

\$3.75 | September – October 2022

# KANSAS

## *Wildlife & Parks Magazine*

*Remembering the life,  
laughter and legacy of:*  
**Bruce  
Cochran**

Pg. 23

**HOW TO**  
**Hunt Prairie Chickens in Kansas**  
Pg. 17

The Importance of  
Leaving No Trace Behind Pg. 30

Identifying  
Cottonwood Borers Pg. 43







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*Wildlife & Parks Magazine*

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**FRONT COVER** A successful day afield. Rob McDonald photo.

**INSIDE COVER** The golden glow of a sunflower field. Staff photo.

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

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# COMMON GROUND

with Brad Loveless



## Trees in the Prairie State

from the secretary

**I**n my first career working with Evergy's environmental program, I helped plant tens of thousands of trees along streams and in urban areas in Kansas. The environmental and human benefits of trees in these areas are irrefutable. But Kansas is a prairie state, dominated by the Flint Hills tallgrass prairie in the east, the mixed grass Smoky Hills and Red Hills in the north and south central parts of the state, short grass prairie in the west, and sand/sagebrush prairie in our southwest.

In those areas, for the most part, large trees are invaders and a threat to both those prairie ecosystems, dominated by native warm season grasses, and to the wildlife species that have evolved to live there. Those areas developed with periodic fire and large herbivores, such as bison (or cattle, today) and tend to stay healthy with proper doses of both.

Historically, trees in riparian areas, along streams, in eastern Kansas were common because of the higher rainfall and protection from wildfires. Because of encouragement and information provided by the Kansas Forest Service (KFS), trees were planted on stream sides to perform critical duties, such as holding soil in place on erodible stream banks, intercepting fertilizers to keep them in the farm field before they became polluting sediment, and collecting nutrients in rivers and reservoirs. They do double duty for excellent wildlife habitat, providing food and cover for mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

Trees in urban areas benefit us aesthetically, mentally and environmentally. In yards, along thoroughfares and in parks, trees create an inviting, welcoming atmosphere. Numerous studies have proven that a green, tree-filled atmosphere significantly improves healing for medical patients, and creativity and test outcomes for school students. Environmentally, those same trees capture atmospheric carbon dioxide and turn it into roots, trunks and leaves. They slow rainfall and runoff giving it time to infiltrate into the soil. And they can shield homes and businesses from harsh winds and sun.


The first tree I planted in our yard was a Shumard Oak just west and a little north of the house, and it now protects that whole end of the house from the scorching summer sun.

Once we get to the Kansas prairies, away from streams and people, trees become undesirable because of their negative environmental impacts.



Trees in grasslands compete for water, nutrients and sunlight while providing perches for raptors feeding on ground-nesting birds. Tree encroachment on the prairie negatively affects many species, including Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens – two iconic prairie grouse species that have declined since European settlement in Kansas.

Teaming with the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in support of their “Tree-free, Seed-free” initiative, we are working cooperatively with landowners using managed fire and tree removal to restore prairie where trees have encroached. Wisely recognizing that when trees that have numerous, easily-transported seeds are removed, the threat of new seedlings in that vicinity is drastically reduced. Recognizing that some species like Eastern Red Cedar have both male and female (seed-producing) forms, we often remove the females or only plant males where a windbreak is needed, such as next to a house or an agricultural field.

Going back to my utility roots, we worked with KFS to develop guides for homeowners to plant the right tree in the right place, avoiding those whose mature height will challenge nearby electric lines. The same concept holds for the rest of Kansas: Let's conserve our native prairies and their dependent wildlife by putting and keeping trees a safe distance away, by our rivers and in our cities where they perform best. 



## IN THE MAIL

### Magazine Updates

Nadia. I really like the magazine. I've been a subscriber for some time and think the magazine is more readable now than when I started. Good job!

Kenneth Woods

Mr. Woods,

Thank you so much for taking the time to reach out, and for your support of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*.

We're always pleased when we hear folks are enjoying the publication.

I've shared your note with the other staff members responsible for putting the magazine together each issue; I know they'll appreciate it.

Thanks again and take care!

Nadia Marji, *executive editor*



in the mail



Flat is a state of mind! Get to know the people, science, and stories that make the Kansas outdoors more than flyover country.

# SUBSCRIBE

 [ksoutdoors.com/Flatlander](https://ksoutdoors.com/Flatlander)



## Fields Managed Specifically for Dove Hunting Now Open



The 2022 Kansas dove hunting season has officially begun and quality public hunting opportunity awaits at more than 90 locations managed specifically for dove hunting by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP). See <https://ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Migratory-Birds/Dove2> for a complete list of publicly-accessible dove fields open this season.

Though drought events earlier in the year have had a significant effect on spring plantings across the state, KDWP's public land managers have once again gone above and beyond to provide optimum wildlife habitat for public enjoyment, to include crops of sunflowers, milo and wheat stubble that are sure to attract good numbers of fast-flying quarry.

Hunters can increase their odds of successful hunts this year by:

- Checking the latest reports for the specific wildlife area they are interested in, or by calling the wildlife area office for the most up-to-date information.
- Ensuring only non-toxic shot is utilized on public lands. And, making sure shotguns are plugged and incapable of holding more than three shells at a time.
- Downloading the Go Outdoors Kansas mobile app, which gives hunters instant access to their license and permit purchases, current regulations, and public lands check-in/check-out system.

The 2022 Kansas dove hunting season runs September 1 through November 29, during which time hunters may take mourning, white-winged, Eurasian collared, and ringed turtle doves. After the season closes, only Eurasian collared and ringed turtle doves may be harvested.

Hunters may keep a daily bag limit of up to 15 doves total, which can be mourning and white-winged doves in any combination; There is no limit on Eurasian collared or ringed turtle doves, but any taken in addition to the mourning and white-winged dove daily bag limit must have a fully-feathered wing attached for identification while in transport. The possession limit for dove is 45.

Lastly, hunters should keep in mind that migratory doves may only be taken while in flight.

To learn more about doves in Kansas, including the dove hunting season, visit [ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Migratory-Birds/Dove2](https://ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Migratory-Birds/Dove2). To purchase 2022 Kansas hunting licenses and permits, visit [GoOutdoorsKansas.com](https://GoOutdoorsKansas.com) or download the Go Outdoor Kansas mobile app, here <https://ksoutdoors.com/License-Permits/KDWP-Mobile-Apps/GoOutdoorsKS-Mobile-App>.



## Public Temporarily Allowed to Salvage Fish at Ellis City Lake Due to Drought



Recent drought conditions resulting in minimal inflow at Ellis City Lake are having detrimental effects on local fish populations. And, continued dry weather may lead to significant fish losses in the near future. That's why the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) and the City of Ellis, Kan. have issued a temporary order to open the lake to public salvage effective immediately.

When a public fish salvage is in effect, the public may collect any remaining fish in the designated waterbody by any legal methods, as well as by hand, dip net, or seine, per K.A.R. 115-7-1. The Ellis City Lake fish salvage order also temporarily removes all daily creel limits and size limits, per K.A.R. 115-25-14.

Anglers should pay special mind to posted notices around the lake, as this order will remain in effect only until posted notice is removed.

Under normal conditions, anglers can expect to find the following species at Ellis City Lake:

- Bluegill
- Black Bullhead
- Channel Catfish
- Crappie
- Flathead Catfish
- Green Sunfish
- Largemouth Bass
- Saugeye
- Wiper

Other waterbodies with a temporary fish salvage order in place due to drought include Warren Stone Memorial Lake, two miles east of La Crosse.

For information on Ellis City Lake, including directions, visit <https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Fishing-Locations-Public-Waters/Northwest-Region/Ellis-City-Lake>.

For information on Warren Stone Memorial Lake, visit <https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Fishing-Locations-Public-Waters/Southwest-Region/La-Crosse-Warren-Stone-Memorial-Lake>.

For all other information, contact KDWP district Fisheries biologist Dave Spalsbury at (785) 726-3212.

## Biologists Detect Undesirable Species at Scott State Fishing Lake



Reports from the public of alleged "intruders" in Scott State Fishing Lake were recently confirmed by Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) Fisheries biologists in late August 2022. Fisheries staff confirmed the presence of gizzard shad, *Dorosoma cepedianum*, in the spring-fed lake – 91 gizzard shad that averaged 5.7 inches long to be precise – during an exploratory electrofishing survey.

Based on the gizzard shad sampled, staff are confident the majority were hatched just this year.

"Given the relatively high abundance and young age, it's likely that most of the current population was produced in Scott State Fishing Lake and not the result of immigration or stocking," said KDWP district Fisheries biologist Dave Spalsbury. Well, it wasn't Department-led stocking, that is.

"Gizzard shad were not stocked by KDWP, so the Scott State Fishing Lake population originated via natural immigration during our high flow-through event in May 2021, or through unauthorized public stocking," added Spalsbury.

While the full effects of gizzard shad establishment in Scott State Fishing Lake are currently unknown, Fisheries staff are well aware of the detrimental effect this species can have in small lakes if left unchecked.

During the initial establishment of a population, small gizzard shad can actually serve as forage for select sportfish. But over time – and with continued reproduction – juvenile gizzard shad form into adults and become too large to be vulnerable to predation. Inevitably, this leads to multiple fish populations directly competing for forage, and overall growth being stymied.

KDWP Fisheries staff are currently evaluating management strategies to mitigate the establishment of gizzard shad in Scott State Fishing Lake, with hopes of protecting the 115-acre lake from becoming overrun with the undesirable species.

Currently, Scott State Fishing Lake is home to channel catfish, crappie, largemouth bass, sunfish, saugeye and the occasional rainbow trout. With the aid of good science, proactive management efforts, and continued monitoring – KDWP's Fisheries staff aim to keep it that way.

For more on Scott State Fishing Lake, including creel and length limits, visit <https://ksoutdoors.com/Fishing/Where-to-Fish-in-Kansas/Fishing-Locations-Public-Waters/Southwest-Region/Scott-State-Lake>.



## BIRD BRAIN

### Fall Migration

with Mike Rader

September and October are exciting for Kansas birders. While fall migration started in July for some species of shorebirds and hummingbirds, we see the rapid increase of other birds during this two-month period. Most of our waterfowl, cranes, loons, and grebes will migrate to and through our state in the late fall months to follow – the chance to see many of the neotropical migrant songbirds is now.

Hunters look forward to the swelling numbers of resident and migrating mourning doves and the abundant early-migrating blue-winged teal that are common statewide. The water conditions of the larger wetlands of the state are in question this year as to availability of quality habitat, given the continuing drought of summer. This will probably translate into these birds using reservoirs across Kansas as stopovers and winter residency, especially if those are the only locations with available water. This could result in a poor showing on water-dependent species throughout the upcoming fall and winter, but time will tell.

We are several months into the launch of the Kansas Birding Trail project, [ksbirdingtrail.com](http://ksbirdingtrail.com). There, birders can find locations, informative descriptions, and maps to where the abundant bird life in Kansas can be found. This program was founded by Kansas birding experts wanting to showcase what our state has to offer. We concentrated on using properties that were accessible to the public, mainly directing folks to federal, state, or local government-owned locations. We also made the trails within the project either a loop or linear trail that can be done in a decent day in the field. They are spread across the state, covering most of the physiographic regions and habitat zones we have. It will be consistently a work in progress, and we will continue to look for additions and improvements as we go. If you are interested in birds, look at the site and get out there to bird our wonderful state.

Early October is also when the Kansas Ornithological Society typically has their fall meeting, including a half-day



Fall migration is a fantastic time to observe a variety of species, including snowy and great egrets.

field trip to local locations and a paper session dealing with bird-related research conducted by a combination of students and instructors from in-state colleges/universities and non-formal folks with a keen interest in birds. Plans are being made for an in-person meeting, which will likely be held in the northeastern part of the state. More information can be found at [ksbirds.org](http://ksbirds.org).

Kansas is a fun state to bird in any season, but there's a special place in my heart when it comes to fall migration. I am reminded of spending many September weekends at the Cimarron National Grasslands, searching for the southwestern specialties and vagrants with friends from all over the state. Those were some of the formative times in my birding career, travelling with so many of my birding mentors and trying to learn a fraction of what they knew about birds. I think I have picked up a few things along the way, but still learn from the best when I can. Find a great birding friend or a lot of them and you'll never regret it.

## WHAT AM I? ID Challenge

Using only the image and clues below, see if you can figure out this month's mystery species!



### Clues:

1. In the past, I've been associated with death and disease.
2. A group of us are called a "murder."
3. I am considered one of the smartest animals in the world.

>>> See answer on Page 10.





## BOAT KANSAS

### Boating Fatigue

*with Chelsea Hofmeier*

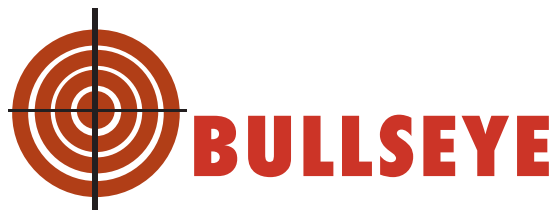


There are many factors to be aware of while boating; navigation rules, required equipment, and even fishing regulations are often on a boater's radar, but a phenomenon called "boating fatigue" might not be.

Many find boating to be similar to driving a car, so the amount of energy used and the stress on our bodies that boating causes is regularly underestimated. Boating, especially if done for long periods of time, can have a large impact on your body by impairing your mental and physical performance and making you tire more easily. This makes risk of an accident much greater. Exposure to noise, vibration, sun, glare, wind, motion of the water and heat can all contribute to boating fatigue. These exposures can also intensify the effects of alcohol and drugs, so it's always important to boat sober.

Think this would never happen to you? Think again! Everyone is at risk for getting boating fatigue regardless of age or fitness level. Even though boating fatigue may at times be unavoidable, wearing sun protection (sunscreen, hats, sunglasses etc.), staying hydrated and sober, taking breaks, listening to music, and knowing when to quit for the day are all good ways to help fight it.

The potential to get boating fatigue is all part of the experience, but if you are aware of it and take the right precautions to reduce its effects, it's one less thing to worry about during your outing. Pair these tips with wearing a life jacket and you've got the perfect combination for a great day on the water!



### Dress for Success at the Range

*with Kent Barret*

Dressing appropriately for a trip to the range is essential for success. These concepts apply equally to all shooters regardless of gender, age or ability. With a little planning it will be easier to concentrate on shooting and less on wardrobe malfunctions.

Some DOs to consider:

- DO call the range or check the website to see if there is a dress code. Some ranges have specific requirements such as no open toed shoes or only collared shirts.
- DO wear a hat. In addition to providing shade, a hat can protect your head and face from ejected hot cartridge brass. A hat can also keep hair out of your eyes so you won't have anything obstructing your view of the sights and target.
- DO wear adequate vision and hearing protection. These are required every time you shoot at any formal range.
- DO wear long pants. The more skin you cover, the less likely you will go home with a burn. Wear an adequate shooting belt to not only help to keep your pants in place, but also to provide a secure way to anchor your holster and make carrying and holstering your firearm safer. It is hard to shoot accurately if your trousers start heading south in the middle of a shot string!
- DO consider an outfit that you can wear exclusively at the range. Even outdoor ranges can expose you to a variety of chemicals. With a separate set of clothes, these can be washed separately and reduce the possibility of cross-contamination with your other clothes.

Some DON'Ts to consider:

- DON'T wear tank tops or other shirts with loose or low-cut tops. You might consider long sleeve shirts even, as the more skin you keep covered at the range, the better the experience will be. Your clothes provide a barrier between ejected hot brass and your skin. Nothing says dance like a hot shell casing going down the front of one's shirt while shooting a string!
- DON'T wear open toed shoes such as sandals or flip flops. Hot brass from ejected cartridges LOVE to find feet. Look for shoes that cover as much of the foot as possible like boots or light hiking shoes. You will find that these types of footwear will help you to maintain a proper shooting stance, improving accuracy and making your range visit more pleasant.
- DON'T wear a lot of jewelry. Large dangling earrings, bracelets and rings can interfere with your shooting besides increasing a risk of injury.

In short, wear comfortable but covering clothing at the range for the best shooting experience.

from kdwp staff





# Law Matters

## KDWP K-9 Teams

*with Colonel Gregory Kyser*

from kdwp staff



On the morning of August 29, Game Warden Falls and K-9 “Indy” were requested by the Miami County Sheriff’s Office to assist in locating two individuals from Osawatomie State Hospital. The pair located a cell phone, which led to the capture of the individuals.

Kansas hunting season is officially in full swing, and many hunters are excited to pursue their favorite game species. While the majority have the confidence and patience to be successful hunters, there are often individuals who go well beyond the limits of ethical hunting. Stealing our state’s resources by poaching species illegally is a battle Kansas game wardens deal with regularly.

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) has a group of 10 special wardens who can help “sniff out” such criminal activity. Ten K-9 teams are positioned across the state and are trained in wildlife detection, evidence recovery, and tracking. Once selected for the program, the K-9 is assigned a handler and attends a nine-week training school hosted by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Upon returning to Kansas, the K-9 teams continue with four hours of weekly training to maintain their skills.

Through the years, the KDWP K-9 teams have had significant success discovering illegally-taken wildlife by unethical hunters. Weapons, shell casings, bows, arrows, and crossbow bolts have been found by deploying the K-9 teams when needed. However, even more rewarding is when our K-9 units assist with locating an individual that is in need of rescue.

In 2016, two KDWP K-9s tracked a four-year-old girl who had walked away from home. While dehydrated and not very responsive, the little girl survived the nearly 100-degree heat thanks to being found by Warden Hockett with K-9 “Meg” and Warden Stoughton with K-9 “Hunter.”

Another similar case involved a young boy who ran away from his grandmother on I-70 in Wabaunsee County. The boy suffered from Angelman Syndrome, which can lead to a fascination with water. After tracking the child across I-70, the young boy was located in a body of water, quickly slipping into hypothermia. His life was saved thanks to the quick actions of Warden Hockett and K-9 “Meg.”

Recently, a KDWP K-9 team was deployed to assist the Miami County Sheriff’s Office in locating a male patient and employee from the Osawatomie State Hospital. Upon arrival, Warden Falls and K-9 “Indy” located a cell phone hidden in thick grass. The discovery of the cell phone led to the capture and arrest of the individuals.

KDWP K-9s do not receive any form of aggression training and regularly engage in public programs and demonstrations. I am proud to say our K-9 teams work hard to promote wildlife conservation while also keeping Kansans safe.





## A Forgotten Treasure

with Dustin Teasley

If you read my article from the last issue, you know I recently had to buy a new freezer. While transferring game to the new freezer, I came across wild turkey breast from last fall's harvest. My wife, Heather, said she would make a meal with it during the week; I figured fried turkey nuggets or chicken fried turkey was on the menu. Unfortunately, school athletics and late nights at work meant we mostly ate on the run.

That following weekend, my daughter, Anastin, developed a mood to cook, so she asked her mom to help her make cream cheese wontons and taquitos. I know – two very different cultures, but that's how we roll. Heather remembered that she needed to cook the wild turkey we set out earlier in the week, so she decided to make the taquitos from that.

After enlisting me to help, I took the turkey breast and cut it in half, making two thinner slices. I started the grill and let the meat marinate in LaChoy teriyaki and Worcestershire sauce while the coals heated. As I grilled the meat, I poured the leftover marinade over each side, giving the meat a nice, caramelized finish.

After I took the cooked turkey breast off the grill, I wrapped the two pieces in aluminum foil to rest, then gave them to Heather. She let them set for about 10 minutes before she unwrapped them and minced them in the food processor. I must admit, I was a little depressed to see the beautifully grilled turkey breast ground up, but it's part of the process.

After mixing the minced meat with other ingredients, she scooped the mixture onto small corn tortillas and rolled them into tight little tubes. Once all the taquitos were made, she air-fried them at 370 degrees for 8 minutes in small batches. After adding a dollop of sour cream and dipping them into taco sauce, an instant hit was formed. It was good enough to make me forget about how nice the grilled turkey looked before it was blended up!

### *Wild Turkey Taquitos*

1 turkey breast (grilled and minced in a food processor)  
1/3 C cream cheese  
1 C grated pepper jack cheese  
¼ C green salsa  
3 Tbsp chopped cilantro  
2 Tbsp sliced green onion  
1 Tbsp dry ranch powder  
1 Tbsp fresh lime juice  
1 tsp Kosher salt  
1 tsp chili powder  
½ tsp cumin  
½ tsp onion powder  
¼ tsp garlic powder  
small corn tortillas (or flour)

Mix all ingredients and place two to three tablespoons in a tortilla. Roll tortilla and put (5-6 per batch) in air fryer at 370 degrees for 8 minutes. Serve with sour cream and taco sauce.

from kdwp staff



Shutterstock 198259307



## Bowfishing as an Introduction to Hunting

with Tanna Fanshier

from kdwp staff



Are you an angler, or the parent of an angler curious about making the leap from fishing to hunting?

Consider giving bowfishing a try! Bowfishing is a method of fishing that utilizes specialized archery equipment to shoot and retrieve fish and can be an exciting (and humbling) experience for new and seasoned outdoor enthusiasts alike!

Bowfishing provides opportunities to hone archery abilities and discuss complex concepts like refraction with science-curious participants. Bowfishing is also a great way to introduce the idea of harvest to budding hunters. Unlike traditional angling with the option for catch and release, arrowed fish cannot be returned to the water. Therefore, bow anglers must be aware to set up safe and ethical shots, practice good shot placement, and become familiar with their effective range – all core concepts covered in hunter education.

Bow anglers can also practice estimating distance, species identification, and cooking with wild game, as many species targeted by bowfishing can make delectable table fare for the openminded archer-angler. For hunters already proficient with a bow, bowfishing provides ample opportunity to keep skills sharp year-round, maintain muscle memory and strength, and add protein diversity to the freezer between seasons. Bowfishing can also further enliven the art of angling for those unexcited by traditional fishing methods.

In addition to the extensive crossover potential between bowfishing and hunting concepts, bowfishing can also be a relatively low cost-to-entry activity with uncomplicated equipment. Used bows can be converted with simple reel kits sold at most big sporting and outdoor equipment retailers for around \$100, with arrows, nocks, and specialized barbed bowfishing points sold together in packs for less than \$20 each and reusable for many shots. NOTE: KDWP recommends consulting your local archery shop for questions about converting used bows and testing them for safety and fit.

If you are considering exploring bowfishing in Kansas, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Bow anglers must possess a valid Kansas fishing license, unless exempt by law. Get yours at [gooutdoorskansas.com](http://gooutdoorskansas.com) or on the GoOutdoorsKS mobile app.
- Arrows must have barbed heads, and each arrow must be attached by a line to the bow.
- Waters within 50 yards of an occupied boat dock or ramp, occupied swimming area, occupied picnic site or camping area, and other occupied public-use areas are closed to bowfishing.
- Nonsport fish can be taken legally by bowfishing wherever bowfishing is allowed. This includes buffalo, common carp, grass carp, drum, Asian carp, and gar. Sport fish are NOT to be taken, apart from blue catfish, channel catfish, and flathead catfish in waters where no length limits for these species are in place. Bowfishing for these catfish species in rivers and streams is NOT permitted.
- Part of being an ethical bow angler is to take your harvest with you, rather than leaving arrowed fish on the bank. Keep in mind that if you won't eat them, your plants will! Fish can make great garden fertilizer. Your tomatoes will thank you!
- Bowfishing is a great "next step" opportunity for past and current National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) or 4H Archery participants!
- Before going out, consider practicing shooting at a target submerged underwater (yes, they do make submersible fish targets) to get used to adjusting for refraction.
- For more information, review the section on BOWFISHING on page 10 of the *2022 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary*, or contact your local game warden (numbers listed on page 40 of the summary).

“WHAT AM I?” answer: CROW





# Kansas State Parks

• FREE ENTRANCE - BLACK FRIDAY •

NOVEMBER

25

Celebrate Black Friday and #OptOutside with free entrance to any of our Kansas State Parks! Walk off some of that Thanksgiving dinner by enjoying the best of nature that Kansas offers in scenery and activity.



Please note: Camping and utility fees are required to stay overnight.

To find the state park nearest you, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com).





## Call of the Wild(scape) Fundraising is Fun

*with Marc Murrell, Executive Director, Kansas Wildscape Foundation*



Wildscape fundraisers feature a variety of activities, including prairie chicken hunting. Profits raised from fundraisers and donations assist KDWP with programs and projects.

If you've ever had any connection to a non-profit organization, you know much of their success is dependent upon fundraisers or related efforts with various donors. The Kansas Wildscape Foundation is no exception – our goal is to raise money and assist the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks with some of their programs and projects. Specific examples of financial support in the past year include the Great Kansas Fishing Derby, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW), National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), Law Enforcement Anti-Poaching Trailer, Pratt Community College Hunting/Shooting Sports Mentorship Program, and the Governor's One-Shot Turkey Hunt Youth Program.

Two of Wildscape's most recent fundraising events were a big success, being all around well received and supported. Wildscape's mission of, "Creating Outdoor Opportunities for Kansans" was evident, as well.

Wildscape's largest fundraiser, The Outdoor Classic, has been held in several Kansas locations over the years but recently settled at Acorns Resort on Milford Reservoir, usually in mid-September. Geary County and the outdoor opportunities available nearby provide the perfect backdrop for a wonderful weekend. A total of 12, four-person teams gathered on Friday for lunch and a round of golf at Rolling Meadows Golf Course. A wonderful dinner and auction follow Friday night and this year's auction totaled nearly \$12,000. On

Saturday, all teams visited Sportsman's Acres to shoot a round of 5-Stand and trap and then swapped for a three-hour fishing trip with guides from Grandpa Boone's Cabins and Outfitters. Points were awarded for finishing places in golf, shooting and fishing. The 2022 winning team was Team Kansas Strong with team members Kris Kobach, Riley Beets, Doug Miller, and Jerry Clark.

This fundraising event netted more than \$18,000. Wildscape would like to thank the generous donors and sponsors for this year's event including Geary County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Acorns Resort, Hodgon, TriStar, Sportsman's Acres, Rolling Meadows Golf Course and Grandpa Boone's Cabins and Outfitters. If you're interested in fielding a team for next year's event on September 15-17, 2023, we've only got room for a few more before capacity, so sign up right away! You can sign up by emailing [marcmurrell@wildscape.org](mailto:marcmurrell@wildscape.org).

Another fundraising event was held at the end of September. The annual Prairie Chicken Hunting Experience was auctioned off and Duayne Madl, a longtime friend of Wildscape, purchased the hunt for \$5,000 for him and three friends for a weekend of fun. Warren Gfeller, Wildscape's board co-chair, and his wife, Angie, started this fundraising hunt in 2010 and host the winning group at their 10,000-acre Stranger Valley Ranch north of Russell.

A bonus to the hunt is former Kansas Governor Mike Hayden, also a two-term Secretary for the KDWP and founder of Wildscape, hosts the hunters in the field. He's a walking Google search of all things Kansas and participants enjoy the information provided whether it's historical or wildlife related.

Participants arrived at the ranch on Friday afternoon and settle into the bunkhouse with all the amenities. An incredible dinner and drinks highlight the evening and plans were made for the first chicken hunt the following morning shortly after sunrise. After a delicious breakfast, hunters hit the fields to walk up greater prairie chickens. After a hearty lunch, attendees were able to fish, sight-see or simply relax prior to an early evening dove hunt where most hunters shot their 15-bird limit in 90 minutes or less. Another chicken hunt followed on Sunday morning before wrapping up the weekend, just in time to catch the Kansas City Chiefs game.

This year's drought played a role in the chickens winning most battles, but the group wasn't skunked. The food, drinks, accommodations, and hospitality are world-class, and the weekend is a bucket-list item for any avid upland bird or wing shooter. Plans are underway now for another wonderful greater prairie chicken hunting experience auction item in late September 2023.

For more information on either of these outdoor opportunities contact Wildscape's Executive Director, Marc Murrell, at [marcmurrell@wildscape.org](mailto:marcmurrell@wildscape.org), or call (316) 391-0807.





## Dotted Gayfeather *Liatris punctata*

with Anthony Zukoff, President-Elect



from kdwp partners

*Liatris punctata* is a perennial member of the aster family known by the common names dotted gayfeather, dotted blazing star and button snakeroot.

Native to North America, *Liatris punctata* can be found throughout the plains of central Canada, the central United States, and into northern Mexico.

There are approximately 50 species of gayfeather in North America. Of the six species found in Kansas, dotted gayfeather is the most common and widespread. With a strong taproot reaching depths of 15 feet, this native plant is very drought tolerant and well suited to dry, open, upland sites, making it abundant in sandy soils.

The dotted gayfeather's rose-purple, elongate flowering spikes flower from the top to the bottom rather than in the traditional bottom to top blooming of most plants. These blazing star-like inflorescences light up prairies across the state in late summer and can often still be blooming as the first frost of the winter season looms.

While not flowering, the dotted gayfeather can be easily identified by its numerous, linear leaves that are covered with tiny dots or pits. Pollinators are highly attracted to the blooms, and it is an excellent source of nectar for Monarch butterflies as they make their way back to Mexico late summer through fall. This nectar source is also highly valuable to queen bumble bees as

they build up reserves to survive winter.

The dotted gayfeather is a host plant for a colorful flower moth, *Schinia sanguinea*, which can often be found resting among the blazing star blooms, well camouflaged by its similar rose-purple markings.

Crows are often observed eating gayfeather roots in the fall, earning the plant the nickname "crow-foot" by Native American tribes. Native Americans utilized the roots for food and medicine. Pulverized roots were eaten to improve appetite, teas were made to treat stomach maladies and boiled root material was applied to swellings.

*Liatris punctata* has been chosen as the 2022 Wildflower of the Year by the Kansas Native Plant Society. Members interested in submitting photos to the annual photo contest should keep an eye out for this colorful late summer bloom.

### CORRECTION

The Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) article in the May/June issue, Narrow-leaved Coneflower *Echinacea angustifolia*, was incorrectly attributed to Krista Dahlinger, KNPS president. It should have been attributed to Anthony Zukoff, KNPS president-elect. *Kansas Wildlife and Parks Magazine* staff regret the error.



## Ducks Unlimited Celebrates National Hunting and Fishing Day's 50th Anniversary in the Great Plains

*with Ben Romans, DU Communications Specialist*

from kdwp partners



Cheyenne Bottoms

It's time to celebrate. Summer is fading, and North America is heading into that magical time of year when anglers catch the last best bites of the season, and hunters migrate into the field to pursue big game, upland birds, and all manner of waterfowl species. It's just some of the reasons it seemed fitting to take a day, September 24, to mark the 50th anniversary of National Hunting and Fishing Day and remember that without conservation, these pursuits would not be possible.

Designated by President Richard Nixon in 1972, National Hunting and Fishing Day is a time to recognize the importance of North America's outdoor heritage and celebrate the role hunting and fishing play in wildlife conservation. More than 38 million people participate in fishing or hunting activities every year, so it's important to instill a sense of responsibility for future generations to preserve wildlife habitat.

In celebration, Ducks Unlimited is spotlighting some of our members, landowner partners, volunteers, and dedicated conservationists and sharing their stories of what it means to not only enjoy the outdoors, but also ensure the future of conservation-focused hunting practices.

One of those groups is the Hoisington Gun Club in Barton County, which neighbors one of DU's most critical conservation efforts—Cheyenne Bottoms. Early members originally formed the organization in 1944 to help improve wetlands, not hunt, but as time passed and habitat conditions stabilized, several family generations have taken to the property's fields and marshes with shotguns in hand.

"The property was largely untouched aside from a few projects in the 1940s and '50s, but about five years ago, we started talking with biologists with DU, and they helped us create a strategy that would allow us to create more wetland habitat using grants and other funding resources," said club president Robin Durret. "We're only a few months away from completion, but we're already witnessing how much these

changes are improving the entire area around us."

Other highlights of the club and its property include:

- 140 acres bordered by Nature Conservancy's Cheyenne Bottoms Preserve on three sides, and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks' Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area—a combined area making up the largest wetland in the interior U.S. (41,000 acres) and a critical stopping point in the central flyway for millions of migrating birds.
- Breathing new life into the landscape using techniques like prescribed burns and adding waterfowl habitat, like a 14-acre manageable wetland, with water control structures.
- Many members are third- or fourth-generation members.
- Improvements are benefiting more than just waterfowl—members report seeing more upland birds, deer, and other wildlife exploring the area.

"Passing on our outdoor traditions down through our families is a priority at Hoisington. All sixteen of our members are DU sponsors, and several of us are lifetime sponsors," Durret said. "If you look at the history of the club, there are third and fourth generation members. But we also reach out into our community and use the property to host fundraisers or other hunters when conditions aren't as favorable at Cheyenne Bottoms."

Since its inception in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has spent the last 85 years with one mission in mind—to keep the skies filled with waterfowl, and despite the setbacks Mother Nature occasionally throws into the mix, we remain steadfast and successful, thanks in large part to our supporters, members, and conservation-minded hunters like those from the Hoisington Gun Club.

If you'd like to learn more about more of DU's supporters and volunteers, or more information about their contributions to some of our largest projects in the Great Plains Region, contact Ben Romans at (208) 761-7775 or [bro-mans@ducks.org](mailto:bro-mans@ducks.org).





# DEADLINE TO ENTER: DEC. 2

# WILD ABOUT KANSAS

## PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

[ksoutdoors.com/Services/Publications/Magazine/2022-Wild-About-Kansas-Photo-Contest](https://ksoutdoors.com/Services/Publications/Magazine/2022-Wild-About-Kansas-Photo-Contest)

Tom Arnhold, 2021



Kathy Carroll, 2021



Matthew Taylor, 2021



Fred Schatzski, 2021

## FIVE CATEGORIES IN YOUTH AND ADULT DIVISIONS

GAME SPECIES, NON-GAME SPECIES, OUTDOOR RECREATION, LANDSCAPE, HUNTING AND FISHING

- PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED TO FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PLACE WINNERS IN EACH CATEGORY.
- WINNING ENTRIES WILL BE FEATURED IN THE 2023 JANUARY/FEBRUARY PHOTO ISSUE OF KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS MAGAZINE.



**KANSAS**  
*Wildlife & Parks Magazine*





KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS

# HARVEST

INFORMATION PROGRAM

## DON'T SKIP *the* HIP



### **PURCHASE THE HIP STAMP**

The stamp, \$2.50, is required to hunt migratory game birds\* in Kansas.

*Buy it online at  
[gooutdoorskansas.com](http://gooutdoorskansas.com).*

### **COMPLETE THE SHORT SURVEY**

Did you hunt dove, or ducks last year? If so, how many did you bag?

A short survey is administered at time of purchase.

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!**

Completing the HIP survey provides biologists at KDWP valuable information to help manage Kansas' incredible migratory game bird populations!

\*Ducks, coots, geese, brant, swans, doves, woodcock, rails, snipe, sandhill cranes, band-tailed pigeons, and gallinules.



# Hunting PRAIRIE CHICKENS in Kansas

by Rob McDonald, Modern Wildman Blog

A monarch of the prairie region, reigning over seas of grass, prairie chickens are a majestic bird that is often unknown to many.

Once prolific across the Great Plains of North America, Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens still stake out a stronghold scattered across the open prairie and grassland regions of Kansas.

Known for their charismatic mating rituals and haunting “booming” in the spring, prairie chickens are a gallinaceous bird that lives in groups known as “leks.” Their fast-paced, wing flapping and glide flight pattern is unique and unmistakable to the trained eye. Those who have a deep admiration for open spaces, grasslands, and prairie, often experience that same reverence for prairie chickens – myself included.



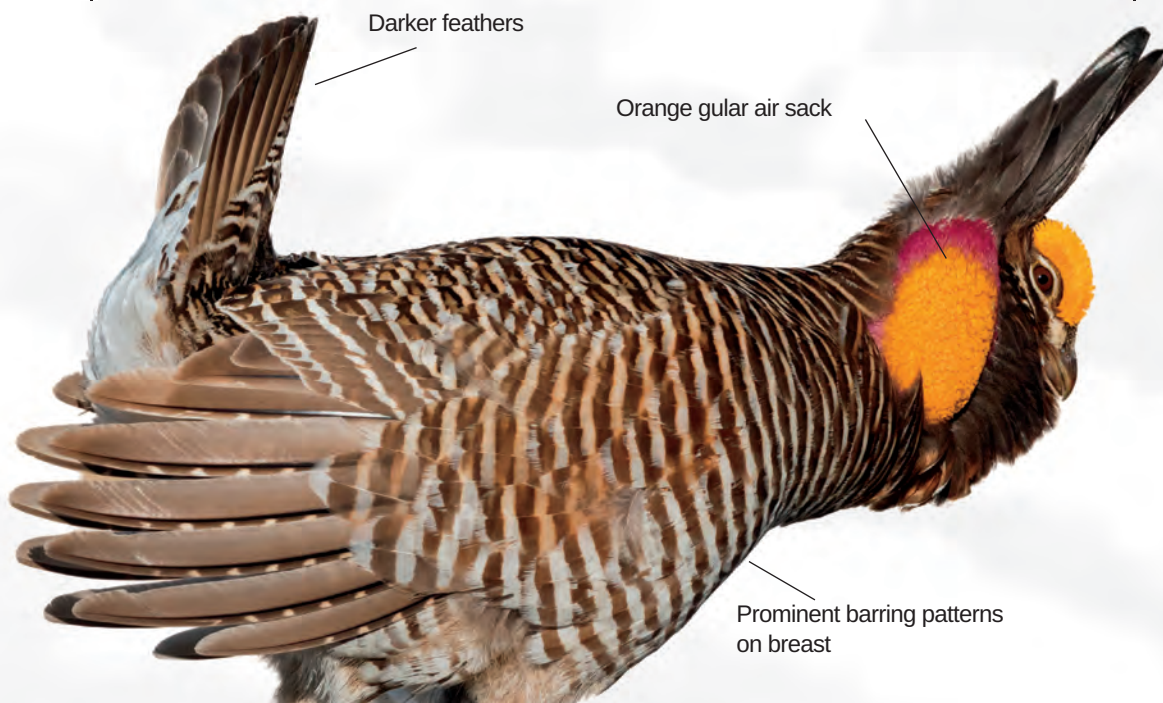


# PRAIRIE CHICKEN

## *Differences*

### MALE GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN

16-18 inches



## WHERE TO HUNT

The southwest portion of the state is closed to prairie chicken hunting to preserve and protect Lesser Prairie Chicken populations in those areas.

Greater Prairie Chicken hunters should focus their efforts in the Smoky Hills region in central Kansas and the Flint Hills region in eastern Kansas. Birds frequent hill tops in vast open grassland areas, preferring little to no brush or timber in the greater area. Hunting with bird dogs, into the wind, can be productive, and prairie chickens will sometimes hold for a pointing dog. Feed fields in these types of areas can also be productive.

While the lesser prairie chicken populations are struggling nationwide due to loss of habitat, the greater prairie chicken population in Kansas is robust enough to support an annual hunting season. For chicken hunters, the pursuit is less about bag limits and more about time invested on the prairie.

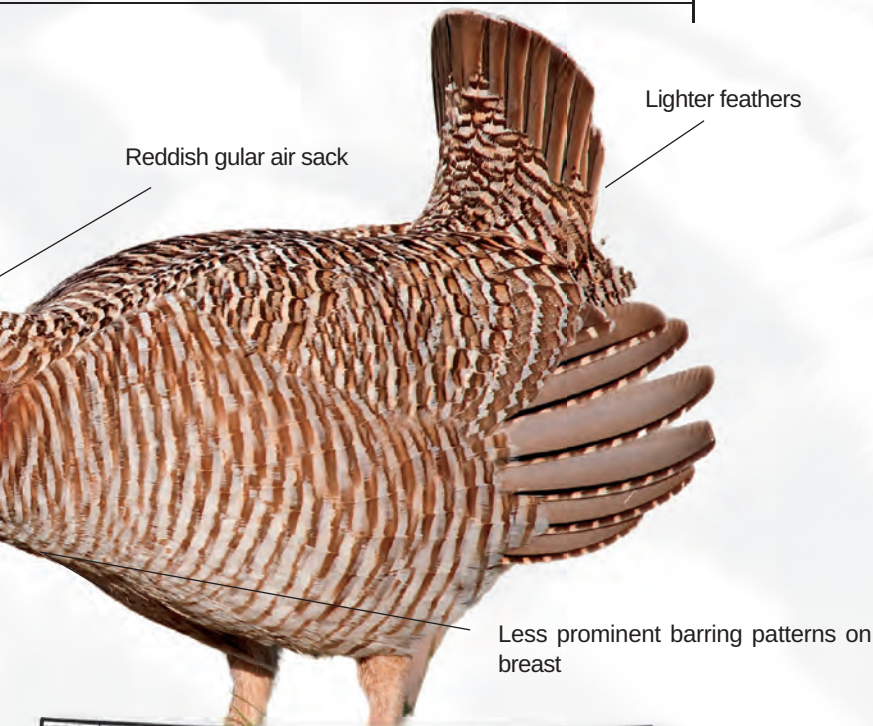
Hunting prairie chickens, or prairie grouse, as they are sometimes called, is an investment of

miles. It's hard to gauge an accurate measurement, but the mile to bird ratio could easily equate to something like ten to one, for those that "walk up" chickens, often with a bird dog. Other hunters pursue prairie chickens with a hide and wait tactic, pass shooting birds on their flights into feed fields, morning or evening.



## MALE LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN

15-16 inches



## WHAT TO KNOW

It is important to review the rules and regulations prior to any hunting trip. The 2022-2023 *Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary* can be found at most sporting goods stores throughout the state and on [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com). Some basic prairie chicken hunting information includes:

### Season Dates

Prairie chicken season opens on September 15 and runs through the end of January.

### Bag Limits

The daily bag limit for greater prairie chickens is two. The possession limit is eight.

### Permits

Greater prairie chicken hunters must purchase a \$2.50 prairie chicken permit in addition to their hunting license before hunting. The permit will allow a random sample of permit holders to be surveyed after the season to assess hunting activity and success. Survey data helps KDWP biologists determine harvest estimates and distributions.



# WHAT TO BRING

Before you head out to the field, here are a few items you should consider:

1

## Shotgun

Prairie chickens, medium sized birds similar in proportion to ringneck pheasants, are hunted with like-sized shotguns. Try a shotgun from 28 gauge to 12. A mid-range modified choke is standard.

2

## Ammo

Load the shotgun with shotshells 4, 5 or 6. Non-toxic shot may be required on certain areas. See the *2022-2023 Kansas Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary* for more information.

3

## Blaze Orange

Swinging on game is the number one cause of hunting accidents in Kansas. Studies have shown that wearing blaze orange reduces the risk of upland bird hunting accidents.

4

## Boots

Be sure to wear sturdy boots that are broken in, and plan on plenty of miles.



1







prairie chickens

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Pack along some water for both you and your dog on the warmer early season days and enjoy everything the Kansas prairie has to offer! I'll see you out there! 🦬









# A Very Funny Man

Written by David Zumbaugh ~ Photos Courtesy of Jon Blumb

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Edward “Bruce” Cochran was arguably one of the most prolific, authentic contemporary cartoonists, covering a diverse array of subjects, including the wildlife satirical genre. His talents exceeded the typical caricature artists realm; Cochran’s hilarious prose elicited streaming tears and a sore belly from laughter before the conclusion to one of his short stories. His sarcasm was enormously brutal to spectators, but all come back for the encore.

Born in Dallas, Texas in 1935, Bruce spent his formative years in Oklahoma City with his parents and two older siblings. Unfortunately, his father was on the road frequently and not inclined to mentor

young Bruce in outdoor sports, which became a passion, and ultimately, his artistic inspiration.

His mother and sister had creative talents and tutored and encouraged Bruce to develop his drawing capabilities. His mother was famous for her watercolor and oil landscape paintings, while his sister was an illustrator for Rothschild’s Department Store advertisements. His silly personality bloomed and was expressed via illustrations and amateurish cartoons, scribbled in the margins of textbooks, much to the chagrin of his teachers. Buoyed by the positive recognition of his family, educators and classmates, he realized he wanted to be an artist.





September/October 2000



"YOU NEVER KNEW YOUR UNCLE LEROY. HE WALKED INTO THE WOODS WEARING A NEW CAMO OUTFIT IN 1989, AND NO ONE EVER SAW HIM AGAIN."

September/October 2004



"DO YOU TAKE THIS MAN FOR BETTER OR WORSE, THROUGH DUCK SEASON, DEER SEASON, PHEASANT SEASON, TURKEY SEASON..."

September/October 2006



"DO THE PART ABOUT 'A QUACK QUACK HERE AND A QUACK QUACK THERE' AGAIN."

November/December 2001



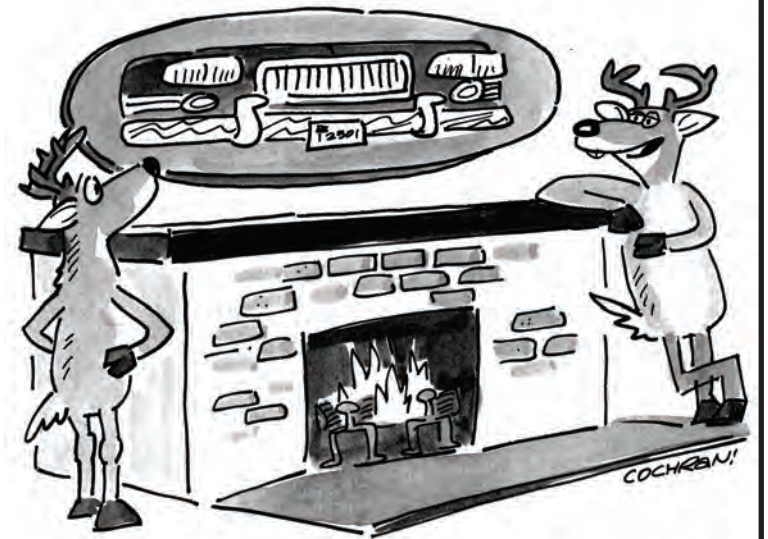
"OK.... NOW!"

May/June 2003



"I'M NOT HITTING THAT. THAT'S LAST YEAR'S COLOR."

November/December 2005



"BAGGED IT JUST SOUTH OF THE DEER CROSSING SIGN ON HIGHWAY FORTY."



July/August 2007



"ON A SCALE OF ONE TO FIVE, WITH FIVE BEING THE MOST SATISFACTORY, HOW WOULD YOU RATE TODAY'S FISHING EXPERIENCE?"

July/August 2008



"YOU IDIOT! THAT'S A PLASTIC WORM."

November/December 2009



"I KNOW TOMORROW IS OPENING DAY, BUT TRY TO RELAX."

November/December 2015



"WHAT'LL THEY THINK OF NEXT?"

Bruce's love of the outdoors was energized through the Boy Scouts and nearby fishing opportunities in Oklahoma where he began documenting his adventures with drawings. Ned Spence, Bruce's best friend and former OKC neighbor told me, "Bruce has a natural sense of humor and was always a jokester. We hung out nearly every day until high school, when Bruce intended to refine his imaginative talents and I excelled in athletics." He was diligent in his objectives, earning a spot on the Classen High School newspaper and yearbook staff.

After spending a year in college, Bruce needed to find the means to continue his college ambitions. He and a buddy decided to enlist in the U.S. Army to secure G.I. Bill benefits for tuition. Luckily, with his education and typing skills, he

was placed in the Army Security Agency; Semper Vigiles (Vigilant Always) and spent his tour in the Philippines intercepting classified Morse code messages sent between the Viet Minh (communist guerrillas) and North Vietnamese Army. As always, Cochran sought out channels for his talents and contributed to his unit's newspaper, producing satirical G.I.-themed cartoons.

Bruce's determination earned him a degree in design from the University of Oklahoma, where he pledged Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity. A fraternity brother introduced Cochran to a younger sister and soon love was in the air. Bruce married Carol Duer in 1958, a union that brought two children and eventually five grandchildren. Carol's father, "Doc," was an avid fly fisherman and sanctioned Bruce's passion for the sport. For years, the



November/December 2012



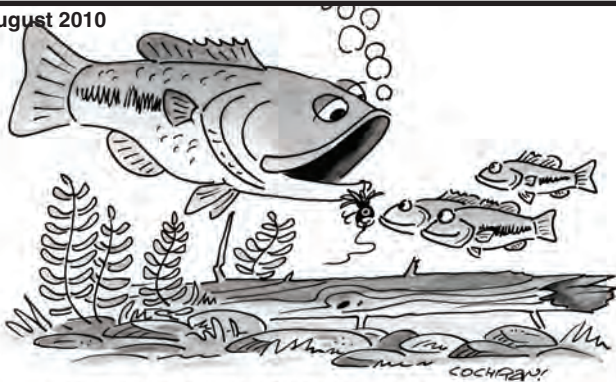
"WHAT HAPPENS IN THE FIELD STAYS IN THE FIELD. OK?"

November/December 2016



"OK. WHAT ELSE BESIDES BIGGER AND DUMBER FISH?"

July/August 2010



I ERUPTED FROM THE LILY PADS AND SMASHED HIS LURE. THEN, SHAKING MY MASSIVE HEAD, I TAIL-WALKED ACROSS THE SURFACE, DOVE INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS, AND WRAPPED HIS LINE AROUND A LOG."

family would travel to Creede, Colorado and trout fish. During these outings, Bruce would sketch for fun and the personas of his future cartoon characters took root. Doc's antics would become the core for many lighthearted public jabs in the future.

He secured a gig at Hallmark Cards, Inc., in Kansas City, where his professional journey was officially launched. Not only was Bruce creating a variety of illustrations for greeting cards, his reputation and "brand" also gained momentum. He reconnected with his old pal, Ned Spence, who had also landed a job in the metro area after service in the Marine Corps. Together, they embarked on many hunts and fly-fishing adventures, prompting internal aftershocks on their incredible successes and despondent failures – perfect fodder for creative comics. Spence says, "Carol blamed me for creating a monster; Cochran

became obsessed with duck hunting and collecting old decoys, tying flies and expending time and money on such things."

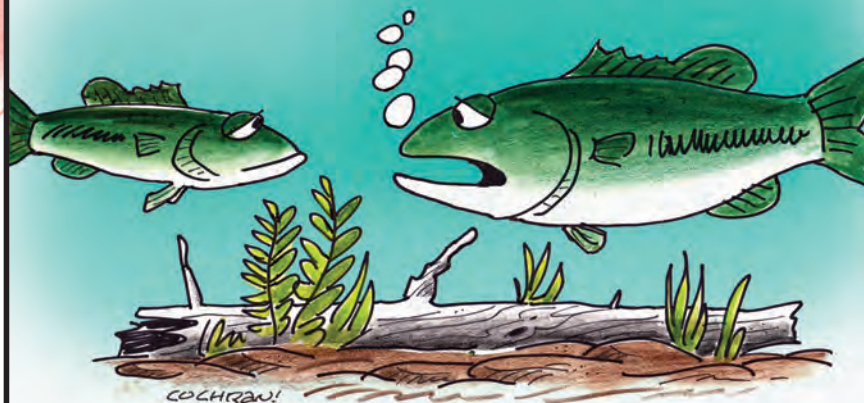
Bruce's first cartoon was published in *Playboy* in 1961, eventually totaling 182 for the magazine. Not all these cartoons were "off-color;" in fact, some had sporting themes. His characteristic signature, Cochran! was born, highlighting his pride as a contributor to the worldwide iconic publication.

Leveraging his passion for the hook and bullet sports, he successfully solicited work from popular outdoor magazines, such as *Sports Afield* and *Field & Stream*.

In the coming decades Cochran's illustrations appeared in *Wyoming Wildlife*, *American Waterfowler* and *Gun Dog*, and, of course, *Kansas Wildlife* and *Park Magazine*.



September/October 2017



"WHEN I START FEELING REAL IMPORTANT I THINK ABOUT THE FACT THAT I'M JUST A BLIP ON SOMEBODY'S FISH LOCATOR."

July/August 2018



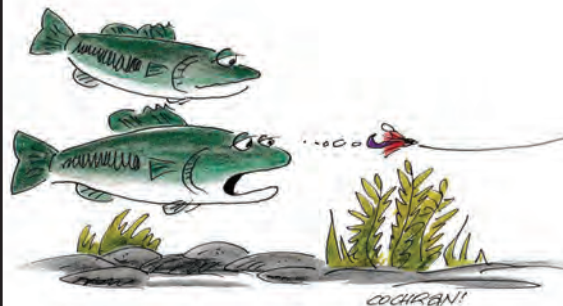
"ACTUALLY IT ONLY SLEEPS TWO, BUT IT TAKES FOUR MEN TO SET IT UP."

November/December 2019



"...BUT MOST OF ALL WE ARE THANKFULL FOR THIS TWENTY POUND TURKEY THAT I SHOT AT TEN YARDS WITH A THREE INCH, FULL CHOKE LOAD OF COPPER-PLATED FIVES."

May/June 2020



"I'M NOT HITTING RIGHT NOW, BUT IF I WAS HITTING I WOULDN'T HIT **THAT**."

March/April 2021

IF YOU DID NOT CATCH ANY FISH AT LAKE WAWA YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO

**COMPENSATION**

CALL  
SMITH & JONES LLC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

**800 463-5555**



March/April 2022



MIGRATION TIME WAS ALWAYS TOUGH ON MAMA GOOSE.

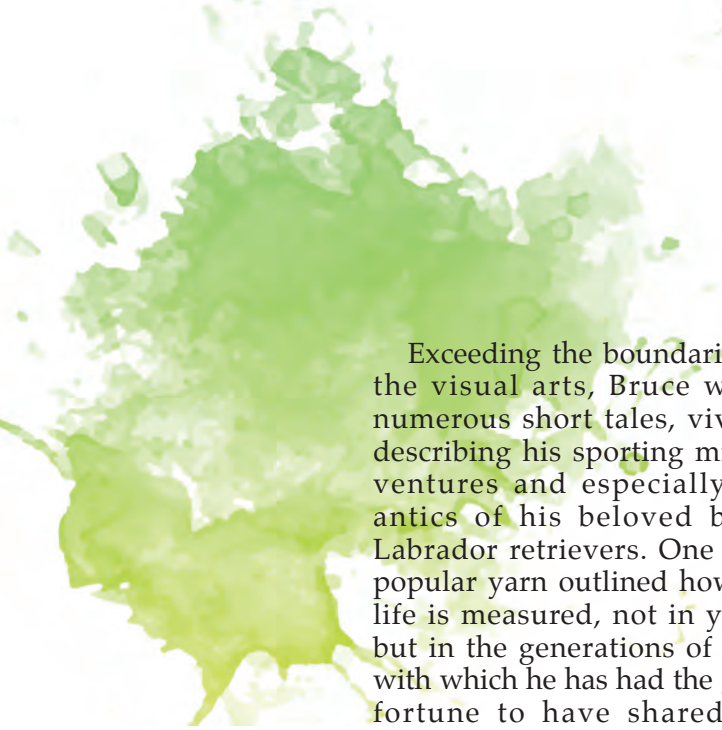
MOM... LEROY'S WINGTIPS ARE TOUCHING MINE.

ARE WE THERE YET?

I GOTTA GO!

SHE STARTED IT!







Exceeding the boundaries of the visual arts, Bruce wrote numerous short tales, vividly describing his sporting misadventures and especially the antics of his beloved black Labrador retrievers. One very popular yarn outlined how his life is measured, not in years, but in the generations of Labs with which he has had the good fortune to have shared the couch.

Cochran has produced 13 illustrated humor books and one children's book. His "fever" series parodies the abstract passions of hunters and anglers; *Trout Fever* and *Duck Fever* are completely and enjoyably outrageous for participants of those pastimes. His incredible popularity was probably the result of his audiences' direct relationship to his ruthless mocking of their beloved hobbies. He lured them into the scenes he created,

making people reflect on their personal experiences – including their miserable blunders, pathetic failures and pitiless criticisms from spouses, family members and friends. No one was immune from his sarcasm and facetiousness.

If monetary value could be appraised to laughter, Edward "Bruce" Cochran would have been one of the richest people on Earth. His longevity, productivity, humorous prose and shocking visual imagery generated more chuckles than the dollars accrued in the national debt. He entertained generations in boardrooms, boudoirs, and in the latrines of hunting and fishing lodges the world over. His humor books have been passed along within families like cherished heirlooms, their tattered pages littered with splashes from tears of laughter. He will be missed. 



### **A Partial List of Publications Including Cochran's Work**

#### **Outdoor Magazines**

Sports Afield, Field & Stream, Outdoor Oklahoma, Wyoming Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, Wildfowl, American Waterfowler, On Wisconsin Outdoors, Our Wisconsin, Peterson's Bowhunting, Pheasant and Quail Forever Journals, Kansas Wildlife and Parks Magazine and Gun Dog.

#### **Traditional Magazines**

Saturday Evening Post, Look, Good Housekeeping, True, Saga, Ladies Home Journal, Changing Times, Atlantic Monthly, Cosmopolitan, National Lampoon and National Enquirer.

#### **Adult-themed Magazines**

Playboy, Penthouse, Cavalier, Dude, Gallery and Escapade.

#### **Books**

No Room For Wellington (Children's Book, 1974, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.), Buck Fever (1990, Willow Creek Press), Bass Fever (1991, Willow Creek Press), Duck Fever (1992, Willow Creek Press), Trout Fever (1993, Willow Creek Press), Uncle Charlie's Hunting Shack (1994, Willow Creek Press), Everything You (Never) Want To Know About Hunting (1995, Willow Creek Press), Lab Fever (2000, Willow Creek Press), Antlers Away (2003, Willow Creek Press), Golden Fever (2003, Willow Creek Press), Marsh Madness (2006, Willow Creek Press), Revenge Of The Trout Zombies (2008, Willow Creek Press)



# —Edward “Bruce” Cochran—



—1935-2022—



# TRASH TALK



by Brent Frazee, Outdoor Writer

Every time Mark Nepote tours Hillsdale State Park, he is reminded of the challenges of managing public land so close to a major urban area.

The park, located only a half-hour from the heart of Johnson County, has one of the highest visitation rates in Kansas. Hillsdale attracts more than 1 million visitors a year, Nepote said.

They come in search of camping, fishing, hiking, biking and boating. But it's what they leave behind that concerns Nepote.

"We've always had problems with trash and littering," said Nepote, manager of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks state park. "But it's getting worse."

"Our visitor numbers grow every year. And the amount of trash and litter we see go up with it."

Trash in fire rings. Plastic soda bottles strewn on the grounds. Wads of fishing

line discarded along shorelines. Dumpsters overflowing with everything from sofa cushions to household items.

That's the grim side of the outdoors and how some visitors treat public land.

Nepote and his staff work hard to keep Hillsdale wild, yet still appealing to the masses. Visit the park on a weekday and you'll see workers mowing campgrounds, trash trucks doing pickups and an occa-

**"WE'VE ALWAYS HAD PROBLEMS WITH TRASH AND LITTERING. BUT IT'S GETTING WORSE."**

sional deer crossing the road.

But the crush of people on the weekends inevitably creates trash and littering.

"It's sad, really," Nepote said. "We're constantly battling it."

"We pride ourselves in providing a quality place where people can enjoy the outdoors. But at times, that can be a challenge."



# TRASHING THE OUTDOORS

That problem is by no means unique to Hillsdale State Park.

It follows a national trend, and Kansas certainly isn't immune from that problem. The pandemic brought increased outdoor use at a time when other entertainment such as sports, dining, movies and school activities were shut down.

That was encouraging in a sense. It encouraged many to get involved in the outdoors for the first time. But it also created a problem: in some cases, the lack of a good outdoor ethic.

"To be straight forward, it's pure laziness on the part of some people," Nepote said. "We have dumpsters throughout the park.

"When one is full, people just toss their bags of trash on the ground next to one of the dumpsters. Then the raccoons tear them open at night and pretty soon you

have trash blowing all over.

"A lot of times, there was another dumpster right across the road that was empty. But people didn't want to go that extra 30 or 40 feet to use it."

Hillsdale has gone to multiple trash pickups a week in the summer to keep up with demands. And volunteers help greatly, organizing regular cleanup events.

"The Boy Scouts and a lot of people who have come here for years and are very proud of this park regularly get out and pick up trash in some of the heavily used areas," Nepote said. "They make a big difference.



## THE METAL FISHERMEN

Willie Connell decided to spend his 6th birthday doing what not many 6-year-olds do – metal fishing.

Metal fishing, as the name implies, is fishing with a large magnet to remove metal waste in waterbodies.

After their grandmother reached out to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks to tout their efforts, Willie and brother Wyatt received certificates for their contribution to conservation.

Thank you, Willie and Wyatt, for helping keep Kansas waters clean and enjoyable for all!

If your child has accomplished a conservation project, please reach out to Megan Mayhew at [megan.mayhew@ks.gov](mailto:megan.mayhew@ks.gov) so they too can be recognized for their efforts!





# LEAVE NO TRACE

The efforts to encourage people to act more responsibly in the outdoors is nothing new.

Many remember the 1971 commercial by the Keep America Beautiful organization. An actor portraying a Native American was seen paddling his birch-bark canoe through a beautiful and serene setting but traveling into an increasingly polluted environment.

The Native American pulled his canoe onto shore and got out and was greeted by someone who threw a bag filled with fast-food wrappers at his feet.

The camera zooms in on the Native American and viewers see a tear rolling down his cheek as the narrator said, "Some people have a deep, abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this country. And some people don't."

That commercial once was the centerpiece for a national anti-littering movement, but it eventually faded away. Today, the Leave No Trace nonprofit, established more than 25 years ago, is taking the lead.

Based in Boulder, Colo., the organization features state advocates who fight for improving the outdoor ethic. It's not just focused on litter; it's based on the overall impact of irresponsible land and water use.

"Learning, practicing and engaging with Leave No Trace is more important now than ever before," said Dana Watts, director of Leave No Trace. "Issue like climate change, dwindling biodiversity as well as the sheer numbers of people getting outside right now have created a perfect storm."

## THE SEVEN OF LEAVE NO TRACE





# PRINCIPLES

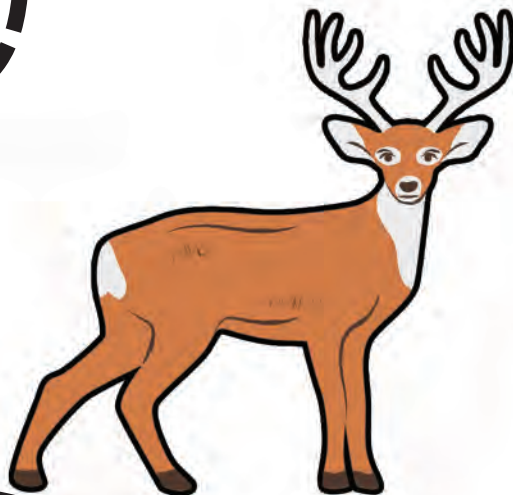


trash talk



5. Minimize campfire impacts

6. Respect wildlife



7. Be considerate of other visitors



Visit [www.lnt.org/why/7-principles](http://www.lnt.org/why/7-principles) for more information.



# DECOMPOSE WOES

Trash decomposes at different rates.  
These items are commonly left at  
Kansas state parks and public lands.



# A KANSAS ADVOCATE

"But what it really amounts to, people have to adopt a better outdoor ethic."

With its wide-open spaces and thousands of acres of agricultural land, Kansas might seem immune from some of those problems.

But Mike Schmitt, the Kansas advocate for Leave No Trace, will tell you that's not the case. "My wife and I go camping every month, and you can't believe the trash we find in the back country," said Schmitt, who lives in Paola. "Plastic bottles, aluminum cans, used fishing line..."

"If people knew how long it takes for these things to break down in nature, they would be amazed. It really is a problem."

That's why Schmitt is working so hard to get the message out. On behalf of Leave No Trace, he presents training sessions to groups on the importance of taking care of our land and water.

"Ethics is what people will do when no one is looking," Schmitt said. "It's not just litter."

"It's astounding what some people will do. They'll use an axe to cut down trees for firewood, they'll create their own fire rings, they'll go off-trail and make their own path, they'll destroy toilets, you name it."

And the problems are getting worse with the influx of new outdoors users.

"I don't think anyone could fathom the number of people who would be coming outdoors during the Coronavirus," Schmitt said. "We weren't prepared. Nobody expected this."

"In many parks, we didn't have enough trash cans and dumpsters. Even when people tried to pick up their trash, dumpsters were overflowing and that drew animals to the area."

"A lot of people never even considered taking their trash home with them and throwing it out there."

Schmitt and others with Leave No Trace work to spread the word about how to act responsibly in the outdoors. They draw on research, studies and experience.

In the end, Schmitt is devoted to the words that top his Kansas outdoor ethics Facebook page: "Leave nothing but footprints. Take nothing but pictures. Kill nothing but time."





## THE SCOUT EXAMPLE

The key to creating new followers of the Leave No Trace ethic is getting to them when they are young, Schmitt said.

"I'm not saying that adults are a lost cause," he said. "But we have to establish a good ethic at a young age."

That's where Scouting excels. From the time they are Cub Scouts all the way until they are young adults in Boy Scouts, the outdoor ethic is emphasized.

"'Leave a place better than you found it' is one of the principles of scouting," said Nathan McClure of Wichita, who has been involved in scout leadership for years. "We thoroughly know that if we don't take care of the outdoors, there won't be programs like this for our grandkids."

Rather than having one large project to help clean up the outdoors, McClure favors sustainable efforts.

"Some of these popular parks get Scouts groups every weekend," McClure said. "Even if one troop goes out and picks up trash for an hour—and other

troops do the same thing—we're making an impact.

If we do these micro projects, we're bending the curve. I would rather see 10,000 micro projects than one big one."

McClure has seen the difference those small projects can make. Even elementary age Cub Scouts are taught the importance of conservation projects.

"We have an event called Monster Mash for the Cub Scouts and we do a conservation project at the end," McClure said. "Last year, they made PVC containers for discarded fishing line, and Wildlife and Parks put them up at fishing spots in the area."

At the opposite end, Boy Scouts ages 14 to 21, specialized in making fish habitat from PEX pipe. And a kayak crew built a new boat dock on the Arkansas River and started collecting trash from the river on their monthly float trips.

Girl Scouts have similar goals to get members to appreciate and protect the outdoors.

Taken as a whole, they represent the future in the fight to get Kansans to protect their wild lands and waters. 🐾





# NON TYPICAL

**BY MICHAEL PEARCE, OUTDOOR WRITER**

*E*lla Perkins had what one could consider a “non-typical” summer prior to starting her sixth grade classes this year.

She went to the huge Bass Pro Shops compound in Springfield, Mo. Ella and her family enjoyed things like the huge wildlife-related displays, and aquariums with fish

larger than the 11-year-old girl herself.

The real reason for the trip was so the prestigious Boone & Crockett Club could honor Ella for harvesting one of the largest whitetail bucks taken by a youth in recent times. The 26-point buck carried a final score of 205 1/8 non-typical inches.











Ella Perkins and her dad, Cody, have been best hunting buddies for most of her 11 years. Both say the memories they've made together mean much more to them than the impressive antler score of the huge buck she got in 2021.

When it comes to books, however, rather than something for Boone & Crockett, Ella has always been more focused on something for a Betty Crocker cookbook.

"She's always had a passion for wanting to go out and shoot something so we could eat it," said Cody Perkins. "When I've brought something home from a hunt, she always wanted to make sure we were going to eat it."

Ella shot her first-ever deer in 2020, a nice doe. Several seasons before that she'd played the role of "tag-along" as she watched and helped her dad on his hunts. Most years Cody Perkins said he gladly shot a nice doe early in the deer season, so he could get back to upland bird hunting.

That focus changed the summer before the memorable deer season. Cody Perkins had seen some

nice bucks on the property but nothing like what showed up on their trail camera. The buck seemed to have points going every where and drop tines, too.

"I know I'd never seen anything like this buck," said Cody Perkins. "It was tough because we'd see him a couple of days in a row then he'd be gone for a few weeks and we'd really start to worry."

Ella didn't get too excited at first, but she eventually caught some of her dad's enthusiasm.

Schedules didn't line up well going into the 2021 youth season. Ella was as busy as any fifth grader in Arkansas City. Living in Wichita, Cody Perkins needs the extra time to drive from his home in Wichita to go get his daughter, then head to the family farm.

Going into the last weekend of the youth season



they'd only made it out twice with no luck. They were running late the afternoon she got the great buck.

Cody Perkins said the family land has rolling hills with a mixture of croplands and hay fields. The plan was to sit beside a big hay bale and watch a nearby soybean field deer. Soon, the father-daughter team heard the noise all deer hunters dread – alarm snorts. Four does were downwind from the hunters, their snouts filled with human scent, snorting loud and waving whitetails good-bye as they left.

Cody Perkins figured no other deer would come out to feed nearby after such a racket.

"I was kind of frustrated. We were running out of the youth season," said Cody Perkins. "We didn't have a lot of daylight left and we had to relocate."

The hunters were about to quit for the day when

Cody Perkins looked back and saw about a dozen deer in the uncut soybeans they'd just left. He quickly checked the herd with binoculars and said, "He's there."

Ella knew "he" was the huge buck they had on trail cameras.

A stalk was planned, and it went well early, thanks to Cody Perkins familiarity with the landscape and soybeans almost as tall as Ella. Unfortunately, it ended sooner than Cody Perkins would have liked.

"We got to where we couldn't go any further. When I checked the buck with my rangefinder, he was at 210 yards," he said. "That's a long way. Ella had only practiced to 100 yards but the doe she shot the year before was about 125 yards and she made a perfect shot."

non-typical

Ella Perkins and her trophy whitetail buck were honored at the Boone & Crockett 31st Big Game Awards Program last summer in Springfield, MO.







Aaron Austin, KDWP chief of education and Boone & Crockett scorer, measured Ella Perkin's whitetail deer. The antlers had a net score of 205 1/5 non-typical points.

Cody Perkins told his daughter his concerns about the distance and the possibilities of what might happen.

Ella could miss and the buck could be scared off and never seen again. They could wait the few remaining minutes of daylight and hope the buck moved closer.

The worst-case scenario was if Ella hit the buck poorly and it would run off and they'd never find it. Ever the carnivore, Ella said her biggest fear was she'd hit the buck but coyotes would rob her of beloved venison.

Cody Perkins set up the shooting sticks so Ella could steady the rifle, a .243 that belonged to her grandfather.

"I was shaking pretty bad by then I noticed Ella was pretty calm," said Cody Perkins. "She looked at the buck through the scope and said she was steady. We discussed where she should aim, and she said she wanted to take the shot."

The herd of deer erupted at the crack of the

rifle. Cody Perkins saw the buck jump high at the shot then head towards a nearby ditch, but they lost sight of it quickly.

Rather than crash off looking for the buck, the hunters decided to wait awhile and call for help. Soon Ella's grandfather, Justin Vurgell, and older sister, Lexi, were with them.

It took some search to find the first few slight specks of blood. After a few tense moments, Ella heard her father yell that's he'd found the buck. The shot had been perfect.

"I was so glad the coyotes didn't get a chance to eat him," said Ella, a huge fan of venison jerky. But dozens of pounds of good meat wasn't all her first-ever buck had to offer.

The huge buck carried 26 scorable points of assorted sizes and angles. Aaron Austin, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks chief of education and official Boone & Crockett scorer, measured the buck for the group's record keeping system. The net score of 205 1/5 non-typical





non-typical

points, despite just a 14-inch spread between the antlers.

That easily topped the minimum score of 195 points needed to be listed in the prestigious all-time record book, it was also one of the top four non-typicals taken by a kid during a three-year measuring period. Ella's buck was on display at Bass Pro Shops much of last summer, along with other tremendous trophies that were honored at Boone & Crockett's 31st Big Game Awards program.

The few days spent at the event, and Ella being specially recognized, and honored at an event just added a few more memories to those she and her father already shared.

"I often think back to the whole experience, her learning to shoot, checking the camera with me, the scouting, the hours we spent together hunting, the whispered conversations," said Cody Perkins. "That time we spent together is probably the most rewarding thing I've ever had while hunting. The whole experience was so much more exciting for

me, because it was Ella taking the animal instead of me"

Ella also said some of her favorite things are now getting up and outside when it's still dark, looking up at the stars, drinking hot chocolate and talking with her dad during hunts. She hopes to hunt doves and other birds this season, and more deer. Even though she's probably already taken the biggest buck of her life, she's anxious to spend more time afield with her father and to keep filling the freezer with jerky.

She also hopes to hunt other animals.

"I really want to hunt elk someday. They're really big," said Ella, who added that a week in the mountains with her dad, followed by a freezer packed with elk jerky and steaks, sounded like a lot of fun.

Cody Perkins is already making the plans to make that happen. 🦬





**KANSAS  
BIRDING  
TRAIL**

[ksbirdingtrail.com](http://ksbirdingtrail.com)



# Species Profile

from kdwp staff



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## Cottonwood Borer

*Plectrodera scalator*

**M**easuring up to 1.5 inches long and 0.75 inches wide, the size and appearance of the Cottonwood Borer is known to cause quite a fright! Earning the nickname, “Skeleton Beetle,” the Cottonwood Borer features black and white patterns unique to each beetle. The Cottonwood Borer also sports large, visible mandibles and will bite if mishandled.



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### Length

1.5 inches

### Width

0.75 inches

### Location

Eastern U.S. and as far west of southeastern Colorado

### Did you know?

As their name implies, Cottonwood Borers feed primarily on cottonwood trees, sometimes causing significant damage.



# Christmas Shopping MADE EASY



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# Backlash

with Nadia Marji

## Get Clever This Holiday Season

from the editor

Much like our annual hunting and fishing licenses, one-year subscriptions to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* are valid for 365 days – or six issues – regardless of when it's purchased. But unlike our hunting and fishing licenses, this publication brings the great Kansas outdoors directly to YOU (and no camo is needed)!

As we slide into the fall and winter seasons, I encourage you to begin thinking about your family members, friends,

acquaintances, customers, and neighbors who would enjoy this publication as a gift. It's cost-effective, unexpected and unique, and if you order it as a gift subscription now – recipients are likely to start their subscriptions with one of our most popular issues: the photography issue!

To help kick-start your holiday gift-giving, here are five clever ways to share a gift subscription to *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* with others:

### 5. Wrap it up like candy!

Place a copy of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* in front of you, upright. Begin slowly rolling the magazine from right to left. Place a small rubberband around the magazine "tube" you've just created. Now, wrap the tube in your favorite holiday wrap, leaving excess wrap on either side of the tube. Instead of placing a ribbon in the middle of the gift, "tie off" both ends of the tube with ribbon – like a giant piece of candy.

### 4. Create an outdoor-themed gift basket

A copy of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* serves as a great "backdrop" for any outdoor-themed gift basket. For a few low-cost ideas of what to add in the basket, consider a *Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks* giftcard (for any amount), disposable hand and foot warmer packets, seasonings that are ideal for fish and game meat, a blaze orange hat or stocking cap, a pair of needle-nose pliers for fishing, or a new knife for wild game processing. For the wildlife watcher in your life, consider a notebook for logging bird sightings, a new field guide, comfy socks for hiking, a breathable hat or stocking cap, or trail mix for their adventure out-of-doors.

### 3. Mail a holiday card with a surprise


We're proud to offer a full-color postcard that notifies recipients of gift subscriptions that *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* will soon be coming their way! Simply call Annie Swisher in circulation at (620) 672-0756 for a blank postcard that you can use in a holiday card of your choosing; she'll get the blank postcard mailed to you right away!

### 2. Place in a shirt box

If you're anything like me, every holiday season you end up with more shirt boxes than you could possibly need. Using some fun holiday-theme tissue paper, wrap a copy of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* and place it flat inside a shirt box. Finish the look with a bow and tag on the front of the box.

### 1. The ultimate stocking stuffer

This classic, tried-and-true method of sharing *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* never disappoints. When visible or hidden, rolled up inside or laid flat behind a stocking – waking up to a new subscription of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine* is sure to bring a smile to all. Just don't forget one for yourself, as well; after all of that clever gift giving for others, you certainly deserve it.

*Kansas Wildlife & Parks Magazine*: Your friend in the field and on the water (and even while sipping from a mug in your cozy socks and robe) since 1939. 





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