

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks Magazine

FOR HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS | \$3.75 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2019



2019
Photo
Issue



STATE OF KANSAS
Laura Kelly, Governor

KDWPT COMMISSION
Gerald Lauber, Chairman
Tom Dill, Vice Chairman
Gary Hayzlett
Aaron Rider
Harrison Williams
Emerick Cross
Troy Sporer

KDWPT ADMINISTRATION
Brad Loveless, Secretary
Todd Workman, Asst. Sec. Administration
Jake George, Interim Asst. Sec. Wildlife,
Fisheries, Boating
VACANT, Asst. Sec. Parks, Tourism
Jake George, Wildlife Director
Doug Nygren, Fisheries Director
Stuart Schrag, Public Lands Director
Linda Lanterman, Parks Director
Jason Ott, Law Enforcement Director
Ron Kaufman, Info. Services Director

Chris Tymeson, Chief Legal Counsel
Joy Duncan, Accounting Chief

KANSAS
Wildlife & Parks Magazine

Mike Miller, Executive Editor
Nadia Reimer, Managing Editor
Dustin Teasley, Graphic Designer Specialist
Marc Murrell, Staff Writer
Annie Campbell-Fischer, Circulation

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

THE PHOTO THAT MAKES YOU GAZE A LITTLE LONGER, QUESTION YOUR OWN EYES, MAKES YOU WONDER IF YOU'RE MISSING SOMETHING – THAT'S WHAT WE INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE.

WE REVIEW HUNDREDS OF IMAGES EACH YEAR, AND WHILE WE'RE USUALLY LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT'S STRIKING ENOUGH TO STOP US IN OUR TRACKS BECAUSE IT'S SO COLORFUL OR SO UNUSUAL, EVERY SO OFTEN WE STOP FOR A DIFFERENT REASON – WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT. IS THERE A BIRD IN THE PICTURE? A MAMMAL? WHAT ARE WE MISSING? AND THEN, BOOM, IT HITS US AND THE PICTURE COMES TO LIFE. A FLECK OF GLINT IN THE ANIMAL'S EYE, OR THE OUTLINE OF A FIGURE APPEARS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND – SOMETHING GAVE IT AWAY. THE ADAPTATIONS WILDLIFE HAVE THAT ALLOW THEM TO CATCH PREY OR AVOID BEING PREY ARE FASCINATING AND MAKE FOR AMAZING IMAGES.

AS YOU FLIP THROUGH THE PAGES OF OUR 2019 PHOTO ISSUE, "NATURE'S CAMOUFLAGE," WE HOPE YOU WILL TAKE THE CHALLENGE OF FINDING WHAT'S HIDDEN AND ASK THE PERSON SITTING NEXT TO YOU, "DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?"

EDITORS

Contents

FRONT COVER: This ridge-faced flower spider's color allows it to blend in perfectly while it hunts for prey. Bob Gress photo

INSIDE FRONT COVER: The Cope's gray tree frog is the only Kansas amphibian that can change its color to blend in. Well done! Zack Cordes photo

Contact the Editors: mike.miller@ks.gov or nadia.reimer@ks.gov

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

Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine (ISSN 0898-6975) is published bimonthly (every other month) by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124. Address editorial correspondence to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124, (620) 672-5911. Send subscription requests to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124. Subscription rate: one year \$13; two years \$22;

and three years \$32. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted with permission. Periodical postage paid at Pratt, KS and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*, PO Box 16325, North Hollywood, CA 91615. For subscription inquiries call toll-free 1-866-672-2145.

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation, and military or veteran status. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612-1327.



Camouflaged by Perception

The theme of this 2019 photo issue is “Nature’s Camouflage,” and these photos illustrate how well wildlife adapt to their environment. Some species merely blend in and some exhibit colors and patterns that match their surroundings precisely.

And while camouflage is a good attribute if you’re predator or prey, it’s not always desired. Unfortunately, the state of Kansas sometimes seems hidden under a camouflage blanket of perception.

We’ve all heard comments that “Kansas is flat and boring,” or “Kansas is wheat fields and wind,” or worse, “Kansas is home to Dorothy and tornadoes.” And while Kansas has elements of each of those stereotypes, there is so much more.


The Great Plains region of western Kansas is mostly flat, but while gazing across the shortgrass prairie in northwestern Kansas, it’s hard not to be inspired by the view and beauty. On a clear day, you can see for miles and the sunsets are unmatched. But just when you think it’s the flattest country you’ve ever seen, something catches your eye: amazing Niobrara chalk formations, created by an ancient ocean, spiral up in amazing white towers. If you’ve never seen them, make plans to visit our newest state park when it opens later this year. A visit to Little Jerusalem Badlands State Park in Logan County should be on your bucket list. It completely dispels the idea that the Kansas landscape is featureless and boring.

There are many other noteworthy Kansas landscapes that must be seen to be appreciated, including the Red Hills of southcentral Kansas, the Smoky Hills in northcentral Kansas and the Osage Questas of southeastern Kansas. And even life-long Kansans may not know that the Ozarks reach into far southeastern Kansas.

And then there is the Flint Hills region. This amazing tallgrass prairie landscape covers an area 93 miles wide and 150 miles long, starting near Manhattan and running south to the Oklahoma border. Tallgrass prairie once covered more than 170 million acres in North America, from Indiana to Kansas and from Canada to north Texas. Today only 4 percent of that tallgrass prairie remains, and the Flint Hills comprises two-thirds of that. A shallow layer of flinty limestone has prevented this mostly private land from being broken out, and the native prairie has been well managed by Kansas cattle ranchers.

For those who love prairie, the view of rolling hills waving with native grass for as far as the eye can see is satisfying, and those views are common along the Flint Hills Scenic Byway, Highway 177 from Council Grove to Cassoday. Along this route, a closer look is easy with a visit to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, between Strong City and Council Grove.

A more intimate Flint Hills experience is free for anyone at the Flint Hills Trail State Park. The trail, which spans from Osawatomie to Herington and is the longest in Kansas at 117 miles, can be hiked, biked or traversed on horseback. It provides fantastic views of the Flint Hills, as well as historical stops at many communities connected along the abandoned Missouri Pacific Railroad corridor.

And there is so much more to Kansas we’d love to uncover, not the least of which is our friendly and hospitable people. But like anything hidden under a layer of camouflage, finding the truth requires a closer look. Enjoy closer looks of the wildlife in this issue, and make a New Year’s resolution this year to look closer at the beauty of our state often hidden under the camouflage of perception. 





Backlash

with Mike Miller

See Me Not

While selecting photos for this issue, I thought about how I've tried to blend in to my surroundings over the years. When I first started hunting, I was more concerned with clothes that kept me warm, and in those days, there weren't many camouflage options available. However, that has changed, and today we have dozens of camouflage types to consider, and "new and improved" patterns are unveiled each year.

My first camouflage consisted of un-insulated pants and jacket, which I assumed were Vietnam-war era fatigues, purchased from a military surplus store. Granddad, who valued a good deal more than anyone, found and bought them for me. And while they were inexpensive, they lasted through a number of hunting seasons. Designed to hide soldiers in the jungle, the pattern probably didn't blend in very well with the southcentral Kansas landscape. But I wore them proudly because Granddad gave them to me and because I felt less obvious.

Blending in, or at least believing you blend in, is important to a hunter's confidence. I'll never forget my first muzzle-loader deer hunt. I had been bowhunting exclusively for several years when a friend loaned me a Hawken-style muzzleloader and invited me to hunt with him. During a firearm deer season, deer hunters must wear a blaze orange hat and vest. Donning these two pieces of attire over my camouflage clothing seemed unnatural. I remember feeling like a dimly lit orange light bulb as I trudged to a stand in the pre-dawn light. I knew the orange I was wearing likely appeared a dull gray to deer, but I remember thinking every deer within a half-mile was watching me.

Over the next couple of days, I learned that I could easily hide from deer wearing orange and had several close encounters. The highlight was watching a bobcat stroll just yards in front of me as I stalked, on hands and knees, a buck bedded at the head of a draw. I didn't move a muscle and the bobcat never acknowledged me.

So while I know better, I still admire and purchase the latest camouflage patterns, hoping to be invisible while hunting. Patterns available to hunters have evolved from crude leaf shapes on a light green background to photo-realistic, 3-D images of trees, limbs, grasses and leaves. I especially like the marsh grass waterfowl camouflage, even though while wearing it head to toe, ducks have flared when I failed to build a decent blind or turned my face to the sky at the wrong time.

The real secret to not being seen is using cover to your advantage, being quiet and holding still. Turkeys and waterfowl have sharp vision and see color better than mammals, but I've had turkeys approach within yards while I was



wearing street clothes but holding absolutely still. And building a blind that blends with the shoreline vegetation is more important to fooling waterfowl than having the latest marsh camouflage. Still, I'm attracted to the new patterns. I even have a gun covered in marsh grass camouflage. It looks pretty cool, but I've had trouble locating it a time or two when I laid it down in corn stubble.

No matter what we do, humans can't compete with wildlife when it comes to blending in. Some species have amazing feather, fur or scale patterns that blend in perfectly, but all can hold statue-still when they sense danger or are waiting for prey. So I guess the moral of this story is to buy comfortable clothing that keeps you dry and warm, and if it makes you more confident in the field, buy the latest camouflage pattern. Above all, learn from the game species we pursue, use the surrounding cover, be patient, quiet and keep still. 🐻



*PINK-SPOTTED
HAWK MOTH*

Bob Gress

RESTING COYOTES

Tony Pianalto



*COPPERHEAD
SNAKE*

Zack Cordes



COYOTE AND
GREATER
PRAIRIE
CHICKEN

Karole Erikson

BROWN
CREEPER

Bob Gress

KILLDEER NEST
Tony Pianalto



*PEREGRINE FALCON
NESTLINGS*

Danny Brown



GREAT-
HORNED
OWL

Jay Miller



PRAIRIE
VOLES

Bob Gress







*RING-NECKED
PHEASANT*

Tony Pianalto



WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWN

Tony Pianalto

RACCOON

David Butel



HOARY BAT

Bob Gress



LEAST
TERN

Bob Gress



MISSISSIPPI
KITE

Karole Erikson





*EASTERN
SCREECH OWL*

Bob Gress

*BLINDED SPHINX
MOTH LARVA*

Gail Huddle





*BLACK SWALLOWTAIL
BUTTERFLY CHRYSALIS*

Bob Gress



*NORTHERN
HOGSUCKER*

Ryan Waters



LONGNOSE GAR

*Isaac Szabo/Engbertson
Underwater Photography*





COPE'S GRAY
TREEFROG

Bob Gress



GREATER
PRAIRIE CHICKEN

Karole Erikson





PRAIRIE RATTLESNAKE

Judd Patterson



WILD TURKEY WITH POULTS

Tony Pinalto





*DIAMOND-BACKED
WATER SNAKE*

Jay Miller





*RUBY-THROATED
HUMMINGBIRD*

Karole Erikson



BULLFROG

Danny Brown





AMERICAN BITTERN

Bob Gress





*GREAT HORNED
OWLET*

Danny Brown

BOBCAT

Tony Pianalto



TEXAS HORNED LIZARD

Bob Gress







RINGED CRAYFISH
Engbertson Underwater Photography



FOX SQUIRREL
Tony Pianalto



COMMON
POORWILL

Bob Gress





COMMON NIGHTHAWK EGG

Judd Patterson

WALKINGSTICK

Bob Gress

COOPER'S HAWK
Gail Huddle





IMMATURE ORIOLE
Karole Erikson





*EASTERN
SCREECH
OWL*

Bob Gress



RING-NECKED PHEASANT HEN

Bob Gress

WHITE-TAILED BUCK

Tony Pianalto





1

Nick Swallow
Starry Night



LANDSCAPES

2

Kylie Rankin
Mossy Trunk

YOUTH

3

Kieren Shultz
Lake View





Tyler Trecek
Riders at Sunset

1



OUTDOOR RECREATION



John Walker
Draw Your Bows



3

Johanna Walker
Let's Play Ball

YOUTH



1

OTHER SPECIES

Danielle Gold
Eastern Collared Lizard

2

Michaela Gold
Orange Bluet



3

Maggie Sanders
Tiger Swallowtail



YOUTH



1

Jenna Thompson
White-faced Ibis



2

Michaela Gold
Ruby-throated Hummingbird

WILDLIFE



3

Danielle Gold
Western Kingbird

YOUTH



1 Isaac Shultz
Out Fishing



2

Andon Soukup
Turkey Time

HUNTING
& FISHING

FOR
YOUTH



1

Robert Dilla
Mushroom Rock Milky Way

LANDSCAPES



Jeremy Black
Supercell

2



Michael Frost
Cedar Bluff

3

ADULT

Luis Felipe B. B. Feitoza
Shooting Day

1



OUTDOOR RECREATION



2

Christine Gold
Catching Butterflies

3

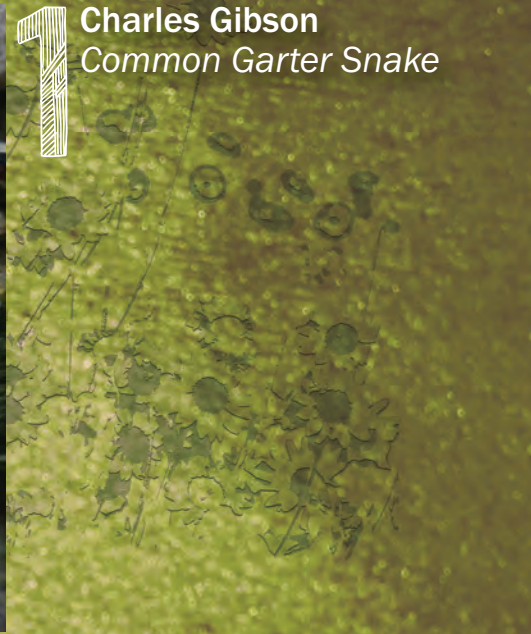
Christine Gold
Exploration



ADULT



1 Charles Gibson
Common Garter Snake



OTHER
SPECIES

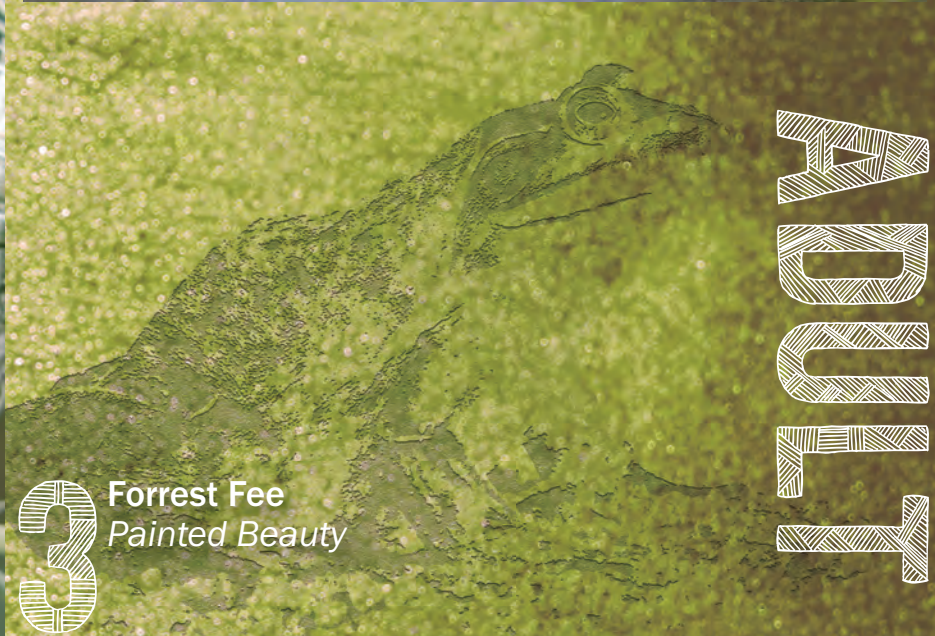


Luis Felipe B. B. Feitoza
Bullfrog

2



3 Forrest Fee
Painted Beauty



ADULT

Jay Stockhaus
Fox Kit

1



WILDLIFE



Joe Lucas
Prairie Dog

2

Matt Wastler
Prothonotary Warbler



ADULT



3



Renae Goetz
Winter Hunt

1

HUNTING & FISHING



2

Brad Schlegel
Fishing The Point



3

Brad Schlegel
Foggy Morning Fishing

ADULT



There is no second nature.
nature.org/kansas

