

## *The Voice of Outdoor Kansas*

**September-  
October 2014**

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

## **New report finds that wetland and grassland destruction is common**

**By Fred Hoefner  
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**

On Tuesday, July 21, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a new report on the status of wetland and grassland loss in the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of the upper Midwest and Plains States.

### ***Wetlands***

The report finds that between 1997 and 2009, net wetland acreage declined by roughly 6,200 acres per year. Emergent wetlands (those with exposed, up-right vegetation) and shrub wetlands declined by an estimated 95,340 acres and 46,080 acres, respectively, over the 12-year period. In contrast, forested wetland acres increased by 61,280 acres.

According to the report:

Emergent wetlands lost to upland land uses (agriculture and development) between 1997 and 2009 accounted for 39 percent of all losses. Small-sized farmed and temporary wetlands experienced substantial losses. Farmed wetlands were very vulnerable to drainage for agricultural crop production because they were usually small, in close proximity to existing farm field operations and could be easily drained, usually without penalty under existing regulations. Temporarily flooded and farmed wetland basins were lost to agriculture even during periods of abnormally high water conditions.

As with the destruction of natural wetlands, wetland restoration is also very common in the Prairie Pothole Region. According to the report, "Between 1997 and 2009, an estimated 87,690 acres (35,500 ha) of emergent wetland was restored from agricultural lands. These restored wetlands averaged 5.8 acres (2.4 ha) and were seasonally or semi-permanently flooded areas." Unfortunately, however,

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



# KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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# President's Message

## By Troy Schroeder

Although still a subject of interest for me, I will not talk about pollinators again this issue. Instead, on the 100th anniversary of the extinction of the passenger pigeon, I will focus on endangered species.

It was on September 1, 1914 that the last passenger pigeon, Martha, died in the Cincinnati zoo, making the species extinct. The interesting thing about this extinction is that this bird was not isolated to a small remote area with specialized habitat, but was perhaps the most abundant bird in North America when white man arrived. Numbers were estimated to be in the billions. These birds were nomadic and traveled in huge flocks. A single flock was estimated to be a mile wide and 300 miles long. Audubon, in 1813 noted that the birds passed overhead for 3 days, at times blocking the sun.

So, what caused the extinction of the passenger pigeon? Most agree that it was mostly the destruction of native habitat (mast producing forests) as they were converted to agriculture along with unregulated commercial killing for meat and feathers. Ohio, originally 95% forest was reduced to 10% by 1900. Climate extremes made the loss of habitat more destructive. Loss of habitat also concentrated the birds in areas that could be more easily hunted.

Due to the destruction of their native habitat containing nuts and fruits, the birds did great damage to agricultural crops in an effort to survive. Thus many farmers were not sorry to see the birds go. It is unknown what if anything could have been done to save the passenger pigeon.

Of course we have many species that are in danger of extinction today. Most notable is the whooping crane whose numbers fell to 15 individuals in the 1940's. Although still critically endangered, efforts have resulted in increasing the wild migratory flock to over 400 birds along with some 160 or so captive birds. Whooping cranes fly through Kansas each year on their migration and often stop near Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivira Wildlife Refuge. They are an awesome sight if you happen to be lucky enough to get a glimpse of one.

Another example is the lesser prairie-chicken. Once abundant and an im-



portant part of settling the prairie, their numbers have been reduced dramatically. Similar to the passenger pigeon, their native habitat has been greatly reduced by converting the prairie in western Kansas and nearby states to farmland after the invention of center-pivot irrigation. Now the habitat threat continues in the form of energy development, oil, gas and wind and maybe even some additional conversion of native grass to farmland. More extremes in climate have a dramatic effect on the bird numbers. Chickens in Kansas were doing fairly well, increasing in number and range occupied, but after a couple years of extreme drought, chicken numbers were reduced by over 50%.

Fortunately we have the Endangered Species Act to protect species in trouble today. Some conflict usually comes with a listing which may restrict destruction of habitat in the interest of economic development. The lesser prairie-chicken was listed as threatened under the Act earlier this year. However there is a move to get this ruling overturned by agriculture, local government and energy producing groups and legislation is being proposed to do this at the national level.

The example of the passenger pigeon should be a reminder that we need to provide protection to species through the endangered species Act. Some species are not as obvious as whooping cranes or lesser prairie-chickens. They may be small fish or snakes that are rarely seen. However the welfare of all species should give us a clue to the condition of our environment and ultimately our own ability to survive.

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

- Sept 5-6** Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply Wildlife Appreciation Days, Emporia  
**Sept 13** 12th Annual Justin Corbet Memorial Shoot, [www.justincorbetfoundation.com](http://www.justincorbetfoundation.com)  
**Sept 13** Tuttle Creek Lake Fall Wildflower Walk RL CO 785-539-8511  
**Sept 13** Prairie Appreciation Day Jackson Co. [Kim Bellemere](http://www.kimbellemere.com) 785-840-8104  
**Sept 13-14** NWTf Kansas State Jakes Camp, White Memorial Camp Gib Rhoades 620-437-2012  
**Sept 19-21** Kansas Native Plant Society's 36th Annual Wildflower Weekend, Pratt [2014 AWW](http://www.2014AWW.org)  
**Sept 20** Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Rock Springs 4-H Ranch, Junction City  
**Sept 20** Allegawaho Park Prairie Walk, Council Grove [Glenn Fell](http://www.glennfell.com) 620-794-8478  
**Sept 25** Invasive Plant Thugs, Paola [Lenora Larson](http://www.lenoralarson.com) 913-284-3360  
**Sept 27** Ralph Cramm Memorial Family Fishing Day, Rose Hill [info@kswildlife.org](mailto:info@kswildlife.org)  
**Sept 27** Beau Arndt Outdoor Appreciation Day, Emporia  
**Oct 4** Kids Shooting Camp Geary County Fish & Game Assoc. Mike Johnson 620-669-7066  
**Oct 4** QUWF Jayhawk Chapter Banquet, Holidome, Lawrence John Hill 785-847-9555  
**Oct 4** Protect & Serve your Over-wintering Wildlife Miami Co. [Lenora Larson](http://www.lenoralarson.com) 913-284-3360  
**Oct 10-12** Camp Mary Dell junior shooting camp, Abilene [www.ksaweb.net](http://www.ksaweb.net)  
**Oct 16** KWPTC Commission Meeting, Martinelli's Restaurant, Salina  
**Oct 29-30** NWTf Forestry Workshop for Resource Professionals, Council Grove 785-396-4552  
**Nov 7-8** Kansas Rural Center 2014 Farm & Food Conference, Manhattan  
**Nov 7-9** Kansas Herpetological Society annual meeting, KSU, Manhattan  
**Nov 12-13** Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas, Manhattan  
  
**2015**  
**Mar 7-8** 6th Kansas Hunting & Fishing Expo, Emporia 620-342-4631  
**June 6** 11th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament, Scott Waters, 785-545-3345  
**June 13** 6th Justin Corbet Foundation "Youth in the Outdoors Day" 785-256-6444

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

## U.S.F.W.S. bans GMOs and neonicotinoid insecticides

In support of their mission to conserve wildlife, Jim Kurth, Chief of the Refuge System, has boldly made the decision to ban genetically modified crops and neonicotinoid insecticides from being used on national wildlife refuges across the country. This decision was based purely on what is best for wildlife management and the National Wildlife Refuge System's Policy on Biological Integrity.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will begin to phase out the use of genetically modified crops to feed wildlife. By January 2016, the agency will ban the use of neonicotinoids, widely used nerve poisons that a growing number of scientific studies have shown are harmful to bees, birds, mammals, and fish. Neonicotinoids, also called neonics, can be sprayed on crops, but most often the seeds are coated with the pesticide so that the poison spreads throughout every

part of the plant as it grows, including the pollen and nectar that pollinators such as bees and butterflies eat.

The nationwide ban, however, goes further, as it also prohibits the use of genetically modified seeds to grow crops to feed wildlife.

In a memorandum released July 17, 2014, Kurth states that "We do not use genetically modified organisms in refuge management unless we determine their use is essential to accomplishing refuge purpose(s)," he wrote. "We have demonstrated our ability to successfully accomplish refuge purposes over the past two years without using genetically modified crops, therefore it is no longer [necessary] to say their use is essential to meet wildlife management objectives."

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##### 2015 NWF Alternate

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Junction City, KS

**Kansas Wildlife Officers  
Association**  
Iola, KS

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



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

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# 2014 Conservation Achievement Program Awards

You know someone who has volunteered countless hours towards a particular wildlife project or someone who has devoted themselves beyond normal expectations for conservation. It is important for conservationist to give credit to those who deserve it. It demonstrates that we hold these activities in high regard and gives some appreciated recognition to folks who work very hard for something they love. Do your part and consider those you work with or know who have performed beyond the call of duty, someone who deserves to be recognized for their contributions to Kansas' wildlife. Let's not let them go unrecognized for their dedication and sacrifices.

Please make an effort to identify folks who have made special efforts for wildlife in 2014. Those who have received Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards in the past can attest to the pride

they felt in being bestowed such a noteworthy recognition. Do your part and make certain we recognize those most deserving at the CAP banquet in February, 2015.

To nominate someone simply e-mail a nomination of 400-500 words (more or less) to [drkidd@gmail.com](mailto:drkidd@gmail.com). Make sure you put full contact information for yourself and the nominee, including mailing and e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Do it now! E-mail me if you'd like a cyber copy of the form. Thanks for your help with this very noteworthy program for wildlife conservation in Kansas. **Get your nominations to us by December 1.**

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## Kansas has record year for hunting safety

### Six reported hunting incidents in 2013 marks lowest number since records have been kept

Kansas has a lot to offer hunters. Abundant wildlife, a multitude of hunting opportunities, and diverse landscapes are just a few of the things that make Kansas truly a hunter's paradise. And while it's always been a safe place to hunt, it's a safer-than-ever place to hunt, now, according to the 2013 Kansas Hunter Education Hunting Incident Report. A total of six reported hunting incidents took place last year, the lowest number of incidents reported since the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) began keeping record over 50 years ago. Luckily, none of these incidents resulted in fatalities, but all incidents can be prevented if basic gun safety rules are followed. Hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities when you consider the low number of incidents compared to the millions of hunter days recorded by Kansas hunters each fall. However, even veteran hunters must keep safe gun handling first.

#### RULES OF GUN SAFETY

- ◆ Treat every firearm as if it's loaded.
- ◆ Never point your firearm at anything you don't want to shoot.

◆ Keep the safety on until right before you shoot.

◆ Know your target and what lies beyond it.

◆ Never put your finger on the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

Rules of gun safety are just one of many lessons taught during Hunter Education courses in Kansas, and the program is a big reason hunting-related incidents in the state are at an all-time low. Since 1973, more than 500,000 students have completed the Kansas Hunter Education course.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in taking a Hunter Education course and continuing good hunting practices, visit [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com) and click "Services/Education/Hunter" for more information.

Kansas Hunter Education courses are conducted solely by volunteer instructors who graciously offer their time and expertise at no cost to KDWPT. Courses can be found through the KDWPT website listed above, however students should keep in mind that classes offered are based on instructor availability.

# Official entry form

## 2014 Kansas Wildlife Federation

### Conservation Achievement Program Awards

The Kansas Wildlife Federation CAP awards recognize outstanding accomplishments in Kansas's conservation. Nominations should be made for efforts worthy of state recognition. The accomplishment should reflect a long-time commitment to natural resources in Kansas with a significant effort during the past year. Awards are presented in 13 categories to capture the wide range of efforts that benefit wildlife and the cause of conservation. Past year's winners are not eligible for nomination in the same category for 3 years. Current KWF officers are not eligible.

• **Wildlife Conservationist.** For outstanding achievement in fish or wildlife resource management. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in management, restoration, or research of habitats or wildlife species.

• **Water Conservationist.** For outstanding achievement in water pollution control, conservation, and protection of rivers and wetlands, prevention of degradation of water quality through effective planning and management or other activity aimed at maintaining or improving water standards.

• **Land and Soil Conservation.** For outstanding achievement in watershed protection, wetlands development, ero-

sion control, habitat improvement or other management practices that improve land so as to benefit wildlife.

• **Conservation Education.** For outstanding achievement in educating others in conservation. The process may be formal or informal. The nominations may be for leadership, which by example of demonstration, aids in the environmental/wildlife education of others.

• **Forest Conservation.** For outstanding achievement in forest and woodlands management, including reforestation, preservation of wilderness areas and wildlife habitat development.

• **Conservation Communicator.** For outstanding conservation achievement in effectively conveying the conservation message and creating public awareness of conservation issues in the news and other media.

• **Youth Conservationist.** For outstanding conservation efforts for someone under 21 during the contest year. Winners should have demonstrated ability and accomplishment in some phase of conservation. Youth groups are eligible as well.

• **Conservation Organization.** For outstanding achievement by an organization for work in some phase of conservation during the contest period. May include

civic clubs, conservation groups, garden clubs, sportsman's clubs, businesses, professional organizations and others.

• **Stream Team or Stream Monitor.** For outstanding efforts by a group of citizen volunteers or individual in monitoring and contributing to the protection of our state's waterways. Nominees should have demonstrated leadership in stream monitoring, protection and educational efforts.

• **Conservation Legislator.** For outstanding achievement by a legislator in conservation legislation that took place in or culminated in the contest year. Competition is open to state or federal legislators and their staff members.

• **Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist.** This award is to recognize special efforts of a farmer and/or rancher who has made extra efforts towards conserving wildlife.

• **Outdoor Skills Instructor.** This award recognizes wildlife, nature, shooting, and outdoor instructors for their superior involvement in educating others.

• **Conservationist of the Year.** The Conservationist of the Year will be selected from all the nominations submitted in all categories. This award will be based on exemplary service to Kansas's fish, wildlife and environmental conservation efforts.

#### CAP Nomination Form

To make a nomination, send this form with attached write up to Randy Kidd, CAP Chairman, [drrkidd@gmail.com](mailto:drrkidd@gmail.com). Nominating write-ups should be approximately 400-500 words, and should list the accomplishments of the nominee, especially those accomplishments during the contest period (2014). The Deadline for nominations is December 1, 2014. Any questions, contact: Randy Kidd [drrkidd@gmail.com](mailto:drrkidd@gmail.com) or 785-863-3425.

Name of nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_ eMail(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Award Category \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify one of the categories, above)

Nominator's name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_ eMail(s) \_\_\_\_\_

# Affiliate News

## Geary County Fish and Game Association

The Geary County Fish and Game Association (GCF&GA) hosted its 12th annual all-day "Women on Target" event the 12th of July. The event was held at Sportsmen's Acres at the south end of Milford Lake in Geary County.

A total of 44 women attended from all over Kansas, in addition to one from California and two each from Oklahoma and Nebraska. Due to the efforts of Sharri Henderson approximately 20 came from the Lawrence area.

All enjoyed shooting trap, pistol, small caliber rifle, muzzleloader and archery. They were assisted by 15 Hunter Education Instructors plus 20 other volunteers. Also "Refuse to be a victim" was part of the event. Mrs. Shirley Allen chaired the event again this year, which she has done wonderfully for 11 of the 16 years that the NRA program has been presented.

Evaluations of the day's events that the ladies turned in were all very positive and "a good time was had by all." Funding for the program comes from Friends of the NRA Foundation and Pheasants Forever. Based on the evaluations provided, a more advanced shooting class is being considered for next spring.

The great participation in this event is part of the growing trend of women in shooting events. After all: "A girl with a gun has more fun!!"

## July Meeting Program

At the July membership meeting of the GCF&GA Chase Ahlers shared his experience at KWF's Outdoor Adventure Camp. He was awarded a scholarship by the club to attend the camp which is sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife Federation. It was held at the WaShunGa area of Rock Springs Ranch the first week of June. Chase talked about the fun he had participating in fishing, shooting, archery, wildlife management, fishery management, stream studies, canoeing, swimming, as well as nocturnal animal searches and a field trip to the Milford Nature Center. He shared that he had a great time and thanked the club for allowing him to attend.

## Two Kids Events Scheduled

The Geary County Fish and Game Association is offering two events for youngsters interested in Hunting:

The first will be a Kids Shooting Camp on October 4th. This event will focus on learning hunting and shooting skills necessary to be a safe and successful hunter. Contact Mike Johnson, 785-482-3416 or mbark@tctelco.net for information or an application. There are a limited number of spaces available.

The second is a Youth Pheasant Hunt on October 18th. Shooting skills will be emphasized and those attending will hunt live pheasants. Contact Billy Ahlers 785-238-8163 for an application.

Attendees must be 11 years or older and must have a Hunter Education certificate to participate in either events.

These events are funded by Friends of the NRA Foundation, Pheasants Forever and the Kansas State Rifle Association Foundation.

The location for both events is at Sportsmen's Acres, located at the south end of Milford Lake in Geary County.

## Becky Keating Benefit Trap Shoot

Becky Keating lives in the Junction City area and is currently battling Cystic Fibrosis. Her lungs are only operation at 19% efficiency. The funds raised from this shoot will go to support Becky and her family while she awaits a double lung transplant.

The trap shoot will be held Saturday, October 11 from 9am to 3pm at the Geary County Fish and Game Association trap range at Sportsmen's Acres on K-244 Spur south of Milford Dam. Cost is \$25 per round, with no limit on the number of rounds each participant can shoot.

Everyone will shoot from the 19 yard line. Cash prizes will be given to the Top 3 scores. Lunch will be served.

If you do not want to shoot trap but want to donation to the cause, make checks payable to: Blessings for Becky P.O. Box 1281 Junction City, KS 66441.

For any questions call Sportsmen's Acreage 785-238-TRAP (8727) or Shirley at 785-238-7305.

# Ralph Cramm Memorial Family Fishing Day

September 27th in Rose Hill

Ralph Cramm passed away April 14th, 2014. Ralph's kindness and generosity was known to many. He was a natural salesman; he never met a stranger. Ralph was an avid outdoorsman all of his life and excelled at hunting and fishing. He had a daily hunting and fishing program on KLEO and later KFDI radio for decades.

In memory of Ralph the Kansas Wildlife Federation will host a Family Fishing Day, Saturday, September 27. The event will run from 10am to 2 pm at the School

Street Pond at the intersection of School Street and Strode Avenue in Rose Hill, KS.

Join us for this fun family fishing day as a way to introduce youth and parents to the opportunities of fishing in Kansas. Instructions will be offered to first time anglers, young and old, by experts from the Kansas Wildlife Federation and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. Equipment will be supplied or you may bring your own.

Registered participants, regardless of

age, are not required to possess a fishing license for this event. Lunch will be provided free of charge to those who pre-register by September 25.

Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

**Participants must register!** Send the names and contact information of the people planning to attend to [info@kswildlife.org](mailto:info@kswildlife.org).

If you have any questions, call 316-214-3001.



# KWF sends heartfelt sympathies

The Kansas Wildlife Federation is saddened to hear that Gary Fuller, the father of Logan Fuller, was killed in a freak accident north of Emporia recently. Kenny Fuller, Logan's grandfather, was also hurt in the accident. A lightning strike caught a tree on fire north of their

residence. Gary and Kenny went to the tree to put out a grass fire under the tree when a large branch fell at least 30 feet. The tree was apparently on fire from the inside. A gust of wind caught the branch and it hit both men. Kenny Fuller was not seriously hurt in the accident.

Logan Fuller was presented the 2013 Youth Conservationist of the Year award at the 2014 KWF Conservation Achievement Program banquet in Salina last February.

Please keep Logan and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

## REPORT

*Continued from Page 1*

"the results of these wetland restoration efforts were overshadowed by the loss of 125,400 acres (50,770 ha) of emergent wetland converted to upland agriculture."

Like emergent wetlands, temporary wetlands (those that come and go) are particularly threatened by conversion to agriculture or development. These wetlands "are a major component of the wetland ecosystem both in terms of function and area, comprising an estimated 49 percent of all remaining wetland basins in 2009, and losses of temporary and farmed wetland area approached 133,000 acres (53,700 ha) between 1997 and 2009."

### **Grassland**

The FWS report also examines grassland loss trends in the PPR. "Between 1997 and 2009, grassland area declined by an estimated 568,040 acres (229,980 ha) or 2.6 percent," the report states. "Grassland area declined by 805,000 acres (325,910 ha) in the western prairie states of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. Minnesota and Iowa gained grassland area (236,960 acres or 95,935 ha) over the period of this study. Ninety-five percent of the area lost from grassland was reclassified as agriculture."

Unfortunately, given the extent of current data collection, it is impossible to determine how many of these acres were converted from native prairie versus non-native prairie. These grassland acres are important not only for the wildlife habitat benefits they provide, but also for their "ability to directly impact [the condition and landscape function of] up to 32 percent of the remaining wetlands that were either within or directly adjacent to grassland areas." Recall that a recent report by USDA's Farm Service Agency found that in just one year (2011-2012), nearly 400,000 acres of non-cropland were broken out for crop production.

### **Policy Implications**

The new findings on wetland and grassland loss are relevant to two new Farm

Bill conservation provisions, known as "conservation compliance" and "Sodsaver," and to the Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Rule seeking to clarify the scope of the Clean Water Act.

**Conservation Compliance**—For the first time since 1996, the 2014 Farm Bill reattached basic conservation requirements to federal crop insurance premium subsidies. In return for these subsidies, farmers are now prohibited from draining or filling wetlands, and must implement a conservation plan on highly erodible land. Just this week, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA), which administers the Crop Insurance program, directed Approved Insurance Providers to amend crop insurance policies to include a conservation compliance certification requirement. By June 1, 2015, farmers will have to certify that they are in compliance with the conservation requirements in order to receive crop insurance premium subsidies. Reattaching conservation compliance to crop insurance was a top priority for NSAC during the three-year Farm Bill debate. The new rules will play an important role in reducing the rate of wetland loss in the PPR and across the country.

**Sodsaver**—In addition to conservation compliance, the 2014 Farm Bill included a "Sodsaver" provision to discourage the conversion of native grassland to crop production. The Sodsaver provision, which was another top NSAC priority during the farm bill campaign, reduces the crop insurance premium subsidy by 50 percentage points on native prairie that is tilled for the production of an annual crop in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska.

Native prairie is generally not well suited for crop production, even when tilled, and is thus considered marginal land. By reducing the risk of planting to marginal land, the crop insurance program makes it easier for farmers to justify bringing native grassland into crop production. The new Sodsaver provision will limit the extent to which taxpayers subsidize risk reduction through federal crop insurance. This was a major win for NSAC and

conservation groups during the Farm Bill debate and is critical for grassland conservation efforts in the PPR, given that, as the FWS study demonstrates, 95 percent of the grassland lost was reclassified as agriculture.

As part of the Sodsaver provision, the Farm Bill directs USDA's Farm Services Agency (FSA) to collect and report data on the change in cropland acreage in six covered states. We will be urging FSA to focus specifically on changes to native prairie acreage, given that such data are sorely lacking.

**Clean Water Act**—In April 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a Proposed Rule to clarify the jurisdictional scope of the Clean Water Act (CWA). This rule is an important step toward ensuring the protection of our nation's wetlands, streams, and other waters. The CWA is the nation's primary tool for protecting wetlands that are connected in some way to other bodies of water, such as rivers or streams, so there is no doubt that without the Act, the rate of wetland loss in the PPR would be far higher.

That said, the FWS study found that "an estimated 49 percent of the wetlands lost between 1997 and 2009 were geospatially isolated wetlands." Geospatially isolated wetlands are generally not covered by the CWA because they are not connected to other water bodies. As the report explains, "in the PPR, where the transitory nature of surface water allows even some of the deepest emergent marshes to dry sufficiently and have an established history of cropping, there are very few prairie wetlands on private lands that appear to have any federal protection status either through CWA (because they are likely to be considered 'isolated') or through other exemptions in the Farm Bill legislation (because of past cropping practices)."

Given the findings of the FWS report, we believe strongly that all three policies—Conservation Compliance, Sodsaver, and the CWA—are critical tools that work together to protect wetlands and grassland across the country.

# The Duck Stamp — Not just for hunters

American Birding Association asks birders to stand up and be counted

## From the Playa Lakes Joint Venture

If you think the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly called the Duck Stamp, is just for waterfowl hunters, think again! In June, the American Birding Association (ABA) sent out a call for birders to “stand up and be counted” by purchasing a Duck Stamp.

In an email sent out to its members, the ABA talked about its concern that the true support of birders for habitat and bird conservation is not accurately assessed.

“We use refuges, too. We are proud to support them. We want a seat at the table alongside our friends in the hunting community, because in the end, our common goals of habitat protection and healthy bird populations far outweigh the little that divides us.”

The ABA is trying to address this and get an accounting of birders—not just in numbers but in dollars and cents—by offering the 2014 Duck Stamp through their own shop. The total number of Duck Stamps purchased through the ABA should offer a more complete assessment of the total impact birders have on conservation initiatives.

So, whether you like to hunt, bird, photograph wildlife and scenery, collect stamps, or conserve habitat, PLJV is also asking you to stand up and be counted. When you buy a \$15 Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp, as much as \$14.70 goes to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which supports wetland acquisition



**The 2014-2015 Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp shows a pair of Canvasback painted by Adam Grimm.**

for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Each year, the sale of the stamp raises about \$25 million to provide critical funds to conserve and protect wetland and grassland habitats for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of people.

The Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is sold

in many post offices across the country. You can also buy a stamp at [www.duckstamp.com](http://www.duckstamp.com), through the American Birding Association, and at many National Wildlife Refuges, sporting goods and outdoor stores. Not convinced yet? Here's seven more reasons to buy a stamp today!

## A drop in the bucket

The fight for our wetlands goes on

### By Chris Madson The Land Ethic

In 2001, the U.S. Supreme Court dealt a crippling blow to the protection of America's wetlands and the wildlife these wetlands support. The court's decision in the case *SWANCC v. Army Corp of Engineers*, followed a year later by similar decisions in the *Carabel* and *Rapanos* cases, ended the Corps of Engineers' authority to protect isolated wetlands and the headwaters of streams.

On April 21, the Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a new set of rules to define “the waters of the United States.” These new rules would return some measure of protection to smaller bodies of water and watercourses, many of which



are crucial to waterfowl and a wide variety of fish. The new rules use language from the Supreme Court's *SWANCC* decision to limit federal authority—they would apply only to those wetlands that significantly affect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity

of navigable waters.

Conservation groups were satisfied with this significant compromise and had hoped that the rules would be adopted, allowing the nation to continue its effort to protect important marshlands like the prairie potholes and the upper reaches of trout and salmon streams in the Appalachians, the upper Midwest, the Rockies, and the Pacific coast. The EPA and Corps of Engineers have asked for comments from concerned citizens and organizations.

But opponents of the rules aren't waiting for the final rulemaking proposal. Organizations like the Farm Bureau Federation and the National Association of Homebuilders

*Continued on Page 10*



# KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp 2014

**By Theresa Berger**  
**OAC Camp Coordinator**

Outdoor Adventure Camp 2014 was year 26 for this Kansas Wildlife Federation sponsored event. On Sunday, June 1, 42 campers arrived at Rock Springs Camp WaShunGa for 6 days of outdoor adventure. These 10 to 12 year olds were from across the state of Kansas - from Dodge City, WaKeeney, Wichita, Topeka and even Kansas City, Missouri and Oklahoma. A little over half of the youngsters were returnees from last year's camp, some even returning for their third year.

Camp got off to a rocky start with some severe weather Sunday evening that cut short our shooting sports events, cancelled our first much-anticipated night swim, and sent us to the safety of the shelter of the dining hall. The weather cleared somewhat for the next few days and camp went on as normal. The kids enjoyed both Insect and Plant programs Monday morning, post cards and a scavenger hunt in the afternoon, then shooting sports again in the evening, followed by a late night swim.

Tuesday brought in the Reptile and Amphibian instructor from Fort Riley and the Wildlife Biologist for Reptiles and Amphibians and Wildlife Management. The kids/instructor found some snakes, including a copperhead, and a few lizards, frogs, and toads. A big snapping turtle was hauled out of the fishing hole too! A turkey gobbler, deer tracks, and several bird nests were the highlight of the Wildlife session. The youngsters saw live birds of prey in the afternoon, swam for an hour, and enjoyed a rousing cabin competition canoe race, archery tournament, and animal charades in the evening before lights out.

Wednesday is always travel day and the trip to the Milford Nature Center and Fish Hatchery came off without a hitch. The brood stripers were cooperative in taking the fish food and the raceways full of koi (glorified carp) were a hit. The kids were challenged with several games - a spider web, lava pit, and balance beam - where they had to learn to work as a team. Then they got to go spend some money at the gift shop. The afternoon was

spent learning about erosion and watersheds with the Stream Trailer and Matt Peek kept them entertained with Skins and Skulls and trapping information. The much anticipated fishing contest took place after supper and the fish cooperated well!!! We set a record with over 300 fish caught and quite a few campers winning prizes for their persistence and/or luck of the evening.

Thursday dawned with another storm looming on the horizon which blew in just after breakfast time. Wind blew tree limbs all over the camp, including a large one that did some major damage to the Pass It On trailer and two counselor vehicles. The Fish Management and Mammalogy sessions were forced inside for the morning as several inches of rain fell over camp, down pouring sideways at times. That made the creek rise and almost washed out the ever popular Stream Sampling/Ecology session. The male counselors managed to brave the swift and muddy creek to collect enough aquatic critters to salvage the session for the kids as all had a chance to handle crawdads, various minnows, aquatic insects, and tadpoles. After another afternoon swim, the Bat Man from the Milford Nature Center gave a program on bats. As dark approached, the rowdy bunch of campers headed out for an Owl Prowl - how in the world can we get these guys to quiet down? But, as the barred owl tape rolled and the bats flew overhead, a live barred owl came flying silently in and proceeded to fly from tree to tree right over the camper's heads. For nearly 30 minutes we made Owl Prowl history with an owl in sight the entire time. Then he was joined on a limb side by side by a second bird and they proceeded to call, laugh and chuckle at us until the camper's giggling got so loud the owls decided to fly on down the creek. We finished the evening with sparks from wintergreen lifesavers as we headed back to the bunks.

Each day the counselors have the duty of picking the Camper of the Day for which prizes are given. They also chose a Camper of the Week, who is someone who shines all week long. These daily and weekly awards have been a real invigorating addition to the camp experi-

ence in the past few years!!! They make parents proud too!!!! Every afternoon for 2 hours, the kids get to do two activities that include canoeing, archery, rifles, fishing, and arts and crafts.

Friday, the last day of camp is when cleanup really begins. Campers collect their gear, clothes, and whatever else they have accumulated throughout the week and haul it to the sidewalk surrounding the swimming pool. Left on the floor are an assortment of underwear, socks, t-shirts and shorts, along with a weeks' worth of candy wrappers, candy, and other trash. Counselors try to get all the clothing claimed but Camp Coordinator Theresa Berger always ends up with a sack full of unclaimed stuff that is taken home and wash up. The cabins are swept - usually by counselors (10 to 12 year old kids don't know how to sweep floors!) - and are always left better than we found them. Then we take a sweep of the outside grounds with buckets as a cabin competition to see who can come up with the most trash - we leave the camp cleaner than we found it, too.

The rest of the morning on Friday, we have Cabin Jeopardy Competition. All activities from the week are put on the board and questions challenge the youngsters to remember what they learned. This game gets pretty intense at times and tends to separate those who paid attention and those who just kind of were there. Generally, the repeat campers tend to shine in this event as they take charge of their cabin groups. We eat our final meal at noon then parents start to show up to retrieve their young'uns who either crash the first mile on the road or talk non-stop all the way home about the fun they had at camp! Gear is loaded up and all the volunteer counselors say their tearful goodbyes as they all head home dead tired but re-energized by the week's experience teaching kids about the great outdoors. Everyone is looking forward to next year's reunion with their lifelong friends!!!!

*To see photos of the 2014 OAC activities, go to the KWF website at [www.kswildlife.org](http://www.kswildlife.org) and scroll to the bottom of the home page to find a gallery of OAC photos.*

# Emerging solar plants scorch birds in mid-air

By Ellen Knickmeyer and  
John Locher  
Associated Press

Workers at a state-of-the-art solar plant in the Mojave Desert have a name for birds that fly through the plant's concentrated sun rays — "streamers," for the smoke plume that comes from birds that ignite in midair.

Federal wildlife investigators who visited the BrightSource Energy plant last year and watched as birds burned and fell, reporting an average of one "streamer" every two minutes, are urging California officials to halt the operator's application to build a still-bigger version.

The investigators want the halt until the full extent of the deaths can be assessed. Estimates per year now range from a low of about a thousand by BrightSource to 28,000 by an expert for the Center for Biological Diversity environmental group.

The deaths are "alarming. It's hard to say whether that's the location or the technology," said Garry George, renewable-energy director for the California chapter of the Audubon Society. "There needs to be some caution."

The bird kills mark the latest instance in which the quest for clean energy sometimes has inadvertent environmental harm. Solar farms have been criticized for their impacts on desert tortoises, and wind farms have killed birds, including numerous raptors.

"We take this issue very seriously," said Jeff Holland, a spokesman for NRG Solar of Carlsbad, California, the second of the three companies behind the plant. The third, Google, deferred comment to its partners.

The \$2.2 billion plant, which launched in February, is at Ivanpah Dry Lake near the California-Nevada border. The operator says it's the world's biggest plant to employ so-called power towers.

More than 300,000 mirrors, each the size



AP Photo/John Locher

**In this Aug. 13, 2014 photo, a truck drives by an array of mirrors at the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System near Primm, Nev. The site uses over 300,000 mirrors to focus sunlight on boilers' tubes atop 450 foot towers heating water into steam which in turn drives turbines to create electricity. New estimates for the plant near the California-Nevada border say thousands of birds are dying yearly, roasted by the concentrated sun rays from the mirrors.**

of a garage door, reflect solar rays onto three boiler towers each looming up to 40 stories high. The water inside is heated to produce steam, which turns turbines that generate enough electricity for 140,000 homes.

Sun rays sent up by the field of mirrors are bright enough to dazzle pilots flying in and out of Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

Federal wildlife officials said Ivanpah might act as a "mega-trap" for wildlife, with the bright light of the plant attracting insects, which in turn attract insect-eating birds that fly to their death in the intensely focused light rays.

Federal and state biologists call the num-

ber of deaths significant, based on sightings of birds getting singed and falling and on retrieval of carcasses with feathers charred too severely for flight.

Ivanpah officials dispute the source of the so-called streamers, saying at least some of the puffs of smoke mark insects and bits of airborne trash being ignited by the solar rays.

Wildlife officials who witnessed the phenomena say many of the clouds of smoke were too big to come from anything but a bird, and they add that they saw "birds enter-

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## WETLANDS

*Continued from Page 8*

have brought pressure to bear on Congress to block any funding for "jurisdiction under the Clean Water Act." The House of Representatives has already passed an appropriations bill that would deny the Corps of Engineers funding to protect the wetlands in question, and the Senate is considering a similar proposal.

This issue has been swathed in a fog of judicial hairsplitting and legislative paralysis

for more than a decade, and as Congress has temporized, losses of the most productive wetland types have continued. Between 2001 and 2011, the Dakotas have lost 154,000 acres of prairie potholes. According the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "emergent wetland area also declined in other Midwestern States, including Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Indiana, and Michigan. Losses were observed in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Plain States of Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana and the southeastern States of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Alabama."

The ongoing loss of wetlands in the Mid-

west, combined with the loss of upland cover maintained under the farm bill, will decimate wildlife in America's heartland. Waterfowl, resident upland birds, and deer will take a huge hit, and the long-term decline of non-game grassland birds will resume.

If you care about these wild things, if you care about clean water and air, if you care about protecting fertile topsoil, please contact your Congressional representatives in both houses. Tell them you support protection of isolated wetlands under the Clean Water Act and that they should, too.

And don't wait.



# The mysterious migration of the dragonfly

By eNature

If you're lucky, dragonflies will join the birds and butterflies in your backyard this summer.

You will enjoy their presence—especially during cookouts and other outdoor activities—because they eat those pesky mosquitoes and flies. Dragonflies are attracted to water. Therefore, if you have a birdbath, water garden or pond, you may also have dragonflies.

## An Ancient Predator

Dragonflies have roamed the earth for over 300 million years. They have inspired both awe and fear in us with their fierce beauty and fascinating lifecycle. Born underwater to emerge from a life in mud and sand, a dragonfly nymph transforms into “a living flash of light,” as Lord Tennyson once described them. The 2,500 different species of dragonflies come in many col-



© André Karwath

## Yellow-winged darter

ors—blue, green, purple and bronze. Their aerial acrobatics are made possible by powerful wings that generate small tornadoes of air that keep the dragonfly moving at speeds of up to 60 miles an hour.

### Mysterious Migrations

Like many birds and some butterflies,

many species of dragonflies migrate. But unlike other migratory creatures, the phenomenon of dragonfly migration is very much shrouded in mystery. It is the combined flight patterns of millions of dragonflies that have become a mystery to modern researchers.

You may have seen a group of dragonflies fly by and wondered with curiosity, “Where are they going?” To date this question remains unanswered, as do many questions about these remarkable insects. It is not even certain why dragonflies migrate. One day these mysteries may be solved. In the meantime, all we can do is watch them in awe, admire their beauty and thank them for being so helpful around the yard.

Have you encountered dragonflies this summer as you've enjoyed the outdoors? We always enjoy your stories! Send them to [info@kswildlife.com](mailto:info@kswildlife.com).

# Grazing on federal land under threat because of drought

## Federal land can't continue to support livestock and wildlife

By Julie Cart  
Los Angeles Times

There's not much anyone can tell Barry Sorensen about Idaho's Big Desert that he doesn't know. Sorensen, 72, and his brother have been running cattle in this sere landscape all their lives, and they've weathered every calamity man and nature have thrown at them — until this drought came along.

Sitting recently in a rustic cabin where he spends many months looking after his cattle, Sorensen's voice was tinged with defeat.

“To be honest with you,” he said, “I think our way of life is pretty much going to be over in 10 years.”

Years-long drought has pummeled millions of acres of federal rangeland in the West into dust, leaving a devastating swath from the Rockies to the Pacific.

Add to that climate change, invasive plants and wildfire seasons that are longer and more severe, and conditions have reached a breaking point in many Western regions. The land can no longer support both livestock and wildlife.

“All these issues — it's changing the landscape of the West, dramatically,” said Ken Wixom, who grazes 4,000 ewes and lambs on BLM land in the Snake River Plain. For public lands ranchers like him

who depend on federal acreage to sustain their animals, the mood ranges from brooding to surrender.

The situation was spelled out in stark terms in two recent letters from the federal Bureau of Land Management. They told the ranchers what they already knew: Unless something changes, the days of business as usual on the 154 million acres of federal grazing land are over.

This drought-stressed range in Idaho can no longer sustain livestock, the letter warned. Better plan to reduce herd numbers by at least 30% for the spring turnout.

“I knew it was coming,” said Sorensen, squinting as the afternoon sun poured through a window.

Sorensen's grazing allotment is so compromised that he was forced to make multiple adjustments. He waited 2 1/2 weeks longer than usual before turning out his cows and calves on BLM pastures, and then released only half his herd. The rest he kept on his ranch, feeding them hay from his own fields.

Conditions could easily grow worse.

Livestock shares the range with wildlife, including the greater sage grouse, a species dependent on sagebrush and native grasslands to survive. The grouse population has plummeted by 93% in the last 50 years, and

its habitat has shrunk to one-quarter of its former 240,000-square-mile range.

If the federal government grants endangered species protection to the grouse sometime next year, ranching on federal land will be cut back even more, federal officials say. In some regions, public lands ranching might end altogether.

The problem for livestock and wildlife alike is that the drought has been merciless on all plants in the West. Last week 60% of the 11 Western states were experiencing some degree of serious drought.

Climate change has altered weather patterns so much that vegetation in some regions is transforming from abundant sagebrush, grass and forbs to a new landscape of weeds and cheat grass — fast-burning fuels that propel wildfire and destroy rangeland.

In southern New Mexico, the transformation has gone one step further — from sagebrush to weeds to sand-blown desert — and biologists say the pattern is likely to be repeated across the West.

If that happens, the economics of cattle ranching will unravel.

Public lands grazing is a remnant of Washington's interest in settling the West

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# DROUGHT

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by providing a financial leg up to covered-wagon pioneers and private interests alike. Ranchers pay a fee, far below market rate, for each mother cow and calf they turn out to graze on BLM acreage.

If public land is not available, ranchers could find private property to graze their animals, paying as much as 16 times more than on federal ground. They could reduce their herds, losing valuable genetics and other breeding characteristics and getting perhaps \$1,000 for a cow that would cost \$1,600 to replace.

Ranchers could bring the cattle to their own land and feed them with hay or alfalfa they grow or buy. None of that is consistent with the business model of a public lands rancher.

"You buy hay at \$200 a ton, so you feed one ton for each 100 head of cows," said Sorensen. "If you've got 200 head of cows, you are feeding \$400 to \$500 dollars' worth of hay a day."

Critics of ranching on federal land have little sympathy. They say the operations are highly subsidized by taxpayers and are secondary to the goal of preserving wildlife and native ecosystems.

If you've got 200 head of cows, you are feeding \$400 to \$500 dollars' worth of hay a day.- Barry Sorensen

Grazing receipts in fiscal year 2013 were \$12.2 million, while the program cost the government \$48.2 million to operate. Fees are based on range conditions that existed in 1966, and the monthly charge of \$1.35 for a cow and calf hasn't significantly changed in 50 years. Sporadic attempts to raise fees have been fiercely and immediately

quashed.

Ranchers argue that they are excellent stewards of the land and that they make improvements that benefit deer, birds and other wildlife as well as improve water quality.

"Without ranchers functioning, the landscape ceases to function," said rancher Shane Rosenkrance, 52, who grazes on 110,000 acres of BLM and state land in eastern Idaho.

Equally persuasive arguments are made by biologists and conservation groups. They say historic overgrazing caused wholesale changes to the landscape and fostered the damaging growth of cheat grass — which has fanned wildfires in the West.

And, they say, when ranchers allow cattle to trample streams and riverbeds, especially in a drought, crucial riparian areas can be destroyed.

The sage grouse is particularly vulnerable to sagebrush loss. Cattle grazing reduces forbs and grasses the birds use for protection and cover, leaving them exposed to predators.

Alarmed Western state governors, fearful that an endangered species listing could also mean the end of energy, mining and other commercial activities on federal land, are scrambling to protect the birds and their breeding grounds.

Kurt Wiedenmann, a BLM manager in Boise, said the drought and the sage grouse have federal and state agencies working together to find room for both grazing and the imperiled birds. Ranchers have already been hit hard by grazing cutbacks, Wiedenmann said, noting that many of them are small-scale, not corporate operations.

Leo Drozdoff, director of Nevada's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, said federal land managers need to take stronger action to preserve sage grouse

populations before they reach endangered levels.

"I don't think there's any doubt that overgrazing and some older grazing practices have not been helpful," Drozdoff said. "But this has been happening over decades, and for a variety of reasons. That should be an indication that the status quo isn't good enough."

Ranchers have responded by opposing efforts to list the grouse as endangered. This spring, Wixom, the sheep rancher, met with officials in Washington, D.C., to discuss the sage grouse. His advice to fellow ranchers is to stop complaining and start fighting.

"If you are in a fistfight, the last thing you want to do is start crying," Wixom said, leaning against the cab of his pickup. "If we come out here and say, 'We're doomed,' they are just going to hit you harder."

Some environmental groups, such as Idaho-based Western Watersheds Project, can't envision any science-based plan to preserve sage grouse habitat that would allow sheep and cattle grazing.

"If land management agencies truly take science into account, the Forest Service and the BLM will have to greatly reduce grazing in ways we haven't seen before," said Travis Bruner, the organization's executive director. "A lot of ranchers will probably see it as a game changer."

Sorensen does. "I think it's inevitable" that the sage grouse will eventually push cattle off the range, he said.

When that happens, it will trigger a cascade of ruinous changes to an ecosystem that has adapted to livestock, he said.

"All of this ground is going to go to hell. There won't be any cattle to eat the grass. That grass will burn. Then there will be no sage grouse left."

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# 5 days away from computer screens boosts preteens' social awareness

By Deborah Netburn  
LA Times

What happens when you take about 50 sixth-graders and send them to a nature camp with no access to computers, tablets and mobile phones? A new study suggests that after just five days their ability to understand nonverbal social cues improves.

Nonverbal social cues are the emotional information we pick up from people around us that is not communicated through words. It includes facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice and body posture.

As children spend more time corresponding with their friends via text rather than talking to them face to face, the researchers wondered whether they were losing the ability to read these important cues.

"The idea for this study came from looking at the way my older child and her friends' older siblings were communicating," said Yalda Uhls, who runs the Los Angeles office of the nonprofit Common Sense Media. "I've been at parties where the kids are all hanging out, but instead of looking at each other, they are staring at their phones."

Uhls, who is the lead author of the study published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*, wanted to see what would happen if a group of children had to spend

an extended period of time communicating completely device-free.

Uhls and senior author Patricia Greenfield of UCLA found a public school that sends its sixth-grade class to a wilderness camp near Big Bear for five days. At the camp, the students have no access to electronics.

When the class of about 50 children arrived at the camp, they were asked to take two tests to measure their ability to read nonverbal social cues. In the first, the kids were asked to assess the emotions portrayed in 48 photos of people making faces. In the second test, they watched a video with the sound turned off, and then made a judgment about the emotional state of the actor.

At the end of the five-day camp, the students were asked to take the tests again. The researchers report that over the five days the kids went from making an average of 14.02 errors on the face-recognition test at the beginning of their camp stay to 9.41 errors by the end. For the video component, they went from getting an average of 26% of the emotional states correct to getting 31% correct.

"Honestly, we were pretty surprised that just five days would have that effect," said Uhls. "But we think this is good news because if indeed lack of face-to-face time is changing people's ability to understand emo-

tion, our results suggest you can disconnect for five days and get better."

The researchers gave the same test to a control group of 54 sixth-graders from the same school who had not yet attended the camp. That group had an average of 12.24 mistakes the first time they took the face-recognition test and 9.81 mistakes when they took it again five days later. For the video test, the students' scores stayed flat, getting an average of 28% of the emotions correct both times they were tested.

Though the children who were at the camp showed a larger improvement over the five days than those who did not go to camp, the end results were not that different.

"I noticed that too," said Uhls, "but even though the kids ended up in the same place, they started at different places, so the change is what we are really looking at."

Uhls and Greenfield said the results of their study suggest that it is important for kids to spend time away from screens, but it doesn't necessarily suggest that all screen time is bad.

"The main thing I hope people take away from this is that it is really important for children to have time for face-to-face socializing," said Uhls. "I love media, my kids are media-savvy, but it is really important to have a balance."

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## SOLAR

*Continued from Page 10*

ing the solar flux and igniting, consequently become a streamer."

U.S. Fish and Wildlife officials say they want a death toll for a full year of operation.

Given the apparent scale of bird deaths at Ivanpah, authorities should thoroughly track bird kills there for a year, including during annual migratory seasons, before granting any more permits for that kind of solar technology, said George, of the Audubon Society.

The toll on birds has been surprising, said Robert Weisenmiller, chairman of the California Energy Commission. "We didn't see a lot of impact" on birds at the first, smaller power towers in the U.S. and Europe, Weisenmiller said.

The commission is now considering the application from Oakland-based BrightSource to build a mirror field and a 75-story power tower that would reach above the sand dunes and creek washes between Joshua Tree

National Park and the California-Arizona border.

The proposed plant is on a flight path for birds between the Colorado River and California's largest lake, the Salton Sea — an area, experts say, is richer in avian life than the Ivanpah plant, with protected golden eagles and peregrine falcons and more than 100 other species of birds recorded there.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials warned California this month that the power-tower style of solar technology holds "the highest lethality potential" of the many solar projects burgeoning in the deserts of California.

The commission's staff estimates the proposed new tower would be almost four times as dangerous to birds as the Ivanpah plant. The agency is expected to decide this autumn on the proposal.

While biologists say there is no known feasible way to curb the number of birds killed, the companies behind the projects say they are hoping to find one — studying whether lights, sounds or some other technology would scare them away, said Joseph

Desmond, senior vice president at BrightSource Energy.

BrightSource also is offering \$1.8 million in compensation for anticipated bird deaths at Palen, Desmond said.

The company is proposing the money for programs such as those to spay and neuter domestic cats, which a government study found kill over 1.4 billion birds a year. Opponents say that would do nothing to help the desert birds at the proposed site.

Power-tower proponents are fighting to keep the deaths from forcing a pause in the building of new plants when they see the technology on the verge of becoming more affordable and accessible, said Thomas Conroy, a renewable-energy expert.

When it comes to powering the country's grids, "diversity of technology ... is critical," Conroy said. "Nobody should be arguing let's be all coal, all solar," all wind, or all nuclear. "And every one of those technologies has a long list of pros and cons."

# 100 years ago: Martha

By Paul J. Baicich  
Birding Community E-bulletin

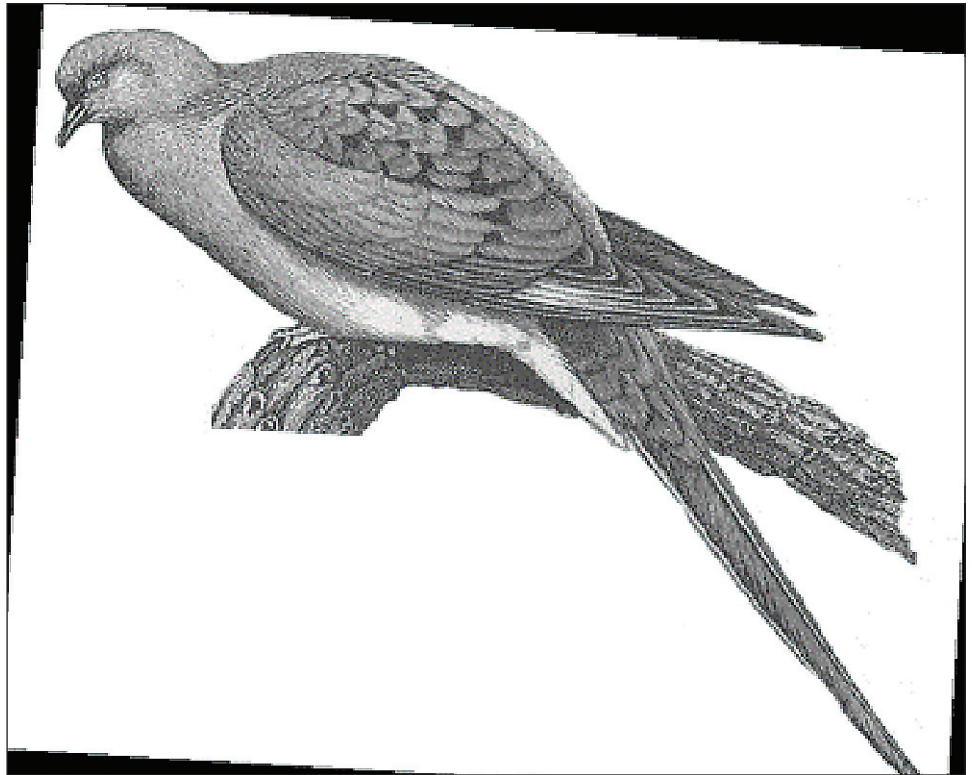
With all the discussion lately about threatened and endangered species in Kansas and across the nation, this would be a great time to step back and look at where we've been regarding endangered species. It's extraordinarily rare to know when the last of a species takes its last breath and becomes irrevocably extinct. In the case of Passenger Pigeon we know exactly when that happened. On 1 September 1914 at 1pm, Martha, the last of her species, died at the Cincinnati Zoo.

The Passenger Pigeon was the most abundant bird in North America at one time, perhaps even in the world, with a population numbering an estimated three to five billion birds. They were once so common that flocks could literally darken the skies for hours or days at a time. Yet human exploitation drove this species to the very edge of extinction in just the last four or five decades of the 19th century. It was an extinction caused by unregulated and unrelenting market hunting and "sport shooting," exacerbated by the spreading technologies of telegraph and modern railroads that facilitated these horrific activities.

While the loss of the Passenger Pigeon became emblematic for the 20th century American conservation movement, it continues to be a reminder of the need for humans to be responsible stewards of birds, wildlife, and nature. For that alone, Martha's departure, 100 years ago this month, should be remembered.

2014 marks the centenary of this extraordinary extinction. Project Passenger Pigeon will mark this anniversary and promote the conservation of species and habitat, strengthen the relationship between people and nature, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources. The project aims to engage a broad audience through a documentary film, a new book on passenger pigeons, social media, curricula, a wide range of exhibits and programming for people of all ages and the website Project Passenger Pigeon <http://passengerpigeon.org/>. Explore this site for more information about these amazing birds, the broader themes of Project Passenger Pigeon, upcoming project activities, and ways you can participate.

Legendary among ornithologists and lay people alike as a symbol of staggering abundance on the one hand and of human greed and indifference on the other,



the Passenger Pigeon is arguably North America's best known extinct species. Historical accounts of its huge flocks appear beyond belief were they not so consistent among independent observers for over three centuries.

It is reported they darkened the sky for hours or even days at a time. The beats of their wings would create drafts that chilled the people over whom they flew.

*"But the most remarkable characteristic of these birds is their associating together, both in their migrations, and also during the period of incubation, in such prodigious numbers, as almost to surpass belief; and which has no parallel among any of the other feathered tribes on earth, with which naturalists are acquainted" (Wilson 1812: 102–103).*

It is estimated that the Passenger Pigeon was once perhaps a quarter of the continent's avifauna ([Schorger 1955](#)). The species occurred only in North America, primarily east of the Rocky Mountains, and bred almost exclusively in the eastern deciduous forest.

The key to the Passenger Pigeon's abundance was its nomadic flocking behavior, which allowed it to exploit seasonally superabundant crops of mast and acorns that were unpredictable in space and time. Passenger pigeons nested singly and in groups of all sizes, but the

larger part of the population nested in huge colonies. Aggregating in such immense numbers allowed the species to satiate any potential predators, until they attracted the ultimate predator—humans armed with nineteenth-century technology.

From billions to none in 40 years. The dramatic decline to extinction in the wild occurred over a period of only 40 years. The birds were subjected to unrelenting exploitation as an item of commerce and sport, with human disruption of essentially every nesting colony. During this period, there were no documented uninterrupted and completely successful mass nestings, which were necessary to sustain the population.

The Great Plains doubtless nourished passenger pigeons on their ways north and south, but provided few such records, and only one verified nesting, judging by records. In 1886 Goss reported "a few to my knowledge bred occasionally in the Neosho Valley...about the middle of April," for the only such record accepted by Thompson & Ely. Goss also provided all three of the specimens known from Kansas, from the same locality on 14 April 1876. It seems migrants usually appeared as isolated pairs or in small

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*Continued on Page 15*



# Did you know that bears don't really hibernate?

By eNature

In the fall with days getting shorter and temperatures dropping, many of us dream of hibernating till spring.

Alas, that's not an option; we humans must face the challenges of winter. But some creatures cope with winter's cold temperatures and food shortages by taking very long naps.

Whether or not we can call their behavior hibernation, though, depends on a number of factors.

## Lethargy vs Hibernation

When most people think of hibernation they picture bears. Yet bears aren't true hibernators; their long nap is more properly called winter lethargy. A true hibernator, like a chipmunk, can reduce its body temperature to nearly freezing during hibernation and change its heart rate from 350 beats per minute to as low as 4 beats per minute within hours of retiring to its den.

The heart rate of a bear also drops, though not as rapidly. During the early part of its winter dormancy, a bear's heart rate averages 50 beats per minute. After several months of uninterrupted sleep, the rate may drop to as low as 8 beats per minute. But a bear's body temperature remains nearly normal during



## Eastern Chipmunk

this period. That's the reason a bear can wake relatively quickly—a fact that's resulted in more than one hasty exit from a bear den by researchers. Pregnant females wake in mid-winter to give birth, then go back to sleep while their newborn cubs nurse. Still, most bears sleep all through the winter if left undisturbed.

## What Characterizes True Hibernation?

Rodents that exercise true hibernation, by contrast, wake every few weeks to eat small amounts of stored food and pass wastes. These brief periods of activity are extremely costly: up to 90 percent of the stored energy reserves (mostly fats) allotted for the entire winter are consumed during these bouts of arousal.

Thus the animals that truly hibernate don't actually sleep all winter, while "winter lethargic" species often do.

The difference between these two strategies—true hibernation and winter lethargy—is related to the animal's size. Bears are too large to dissipate the heat necessary to enter hibernation, whereas smaller mammals, with their high surface-to-volume ratio, can achieve this temperature drop quickly and evenly.

## So Who's The Champion Hibernator?

Possibly the largest rodent that truly hibernates is the Woodchuck (also known as the Groundhog), and it's a champion napper. In the Northeast, it has been known to enter its burrow while the weather is still warm in September and not emerge until late March.

In other words, a Woodchuck can spend more than half of its life sleeping!

Sound like a good plan? Would you like to doze off after the end of the World Series and wake up just in time for opening day?

The concept isn't too far fetched; researchers are experimenting with the compounds responsible for inducing hibernation, and they're finding that even species that don't hibernate will respond to treatment with these hormones.

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## MARTHA

*Continued from Page 14*

groups here at the southwestern periphery of the pigeon's normal range. Bradley discovered a large feeding flock, shooting 271, on 18 April 1810 along the Missouri. His experience was not a routine one, as the pigeon was officially accepted to the Kansas avifauna only in 1872.

No place-names in Kansas appear to have been related to passenger pigeons. The only Kansas locations known to have Passenger Pigeon skins, mounts, and or skeletons is Lawrence, at the Biodiversity Institute, University of Kansas.

Wisconsin's A.W. [Bill] Schorger (1884-1972) spent many years researching the history of the Passenger Pigeon, and he summarized his findings in his 1955 book, *The Passenger Pigeon: Its Natural History and Extinction*. At the time of its publication, the book was the most comprehensive account of the species. Schorger did an excellent job summarizing the nearly 10,000 historical

records he discovered in libraries and historical societies around the country, but his original research notes contain many additional details.

For the 2014 centennial, Professor Stanley Temple of the University of Wisconsin-Madison has made all Schorger's handwritten research notes available in digital form. This link will take you to a table that provides details of all the historical records Bill Schorger discovered for Kansas: <http://passengerpigeon.org/states/Schorger-KS.pdf>.

The Passenger Pigeon was not a Carrier Pigeon, not a Messenger Pigeon, not a Rock Pigeon. The passenger pigeon and the rock dove (*Columba livia*, aka rock pigeon, carrier pigeon, etc) are often confused in the public's mind but they are not closely related. The dock dove is a Eurasian species that has been semi-domesticated for centuries and has been introduced into North America. They like to nest on ledges, which is one reason they have proliferated in cities around the world in a feral state.

*The Passenger Pigeon was no mere bird, he was a biological storm. He was*

*the lightning that played between two biotic poles of intolerable intensity: the fat of the land and his own zest for living. Yearly the feathered tempest roared up, down, and across the continent, sucking up the laden fruits of forest and prairie, burning them in a travelling blast of life. Like any other chain reaction, the pigeon could survive no diminution of his own furious intensity. Once the pigeoners had subtracted from his numbers, and once the settlers had chopped gaps in the continuity of his fuel, his flame guttered out with hardly a sputter or even a wisp of smoke.*

Aldo Leopold, 1947, *On a Monument to the Pigeon*

## Read Fascinating Historical Accounts of the Passenger Pigeon in Kansas

Sources

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# Another budget concern: NAWCA

## From the Birding Community E-bulletin

Last month the *Birding Community E-bulletin* profiled the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) as an important bird-funding mechanism that needs special attention this year: see <http://refugeassociation.org/?p=9692/#another> for details.

This month, we focus on the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and its importance in supporting on-the-ground bird conservation.

NAWCA was enacted in 1989 and provides federal cost-share funding to support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. NAWCA's success is driven by partnerships involving federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and community groups. Every federal dollar provided through NAWCA must be matched by at least one dollar from non-federal sources. Because the program is so effective, NAWCA funds are usually tripled or quadrupled on the local level. The effort may be waterfowl-based, but it goes beyond that

to secure wetlands and other closely associated habitats (e.g., grasslands and riparian wooded bottomlands) that favor other kinds of birds and a variety of other wildlife.

Over \$1 billion in federal grants has been allocated for NAWCA projects, efforts that have leveraged an additional \$3 billion from matching and non-matching funds. Since its start, more than 2,000 NAWCA projects have contributed to the conservation of almost 27 million acres of habitat across North America.

It's a premier practical, bird-funding, and habitat-securing mechanism. It is no wonder that both Houses of Congress unanimously reauthorized NAWCA in September 2006. The appropriation authorization for NAWCA at the time was increased to \$75 million for FY 2007 through FY 2012.

But just because Congress "authorizes" \$75 million doesn't mean that it "appropriates" anything close to that amount. Actual funding between 2007 through 2012 fluctuated from as high as \$47.6 million to as low as \$35.5 million.

And just because reauthorization sailed

through Congress in September 2006 doesn't mean that it will have such support today. Indeed, NAWCA program funding formally expired in September 2012, jeopardizing its very future. While funding miraculously continues, it is at much lower amounts, somewhere in the vicinity of \$33-\$34 million.

Despite its fine reputation and its successes, NAWCA is not faring as well as it should be in Congress. Ideally, it should be reauthorized at its previous amount \$75 million, but with the current Congress, that's not likely.

At the same time, the White House has only requested that NAWCA be funded at \$34.1 million, which is functionally a flat number.

*Editor's Note: Kansas currently has 17 NAWCA projects either complete or underway. These projects have conserved a total of 70,549 acres of wildlife habitat. NAWCA funding of over \$9.4 million stimulated partner contributions of nearly \$17.6 million. Obviously the NAWCA program has been very important to Kansas wildlife and its habitats.*

## 10 tips on taking kids hunting

### By Sean Curran USSA's Sportsmen's Notebook

Getting the next generation of hunters into the field should be a top priority this season for each and every license buying sportsman. If you're not already taking a child with you then please consider it for at least a few hunts this fall. It's not only an investment in the future of our outdoor pursuits, but you'll come to find out it's even more rewarding than you can imagine. The experience can literally change the way you and that child approach the outdoors. Here are 10 tips to keep in mind when you're planning to take a youth hunting.

**Safety.** This should go without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway. Safety is first and foremost above everything else. My children have been taught from an early age there are three rules to everything we do outdoors and we discuss them while we're riding in the truck before each outing. Our entire outing is filled with teaching moments focused on safety. As long as we follow the first two rules then rule three is always automatic.

Rule #1 – Safety first!

Rule #2 – Listen to Dad.

Rule #3 – Have fun.

**Make it fun.** Establish the mindset that

when you're taking a youth into the field it is about them and not about you. Don't push them to hunt as hard as you normally would, or pressure them into situations because of your own drive. Step back and see the big picture from the child's perspective. Let them progress at their own pace and they'll take ownership of the situation.

**Weather.** Some of the best hunting can be in tough weather, but since we're making this all about the child, optimize the experience by taking them out in pleasant conditions. Early season bow hunts from a ground blind overlooking a field or mid-October walks through the squirrel woods are perfect ways to get youth outdoors.

**Patience.** Don't lose it. Children are going to make noise and squirm in their chairs. Find ways to guide their energy while creating teaching moments. Bring along a bird ID book and see how many types of birds you can find together. Collect leaves, acorns and pine cones to match them up to pictures in a tree ID book. If necessary you can even break out an iPod and let them play games for a while.

**Snacks.** This item could easily be listed as #2 because it is almost as important as safety. Bring along some snacks and drinks to share with the child when you can see their attention starting to fade. Let them pick

out the snacks at home or even better yet, support your local economy by giving the child a few bucks then stopping at the convenience store. Find a way to make it special or maybe start a pre-hunt tradition here.

**Exposure.** The outdoors can easily be a year-round activity to involve children in. Take them out to help train your duck dog. Involve them in the training by having them give the dog commands or throw out bumpers for the dog to fetch. Invite them to hike into the woods to monitor trail cameras or establish mineral sites. Let them be the first to look through the trail camera pictures when you get them uploaded, and if you're into naming target deer then let the child pick the names this season.

**Not for everyone.** Don't put any pressure on a child to take up hunting. Let them come along at their own pace and develop through their own curiosity. When a child sees their parent involved in an activity they will be naturally inclined to want to learn more about that activity. Embrace and encourage that but only at the appropriate pace for that individual child. Pushing them too fast can ruin the experience. Ultimately they may still choose not to hunt anyway, but allow them the opportunity to make that decision. Taking

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# Benefits of a dead tree

**By Joel D. Glover**  
**The Outdoor Wire**

As a wildlife biologist, I regularly visit with landowners to give them management advice. During these meetings, I have had landowners point to a dead tree and tell me they just haven't gotten around to cutting it down. They often step back when I ask, "Why would you want to do that?" Many people assume that a dead tree should be cut. Cutting it is a good idea if the tree is in an area frequented by people or livestock, or if it is threatening a power line or structure. However, a dead tree, or "snag," in the forest is natural and beneficial.

In forested habitats, cavity-nesting birds may account for 30-45 percent of the total bird population. These species are largely dependent on snags for nesting, roosting, foraging and other functions. Snags are often a rich source of food. Wildlife will forage on the external surface of the bark, the inner cambium layer and the heartwood

of the tree.

While primary excavators are species that actually carve nesting and foraging cavities in snags, the cavities they create can have a long life span with many various users. Secondary cavity users inhabit either natural cavities or cavities abandoned by other species. Chickadees, bluebirds, wood ducks, titmice, great crested flycatchers, nuthatches, barred owls, screech owls and kestrels often use cavities created by woodpeckers. In addition, bats, gray squirrels, fox squirrels, flying squirrels, raccoons, frogs, snakes, honeybees, wasps and spiders also use the cavities. An absence of suitable snags can be a major limiting factor for some cavity-dependent wildlife populations.

With this in mind, some landowners actually kill trees in areas lacking natural snags. When creating a snag, remember that the larger the tree, the more use it will normally receive. In addition, always keep safety in mind and avoid deadening

a tree that might fall into an area regularly frequented by people or livestock. Snags should be large and well distributed using both hard and soft woods.

There is something very natural about planting trees and watching them grow; killing them doesn't come so naturally. While I am not ready to kick off a "let's kill trees campaign," I can say I have seen the practice to be extremely effective in providing nesting and feeding opportunities for birds. Before you run to get the saw the next time you come across a dead tree in your forest, pay attention to how much wildlife is using it. You might just be surprised.

Do you have a dead tree near your home? Have you watched it to see what animals use it and how they take advantage of its benefits? We always enjoy your stories! Send them to [info@kswildlife.com](mailto:info@kswildlife.com).

*Joel D. Glover is a Certified Wildlife Biologist with the Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries*

## Andrew Junior Hawks passes away

Andrew Junior Hawks, 86, of El Dorado, passed away Friday, June 6, 2014, at Lake-Point in El Dorado. Celebration of his life was on Tuesday, June 10 at the First United Methodist Church in El Dorado. His burial followed at Walnut Valley Cemetery.

Andy was born Dec. 16, 1927, the son of Andrew and Osceola (Koontz) Hawks in Midian. He grew up and attended school in El Dorado. He graduated from El Dorado High School in 1945. Andrew was united in marriage to Juanita Faye Foster, June 20, 1948. He served his country in Korea

as a member of the U.S. Army Medical Corp. Andy worked for Cities Service for 37 years.

Andrew enjoyed fishing, hunting, and camping. Andy loved sharing his enthusiasm for nature with his family. He and Juanita spent thirteen winters in Mesa, Arizona. His family called him Jr., but to many he was "Moon".

Survivors include: his wife, Juanita Hawks; sister, Ila Harwick; children, Terry (Teresa) Hawks of Overland Park, Drew (Sheryl) Hawks of El Dorado, and Jan (Neil)

Baker of Blackwell, Okla.; grandchildren, Mika (Jeff) Williams of North Richland Hills, Texas, Kylee Hawks of Trophy Club, Texas, Kevin Baker of Blackwell, Okla., Kellee (Nick) Brown of Stillwater, Okla., Ryan Hawks of Overland Park, and Lauren (Brad) Cottam of Leawood, Kan.; great-grandchildren, Rubye and Britton Williams, Austin, Paxton and Sutton Brown, and Kinley Hawks.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to First United Methodist Church or The Kansas Wildlife Federation.

## HUNTING

*Continued from Page 16*

this approach will still leave them with a favorable impression of hunting and our role in conservation.

**Discuss.** One of the things I love most about hunting is that it is an endless learning process. You'll never know everything there is to know about monster bucks, for example. Quite frankly, even though I'm always thirsty for knowledge, I don't want to know everything. That just adds to the allure. Hunting creates an infinite amount of teaching moments as you're introducing children to the outdoors. They're naturally inquisitive so this opens up a fantastic set-up for you to talk through the what, where, when, why and

how's of hunting.

**Participate.** A big component of a successful youth hunt is letting them actually play a role in the experience. Let them help get decoys out of the bag, pack their own backpack to carry into the woods or follow deer tracks to where they think a good spot to hunt might be. This not only helps make them feel like they're part of the team but also promotes active learning through your careful guidance.

**Timing.** From late October to mid-November I'm happily perched in a tree stand from before the sun comes until after it has gone down (as long as I have my snacks). However, there is absolutely no way I'd expect my children to be able to endure the same bowhunting marathon. Keep your youth hunts short in duration, maximized

with activity and custom tailored to the individual. Just like training a good retriever you always want to finish on a high note. Find that happy medium of just before they're too tired and bored yet still left wanting more!

This is a subject near and dear to me with two hunting up-and-comers in the family. While there could easily be a list of 100 items to keep in mind, my hope is that these 10 tips touch on some of the main points of introducing our hunting heritage to today's youth. Above and beyond everything else, just make sure to keep the experience fun for them. The days spent afield have a special way of creating some of the strongest bonds we will experience in life. When put into that perspective, who better to introduce to our hunting heritage than your own children, relatives or family friends.



# National survey answers question: Who is today's dove hunter?

Results from a first-of-its-kind survey of the nation's mourning dove hunters have been released by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), National Flyway Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The survey, in which more than 12,000 dove hunters from around the country participated, will provide wildlife and natural resources managers with information to help them effectively manage and conserve this migratory bird species into the future.

"Hunters opinions and preferences are an important consideration in how state fish and wildlife agencies, the Service, the Flyway Councils and our conservation and sportsmen group partners sustain resources and continue to provide quality hunting opportunities," said Dan Forster, AFWA President and Georgia Wildlife Resources Division Director. "We collaborated on the National Dove Hunter Survey so that we can see the big picture and understand who is today's dove hunter."

The survey provides demographic data and information on hunter behavior and attitudes on a variety of topics, including where and how often they hunt, hindrances to them engaging in their sport, and where they get their trusted information on this and related issues.

The survey also explored dove hunters' opinions and attitudes towards lead ammunition and the perceived impacts of spent lead on wildlife. The survey questions and collection of responses on this issue does not mean that non-toxic shot will be required to hunt doves in the future.

"As wildlife managers, we saw this unique opportunity to conduct a compre-

hensive national survey in order to gain perspectives of dove hunters versus the piecemeal regional efforts conducted in the past," said Ron Anglin, Chair of the National Flyway Council. "Since doves are managed at both the regional and national levels, we now can look to this survey to provide us with hunter attitudes and opinions on the issues managers must consider."

"Hunters are key partners in conservation," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "For generations, hunters, recreational shooters and anglers have been - and continue to be - the primary funders of wildlife and sportfish conservation in the U.S. through their purchases of specially taxed gear and hunting and fishing licenses. Understanding their perspectives on the many facets of their sport is critical, and I am grateful to all who voluntarily took part in this survey to help us in that regard."

The report is just a first step in the all-important process of review and discussion among stakeholders about what the survey results reveal and how they can be used to inform future decisions about dove hunting and resource management in the United States. Rigorous statistical analysis and modeling of the results will follow to provide additional understanding.

Hunting has an \$86.9 billion impact on the national economy and generates approximately \$11.8 billion in federal, state and local tax revenues. Thanks to hunting and sport-shooting purchases, state fish and wildlife agencies have been able to provide hunter education to more than 24 million people, build hundreds of public shooting ranges, develop walk-in hunting

access programs, educate youth in schools about the conservation of fish and wildlife, and deliver outdoor skills training to millions of Americans of all ages.

Mourning doves are one of the most abundant and widely distributed game birds in the country, with hunting seasons established in 40 of the lower 48 states. Doves can be poisoned by consuming spent lead shot, but despite anecdotal evidence, researchers do not yet know if there is a population-level effect.

Key Findings from the National Dove Hunter Survey:

- Dove hunters are typically white males, 45 years of age and older and are well-educated with higher-than-average incomes.
- Dove hunters responding to the survey said that the top hindrances to their participation in dove hunting are financial-the cost of gasoline, the cost of shotshells, the cost of other dove hunting gear and the cost of hunting permits.
- Dove hunters mostly harvest fewer than 30 birds per season and hunt on private land. They typically travel 50 miles or more to get their hunting spots.
- Dove hunters responding to the survey aren't sure about the impacts of spent lead shot on dove health and believe they don't have enough scientific information about its potential effects. They are concerned that hunter participation could be impacted if non-lead shot were to be required at some point in the future.

The full survey results, along with further information about dove hunting including FAQs about the survey, can be found at [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org) using the link on the home page or via <http://bit.ly/DoveHunterSurvey>.

## Mepps in market for squirrel tails

Attention squirrel hunters: Mepps® needs squirrel tails to create hand-tied, dressed hooks for their world-famous, fish-catching lures. They've been recycling squirrel tails for over half-a-century. In fact, they recycle more of them than anyone else in the world.

"We've tried hundreds of other natural and synthetic materials; bear hair, fox, coyote, badger, skunk, deer, even Angus cow, but nothing works as well as squirrel tail hair," explains Mepps® Communications Director, Kurt Mazurek.

The fact is squirrel tails are all hair-no fur. Practically all other animals have fur tails with just a few guard hairs. Fur doesn't have the rippling, pulsating movement of squirrel hair in the water.

Squirrels are a plentiful natural resource. Plus, squirrel is some of the best wild meat and their skins are used for caps, coats, glove linings and many other items, but the tail is usually thrown away. Mepps® is asking you to help them recycle this valuable resource, AND, they're offering to reward you for your efforts!

Mepps buys fox, black, grey and red squirrel tails and will pay up to 26 cents each for tails, depending on quality and quantity. Plus, the cash value is doubled if the tails are traded for Mepps lures.

Mazurek wants to remind everyone, "We do not advocate harvesting of squirrels solely for their tails."

For all the details on the Squirrel Tail Program, either visit our web site [www.mepps.com](http://www.mepps.com) or call 800-713-3474. Mepps, 626 Center St., Antigo, WI 54409-2496.

# Blue streak special — Ever see a skink?

From eNature.com

There's a rustling in the leaves. You look to see what made the sound and bam—a blue streak vanishes into the duff. Was it a snake? A lizard? Was that intense cobalt color even real?

Yes, it was real. The creature responsible for the streak was a lizard called a skink. Now's the time when the newborns hatch, and the intense blue tails of the juveniles are as bright as neon signs.

There are fifteen species of skinks in North America, a small percentage of the 1,200-plus species found worldwide (it's the largest family of lizards). Most species keep their blue tails for the first two years of life; the tails of adults fade to gray or brown. As for why the young skink needs such a gaudy appendage, the standard textbook answer is that predators like birds and mammals will grab first at the bright tail. Because the tail easily detaches, the lizard escapes—tailless, yes, but at least still alive.

If this strategy is so advantageous, though, why don't adult skinks have blue



**Southeastern Five-lined Skink, juvenile**

tails? One possible explanation is that young skinks tend to spend more time above ground where they're subject to more predators. When they become adults, skinks establish territories inside rotting logs or under rocks and spend little time moving from place to place. (To tell the difference between a mature male and a mature female, look for the orange highlights on the male's head.)

Mating takes place in the spring. Then, in late spring, the adult females retreat to burrows or other sheltered recesses, often deep in the ground, where they lay eggs



**Broad-headed Skink, male**

and remain with them until hatching. A female may keep its eggs moist by licking them or otherwise moistening them or it may simply guard the clutch of two to six eggs. When the eggs hatch, adult females and their brightly colored newborns come to the surface to feed on insects and spiders for the summer. The first chill of autumn sends them underground, where they wait until the first warm days of spring beckon them back to the surface.

Have you come across skinks or other colorful amphibians? We always enjoy your stories! Send them to [info@kswildlife.com](mailto:info@kswildlife.com).

## Sportmen's role in driving outdoors-based economics highlighted in congressional hearing

**By Katie McKalip**  
**Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**

When Senate lawmakers met July 22nd to consider the role of natural resources in stimulating America's economy, the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership spoke up in support of sportsmen — and testified to the value hunting, fishing and related activities bring to our nation's fiscal health.

"Leveraging America's Resources as a Revenue Generator and Job Creator" was the theme of a hearing convened this morning by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and TRCP Center for Western Lands Director Joel Webster emphasized that hunting and fishing activities are not only a valued part of America's heritage but a significant contributor to the outdoor economy.

"Thirty-seven million Americans hunt and fish and spend \$58 billion annu-

ally," Webster stated. "While recreational activities like hunting and fishing might appear to be expendable or mere pastimes, they are vital everyday activities to those communities that rely on that business.

"To the tackle shop owner in Cocodrie, Louisiana, who sells bait, ice and fuel, fishing is not a pastime — it will send a kid to college. For the outfitter based in Fairbanks, Alaska, who relies on booking trips for caribou hunts, hunting is not expendable — it pays the mortgage."

America's natural resources form the infrastructure of a robust outdoor recreation economy. According to a 2012 report by TRCP partner the Outdoor Industry Association, this economy drives \$646 billion in direct consumer spending and supports more than 6 million jobs.

Webster stressed that federal public lands in particular play a crucial role in upholding this economic engine, sustain-

ing rural communities and the places where sportsmen from across the country hunt and fish.

"Each summer and fall, sportsmen crowd towns like Meeker, Colorado; Elko, Nevada; Salmon, Idaho; Cody, Wyoming; and La Grande, Oregon," continued Webster, who lives in Missoula, Montana, "and they happily spend their hard earned money on vehicles, sporting goods, food, fuel, lodging, outfitters and guides. These sportsmen and the local economies depend on public lands for hunting and fishing.

"Consequently, conservation of our natural resources is the critical first step in maintaining the vitality of this economic engine," said Webster. "Our elected leaders must commit to reinvesting in public access and priority fish and wildlife habitat to support America's sustainable outdoor recreation economy."

Read the OIA report.

Read the TRCP Senate testimony.

# Anti-anxiety meds we're flushing down the toilet could be increasing the lifespan of fish

The unexpected 'benefits' of wastewater pollution

By Lindsay Abrams  
Salon.com

We all know by now that the meds we flush down drains don't just disappear: lake and river creatures are the unwitting recipients of pharmaceuticals that enter their ecosystem via our sewage. And according to a new study, published August 8 in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*, drugs prescribed to treat humans may also be helping out fish.

Researchers at Umeå University in Sweden brought wild Eurasian perch from a local lake into the lab and exposed them to Oxazepam, a benzodiazepine used to treat anxiety and insomnia in humans that's known to be contaminating the surface water in high concentrations. It's hard out there for the perch — they don't, in general, tend to live very long (only eight percent typically make it to adulthood). But among newly hatched fry and two-year-old fish, a funny thing happened when they were dosed with the drugs.

They stopped dying.

Turns out, what slows brain activity in

humans makes perch bolder, less social and hyperactive (a "paradoxical reaction" also documented in young children). In a previous study, the researchers showed how this leads them to eat more quickly — which could be causing their increased longevity.

When we study the effects environmental toxicants can have on marine life, the researchers argue, this kind of thing is going unnoticed. "Ecotoxicological tests were designed with traditional toxic contaminants in mind, such as heavy metals and dioxins, which have historically been the major apparent threat against aquatic organisms in surface waters," lead author Jonatan Klaminder explained in a press release.

"Pharmaceuticals, which are designed to improve health, are a new group of contaminants that do not necessarily fit into the traditional view," he added. Not everything that's good for humans is good for fish, of course: plenty of other studies have documented the ways in which drug waste is harming fish (by, for example, messing with their sex organs).

But the thing is, as much as we like to complain about pollutants that kill fish, pollutants that extend their lives are just as problematic. Even if the perch are coming out ahead, there's no telling what effect the drugs could be having on other species. And as co-author Tomas Brodin noted, "a therapeutic effect leading to increased survival of one species may generate a proportional increase in mortality of that species' prey, which may have cascading ecological consequences that need consideration." Mess with one part of a complex food chain, and consequences can arise in unexpected ways.

These findings have yet to be tested in the wild, but if there's one thing we do know, it's that fish are being exposed to a lot of drugs: including, the authors note, antibiotics, painkillers, anti-inflammatory drugs, hormones and antidepressants. And, they suggest, we're only just beginning to understand the consequences.

*Editor's note: Lindsay Abrams is an assistant editor at Salon and a former writer and producer for The Atlantic's Health Channel.*

## Half CRP acreage still available for bobwhite quail conservation

### The Outdoor Wire

With the reopening of federal Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices this summer, more than 250,000 acres - half the nationwide allotment - have been enrolled in the CRP "Habitat for Upland Birds" practice. This leaves about 250,000 available for sign up by landowners, acres that, once enrolled, will improve habitat for northern bobwhite and other wildlife.

Officially known as Conservation Practice 33, the program is most commonly referred to as "bobwhite buffers" as the purpose of this practice is to reverse the long-term decline of northern bobwhite and other upland bird populations by providing needed nesting and brood-rearing habitat adjacent to cropland. These important components of northern bobwhite habitat have declined due to more intense grazing and cropping practices - resulting in the elimination of weedy field borders, abandoned farmsteads and small, recently disturbed areas loved by northern bobwhites. There are currently 250,073 bobwhite buffer acres enrolled across the country.

"Many landowners still don't know about the availability and advantages of this program," says Rick Young, Quail Forever's Vice President of Field Operations, "The 'bobwhite buffers' program is a 'win-win' - for landowners, it allows unproductive field margins to be restored to grassland habitat, often with net financial gains through practice incentives. Those grassland acres then provide critical habitat for northern bobwhite and other upland wildlife."

	State Allocation (Ac)	Acres Currently Enrolled	Bobwhite Buffers Available (Ac)
Colorado	610	171	439
Kansas	70,500	40,493	30,007
Missouri	52,300	34,350	17,950
Nebraska	12,000	6,053	5,947
Oklahoma	1,600	1,048	552

Landowners interested in the bobwhite buffers practice can enroll at any time by contacting the Quail Forever or Pheasants Forever farm bill wildlife biologist in their area or by visiting their local USDA Service Center. There are more than 103,000 Conservation Practice 33 acres on reserve, meaning they will be allocated to states once current allotments are used up.



# House subcommittee votes to curtail environmental protections

**By Fred Hoefner**  
**National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**

On Wednesday, July 9, the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee passed a bill to fund the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and related agencies in fiscal year (FY) 2015, which begins on October 1, 2014. The bill cuts EPA funding by \$717 million, or 9 percent, relative to current already tight spending levels. Funding for the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within DOI remained largely intact. Most strikingly, the bill contains **35 separate policy riders** aimed at curtailing the Obama Administration's implementation of key environmental protections.

The multitude of legislative riders attached to various FY 2015 appropriations bills in the House—including two riders to the agriculture appropriations bill, one intended to waive school nutrition standards, and another aimed at undermining the U.S. Department of Agriculture's effort to protect livestock farmers from abusive and deceptive practices by meatpacking corporations—are a big part of the reason that Congress is struggling to pass appropriations bills before the end of the fiscal year. The policy riders are topics within the jurisdiction of congressio-

nal authorizing committees, not the appropriations committees, but given their annual nature, appropriations bills become ripe targets for legislating in addition to determining funding levels.

Among the riders included in the Interior-Environment bill are provisions to:

- Prevent EPA from implementing new greenhouse gas emissions restrictions for power plants;
- Remove EPA's existing authority to regulate carbon pollution from large stationary facilities;
- Prohibit the Administration from designating coal ash as a hazardous waste;
- Bar the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from creating or expanding wildlife refuges; and
- Prohibit the listing two species of sage grouse as endangered.

The bill also contains a rider to halt EPA from finalizing its Proposed Rule to clarify the jurisdictional scope of the Clean Water Act (CWA). In issuing the Proposed Rule, EPA took an important and overdue step toward ensuring the protection of our nation's wetlands, streams, and other waters. The CWA is the nation's primary tool for protecting wetlands that are connected in some way to other bodies of water, such as rivers or streams; however, the scope of the CWA had been muddled by earlier court rulings.

Were the House and Senate to pass

their respective appropriations bills, it is very unlikely that the riders would survive negotiations over the makeup of the final legislation. In recent years, the House Majority has loaded up appropriations bills with policy riders to have more leverage in calling for spending cuts when negotiating with the Senate, and getting perhaps a few of the riders through the process as well. Unfortunately, what this means is that, in a year when both chambers of Congress were able to agree upon overall spending levels, Congress will nonetheless very likely get so bogged down by policy riders that it cannot get its work done in passing FY 2015 appropriations bills.

As the number of legislative days left before the November elections slip by, it will become extremely difficult for Congress to finalize appropriations bills, or some package of appropriations bills, prior to recessing for the month of October to go home and campaign. It is still possible though, and we strongly encourage Congress to get the job done and done on time. The far worse, but more likely, alternative is that Congress will simply continue current funding levels on autopilot under what is known as a "continuing resolution," at least for part of the next fiscal year.

Read our earlier blog post for more information on the status of FY 2015 appropriations.

## Land and Water Conservation Fund celebrates turning 50 by being underfunded ... for the 48th time

**By Bob Marshall**  
**The Field & Stream Conservationist**

Hardly a day goes by without a new opinion poll showing Congress has sunk to a new low in national approval ratings. There are many reasons for that slump, but I can think of none better than the story of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

In 1964, Congress agreed to dedicate a small portion of royalties it received from oil and gas extraction in federal offshore waters to protect fish and wildlife habitat on land. As the LWCF Coalition (<http://lwcfcoalition.org/>) succinctly summarizes, "It was a simple

idea: use revenues from the depletion of one natural resource - offshore oil and gas - to support the conservation of another precious resource - our land and water.

Congress put a \$900 million annual cap on the fund, and made sure it would be dispersed to state as well as federal agencies for projects involved in fish and wildlife habitat conservation, which ultimate benefit all outdoors recreation.

The legislation was held up as a shining example of a national government understanding its responsibility to the environment, especially for future generations.

But in the 50 years since then, following Congresses have fully funded the LWCF only twice. The rest of the time they took

money out of the fund for other purposes

Put another way: They have been stealing from fish, wildlife, and sportsmen for 48 of the last 50 years.

Breaking promises is bad government at its worst. It not only cheats the intended programs, but it destroys trust in the institution going forward. And that means future agreements like this one will be harder to put into law.

Robbing the LWCF has had as an increasingly negative impact on fish and wildlife management. Because it is supposed to be practically a guaranteed source of funding, many agencies make plans for the money

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*Continued on Page 22*

# Feral cats videoed killing endangered Hawaiian seabirds

## From The Birding Wire

Scientists in Hawaii report that free-roaming, feral cats are killing endangered seabirds in large numbers in one of the most remote and rugged rainforests of the mountains of Kaua'i.

Cameras placed on endangered seabird burrows on Kaua'i this season have filmed feral cats entering burrows and killing breeding birds, according to the Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Project (KESRP). Videos released on its website and Facebook page this week show cats pulling a Newell's Shearwater and a Hawaiian Petrel out of their respective burrows and killing them.

"This is yet more evidence of the serious conservation impact that feral cats are having on our endangered wildlife," said Dr André Raine, coordinator of KESRP. "Year after year, we are finding the bodies of dead seabirds killed by cats in even our most remote and isolated colonies."

The Kaua'i Endangered Seabird Recovery Team is a collaboration of the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the University of Hawaii's Pacific Coop-

erative Studies Unit.

According to a press released issued this week by KESRP, in one of the videos, a cat enters a rare Newell's Shearwater burrow at a site within the Hono o Na Pali Natural Area Reserve. It is then seen struggling about in the burrow and then emerging with the shearwater in its mouth before killing it and eating parts of it off camera. The remains of the bird were recovered a few days later by KESRP staff. The bird was one of a pair of the very rare Newell's Shearwaters that had successfully fledged a chick last year.

The KESRP Team has been conducting field research on the endangered birds to better understand the factors causing a continued decline in the endangered species. The studies are revealing high rates of nest failure and numerous instances where the birds have been killed by predators at the nest.

"The cameras are showing that cats are regularly visiting seabird burrows in all of our monitored colonies," said Dr. Raine. "Last year, we had one cat visit nine burrows in a single day - killing a Hawaiian Petrel chick in the process. If one considers that we are only monitoring

a small number of burrows with cameras in a small number of areas, then the true impact of feral cats must be very significant indeed. These cats are not house pets. They are predators capable of wiping out entire colonies of our native and endemic seabirds," he said.

KESRP reports it has already recorded 25 instances on camera of feral cats trying to enter breeding bird burrows this season, including the two that resulted in the birds inside being killed. The remains of nine endangered seabirds killed by cats have also been discovered at multiple remote sites around the island so far this season.

Like many other States and counties throughout the country, Hawai'i's communities are seeking solutions to address problems with large numbers of feral cats in public and residential areas. In an effort to find solutions, the Kaua'i County Council created the Feral Cat Task Force. It is expected to present its findings to the county in early July.

Editor's note: To see the video, go to <http://kauaiseabirdproject.org/index.php/media/kesrp-press-releases/june-26-2014-feral-cats-caught-on-camera-killing-endangered-seabirds>

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## FUND

*Continued from Page 21*

they are supposed to receive. Today federal agencies report a \$30 billion backlog in projects, including many needed to protect already vulnerable habitats. State agencies say they are holding a \$27 billion backlog. And when it comes to saving and protecting fish and wildlife habitat, delay often means permanent loss.

Early in July, Trout Unlimited, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, the Bull Moose Sportsmen's Alliance, and the National Wildlife Federation met with federal officials and supportive members of congress to outline some of the good programs being threatened by yet another congress refusing to fully fund the LWCF. As you read a part of the list below, understand the people representing you in Washington may be voting to not fund these and many other projects that were promised to you 50 years ago. Contact your reps to find out where they stand. You can find their contact information at [contactingthecongress.org](http://contactingthecongress.org).

### **Tenderfoot Creek, Montana**

Several sportsmen's organizations, local organizations and the U.S. Forest Service are partnering to protect lands in the Tenderfoot Creek drainage, which flows into the nationally recognized Smith River, a popular floating and fishing stream, within the heart of the historic Lewis & Clark National Forest. Funding from the LWCF is helping to conserve habitat for cutthroat trout, elk, deer, moose, and other species; and provide public access to the Smith River.

### **Gunnison Gorge Conservation and Wilderness Area, Colorado**

Offers gold medal fishing waters for rainbow, brown, and cutthroat trout. In addition, the Gunnison Gorge offers one-of-a-kind backcountry hunting for chukar, mule deer, big horn sheep, elk, mountain lion and coyote.

### **Dakota Grassland Conservation Area, North Dakota and South Dakota**

Often referred to as America's "Duck Factory," the Prairie Pothole Region is responsible for approximately half of the waterfowl production in the United States. But this habitat is threatened as wetlands are drained and grasslands are plowed under. In

response to these challenges, LWCF funding has enabled the creation of the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area, which boasts 1.7 million acres of grassland habitat as well as 240,000 acres of wetlands. Not only has this ensured access to hunters, but the establishment of conservation easements on private land also has kept these agricultural lands working.

### **Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana**

There are over 24,000 acres of fresh and brackish marshes and coastal hardwood forests, all within the city limits of New Orleans, making it the nation's largest urban National Wildlife Refuge. The proximity to New Orleans provides ample opportunities to educate local school children, and in 2011 the refuge instituted a youth waterfowl season, the first hunting season since the refuge was established. Bayou Sauvage is a prime example of how LWCF funds can be used not only for habitat conservation and education, but also for hunting and fishing opportunities. Like many wetland areas in coastal Louisiana, Bayou Sauvage also provides much-needed storm surge protection for the city.

# Legacy of the Gulf oil spill

**By David J. White**  
**National Wildlife Federation**

It is said that behind every crisis is an opportunity. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill was a tragedy that took the lives of eleven men, significantly disrupted the economy of the Gulf States, and enormously damaged fish, wildlife, and natural ecosystems of the Gulf Coast.

Various legal processes are underway to hold BP responsible for the economic and ecological damages it caused. The Natural Resource Damage Assessment process is currently evaluating ecological impacts from the spill, and will require the company to pay full restitution for all environmental damages. This is just the cost of business for these multinational energy corporations who reap huge profits from drilling in ever-deeper and more dangerous waters.

The RESTORE Act, passed by Congress and signed into law with the help of sportsmen, anglers and conservationists around the country, sends 80% of all civil fines for illegal discharge of oil under the Clean Water Act back to the Gulf Coast region for ecological and economic restoration. Without the RESTORE Act, these funds - which could be as much as \$17 billion - would otherwise go into the US Treasury. Consequently, RESTORE Act funds constitute somewhat of a windfall to the Gulf States, since they are not necessarily intended to compensate for damages caused by the oil disaster.

It is now time for Florida's anglers, sportsmen and conservationists to rally and engage in the various processes going on in Gulf Coastal Counties to determine how the RESTORE funds will be spent. We believe it is fitting, fair and just to use the majority of BP's civil fines and penalties to fund ecosystem-scale solutions necessary to address ecological damage to the Gulf Coast caused by decades of degradation, neglect, and abuse. As you might imagine, however, there is tremendous pressure at the state and local level to divert those funds away from ecological restoration projects into primarily economic development activities. It will take a concerted effort from all of us that care about healthy fish and wildlife populations to ensure that there is an appropriate balance between ecosystem restoration and economic development, and to advocate for restoration projects that will benefit the ecology and resiliency of coastal communities while also creating jobs and stimulating the regional economy.

The RESTORE Act passed with strong bipartisan support because Congress recognized the Gulf of Mexico is an American

treasure worth saving. The crisis that was the oil spill became an opportunity to address a half-century's worth of ecological degradation. Our coastal ecosystems are disappearing at an alarming rate, many of our fisheries are reduced to a mere vestige of what they once were, and our coastal communities are increasingly vulnerable to rising sea levels and coastal flooding from more frequent and powerful storms.

The RESTORE Act is an historic opportunity to address, in a truly meaningful way, the long-term degradation of the Gulf by rebuilding marshes, restoring water quality and the ecological integrity of our estuaries, reversing erosion of barrier islands and coastal habitats, and protecting our investments in our coastal way of life. It's also our best chance to restore our fishing and seafood tradition by protecting and improving essential fish habitats to produce more fish for the future. Our challenge now is to find the most effective way to direct funds to correct major environmental problems in the Gulf, in a way that promotes economic and environmental resiliency for coastal communities.

Tourism plays a vital role in our state, and Florida's 23 Gulf coastal counties support more than 16,000 tourism businesses, providing more than 281,000 jobs. Florida's tourism industry is largely driven by clean waters and beautiful beaches, making productive coastal ecosystems and habitats economic engines that help drive our economy. Fishing, hunting and wildlife watching are important economic drivers in Florida, drawing over 7 million participants annually, and generating over \$8 billion in revenue. This industry consists not only of guides that directly serve visitors, but also lodging and dining establishments where visitors eat and sleep. Wildlife tourism depends on healthy ecosystems, Florida's "natural capital."

We should insist that our government leaders implement a robust, transparent and broad-based public participation process where projects and activities that will both stimulate the coastal economy and contribute to the recovery and restoration of coastal resources can be fully and fairly understood, discussed, and compared. Ultimately, projects that have the greatest long-term benefits for coastal communities can then be widely supported by the public and implemented as quickly as possible.

If we use this money to restore coastal habitats, improve water quality, and increase coastal resiliency we will create new jobs and reduce flood risks, improve tourism opportunities, and help achieve economic and ecological stability over the long term.

In short, we can either make sound invest-

ments that will make a lasting difference to our future prosperity, or we can squander this opportunity. Despite its title and fairly explicit intention, the RESTORE Act leaves plenty of wiggle room for non-restoration expenditures. Florida's leaders could easily spend these funds on the very kinds of infrastructure and development that have left the coast in its current degraded state. We the People must let our elected officials know we want the legacy of this tragic event to be a healthy, resilient Florida Gulf Coast that will support our communities and our economy for generations to come.

Editor's Note: David J. White is Director of the Gulf of Mexico Restoration Campaign with National Wildlife Federation out of Saint Petersburg, FL. Many of the migratory birds that travel through Kansas winter in the Gulf of Mexico area. The RESTORE Act deserves our support and efforts to get the Kansas congressional delegation to vigorously support it, too.

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## GMOS

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*Continued from Page 3*

GMOs have not been linked directly to the bee die-off. But the dominance of GMO crops has led to the widespread use of pesticides such as neonicotinoids and industrial farming practices that biologists believe are harming other pollinators, such as the monarch butterfly.

Neonicotinoids account for 40 percent of the global pesticide market and are used to treat most corn and soybean crops in the U.S.

The Service also decided that by January of 2016, neonicotinoid pesticides will be completely phased out. These pesticides have been linked to the decline of the bee population hurting local ecosystems. Kurth mentions "We have determined that prophylactic use, such as a seed treatment, of the neonicotinoid pesticides that can distribute systematically in a plant and can potentially affect a broad spectrum of non-target species that is not consistent with Service policy."

The Kansas Wildlife Federation applauds Kurth and the Service for making these bold decisions for the benefit of wildlife.

We understand the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is considering the same changes on KDWP wildlife areas in Kansas. We applaud their efforts, too.

*This article was compiled from reports by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and Takepart.com.*



# Merlin Bird ID app now available for Android

## From The Birding Wire

Merlin Bird ID - now available for Android - is a revolutionary new app for identifying common birds of North America. Why is it revolutionary?

It asks you five simple questions about the bird you saw and then gives you a short list of the most likely possibilities.

That short list is a smart list - Merlin uses data from our eBird project to tell you which birds are most likely to be seen near you, right now.

It's loaded with tons of top-quality photos and sounds.

It's free.

Cornell Lab launched Merlin Bird ID in January 2014 for iOS7 devices and immediately started work on developing an Android version. That version is now ready to download in the Google Play store. Plus, while they were developing Merlin for Android, they also expanded the app so that it now covers 400 species and contains more than 2,000 photos and 1,000 sounds. And it's still free. Note: because Merlin Bird ID is a large app, be sure to download it via a wifi connection. Tap this link from your Android device to download the Android version (OS4 and higher).

iPhone and iPad Users: the updated

400-species version of Merlin Bird ID is available for devices running iOS7 or later, too. If you already have Merlin, just update the app on your device to get the new version.

Merlin is a great tool for beginning birders or anyone who wants to help share their love of birds.

If you don't have Merlin yet, tap this link to download either the iOS or Android version. <http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/download/>

Find out more at: <http://blog.allaboutbirds.org/2014/07/25/its-here-free-merlin-bird-id-app-now-available-for-android/>

## NSSF issues report on combined spending by hunters and target shooters

National Shooting Sports Foundation's "Hunting in America" and "Target Shooting in America" reports reveal the broad impact that spending by hunters and target shooters have on America's economy. Now, responding to demand for a combined report, NSSF has issued "Economic Impact of Hunting and Target Shooting in America," showing, among other significant statistics, that spending by America's sportsmen and women results in a total impact of \$110 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

"America's hunters and target shooters create one giant economic engine whose hum can be felt throughout our country and by businesses of all sizes," said Elizabeth Karasmeighan, NSSF Director, Legislative and Policy Research.

The report contains some surprising

findings and interesting comparisons.

The more than 866,000 jobs supported by hunting and target shooting would rank as the seventh largest employer in the world, ahead of IBM or McDonald's. And the \$48 billion in retail sales exceed those of Fortune 100 Companies like Coca-Cola, Federal Express or Disney.

Given that taxes were on everyone's mind recently, it's notable that expenditures by hunters and target shooters result in combined state, local and federal taxes of more than \$15 billion, an annual collection that would pay more than 336,000 firefighters.

The report includes a state-by-state breakdown of the economic contributions from combined hunting and target shooting activities. Leading the pack is Texas whose hunters and shooters generate \$5.1

billion in economic activity, followed by Michigan and New York at \$4.6 billion and Wisconsin at \$4.2 billion. Even tiny Rhode Island's economy benefits to the tune of more than \$109 million.

"These impressive economic numbers show that the popularity of target shooting and hunting are good for industry and good for America," said NSSF President Steve Sanetti.

The "Economic Impact of Hunting and Target Shooting in America" report, as well as the individual "Hunting in America" and "Target Shooting in America" reports, is available at [www.nssf.org/research](http://www.nssf.org/research).

"Hunting in America" was a joint effort of NSSF and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The findings in both reports are based on spending activity from 2011.

## Factoids:

Sportsmen contribute \$800 million annually to state wildlife management agencies via hunting and trapping licenses and excise taxes.

According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the average hunter spends \$96,017 during his or her lifetime on hunting equipment, accessories, travel, and other related expenses.

Traveling sportsmen spend \$5 billion annually at hotels, restaurants, gas stations and other services.

# Poachers hitting deer near Cedar Bluff Reservoir

By Molly Hadfield  
Ksn.com

Deer hunting season doesn't start until December, but that's not stopping some poachers near Cedar Bluff Reservoir.

State wildlife officials found six deer off the highway near Cedar Bluff Reservoir, all killed by poachers in July.

"Well, the unusual part about it is that, in the middle of summer it's just something that usually doesn't happen. Occasionally in deer season you'll have some issues with people shooting stuff, and taking parts and just leaving other parts, but with this it's in the middle of summer and they haven't taken anything," said Owen Johnson, a Game Warden with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and

Tourism.

The poachers didn't take any meat or antlers from the deer.

"They're just being shot and wasted. They're not doing anything with them. They're just driving by and shooting them and driving off and leaving them to waste there in the grass," said Johnson.

Several of the deer were shot in this field. You can see the shine of their eyes at night. As people drive down the highway, it's easy to shoot the deer from a truck.

"It only takes a few seconds to stop, roll your window down and shoot at one or two and keep going down the interstate. The whole act only takes fifteen to twenty seconds before the person's going back down the road again," Johnson said.

The worst part is that these deer are

being killed in fields reserved for youth hunts. They are for kids to hunt with mentors who otherwise wouldn't get the opportunity to go hunting.

"The fields are protected all year round from all other hunting. And then for someone to come along and just kill them and not do anything with them. They're essentially taking away from those kids who are counting on that as a place to hunt," said Johnson.

If you know anything about the deer poachers, you can report them anonymously to Operation Game Thief at 1-877-246-3843.

To see the video report from KSN News TV, go to:

<http://ksn.com/2014/07/24/poachers-hitting-deer-near-cedar-bluff-reservoir/>

## Colorado health officials warn of plague in small game

By Daniel Xu  
OutdoorHub

Boulder County health officials have announced that fleas from a dead prairie dog tested positive for bubonic plague earlier this month. The animal was found in the city of Boulder after residents noticed its carcass on their property. According to a [press release](#), health officials have already set warning signs in the area where the animal was found, as well as nearby parks and open spaces. Residents are warned to avoid wildlife such as squirrels, prairie dogs, and other small rodents that may carry the plague. Domestic pets are the most at risk for contracting the disease, and experts also advise buying new flea collars or flea powders to keep pets healthy.

"Because plague is most commonly transmitted by fleas, taking steps to avoid flea exposures will help prevent the spread of the disease," said Lane Drager, Boulder County Public Health Consumer Protection Program coordinator.

It is rare, but not unheard of for pets to transmit the disease to their owners. Three people in Colorado have already contracted pneumonic plague after com-



**Residents are warned after the first confirmed case of bubonic plague in Colorado since 2011.**

ing into contact with an infected dog. Pneumonic plague is similar to bubonic plague, except it is considered even more rare and virulent. It is also highly transmissible from human to human. [Fox News](#) reports that the recent cases were the first time plague has been transmitted to a human since 2004.

Plague occurs naturally in Colorado, which only recorded 12 cases of human infections over the past decade. The disease is spread by fleas and can carry symptoms such as fever, fatigue, and severe swelling. Due to its rarity, it is often

not seen as a high concern, but experts say that any suspected case of infection must be treated as quickly as possible. Plague has a high fatality rate if antibiotics are not administered quickly after infection.

Boulder County health officials also released the following tips for preventing plague contraction:

- **AVOID FLEAS!** Protect pets with flea powder, drops, or a new flea collar. Keep pets on a leash and out of wild rodent habitats.
- **STAY OUT** of areas that wild rodents inhabit. If you enter areas with wild rodents, wear insect repellent and tuck pants cuffs into socks to prevent flea bites.
- **AVOID** all contact with wild rodents, including squirrels; do not feed or handle them.
- **DO NOT TOUCH** sick or dead animals.
- **PREVENT** rodent infestations around your house. Clear plants and materials away from outside walls, reduce access to food items, and set rodent traps.
- **TREAT** known rodent sites around your home with flea powder or a suitable insecticide.

# Top 5 myths about coal

**By Susan Stephenson**  
**Interfaith Power & Light**

From Pittsburgh, PA to Denver, CO people of faith across the country are speaking out in support of the EPA carbon pollution standards. But Big Coal continues to spread myths and fear about what will happen when the health of our communities gets in the way of their profits.

Here are the top five myths they are promoting, and why they are so outrageous.

The Top 5 Myths About Coal:

**Myth #1: Curtailing coal will have a devastating effect on American jobs**

In 2013, 89,838 individuals were employed by the coal industry compared to 142,698 individuals employed by the solar industry (1). Coal jobs have been decreasing, but this is largely due to increased automation and efficiency in coal mining: While coal jobs in two major coal states, Kentucky and West Virginia, have decreased from 79,000 in 1983 to 41,000 in 2012, the states' combined coal output has remained steady, dropping from 245 million short tons in 1983 to 240 short tons in 2011 (2). Coal workers are losing their jobs, in part, to horrific "efficiencies" like mountain top removal, where the top of the mountain is blown off to get at the coal seams.

In fact, every dollar invested into clean energy creates approximately 3 times as many jobs as a dollar invested into fossil fuels. (7)

**Myth #2: There is such a thing as "clean coal"**

This idea relies heavily on new methods such as "Carbon Capture and Sequester" (CCS) which will store carbon pollution from coal-fired plants in underground geological formations, a method that will use 10%-40% of the energy created by the power plant (5). This, and the added cost of creating a CCS system, will almost double the cost of creating new coal-fired power plants. Most importantly, CCS

won't be available at a large scale until 2030 and even oil giant Shell, "doesn't see CCS being widespread until 2050." Unfortunately, CCS is still a hypothetical solution, not a reality. With approximately 6,000 to 10,700 deaths attributed to air pollution from coal-fired power plants each year, (4) we can't afford to wait.

**Myth #3: The federal government is waging a "war on coal"**

The federal government has been ordered by the Supreme Court to enforce the Clean Air Act and rein in global warming pollution. Power plants are the nation's largest emitter, so the EPA's first-ever proposed limits on carbon pollution will address all power plants. The decline in coal jobs is nothing new; in fact, coal jobs have been declining since 1983, long before the current administration and long before the EPA carbon rules (2).

**Myth #4: EPA limits on carbon pollution will cause electricity rates to skyrocket**

This is the standard old saw the industry uses every time a new regulation is proposed, whether to limit air pollution or require more renewable energy sources. In the long run, greater efficiency and greater reliance on renewables whose fuels (sunlight and wind) are free will reduce electricity rates. The American Wind Energy Association published a study that found that consumer rates declined over the past five years in the eleven states with the most wind powered electricity, while all other states saw a collective increase in rates. Americans will save money through reduced health care costs as well. The EPA estimates that the new carbon rules will help avoid 2,700 to 6,600 premature deaths and 140,000 to 150,000 asthma attacks each year. This means that for every \$1 invested in clean energy, Americans will reap \$7 in health benefits. (8)

**Myth #5: Mountain top removal coal mining is good for wildlife**

Yes, this is an actual claim of some pro-coal groups (6). They say animals thrive

in the open landscape. Let's get our facts clear: Mountain top removal has destroyed more than 500 mountains, encompassing 1.2 million acres – roughly the size of Delaware. (8) With the destruction of their habitat many birds are in danger, including the cerulean warbler whose population has steadily declined by 70%. Fish such as the blackside dace have also been severely impacted by mining waste that has filled nearly 2,000 miles of Appalachian streams. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, "The most significant factor in the decline of the blackside dace has apparently been habitat degradation from siltation, particularly in relation to surface mining." (8)

You can stand up to Big Coal by telling the EPA that you support the carbon pollution standards and educating your friends and family about the effects of coal.

There is no debate: Coal is bad for our health, our economy, and Creation. **Tell the EPA you support the Carbon Pollution Standards today.**

Footnotes:

1. [http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/solutions\\_summer\\_2014\\_final.pdf](http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/solutions_summer_2014_final.pdf)
2. <http://www.nationaljournal.com/new-energy-paradigm/coal-country-s-decline-has-a-long-history-20131031>
3. [http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other\\_publication\\_types/green\\_economics/economic\\_benefits/economic\\_benefits.PDF](http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/other_publication_types/green_economics/economic_benefits/economic_benefits.PDF)
4. <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/news-and-blogs/news/new-greenpeace-report-exposes/>
5. [http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/9553\\_coal-plants-health-impacts.pdf](http://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/9553_coal-plants-health-impacts.pdf)
6. <http://www.kentuckycoal.org/index2.cfm?pageToken=mtmIssues>
7. <http://appvoices.org/end-mountain-top-removal/ecology/>
8. <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-06/documents/20140602ria-clean-power-plan.pdf>

## Factoids:

"In the environment, every victory is temporary, every defeat permanent." - Thomas Jefferson

"The wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must and we will." - Theodore Roosevelt



# Scotts gets out of birdseed

**By Paul J. Baicich**  
**Birding Community E-bulletin**

In 2012, Scotts Miracle-Gro, based in Marysville, Ohio, agreed to plead guilty to federal court charges and agreed to pay fines in connection with distributing 73 million units of birdseed coated with the insecticides Storcide II and/or Actellic 5E between November 2005 and March 2008. These insecticides were

used to keep insects from eating the seed during storage but they have been determined to be toxic to birds. Scotts is the world's largest marketer of branded consumer lawn and garden products. This story appeared in the March and October 2012 E-bulletin: <http://refugeassociation.org/?p=5126#seed> and <http://refugeassociation.org/?p=6429#scotts>

In late March of this year, Global Harvest Foods acquired the Scotts Miracle-

Gro U.S. wild bird food business. The acquisition transfers to Global Harvest Foods some of Scotts' familiar name brands: Songbird Selection, Morning Song, and Country Pride. The deal includes the Scotts birdseed manufacturing plant in Reynolds, Indiana.

You can find more information here: [www.birdingbusiness.com/](http://www.birdingbusiness.com/) and [www.ghfoods.com/documents/ScottsAcquisition-Mar2014.pdf](http://www.ghfoods.com/documents/ScottsAcquisition-Mar2014.pdf)

## Scientists report finding intersex fish in Pennsylvania

**By Daniel Xu**  
**The OutdoorHub**

A new survey led by the US Geological Survey (USGS) has found intersex fish, or fish that display traits of both genders, in at least three Pennsylvania River Basins. According to the USGS, "male" specimens recovered from the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Ohio river basins have been discovered to contain immature eggs in their testes. Experts are saying that the trait may have been caused by exposure to man-made chemicals that include hormone-mimicking compounds.

"Chemical compounds associated with estrogenic endocrine disruption, in particular estrone, a natural estrogen, were also associated with the extent and severity of these effects in bass," said fish biologist Vicki Blazer.

"The sources of estrogenic chemicals are most likely complex mixtures from both agricultural sources, such as animal wastes, pesticides and herbicides, and human sources from waste water treatment plant effluent and other sewage discharges," she added.



**Smallmouth bass and white sucker found in at least three Pennsylvania river basins exhibited intersex attributes.**

Blazer and her team recently published the results of their study in the online journal *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*. The researchers said that fish downstream from a wastewater treatment plant or near agricultural development are especially prone to these defects, which the fish are born with. Blazer told the *Los Angeles Times* that she was surprised by the number of fish affected and the severity of the defects.

"We weren't expecting the issue to be as widespread as it was," she said.

Local lawmakers have already responded to the troubling discovery, seeking to call more attention to water pollution and chemical waste regulation.

"We need to be conscious of the substances flowing into our water sources," said **Virginia Representative Jim Moran** (D-VA). "Our rivers and the wildlife living there are among our country's most precious resources, it's a shame to see them deteriorated at the hands of irresponsible human behavior."

Moran reminded lawmakers that America's rivers and wildlife that depend on them are among the nation's most treasured resources, and they can be quickly destroyed by irresponsible behavior.

It is not currently known how the phenomenon will affect fish populations or how humans will be affected by either eating intersex fish or consuming contaminated water. Researchers said that upgrading treatment facilities as well as reducing the amount of chemicals leaking into the water should mitigate the problem.

## Factoids:

Over half of all anglers have attended college.

National wildlife refuges generate about \$4 in economic activity for every \$1 of government spending on the Refuge System budget.

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

## The Kansas Wildlife Federation is Working to Preserve a Way of Life for Kansas!

### *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!

## How You Can Help:

- \* **Basic Membership:** As a Basic member, for \$30 you'll receive 6 issues of the KWF newsletter packed with the latest information on wildlife resources, events and issues around the state. You also have voting privileges at the KWF Annual Meeting.
- \* **Expanded Membership:** When you send in your Expanded member dues of \$75, you receive the basic membership benefits and a complimentary ticket to the KWF Annual Meeting and CAP banquet.
- \* **Kansan:** For an annual fee of \$150, you receive all the benefits listed above plus an additional complimentary ticket to the KWF Annual Meeting and CAP banquet.

## Here's How to Join:

**Complete the form on Page 12 and mail with your membership fee to:**  
**Kansas Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 771282, Wichita, KS 67277-1282**