



## *The Voice of Outdoor Kansas*

**January-  
February 2016**

P.O. Box 771282  
Wichita, KS 67277-1282

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Go to our Web site,  
[www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org),  
for additional KWF information

## **Avian cholera detected at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira**

Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) staff at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area in Barton County, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge just 30 miles to the south are closely monitoring waterfowl populations at the wetlands after dead geese were observed. Staff at both areas picked up dead birds last week and sent samples for testing.

Lab results confirmed that avian cholera, a contagious disease resulting from infection by the bacterium *Pasteurella multocida*, was the cause of death. This strain of bacteria commonly affects geese, coots, gulls and crows. Most of the dead birds found have been snow geese.

"We picked up about 30 dead geese on Monday, December 14," said Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area manager Karl Grover. "Those birds had died between last Friday and Monday, so we're seeing about 10 dead birds a day. We estimate that the Bottoms is holding between 75,000 and 150,000 geese, half of which are snows, and about 10,000 ducks."

USFWS staff at Quivira NWR gave similar estimates. Refuge manager Mike Oldham said some geese moved off of the refuge after the weekend.

"We probably have about 80,000 geese and about half of them are snow geese," Oldham said. "We're picking up about 4-5 dead birds per day."

While it's not uncommon for a contagious disease to affect waterfowl when large numbers are concentrated, avian cholera deaths are not common in Kansas. According to the USGS National Wildlife Health Center, humans are not at high risk for infection with the bacteria strain causing avian cholera. However, it's recommended that hunters and their dogs avoid contact with any sick or dead birds.

Avian cholera quickly overcomes infected birds, resulting in death in as little as 6-12 hours, although 24-48 hours is more common. Infected birds may exhibit signs such as convulsions, throwing head back between wings, swimming in circles, erratic flight and miscalculated landing attempts.

Avian cholera should not be confused with avian influenza, which is a highly pathogenic virus that infected millions of poultry flocks in the upper Midwest last summer.

**Protecting the Land...  
Passing on Our Traditions**



# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

## Officers and Board of Directors

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#### **Editor:**

Steve Sorensen

# President's Message

This time of year is commonly used to reflect over the past twelve months and evaluate. What were the successes? Where did things not turn out quite as anticipated? What could we have done better? Were there any unexpected surprises along the way? I could write today reviewing 2015 – it was a year filled with wonderful events and surprises. However, on this outset of the New Year, I want to look forward to the future.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation is extremely excited for the new endeavors in the planning stages for this year, in addition to continuing our tried and true traditional services. We always look forward to attending the annual events other wonderful Kansas businesses and organizations host to promote outdoor activities. Events such as the Monster Buck Classic in Topeka, Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply's Outdoor Appreciation Days in Emporia, the Kansas Rural Center's Conference, and supporting Kansas ECO-Meet, just to name a VERY few. There is no doubt we enjoy hosting or co-hosting events such as the memorial fishing events and the ever-popular, Outdoor Adventure Camp.

If you have not yet experienced the KWF Annual Meeting or if it has been a while since you last participated, I highly encourage you to attend this year's! In celebration of it being our 65th Annual Meeting – that's right, 6-5! – there will be some new features.

Starting but not ending with our featured speaker, the fairly new CEO for the National Wildlife Federation, Collin O'Mara. For me, this will be like attending a red carpet event, only way better! Ever since I was young, that National Wildlife Federation logo has remained a constant in my life as I tried to keep up with their efforts towards wildlife conservation, especially the education component. Ranger Rick magazine was a treasured read. As my own children grew, a constant subscription to the age-appropriate kids NWF magazine was maintained. Collin O'Mara has done a wonderful job of maintaining the integrity behind that logo.



If you notice at the Annual Meeting agenda, we are changing things up with giving our attendees the opportunity to see a little more of Wichita's great highlights. We will receive our important legislative review and hold our business meeting (which is open to the public) at the Great Plains Nature Center. Our Saturday speaker series and CAP Awards Banquet will take place at the Hotel at Old Town Conference Center. If you choose to stay in Wichita, make sure to join us at the historic Hotel at Old Town. There is a special rate if you mention you are with the Kansas Wildlife Federation block. Also this year, we are inviting other conservation organizations or businesses to set up an information/promotional table during our Saturday speaker series. Please check out the enclosed annual meeting agenda. We hope to see you all there – the more the merrier!

In addition to all of this, the New Year is the time to pledge continued friendships and support through a reNEWed membership. For it is only through the capacity of your actions and donations, can we have the impact we seek. Simply visit our website, [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org), click on the membership/donation link to either pay by PayPal or to get the mailing address.

We expect many more new highlights to come this year, along with our share of challenges. I know that with your support, we will see another year filled with successes.

# A Call for 2016 Resolutions

Resolutions adopted at the annual meeting of the Kansas Wildlife Federation are an opportunity for the membership to guide the future direction of the Federation's activities. The following is an example of a previous KWF resolution you can use as a guide to develop your proposed resolution. Utilize a Whereas to explain the facts involved in the resolution. The Resolves are used to state actions called for by the resolution.

If you have an issue you would like to see addressed by KWF members at the 2016 Annual Meeting February 26 in Wichita, please send the proposed resolution to KWF by January 31, 2016 at KWF Resolutions P.O. Box 771282 Wichita, KS 67277-1282 or e-mail it to [info@kswildlife.org](mailto:info@kswildlife.org).

The proposed resolution will be reviewed Friday afternoon, February 26 and presented to the membership for adoption. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact Steve Sorensen, Conservation Vice President, at 316-214-3001 or [info@kswildlife.org](mailto:info@kswildlife.org).

## **Example Supporting Water Quality Protection of Kansas Streams**

Whereas, the mission and policy of the State of Kansas is to protect the environment for existing and future generations of Kansans along with the wildlife resources of our rivers; and,

Whereas, it is the purpose of the Kansas Wildlife Federation to support sound conservation measures in support of the same purposes; and,

Whereas, clean water is a precious resource in short supply in Kansas which without adequate protection will limit economic growth; and,

Whereas, current legislation is designed to dismantle water quality protection criteria in Kansas and will do great harm to the

maintenance of healthy stream systems for wildlife and people by requiring adequate water quality standards on only the largest of our Kansas rivers; and,

Whereas, current legislation will result in a bypass of any public involvement in the water quality criteria setting process, violating provisions of the Clean Water Act and lead to extensive litigation and loss of state authority over water quality protection in Kansas; and,

Whereas, current legislation requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to assess the social, economic, and regulatory impacts of each stream prior to classification which is beyond their capabilities and will subject all streams to a state of no classification if this legislation is passed; and,

Whereas, requirements of any legislation that only endangered species considerations are relevant for streams that don't meet the 7Q10 flow criteria do not address the significant sport fish and wildlife use and needs of our streams and rivers.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Kansas Wildlife Federation at its Annual Meeting on Feb. 17, 2001, in Salina, Kansas, opposes any legislation which reduces water quality protection for Kansas streams; and,

Be It Further Resolved that the Kansas Wildlife Federation urges the State Legislature and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to uphold the water quality standards of Kansas and provide protection of rivers and lakes from degrading pollution so as to prevent any necessity of the Environmental Protection Agency from assuming regulatory authority over Kansas's water quality enforcement; and,

Be It Further Resolved that this resolution be supplied to the Governor, appropriate state agencies, and key members of the Kansas Legislature.

## Calendar of Events

- Jan. 16** Elk Days at Maxwell Refuge, McPherson County  
[friendsofmaxwell@yahoo.com](mailto:friendsofmaxwell@yahoo.com)
- Feb. 4-5** Kansas Natural Resources Conference,  
Double Tree by Hilton, Wichita
- Feb. 20** Fish Kansas Instructor Workshop, Emporia  
[www.fishingsfuture.org/node/459/register](http://www.fishingsfuture.org/node/459/register)
- Feb. 20** Fishing's Future Kansas Chapter Meeting, Emporia  
[ptaunton7@gmail.com](mailto:ptaunton7@gmail.com)
- Feb. 26-27** KWF 65th Annual Meeting, Hotel at Old Town, Wichita  
Visit [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org)

For a more up-to-date calendar go to <http://kswildlife.org/ww/events/>.

## KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

### Officers and Board of Directors

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##### **2016 NWF Representative: Angela Anderson**

##### **2016 NWF Alternate Representative: David Zumbaugh**



## KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

### Officers and Board of Directors

The Kansas Wildlife Federation promotes hunting and fishing opportunities and associated recreation for the benefit of all hunters, anglers and conservationists.

KWF supports the sustainable use and management of fish and wildlife and their habitats through education, partnerships, outreach and policy oversight.

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#### Director at Large:

**Open**

#### Director at Large:

**Open**

#### Director at Large:

**Open**

#### Director at Large:

**Open**

#### KWF Affiliates:

**Geary County Fish & Game  
Association**

Junction City, KS

**Kansas Wildlife Officers Association**  
Fredonia, KS

**Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation**  
Buffalo, MO

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please send your mailing label and new address, clearly printed. Allow 2 to 6 weeks for the change to be made. Send to:

Kansas Wildlife Federation Newsletter  
P.O. Box 771282  
Wichita, KS 67277-1282

# 2016 KWF Annual Meeting set for Wichita

The Kansas Wildlife Federation's 2016 Annual Meeting is our 65th. It is set for Friday and Saturday, February 26 at the Great Plains Nature Center at 6232 E. 29th St. N. in Wichita and February 27th at the Hotel in Old Town Conference Center at 210 N. Mosley in Wichita. The 2015 Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards banquet will be held Saturday night at the same location.

Friday afternoon we will convene a meeting to review pending Kansas legislation dealing with wildlife issues and discuss any resolutions to be brought before the membership along with other KWF business. Come participate in this important process.

Our featured guest will be Collin

O'Mara, CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. This year is National Wildlife Federation's 80th anniversary. His presentation at the CAP Banquet will feature national resource issues of interest to Kansans. Don't miss it.

Hotel rooms have been reserved at the Hotel in Old Town at 830 E. 1st St. N. in Wichita. Call the Hotel in Old Town at 316-267-4800 or toll free at 877-265-3869 to make reservations. Rates are \$99 for a Queen studio, \$119 for a King studio and up. Cut off date for the special rate on the rooms is **February 5**. So make your reservations early and be sure to tell them that you are with the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

See you in Wichita.

## 2016 Annual Meeting Registration Form

Yes – I am registering for the KWF Annual Meeting to be held February 26th at the Great Plains Nature Center at 6232 E. 29th St. N. and February 27th at the Hotel at Old Town Conference Center at 210 N. Mosley in Wichita.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Registration (includes Lunch): \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20 (before 2-12-16)  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 (after 2-12-16)

Conservation Achievement Banquet: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30 (before 2-12-16)  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40 (after 2-12-16)

Total Sent: \_\_\_\_\_

I will bring an item to be auctioned for KWF's education programs.

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation**

**MAIL TO: KWF Annual Meeting**

**Kansas Wildlife Federation**

**P. O. Box 771282**

**Wichita, KS 67277-1282**

**ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA  
FEBRUARY 26-27, 2016**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 – GREAT PLAINS NATURE CENTER, WICHITA**

**12pm – REGISTRATION - OPEN ALL DAY**

**1pm** – 2016 Legislation Presentation – Chris Tymeson, KDWP

2016 KWF Resolution Review

**2pm** – Opening KWF Annual Meeting

Pledge

Presentation of 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes

**3:30pm** – Committee Reports

Treasurer

Issues & Action

Affairs

Education

Membership

Conservation

**4pm – Break**

**4:15pm** – NWF Report

**4:30pm** – Affiliate Reports

**4:45pm** – Resolution Adoption

**5:15pm** – Election of KWF Officers

**6pm** – Showing of movie in Auditorium/Finger food reception



**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27 – HOTEL AT OLD TOWN, WICHITA**

**8:00-9:00am – REGISTRATION**

**9:00-9:45am** – Scott Vogt – Dyck Arboretum – “Pollinator Gardens” **KEEN KUTTER**

**ROOM A**

**10:00-10:30am** – Jared McJunkin, NWTF

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM A**

**10:30-11:10** – Holly Shutt, Pheasants Forever

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM A**

**11:10-11:30am** – Networking, View Exhibits (**Simmons Room B**), Silent Auction

**(KEEN KUTTER B)**

**11:30-12:45 – Lunch & Luncheon Speaker**

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM D**

- Linda Craghead – Assistant Secretary Kansas Parks & Tourism –  
“Travel Kansas”

**1:00-2:45pm** – Cathy Musick – Kansas Ag in the Classroom – “Bringing Pollinators to Your Classroom” – hands-on workshop

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM B**

**3:00 – 3:45pm** – Chip Taylor – Monarch Watch

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM A**

**4:00pm – Adjourn**

**2015 CAP AWARDS BANQUET**

**5:00pm** – Social, Exhibits, Silent Auction (Closes at 6pm) and Live Auction

**6:30pm** – Dinner & Featured Speaker

**KEEN KUTTER ROOM D**

- Collin O’Mara – CEO National Wildlife Federation

**7:30pm** – CAP Awards



# You and Dillons can help the Kansas Wildlife Federation

Again this year Dillons and other Kroger affiliates have created a way for you to choose which non-profit/charitable organization you'd like to support EVERY TIME you shop at Dillons. The Kansas Wildlife Federation will get credit for every purchase\* you make using their registered Plus card. The more you shop with them, the more opportunity KWF has to earn even bigger rewards. It's that easy!

For anyone who shops at Dillons and uses a Dillons Plus card, by enrolling in Community Rewards, Dillons will give 5% of your purchase to the organization of your choice every time you scan your Plus card at the register!

You can only choose ONE ORGANIZATION AT A TIME, but you can also change the organization any time by logging into the Dillons Community Rewards site and changing your preferences.

If you enrolled last year and chose the Kansas Wildlife Federation as your recipient organization, we THANK YOU and ask that you RE-ENROLL after January 1, 2016 so that you may continue supporting our organization in this way. (You may have already received an email that allowed you to either maintain or change your current settings. If you did this, you do not need to do anything else.)

As a result of our members participating in the Dillon's Community Rewards



program in the first 9 months of 2015, KWF received \$154.33 to be put toward our youth education programs (we have not heard regarding our last quarter donations). We greatly appreciate our member's contribution through Dillon's Community Rewards program.

A customer must have 3 things to register and begin supporting KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION:

1. A Plus card, which is available at any store by asking an associate
  2. A valid email address, which can be obtained from any free online service and can be anonymous
  3. A personalized account at our website, which again can be anonymous
- Here's how it works!

## TO ENROLL OR RE-ENROLL IN THE COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM:

1. Members must visit our website at [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards) (substitute Dillons, Bakers or Gerbes for banner depending on your location)
2. Sign in OR Create an account (see below on creating an online account

at our website)

3. Click on "Enroll Now"
4. Enter the 5-digit NPO (**Kansas Wildlife Federation is 62633**) and search
5. Select your Organization and click on "Enroll"

## TO CREATE AN ONLINE ACCOUNT AT THE DILLONS WEBSITE:

1. Visit their website at [www.dillons.com/communityrewards](http://www.dillons.com/communityrewards)
2. Click on "Register" at the top of the page
3. Enter your email address, password, zip code (select preferred store) and check the box if you desire to receive email communication from them
4. Click on "Creat Account" at the bottom of the page
5. You will receive an email confirmation to your inbox, to activate your account click on the link in the body of the email and enter your sign in information to confirm

We are very grateful to Dillons for this opportunity for our members and supporters to guide their potential giving dollars to the Federation and other worthy causes. And we are grateful to you for supporting the Kansas Wildlife Federation in many different ways!

\*Some specific purchases cannot be included. See FAQs at their website for a complete list of exclusions.

## 2016 Fishing Regulations Summary available online

A new year means new seasons ahead, and it's never too early to start planning. Anglers with an itch to get the low-down on all things fishing related in Kansas this year should check out the online version of the 2016 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary. Simply visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Fishing/Fishing Regulations" to download your copy of the free, easy-to-use, full-color pamphlet. Printed copies will be available wherever licenses are sold by mid-January.

Apart from a helpful section highlighting new regulations for the 2016 season, the summary also includes information

on important fishing regulations such as special seasons, creel and length limits, license fees and legal fishing methods. Because creel and length limits vary from lake to lake, the 2016 Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary is a must-read for all anglers.

The summary also lists all public waters, along with their location and any special regulations in effect. At the turn of a page, anglers can see which community lakes don't charge extra fees for fishing, as well as community lakes designated as Family Friendly Facilities (FFF) that will include flush toilet facilities, security

patrols, security lighting, easy access to the water and do not allow alcohol.

Anglers can also read up on aquatic nuisance species (ANS), as well as regulations governing the use of live baitfish. Select pages are devoted to fish identification, featuring color illustrations by renowned fish illustrator Joe Tomelleri. Current state record fish are listed, and there is also a Master Angler Award Application for anglers who catch fish that qualify for this certificate award program.

For more information on Kansas fishing, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com/Fishing](http://www.ksoutdoors.com/Fishing).

# 2016 Fish Consumption Advisories issued

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) are issuing revised fish consumption advisories for 2016. The advisories identify types of fish or other aquatic animals that should be eaten in limited quantities or, in some cases, avoided altogether because of contamination. General advice is also provided to aid the public in making informed decisions regarding the benefits as well as the risks associated with eating locally caught fish from Kansas waters.

## Statewide Advisories

The following consumption restrictions are recommended because of mercury in fish:

Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing and children age 17 or younger should restrict consumption of all types of locally caught fish, from waters or species of fish not specifically covered by an advisory, to one meal per week because of mercury.

Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing and children age 17 or younger should restrict consumption of largemouth, smallmouth, and spotted bass (black basses) to one meal per month because of mercury.

The general public (men and women 18 or older) should restrict consumption of these species to one meal per week because of mercury.

Recommendations include not eating specified fish or aquatic life from the following locations:

The Kansas River from Lawrence (below Bowersock Dam) downstream to Eudora at the confluence of the Wakarusa River (Douglas and Leavenworth counties); bottom-feeding fish such as buffalo, carp, carpsuckers, catfishes (except flathead catfish), sturgeons, and suckers because of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The Spring River from the confluence of Center Creek to the Kansas/Oklahoma border (Cherokee County); shellfish because of lead and cadmium.

Shoal Creek from the Missouri/Kansas border to Empire Lake (Cherokee County); shellfish because of lead and cadmium.

Cow Creek in Hutchinson and downstream to the confluence with the Arkansas River (Reno County); bottom-feeding fish such as buffalo, carp, carpsuckers, catfishes (except flathead catfish), sturgeons, and suckers because of PCBs.

The Arkansas River from the Lincoln Street Dam in Wichita downstream to the confluence with Cow skin Creek near Belle Plaine (Sedgwick and Sumner counties); bottom-feeding fish such as buffalo, carp, carpsuckers, catfishes (except flathead catfish), sturgeons, and suckers because of PCBs.

Antioch Park Lake South in Antioch Park, Overland Park (Johnson County); all fish because of the pesticides dieldrin, heptachlor epoxide, chlordane, and dichlorophenyltrichloroethanes (DDTs).

Consumption of bottom-feeding fish such as buffalo, carp, carpsuckers, catfishes (except flathead catfish), sturgeons, and suckers should be restricted to one meal per

month from the following location because of PCBs:

1. The Little Arkansas River from the Main Street Bridge immediately west of Valley Center to the confluence with the Arkansas River in Wichita (Sedgwick County).

Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing and children age 17 or younger should consider restricting their total mercury intake for both supermarket fish and locally caught species. Concerned parents and other persons may wish to consult with a physician about eating fish and mercury exposure. Mercury exposure can be reduced by limiting the consumption of large predatory fish. Larger/older fish of all types are more likely to have higher concentrations of mercury. Avoid the consumption of fish parts other than fillets, especially when eating bottom-feeding fish. Fatty internal organs tend to accumulate higher levels of fat-soluble contaminants such as chlordane and PCBs than fillets. Consumers can reduce their ingestion of fat-soluble contaminants such as chlordane and PCBs by trimming fat from fillets, and cooking in a manner in which fat drips away from the fillet. In water bodies where watches or warnings related to harmful algae blooms have been applied, fish should be consumed in moderation and care taken to only consume skinless fillets. Avoid cutting into internal organs and rinse fillets with clean water prior to cooking or freezing.

To view the advisories online and for information about KDHE's Fish Tissue Contaminant Monitoring Program, visit [www.kdheks.gov/befs/fish\\_tissue\\_monitoring.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/befs/fish_tissue_monitoring.htm)

## Fishing regulation changes slow the spread of Asian carp

Many anglers remember when the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) changed bait regulations in 2012 to limit the use of wild-caught bait to within the drainage where collected as well as the 2013 amendment to lessen restrictions for bluegill and green sunfish. The intent of these regulations was to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species such as Asian carp, white perch, and zebra mussels. Sampling conducted earlier this year appears to show that anglers adhering to the bait regulations helped slow the spread of Asian carp

through Kansas waters.

In July 2015, KDWPT partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to sample 11 locations from six river basins throughout Kansas to detect the presence of environmental DNA (eDNA) left behind by bighead and silver carp (collectively known as Asian carp). Over a three-day span, two field crews, each comprised of two KDWPT Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) program staff and one USFWS staff, collected 204 eDNA samples. An additional USFWS crew, manning a portable trailer with cooled cen-

trifuges, prepared the samples for shipment to and processing by the USFWS Whitney Genetics Lab in LaCrosse, Wis.

Results were released to KDWPT earlier this month and are available at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/fisheries/eDNA.html>, but to summarize, none of the samples collected contained Asian carp eDNA. ANS program coordinator Jessica Howell has a good guess as to why.

"We believe the bait regulations have had a positive impact

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*Continued on Page 9*



## KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE, PARKS & TOURISM

# Fish Kansas Instructor Workshop

Learn to introduce youth and families to the sport of fishing and get them "Outside for a Better Inside!". Participants can be certified to teach fishing techniques and aquatic education through the KDWPT Angler Education program.

**Saturday, February, 20, 2016**

**9:30am to 1:00pm - Certification | 2:00pm to 6:00pm - KS Chapter Meeting**

**Flint Hills Technical College Conference Rooms A, B, & C | 3301 West 18th Avenue | Emporia, Kansas 66801**

Participants will also be given valuable information regarding working with children, sample curriculums, and tips for preparing a class or clinic. Current fishing rules and regulations, species identification, fishing ethics, equipment, knot-tying, casting, fish habitat, aquatic nuisance species, and conservation practices will be covered.

Those wanting to become certified instructors must be 18 and pass a background check. There is no test. Youth between the ages of 12 and 17 can also become certified as KDWPT Junior Assisting Angler Volunteers.

Instructed by Shane Wilson, Kevin Reich, Phil Taunton and other Kansas Master Instructors from across the state along with David Breth, KDWPT aquatic education coordinator.

### Register or Learn More

Online at [fishingsfuture.org/node/459/register](http://fishingsfuture.org/node/459/register) or  
Phil Taunton | 620.794.5373 | [ptaunton7@gmail.com](mailto:ptaunton7@gmail.com)



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TECHNICAL  
COLLEGE**



# Support Nongame species with tax donation

Nongame wildlife makes up more than ninety-nine percent of all species in Kansas

More than 4,500 birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, crustaceans and mollusks are considered nongame species, or species that are not trapped, fished, or hunted, in Kansas. We share our state with hummingbirds and herons, bats and butterflies, turtles and toads, mussels and snakes, and almost everything in between. Collectively, nongame wildlife makes up more than 99 percent of all species in Kansas.

While habitat management efforts designed for game species also benefit nongame wildlife, there was a need for programs specific to nongame species, so the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism established the Kansas Nongame Wildlife Improvement Program, also known as the Chickadee Checkoff Program. The program, which seeks sup-



port through tax-deductible donations, provides funding for nongame wildlife research, habitat enhancement and restoration projects, as well as a variety of educational projects.

Private donations are crucial in funding these vital programs, especially when Chickadee Checkoff proceeds are matched by federal funds. Contributions have been steadily decreasing in recent years, making it imperative that every

Kansan consider donating this tax season.

To make a contribution, taxpayers can simply mark the Chickadee Checkoff box on their state income tax forms (line 36 on Form K-40) and designate the amount they would like to donate. There is no minimum or incremental requirement, and donations can also be made directly to the Chickadee Checkoff program at any time throughout the year by mailing the donation to Chickadee Checkoff c/o Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) 512 SE 25th Ave, Pratt, KS 67124.

For more information on how you can support Kansas' nongame wildlife, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Services/Wildlife Diversity/Chickadee Checkoff."

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## CARP

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on protecting our natural resources from ANS such as Asian carp, as evidenced by the apparent lack of spread of bighead and silver carp throughout the state," said Howell. She went on to add that locations such as Atchison State Fishing Lake and the Kansas River above the Bowersock Dam in Lawrence are areas we would have expected to see positive samples if the fish were moved upstream. Instead, these popular fishing locations were negative for eDNA, despite downstream populations where reproduction by the fish has been documented.

Regulations were changed because ANS, including Asian carp and white perch, can easily be confused with similar-looking native species by anglers catching bait. Small bighead and silver carp look very similar to native gizzard shad. White perch look very similar to native white bass. When the KDWPT Commission amended the regulations in 2013 to allow bluegill and green sunfish to

be moved, part of the decision was that bluegill and green sunfish do not look like invasive fish currently in Kansas (bighead carp, silver carp, and white perch).

Anglers and boaters should be aware of Kansas regulations enacted to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species, including:

Wild-caught bait must be used in the common drainage where collected and may not be moved upstream of a dam or natural fish barrier. Bluegill and green sunfish collected from non-designated aquatic nuisance waters may be possessed as live bait anywhere in the state.

No live fish may be taken from designated aquatic nuisance waters, including sport, non-sport, and bait-fish.

Anglers fishing with bait purchased from a commercial dealer must have the receipt in their possession while fishing with purchased bait.

Boaters must pull drain plugs and drain livewells and bilges before transporting their boat on public highways.

It is illegal to possess certain spe-

cies or to release wildlife on department lands or waters, federal reservoirs, and navigable publicly owned rivers.

KDWPT recommends that all water users Clean, Drain, and Dry all equipment after each use to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species.

**Clean** – Remove all plants, animals and mud; thoroughly wash everything, especially crevices and hidden areas.

**Drain** – Eliminate all water before leaving the area, including livewells, ballast and engine cooling water. Dispose of unused bait on land or in an approved bait receptacle.

**Dry** – Allow five days for your equipment to completely dry before transporting to other waters. If you cannot wait five days, clean your boat with high-pressure hot water (140 degrees for 10 seconds of contact).

For more information on eDNA sampling efforts, and how you can help play a part in the fight against ANS, visit [www.protectKSwaters.org](http://www.protectKSwaters.org) or contact Howell at Jessica.howell@ksoutdoors.com.

# Application period for Unit 4 spring turkey permits Jan. 12-Feb. 12

It may not be spring yet, but it's time to prep like it is. The application period for those looking to hunt turkeys in Unit 4 this spring begins Jan. 12. Spring turkey permits are sold over-the-counter or online for all but the southwest portion of Kansas, Unit 4. A limited number of permits are issued to residents only through a lottery drawing. Hunters can apply online only, or over the phone, from Jan. 12-Feb. 12 by visiting [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com). Hunters may apply for a Unit 4 Spring Turkey Permit or a Unit 4 Spring Turkey Permit/Game Tag Combo; however the game tag will only be valid in Units 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6.

Five hundred Unit 4 permits will be made available for the 2016 spring season, with half of those permits designated as landowner/tenant permits. Kansas youth

(15 and under) may purchase a spring turkey permit valid statewide over the counter or online and will not need to enter the Unit 4 draw. Unit 4 spring turkey permits are also valid in adjacent Units 1, 2, and 5.

Unit 4 Spring Turkey Application Fees:  
General Application: \$32.50  
Landowner/Tenant Application: \$20.00  
General Combo Permit/Game Tag Application: \$42.50

Landowner/Tenant Combo Permit/  
Game Tag Application: \$25.00  
Nonresident Tenant Application: \$37.50

Nonresident Tenant Combo Permit/  
Game Tag Application: \$50.00  
Preference Point only: \$6.50  
There is a \$6.50 nonrefundable ap-

plication fee. Unsuccessful applicants will receive a refund check and be issued a preference point. If you do not want to apply for a permit and want to purchase a preference point only, you may do so online by selecting Spring Turkey Preference Point Application. Only one point may be obtained per year.

Any individual who has purchased a Spring Turkey Permit is eligible for one Second Turkey Game Tag. Game tags are valid in Units 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 ONLY.

The spring turkey season will open April 1-12 for youth and hunters with disabilities, and April 4-12 for archery hunters. The regular spring season is April 13-May 31.

For more information, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com), or call (620) 672-5911.

## Hunting private land in Kansas is a privilege

Property boundaries aren't always clear-cut, but the rules for hunting private land are. Because Kansas is 97 percent privately owned, landowners still provide access for most of our hunting opportunities. Know and follow some of these key private land hunting rules to prevent an early end to your season, and more importantly, to ensure good relationships are maintained between hunters and landowners.

- Kansas law requires all hunters to have landowner permission before hunting on private land whether the land is posted with "No Hunting" signs or not. If the land is posted with "Hunting With Written Permission Only" signs or marked with purple paint, hunters must have written permission from the landowner.

- Make a point to notify the landowner of when you plan to hunt and how many

will be in your party. This is a common courtesy that will help keep the lines of communication open, and also can aid landowners in determining whether illegal hunters are trespassing on their property.

- Leave the land how you found it, or better. This can include things as simple as closing gates after you leave, sticking to maintained roads, and removing any trash you find.

- All deer hunters and persons assisting them must wear orange during an open firearm or muzzleloader season. An orange hat and at least 200 square inches of orange is required. Of this, 100 square inches must be visible from the front and 100 square inches must be visible from the back on the upper half of the body. Camouflage orange providing the required orange is legal.

- Know the property boundaries and

know them well. Hunting from roads or railways without permission is a form of trespassing called criminal hunting; since the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) is one of 44 states in the Wildlife Violator Compact, conviction of trespass or criminal hunting may prevent the convicted person from enjoying hunting privileges in other states, as well.

Hunting private land in Kansas is a privilege and should be treated as such. Take advantage of private land access and chances are, you may be looking for a new spot next season. Treat landowners and their property with the same respect you would expect from someone on your land, and great things can come of it.

If you witness trespassing or illegal hunting, please call the Operation Game Thief toll-free hotline at 1-877-426-3843.

## Wardens seek assistance in poaching cases

If you've ever seen a photo of a poached deer, chances are you wish you hadn't. The sad reality is countless numbers of big game animals are illegally killed in Kansas each year. While Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism game wardens make every effort to solve these cases, lack of evidence often leaves criminals unpunished. The good news is you don't have to be a game warden to play a significant role in helping solve a poaching case.

Operation Game Thief (OGT), 1-877-426-

3843, is a toll-free line available 24/7, 365 days a year, where citizens can anonymously report wildlife-related crimes. Once a call has been placed, the message is relayed to the game warden nearest the violation.

If you suspect you are witnessing a wildlife crime do not confront the suspects. Pay attention to detail so you can provide as much specific information as possible when you call OGT. Information such as vehicle model and color, license tag numbers, descriptions of people involved, location, and

the time the incident occurred will help game wardens find the poachers.

OGT calls have resulted in numerous arrests and convictions on violations ranging from deer poaching to public lands vandalism. In many cases, poachers have been arrested within minutes of the call. If you think picking up the phone can't make a difference, think again. Those who commit wildlife crimes aren't just stealing from the land; they are stealing from us all. Help bring them to justice by calling OGT at 1-877-426-3843.

# Commission approves proposed hunting and fishing license fees

The Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) Commission approved a proposal to raise fees for fishing and hunting licenses at their public meeting in Burlington on October 22, 2015. The new fees will be effective January 1, 2016. KDWPT staff have been discussing fee increases since early last spring and presented a draft proposal before the Commission at their public meeting in August.

Fee increases were deemed necessary to ensure pivotal programs important to hunters and anglers can be maintained and enhanced. Basic hunting and fishing license fees haven't increased since 2002, and the price of resident deer and turkey permits haven't increased since 1984. Inflation has increased the cost of doing business by almost 30 percent since 2002, and the uncommitted balance of the Wildlife Fee Fund was beginning to decline. License and permit revenues go into the Wildlife Fee Fund to pay for wildlife and fisheries programs, which receive no State General Fund money.

By unanimously approving the proposed increases, the Commission ensured that programs such as Walk-in Hunting Access (WIHA), Community Fisheries Assistance (CFAP), Pass It On, Fishing Impoundment and Stream Access (FISH), and Wildlife Habitat Improvement (WHIP) will continue to provide hunters and anglers with high-quality outdoor opportunities. Increased revenues will

also help fund day-to-day business such as operation of four fish hatcheries, law enforcement, public lands management and private land programs.

Beginning January 1, 2016 a resident annual hunting or fishing license will cost \$25. The current fee is \$18. However, value-added options are built into the new fee structure, including a discount for purchasing a combination hunt/fish annual license (\$45) and an early-buy combination discount (\$40) if purchased before February 1. Also included are multi-year hunting and fishing licenses that will provide savings. A five-year fishing or hunting license is priced at \$100, and a five-year combination hunting/fishing license is \$180, a savings of \$70 if those licenses were purchased individually each year.

Nonresidents will pay \$95 for an annual hunting license and \$50 for an annual fishing license.

Resident deer permits will go from \$30 to \$40; nonresidents will pay \$415 for the combination (one antlered deer/one antlerless whitetail) permit. Resident turkey permits are set at \$25 and nonresidents will pay \$50 for a fall turkey permit and \$60 for a spring turkey permit.

Lifetime hunting and fishing licenses will go from \$440 to \$500 and \$880 to \$960 for a combination.

Youth license and permit fees were not changed, and the senior lifetime hunt/

fish combination license (\$40) will not change.

Vendor and convenience fees of \$2.50 are added at the point of purchase. For a complete listing of fee changes see K.A.R. 115-2-1 at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Commission/Upcoming-Commission-Meetings/October-22-2015/October-22-2015-Approved-Regulations>.

In other business, commissioners approved an amendment to the definition of a setline, allowing anglers to anchor a setline with a 25-pound weight, and use a closed-cell float to mark it. Amendments to the creel and length limit reference document were approved, including several changes to length and slot-length limits for blue catfish. To see all approved creel and length limits see K.A.R. 115-25-14 at: <http://ksoutdoors.com/KDWPT-Info/Commission/Upcoming-Commission-Meetings/October-22-2015/October-22-2015-Approved-Regulations>

And in final action, commissioners approved staff's proposal for duck zone boundaries. After months of public meetings, discussion and surveys, KDWPT staff proposed a new map that will go into effect for the 2016 fall duck seasons and remain in place for five years. The only change was a boundary shift to move Cedar Bluff Reservoir out of the Low Plains Early Zone and into the Low Plains Late Zone. All other duck zone boundaries remained the same.

## Landowners invited to CRP sign-up workshops

A general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is open from Dec. 1, 2015 - Feb. 26, 2016 at Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices across the state and landowners are encouraged to attend a nearby workshop for details. Whether you have existing crop ground, expiring CRP, or expired CRP that is still in grass, FSA

and Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism staff want to work with you. New contracts will range from 10 and 15 years in length and will begin October 1, 2016.

Representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, alongside state and county conservation partners, will be pres-

ent at each workshop to deliver up-to-date information on the program.

For a complete list of workshops, visit the Kansas Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever website, [www.kansaspfqf.org](http://www.kansaspfqf.org).

Landowners who have already made an appointment with an FSA office are still welcome to attend a workshop.

## Gov. Brownback recognizes Cheyenne Bottoms

Governor Sam Brownback visited the Kansas Wetlands Education Center (KWEC) at Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area on Monday, October 19, 2015. Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) Secretary Robin Jennison introduced Gov. Brownback, who joined local city and county government officials, media representatives,

and local legislators, to tour the center and discuss the importance of educating visitors about the value of wetlands and raising awareness of Cheyenne Bottoms.

Located four miles north of Great Bend in Barton County, Cheyenne Bottoms is the largest inland wetland in the U.S. and is a critical stopover for many migrating

waterfowl and shorebird species. In addition to hundreds of thousands of waterbirds, this 19,000-acre wildlife area, operated by KDWPT, attracts more than 60,000 hunters and bird watchers annually from across the

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# State competition tests students' plant and animal knowledge

Think you know Kansas' flora and fauna inside and out? Would you be willing to put your knowledge to the test? Seventy-nine students from 12 schools across the state did just that during the 17th Annual Kansas ECO-Meet State Finals competition on November 5, and the results were impressive. Held at the Camp Wood YMCA, near Elmdale, the ECO-Meet tested students' knowledge via a wetlands and aquatic ecosystems test, invertebrates test, live plant scavenger hunt, and an interpretive event.

To compete at the state level, students had to qualify at one of seven regional competitions held in September and October at Milford Nature Center, Lakewood Discovery Center, Dillon Nature Center, Wilson Lake, Great Plains Nature Center, Southeast Kansas Education Service Cen-

ter, and Ernie Miller Nature Center.

At the state competition, a total of 21 teams participated, along with six students who qualified as individuals in the two test events. Schools represented at the state competition included Clay Center, Goddard, Goessel, Inman, Maize, Miltonvale, Nickerson, Pike Valley, Pratt, Salina South, Shawnee Mission South, St. Mary's-Colgan of Pittsburg, Tescott, Tonganoxie, Wakefield, and Wilson.

## 2015 Kansas ECO-Meet State Finals Results

### Overall Team

1st – Shawnee Mission South High School Team A: Megan Jenkins, Joe Petty, Kara Pringle and team coach PJ Born - \$300/student scholarships awarded.

2nd – Goddard HS: Sarah Tomtschick, Clara Towey, Brooke Wentz, Brooke Wetta and team coach Marylee Ramsey - \$200/student scholarships awarded.

3rd – Wilson HS Team A: Anna Criswell Aaron Dlabal, Trey Fink, Kyle Goldwater and team coach Melanie Falcon - \$100/student scholarships awarded.

### Individual Events

#### Invertebrates

1st – Joe Petty, Shawnee Mission South High School A - \$200 scholarship

2nd – Kara Pringle, Shawnee Mission South High School A - \$100 scholarship awarded.

#### Wetlands/Aquatic Ecosystem

1st – Joe Petty, Shawnee Mission South High School A - \$200 scholarship

2nd – Aaron Dlabal, Wilson High School A - \$100 scholarship awarded.

## Kansas angler discovers rare eel on end of line

A Kansas angler got quite the surprise when he reeled to the surface not a just an ordinary fish, but a 30-inch-long eel from the Kansas River, below the Bowersock Dam near Lawrence. After closer inspection, it was determined the catch was an American eel, a species that hasn't been seen in Kansas for nearly 10 years.

"This species spawns in the Sargaso Sea of the Atlantic Ocean," said Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Fisheries section chief, Doug Nygren. "So, this eel made a long journey from the Atlantic Ocean, through the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mississippi, took a turn at St. Louis to enter the Missouri River, and another turn to go up the Kansas River to the Bowersock Dam."



The American eel once inhabited waters as far as the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastlines, from Greenland to Brazil, and inland from Minnesota to central New Mexico. In the early 1800s and 1900s, there were several accounts of the American eel in Kansas, but dams

blocking upstream migrations have made this species' appearance a rarity today.

Less active during the day, eels will often remain under logs or other cover until night approaches. They feed primarily on invertebrates and soft-bodied fish.

Although the age of the eel caught from the Kansas River is unknown, records indicate the American eel can live to about 20 years. The current state record American eel was caught in 1987, also from the Kansas River, and weighed 4.4 pounds.

## GOVERNOR

*Continued from Page 11*

U.S. The Nature Conservancy manages 8,000 acres of wetlands adjacent the state wildlife area. The KWEC, which is owned and operated by Fort Hays State University, provides visitors a window to the wetland, literally. The center is surrounded by marsh and inside, visitors can learn interactively about the ecosystem's history, biology and the value of wetlands in general. University and KDWPT

staff have offices at the center.

"This is a fantastic facility," Gov. Brownback said about the education center as he addressed Monday evening's guests. "It's important that visitors, especially our youth, learn about the role of wetlands and the story of Cheyenne Bottoms."

After discussing the area's value as a natural resource and local tourism attraction, Gov. Brownback listened to comments about how the area could be promoted and how it could be improved. It was pointed out that many Kansas residents fail to realize or may take for granted the fantastic natural resources

Kansas has to offer.

On Tuesday morning, October 20, Gov. Brownback spent several hours on the wildlife area, observing waterfowl and shorebirds as they fed and rested on the area's shallow pools and mudflats. Accompanying KWEC and KDWPT staff explained management efforts and challenges, and provided expert advice on shorebird identification.

"This has been a great morning," Gov. Brownback said as the area tour concluded. "I appreciate what the people here are doing to maintain this area and ensure it's here for future generations."

# Trout season offers hot fishing during colder months

Kansas fishing fun doesn't have to end when winter begins. A unique angling opportunity is about to kick off in select waters throughout the state, and with the right permit and some layered clothing, you just might find you have one more reason to fire up the grill – trout.

Trout are stocked in more than 30 locations around the state during the season, which runs Nov. 1, 2015 - April 15, 2016. Anglers can try their luck at trout fishing in Type 1 waters, which require all anglers to possess a \$12.50 trout permit, and in Type 2 waters, which require only those fishing for or possessing trout to purchase the permit. The permit is valid for the calendar year and can be purchased wherever licenses are sold and online at [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com).

Trout fishing opportunities are available at the following locations:

## TYPE 1 LAKES: TROUT PERMITS REQUIRED OF ALL ANGLERS

Cedar Bluff Stilling Basin  
Dodge City Lake Charles  
Ft. Scott Gun Park Lake  
Glen Elder State Park (SP) Pond

Kanopolis Seep Stream  
KDOT East Lake in Wichita  
Lake Henry in Clinton SP  
Mined Land WA Unit #30  
Pratt Centennial Pond  
Walnut River Area in El Dorado SP  
Willow Lake at Tuttle Creek SP  
Webster Stilling Basin  
Sandsage Bison Range and WA Sandpits (Periodically Dry)

Vic's Lake and Slough Creek in Sedgwick County Park

Topeka Auburndale Park  
Garnett Crystal Lake

## TYPE 2 LAKES: TROUT PERMITS REQUIRED ONLY FOR TROUT ANGLERS

Sherman County Smoky Gardens Lake  
Solomon River between Webster Reservoir and Rooks County #2 Road  
Ft. Riley Cameron Springs  
Lake Shawnee - Topeka  
Salina Lakewood Lake  
Moon Lake on Fort Riley  
Scott State Fishing Lake  
Scott State Park Pond  
Hutchinson Dillon Nature Center Pond

Atchison City Lake # 1  
Belleville City Lake (Rocky Pond)  
Holton-Elkhorn Lake  
Syracuse Sam's Pond  
Cimarron Grasslands Pits  
Colby Villa High Lake  
Great Bend Stone Lake  
Herington - Father Padilla Pond  
TROUT Permit required year-round\*  
Cherokee County – Mined Land Wildlife Area No. 30

\*Because trout survive through the summer here, a trout permit is required year-round for anglers utilizing the lake.

Residents 16-74 years old, and all nonresidents 16 and older must also have a valid fishing license. The daily creel limit is five trout unless otherwise posted. Anglers 15 and younger may fish without a trout permit, but are limited to two trout per day, or they may purchase a permit and take five trout per day. Possession limit for trout is 15.

For information on trout stocking schedules, visit [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com) and click "Fishing / Special Fishing Programs for You / Trout Stocking Schedule."

# Kansas Wildlife and Parks magazine announces photography contest winners

For the third year running, Kansas Wildlife & Parks magazine staff have not been disappointed by the entries received in the "Wild About Kansas" photography contest. What used to be a contest only open to youth age 18 and younger was expanded to accept entries from photographers of all ages and skill levels.

A total of 124 participants submitted work this year in hopes of landing on the pages of Kansas Wildlife & Parks magazine, and 24 of them will realize that dream in the 2016 January/February photo issue. To obtain a copy of the special photo issue out in early January, call (620) 672-5911, or become a subscriber at [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) by clicking "Publications," then "KDWPT Magazine."

"Wild About Kansas is really about appreciating Kansas outdoors from all perspectives," said Kansas Wildlife & Parks managing editor, Nadia Marji. "We've seen incredible photos taken from the heart of the suburbs, and we've seen equally stunning photos taken from the middle of the prairie. It's just a true testament to the diversity of our state and all that our land-

scape has to offer."

Photos were judged based on creativity, composition, subject matter, lighting, and overall sharpness. The 2015 "Wild About Kansas" award winners are as follows:

## WILDLIFE

### Adult

1st- Tony Pianalto, "Sumac Buck"  
2nd- Chuck Gibson, "Great Blue Heron"  
3rd- Dale Roark, "Towhee"  
Honorable Mention- Aaron Thompson, "Focused Eagle"

### Youth

1st- Amelia Kilmer, "Monarch"  
2nd- Ross Ifland, "Upland Sandpiper"  
3rd- Christina Craig, "Halloween Pen-nant"

Honorable Mention- Julien Reynard, "Moonlight Geese"

## LANDSCAPE

### Adult

1st- Aaron Thompson, "Wood Skeleton"  
2nd- Tony Ifland, "Dewy Prairie Morning"

3rd- Robert Dilla, "Foggy Sunrise"  
Honorable Mention- Jay Miller, "Kansas Night Sky"

### Youth

1st- Christina Craig, "Almost Spring"  
2nd- Grace Young, "Marais Des Cygnes"

3rd- Amelia Kilmer, "Tree Arch"  
Honorable Mention- Julien Reynard, "Sunset in The Spring"

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

### Adult

1st- Tony Ifland, "Duck Season Training"  
2nd- Darrell Skrdlant, "Flying High"  
3rd- Ken Brunson, "Sylvie Spots Mushroom"

Honorable Mention- Chuck Gibson, "Gone Fishin'"

### Youth

1st- Katelyn Ifland, "Camping Moonrise"

2nd- Callie Bowley, "Kansas Winter Trout"

3rd- Christina Craig, "Fishing on Glass"  
Honorable Mention- Andrew Fischer, "Hunting Sunset"

Details on the 2016 contest will be made available after the New Year on [www.ksoutdoors.com](http://www.ksoutdoors.com).

# Sproul Family Receives 2015 Kansas Leopold Conservation Award

Bill Sproul and his family, who operate a 2,200-acre stocker ranch in Chautauqua County, received the first Kansas Leopold Conservation Award in November. The award honors Kansas landowner achievement in voluntary stewardship and management of natural resources, and was presented by the Sand County Foundation in partnership with the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) and the Ranchland Trust of Kansas (RTK).

When the Sprouls purchased their land, it had a long history of being overgrazed and was rapidly transforming into woodland. After removing the invasive woody plants, they transformed the land back into native tallgrass prairie and implemented a patch-burn grazing program. While the cattle graze the burned areas, the unburned grass accumulates, providing habitat for wildlife and fuel for future burns.

Sproul always considers the long-term consequences of his decisions on prairie health. When drought reduced forage production, he reduced stocking rates to help the land recover, even if it meant deferring grazing altogether on some rangeland. When

asked about his approach to conservation, Sproul said, "I let the prairie dictate what I do."

Over the past eight years, Sproul has worked with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) to conduct annual breeding bird surveys on his ranch. He has also worked with Kansas State University to perform studies on the effects of patch-burn grazing on pollinator populations.

The Leopold Conservation Award is presented in honor of renowned conservationist and author Aldo Leopold, who called for an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage. Award applicants are judged based on their demonstration of improved resource conditions, innovation, long-term commitment to stewardship, sustained economic viability, community and civic leadership and multiple use benefits.

The \$10,000 award, and a crystal depicting Aldo Leopold, was presented to the Sproul family at the KACD annual convention in Wichita on November 23.

"The Sproul ranch is an outstanding

example of conservation and truly exemplifies Aldo Leopold's land ethic," said Jim Krueger, KACD Executive Director. "Their careful stewardship of the land will help ensure their unique landscape is preserved for generations to come. As the first recipients of the Kansas Leopold Conservation Award, the Sprouls have set the bar high going forward."

"The Ranchland Trust of Kansas is proud that one of our charter members was chosen as the first Kansas recipient of the Leopold Conservation Award," said Bill Eastman, RTK Chair of the Board. "We know firsthand the conservation and stewardship of the Sproul family. It is a great pleasure to see their efforts and leadership being recognized with an award that epitomizes the conservation movement in America."

The Leopold Conservation Award Program in Kansas is made possible thanks to the generous support of Clean Line Energy Partners, Ducks Unlimited, ITC Great Plains, NextEra Energy Resources, Westar Energy, KDWPT, DuPont Pioneer, The Mosaic Company and The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

## Mexico hopes to see 3-4 times more monarch butterflies

**By Mark Stevenson**  
Associated Press

The number of monarch butterflies reaching their wintering grounds in central Mexico this year may be three to four times higher than the previous season, authorities said Thursday.

Speaking during a visit to a monarch reserve with U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Mexican Environment Secretary Rafael Pacchiano said initial reports suggest the butterfly population is rebounding.

"We estimate that the butterfly population that arrives at the reserve is as much as three and could reach four times the surface area it occupied last season," Pacchiano said.

He did not explain how the government made the calculation, but authorities conduct informal tracking of monarch butterflies as they enter Mexico from the United States.

The population of orange-and-black butterflies making the 3,400-mile (5,500-

kilometer) migration from the United States and Canada declined in recent years before recovering slightly in 2014, when the insects covered about 2.79 acres (1.13 hectares) in the mountains west of Mexico City.

The monarchs cluster so closely in trees that their numbers are measured by the area they cover. They once blanketed as much as 44 acres (18 hectares).

Pacchiano said the butterfly colonies could cover 3 or 4 hectares (7.8 to 9.9 acres) this year, and officials hope to reach 6 hectares (14.8 acres) in the reserves by 2020.

"The United States is very committed to protecting the monarch butterfly, but we need the help of Mexico and Canada," Jewell said before hiking an hour into the mountains to see the trees where the monarchs roost.

She said the United States is working to reintroduce milkweed, a plant key to the butterflies' migration, on about 3 million hectares (1,160 square miles) within five years, both by planting and

by designating pesticide-free areas.

Milkweed is the plant the butterflies feed and lay their eggs on, but it has been attacked by herbicide use in the United States.

"Our agricultural practices must be adapted. ... We have to look at our use of pesticides," Jewell said. "We have the goal of 225 million monarch butterflies returning right here, to Mexico, every year. We believe we can get there by working together."

Mexico, too, still has problems.

Illegal logging more than tripled in the monarch butterflies' wintering grounds last year, reversing several years of steady improvements.

Pacchiano said the reserve's buffer area lost more than 20 acres (9 hectares) due to illegal logging in one area this year, but the tree cutting was detected and a number of arrests were made.

Loggers cut down 47 acres (19 hectares) of trees in San Felipe de los Alzates.

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# 'Pass It On – Outdoor Mentors' get kids playing outside again

By Cameron Gray  
Opportunity Lives blog  
NRA News

When we were kids in the 1970s and '80s, the rule was go outside and play, and don't come home until sunset. We rode our bikes all over town, explored the woods behind our houses, set up forts, and had the time of our lives. Today, sadly, kids don't get outside that much and parents are increasingly afraid of letting them out of the house unsupervised. Government authorities have detained children walking to the park or playing a block away from home. Technology, especially video games, has kept kids indoors and sedentary.

Lately, however, there has been a concerted effort by organizations around the country to fix this problem, and to get kids out of the house. One of those groups is Pass It On – Outdoor Mentors.

Pass It On started in 1999 as a partnership between the Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks and Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters. Kansas had just implemented the state's first youth upland hunting season, and the Wildlife & Parks Department recognized a need for people to coax more children and teens outdoors for hunting and fishing. Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters hired Mike Christensen as director of outdoor mentoring in 2002.

"Big Brothers Big Sisters' interest in setting up an outdoor mentoring program was seen as a way to attract more men to mentoring," Christensen explained. "It was a win-win-win. Kansas Department of Wildlife

& Parks saw more kids getting outdoors, Big Brothers Big Sisters got more men as mentors and the kids got to go hunting and fishing with a positive role model."

In 2006, Pass It On spun off from Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, with Christensen left in charge of the program.

Pass It On has found that, typically, youth mentoring organizations have a standing list of kids who need or want a mentor. They are especially in need of men, as about three-quarters of waiting lists tend to be boys. Pass It On targets established outdoor organizations such as Pheasants Forever, the National Wild Turkey Federation and Ducks Unlimited to find men and women with an interest in sharing time outdoors with a child. Because safety is always crucial, Pass It On works closely with its partner organizations, who conduct background checks and manage the matches once they are made.

Christensen admits that it's not always easy to get kids interested. "A couple of years ago, we had a young boy whose mom had to literally shove him out of her car when dropping him off for one of our events," he recalled. "By the end of the day, he was all excited and couldn't wait to go again. He had no idea what we were going to be doing that day. It was a day spent with the local bird dog club, who took everyone to a member's ranch. We set up clay target shooting and the kids did some fishing. He was more than ready to go again."

Pass It On takes kids on many and varied outdoor adventures, depending on the season. In the spring, it's fishing, turkey hunting and shooting clays at the range. Summertime

means fishing and target shooting. In the fall and winter, the mentors take kids deer, waterfowl, dove and upland hunting. Outings could be as small as one or two kids, or as large as 300 participants.

Christensen is proud of a new initiative, the First Hunt program, in which Pass It On offers a first hunt to new hunter education graduates.

"We take up to 20 new hunters at a time to the field, where we give them some shotgun instruction, and then have them 'hunt' for pheasants we've placed in bird launchers," he explained. "This lets us conduct a very safe, controlled hunt for these new hunters, emphasizing what they have learned in the class. These First Hunt events are open to any and all new hunter education graduates."

One of the many great things Pass It On — Outdoor Mentors sees is children and teens that continue with outdoor activities. Christensen says that the first boy he mentored, Dana, now hunts and fishes on a regular basis, taking his younger brother along with him on many occasions. Dana, along with other former participants, also volunteers to help mentor other kids, "passing it on."

When Christensen asked about the nicest things he's heard from people he has worked with over the years, he readily answers: "From the kids, 'When can I go again?' And we hear that a lot. Hearing that means that we did our job, providing a safe, memorable event and that they want more. The seed has

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## MONARCH

*Continued from Page 14*

in Michoacan state last year, the biggest loss since 2009.

Illegal logging had fallen to almost zero in 2012.

The forest canopy acts as a sort of blanket against the cold for butterflies that form huge clumps on tree branches during their winter stay in Mexico.

The migration is an inherited trait: No butterfly lives to make the full round trip, and it is unclear how they find their

way back to the same patch of pine forest each year.

Some scientists suggest the butterflies may release chemicals marking the migratory path and fear that if their numbers fall too low the chemical traces will not be strong enough for others to follow.

Two years ago the butterflies reached a low point, covering only 1.65 acres (0.67 hectares), the lowest since record-keeping began in 1993.

At their peak in 1996, the monarchs covered more than 44 acres (18 hectares). But since then, each time the monarchs have rebounded, they have done so at lower levels. The species is found in

many countries and is not in danger of extinction, but experts fear the migration could be disrupted if very few butterflies make the long trip.

Largely indigenous farm communities in the mountain reserve have received government development funds in return for preserving the 139,000-acre (56,259 hectare) reserve that UNESCO has declared a World Heritage site.

Some of the communities earn income from tourist operations or reforestation nurseries to grow and plant saplings.

But Omar Vidal, head of the World Wildlife Fund in Mexico, said poverty remains a problem among the communities.

# Low acceptance rates reflect continued conservation cuts

From National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

As Congress continues to negotiate funding levels for fiscal year (FY) 2016, key conservation programs are once again on the chopping block. The severe magnitudes of those cuts are described at the end of this post.

As we write this, congressional leaders and appropriators are in the final stretch of making the government funding decisions for FY 2016, with the potential of reducing or eliminating the farm bill conservation program cuts in light of extra funding recently provided by the two-year budget deal.

Re-opening the 2014 Farm Bill to make these shortsighted cuts impacts the ability of farmers and ranchers to enroll in critical conservation programs and this post illustrates just how dramatically these funding cuts have impacted program acceptance rates in recent years.

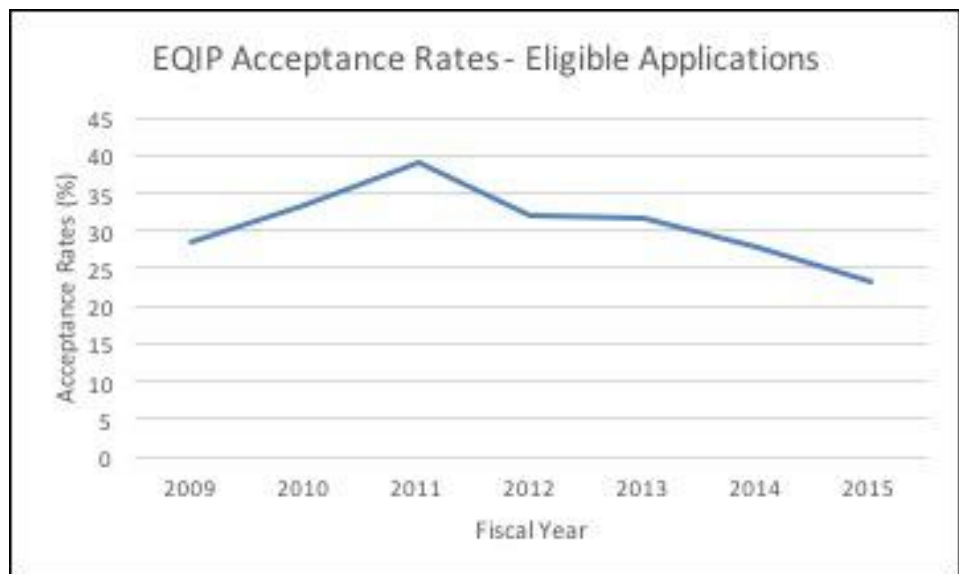
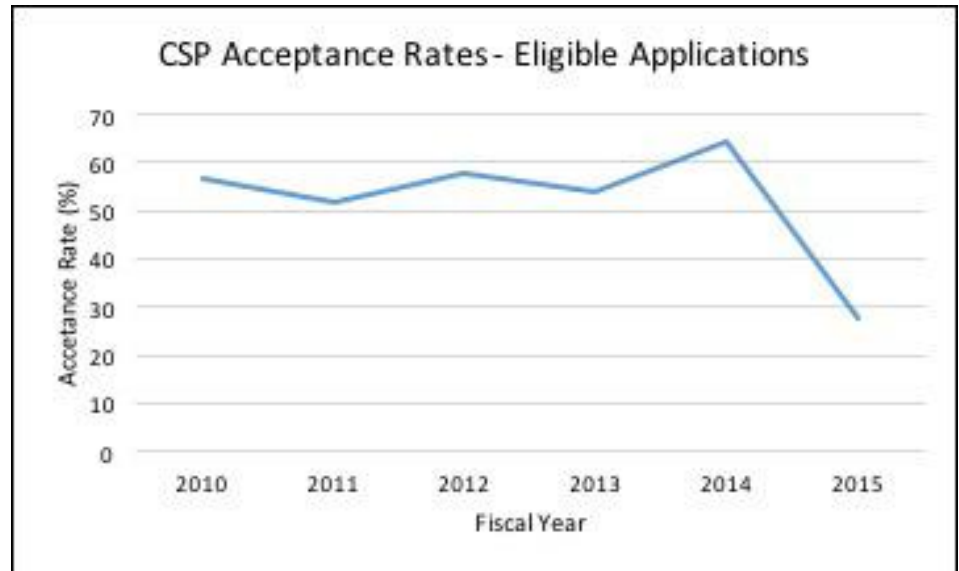
Working lands conservation programs help farmers and ranchers to protect and rebuild soil, provide clean water and habitat for native wildlife, sequester carbon, and supply other conservation and environmental benefits. To protect these benefits and the carefully negotiated 2014 Farm Bill, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC) urges Congress to avoid any further backdoor cuts that will shut the door to conservation funding for even more farmers with eligible conservation proposals to protect and enhance the natural resource base on which our food security depends.

## What's at Stake?

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) are both administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and are the farm bill's two large working lands conservation programs.

CSP provides farmers and ranchers technical and financial assistance to actively manage existing conservation and to implement additional conservation activities. CSP is the only comprehensive working lands conservation program designed to help farmers and ranchers adopt and maintain advanced land management conservation systems on land in agricultural production.

EQIP provides financial cost-share assistance and technical assistance for producers to implement basic conservation practices on working agricultural land. EQIP assistance is available through a general pool and also through special initiatives.



CSP and EQIP both had exceptionally low acceptance rates for FY 2015, at 27 and 23 percent respectively, which reflects not only the 2 to 1 ratio of demand to funding that we would expect under "normal" funding conditions, but also backdoor farm bill cuts in annual appropriations bills, as well as automatic budget cuts known as sequestration, were also in play during the last few rounds of conservation funding.

## Only 27 Percent of CSP Applications Funded in FY 2015

In FY 2015, nearly 21,000 eligible producers applied for funding through CSP. This excludes applications that did not meet

the minimum eligibility criteria. Of those eligible applicants, only 5,785 producers (27 percent) were funded in FY 15.

As the chart below illustrates, this represents a historic low in the percentage of eligible applicants that CSP is able to support. While CSP is indeed intended to support only the best stewards of the land, the 2015 acceptance rate reflects a dramatic disconnect between eligible stewards and available funding. Until 2015 NRCS had been able to fund approximately half of the eligible CSP applicants they received.

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# CSP

*Continued from Page 16*

## Why was the 2015 Acceptance Rate So Low?

There are a number of factors that influence CSP funding each year, including most importantly the amount mandatory funding authorized in the farm bill, but also cuts known as “changes in mandatory program spending” (known as CHIMPS in congressional shorthand) made through the annual appropriations process, and automatic spending cuts known as “sequestration.” All of these factors combined in a kind of “perfect storm” that worked against farmers and ranchers who applied to CSP in FY 2015.

First, the 2014 Farm Bill decreased the annual enrollment in CSP down to 10 million acres, rather than 12.8 million acres per year as was the case under the 2008 Farm Bill. The new acreage cap meant that beginning in FY 2014, NRCS was able to enroll 2.8 million fewer acres in the program. This amounts to roughly an additional 2,000 farmers and ranchers who have to be turned away from the CSP each year.

While the enrollment cap of 10 million acres was also applied for the FY 2014 sign-up, the 2015 sign-up was further limited by an additional 23 percent cut, limiting program enrollment to 7.7 million acres, via the annual appropriations process. This CHIMPS cut directly cut into the ability of producers to enroll in key conservation programs, and fiscal year (FY) 2015’s historically low acceptance rate illustrates the damage done by continued cuts. There was no CHIMPS cut in FY 2014.

Finally, the sequestration process cut an additional over 7 percent of program funding (for both CSP and EQIP) in FY 2015. These

automatic cuts keep getting extended by Congress and under current law will continue to cut farm bill farm until 2025, and hence will have a major impact on the 2018 Farm Bill process. These automatic spending cuts have so far impacted enrollment from 2013 through 2015, and will again influence 2016 enrollment, although we do not yet know the exact size of the cut.

These factors together, along with continued and increasing farmer demand for the program, are driving down acceptance rates and creating major backlogs, not to mention discouraged farmers and lost conservation opportunities.

## Less than One Quarter of EQIP Applicants Accepted in 2015

In FY 2015, EQIP had a similarly low acceptance rate, as NRCS was only able to enroll 30,175, or 23 percent, of the nearly 130,000 eligible applicants. As the chart below illustrates, since 2011 it has become increasingly challenging for eligible EQIP applicants to receive cost-share support for critical conservation practices.

While EQIP funding remained fairly level in the 2014 Farm Bill, one change from the farm bill that could be impacting the low acceptance rates in 2014 and 2015 is the increase, included in the 2014 Farm Bill, in the payment limit from \$300,000 to \$450,000 per contract. This increase in the upper payment limit means that large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and large operations expanding irrigated acres are able to commandeer more of the total funding, thus reducing access to the program for other farmers and ranchers.

Finally, in addition to farm bill changes, EQIP funding continues to suffer major cuts through CHIMPS in the annual appropriations process, as well as cuts through sequestration since 2013. The final FY 2015 appropriations bill cut EQIP by over

\$136 million, on top of the \$117 million cut through sequestration.

Given that the CHIMPS cut to EQIP in FY 2014 was an even larger \$274 million, it is possible that there were additional factors influencing 2015’s historically low acceptance rate, including the size of accepted applications, the timing of application periods, and NRCS program outreach at the state and local levels.

## Looking Ahead to 2016

The low acceptance and high backlog rates for CSP and EQIP reflect farmers and ranchers’ continued conservation demand across the country, as well as the serious cuts to these programs, year after year. The clock is ticking for Congress to finalize funding levels for 2016, and the proposed cut to CSP in the House Agriculture Appropriations bill and to EQIP in the Senate and House would have serious implications for eligible producers to enroll in critical conservation programs.

Given that the budget deal announced in late October lifted discretionary spending caps for FY 2016 and gave appropriators more money to work with, it is our hope that with the additional funding they will eliminate the 23 percent cut to CSP in the House bill and the over \$300 million cut to EQIP in both the pending House and Senate bills. If not eliminated, these shortsighted cuts would force NRCS to turn away thousands additional of farmers and ranchers looking to improve soil and water quality, protect pollinators and habitat, conserve water, and prepare for extreme weather events.

Application periods for EQIP are open across the country, and we expect CSP (in an entirely new and redesigned form) to be rolled out early next year. Stay tuned for more information on program funding and sign-up periods in the coming weeks and months.

# JOIN THE KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION!

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Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation.

MAIL TO: Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, KS 67277-1282



# Unlicensed hunter arrows 208-inch buck

**Todd Masson**  
**The Times-Picayune**

Never call a Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries agent to come measure your deer if you forgot to buy your license before you shot it.

An Abbeville man learned that lesson the hard way Saturday, according to the department. Officials say Senior Agent Douglas Anderson received a call at 10 a.m. Saturday about a trophy buck that had been shot on a private lease in Avoyelles Parish near Simmesport by a guest hunter. The club wanted someone to come mea-

sure the buck for record purposes.

Upon arrival, Anderson was informed that the deer may have been shot by an unlicensed hunter. He says he interviewed the hunter, Glen Toups Jr., 40, and Toups confessed to not having a basic hunting license, big-game license or deer tags.

The agent cited Toups for the violations, and seized the deer, which was unofficially scored as a 208-inch buck. Taken by a licensed hunter, it would have qualified as one of the largest bow kills ever in Louisiana.

The state's largest non-typical archery buck was a 219 1/8-inch deer taken by

Billy Husted in Tensas Parish in 2007. The No. 2 deer was Rodney Lee's 203 5/8-inch-er taken in East Feliciana parish in 1983.

Not possessing deer tags carries a \$100 to \$350 fine and up to 60 days in jail. Hunting without basic and big game licenses each brings a \$50 fine and up to 15 days in jail. Toups may also face civil-restitution charges totaling \$2,033 for the replacement value of the illegally taken deer.

The deer meat was donated to charity, and the head and antlers are being held as evidence by the department. Officials were unable to provide a photo of the deer.

## Seeking the crown - the hunt for shed antlers

**Todd Amenrud**  
**Mossy Oak GameKeepers Club**

I have been training my yellow lab, Annabell, to find and retrieve shed antlers for almost a year. I had a great laugh a couple days ago when I let her go outside for a "potty time" and she came back to the house with an antler in her mouth. I was SO PROUD! Her first real antler on her own. I praised her, "good girl, bring it here!" I was so pleased; until she got closer and I saw it was the antler off of my 3-D target! At least she has learned to recognize antlers by sight; I hope she does as well with the real thing.

There are various reasons why we search for these cast off crowns. I started about 20 years ago, and every year it seems I become a more avid shed hunter. I'm not the only one, shed hunting has become so popular that guided week-long shed hunting vacations that include food and lodging can cost \$2,500 or more. Don't let that scare you because sheds can be found in your own hunting area - for free.

There are numerous reasons why searching for shed antlers has become so popular - it's the perfect way to expand your interest in whitetails, it's good exercise and it's a perfect time to take a jab at "cabin fever." It's a great family participation sport and can be a great way to learn something that may help you get closer to a mature buck the following hunting season. Not to mention that big sheds can bring in big buck\$....pun intended.

Shed hunting is also valuable for helping formulate management decisions like which bucks should go on your hit list. It also helps in estimating the buck population and age of the animals that made it through the hunting season.

It's a challenge to understand the life and



**"Sheds" can be almost any size imaginable. But whatever the size, you have a feeling of accomplishment at having spotted them. OWDN photo**

movements of a specific buck and when I find a shed I feel like I'm one step closer. I get more excited, however, to know that his rack will be more impressive next year, with greater mass, longer beams and maybe extra tines.

My main reason for going on these searches is to learn more about my hunting area and the patterns of the animals. Finding shed antlers can make you a better hunter by showing you which areas mature animals utilize. Late winter through spring is a valuable time for seeking out the travel patterns of mature bucks. With the foliage off of the trees, sign you never saw last fall can seem blatantly obvious.

When should you begin the search? On a lease I used to have in the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota I've seen bucks drop their antlers as early as late December, but that's early. Most deer hold their racks through January and begin to drop during February and March. Around my home it's usually the second week in March when most bucks "go

bald." If you wait too long, newly growing weeds and grasses will make the search more difficult and mice and chipmunks will have a chance to gnaw on them for the calcium and phosphorous.

While deer may shed both of their antlers within seconds of one another in the same spot, don't expect that to happen often. Once, while walking a tract I used to hunt in Manitoba, I found a matching pair of 5x5 sheds stuck upside-down, side by side in the snow. It was like the buck placed them there for safe keeping. Sometimes you'll discover just one and sometimes you'll find both, and sometimes you'll find them close by one another and other times the matching half might be a half mile or more from the first.

You might get lucky by just taking an aimless stroll, but you're better off to have a plan. Begin searching areas where you've seen deer during the winter before. Prime locations will be winter food sources, swamps with conifer trees for thermal cover and heavy cover adjacent to leftover agricultural crops. Thick stands of conifers, south-facing hillsides, freshly logged areas, ravines and stream bottoms that offer some protection from cold winter winds are all good bets for shed hunting. Make sure to check fence crossings where an animal might jump across and jar the antler loose as it lands on the other side.

Always bring binoculars - they can save a lot of leg-work. If you see something that looks like an antler far away, you can often cut down excess walking by examining it through your optics. Most youngsters love to hunt for sheds if given the opportunity, so bring your kids or a neighborhood youngster

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# Can A Groundhog Predict The End Of Winter?

By eNature

February 2 is Groundhog Day and groundhogs will receive A LOT of media attention. And Punxsutawney Phil will deliver that morning — seeing his shadow and predicting six more weeks of winter or failing to see his shadow and calling for the end of winter.

We've received a number of inquiries about this furry, kind-of-cute rodent from readers.

Groundhogs clearly aren't related to pigs or hogs—so what exactly are they?

The groundhog (also known as a woodchuck or Eastern Marmot) is actually a large, ground-dwelling rodent and is part of family of ground squirrels known as marmots.

Groundhogs are lowland creatures and are common in the northeastern and central United States, found as far north as eastern Alaska and south as the northern half of Alabama.

If you live in the western U.S., particularly in rocky and mountainous areas, you're probably familiar with the groundhog's cousins such as the yellow-bellied and hoary marmots.

### Can They Really Chuck Wood?

The name that many use for the animal, "woodchuck", is derived from the Native American Algonquian tribe's name for the animal, "wuchak".

So despite the tongue-twister we've all heard (as well as that GEICO ad a year

or two back!), it's name has nothing to do with throwing around pieces of wood, even though it's a great image....

### Digging Life

These busy rodents are great diggers and hikers can often find their dens by looking for disturbed earth. Their short, powerful limbs and curved, thick claws are ideally suited for digging the extensive excavations they are known to create.

Groundhogs have two coats of fur—a dense grey undercoat that is then covered by a longer coat of banded guard hairs, which provide its distinctive "frosted" appearance.

They are good swimmers and excellent tree climbers and can do both while escaping predators. When threatened, groundhogs generally retreat to their burrows but the animal can tenaciously defend itself or its burrow using its two large incisors and front claws. That said, groundhogs are pretty easy prey for predators such as coyotes, foxes, bears and even large raptors. Young groundhogs are also preyed upon by snakes.

### What Do Groundhogs Eat?

Groundhogs are mostly herbivorous, consuming wild grasses and other vegetation such as berries and agricultural crops. On occasion, they'll also eat grubs, insects, snails and similar small animals. Groundhogs don't need open water to drink and can hydrate themselves by consuming leafy vegetation.

Individuals often "stand alert" in an erect posture on their hind legs when not actively

feeding. This is a commonly seen behavior and easily observed.

### So How Can They Predict The End Of Winter?

Unlike many rodents, groundhogs are true hibernators and are rarely, if ever, active or seen during the winter. They often build a separate "winter burrow", which extends below the frost line and stays at a steady temperature year round, allowing the animal to avoid freezing during the winter's cold months.

It's this trait of sleeping through the winter that led to the folklore that a groundhog's behavior can predict when winter will end.

Since a groundhog sleeps through the entire winter, the reasoning is that the winter must be ending if he's willing to stay out and about once he or she has been awakened on February 2nd.

It's a pretty shaky premise and the poor creature is probably so dazed from being rudely awakened that he has no idea what the temperature is.

### How Accurate Are A Groundhog's Predictions?

Groundhogs are among our longest hibernators, often settling down as early as October and remaining in their burrow until March or April.

So no matter what our furry prognosticators may appear to tell us on Groundhog Day, it's a pretty safe bet that just want to go back to sleep, regardless of the weather!

## KIDS

*Continued from Page 15*

been planted. Now we need to cultivate it! It doesn't get any better than that," he said.

"The kids get excited," he added. "Their self-confidence grows. Their self-esteem is boosted. They see themselves in a different light having gone hunting and having spent time outdoors doing things that are way out of their comfort zone."

Parents often say "thank you."

"We really appreciate it when the parents see the positive changes to the kids from participating in these events," Christensen said.

As for the mentors, Christensen said they often tell him they get more out of the program than the kids. "Mentoring a child can be a tremendously rewarding experience," he said. "Getting to see the outdoors through the eyes of a child experiencing it for the first

time is a truly neat and rewarding experience for the mentor."

Pass It On covers all of the costs for the kids. The group asks the volunteers to cover any costs they may incur. Many of the kids they work with come from low-income families, and Christensen says they don't want cost to discourage anyone from getting outdoors. Thanks to generous supporters, Pass It On can provide opportunities for kids who wouldn't be able to participate otherwise.

But Christensen laments, "We never have 'enough' money. We use every penny we get to do as many events [and] activities as we can. Funding is always a struggle as I'm sure it is for most nonprofits. But we have a core of supporters who have been tremendous in their support of our efforts to get more kids outdoors. If we had more funds, we would be able to do more events and get more kids outdoors."

If you want to help Pass It On – Outdoor

Mentors, you can do so in two ways:

1) Give your time. Pass It On – Outdoor Mentors is always in need of men and women willing to share their time outdoors with a child a couple of times a month. Any outdoors activity to share with a youngster is great, like taking them hunting and fishing, going to the range, going scouting, setting up tree stands and planting food plots.

2) Donate your money. "We desperately need financial assistance," Christensen said. "The funds we raise are put to use hosting events, that give those new to the outdoors a chance to gain experience with the assistance of a mentor. We never have enough."

If you would like to find out more about Pass It On – Outdoor Mentors, and to donate, visit <http://outdoormentors.org>.

*Cameron Gray is a contributor for Opportunity Lives. You can follow him on Twitter @Cameron\_Gray.*

## Winter wildlife quiz

By eNature

North American animals have numerous strategies for surviving the winter. Some migrate to warmer climes, others head for a long winter's nap, and some stay where they are and rely on fur, speed, fat, teeth, and claws to keep them safe, warm, and well fed. How much do you know about the winter behavior of North America's animals? Test your winter wildlife knowledge by taking our quiz. (Scroll down to see the answers.)

**1. Which animal has the densest, warmest fur on earth?**

- A. Beaver
- B. Sea Otter
- C. Polar Bear
- D. Mink
- E. Muskox

**2. How much weight might an adult Grizzly Bear gain before retiring for the winter?**

- A. 50 pounds
- B. 100 pounds
- C. 200 pounds
- D. 300 pounds
- E. 400 pounds
- F. All of the above

**3. Which animal remains active all winter, and doesn't retire to a den for a sustained period?**

- A. Eastern Chipmunk
- B. White-tailed Prairie Dog
- C. Red Squirrel
- D. Black Bear
- E. Polar Bear

**4. Choose the animal species that does NOT regularly appear in a white-furred form.**

- A. Eastern Gray Squirrel
- B. Arctic Fox
- C. Grizzly Bear
- D. Least Weasel
- E. Gray Wolf
- F. Black Bear

**5. Which of the following species will travel to a new area for the winter?**

- A. Manatee
- B. Caribou
- C. Bison
- D. Snow Goose
- E. Snowy Owl
- F. All of the above

**6. Animals generally put on fat for two reasons: warmth and food reserves. Which of the following species reaches the heaviest weight?**

- A. Grizzly Bear
- B. Polar Bear
- C. Northern Elephant Seal
- D. Walrus



**Muskox credit: Dixi /CCSA**



**Arctic Fox, winter coat credit: Ansgar Walk/CCSA**

**7. Match the predator (1-7) with the prey (a-g) that it commonly eats.**

- |                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Arctic Fox             | a) fish          |
| 2. Lynx                   | b) squid         |
| 3. Northern River Otter   | c) clams         |
| 4. Mink                   | d) seal          |
| 5. Polar Bear             | e) snowshoe hare |
| 6. Walrus                 | f) lemming       |
| 7. Northern Elephant Seal | g) muskrat       |

**(ANSWERS ON PAGE 22)**



## KID'S WILDLIFE FRIENDS

# How does the Wood Frog avoid freezing to death during a cold arctic winter?

By eNature

When winter arrives in the Arctic, the temperature drops, and the Wood Frog responds accordingly—in a behavior that sounds like something from a science fiction movie.

It lets itself get deep-frozen.

A Living Ice Cube? First the frog drifts into a deep sleep, then its heart stops, its breathing stops, and most of the water in its body turns to ice. The Wood Frog becomes, for all intents and purposes, a frog-shaped Popsicle.

But when spring arrives some months later, an interesting thing happens: the frog thaws, and its hearts starts to pump again, its breathing resumes, and the animal is soon hopping, croaking, mating—enjoying all the amphibian pleasures life has to offer.



Wood Frog © MichaelZahniser

So what's the Wood Frog's secret? Letting yourself get frozen solid doesn't seem a good way to cope with winter!

It's Not Easy Being Frozen

Well, slow cooling is important. If the animal's temperature were to drop too quickly, it wouldn't have time to secrete

substances like glucose that protect its internal organs from dehydration while frozen. Slow cooling also allows the water inside the frog time to shift position. The more water that collects in the hollow cavities within the abdomen, for example, the more room there is for the water to expand as it freezes. If too much water remains in the organs, however, blood vessels will rupture as the temperature drops, and the animal will never wake from its slumber.

So when you start to see the tadpoles, frogs and other amphibians in your neighborhood this spring, don't forget their northern kin and their remarkable story.

How are the creatures in your neck of the woods handling winter's cold?

Here in the mid-Atlantic we're seeing all sorts of activity as the mild winter hasn't driven our wildlife into deep cold survival mode.

## KID'S WILDLIFE FRIENDS

# Valentine's Day: It's not just for humans — there's a lot going on in the wild too!

By eNature

Some folks love it, others dread it. But no matter what your feelings about Valentine's Day, there's no avoiding it.

And it's not just humans—animals in the wild are succumbing to Cupid's arrows as well.

Take a walk through your backyard or a backcountry hike and you'll likely be confronted by a courtship ritual of some sort. For the animals engaged in such displays, the whole month of February, not just Valentine's Day, is meant for romance.

### Mammals Looking For Love

Despite the chill that remains in much of North America, Raccoons, Minks, river otters, Gray and Red Foxes, Coyotes, and skunks all take time off from their mid-winter hunting to prowl for partners. Groundhogs start to look around longingly soon after they emerge from their long winter's sleep, and many of their rodent kin, from California Kangaroo Rats to Black-tailed Prairie Dogs, also consider February just the right time for rubbing noses.



Northern River Otter © Gay Bumgarner

### And Many Bird Species Are Too

Birds, too, at least a few of them, hit their romantic stride during the second month of the year. Great Horned Owls start hooting it up in December but mostly wait till now to take care of their romantic business. Male Red-winged Blackbirds return to much of the continent in February and start right in displaying and singing for prospective females, while American Woodcocks stage their delightfully bizarre



Pipevine Swallowtail © Rick Cech

courtship performances in the February twilight. And in the swamps of southern Florida, ungainly looking Wood Storks make hay in the February sunshine.

### Even Butterflies Are Seeking Partners

Also out under bright sunny southern skies are myriad butterflies looking for love. There are large Pipevine Swallowtails and diminutive Western Pygmy-Blues

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# Answers to winter wildlife quiz

Question 1: If you guessed the Sea Otter, you're right! Its fur is denser than the fur of any other mammal. One square inch of Sea Otter fur contains as many as 1 million hairs -- that's about the same number of hairs on the heads of ten humans. This water-loving mammal eats, sleeps, mates, and gives birth at sea. It lacks the layer of blubber that keeps many other marine mammals warm, and so has only its fur coat to protect it from chilly North Pacific waters. Oil spills can devastate Sea Otter populations, because the otters' coats lose their insulating properties when saturated with oil, and many affected otters die of exposure.

Question 2: All of the above! A Grizzly Bear can put on as much as 400 pounds to prepare for its winter sleep. This omnivore will eat just about anything in its quest to fatten up for the lean times. Grizzlies eat not just large mammals (elk, moose, deer) and fish, they'll eat roots, plant sprouts, berries, mushrooms, and any smaller critters, including insects, that come their way.

Question 3: The answer is the Red Squirrel. These gregarious creatures are active year-round, although they may hole up for a few days in inclement weather. The Red Squirrel's relatives the Eastern Chipmunk and White-tailed Prairie Dog are true hibernators, meaning they enter a state of dormancy during the winter in which body temperature drops to only a few degrees above air temperature, and all bodily processes greatly slow down. The hibernating animal thus conserves energy and stored fat, and is able to sleep through much of the winter.

Bears enter a protected area and sleep away the harshest part of the winter, but they do not truly hibernate, as their sleep is not deep, and their temperature falls only a few degrees below normal. Even Polar Bears retire to a den for part of the winter. Females den from November to March, during which time they give birth, while males usually den from late November to late January.

Question 4: The answer is the Grizzly Bear, which ranges in color from tawny to dark brown but is never white (except

in the case of a rare albino individual). Arctic Foxes and Least Weasels vary seasonally, growing a white coat for winter camouflage (in northern populations). The Gray Wolf is a species that varies individually, ranging from white to black and any shade in between. Most Eastern Gray Squirrels are gray, but there are populations of white gray squirrels in several areas, with the largest concentration found in Olney, Illinois. And rarest of all of these white mammals are the cream-colored Black Bears that live in the coastal rain forests of British Columbia. These bears belong to a subspecies of Black Bear officially named the Kermode Bear but often referred to as the Spirit Bear.

Question 5: If you guessed all of the above you are right! At least some individuals of all of these species relocate seasonally. Even though Manatees live only in the South, they head for warmer water in the winter, some migrating tens to hundreds of miles and others merely congregating around the heated discharge from power plants. The Caribou of Alaska and Canada famously go on long mass migrations between winter and summer grounds. The Bison of the Great Plains once undertook mass migrations by the millions and ranged nearly from coast to coast. Few of the populations left are free-ranging, but some Canadian Bison still migrate about 150 miles between winter and summer grounds.

The Snow Goose is named for its white color rather than its love of snow; it summers in the Arctic but heads to the coastal United States and southward for the winter. The Snowy Owl, on the other hand, can and does survive the winter in our most northerly climes. In some years, however, if the owl's prey species (mainly lemmings) decline in population, large numbers of Snowy Owls will move into regions south of their normal range; this kind of migration is called an irruption or invasion.

Question 6: The Polar Bear, with its warm coat to keep it warm, is the sveltest member of this group, reaching only about 1,100 pounds. A Grizzly Bear

can weigh as much as 1,700 pounds. The largest Grizzlies are those of the southern Alaska coast and islands that are known as Alaskan Brown Bears. A Walrus can weigh nearly twice as much, topping out at 3,300 pounds. It lives in Arctic seas and needs a good solid layer of blubber to keep warm. Wisely, it spends a lot of time sunbathing on beaches or ice floes. When it does go on a prolonged dive (for up to 30 minutes) its blood flow decreases to the skin, thus conserving body heat, and increases to its vital internal organs.

The record holder among these four creatures is the Northern Elephant Seal: A male can reach 4,400 pounds! He doesn't stay that hefty, however: this seal can lose 50 percent of its weight during the mating season, when it is too busy to eat, and also fasts during the molt, when it grows a new coat. This Pacific Coast species does not live in waters as cold as the Walrus, but it spends more time in the water. It can stay underwater for nearly an hour and a half, pop up for a few minutes and dive again, so clearly it needs insulating blubber to help retain body heat.

Question 7: Lemmings are an important food source for the Arctic Fox. These small rodents undergo cyclical variations in population, increasing in number enormously when food is plentiful, then decreasing when the population outgrows the food supply. Arctic Fox populations follow these cycles, usually peaking a year after the lemmings. There is a similar relationship between the Lynx and the Snowshoe Hare, which makes up three-quarters of the Lynx's diet.

Northern River Otters mainly eat fish, and Minks fish too but their preferred prey in many areas is muskrat. Polar Bears stalk seals mainly, but also eat young Walruses, whales, fish, birds, eggs, shellfish, kelp ... whatever they can find. Walruses like clams and other mollusks so much that they can eat 3,000 to 6,000 in a single feeding. Northern Elephant Seals eat enormous quantities of squid (and they eat fish, too).

# How Do Birds Survive the Winter Chill?

With cold weather in full swing, many of our wildlife have made themselves scarce, waiting for warmer days to make their reappearance. One type of creature you can probably still catch sight of, however, is a bird! While some birds are migratory, skipping town to avoid the cold weather, others are with us all winter long. You might have some bird houses in your yard, but they probably don't come with heat—so how do these animals keep warm through the season?

One strategy is to put on layers. Instead of donning a sweater, some species of birds such as geese and grouse, grow a layer of down or an extra layer of soft and fluffy feathers that help insulate the birds' bodies. Other species of birds become eating machines in an effort to pack on the fat, with some consuming as much as 60% of their body weight in food each day. In addition to adding another layer of insulation, this fat also fuels nighttime muscle movement... otherwise known as shivering! If you've ever paced at the bus stop on a chilly morning to keep warm, you know how helpful some physical exertion can be in fending off the cold. For birds, the same principle applies to shivering; by maintaining muscle contractions in the cold, dark nights, the birds can stay warm until morning.

There are also some strategies employed by our feathered friends which you and I would never try, such as controlled hypothermia. Black-capped



**Black-capped chickadee, courtesy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Chickadees can let their body temperatures drop in an effort to conserve their energy and make it through the nights, going from their normal 107.6°F to 80.6°F — that would be like one of us going from a healthy 98.6°F down to 74°F when it's time for bed!

**Tip:** Give feathered friends a hand this winter by adding food and water sources to your yard, then sit back and enjoy some winter birdwatching. Provid-

ing a variety of feeders and foods will attract different species of birds – try suet, cracked corn, seeds and nuts. Once a few birds find your feast, others will likely follow. Providing a water source will also attract birds. Use a heated bird bath or place a bath in a sunny area where it's less likely to freeze over. Don't forget to clean feeders and baths regularly to prevent spreading disease, and remove old, wet seed that can breed bacteria.

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## LOVE

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in Texas, gorgeous Zebra Heliconians and Gulf Fritillaries in Florida, Spring Azures and Long-tailed Skippers in the other Gulf States, and dainty Desert Marbles and Desert Orangetips in the Southwest. Wherever and whenever you see butterflies flying, even in February, you can rest assured that half of them are males on the lookout for lepidopteran love.

### **As Are Toad, Frogs And Salamanders**

As for amphibians, their amorous inspiration comes in the form of a nice February rain. And when the rain falls, the amphibians emerge from their hibernation

and march straight to breeding pools. Pond frogs, treefrogs, toads, and salamanders of all kinds take to the mating trail in February in the southern parts of the United States. The male frogs are at their vociferous best in their choruses to attract mates, while male salamanders vie for partners, too, though without the audible fanfare.

### **And Love Can Even Be Found Underwater**

Even fish feel frisky these days, especially the Rainbow Trout in the Smokies and the Largemouth Bass in Texas. The same is true for animals in saltier waters: Humpback Whales, Northern Right Whales, Gray Seals, and Northern Elephant Seals have love on their marine-mammal minds, while far to the north in

the pitch-black darkness of the Arctic winter Walruses have a gleam in their eyes.

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## ANTLERS

*Continued from Page 18*

– the more “eyes” the better for this task.

While searching for these “discarded bones,” make sure to always be on the lookout for rub lines, scrapes, trails and other sign as you walk through their territory. These key pieces of information can make you a more knowledgeable hunter and help you bag the buck that carried the antler the following fall.



# How to enjoy Owls in winter (or anytime)

**By Dani Tinker**  
Wildlife Promise

Owls have been in the spotlight recently, from the DC snowy owl to the Colbert Report. They are incredible and elusive creatures. Here are some ways you can experience and learn about owls first-hand this winter.

### **Go on an owl walk, or “owling.”**

Winter is actually a great time to search for owls (as long as it's not too cold). Most trees are without leaves, which makes it easier to see an owl's silhouette. Dawn and dusk are good times to go, since there is a bit of light and the owls are more active (depending on the species and location).

### **Learn common owl calls.**

Even if you can't see an owl, chances are you'll hear them. Try to learn the different calls of North American owls and match them to the ones you hear.

### **Build an owl nesting box.**

Welcome owls to your backyard with a nest box. Many owl species need to find a suitable nesting cavity in order to survive in an area. To make the nesting box safer and more suitable for owls, consider the following (adapted from our owl activity guide).

- Wood is the best building material. Avoid using metal as it gets too hot when exposed to the sun.
- Find out which owls live in your area and build the appropriate box.
- Pay special attention to the size & height of the entrance hole, drainage for the bottom of the box, and ventilation.
- Place the box where there is no danger of cats or other predators, and consider a tin guard for extra protection.
- Don't disturb the nest while the birds are in it.
- Clean it out annually, when the birds are no longer occupying the box.
- Provide a layer of nesting material (wood shavings, for example).
- Make sure the box is at least 10 feet off the ground — 15-30 feet is ideal.
- Attach the box to a tree, building or post.

### **Visit a local nature or wildlife rehabilitation center.**

Many wildlife rehabilitation centers have educational birds that were rescued, but wouldn't survive in the wild. Resi-



**Barn owl photographed in Utah by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Jay Warburton.**



**National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant, Paul Bennett, put up a screech owl nest box on a pine tree just outside his bathroom window. These are a few of the visitors.**

dent educational birds are a fantastic way to experience owls up-close. I met Hazel at the Audubon Wildlife Care Center in Portland. I was also lucky enough to watch Julio (a female great horned owl) hoot! Nature centers often offer guided owl hikes or similar programs, browse some of your local nature sites to learn more.

### **Read a book or watch a movie.**

The snowy owl buzz has thrown Hedwig into the spotlight for Harry Potter fans, but there are other owl characters to enjoy. Who could forget Owl from Winnie the Pooh? And the movie Legend of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'Hoole is a filled with owls. Check out this list of other fictional owl characters to enjoy when it's cold and you'd rather curl up with a book or movie.

### **Watch a live owl cam.**



**Elaine Turner, a National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant, saw this great horned owl at sunset in her front yard.**



**Snowy owl, like Hedwig, from National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Kim Leblanc.**



**These young burrowing owls are very entertaining to watch, according to National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Milos Tomajko. They come out of their nest and spend a lot of time stretching and yawning.**

I've been watching this live feed of burrowing owls in Florida. There are great horned owl cams from both the International Owl Center and Explore, as well as countless other live feeds. You can even set up a camera on your own owl box.

# Reindeer populations are disappearing worldwide



**By Kelly Dickerson**  
Beta livescience

Reindeer populations are in trouble around the world, and in China, the iconic animals are on the decline largely because of inbreeding, according to new research.

Some folklorists say Christmas tales of flying reindeer may have originated as a hallucination, with one theory claiming the inspiration for Santa Claus came from shamans who would give out bags of hallucinatory mushrooms in late December in the Siberian and Arctic regions. But, nonflying reindeer are very real and an important part of northern ecosystems.

Reindeer populations currently live in Finland, Sweden, Norway, Canada, Alaska, Russia, Mongolia and China, and populations across the board are declining. In the new study, researchers from Renmin University in Beijing focused on the reindeer population in China, which has declined about 28 percent since the 1970s.

Reindeer first migrated to China from Siberia about 2,000 years ago along with the Ewenki tribe, according to the researchers. The Ewenki people are reindeer herders, and they have a similar relationship with reindeer as Native Americans had with buffalo. The Ewenki do not fully domesticate the reindeer, but provide the herd with basics like salt, and use the animals for their meat, hides and milk.

The researchers determined how many reindeer were left in China (about 770) by interviewing the Ewenki herders and looking through old population records. The Ewenki often tie colored ribbons around the reindeer's necks to help differentiate the animals.

The researchers pointed to several reasons reindeer populations are decreasing, but the number one cause they found was inbreeding. Reindeer are split up into small, shrinking groups and have very few mating options. Without more genetic variation, the populations will eventually collapse, the researchers said. Poaching is also a problem, since rein-

deer antlers can fetch a pretty price. Both male and female reindeer have antlers, so snares set up to catch reindeer do not target a specific sex.

Further, more and more of the reindeer's historic caretakers are opting for different careers. Ewenki herders are usually young men, and many have trouble adjusting to the isolation of the forest-covered mountains where the animals live. As of 2012, there were only 33 reindeer herders left in China. The lack of herders means that reindeer that get lost from the group usually stay lost, and those caught in poaching traps are generally not rescued.

Moving the herds closer to civilization may make more Ewenki people willing to sign up as herders, but when moved closer to cities, reindeer are often hit by cars, kept as pets or slaughtered for tourists.

The Chinese government is starting to address the problem. In 2012, they brought in 29 reindeer to participate in an artificial insemination program designed to work against inbreeding and reverse the loss of genetic variation.

The researchers suggest the Chinese government should also set up natural reserves or parks to preserve the species. In addition, the scientists are urging world leaders to pay more attention to the Association of World Reindeer Herders, which spans several northern countries and represents more than 20 different ethnic groups.

Reindeer are currently listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's threatened species list under the "least concern" category. But the researchers say this classification, which is based on a 2008 survey of the population, needs updating.

Strengthening the declining population could also boost the health of ecosystems and enhance local economies, the researchers said.

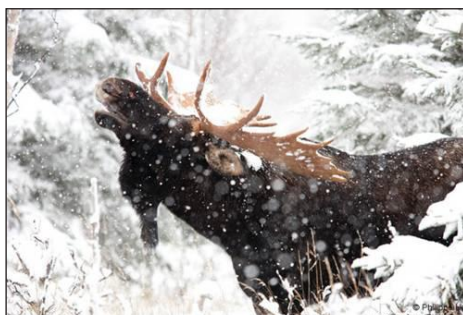
The findings were published in the December 2014 issue of the *Journal for Nature Conservation*.



# These animals don't care that it's freezing outside



**Great Gray Owl.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Robert Palmer.



**Moose.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Philippe Henry



**Deer.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Jeanette Tasey



**Grizzly Bear.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Steve McMorran



**Bison.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Mark Ditmer



**Squirrel.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Kelly Lyon

**By Dani Tinker**  
From Wildlife Promise

I was the first one to bust out my puffy jacket, gloves and hat to stay warm. I don't like coffee, but I offer to hold other people's drinks to warm my hands. I nuzzle my nose in my scarf. Similarly, the animals below have creative strategies to cope with the cold weather and are seemingly unaffected by the snow and ice. Bundle up & enjoy!

### Great Gray Owl

Impeccable hearing to locate prey, feathered snow pants to stay warm, and talons to break through ice are just a few characteristics that help great gray owls hunt effectively in the snow. Just watch this great gray owl in action. Snow doesn't seem to be an issue.

### Grizzly Bear

Grizzly bears hibernate during the winter months, but they don't miss out on all the snow. Grizzlies can be quite active as they forage and prepare for



**Mallard.** Photo by National Wildlife Photo Contest entrant Jennifer Warner

winter. They can sense when it's time to enter their winter den based on the cold temperatures or snow conditions.

### Moose

Insulating fur allows moose to survive very cold conditions. Although their long legs can navigate through snow depths of up to 36 inches, they prefer to hang out in the forest where there is greater cover.



**Cascade red fox at Mt. Rainier National Park.**

### Bison

These gigantic creatures have superb insulation. Bison have "thick skin and underfur, long guard hairs, and layers of fat," according to Yellowstone National Park. Try to look at one and not feel cozy.

### Mallard

I have poor circulation, which means my feet are always freezing. I see mal-

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# Which hawks just can't resist a crowded birdfeeder?

By eNature

It's a distressing but all too common sight on winter days and we often hear from our readers who have witnessed it....

This is the time of the year to see hawks attacking and eating birds at bird feeders.

The typical scenario is a flock of songbirds quietly eating at feeders, when all of a sudden, a hawk swoops in and panics the birds into flight. A talented hawk may capture one of the songbirds in its talons, and then fly to a nearby tree to eat its prey.

Some hawks learn that even if they miss on the first pass, a bird may fly into a window in panic, and make an easy prey on the hawk's second pass.

Many people are shocked at the sight of a hawk eating a songbird. Yet, it is all part of the balance of nature. Hawks have to eat, too, and a bird feeder is the perfect place to find their food.

There are two species of hawks responsible for most of the predation on feeder birds: the Cooper's hawk and the slightly smaller Sharp-shinned hawk.

Except for size, they are almost identical in appearance. The larger Cooper's has a slightly rounded tail, while the sharpie has a square tail. Both have long tails and short wings for pursuing small birds through trees and bushes.

Both species are found throughout most of the continental United States, although the Cooper's is probably the most commonly encountered. The Sharp-shinned hawk's range extends high into northern boreal forests of Canada while the Cooper's tends to stay in the lower latitudes.

As with all hawks, these two are protected by state and federal laws, and

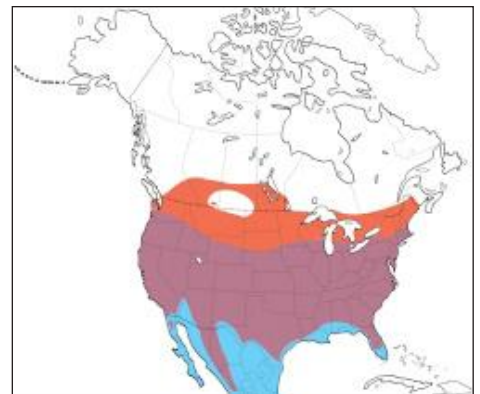


**Cooper's Hawk with prey**

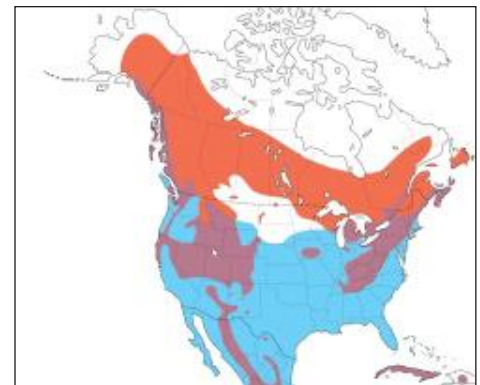


**Sharp-shinned Hawk**

cannot be harmed or harassed.



**Range of Cooper's Hawk in North America**



**Range of Sharp-shinned Hawk**

So, the solution is to live with them, as we live with other bird feeder problems, such as gluttonous squirrels and bully European starlings. It's just a slice of life in the backyard habitat.

Have you had a hawk visit your feeder? We always enjoy hearing your stories about your encounters with the wild.

## WINTER

*Continued from Page 26*

lards swimming and waddling around in snow and can't help but wonder how their feet aren't icicles. The answer lies within their unique heat-exchange system, called counter-current circulation. Arteries carrying warm blood from the heart are interwoven with veins carrying cold blood from the feet. The netlike pattern allows blood flowing to the body to

be warmed, and blood flowing to the feet to be cooled.

### Deer

These two deer are oblivious to the fact that it is frigid. Probably because their winter coat keeps them warm, even when it's -30 degrees Fahrenheit outside! Each hair on a deer's winter coat is hollow, trapping air that helps them retain heat. Quilts, window panes and house insulation all utilize air pockets in similar ways.

### Squirrel

This time of year, squirrels look a little bulky. They increase their body mass as one way to stay warm during the winter.

### Red Fox

One of my favorite videos is of a red fox, diving head first into the snow to capture prey. Impressive. Take a look at some incredible fox photos we've collected from our Facebook community.

**Kansas Wildlife Federation**  
**P.O. Box 771282**  
**Wichita, KS 67277-1282**

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### *Conservation of the state's natural resources means . . .*

- Public awareness of our state's wonderfully diverse advantages and a determination to keep and improve them for wise use now and in future years.
- Proper safeguards—within the bounds of wise use—for the state's soil, water, forests and wildlife, to assure proper balance, use and advancement of our state's entire economy!

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