several ways. Although the federal government has importation checks in place, it is possible that the virus could enter the country through smuggling or the improper importation of live poultry and poultry products. It is also possible that the Asian Bird Flu could be introduced intentionally as an act of bioterrorism to cause economic loss in our country.

Another way the virus could be introduced is through the movement of migratory water-

fowl. It is thought that when North American waterfowl intermingle with their Asian and European relatives on northern summer breeding grounds that our birds could pick up the virus and transport it during the fall migration. It is also thought that if the Asian bird flu finds its way to South America, migratory birds could bring it north during their spring movements.

To date, the Asian strain of the bird flu has not been detected in North America. The chances of a hunter encountering the virus are extremely low. Furthermore, in its current form, the virus is not easily contracted by man. That said, hunters should always follow the basic rules of hygiene when handling wild game.

Thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is a very effective method for inactivating influenza viruses, including the Asian bird flu germ. These viruses are also inactivated with many common disinfectants such as detergents, 10-percent household bleach, alcohol, or other commercial disinfectants. The influenza virus is also killed by normal cooking temperatures.

Avian influenza surveillance in Kansas directly supports the national interagency strategic plan, "Early Detection System for Highly Pathogenic H5N1." The plan incorporates the efforts of many national and state agencies into the common goal of quickly detecting the Asian bird flu if it appears in the United States.

In Kansas, the surveillance of avian influenza in wild waterfowl includes two different methods. The first involves swabbing a random selection of ducks and geese to see if any are actually carrying and shedding the virus. In conjunction with KDWP's bird-banding program, approximately 200 of the 1,200 statewide samples are obtained by trapping, testing, and releasing resident birds. The remaining 1,000 samples are obtained from hunter-harvested birds.

Similar to the past two years, KDWP biologists are visiting waterfowl areas and asking hunters for permission to swab their bagged birds for testing. The sampling procedure involves



It is important that hunters report seeing sick wildlife. Biologists collect those specimens for testing to identify and monitor diseases, prevent spread to healthy populations, and to inform and educate the public about safety precautions.

taking a quick swab of the throat and the cloaca, which will not affect the edibility or quality of the meat. The swabs are then shipped to the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Manhattan where they are screened for the presence of influenza viruses.

Another method of detecting the Asian bird flu is simply by watching for dead birds, paying special attention to waterfowl species that are sensitive to the virus. This group includes swans, white-fronted geese, wood ducks, diving duck species, shovelers, gulls, terns, grebes, and some shorebirds. KDWP routinely surveys various bodies of water with the express purpose of looking for suspicious deaths in water-



Biologists need assistance and cooperation from hunters to get adequate samples from harvested deer to monitor the occurrence and prevalence of CWD. Hunters are asked to drop off the heads from harvested deer at specific locations. See Page 32.

fowl. Birds that die of unexplained causes are sent to a laboratory for testing.

The Wildlife Services division of USDA-APHIS collects environmental samples and samples from hunter-killed birds in Kansas. The Kansas Animal Health Department tests flocks of domestic poultry as well as flocks of captive gamebirds. The Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory provides rapid testing services to all agencies. In partnership, the Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment have established an Avian Influenza Hotline (1-800-566-4518) for people to report concerns or to ask questions regarding avian influenza. The Kansas Department of Health and Environment is highly involved in pandemic flu preparedness activities in Kansas.

Anyone who notices any unusual deaths in waterfowl species should notify KDWP or USDA-Wildlife Services. The

USDA also recommends reporting deaths in species such as songbirds when five or more individuals are involved. Their toll-free number is 1-866-4-USDA-WS. The carcasses must be freshly dead or chilled to be of diagnostic value.

In short, hunters and wildlife watchers have very little chance of encountering the Asian bird flu in Kansas. The disease has not been detected in the Americas after two years of intense surveillance by numerous agencies. For links to more information check the KDWP webpage:

www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Hunting/Migratory-Birds/Avian-Influenza-Bird-Flu-Information

Chronic wasting disease (CWD)

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a contagious, fatal neurological disease of white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk and moose. It affects wild and captive deer and elk. The disease is associated with a misshapen version of a normal

Voluntary CWD Sampling Stations

Atwood: James Zeigler (785) 626-6042; Great Outdoors Gun Shop (785) 626-9100	Marland: Jeanie Bell (785) 627-6045
Bonner Springs: Sure Shot Taxidermy (913) 231-4762	McPherson: Shaw's Taxidermy (620) 245-0811
Brookville: It's Alive Taxidermy (785) 577-6204 Lane Johnson (785) 577-6204	Milford: RR Crafts Studio (785) 223-6193
Carbondale: Vision Quest Taxidermy (785) 836-3135	Minneola: Patrick Martin (620) 408-8692
Colby: Tumbleweed Taxidermy (785) 462-7943	Ness City: South Fork Meat Processing (785) 798-3464
Cottonwood Falls: Flint Hills Taxidermy (620) 273-8224	Norton: David Bainter (785) 874-4874; Richard Lindsay (785) 877-3178
Delphos: Heartland Taxidermy (785) 822-7466	Oakley: Mikes Locker (785) 672-9003
Dighton: Hurley Smith (620) 397-3062	Oberlin: Dale's Fish N Fun Inc. (785) 475-2201; Patrick Inman (785) 475-7182
Dorrance: Ryan Williams (785) 623-8996	Offerle: Deputy Bryant Kurth (620) 659-2888
Ellinwood: T&K Taxidermy/TK Archery (620) 564-2326	Otis: High Plains Taxidermy (620) 586-3369
Elkhart: Morton County Sheriff (Justin Holliday) (620) 360-0261	Plainville: Ryan Williams (785) 623-8996
Ellis: GNAD Fur Company (785) 726-3149	Phillipsburg: Phillipsburg Locker (Randy Elder) (785) 543-2313
Fowler: T&T Processing (620) 646-5911	Pratt: Kenny's Deer Processing (620) 672-9261
Garden City: Simon's Gr. Outdoors Tax. (620) 275-8999; Southwest Skullworks (620) 275-4441	Portis: Roger Macy (785) 346-2076
Goodland: Bob's Wildlife Taxidermy (785) 821-1207	Quinter: RW Leighton (785) 754-3625
Harveyville: Bell Wildlife Specialties (785) 589-2321	Seneca: Alpha Taxidermy (785) 336-2444
Hays: Andrew Pettibone (785) 399-8080; Pat Riese (785) 650-5245	Sharon Springs: John Helsel (785) 821-0792
Hoxie: Elmer Zimmerman (785) 675-3226 Paul Babcock (785) 675-3686	Smith Center: Phillip Breese (785) 282-6404
Ingalls: King's Taxidermy (620) 335-5424	South Haven: KanOkla Fur Co. (620) 892-5895
Johnson: Stanton Co Sheriff (Edward Bezona) (620) 492-6866	St. Francis: Cheyenne County Wildlife Inc. (785) 332-6601
Kansas City: Second Creation Taxidermy (913) 422-3111	Thayer: Mamma C's, (620) 839-5686
Kensington: TIPI Taxidermy (785) 476-3285	Valley Center: Mel's Taxidermy (316) 755-2579; Roger Davis Taxidermy (316) 755-2738
Kismet: Riverbend Taxidermy (620) 563-7659	Wakefield: Tom's Taxidermy (785) 461-5739
Lakin: Duncan's Locker (620) 355-6351	Wellington: Jay Dee Brown (620) 326-7020
Liberal: Cottonwood Springs Inc. (Tom Stinson) (620) 624-6299	Winfield: Feaster's Deer Processing (620) 221-2494
Lincoln: M&M Processing (785) 658-5566	Weber: Larry Wackel (785) 753-4015
Longton: Ron Edwards (620) 642-3243	

More sites may be listed on KDWP's website.

body protein called a prion. Accumulations of the abnormal prion result in damage to the animal's brain, which in turn causes symptoms of the disease.

CWD has a long incubation period, taking an average of 18-24 months after infection before an animal develops obvious symptoms of disease. Animals with CWD may be thin ("wasted away") and may exhibit behavioral changes such as showing no fear of people or other potential dangers. Other signs may include drooling, walking in circles, and hanging around water. These symptoms are not exclusive to CWD and may occur with other conditions as well. Laboratory testing of brain

and lymph tissue is the only definitive way to diagnose CWD.

Chronic wasting disease is a member of the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). Other diseases in this family include Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) and variant CJD in people, scrapies in domestic sheep, and bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or "Mad Cow Disease") in cattle. CJD is rare and occurs spontaneously in humans throughout the world, whereas variant CJD has been associated with the BSE agent. Although studies have shown no link between CWD and the development of disease in either people

or domestic livestock, it is recommended that people do not consume meat from infected animals.

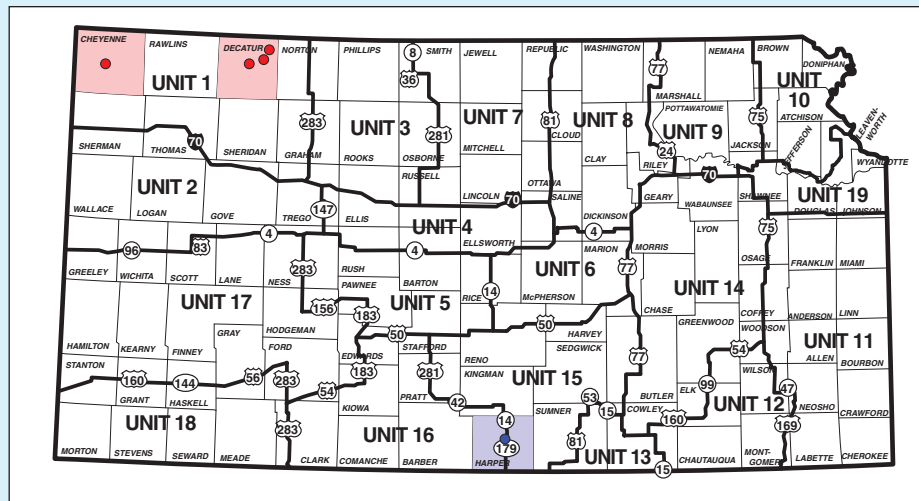
The main reason for concern about CWD at this point is for the future of the deer family itself. Chronic wasting disease is always fatal, there is no treatment, and there is no vaccine to prevent disease. The CWD prion resists many of the usual methods of disinfection and remains infective in the environment for extended periods of time. There is much we still don't know about CWD, but at present, the outlook is not encouraging. The most effective and acceptable management tool is to prevent the introduction of disease into new areas. By learning how

CWD is transmitted, people can avoid moving the disease from one place to another.

CWD spreads very slowly through the natural activities of wild animals. The disease may be passed directly from one animal to another via body secretions such as saliva. Diseased animals may also shed the infective agent into the environment where, even years later, it can infect a healthy animal when ingested while eating or licking. When an infected animal dies, the CWD prions from its body remain in the environment even after the rest of the carcass has decomposed.

In the case of CWD, an ounce of prevention is worth vastly more than a pound of cure. Since there is no cure for CWD, prevention is priceless.

Unfortunately for the deer species, CWD can and has spread much farther and faster through the activities of humans than might have naturally occurred. Bait stations used while hunting increase the chances that CWD will be transmitted more quickly through a population of deer. This unnatural congregation of animals makes transmission of any contagious disease more



CWD was detected in a wild white-tailed doe taken in Rawlins County in 2005. In 2007, three white-tailed bucks taken in Decatur County tested positive. CWD was detected in a captive elk in Harper County in 2001. That herd was depopulated.

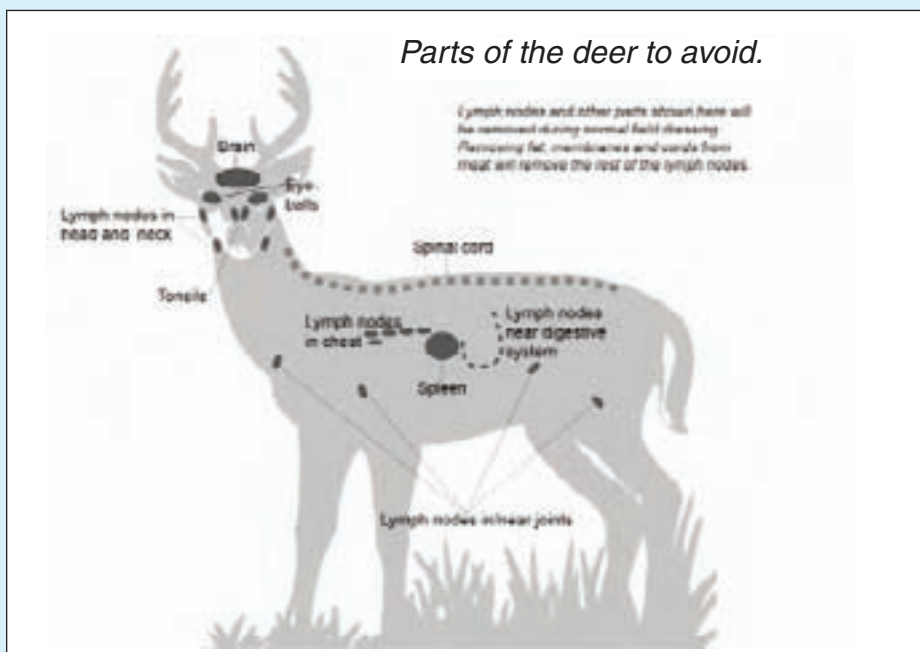
likely through increased contact with the infectious agent. For this reason, the practice of baiting or otherwise congregating deer is strongly discouraged.

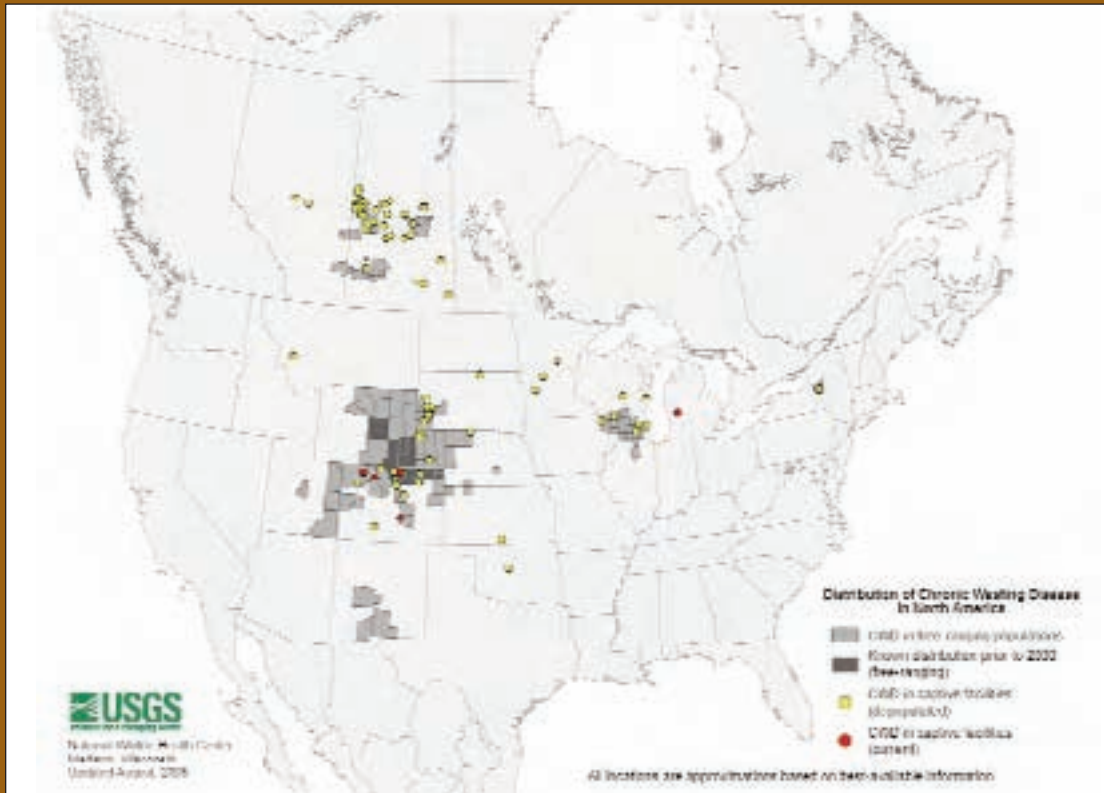
Perhaps the most important role the public can play in fighting the spread of CWD is by not helping the disease make long-distance jumps into new areas. People should not transport carcasses or live animals (wild or pen-raised) out of areas where CWD has been detected or suspected. Since the CWD prion accumulates in highest concen-

trations in the brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes, and certain abdominal organs, those tissues are the most important to avoid moving from place to place. When hunting in areas where CWD has been detected, it is generally considered safe to transport boned-out meat, antlers with cleaned skull plates, capes, and/or finished taxidermy mounts. The rest of the carcass should either be left in the area where the animal was harvested or should be disposed of in a landfill.

In Kansas, CWD has been detected in both wild and captive members of the cervid family. Through testing by the Kansas Animal Health Department (KAHD), CWD was detected in 2001 in a captive elk herd in Harper County. That herd was then depopulated. The KAHD maintains a voluntary CWD testing program for the state's captive deer and elk farms.

KDWP has tested more than 13,000 wild deer and elk since 1996. In 2005, CWD was detected in a wild white-tailed doe in Cheyenne County. Then in the 2007 hunting season, CWD was found in three wild white-tailed bucks in Decatur





County. Cheyenne and Decatur counties are both in Deer Management Unit (DMU) 1 in the far northwestern corner of Kansas bordering Colorado and Nebraska.

In addition to the testing of sick deer, KDWP will maintain statewide surveillance through the testing of animals harvested during the early (archery & muzzleloader) hunting seasons. During the regular firearms season, the surveillance effort will move primarily to DMU 1, where as many samples as possible will be collected to assess the prevalence and distribution of CWD in the area. Other areas that will be tested during the regular firearms season include DMUs 2, 3, 16, 17, and 18.

Hunters in those western areas of the state can greatly help the CWD surveillance effort by taking the head of their harvested deer to a local CWD test station for free

testing. These stations are often located at taxidermy shops, meat lockers, and other places where deer products are processed. A list of these stations will be advertised and will be posted on the KDWP website at : www.kdwp.state.ks.us/news/Hunting/Big-Game/Chronic-Wasting-Disease.

Hunters may also call the Emporia Research and Survey office at 620-342-0658 for more information.

In other areas of Kansas, the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory can perform personal CWD testing for hunters. Samples should be properly collected and shipped on ice to the KSVDL. A fee of \$30 per sample will be charged for the testing. More Information is available at www.ksvdl.org.

The same simple precautions hunters should take when handling any wild game will limit exposure to the CWD prion. In

addition, it is recommended that people avoid consuming any part of the deer except de-boned muscle meat. Tissues to avoid include the brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes, and internal organs.

In summary, CWD has been detected in Cheyenne and Decatur counties in the far northwestern corner of the state bordering Colorado and Nebraska. Hunters in western only DMUs may take advantage of the free testing available through the CWD surveillance program. Hunters in the rest of Kansas at this time have little risk of harvesting a CWD-positive deer in their area. Kansans can help keep that risk low by not transporting whole carcasses or live deer and elk (wild or farmed) from areas where CWD is known to occur or is suspected. Acting responsibly now can protect our deer population for future generations. ♡



ANY HAT WILL FIT

text and photos by Mark Shoup,
associate editor, Pratt

Commonly known as “game wardens,” KDWP natural resource officers duly enforce our wildlife-related laws. However, they wear many other hats in the course of their daily duties, as the author discovered.

Game warden, game protector, conservation officer, natural resource officer: at one time or another, each of these monikers has served as the official title for Kansas wildlife officers. One might say that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but I don't think these men and women would really appreciate the analogy, considering the nature of their jobs.

Today, they are known as natural resource officers, and we all have some familiarity with their work. They just round up “bad guys,” right? Most *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine subscribers have read the “Law” page in pre-

vious issues under the old magazine format. There, we described in detail complicated and varied cases of stakeouts, car chases, interrogations (called “interviews”), and arrests for poaching everything from deer to endangered species. It was all fascinating, sometimes funny, and occasionally dangerous. But there is much more to being a natural resource officer than hiding for deer spotlights or nabbing gill netters. In fact, much of the job falls outside the realm of what most people consider law enforcement.

I have followed these cases for almost 20 years now and have

worked with and known a number of our officers, so I thought I had a pretty good grasp of how diverse the job is. It wasn't until I drove to Tuttle Creek State Park's Fancy Creek Range last September that I fully appreciated the variety of an NRO's duties.

NRO Ben Jedlicka, Riley, had asked that someone from the Information and Education Section drive up to cover a youth/disabled rifle sight-in prior to a hunt. Seizing the opportunity to see some beautiful country and learn more about the “Pass It On” program, I volunteered. It was also an opportunity to learn more about Wildlife and Parks NROs.

When I arrived, Jedlicka was in uniform, flipping bratwursts and wieners on the grill, helping prepare a meal for about 20 youth and disabled hunters and their volunteer guides who were on hand for the event. This particular event, and the two-day hunt to follow, was hosted by volunteers from two groups — Friends of Fancy Creek Range (FFCR) and the Riley County Fish and Game Association (RCFGA). Three other NROs were on hand to assist with the sight-in and would be at the hunt the fol-

lowing weekend. Luke Nihart, a park ranger at Tuttle Creek State Park, was also on hand. (Park rangers also carry the official title of natural resource officer but are part of KDWP's Parks Division.) Jedlicka and other KDWP employees had been working with the private groups for months to bring this event to fruition.

Soon after I arrived, Jedlicka left the meat to simmer while he introduced the hunters, parents, and guides to one another, and the group was briefed on the rules of the range by other officers and volunteers. Then half the group ate while the other half, with assistance from FFRC and RCFGV volunteer guides, helped the young and disabled hunters sight in rifles. All participants seemed excited about the event and looking forward to the hunt. The sight-in ended slowly, as participants, guides, and volunteers gathered in groups like newfound friends. I had just witnessed a small part of what NROs help with on a regular basis, but something most folks don't associate with "game wardens."

The next morning, I met Jedlicka at the Tuttle Creek Lake Corps of Engineers Office and would spend the majority of the day riding with him to get a better feel for an ordinary day in the life of a natural resource officer. It was an unseasonably cool early September day, so Jedlicka was uncertain what we might run into on his daily patrol (which may cover any portion of northern Riley or all of Washington counties, some 1,200

square miles). The cloudy day was cool enough to keep most anglers and dove hunters home.

Our first stop was the Tuttle Creek State Park Office, where he made copies of receipts for food and drinks for the previous day's sight-in. Jedlicka had paid for these items himself and would send the receipts to Friends of Fancy Creek Range, which manages money donated for specific outdoor events of this nature and will reimburse Jedlicka. Not

payments, which now is against state law. Office manager Joyce Dixon assured him that the system was working and that she would let him know of any problems.

As we drove toward the River Pond Area, Jedlicka explained some of his annual duties. These include help with a variety of educational programs, including Women On Target, hunter education classes, activities at the shooting range (such as the previous day's event), and Boy Scout shooting events. In late summer into September, deer hunters begin preparation for the fall seasons. This means wildlife areas abuzz with scouting hunters and calls from non-residents wanting the latest information on deer hunting. In October, most officers undergo periodic firearms training (qualification required four times a year), but as hunting seasons move into full swing, their primary focus is patrolling, checking hunters, and following leads on hunting violations.

Jedlicka was about to tell me about how technological changes have affected the NRO's job when a call for assistance came over the mobile radio: an inch of rain the previous morning had made the dark clay roads in Riley County slicker than a greased mud run, and a rural Riley County Police Department (RCPD) officer was stuck several miles west of the lake. With no other pressing concerns, Jedlicka decided to make rescuing the hapless officer his day's mission, one of many unexpected things that all law enforcement officers deal with from time to time.



NRO Ben Jedlicka cooks brats for lunch during the sight-in day for a youth/disabled hunter deer hunt he helps coordinate.

exactly glamorous work but important for those involved in the hunt.

While we were there, Jedlicka discussed trout permits for the upcoming season and how to avoid issuing them to parents who are delinquent in child-support



Mike Blair photo

Most NROs are responsible for enforcement of wildlife-related laws in several counties. Checking licenses and permits is part of the job, but with such large territories, it's impossible for them to contact a large number of constituents.

As we drove toward the stranded officer's location, Jedlicka continued the conversation about technology.

"These mobile radios have been around forever," he explained, "but the 800 megahertz repeater system is our latest piece of high-tech equipment." He pulled what looked to me like a simple walkie-talkie from his back seat. "These little gems allow portable, statewide inter-agency communication. Once we all get up to speed with them, all local, state, and federal public safety authorities should have access to shared public safety information.

"I know that sounds kind of futuristic, but the biggest technological change — and one of the best tools I can think of — is the cell phone," he added. "It gives us instant communication with suspects and witnesses right in the field. Using one of these, I've been able to question what a sus-

pect has told me by calling others involved in the case on the spot. In the past, I might have had to drive miles to confirm a suspect's story, giving him time to cover his

tracks. And the technology evolved so quickly." (Most of us can relate to the cell phone. How many times have parents used them to check up on their kids?) Jedlicka added that the simple word processor has made making reports much easier, as well.

About half way to the stranded officer's location, Jedlicka pulled over and applied his favorite piece of technology; he phoned others involved in the upcoming youth hunt to make sure permits were being taken care of and to ask if he needed to set up a hunters' stand while he was out. That piece of logistics covered, we found the officer who was stuck, but the road was so slick that we couldn't pull him out. A radio call soon brought another RCPD officer to the scene, and a three-vehicle daisy-chain pulled the mired vehicle onto the road. Mission accomplished.

As we headed back to the Tuttle Creek area, Jedlicka explained that things would be getting busier soon. "By the end

DUTIES

The NRO enforces laws and regulations by patrolling an assigned area; protects KDWP properties; investigates violations; prepares cases for court; assists other law enforcement agencies and the public in emergency situations; maintains enforcement equipment; completes required law enforcement reports; provides a public relations program; provides public instruction and education in boating safety and furharvester, hunter, and wildlife education; provides technical and biological assistance to citizens, sportsmen and women, landowners, and other agencies in investigating matters of environmental concern; provides animal damage control and wildlife collection and disposal; conducts wildlife surveys and general maintenance on department lands; and assists in other department programs.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Bachelor's degree in natural resources and a valid driver's license. Experience may be substituted for education as determined relevant by the agency. The employee must also be certified as a law enforcement officer by the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Commission.

of October, bowhunters are out in force, and by November, things are going strong. One big issue we deal with is fraudulent permit purchasers — people claiming to be landowners when they're not. And one of our best sources of information on these cases is when a permit seller gets suspicious and calls us, but other people tip us off, too."

While November and December keep most NROs busy driving roads and checking hunters, many cases are not fully completed until January or February. It can take months after an initial encounter with a suspected poacher has been made until actual charges are filed, so much of those first two months of the year is spent interviewing or re-interviewing witnesses and

suspects and following other leads before cases can be brought to court.

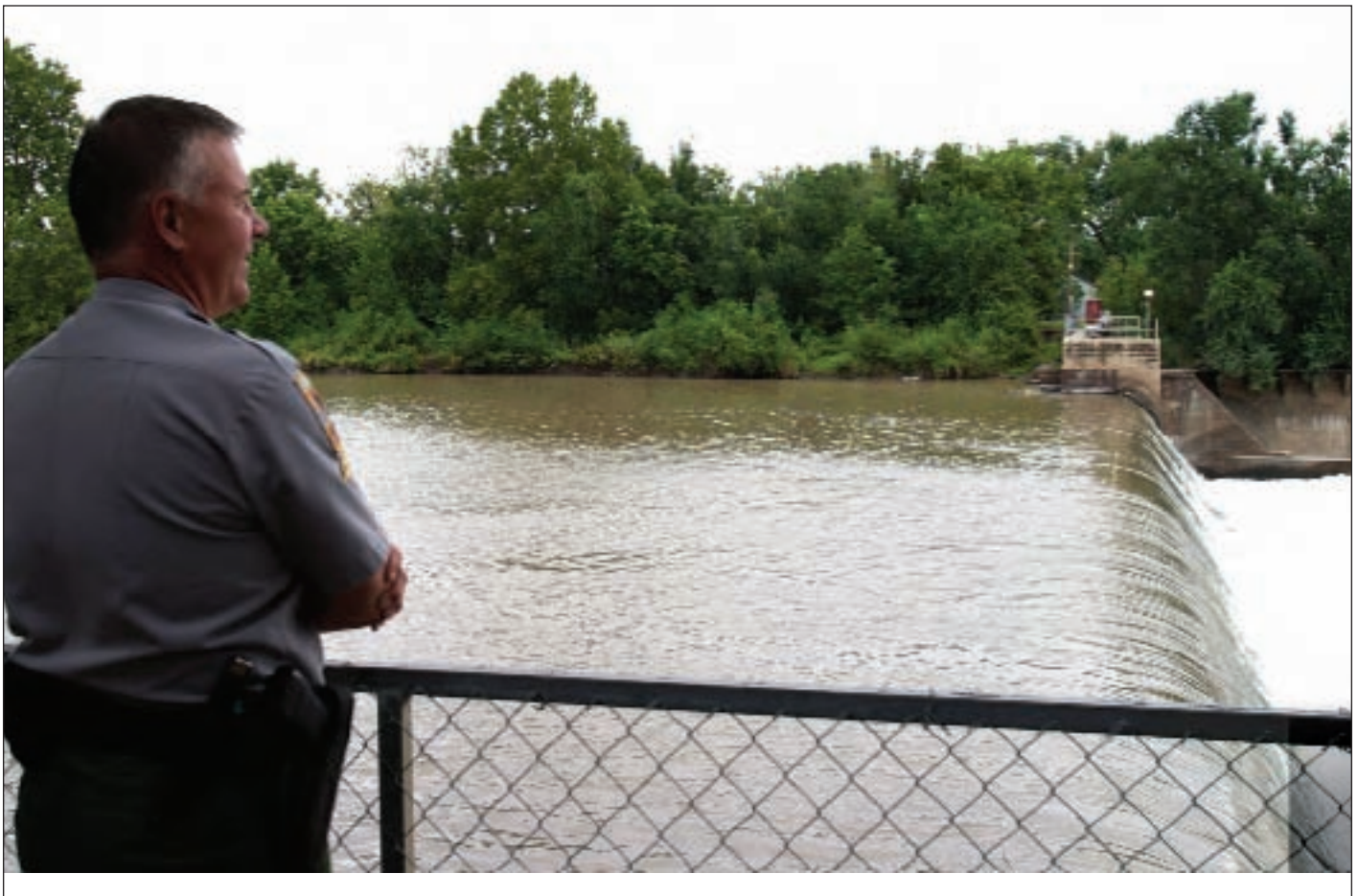
Depending on an NRO's territory, pest control can be an ongoing issue. People report everything from bats in the attic to skunks in the cellar, and NROs often help remove them. People in more urban areas often just report things they've never seen before, such as a fox or a bobcat.

As with all KDWP employees, scheduling is important for NROs. They turn in their work schedules up to six weeks in advance, but unlike other employees, they have to give a copy to local law enforcement centers, so they will know who to contact if a wildlife violation is reported. While I rode with Jedlicka, he had to stop at the

Riley County Law Enforcement Center in Manhattan to turn in his schedule.

Jedlicka also took me by Pillsbury Crossing — where a beautiful rock-bottom shelf allows people to drive over Deep Creek. Parties have gotten to be such a problem here that a 10 p.m. curfew has been established and alcohol banned. In warmer months, Jedlicka has to write a number of citations for these violations. It's not the sort of thing most people would associate with a wildlife officer, but it's part of the job.

In March, the KDWP Law Enforcement Division conducts its annual week-long in-service training at the National Guard Training Center in Salina. Here, all NROs get together to maintain



Jedlicka surveys Rocky Ford Fishing Area, a popular fishing hole for anglers in the Riley County area. In addition to contacting hunters and anglers, NROs also patrol wildlife areas, enforcing alcohol and curfew regulations.

law enforcement certification and receive updates on the latest laws and techniques for search and seizure, interviewing, defense, crime scene investigation, sobriety testing, and a variety of other enforcement issues. It's also a time for officers who haven't seen each other in some time to touch base and compare notes.

Spring is a transition period for Jedlicka and many NROs. Hunter education courses start back up, and turkey season is an active time for many, as officers patrol spring turkey Walk-In Hunting Access areas, wildlife areas, and roads along private land. For most, it's a time when the focus moves from hunting to fishing. For Jedlicka, March and April begin a long period when much of his time is spent on Tuttle Creek Reservoir, checking fishing and boating licenses and permits. Although he uses both boat and personal water craft (PWC), he likes the PWC better.

"I prefer the PWC because I can check twice as many boats in a given amount of time," he explains. "It's just so efficient; I can maneuver in shallow or rough water and ease up to a boat quickly and safely. The only downside of a PWC is that if I find a boat full of people who are under the influence of alcohol, I can't just let them drive their boat back to the dock."

With several rivers on public land in his area, however, Jedlicka spends plenty of time walking banks and checking licenses on dry land. But whether he's on a PWC in summer or driving the road in winter, Jedlicka — like most KDWP staff — loves his job.

"I absolutely love my work," he says. "Sure, just like our biologists, a lot of my work time is during prime hunting and fishing seasons. But I don't mind. I meet a lot of people, and the vast

YOUR FRIEND IN THE FIELD

Natural resource officers truly are the sportsmen's friend. They are here to protect the resource and to help the hunter and angler whenever possible. For those who think all a "game warden" does is arrest people, Jedlicka says that only a small fraction of his contacts with the public result in citations.

Here are some interesting statistics: in 2007, Kansas NROs checked 30,004 hunters and issued 1,400 citations. They checked 31,360 anglers and wrote 901 citations. Considering that many of those citations were issued to one person for multiple violations, we can see at a glance that the vast majority of NRO-sportsmen contacts are amicable. In most cases, sportsmen are happy to know someone is watching out for them, and they often glean useful information from NROs during these contacts. Nor is there any incentive to write tickets; all fines paid for wildlife crime go to the state General Fund, not to KDWP.

The next time you encounter an NRO in the field, thank him or her for being there. Ask a few questions, and you may even find a better place to hunt or fish.

Ben Jedlicka is one of approximately 69 field NROs in Kansas. Three more are expected to be added later this year. In addition, five captains, two assistant division directors, one division director, and two administrative employees round out the Law Enforcement Division. If you think you might be interested in becoming an NRO, contact KDWP at 620-672-5911.


majority of them are good people. As a city boy, I like working with people. Whether it's volunteers or average outdoorsmen in the field, most people have interesting stories to tell."

"City kid?" you may ask. Yes, not all KDWP field staff have rural backgrounds. Jedlicka grew up in the Chicago area, but when his parents moved to Parsons just after he graduated from high school, Kansas became his home. Although he fished as a youth, he didn't grow up hunting. Now, however, two of his favorite pastimes are coon hunting and crappie fishing. He has a cautionary tale for those who carry the "Pass It On" mantle, however.

"When I first started learning to hunt, my in-laws took me out pheasant hunting. They'd grown up with it, so the first time a bird

got up, BOOM! They were good shots, and the bird was down before I could shoulder my shotgun. That turned me off to hunting for a little while." So Jedlicka's recommendation to anyone introducing a novice to hunting is to give them a shot. In fact, give them all the first shots until they are hooked.

Whether it's writing citations or investigating wildlife crimes, teaching hunter education classes or learning about the newest technology, listening to visitors' stories or flipping brats, Kansas natural resources officers wear many hats. To the sportsmen and women of the state, they are your friend and always encourage people to get out and enjoy the great natural resources of the Sunflower State.

Just make sure you have all the necessary licenses and permits. 

Buntin' On The Fort



A good day of hunting around the turn of the century. (Courtesy of the U.S. Cavalry Museum.)

The rich military history is undeniable: the Buffalo Soldiers, the Big Red One, and the U.S. Cavalry School. Through the years, Fort Riley has been home to several important military figures including the likes of Custer, Patton, and Wainwright, as well as enlistees who later became famous, such as Joe Louis, Earl Woods, Mickey Rooney, and Jackie Robinson. Significant national events occurred here, including a visit by Franklin D. Roosevelt on Easter morning 1943 and the 1918 outbreak of the Spanish Flu — attributed by many to have originated at Fort Riley. Even the grave of the last cavalry horse, “Chief,” is located near the Cavalry Parade field and centuries-old native limestone quarters.

But for all the impressive military history of this prairie post, Fort Riley also features a well chronicled history of providing excellent hunting and fishing opportunities for soldiers and civilians. Over the last 150 years, the fort has trained hundreds of thousands of warriors, from the mounted cavalry regiments to the high-tech brigade combat teams of today. Their jobs are as serious as it gets. Many of the current soldiers stationed at Fort Riley have already completed as many as three tours of duty in the War on Terror. It

is little wonder then, that when these men and women have time off, they look to nature for relaxation. Many choose to take advantage of the tremendous hunting and fishing opportunities on Fort Riley.

Fort Riley can trace its roots to the headwaters of the Kansas (“Kaw”) River. “Camp Center” as it was first named, was the initial encampment at the confluence of the Republican and Smoky Hill rivers. The location of the military outpost was selected by a surveying party, with its primary purpose being protection for travelers along the Santa Fe and Oregon Trails. They believed the site to be near the center of the U.S., hence the name. Later, the name of the encampment was changed to Fort Riley in honor of Maj. Gen. Bennett Riley.

Hunting and fishing was a common activity immediately after establishment of the outpost, but not necessarily for recreational purposes. In the early years, deer, bison, elk, and various species of small game served as staples to support the increasing number of troops and civilians who worked to build the post. Although some hunting and fishing likely took place for leisure, most was probably out of necessity.

Fort Riley's hunting legacy

by Alan Hynek
fish and wildlife biologist, Fort Riley

photos courtesy Fort Riley

The U.S. Army's Fort Riley, just north of Junction City, has trained soldiers for 150 years, but it has also provided outstanding hunting and fishing recreation for soldiers and citizens alike.



As the post became permanently established, government-supplied rations became more dependable. Hunting and fishing evolved from a necessity to a form of recreation. In the late 1800s, a local Fort Riley Hunting Club was established to provide soldiers an outlet from their daily duties. The Hunting Club consisted of various types of organized hunts, including fox hunts on Sunday mornings that began with the "blessing of the dogs" at the Main Post Chapel.

Modern game management of Fort Riley's fish and wildlife resources began in the 1950s with the establishment of the Rod and Gun Club. The club was mostly made up of interested volunteers who coordinated organized hunts and social gatherings. Although they did not employ a professional biologist, they frequently sought the advice of the Kansas Fish and Game Commission, as well as Kansas State University, to make habitat improvements. Some of



How to access Fort Riley

Visitors must obtain vehicle passes and maps and register their firearms at the Marshall Army Airfield Visitors Center, Exit 301 from I-70.

All adults entering Fort Riley must have a photo ID, along with proof of insurance and vehicle registration in their vehicle.

Cameron Springs was one of the first trout fishing impoundments in Kansas. The cool flowing spring that runs into the lake has supported rainbow trout for 40 years

those early efforts are still visible today, such as tree plantings, fishing impoundments, and established food plots.

Beginning in the early 1960s, Dr. Robert Robel from Kansas State University initiated a series of important research projects on Fort Riley. Most notable was his analysis of food use by bobwhite quail, which took an in-depth look at the metabolized energy of seeds commonly eaten by the species. It was one of the most important studies of the time and is still frequently cited today. In addition, Robel published several other papers based on data collected on Fort Riley, including white-tailed deer and greater prairie chickens.

In 1967, one of the first trout fisheries in Kansas was developed on Fort Riley at Cameron Springs. Under the guidance of Dr. Harold Klaussen, Cameron Springs became one of the first places in the state to provide trout fishing. Trout were mainly acquired from the Neosho National Fish Hatchery in Neosho, Missouri. Cameron Springs, as the name implies, is a spring-fed pond that provides good aeration and slightly cooler water temperatures, making it suitable for rainbow trout.

In addition to Cameron Springs, management of a number of other impoundments began in earnest in the 1970s. These range from small farm pond-type impoundments to moderately sized watershed ponds. Two are oxbow lakes, carved out by the Kansas River. The remaining impoundments are

scattered throughout the post. Interestingly, many of those are named after their former landowners. A total of 29 ponds and lakes are actively managed today.

The passing of the Sikes Act, approved Sept. 15, 1960, and its subsequent amendments brought significant changes to natural resources management on Army property. This law stipulates that professional natural resources managers prepare plans and implement provisions of the Act. Initially, understaffing and meager budgets were common at most installations, where often just a few individuals were responsible for managing hundreds of thousand of acres. Despite those difficulties, a solid foundation was created that still pays dividends today. Notably, the Department of Defense is home to more than 300 threatened or endangered species on the 25 million acres they manage.

From the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s, Fort Riley became nationally known for its upland bird hunting. During some of those years, annual harvest of bobwhite quail topped 6,000 birds, and hunters were documented from nearly every state in the nation. Fort Riley experienced a sharp decline in overall upland bird harvest in the late 1990s, due to declining bird populations and decreased hunting pressure. Despite a much improved harvest rate over the last few years, the current bobwhite harvest has been steady at around 1,200 birds per year.

Balancing the Military Mission with Hunting and Fishing Opportunities

Today's challenges are unlike any other time in the past. The military mission has changed; security restrictions have been enacted; and environmental regulations have become increasingly complicated. All the while, overall demand for hunting and fishing opportunities on public property has skyrocketed. This paradigm shift makes it increasingly difficult to strike a balance between military readiness and providing maximum opportunities for hunting and fishing.

Conservation efforts in recent years have focused on landscape-level management practices, particularly for those species that are either endangered or are declining throughout the region. The reason for this shift is that proactive stewardship of natural resources is paramount in limiting potential effects from federally-listed species. For the most part, Fort Riley has escaped wide-scale environmental restrictions while other installations throughout the country are restricted to a point that it affects the timing and location of military training.

Recently, Fort Riley initiated an Army Compatible Use Buffer program to ease encroachment pressure near the boundary of the installation. This is in addition to the Fort Riley Prairie Partnership that was initiated in 2003, in which the Fort works cooperatively with adjacent landowners to conserve high quality tracts of tallgrass prairie. Both of these programs have been at the cutting edge in pursuing collaborative regional efforts with the Army, a base's home state, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and private landowners.

Nongame species flourish on post. More than 400 bald eagles have been documented at one time using the thermal roost along the Kansas River. It is one of the largest wintering roosts in the continental U.S. There are six streams that contain the endangered Topeka shiner. Increasingly, rare grassland birds have become fairly common on Fort Riley, a tribute to the Army's overall environmental stewardship goals.

Despite the challenges that lie ahead, Fort Riley continues to offer soldiers and civilians with some of the best hunting and fishing opportunities in the state. At more than 100,000 acres (as much as 66,000 available for public use), the installation has the distinction of being the largest contiguously owned parcel of public property in Kansas. It is also one of the largest publicly owned parcels of tallgrass prairie in the nation.

Because of its fantastic hunting and fishing opportunities, Fort Riley has long been considered a gem by many active duty and retired military staff. Many request to be stationed here or plan their retirement in the vicinity. But Fort Riley is open to all residents and non-residents. Still, as with all military installations, there are security issues that all prospective hunters must appreciate. Most important though is that all hunters and anglers must realize that Fort Riley is an active training facility for the U.S. Army. Accomplishment of that mission will always take precedence over any outdoor recreational activities.

That said, just as the U.S. Army serves the state and the nation around the globe, we are always at work to make Ft. Riley an inviting retreat for outdoorsmen and women, both civilian and military, right here in Kansas.



The largest archery harvest on Fort Riley in 2007 with a gross Boone and Crocket score of 203.

In 1986, an elk restocking effort was initiated by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Fort Riley's environmental staff. The first release consisted of 12 head of elk from Maxwell Wildlife Area near McPherson. Supplemental stockings in 1987, 1988, 1990, and 1994 released 47 elk from Colorado, Montana, and South Dakota. Most releases occurred in the vicinity of the Madison Creek area on Fort Riley. The elk herd currently consists of 100-125 head, which are regulated by an annual harvest quota of permits issued by KDWP.

A gradual but very evident shift in hunter demographics took place beginning in the mid-1990s and continues to this day. While upland bird populations began to decline, pursuit of white-tailed deer and turkey increased dramatically. Overall, hunter man-days have remained nearly constant over the last 30 years, but their pursuits have changed from upland game to big game and wild turkey. In 2007, nearly 1,800 man-days were reported for archery deer hunting alone. Ten years ago, total archery man-days were fewer than 400. 🏹

Hunting and Fishing on Fort Riley

Hunting and fishing information can be obtained by phoning 785-239-6211 or by visiting Fort Riley's Environmental Division Office, Building 407 Pershing Court, located in the Main Post Historic District, Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

All Kansas hunting and fishing regulations are in effect on the installation. Additionally, there are Fort Riley-specific regulations in effect that all hunters and anglers must abide, available at the Environmental Division Office.

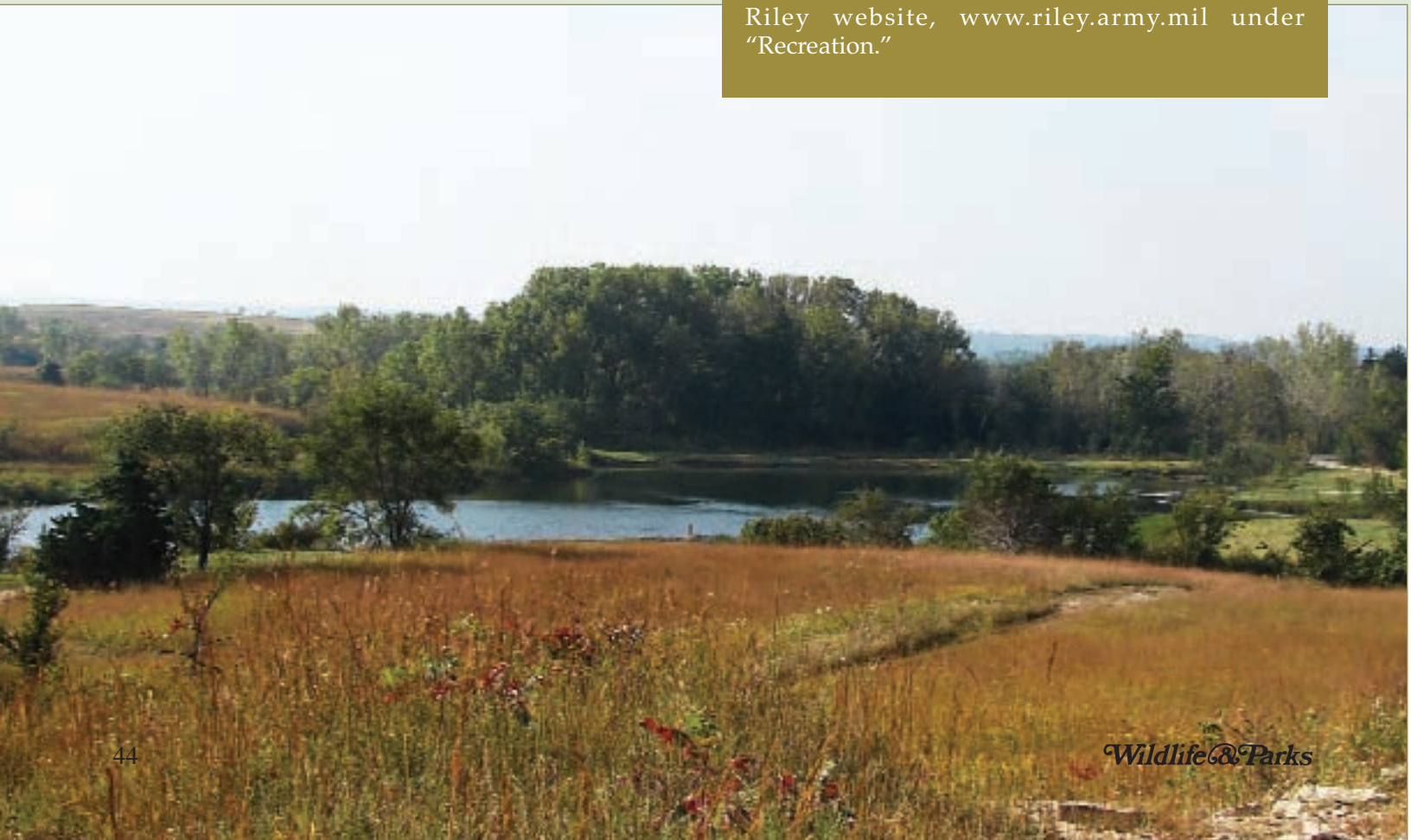
All hunting and fishing access may be closed at any time without advanced notice due to security or mission restrictions.

Hunting and fishing are allowed only in areas open for those activities. The Environmental Division opens and closes recreational areas in coordination with military training and other land use activities. A list of open recreational areas can be obtained by phoning 785-239-6669. A Fort Riley Outdoor Recreation Map must be used to determine availability.

A Fort Riley Access Permit is required for individuals ages of 16 to 65. These can be obtained at any KDWP license vendor.

Additional permits are required for spring turkey, deer, and elk hunting but can only be obtained from the Environmental Division Office.

Further information can be found on the Fort Riley website, www.riley.army.mil under "Recreation."





Backlash

by Mike Miller

Defining Success

In an excellent article on Kansas pronghorn hunting in our last issue, author Matt Bain explained that hunters might have to reconsider their definition of success. His point was that Kansas pronghorns are scarce and the country they inhabit is wide-open and unforgiving. If your definition of success is an easy opportunity at a buck antelope, Kansas will surely disappoint you. If a successful hunt means learning about your quarry, spending time with friends and family, and challenging your skills, you'll find it all in western Kansas.

But the point made me think about our definition of successful hunting and fishing. As we get older and more experienced, our perception of success often changes. I think I've been redefining success a little every year for the past 35. Sometimes, the definition of success will change within the season, according to conditions and other factors, but usually it is a factor of time and maturity. For me, success today is much different than it was 10 or 20 years ago.

Nonfishers wonder incredulously how anglers can spend hours fishing and enjoy it even when the fish aren't biting. It's difficult to explain, but here's my shot. It's not just catching fish I'm after. Nor is it merely the act of fishing. Rather, it's a combination of preparation, strategy, tackle, method, discovery, landscape, people, and of course, fish. It's rigging a fly rod with a new leader, applying the right weight and length of tippet, tying a good surgeon's knot, then selecting a fly. Then there's reading the water, making the cast, switching flies, making the drift, and finally fooling a trout. Looking up from the rushing water to a cerulean sky with mountains as a backdrop doesn't hurt a bit.

On a short morning duck hunt, choosing just the right spot for a blind and setting the decoys might take as long as the hunt. Then I'll blow my calls, even if there are no ducks flying. It drives BBD (Big

Black Dog) crazy as he looks for the phantom ducks, but I'm always striving to sound as good as the friend who taught me to call years ago. I don't yet, probably never will, but I like blowing on a duck call. If a couple of mallards are fooled, set their wings, and give me a chance to get the dog wet, I've had a good morning. It will have been especially good if I am the only hunter on the marsh. In fact, I'd rather take a couple of ducks with no other hunters around, than kill a limit in crowded, competitive conditions.

I haven't always felt this way, though. I've been impatient, frustrated and greedy for action and game. I've coveted a full game bag, and proving my competence to fellow hunters was a part of that drive. I've been embarrassed when I came home empty-handed, and I've been disappointed with half a limit. I'm not proud of it, but I'm not ashamed, either. It's part of the process.

I still enjoy testing my hunting and angling skills, but I don't give a whit if anyone else knows about it. I no longer feel the need to prove myself to anyone but myself. I still take pictures, especially of friends, family, and the dog, and I still relive my trips with good old fashioned fishing or hunting yarns. However, I have a much smaller circle of close friends to whom I tell. And sometimes I forget to tell them, unless they ask. It's just not as important as it once was.

What is still as important is the experience. Being there. Scratching the dog's ear, savoring a breath of mountain air, or feeling adrenalin surge as a cock pheasant explodes too close. It doesn't take as much as it once did, but it's still just as important and just as satisfying.

Yes, I've redefined success once again. I'll be there trying to attain it and enjoying every minute of it. I'll never get it perfect, but I'll get close enough. ♡

