

The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

**January-
February 2015**

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

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Go to our Web site,
www.kswildlife.org,
for additional KWF information



Journal Sentinel files

Experimental vaccine partially successful at preventing CWD in deer

By Paul A. Smith

Milwaukee-Wisconsin Journal Sentinel

In a scientific milestone that could have human health implications, an experimental vaccine was partially successful at preventing chronic wasting disease in deer, according to a recently published U.S. study.

The finding represents the first time a treatment has prevented the deadly prion infection in deer. The work could have implications on human health and the livestock industry, according to lead researcher Thomas Wisniewski of New York University's

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Protecting the Land... Passing on Our Traditions



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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President's Message

By Troy Schroeder

It's hard to believe that I have been KWF Board president for three years. But that being the case, I have reached the term limit and will be passing along this duty to someone else at our annual meeting in February. Unfortunately, I was not able to achieve all the lofty things I set out to accomplish three years ago. Angela Anderson, our current Administrative Vice President, is planning to run for President. And if elected, will do a great job of leading KWF in the future. I remain dedicated to the KWF cause and plan to remain on the Board to serve in some other capacity.

We currently have all volunteer Officers and Board members that carry out all of the KWF activities. I wish to thank these folks for all their hard work and dedication during my Presidency. They are listed in the first couple pages of this newsletter.

A few things I would like for us to do in the future include:

- Greatly increase KWF membership. Not only does most of our funding come from memberships, but numbers count when we try to impact legislative or state administrative decisions that affect wildlife.

- Increase funding through tax deductible donations for tax purposes or planned giving through wills and estates so we can do more on-the-ground habitat projects.

- Address the pollinator crisis by improving habitat for bees and butterflies in back yards or other small plots



·If funding allows, hire a part-time administrative person to help with daily duties and new program coordination to relieve some of the volunteer board members that are now working above and beyond what they should be doing.

Although addressed elsewhere in this newsletter, I am asking each of you to renew your membership as soon as possible. Memberships run from Jan 1 through Dec 31. Consider stepping up to a higher level of membership by donating at least \$75. With this level of membership, you get a free ticket to our annual Conservation Achievement Award banquet. In addition, please contact at least five other people and invite them to join KWF. We again

Continued on Page 3

Affiliate News

17th annual deer hunt a success

Thank you again to the Geary County Fish & Game Association for their assistance with the 17th Annual Milford Lake Assisted Deer Hunt which was held December 12, 13 & 14, 2014. This year they had records of: 17 total number of hunters they were able to assist; 6 for number of deer taken on a Friday evening session; and 12 for total number of deer harvested.

All of this is good, but the camaraderie with these otherwise mobility impaired hunters is what is special. Being a partner with the Corps of Engineers, Milford State Park, Grandpa Boone's Outfitters, and the Clay Center Locker plant is a bonus with this endeavor. Thanks to GCF&G's: Shirley and Gordon Allen, Ed

Augustine, Chris Blodgett, Don Gilmore, James Trunk, Mike Wagenblast, and Harvey Brink for all your individual support.

Geary County Fish & Game Association Officers Elected

New Officers and directors for 2015 were elected at the December membership meeting. Officers elected were: President Alex McKay; Vice President Tom Goudey; Secretary Kathie Ainsworth; Treasurer Shirley Allen. Directors elected were: Past President Ed Augustine; Chris Blodgett, Cathy Strowig, Kenneth Malone, Michael Johnson, Larry Varney and Wendell Wright.

A call for 2015 resolutions

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

If you have an issue you would like to see addressed by KWF members

at the 2015 Annual Meeting February 21 in Hays, please send the proposed resolution to KWF by January 31, 2015 at KWF Resolutions P.O. Box 771282 Wichita, KS 67277-1282 or e-mail it to info@kswildlife.org.

The proposed resolution will be reviewed Friday night, February 20 and presented to the membership for adoption at the annual meeting. If you have any questions regarding the process, contact Steve Sorensen, Conservation Vice President, at 316-214-3001 or info@kswildlife.org.

Example

Supporting Water Quality Protection of Kansas Streams

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

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

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

Whereas, current legislation is designed to dismantle water quality protection criteria in Kansas and will do great harm to the maintenance of healthy stream systems for wildlife and people by requiring adequate water quality standards on only the largest of our Kansas rivers; and,

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

Whereas, current legislation requires the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to assess the social, economic, and regulatory impacts of each

stream prior to classification which is beyond their capabilities and will subject all streams to a state of no classification if this legislation is passed; and,

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

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

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

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

We would love to see you at our annual meeting and CAP banquet in Hays on Feb 21. Pollinators is the central theme. Detailed information is elsewhere in this newsletter.

I wish you health, happiness and prosperity in 2015.

2015

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give you the option of giving a basic \$30 membership to a friend for half price with your paid membership.

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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2015 NWF Alternate

Representative:

Angela Anderson

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**Geary County Fish & Game
Association**
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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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

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

Calendar of Events

Jan 12

Geary County Fish & Game Association Membership Mtg, Milford Lake

Jan 19

KS Assn. of Biology Teachers Winter Board Meeting, Camp Williamson, Venango

Jan 19

Elk Days at Maxwell Refuge, McPherson County Betty Schmidt 620-628-4455

Jan 24

KNPS Winter Board Meeting and Outing, GPNC Wichita Mike Haddock

Jan 29-30

Kansas Natural Resources Conference combined meeting – Airport Hilton, Wichita

1. Great Plains Society of American Forestry,
2. Kansas Alliance for Wetlands and Streams
3. Kansas Chapter: American Fisheries Society
4. Kansas Chapter: Soil and Water Conservation Society
5. Kansas Chapter: The Wildlife Society
6. Kansas Section: Society for Range Management
7. Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition

Feb 20-21

Kansas Wildlife Federation Annual Meeting, Hays

Feb 21

Flint Hills Chapter QUWF Banquet, Morris County Fair Building

Mar 16-22

Spring Break for Kansas Regents Schools

Apr 10-11

Kansas Assn. of Teachers of Science [KATS] Kamp, Rock Springs

Apr 24-25

Wings n/Wetlands Festival, Great Bend

May 2-3

Kansas Ornithological Society spring meeting, Western KS

May 2-3

Kansas Sampler Festival, Wamego

May 3-5

Outdoor Writers of Kansas spring meeting, Emporia

May 29-31

Kansas Assn. of Biology Teachers spring field trip, Chautauqua Hills

June 6

11th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament, Scott Waters, 785-545-3345

June 7-12

KWF Outdoor Adventure Camp, Rock Springs Camp Theresa bergkwf@wtciweb.com

June 13

6th Justin Corbet Foundation "Youth in the Outdoors Day" 785-256-6444

June 13

Symphony in the Flint Hills, Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, Chase County

July 30-Aug 2

Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, national meeting, KU, Lawrence

Sept 12

Kansas Assn. of Biology Teachers annual mtg, Konza Biological Station, Manhattan

Sept 26-27

Kansas Hunting & Fishing Expo, Emporia 620-342-4631

Sept 25-27

Kansas Native Plant Society annual meeting, Konza Biological Station, Manhattan

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

Witnesses of wildlife-related crimes can report anonymously

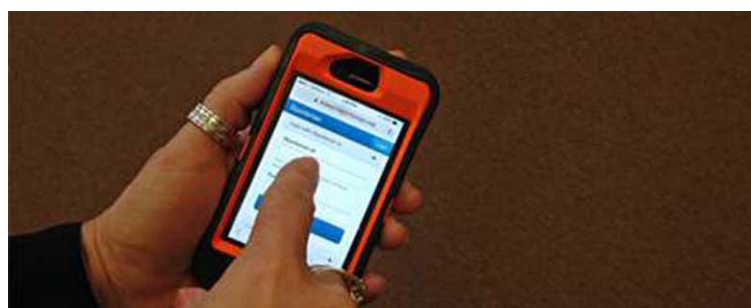
Countless wildlife, especially big game, will be illegally killed at the hands of poachers this season and unfortunately, these criminals are tough to catch. Game wardens work tirelessly to track down the men and women allegedly responsible for these crimes, but often a lack of evidence leaves officers with their hands tied. The good news is, one phone call can change this scenario. Operation Game Thief (OGT), 1-877-426-3843, is a program that provides a toll-free line available 24/7, 365 days of the year, for citizens to report wildlife-related violations. All calls received through the OGT line are quickly relayed to the natural resource officer nearest the violation, and callers can remain anonymous.



When reporting a wildlife crime, keep the following in mind:

- never confront suspects; and
- provide as much specific information as possible, such as vehicle model and color, license tag numbers, descriptions of people involved, locations, and the time the incident occurred.

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



Hunters encouraged to use iSportsman electronic check-in system

Since Sept. 1, hunters using select Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) wildlife areas have been able to obtain free daily hunt permits electronically through the iSportsman system. To date, more than 4,500 individuals have registered for accounts and have "checked in" for 8,000 daily hunting permits. Although several thousand hunters have used the new system, a large percentage of hunters continue to use the traditional paper permit system. The iSportsman electronic permit system, which is more efficient and economical than the paper system, is in use at the following wildlife areas: Jamestown, Lovewell, Clinton, Elwood, Kansas River, Milford, Cheyenne Bottoms, Texas Lake, Isabel, McPherson Wetlands, Slate Creek Wetlands, Neosho, Melvern and Lyon. A similar system has already been in use at Fort Riley.

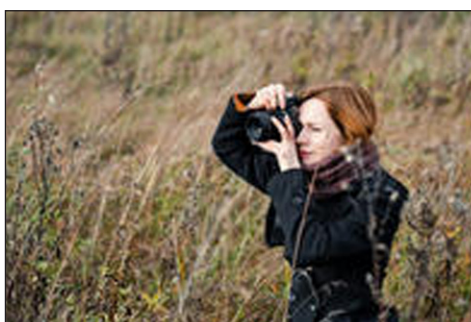
This is a reminder for hunters planning to hunt any of the aforementioned areas to register for an account at any time by logging on to <https://kdwpt.isportsman.net>. Upon completing the registration, hunters will obtain a general access permit. He or she can then log on or call in before they plan to hunt to "check in." After a hunt is complete, the hunter can then log on or call in to report harvests and "check out" of the system. The system can be utilized from any computer, smart phone, cell phone or landline.

For more information on iSportsman, call (620) 672-5911 or visit <https://kdwpt.isportsman.net>.

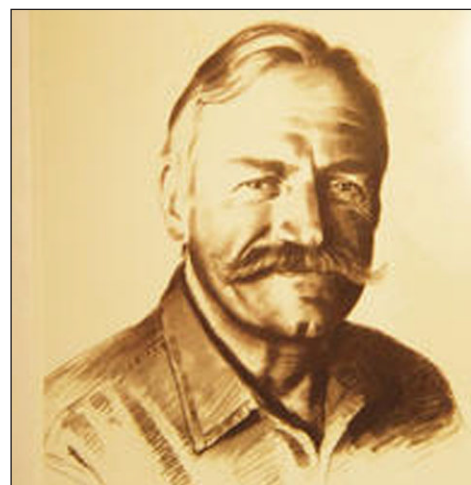
Steve Harper Memorial Scholarship

One of the best-known Kansans of his time, Steve Harper left his mark on Kansas through photographs and words. During his career, he was a photojournalism instructor at Wichita State University, the Wichita Eagle's photography editor and eventually, the newspaper's outdoors writer and photographer. His series in the Eagle on Kansas day trips led to the publication of his popular book, "83,000 square Miles, No Lines, No Waiting." His outdoor page was several times voted the best of its kind in the nation.

Steve died of cancer in 2000, at the age of 55, in the Newton house where he had grown up and raised three daughters. The



Harper Memorial Scholarship was started at the suggestion of Governor Bill Graves,



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2015 KWF Annual Meeting set for Hays

The Kansas Wildlife Federation's 2015 Annual Meeting is set for Friday and Saturday, February 20 and 21 at the Whiskey Creek Wood Fire Grill at 3203 Vine Street in Hays. The 2014 Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards banquet will be held Saturday night at the same

location.

Friday night we will convene a meeting to review pending Kansas legislation dealing with wildlife issues and discuss any resolutions to be brought before the membership at the meeting Saturday morning. Come participate in this important process.

Motel rooms have been reserved at the Days Inn at 3205 Vine Street in Hays. Call the Days Inn at 785-628-8261 or 800-225-3297 to make reservations. Be sure to tell them that you are with the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

See you in Hays.

2015 Annual Meeting Registration Form

Yes – I am registering for the KWF Annual Meeting to be held February 20 & 21 at the Days Inn/Whiskey Creek Wood Fire Grill at 3203 Vine Street in Hays.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Meeting Registration (includes Lunch): _____ @ \$15 (before 2-13-15)
 _____ @ \$20 (after 2-13-15)

Conservation Achievement Banquet: _____ @ \$25 (before 2-13-15)
 _____ @ \$35 (after 2-13-15)

Total Sent: _____

I will bring an item to be auctioned for KWF's education programs. Yes ____ No ____

Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation

MAIL TO: KWF Annual Meeting

Kansas Wildlife Federation

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

KWF Annual Meeting Agenda

**Kansas Wildlife Federation
64th Annual Meeting
February 20 and 21, 2015
Days Inn and Whiskey Creek Wood Fire Grill
3203 Vine Street
Hays, KS**

Friday, February 20th

6:30 pm Registration
7:00 pm 2015 Legislation Presentation
Chris Tymeson, KDWPT
2015 Resolution Review

Saturday, February 21st

8:00 am Registration
9:00 Opening of KWF Annual Meeting
Pledge
Presentation of Minutes of 2014 Annual Meeting
9:30 Committee Reports
Treasurer
Issues and Action
Education
Membership
10:00 Affiliate Reports
10:15 Break

10:30 Resolution Adoption
11:00 NWF Report
11:15 Election of KWF Officers
12:00 Lunch (included in cost of registration)
Northern Long-eared Bats in Kansas
– Dr. Elmer Finck, FHSU
1:30 pm The Importance of Pollinators
Kansas Pollinators – Dr. Packauskas, FHSU
Monarch Butterflies and Roadside Mgmt.
– Orley “Chip” Taylor, Jr., KU
3:15 pm Break
3:30 pm The Importance of Pollinators (cont)
Managing for Pollinators – Zac Eddy, Pheasants Forever
4:30 pm Adjourn

2014 Conservation Achievement Program Awards Banquet

5:30 pm KWF Social Hour with Live and Silent Auctions
Dave Hendricks, Auctioneer
7:00 pm KWF Annual CAP Banquet and Awards Program
Speaker – Scott Hoard, Courtland
“Once in a Lifetime”

Support Nongame species with tax donation

Nongame wildlife makes up more than 99 percent of all species in Kansas

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

While habitat management efforts designed for game species also benefit nongame wildlife, there was a need for programs specific to nongame species, so the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism established the Kansas Nongame Wildlife Improvement Program, also known as the Chickadee Checkoff Program. The program, which seeks support through tax-deductible donations, provides funding for nongame wildlife research, habitat enhancement and restoration projects, as well as a variety of educational projects.

Private donations are crucial in funding these vital programs, especially when



Chickadee Checkoff proceeds are matched by federal funds. Contributions have been steadily decreasing in recent years, making it imperative that every Kansan consider donating this tax season.

To make a contribution, taxpayers can simply mark the Chickadee Checkoff box on their state income tax forms (line 36 on Form K-40) and designate the amount they would like to donate. There is no minimum or incremental requirement,

and donations can also be made directly to the Chickadee Checkoff program at any time throughout the year by mailing the donation to Chickadee Checkoff c/o Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) 512 SE 25th Ave, Pratt, KS 67124.

For more information on how you can support Kansas' nongame wildlife, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click “Services/Wildlife Diversity/Chickadee Checkoff.”

Eight hunters face federal charges linked to dove hunt

By Stan Finger
The Wichita Eagle

Eight hunters – seven from Kansas – were charged November 4 in Federal court in Wichita with violating the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The men are accused of violating the federal law protecting migratory birds when they participated in an annual opening weekend dove hunt in Graham County on the first two days of September, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said in a statement.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act classifies mourning doves as migratory game birds, he said. It classifies owls as migratory non-game birds. Restrictions on

hunting mourning doves include a daily bag limit of 15 and a possession limit of twice the daily bag limit.

Those charged include three men from Derby and one from El Dorado.

Daniel R. Dinkel, 63, of Hill City is charged with one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves.

Kent Webber, 52, of Derby faces one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves and one count of taking an owl.

Evan Webber, 25, of Derby is charged with one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves and one count of taking an owl.

George Morgan, 52, of Gordonville, Texas, faces one count of exceeding the

daily bag limit for mourning doves.

Kenneth Beran, 67, of Derby is charged with one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves.

Clark Law, 57, of Hill City is charged with one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves.

Tracy Higgins, 54, of El Dorado faces charges of one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves and one count of taking an owl.

John Kobler, 62, of Topeka is charged with one count of exceeding the daily bag limit for mourning doves.

If convicted, the eight men face a maximum penalty of six months in prison on each count and a fine of up to \$15,000.

DEER

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Langone Medical Center.

“Now that we have found that preventing prion infection is possible in animals, it’s likely feasible in humans as well,” Wisniewski said. Wisniewski is a physician and researcher who specializes in neurodegenerative disorders such as prion diseases and Alzheimer’s disease.

The CWD vaccine study started in 2010 and was conducted at Colorado State University. Its results were published in *Vaccine*, a peer-reviewed medical journal.

Chronic wasting disease is a fatal brain disorder caused by a misfolded prion, or protein, in the brain. It is among a family of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, including mad cow disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob.

The deer disease was first detected in Colorado in the 1960s and now has been found in 22 states and two provinces in North America. It was detected in Wisconsin in 2002. The disease has led to restrictions on transfer of farmed deer and elk and prohibitions on deer baiting and feeding in many areas.

Although it has not been shown to infect humans or livestock, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends humans not consume meat from a CWD-positive animal.

For the study, researchers exposed 11 deer to CWD. Five deer were then treated with various doses of a CWD vaccine. The other six were given placebos. The 11 deer were

housed together throughout the experiment.

Within two years, all six of the control deer developed CWD infections. The median survival of unvaccinated deer was 600 days, Wisniewski said. The treated deer survived an average of 900 days, and one deer — which received the highest dose of vaccine — is still alive.

The vaccine was made by inserting a cervid prion gene (PrP) into weakened, or attenuated, salmonella bacteria. The bacteria was then administered to the deer, at first through a tube and at later stages in food. The five treated deer were given various strengths of the vaccine over 11 months.

The treatment produced the prion protein inside the animals’ guts and triggered their immune systems to produce “anti-prion” antibodies, according to researchers. The work represents a breakthrough in prion disease treatment.

“It is the very first time a vaccine approach has been shown to have efficacy in a species naturally at risk for prion infection,” Wisniewski said. “That’s very encouraging for future work and developments.”

Although wildlife officials in the United States and Canada have tried to prevent the spread of CWD in wild and captive herds, the disease has continued to show up in new areas and increase in prevalence.

No treatment exists for CWD and the other prion diseases. The allure of a cure for CWD has attracted attention from governmental agencies, private companies and universities.

Earlier this month the Canadian government announced a \$1.16 million investment in a CWD vaccine study being conducted at

Pan-Provincial Vaccine Enterprise (PRE-VENT) in Saskatchewan.

If proven successful through further testing, a vaccine would have the greatest application to captive cervids. It’s much more difficult, but not impossible, to administer vaccines to wild animals. A rabies vaccine, for example, is added to food and dropped from aircraft to treat raccoons and foxes.

Dave Clausen, a retired veterinarian from Amery and former head of the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board, urged caution about the results. “It’s a step in the right direction,” Clausen said. “However, it’s a long way from becoming a reality, especially in wild deer.”

Clausen said among the questions that remain unanswered were how long any immunity would last and whether it can be passed from adults to offspring. Then there is the danger of false hopes.

“Hunters might say, ‘Why worry about CWD, it’s almost cured,’” Clausen said. “The costs of dealing with CWD will always be lower if the disease is contained to the smallest possible area and to the fewest number of deer.”

The CWD vaccine study was funded through the National Institutes of Health and the Seix Dow Foundation.

For his part, Wisniewski termed the work “partially successful.”

“We have a ways to go, certainly,” Wisniewski said. “We’re hopeful we will be able to follow this work with another study, and that others will pursue the similar treatments. It represents a new era in the study and potential treatments of prion diseases.”

Clearwater Archery Club hosted tournament

The Clearwater Archery Club conducted an archery tournament in Clearwater on Nov. 1st. Three schools participated, Clearwater, Erie and Rose Hill. Participation of 234 kids made it one of the larger tournaments in the area. The three schools are all involved in the National Archery in the Schools program. The tournament ended the fall segment of NASP.

Clearwater teams took first place in all three categories; Elementary (Clearwater Columbia), Middle (Clearwater Columbia) and High (Clearwater HS).

Carl Conley, KWF Southcentral District Director, helped with the tournament. Carl re-fletches damaged arrows, has built arrow holders and helps maintain targets and backstop items. Without the help of volunteers like Carl, it would be difficult for the students to have the opportunity to participate in NASP. From the photo you can see the kids had a lot of fun at the tournament.



The Clearwater Archery Club will resume practice in February to prepare

for the Kansas NASP State Tournament March 28. Good luck to all participants.

Kid's Wildlife Friends

How do our birds cope with winter's big chill?

By eNature

Winter's chill is arriving, with close to Arctic conditions forecast for many of less temperate states over the next few days.

So how do our birds cope and what do they do for protection during severe weather such as blizzards, hurricanes, and tornadoes?

Birds have an amazing ability to find refuge from storms, but they do it in a variety of ways, depending on the species and the bird's natural habitat.

Bluebirds, for example, often winter as far north as New England. They find protection against the cold and storms by communal roosting, often in a bird house. There are photographs of 13 male eastern bluebirds, all crowded into one bluebird house. This behavior shares warmth, and keeps the birds out of the wind, rain and snow.

Other cavity nesters, such as chickadees, titmice and woodpeckers, also seek out old nesting sites in dead trees or bird houses in which to roost or find protection during a storm.

Nuthatches, which sometimes nest behind a loose piece of tree bark, may seek



Eastern Bluebird pair, female upper, male lower

the same kind of shelter against the cold.

Flocks of rosy finches often roost in an outcropping of rock where they can get out of the cold wind.

Northern Bobwhites make a circle of the covey, huddled side-by-side, with head facing out. This allows them to share body heat, while being ready to escape in all directions, should they be attacked.

Ruffed grouse take a different tactic. They dive into a snow bank, and may stay there for several days until the storm passes. Many other birds retreat to dense, evergreen thickets where they are protected from the elements for the duration of the



Eastern Bluebird

storm.

How are your birds coping with the cold?

EPA Punts on Renewable Fuel Standard, says BoatUS

From The Fishing Wire

Ensuring a safe fuel supply for America's 12 million registered boat owners may have to wait, said Boat Owners Association of The United States (BoatUS) after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced November 24, 2014 that the agency will further delay the final rule on how much ethanol refiners must blend into the nation's gasoline supply under the federal Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). After almost a year of review, the 2014 Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs), which dictate ethanol levels, are now not set to be released until 2015.

BoatUS testified before the EPA on the proposed rule in November of 2013, which for the first time would have lowered the amount of mandated ethanol in gasoline and aligned the law with current gasoline

usage. BoatUS supported this move that would have held gasoline/ethanol blends to a safe level for boats and small engines. Currently there is not a single marine engine warrantied to run on any fuel containing over 10% ethanol and this fuel is not authorized for use in recreational vessels. However, the national boat owners group has concerns over misfueling and poor pump labeling. Many boat owners trailer their vessels and refuel at roadside gas stations, filling up both the tow vehicle and boat at the same time.

"There is solid scientific data that supports levels of ethanol in gasoline over 10% damage marine engines," said BoatUS Government Affairs Program Manager Nicole Palya Wood. "The EPA's failure to efficiently administer this program, utilize its waiver authority and set standards that provide protections for consumers sends a

clear message that congress must act now to reform the RFS. We were hoping the EPA would utilize their waiver authority to ease the pressure on the nation's fuel supply with regard to ethanol. Now, with their failure to act, it's even more critical we work for a Congressional legislative fix which would bring the investment in safer, more compatible renewable fuels, which was what the RFS originally intended," added Wood.

The refiners and obligated parties under the RFS will be held to comply with 2013 mandates until the EPA issues the final rule in 2015. Today's announcement comes on the eve of the 90-day comment period expiration for the final rule.

A Federal Register Notice by the EPA can be found at <http://goo.gl/MwqSbx>. A BoatUS issue brief on the RFS can be found at <http://goo.gl/0HFfRo>.

Colorado man sentenced for "one of the worst examples of poaching"

From The Outdoor Wire

Christopher W. Loncarich, 56, of Mack, was sentenced Thursday in U.S. District Court in Denver to 27 months in prison, followed by three-years of probation, for conspiring to violate the Lacey Act, a federal law prohibiting the interstate transportation and sale of any wildlife taken in an illegal manner. Until his probation has been completed, he cannot hunt, pursue or trap any wildlife and must undergo substance abuse and mental health treatment while on probation. In addition, Loncarich will appear before a Colorado Parks and Wildlife Hearings Officer where he may receive up to a lifetime ban from hunting and fishing in Colorado and 43 Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact states.

Loncarich and his assistant, Nicholas J. Rodgers, 31, of Medford, Oregon were indicted in January by a grand jury on 17-counts of illegally trapping and maiming mountain lions and bobcats. In August, Loncarich pleaded guilty to one count of conspiring to violate the Lacey Act. Rodgers pleaded guilty to the same charge in July and will be sentenced in early 2015.

"The sentence should send a strong message that poaching is a serious crime and will be treated as such by law enforcement agencies and the courts," said Northwest Regional

Manager Ron Velarde of CPW. "Our officers and investigators worked hard to bring these criminals to justice and we are satisfied with the outcome."

A three-year investigation by Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revealed what Velarde said was one of the worst examples of poaching he has seen in his 40 plus-year career managing Colorado's wildlife.

According to the indictments, between 2007 and 2010, Loncarich, aided by his daughters Caitlin and Andie Loncarich, assistant guide Marvin Ellis and Rodgers, conspired to capture lions and bobcats then cage them, hold them in leg traps or shoot them in the foot or stomach. Coordinating by radio communication, they released the hindered cats when their client arrived. The goal was to make the cats easier for their clients to kill during excursions along the rugged Book Cliff Mountains in western Colorado and eastern Utah.

Several cats killed in Utah were illegally transported to Colorado where Loncarich falsified documents to obtain the required seals for the hides. The outfitter's clients then transported the illegally taken cats back to their home states in further violation of the Lacey Act.

Loncarich charged 18 clients between \$3,500 and \$7,500 for each lion hunt and between \$700 and \$1,500 for each bobcat hunt, sharing his earnings with his assistants. Investigators say approximately 30 cats were killed in this manner.

In what wildlife officials say was a particularly egregious example of their activities, the group captured a mountain lion and fit it with a radio-tracking collar. Aided by the device, they captured the same lion a year later, immobilizing it overnight with a leg-hold trap. The next day, they placed the lion in a cage and took it to Loncarich's residence in Mack where it was held for approximately one week while the outfitters waited for their client to arrive from Missouri. They then placed the lion in a box, transporting it via snowmobile to a predetermined area where it was released for the client to kill. Loncarich charged \$4,000 for the outing.

"This was not hunting - it was a crime," said CPW Area Wildlife Manager JT Romatzke. "It was cruel to the animal and contrary to what an ethical, legal hunt should be."

Caitlin Loncarich pleaded guilty to her role in the scheme and was sentenced on two misdemeanor Lacey Act violations on Sept.

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Landowner permission required to hunt any private land

Hunters must get permission to hunt private land whether it's posted or not

Kansas is 97 percent privately owned, so most hunting occurs on private land. While there are more than 1.5 million acres of public hunting lands, including Walk-In Hunting Access, that represents only 2.5 percent of the land in Kansas. Landowners still provide access for most of our hunting opportunities. Kansas law requires all hunters to have landowner permission before hunting on private land whether the land is posted with "No Hunting" signs or not. If the land is posted with "Hunting With Written Permission Only" signs or marked with purple paint, hunters must have written permission from the landowner.

To avoid serious penalties and potentially

harming landowner-hunter relations, giving all hunters a bad name, hunters should keep the following in mind:

Get landowner permission before accessing any private land for any reason. A convenient landowner permission card is available for download at www.ksoutdoors.com/Services/Law-Enforcement that hunters may use to document permission to hunt on private land.

Hunting from roads or railways without permission is a form of trespassing called criminal hunting; since the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) is one of 44 states in the Wildlife Violator Compact, conviction of trespass or

criminal hunting may prevent the convicted person from enjoying hunting privileges in other states, as well.

Conviction of simple criminal hunting can result in a maximum fine of \$500, plus court costs, and one month in jail on the first conviction. Additionally, the court can suspend or revoke license privileges for up to a year. A second conviction requires at least a one-year suspension of privileges in addition to any fines or jail time.

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

HARPER

Continued from Page 5

among others, as a way to honor Steve's dedication to Kansans and serving the Kansas outdoors. An excellent judge of character, Steve put as much stock in a person's initiative and accomplishments as academic successes. The scholarship committee will give equal consideration to all three qualifications.

This \$1,000 scholarship (paid at \$500 a semester) is presented to Kansas youth pursuing wildlife or nature-based careers at Kansas colleges, with Kansas-based career goals. The scholarship is sponsored and funded by the Outdoors Writers of Kansas, a group of assorted journalists, photographers and artists dedicated to sharing the greatness of the Kansas outdoors through print, broadcast and online markets. For more informa-

tion on the group, go to www.outdoorwriter-sofkansas.com.

The Kansas Wildscape Foundation is also assisting with funding and administration of this scholarship.

ELIGIBILITY - Scholarships are available to any graduating senior enrolled in a Kansas high school that plans to attend a college in Kansas and study wildlife or nature-based curriculum or outdoors journalism. University students enrolled in a wildlife or nature-based curriculum, or pursuing outdoors journalism are also eligible. Scholarship award recipients are selected without regard to race, color, religion, or sex. Applicant chosen as the recipient of this scholarship will be required to show proof of full-time enrollment (minimum of 12 credit hours) in order to receive the scholarship funds.

A letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, coach or employer must

be included with the completed application (available by download below). Those hoping for outdoors journalism should send examples of their work. The completed application and supporting documents must be returned to on or before April 15, 2015 to the following address:

Kansas Wildscape Foundation
Attn: Steve Harper Scholarship
2500 W. 6th St., Suite G
Lawrence, KS 66049

Click below to download the full application and guidelines:

2015 Harper Scholarship 4.52 MB

Debbie Brandt (Director of Administration - Kansas Wildscape) can be reached at dbrandt@sunflower.com or 785-843-9453 or Michael Pearce, (Outdoors Writer for the Wichita Eagle and Chairman of the Steve Harper Scholarship Committee) can be reached at mpearce@wichitaeagle.com with any further questions.

POACHING

Continued from Page 10

30. She received one year of probation, a \$1,000 fine as well as sixty hours of community service, thirty of which must be spent with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Hunter Education program. Also pleading guilty, her sister Andie Loncarich was sentenced on a misdemeanor Lacey Act violation, receiving one year of probation, a \$500 fine and thirty-six hours of community service, half of which must be spent with the Colorado Parks

and Wildlife Hunter Education program.

Ellis also pleaded guilty and on June 3, 2013, he was sentenced to three years of probation, six months of home detention and ordered to pay a \$3,100 fine.

Loncarich's 2008 Ford truck and Ellis' 1995 Dodge truck were seized during the investigation, having been used in the commission of Lacey Act violations. Both vehicles were subsequently forfeited to the government. In addition, three of Loncarich's clients have been issued federal, Lacey Act violation notices. Those clients have paid a total of \$13,100 in fines.

"Many of the violations committed by Mr.

Loncarich appear to be the result of greed, unlawfully killing and maiming wildlife to increase his profits," said Special Agent in Charge Steve Oberholtzer, who oversees Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement operations in the Mountain-Prairie region. "The dedication and expertise of the state and federal investigators and prosecuting attorneys in bringing these persons to justice was outstanding."

The case was prosecuted by the Environmental Crimes Section of the U.S. Department of Justice's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

Birds at Your Feeder Provide Clues to Scientists

House Finches may be found at feeders across much of North America and if you see these little birds, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology would like to know about it. Scientists specifically want to know if the birds you see appear healthy or if they have redness and swelling around the eyes-signs of a bacterial disease (*Mycoplasma gallisepticum*) that first appeared in 1994 and is now found in House Finch populations from coast to coast.

This special push to track both sick and healthy House Finches is being carried out through the Cornell Lab's Project FeederWatch, an annual winter survey of feeder birds that runs from November through April. New participants are invited to sign up to help at www.FeederWatch.org. Making the correct ID is important, so there's additional help provided in distinguishing among similar species, such as the Purple Finch and Cassin's Finch.

"House finches are providing a unique

window into disease dynamics," says Wesley Hochachka, Assistant Director of Bird Populations Studies at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. "We want to understand how this disease is spreading, if cases are more or less severe than they used to be, and how the birds' immune systems are adapting to fight this threat." Though this disease does not affect people, understanding how it's transmitted provides insight into how human diseases are spread.

House Finch eye disease first appeared in the eastern United States and arrived in parts of the West in 2003. There is evidence suggesting that western bacteria could cause more severe disease now than in the past.

"Collecting reports from western states is especially important because the disease is still spreading there," says FeederWatch project leader Emma Greig. "We hope to encourage participation in states such as Utah, Colorado, and Nevada, because the

data they provide are extremely valuable."

To learn more about FeederWatch and to sign up, visit www.FeederWatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at (866) 989-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members), participants receive the FeederWatcher Handbook and Instructions with tips on how to attract birds to your feeders, an identification poster of common feeder birds, and a calendar. Participants also receive Winter Bird Highlights, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings, plus the Cornell Lab's quarterly newsletter. This year participants will also receive a coupon for 75-cents off a product from sponsor Bob's Red Mill. One thousand new FeederWatchers will receive an additional coupon for a free Bob's Red Mill product (up to \$7.99 value).

Project FeederWatch is a joint research and education project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.

Black-footed Ferret program to continue

As you know, the Kansas black-footed ferret recovery project has had some challenges lately, including the multi-year drought that not only hit the prairie dog and ferret populations hard, but made grazing conditions more dire for ranchers.

However, this email contains good news for the project. I'm pleased to announce that the Fish and Wildlife Service, after coordinating with multiple partners and the cooperating landowners, has decided to continue

with recovery efforts at this site. We will be implementing modifications to the way the site is managed, and anticipate that these changes will provide benefits to prairie dogs and ferrets, the participating landowners, and neighboring landowners.

The other news is that 19 captive ferrets were released onto the Haverfield and Barnhardt ranch Monday, November 24. I remain hopeful of getting the zoos involved in a future release, in recognition of all

they've done for us through the years, but this particular release was not that opportunity.

Thanks to everyone who has provided effort and time to keeping this project going. It has been and will continue to be a group-driven effort. With an increase in precipitation in 2014, more grass and fatter prairie dogs, maybe we can finally start to see the ferret population begin growing again.

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

Restoring the Gulf of Mexico for fish and wildlife: New report

By Vanishing Paradise

On December 10, one of America's leading wildlife conservation groups released a report outlining 47 projects that would improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico in the wake of the 2010 oil spill.

"We can't undo the oil spill, but we can take concrete steps to make the Gulf of Mexico a better place for fish and wildlife," said Steve Bender, director of National Wildlife Federation's Vanishing Paradise campaign. "This type of comprehensive habitat restoration will measurably boost populations of fish and waterfowl."

Restoring the Gulf of Mexico for People and Wildlife: Recommended Projects and Priorities takes a broad look at restoration efforts that would benefit all five Gulf Coast states—Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. The recommendations emphasize restoring the areas where rivers flow into the Gulf of Mexico, such as the Mississippi River Delta. These places are important nurseries for marine life and provide wintering habitat for waterfowl.

Money for restoration projects could come from the billions that BP and the other companies responsible for the 2010 spill will pay in fines and penalties. Much of this money will ultimately be distributed to the Gulf states for restoration.

"Over the past hundred years, we've made major changes to the way our rivers flow into the Gulf of Mexico," added Bender. "The results have not been pretty for fish and wildlife. Restoring degraded coastal habitats will help numerous species of fish and these habitats are also critical for the millions of waterfowl that winter or stopover on the Gulf Coast."



The report's 47 proposals can be grouped into these five general categories:

1. Restoring Wetlands: Wetlands play a critical role in the Gulf ecosystem—creating habitat for fish and wildlife, filtering pollutants, stabilizing shorelines and providing protection from storms. Over the past eight decades, the Gulf Coast has lost an area of wetlands larger than the state of Delaware, largely in the area of Louisiana known as the Mississippi River Delta.

2. Restoring Sediment: The Mississippi River is hemmed in by man-made levees; the river sediment that once nourished the delta's wetlands is now propelled deep into the Gulf. If all of the 19 recommended projects in Louisiana were built, together they would sustain, restore and rebuild as many as 300 square miles of wetlands that would otherwise be lost by 2060.

3. Restoring the Balance between Fresh and Saltwater: Estuaries are created where fresh water from rivers mixes with saltwater from the Gulf. In most of the Gulf's estuaries the natural balance of fresh and salt water has been dramatically altered. The report recommends fixes for many of the Gulf's major estuaries, including

the Everglades and Apalachicola Bay in Florida as well as five systems in Texas.

4. Restoring Oyster Reefs: An adult oyster can filter as much as 50 gallons of water per day, and oyster reefs provide important habitat for many economically important species of fish, such as redfish, shrimp, and blue crabs. Oyster reefs also create physical structures that can protect coastal communities from storms. Restoring oyster reefs is a key element in several of the recommended projects in the report, for example in Mississippi's Biloxi Bay and Bay St.

5. Protecting Critical Landscapes: In a few select places, the report recommends purchasing key parcels of coastal lands to protect them in perpetuity. For example, the report recommends adding lands to Alabama's Grand Bay and Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuges.

The report is aimed at informing a series of decisions that will be ultimately made for funds flowing from the Gulf oil disaster, including those to be made by Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council. The federal-state council is tasked with implementing a comprehensive restoration plan to include a list of projects prioritized for their impact on the Gulf ecosystem. The council recently released a list of projects and programs proposed for funding with oil spill penalty money.

"America's hunters and anglers want to enjoy a restored Gulf of Mexico," said Bender. "We owe it to future generations to make sure the oil spill dollars are spent on projects that will really make a difference."

To find out more about Vanishing Paradise, visit <http://vanishingparadise.org>.

Sharing the harvest in Kansas

From The Archery Wire

A mature white-tailed deer, even field dressed, can often outweigh the very hunter lucky enough to make the harvest. Combine that with generous permit allocations in some areas of the state, and some hunters may find they are quickly filling their freezers with venison. It's meat that was obtained with hard work, time and perseverance, so it's no surprise that hunters hold their harvests dear. But it's this very reason that hunters should

consider sharing such a meaningful meal with others this season.

Venison is a lean and healthy protein that most food pantries wouldn't be able to offer their customers if it weren't for organizations like Kansas Hunters Feeding the Hungry (KSHFH). KSHFH is a nonprofit organization that is the conduit for generous hunters to donate deer and provide food for thousands of hungry Kansans. Last year alone, hunters donated 991 deer and 18 elk, providing 245,000 meals across the state.

If you harvest a big game animal this season, consider sharing your harvest with fellow Kansans in need. Hunters can donate any legally-harvested deer, antelope, elk, or moose to one of the more than 40 participating meat processors around the state found at www.kshfh.org/lockers. It's always a good idea to call ahead before taking your deer to a processor, but walk-ins are usually welcome. There is no cost to donate

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USDA Approves 12,300 More Acres in Kansas for Wildlife Habitat

Farm Service Agency (FSA) has announced that a total of 64,400 acres in Kansas are now available for wildlife habitat improvement incentives.

FSA is accepting applications to enroll more acres in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program, part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) whereby FSA contracts with landowners so that environmentally sensitive land is not farmed or ranched, but instead used for conservation. Targeted wildlife species in

Kansas are prairie-chickens.

Program participants establish long-term plant species to control soil erosion, improve water quality, or strengthen declining wildlife populations. In return, participants receive annual rental payments between 10 and 15 years.

The SAFE program allows state fish and wildlife agencies, non-profit organizations and other conservation partners to target the Conservation Reserve Program within distinct geographic areas to help

wildlife. SAFE is limited to 1.35 million acres nationally, with 97 projects in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

Interested landowners can enroll acres in a designated wildlife project in their state at any time. Participants and land must meet certain eligibility requirements. Other restrictions may apply. For additional details, contact your local Farm Service Agency office at offices.usda.gov or visit the website at www.fsa.usda.gov/conservation.

Pope & Young Club launches new website

The Pope & Young Club, the only bowhunting specific organization working to protect and defend bowhunting across North America, is proud to announce the launch of their new website!

The new website went live Nov. 1st and features stunning graphics, more videos, a user friendly "Find a Measurer" feature and improved store front. Members will find it much more informative and easier to navigate.

We've kept some popular features like "Photo Of The Week" and "World Records", but everything has a new, fresh look. The "World's Records" area has also been expanded to include the Top 10 for each species!

The Museum page is something that we encourage every bowhunter or fan of bowhunting to visit. "Walk in the Footsteps of the Pioneer Bowhunters" feature gives you a sample of the different dioramas that can be found at the Pope & Young Club/Glenn St. Charles Museum of Bowhunting and introduces you to the pioneers of bowhunting.

The website also features a Facebook, Twitter and YouTube feed, plus a "Members Only Forum" to share advice, tips and information to help on your next bowhunt!

"We are extremely proud of this new website", says Kevin Hisey, Executive Secretary for the Pope & Young Club.

"Our staff has worked very hard to make this a world class website and we encourage all bowhunters to visit and see what the Pope & Young Club is really all about!"

Established in 1961, the Pope and Young Club is a non-profit North American conservation and bowhunting organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of our bowhunting heritage, hunting ethics and wildlife conservation. The Club also maintains the universally recognized repository for the records and statistics on North American big game animals harvested with a bow and arrow.

Go to <http://www.pope-young.org/> and check it out.

Kid's Wildlife Friends

Do bears really hibernate through the entire winter?

By eNature

With the days getting shorter and temperatures dropping, many of us dream of hibernating till spring. Especially after a big holiday meal!

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



Black Bear, cinnamon phase

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,



Eastern Chipmunk

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

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Youth, female archery participation skyrockets in 2014

On the eve of “The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I” premiere, USA Archery has released membership statistics proving that archery interest has continued to increase dramatically since the premiere of “The Hunger Games: Catching Fire” in 2013, especially among women and teens.

USA Archery, the sport’s National Governing Body, has seen youth memberships increase 121% since November 2013. This is up from the previous two-year period, in which youth memberships had increased 104% between 2011 and 2013.

Female participation in archery has also seen very strong growth. Memberships purchased by women are up 105% in the last twelve months alone. Overall, individual memberships have increased 84% since November 2013, with over 15,800 members today.

“We’re very excited to see the tremendous growth of our sport,” said Denise Parker, USA Archery CEO and Olympic bronze medalist. “People are connecting with archery more than ever before, and

we see that reflected in our membership numbers and event participation.

“Thanks to movies like ‘The Hunger Games’ and ‘The Avengers,’ people have tried archery and found it to be a fun sport that they can enjoy throughout their lives. In the past twelve months especially, we’ve seen huge increases in female and youth participation, and we’re excited to see that trend continue.”

The organization has also seen a boost in event participation. The U.S. National Indoor Championships and Junior Olympic Archery Development (JOAD) National Indoor Championships experienced a 20% increase in participation from 2013 to 2014. Registrations for the “Outdoor Nationals,” comprised of the U.S. National Target Championships and Easton JOAD Nationals, grew 28% in the past year.

Overall, the archery industry has seen steady growth and people are participating in all facets of the sport. The first-ever nationwide archery survey, conducted by the Archery Trade Association, showed

that 18.9 million Americans participate in archery, and that 5.8 million of all archery participants were women.

In response to the growth of the sport, the Archery Trade Association, together with industry manufacturers and organizations like USA Archery, recently conducted the first-ever Archery Showdown featuring an archery video competition between YouTube stars Dude Perfect and Brittany Louise Taylor. Together, the videos have had over 12 million views in one week.

For those looking to try archery, the USA Archery website connects people with local archery programming, coaching and the chance to try competitions. For more information, visit <http://www.usarchery.org> and click “Find It.”

With two additional “Mockingjay” films planned, “The Avengers: Age of Ultron” set to debut in 2015, and the advent of the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, it’s clear that the bow and arrow sport will remain in the spotlight.

Don’t Use B&C Scoring on Captive Deer

The Boone and Crockett Club reaffirmed its objection and rejection to the use of its name and scoring system in conjunction with captive deer and elk. So says an official resolution presented and signed by Club president William A. Demmer.

The resolution was ratified at Boone and Crockett’s 127th annual meeting, which concluded Dec. 7, 2014 in St. Petersburg, Fla. The resolution reads:

“The Boone and Crockett Club scoring system exists to document the successful conservation of wild game animals in North America. The Boone and Crockett Club objects to and rejects any use of or reference to the Boone and Crockett Club or its scoring system in connection with antlers/horns grown by animals in captivity.”

Demmer said, “With the growth of the deer breeding and shooting industry, and modern marketing and selling of ‘shooter bucks’ raised in captivity and graded and sold using B&C scores, it was time to make this unauthorized uses of our scoring system more widely known.”

The Club’s records program was established in 1906 as a way of detailing species once thought headed for extinction. Today, the B&C scoring system

is used to collect data on free-ranging big game. These data reflect successful conservation efforts, population health and habitat quality. Biologists compare and contrast records to improve local management strategies as well as state and federal wildlife policies.

“To maintain the purity of this dataset, and to ensure its usefulness for conservation professionals, the Club has always excluded farm-raised big game from its records program. Including unnaturally produced or genetically manipulated specimens would taint one of the longest running conservation programs in existence,” said Demmer.

The Club supports use of scientifically guided wildlife management techniques to enhance or restore big game populations and other species at risk. However, the Club condemns artificial enhancement of a species’ genetic characteristics for the sole purpose of producing abnormally large antlers to increase commercial value.

For nearly 100 years Boone and Crockett record books and B&C score has been considered the gold standard for evaluating and verifying the trophy quantity of wild, native North American big game taken under fair chase condi-

tions.

Through this official resolution, the Club reaffirms that no one is authorized to exploit this standard by using the B&C scoring system, name or logo in connection with captive animals. The Club strictly opposes any attempt to legitimize the trophy quality of pen-raised animals or put and take shooting operations by associating either with the Boone and Crockett Club.

Advertisements accepted in KWF newsletter

Beginning with the January 2015 newsletter the Kansas Wildlife Federation is accepting advertisements. If you or your company caters to hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts, this is the vehicle to reach them.

For more information and rates, contact the editor at info@kswildlife.org.

The Pope & Young Club announces a potential new world's record typical Mule Deer

By Pope & Young Club

Patience is a particular virtue of bowhunting. It was an ample supply of patience that resulted in the harvest of a potential new World's Record typical Mule deer.

Having observed this buck on many occasions, and knowing the buck's home range was particularly thick cover — “as thick as dog hair” — Arizona veteran bowhunter John McClendon knew his best chance would be to carefully hunt the buck over a waterhole. He patiently waited out several days of raining, and then the drying, for the perfect opportunity to hunt that water. The result — a perfect 25-yard shot at the buck of anyone's dreams!

The current World's Record typical mule deer is: 205 0/8 • Hermosillo, Mexico • 2009 • George Harms

Mr. McClendon's mule deer, from Mohave County, Arizona, has an initial entry score of 207 5/8. The final score is yet subject to Panel Judging verification, which may change the final accepted score for a variety of reasons, including unusual shrinkage, initial mis-measurement, etc.

This mule deer is entered into the current, ongoing 29th Recording Period—the biennium representing entries accepted into the P&Y Records Program from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014.

At the close of every two-year biennial recording period, numerical awards and honorable mentions are awarded to the most outstanding animals in each species category that have been entered during that recording period. New world's records are verified and proclaimed, and awards are presented to these outstanding animals during the



John McClendon with his potential record mule deer. Image courtesy John McClendon

Pope and Young Club's biennial convention and awards banquet.

Prior to the actual convention and banquet, outstanding trophies are requested to be sent to a designated site for panel judging. Panel Judging is a process of verification of the final scores of antlers, horns and skulls of the highest ranking North American big game specimens entered during that two-year recording period. A hand-picked team of highly knowledgeable and experienced certified measurers gather for the actual scoring.

Congratulations to Mr. McClendon on this incredible animal!

Look to see this outstanding North

American big game specimen, plus roughly a hundred more of the biggest and best over the last two years, on display at the Pope and Young Club's National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, April 15-18, 2015.

The Pope & Young Club is a non-profit North American conservation and bowhunting organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of our bowhunting heritage, hunting ethics and wildlife conservation. The Club also maintains the universally recognized repository for the records and statistics on North American big game animals harvested with a bow and arrow.

HARVEST

Continued from Page 13

your deer as long as the KSHFH organization has sufficient funding to cover the processing expense. Donated game must be field dressed and legally tagged.

If you would like to help, but would prefer to keep your meat, consider making a money donation to KSHFH by texting “DEER” to 91011. A reply text will then ask for credit card information, including the donation amount. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism also makes supporting this program easy. When outdoorsmen and

women buy licenses, permits, or stamps, they can donate \$2 to fund the program, which the agency collects for KSHFH. Donations made by check can also be mailed to KSHFH at 17811 Donahoo Rd., Tonganoxie, KS, 66086.

For more information on how you can help, visit www.kshfh.org.



Reserve your 2015 campsites and cabins in advance

Online reservation system allows reservations up to a year in advance

With weather in the 30s, it's hard to picture planning spring and summer fun, but the secret about Kansas state parks is out and reservations are a must for busy holiday weekends. Consider making your 2015 camping and cabin reservations in advance and ensure your family and friends ample space at the lake for your next visit. Campsite reservations for 2015 can be made beginning at noon on Dec. 19, and cabin reservations can be made at any time. Simply visit www.ksoutdoors.com

and click on the "Reserve A Cabin Or Campsite Now" button, choose the location you'd like to visit, and begin searching for your ideal date.

Camping and cabin reservations guarantee the holder their spot will be open and ready when they arrive at the park. Payment in full is required at the time a reservation is made. Reserving a cabin requires a non-refundable \$14 reservation fee. Reserving a campsite requires a non-refundable \$3 reservation fee per

stay.

Daily vehicle entrance permits are \$5. Annual vehicle permits are \$25 or you can purchase a State Park Passport when you register your vehicle for \$15. Annual vehicle permits for seniors and persons with disabilities are available through department offices for \$13.75.

For more information about Kansas state parks and their amenities, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "State Parks."

HIBERNATION

Continued from Page 14

sleep, the rate may drop to as low as 8 beats per minute. But a bear's body temperature remains nearly normal during 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 activ-

ity 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.

How is your local wildlife preparing for winter? Here in the mid-Atlantic, our chipmunks have seemed very scarce the past week or so....

Let us know what you're seeing (or not seeing!). We always enjoy your stories.

Dos and Don'ts of feeder placement

Finding a Safe Place

Finding the perfect location for a bird feeder is a balancing act between getting the views you want and birds' safety. Where do you watch birds from? Your patio? A kitchen window? The living room? You can start by limiting the possible area by deciding on a focus zone in the yard.

Next you need to check for known dangers to eliminate unsafe locations within that zone. Ornithologists estimate that millions of birds are killed each year by hitting windows. Window strike mortalities can be reduced by moving your feeders to within 3 feet of the window or greater than 30 feet away.

When feeders are close to a window, a bird leaving the feeder cannot gain enough momentum to do harm if it strikes the window. If feeders are more than 30 feet from a window, the birds are less likely to perceive windows as a pathway to other parts of your yard. Some ideas for safe locations including hanging a feeder at the corner of a house from the eaves, making it visible from a corner window, or from two sides of the house. Other people fix a feeder directly to a window.

Another strategy is to place the feeder beyond the 30 foot danger zone. This might mean choosing a location across the yard from a house. Some people opt to create a special bird watching area tucked into a corner of their yard with a blinded seating area. This space might be in a secret grove, near a special bench, or behind a potting shed. Use the map below to see where in your yard is beyond the danger zone.

Cover Your Yard

The plant community around your feeder is full of opportunity. Brush piles and evergreen trees and shrubs can provide safe hiding places while consuming seeds gathered at the feeder. Birds often grab a seed, and retreat to cover to eat it.

The Path Taken

Think about the path of movement a bird might use to navigate your yard. Land corridors come on a scale as large as wooded strips connecting larger woodland areas, but can also be as simple as a line of shrubs along a sidewalk. Such areas can facilitate the movement



of many small animals, but especially birds, from tree to tree, until they find a safe habitat. Not only do minimal corridors aid in the movement of birds, they are also aesthetically pleasing. You can plant to support these kinds of movements around your yard.

Winter Cover

Bird feeding is often done in the winter, when plants have little or no dense coverage. In cold places, evergreens near a feeder can provide an excellent option for providing birds with safe cover. Here are some great native evergreen choices for regions around the US:

You can also provide cover with a strategically placed brush pile. Brush piles can be tidy or wild, alive or dead. Some people even use theirs and their neighbors' discarded Christmas trees as a base for a brush pile.

While at the feeder, birds are often out in the open, making them a target for local predators. A distance of about 10 feet from feeder to brush pile or shrub helps keep feeders out of a cat's striking distance (even though they might hide behind the cover).

Think About Your Yard Structure

Diversity of planting levels means more hiding places for more kinds of birds. This is a good rule of thumb for your yard in general, not just around the feeder. Think about high/mid/low-level vegetation to provide spaces for a variety

of birds with a variety of preferences.

Baffle the competition

Squirrels often cause problems by chewing through feeders and preventing birds from visiting, so you may need a strategy for baffling these rodents. Many people use a shepherd's hook with a barrier on the pole preventing squirrels from accessing the feeder. Suspending a feeder from a cable that stretches across an open space is another option, though some squirrels learn to walk the tightrope. Although different birds prefer feeding at different heights, a rule of thumb for a backyard feeder is to hang it from 5 to 8 ft off the ground. Some people hang feeders in trees, but this makes it much easier for squirrels to gain access. A baffle above the feeder can help deter squirrels, as can putting the feeder out of their jump zone (they can jump from 8-10 feet sideways).

Other things to keep in mind when placing feeders:

Put feeders in a location you don't mind visiting to refill (think about walking through snow, access to seed, water for cleaning, etc.).

Moving feeders periodically helps prevent build-up of waste.

Putting a feeder nearish (but not over) a water feature like a bird bath, will almost ensure that birds find your feeder.

Noise and too much action, like along a sidewalk or street will be deterrents for birds, and possibly even dangerous if they fly out in front of a fast moving car.

Westar Energy expands commitment to Kansas wind energy

New agreement brings renewable investment to 1100 MW

Westar Energy Inc. (NYSE:WR) announced on Dec. 16, 2014 that it will purchase wind energy from an affiliate of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC produced at the soon to be constructed Cedar Bluff wind farm in Ness and Trego counties in western Kansas. The new wind farm will add 200 megawatts to Westar Energy's renewable energy portfolio, bringing the total to nearly 1100 MW.

Coincidentally, the expansion of the renewable program happens as some older generating plants are ready to retire. Late this year, Westar will retire two small natural gas units that have been serving customers for over a half century at its Murray

Gill Energy Center in Wichita. Those units provide a total of 85 MW of electricity.

"These plants served our customers well for longer than expected, but they've reached a point where it is not cost effective to maintain them. It is good news that we can rely on wind resources to provide energy at competitive prices," said John Bridson, Westar Energy vice president, generation. "We believe it is important to maintain a diverse mix of generation resources, and wind power helps us improve that diversity. Customers want renewable energy choices, and today about 10 percent of the electricity they use is generated from renewable sources."

The Cedar Bluff wind farm is expected to be in operation by the end of 2015 and the previously announced Kay Wind project by the end of 2016. With these additions and the retirement of the small units at Murray Gill Energy Center, Westar will have about 7500 MW of generation. Westar's renewable generation portfolio will meet all requirements of the state's renewable energy standard.

The Cedar Bluff and Kay wind farms are expected to bring about 300 to 350 construction jobs and about 20 permanent jobs upon completion to nearby communities. Wind energy development has attracted about \$7 billion in investment to Kansas.

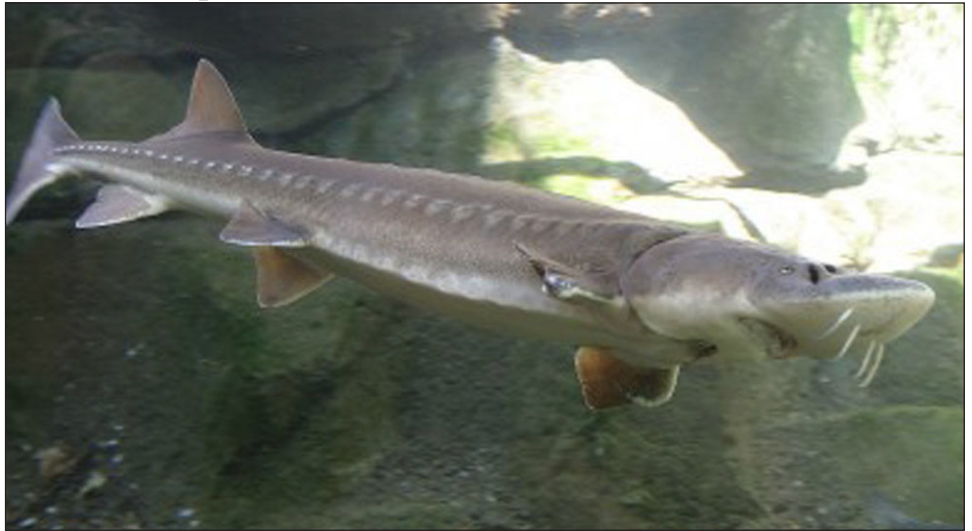
Study: Sturgeon produce "sonic thunder" to aid reproduction

By Daniel Xu
From the OutdoorHub

A study recently published in the *Journal of Applied Ichthyology* has turned up some interesting ideas on sturgeon, one of the oldest and largest fish species in North America. Anglers who have been around these prehistoric fish may have noticed that sturgeon are vocal creatures and will occasionally produce a faint drumming sound called "sturgeon thunder." Although researchers are still unsure exactly how the fish produce these low-frequency sounds, they are now being compared to similar behaviors by animals such as whales or elephants.

"These fish have been anecdotally known by biologists and sportsmen to produce low-frequency sounds during bouts of spawning, and local Menominee tribal traditions associating sturgeon with thunderstorms in the spring suggest an indigenous knowledge of sturgeon sound production during spawning that predates Western settlement," researchers wrote in the study, which included scientists from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

It was only recently that biologists have confirmed that these sounds are used to aid in reproduction, specifically in the timing of gamete release. According to the study, the low-frequency



Did you know that sturgeons make a noise commonly called "sturgeon thunder?"

sounds—which sound like a crisp knock—may attract male sturgeon to the presence of females. It is simply one of the many tools that has allowed this ancient fish to survive since the age of the dinosaurs.

"Along with known physical cues from river temperature and substrate, the fish likely combine visual, acoustic and electrical sense information into an adaptable suite of wide-ranging sensory knowledge, a powerful suite of perceptions that has undoubtedly assisted lake

sturgeon in successfully propagating their species for 150 million years," Chris Bocast, lead author on the study, told *The Post Crescent*.

Bocast said the noises were similar to a human snapping their fingers or whistling—an attention-getting sound. Sturgeon have been observed to make the drumming noise as far away as 17 feet from another fish, and scientists have a couple of ideas on how exactly the fish

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Study: Plants adapt defensive mechanisms to survive deer “predation”

By Daniel Xu
OutdoorHub

Most outdoorsmen rarely think of deer in a predatory light, but scientists say that an unchecked deer population can rapidly eat its way through a healthy forest—a self-destructive act that can lead to mass starvation. However, plants are not just hapless victims, either, and a study recently published in the *Journal of Ecology* found that at least one plant found defensive mechanisms to combat the deadly molars of deer. According to the study, which was authored by researchers at Cornell University in New York, populations of the orange jewelweed have actually developed two methods to ensure their survival against deer.

Researchers found that samples of

orange jewelweed that are exposed to deer tend to have longer flowering days and increased fruits per flowering node. This allows the jewelweed to wage a war of attrition: as much as the deer eats, the jewelweed will outproduce the herbivores. Researchers took both the plants that have already been exposed to deer and those generally protected from browsing—such as those in city parks—and placed them together. The plants were then put in common gardens for natural deer browsing. What researchers found was that side-by-side, the plants that adapted to deer consumption saw a 20 percent reduction in lifetime seed reduction due to the deer, while the previously protected plants saw a much higher 57 percent decrease.

Not all defense mechanisms involve prickly barbs or poison. Sometimes

plants win in the game of evolution by simply out-producing herbivores.

“Individuals in populations that were historically browsed were able to devote more resources to seed production,” said Laura Martin, the paper’s lead author, told the *Cornell Chronicle*. “The flowers last longer and there were more seeds per flower in the historically browsed plants, but there were the same number of flowers in browsed and protected plants.”

Researchers said that the study shed new light on how plants such as the jewelweed adapt to ecological change. Of course, herbivores are not without their own tricks. Researchers in Canada have found that some moose have developed saliva that counteracts toxic fungus, such as the one found on a grass called red fescue.

Fishing Remains a Popular Family Activity Adults and Kids Can Enjoy

Despite the modern draw of video games and organized sports, the attraction of the wild outdoors and all it has to offer remains as powerful as ever as evidenced by the number of anglers who shared the water with a son, daughter or other child in the past year. Whether spending the day in the comfort of a boat or clutching a rod along a shady bank, fishing remains a popular activity for all ages with up to 66 percent of active anglers reporting they took a child fishing in the past 12 months, according to a recent poll by AnglerSurvey.com.

Angling is a great way to enjoy quality one-on-one time with a young person, but it’s also an excellent group activity, too. When asked how many children each angler had taken fishing in the past

12 months, 20 percent said they had taken a single child, while 21 percent took at least two. Nearly 10 percent of anglers reported taking three children fishing, six percent took four and an impressive 10 percent took five or more kids fishing in the past year. Thirty-four percent of those surveyed said they had not taken any children fishing.

“Taking a kid fishing is one of life’s more rewarding efforts. Not only is it good for the child and family, it generates a future generation committed to conserving fish and the outdoors,” says Rob Southwick, president of Southwick Associates, which designs and conducts the surveys at HunterSurvey.com, ShooterSurvey.com and AnglerSurvey.com. “We encourage all anglers and the fish-

ing community to get involved in youth fishing efforts and programs such as the RBFF’s Take Me Fishing campaign and others.”

Indeed, it looks like an activity that many angling families do enjoy together as 78 percent of those who reported taking a kid fishing said those children were in some way related to them. Forty-four percent were a son or daughter, 17 percent were a grandchild and 17 percent were a niece, nephew or other relative. Twenty-two percent said the child or children they took fishing were not related to them with five percent of those taking them fishing as part of an organized Scouting, church or similar activity.

STURGEON

Continued from Page 19

make the sharp noise. The prevalent theory is that sturgeon are rubbing together different bones or sections of their body to produce the sounds. Yet observa-

tions so far had been made mostly in a tank, and researchers said that studying the behavior in the wild will allow learning more about how it affects sturgeon breeding.

Knowing how sturgeon breed may be vital to conservation efforts. Although the species has an extensive range throughout North America, Europe, and

Asia, nearly all sturgeon species are either endangered or vulnerable. Wildlife departments and non-profit conservation groups are working to reverse this trend and introduce wild sturgeon back into many of their natural habitats.

The primary cause for the sturgeon decline remains habitat loss, the effects of dams, and, in some areas, poaching.

Kid's Wildlife Friends

Can A Groundhog Really Predict The End Of Winter?

From eNature.com

February brings Groundhog Day and a number of inquiries about this furry, kind-of-cute rodent from readers.

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

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

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

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

Can They Really Chuck Wood?

The name that many use for the animal, "woodchuck", is derived from the Native American Algonquian tribe's name for the animal, "wuchak". So despite the tongue-twister we've all heard (as well as that GEICO ad a year or two back!), it's name has nothing to do with throwing around pieces of wood, even though it's a great image....

Digging Life

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

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

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

What Do Groundhogs Eat?



Groundhog range © Andreyostr

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

When not actively feeding individuals often "stand alert" in an erect posture on their hind legs. This is a commonly seen behavior and easily observed.

So How Can They Predict The End Of Winter?

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

It's this trait of sleeping through the

winter that led to the folklore that a groundhog's behavior can predict when winter will end.

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

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

How Accurate Are Groundhog's Predictions?

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

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

Greater Prairie-chicken research leads to great award

A Kansas State University professor is part of a group of researchers receiving a national award for the best journal article from The Wildlife Society for research on Greater Prairie-chicken population declines that may change conservation practices.

Brett Sandercock, Kansas State University professor of wildlife ecology, and his colleagues, wrote the award-winning article “Demography of Greater Prairie-chickens: regional variation in vital rates, sensitivity values, and population dynamics.” Sandercock’s co-authors include two Kansas State University alumni, Lance McNew, assistant professor at Montana State University, and Andrew Gregory, assistant professor at Bowling Green State University; and Samantha Wisely, associate professor at the University of Florida.

The article, published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management*, investigates demographic mechanisms driving the population declines of Greater Prairie-chickens at three sites in Kansas: one site in the Smoky Hills and two sites in the Flint Hills.

“A lot of wildlife agencies monitor prairie-chickens by counting birds at leks, so they know population trends but they don’t know what is driving the numbers,” Sandercock said. “This research — one of the most comprehensive analyses of any grouse species — identifies that reproductive failure is driving the population declines.”

The researchers did a complete demographic analysis, which included estimates of clutch size, nest survival, brood survival, juvenile survival and female survival, across two ecoregions and multiple years. According to Sandercock, prairie-chickens have poor reproduction in managed grasslands, with an average productivity of one juvenile for every seven nesting females.

Their results suggest that the rate of population decline was sensitive to the patterns of landscape fragmentation and land use, and that the Greater Prairie-chicken population would benefit from immigration and better productivity. The research also indicated that nest and



A female Greater Prairie-chicken, left, watches a male do his display dance

brood survival were low because of land management practices and changes in predator numbers.

The article was written as part of McNew’s dissertation while he was a graduate student in the Division of Biology at Kansas State University. The award was presented at the society’s annual conference Oct. 25-30 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The Wildlife Society presents annual awards in four categories: best journal article, the best monograph, best book and best edited volume. The awards recognize publications with scientific writing featuring research or thought originality and a high scholastic standard of presentation. The article must be published within the last three years and must be research and management oriented.

“This is a highly prestigious award,” Sandercock said. “The committee selects only one article per year. The award confirms that the work we are doing here at K-State is competitive at a national scale

and among the best research in wildlife ecology.”

The project was conducted on managed rangelands in Kansas.

“We are very grateful to landowners who permitted access to private lands for this field project,” Sandercock said. “The work could not have been completed without their generous cooperation and support.”

Research and equipment were sponsored by a consortium of federal and state wildlife agencies, conservation groups and wind energy partners under the National Wind Coordinating Collaborative, including the Department of Energy; National Renewable Energies Laboratory; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism; Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Kansas and Oklahoma chapters of The Nature Conservancy; BP Alternative Energy; FPL Energy; Horizon Wind Energy; and Iberdrola Renewables.

Kid's Wildlife Friends

Why Does The Cold Make Blackbirds Gather In Large Flocks?

By eNature

The old saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," is particularly true among blackbirds in winter.

Though many birds band together during winter, none are as notorious for their flocking behavior as blackbirds, including red-winged blackbirds, European starlings, common grackles and brown-headed cowbirds.

These groups of a feather often flock together in the many thousands, sometimes the millions. One winter roost in the Great Dismal Swamp on the Virginia-North Carolina border held an estimated 15 million birds. Flocks in the thousands often roost in urban and suburban areas, where their numbers and their noise make them unpopular among the people living nearby.

Attempts by state and federal wildlife officials to discourage or destroy such flocks of wintering blackbirds have usually failed. One experiment, using a wetting agent sprayed on a huge flock of birds from an aircraft, left a much greater mess in the form of rotting carcasses.



Common Grackles

Many wonder why birds in general and blackbirds in particular gather in flocks in winter. Though studies have been inconclusive, it's generally believed that there is safety in numbers. With many more eyes and ears to search for food and watch for predators, the chance of an individual bird surviving winter is increased.

There are reports of hawks attacking flocks of flying birds time and again, but failing to capture even one when the prey closed ranks to form a mass that the hawk was unwilling or unable to penetrate without



Although primarily a marsh bird, the Red-winged Blackbird will nest near virtually any body of water and occasionally breeds in upland pastures.

being injured.

Are you seeing flocks of blackbirds in your neck of the woods? We always enjoy hearing what our readers are seeing!

2014 Kansas State Eco-Meet hosts 103 competitors

Twenty-three schools participated in the annual competition

The 16th Annual State Finals ECO-Meet competition, which was held at the Rock Springs 4H Center on Nov. 6, proved to be an exciting and hard-fought contest. A total of 27 teams consisting of 103 students from 23 schools across the state participated at the competition, with an additional seven students qualifying as individuals in the two test events. Results from the 2014 state finals are as follows:

Overall Team WINNERS

1st place: Blue Valley Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) – Michelle Fan, Meagan Fortin, Justin Patterson, Devanshi Singh and team coach Eric Kessler. Each student competitor received a \$300 scholarship.

2nd place: Shawnee Mission South High School Team B – Ellie Bartlett, Miah Gray, Rob Michels and team coach P.J. Born. Each student competitor received a \$200 scholarship.

3rd place: St. Mary's-Colgan High School Team A – Rachell Krall, Hannah

Maus, Abby Normand, Sicily Stahl, and team coach Donna Maus. Each student competitor received a \$100 scholarship.

Individual Event WINNERS

Mammalogy

1st place: Joe Petty, Shawnee Mission South High School - \$200 scholarship

2nd place: Justin Patterson, Blue Valley CAPS - \$100 scholarship

Wetlands/Aquatic Ecosystem

1st place: Joe Petty, Shawnee Mission South High School - \$200 scholarship

2nd place tie: Sarah Tomtschik, Goddard High School - \$100 scholarship

2nd place tie: Aaron Dlabal, Wilson High School - \$100 scholarship

ECO-Meets are a series of quiz bowl-type competitions based on knowledge of Kansas plants and animals. Four events make up the competition, including a test on ecosystems in the state; a test on specific groups of animals; a scavenger hunt, where student teams look for plants found in the area and prove their identifica-

tion skills; and an interpretive event, where the teams put together an informative and entertaining skit to relay their knowledge of animal/plant species to a team of judges and their peers.

Schools represented in the 2014 competition included: Blue Valley Center CAPS, Clay Center, Galena, Goddard, Goodland, Inman, Lakewood, Maize, Mission Valley, Palco, Pratt, Pike Valley, Salina South, Satanta, Shawnee Mission East, Shawnee Mission South, St. Mary's-Colgan of Pittsburg, St. John's of Beloit, St. Xavier of Junction City, Tescott, Tonganoxie, Wakefield, and Wilson high schools, as well as Salina Middle School and Wilson Junior High School..

For more information on the Kansas ECO-Meet program, or to view results from past events, visit www.kansaseco-meet.org, or contact Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism wildlife education coordinator Mike Rader at mike.rader@ksoutdoors.com or (620) 672-0708.

Study: Deer react more to firearms season than archery season

By Daniel Xu
OutdoorHub

It has only been about two years since Pennsylvania State University researchers began fieldwork on their deer-forest study, but scientists are already drawing insights about the deer population in Pennsylvania's Rothrock and Bald Eagle State Forests. The study is focused on the movement of 40 collared deer, both male and female, who transmit their locations back to Penn State researchers every few hours. During hunting season, however, scientists receive updates as frequently as every 20 minutes. In fact, a large part of the study focuses on how the deer react to hunters and hunting pressure, and scientists are finding that there is a vast change in behavior between archery and firearms season.

"It's like flipping a switch," Duane Diefenbach, leader of the Pennsylvania Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, told the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.

"Their behaviors in archery season, there's nothing to suggest these deer are being impacted by the hunting that's going on to any great extent," said Diefenbach. "But once the rifle season begins, we see some pretty dramatic differences. Some of these bucks will leave their home range and go places we've never seen them in the previous 10 months. It's pretty amazing."

Diefenbach wrote on the study's webpage that both bucks and does have their own ways of hiding from hunters, but said that bucks who have survived at least one hunting season are especially skilled in finding spots that are not only remote, but also difficult to approach undetected.

"That's right; these bucks find what I call 'vantage points.' Places where the prevailing wind comes from the west—nothing is going to sneak up on them from that direction. And to the east? A steep slope where they can make a quick getaway—or definitely see or hear some hunter struggling up the slope!" Diefenbach wrote.

One of the conclusions drawn by the research team is that deer that have



A Penn State study found that deer are much more aware of rifle season than archery season, which is of course, exactly what bowhunters want.

experienced hunting pressure before will have a better strategy for survival than younger deer. It may seem like an obvious observation, but another study by scientists at the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Auburn University found that there was no correlation between deer age and changes in their movement. In that study, researchers found that deer of all ages tended to have the same home ranges and behavior. However, the Auburn University Project focused exclusively on bucks, and inside the dense Brosnan Forest far away from Pennsylvania.

The Penn State study may have also found evidence that deer can recognize the difference between different hunting seasons. In one example, a deer the scientists nicknamed the "Hillside Doe" stayed close to a road throughout bear season, but as soon as the deer firearms season began, the doe made a beeline for a steep "safe spot" on a nearby hill. The doe would stay there in the mornings and then come back down to eat in

the afternoon, therefore bypassing the majority of hunters. It quickly became a routine and, needless to say, she has not been harvested yet.

"Since we began getting data from GPS collars, there are two things we have learned about deer movements during the rifle season that have amazed me," Diefenbach wrote online. "First, deer respond to hunting pressure the day before the season opens (and not before). Second, their ability to hide somewhere in their home range during hunting hours is amazing."

Diefenbach and his colleagues will continue to monitor the collared deer and welcome feedback from hunters in the area. Agencies involved include the US Geological Survey, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, and the state Bureau of Forestry. The deer-forest study will evaluate the effectiveness of current management techniques in controlling the deer population, as well as testing forest management activities and protocols.

A unique harvest

By Jessie Wagoner
Emporia Gazette

Saturday morning Brenda Doudican rose early and nestled into her hunting blind in rural Lyon County by 5:40 a.m. As day broke she saw a bull elk wander through a clearing with three does. With a clear shot, Doudican harvested the elk — a rarity in Lyon County.

“I’m still kind of in awe over it to be quite honest,” said Doudican.

Saturday’s successful harvest began several months ago. Doudican began her hunt for a white tail buck with muzzle-loader season, then continued with bow season followed by rifle season. She spent a great deal of time sitting and waiting, never seeing anything she wanted to harvest during those runs.

“I even had a shot on a really great one,” said Doudican. “And overshot with my bow.”

She said she now feels like all the waiting was worth it. The waiting kept her out there and gave her the opportunity to see something few witness in Lyon County.

“By sitting and waiting, I was able to witness this,” said Doudican. Doudican first caught sight of the elk on Friday morning. She was sitting in her blind and just before daybreak she caught a glimpse of the elk to her south.

“It was this mass, huge,” said Doudican. “I had to really look hard and do a double-take.” After rubbing her eyes and taking a good look, Doudican was certain it was an elk wandering through the cedar trees with two does. Doudican’s husband wasn’t convinced when she called to tell him what she saw. She was persistent and shared the sighting with a family friend who then encouraged her to get an elk permit.

“He told me to go get a tag and go sit again,” said Doudican.

She did exactly that, and headed back to another location on Friday evening with tag in hand. She didn’t catch a glimpse of the elk but she made sure to get up extra early on Saturday morning and return to the location she originally saw the elk on Friday morning. Settling



Brenda Doudican of Emporia harvested this bull elk in rural Lyon county on Saturday, December 13.

into her blind early led to witnessing the elk on a second occasion.

Doudican was hunting alone on Saturday, so she placed a call to game warden Dave Adams with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. Adams completed the necessary paperwork allowing Doudican to have the elk processed.

“Whenever you harvest an animal you don’t want to waste it for sure,” said Doudican. “All the meat is at the locker right now being processed.”

Having eaten elk meat in the past, Doudican describes it as “absolutely wonderful.” It is a lean meat and hormone-free so very healthy to eat. She also plans to have a mount made.

Due to the size of the elk, Doudican had to field-dress and quarter it to be able to move it. The elk was estimated between 900 and 1,000 pounds.

Matt Peek, wildlife research biologist, with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism agrees that Doudican’s elk harvest is unique but advises that elk are not entirely rare in Kansas.

“There have been a few elk around on occasion,” said Peek. “But it has only

been in the last several years that we have had a hunting season open throughout this part of the state.”

He explained that, surprisingly, there are elk scattered throughout south central and southwestern Kansas on private land. The further west in the state, a higher number of elk can be found. “There are small herds of them and a small amount of reproduction that occurs,” Peek said.

Some elk were originally captive elk that were in pens but escaped. However, there is a larger reproducing herd around Fort Riley that occasionally has elk leave the herd and travel to other portions of the state.

He said a permit is required to hunt elk, which Doudican had previously purchased in anticipation of harvesting the elk. For additional information on how to obtain an elk permit, visit <http://kdwp.state.ks.us>.

Doudican encourages others to get outside and sit, focusing less on the harvest and more on the experience.

“Even if you don’t harvest a thing, it is just amazing sitting and seeing everything Mother Nature has to offer,” Doudican said.

Spring Snows to Look Forward To

Goose Hunting Tips

By Hard Core Decoys

They say that spring turns a young man's fancies to thoughts of love. That's true, sort of. Spring turns waterfowlers' thoughts toward snow goose hunting, and who doesn't love that? But it is more than just the thought of hunting that gets hunters excited for spring snows. Liberal limits, if there are limits at all, and unplugged shotguns drive hunters wild as well.

Hunting snows

As with most waterfowl, the key to a successful snow goose hunt is location and scouting. You need to be where the birds want to be. To be successful, you have to spend time looking for them and be ready to hunt when you do.

"Scout, scout and scout some more, and then hit them as soon as you find them," said Jason Summers, a Hard Core Pro Staff member from Wichita, Kansas. "Snows are hard and a lot of work to hunt. They're constantly field hopping. Have a lot of movement in your spread, a good e-caller, and a sweet convincing sound track."

Snow geese generally are attracted to big numbers and when the migration is on, it is not uncommon to have flock after flock hit the same spot. They will hit a

field and then be gone, on to another, just as fast. One comment heard was that they move like locusts, devouring all the food in one spot quickly before hopping off to the next. That is not all that inaccurate.

Decoy spreads have to generally be quite large and the higher the quality the better, especially if you can't put out the massive spreads of hundreds of decoys, as some hunters do. Movement is a key element to decoy spreads as well. Snows are very wary birds. The Hard Core TruMotion base system in the full-body decoys creates realistic movement with minimal wind, just the ticket to bring in the birds.

When you have 300-plus decoys out, one or two hunters blowing calls is just not going to do, even if you're as talented with a call as I am (ok, I'm not really that talented with a call). In most states, electronic callers are legal for snow goose hunting. Most hunters who use them run feeding programs and use human-powered calls for specific greeting and hail calls. There are readily available CDs of snow goose calls, as well as MP3s available for download to electronic callers.

Tracking migration patterns are part of successful hunting too. Current reports can be found online at Ducks Unlimited's (DU) website on the hunting page. The

DU migration Map is also available as part of a smartphone app.

Hunters can often use unplugged shotguns when hunting snow geese, allowing them to carry seven to eight shells in their firearm at a time.

While the regulations regarding non-toxic shot are still in place for snow geese, another of the regulations is relaxed when it comes to snow geese. Hunters can quite often use unplugged shotguns for hunting the white birds. Many hunters add aftermarket extensions allowing their guns to hold seven to eight shells, as opposed to the standard, unplugged capacity of four to five shells. As with all regulations, check your local offices to make sure you're legal. Remember, waterfowl are federally protected species, so violations of regulations often carry stiff penalties.

The main reason hunters like the added shots they can take at snow geese are the liberal limits that accompany spring hunting seasons. Most states allow for a minimum of 20 birds per day. Many states have no limit on the number of snows shot per day and with the advantages of electronic calls, huge decoy spreads, unplugged shotguns and more,

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TPWD Releases Dove Lethality Study Findings

From Outdoor News Daily

Texas leads the nation in dove hunting with roughly a quarter million hunters bagging 5 million mourning doves each fall. Their success afield should not change with the type of shot used, according to the results of a just-released study examining the lethality of lead versus non-toxic shot for mourning dove.

The field collection phase of the study was conducted in Brown, Coleman and McCulloch counties during the 2008 and 2009 Texas dove hunting seasons. After recording more than 5,000 shots fired by Texas hunters during the two-year project, and then necropsying 1,100 mourning doves, researchers determined no statistical significant difference in harvest efficiencies between the three loads tested, regardless of distance.

Non-toxic shot has been required for hunting waterfowl for more than two decades. Despite studies that have

demonstrated the effectiveness of non-toxic shot for waterfowl and other game birds, the results of this study were not a foregone conclusion, at least not in the perceptions of dove hunters. Recent dove hunter surveys indicate that some hunters still believe non-toxic shot to be inferior to lead.

"Our findings address the efficiency of lead and non-toxic shot on mourning dove," said Corey Mason, a TPWD wildlife biologist and one of the authors of the report. "There continues to be a spirited national discussion on the use of lead and other types of shot and these results help inform one aspect of the conversation."

This study is the first on the lethality of lead versus non-toxic shot under typical hunting conditions for mourning dove to be published in a scientific journal. The Institute of Renewable Natural Resources at Texas A&M University, Thomas Roster, and Texas Parks and Wildlife authored report will be published in the

March 2015 issue of The Wildlife Society Bulletin, a peer-reviewed, scientific publication containing papers related to wildlife management, conservation law enforcement, conservation education, economics, administration, philosophy, ethics, and contemporary resource problems. An advance release of the report is available online at http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/game_management/dove_summary/

TPWD officials believe the research findings may be useful to Texas hunters as they make decisions on the type of loads they choose for dove hunting.

"We absolutely believe in hunter choice and we also want hunters to be as informed as possible on matters affecting their outdoor pursuits," said Carter Smith, TPWD Executive Director. "Dove are a shared international resource, and the

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Condors and lead in Arizona and Utah

The California Condor recovery effort in Utah and Arizona has been a cooperative venture among federal, state, and private partners. The partners include The Peregrine Fund, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Recently, these partners have touted some good news. Apparently, the number of California Condors treated for lead exposure from lead-bullet ingestion in Utah and Arizona

recently dropped to its lowest level since 2005. Between September of last year, and the start of September of this year, a total of 13 condors were treated for lead poisoning. During the same period the previous year, there were 28 birds treated. The average over five years had been 26 condors per year.

The problem, of course, is that condors can be at risk of death if they ingest carrion that contains lead fragments.

To help the California Condor, the state wildlife agencies in both states have asked

hunters in southern Utah and northern Arizona to use non-lead ammunition. In an effort to offset the cost and encourage hunter participation, both agencies have run voluntary programs to provide hunters with a free box of non-lead bullets. The voluntary response from hunters has been significant.

Lynda Lambert, a spokeswoman for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, said that she's cautiously optimistic. She added, "We have between 80 and 90 percent of hunters participating in any given year."

Game Wardens busy for pheasant/quail season opener

No injury or fatal hunting incidents were reported

Game wardens with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) reported a number of violations during the opening weekend of the pheasant and quail regular season which began November 8. The weekend reporting period ran from 7:00 p.m. on Friday, November 7 to 11:59 p.m. Sunday, November 9. No injury or fatal hunting incidents were reported. Wardens are investigating a boating incident that occurred at Stockdale Cove at Tuttle Creek Reservoir Saturday night. The 61-year old victim remains hospitalized at Stormont-Vail Healthcare in Topeka.

Across the state, wardens checked 704 hunters who had harvested 343 pheasants and 50 quail.

Game wardens and Kansas Highway Patrol troopers conducted a driver's license and wildlife check lane on southbound US-81 in Ottawa County on Sunday night. Wardens checked 53 vehicles with 109 hunters who were transporting six deer, 111 pheasants (most were harvested in South Dakota), and 25 quail. One ticket was issued for failure to tag a deer.

Wardens arrested a man in Rice County Saturday night for trapping furbearers out of season, no fur harvester license, untagged traps, and felon illegally possessing a handgun. The furharvester season starts November 12.

A tip to Operation Game Thief (toll-free 1-877-426-3843) Saturday night led

wardens to three people in Greenwood County who are being investigated for multiple deer hunting violations. Charges are pending. The regular firearm deer season was December 3-14.

A warden in Osage County apprehended a man stealing diesel fuel from a farmer's tractor late Friday night. He was booked into jail for theft and driving while suspended.

A warden in Pottawattamie County worked with sheriff's officers to apprehend a group illegally hunting with artificial light Saturday night. In addition to three people charged for illegally hunting with artificial light, they were charged with no hunting licenses and transporting open containers of alcohol.

SNOWS

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huge numbers of very tasty birds can be taken by hunters willing to put in the time and expense to hunt snow geese.

As one Michigan hunter recently said, hunting snow geese is addictive. He hunts all kinds of ducks and enjoys field hunting Canada geese too, but will plan all of his vacation time around chasing the snows across his favorite state for doing so, South Dakota.

A little biology

Snow geese, like Canadas or other species, have lesser and greater variants.

Lessers have a color variant as well, with white and blue (dark) feather colors being common. The lesser also can cross-breed with Ross' geese, which are quite similar in appearance. Greater snow geese have no color variant, having only a white phase.

Lesser snow geese generally migrate from the northern breeding grounds down the Pacific and Mississippi flyways, wintering in the central valley of California and the Gulf Coast of Texas, Louisiana, and Mexico, according to reports from DU. The abundant vegetation located on the brackish and salt marshes in the wintering grounds provides ample food and cover. The winter ranges have expanded

in Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas; basically anywhere there is agricultural land they can feed in.

Greater snow geese leave arctic breeding grounds and migrate along eastern Canada and the northeastern United States to the mid-Atlantic coast from New Jersey to North Carolina. Greaters are grubbers, feeding on roots, rhizomes, and shoots of bulrushes and marsh grass. They also make extensive use of agricultural fields found near wintering areas.

During migrations, snows can be found across the Plains and Midwest, as well as along the Atlantic Flyway. Most reports show that the younger geese migrate earlier than the older populations.

Many animal species benefit from tree snags

Standing dead trees, or snags, may appear to be useless, even eyesores, but they are important components of wildlife habitat and frequently in short supply.

A snag may provide a secure home for many kinds of animals and a virtual smorgasbord of insect food. Downy, hairy, red-bellied, pileated and red-headed woodpeckers all feed heavily on wood-boring larvae of beetles and other insects and invertebrates found in snags.

Snags that are near homes or other structures may need to be removed for safety reasons, but when they are not hazardous 'backyard' snags, or one near a deer stand, they may provide wonderful wildlife viewing opportunities.

Woodpeckers are also the primary excavators of nesting cavities in snags. These cavities are later used by other species. Bluebirds, wood ducks, titmice, great-crested flycatchers, chickadees, nuthatches, barred owls, screech owls and kestrels all depend on cavities for success-

ful nesting.

In North America, snags provide habitat for at least 85 bird species that nest in tree cavities. Cavities in snags are a critical resource for many species, and cavity-nesting birds can comprise up to 40 percent of the bird community within some forests.

Mammals such as bats, gray squirrels, fox squirrels, flying squirrels and raccoons also use cavities in snag trees. Tree cavities are also used by frogs, snakes, honeybees, wasps, spiders and aquatic invertebrates. A single snag tree may contain many cavities useful to a multitude of species, as well as providing a food supply.

The value of snags to both wildlife and people are countless. Many snag-dependent species control insects and pests, and birds of prey prefer the vantage point snags afford for hunting rodents. The woodpecker's diet is filled with many insects that can be harmful to our interests.

There are two kinds of snags. A "hard" snag may be only partially dead, with

many limbs remaining and sound wood. This kind of snag will be beneficial for many years. A "soft" snag is more decayed, with no limbs left and advanced heart rot. Wildlife species make use of both kinds of snags, but larger snags have more value.

In woodlots, at least four to five snags per acre should be maintained. Snags left in open areas over water will also provide hunting perches for flycatchers, bluebirds, hawks and kingfishers. Osprey may nest in large snags near open water.

Snags may not appear very attractive, but their value to wildlife is clear. Wildlife enthusiasts should take a second look at dead or dying trees on their property and include snags in their wildlife management or landscaping plans.

To view or print out a wildlife management guide on snags and downed logs, visit the South Carolina DNR website <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/wildlife/publications/pdf/snags.pdf>

Congress aims to protect Great Lakes against invasive carp

By Jenna Iacurci
NatureWorldNews

The problem of Asian carp invading the Great Lakes and outcompeting local fish populations for food has been an ongoing one, so on December 12 the US Congress called for a temporary solution to strengthen defenses and protect native fish until a more permanent plan can be agreed upon.

The new measure would use additional structures to control upstream movement of fish at the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, located on the Des Plaines River in Joliet, Ill., just 40 miles from Chicago.

Supporters of the legislation describe Brandon Road as a "choke point," meaning the location would block Asian carp as well as other exotic species from reaching Lake Michigan, and potentially spreading to other Great Lakes.

"This is important work that will develop solutions that can be applied elsewhere in the Chicago waterway system - and throughout the Great Lakes and the nation as a whole - to prevent damaging aquatic species from expanding into other water bodies," Jon Allen, vice chairman of the Great Lakes Commission, which endorsed the bill, said in



(Photo: Flickr/US Army Corps of Engineers/Todd Davis)

a statement.

According to the National Wildlife Federation, Asian carp were first introduced into the United States in

the 1970s to clean up fresh water, and

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Chanute Elementary School Decision Lacks Common Sense

The Kansas State Rifle Association is calling for a public apology to be issued to Camron Carlson and his Mother Deana Carlson.

Nine year old Camron Carlson was suspended from school for five days because one empty shell casing fell out of the boys coat pocket at school on December 3, 2014. He had been with his Mother the evening before sighting in a rifle for deer hunting, a common activity in Kansas.

"I have interviewed the Mother and find that the actions of the school are inappropriate at best. To suspend a 9 year old child for having an empty shell casing in his coat pocket sorely lacks any common sense," said KSRA President Patricia Stoneking. "It reminds me of the kid who chewed his pop tart into the shape of a gun being suspended from school. I think we have to draw the line and choose to be

more careful about what we want to classify as zero tolerance violations."

When Deana Carlson arrived at the school after being called by the principal she found her child in tears after an alleged interrogation by the principal before she arrived in which her son was told that this inert, empty, already fired piece of brass was dangerous. That is absolutely inaccurate as an already used piece of brass is simply that, a piece of brass, which has no capability of causing any harm whatsoever.

Stoneking said, "Certainly children have no business bringing guns or live ammunition rounds to school but that is not what happened here. To persecute a child for a piece of spent brass and tell him he did something dangerous is ridiculous and totally lacks common sense."

By all accounts it seems apparent to us that the school was more interested in

attacking the philosophy this young man was being taught at home than the actual supposed offense of having a spent piece of brass in his possession at school.

We call upon school administrators in Kansas to recognize the difference between common sense rules and persecution of a belief system and to act accordingly in the future. This child made an innocent mistake by not emptying his coat pocket before going off to school and we see absolutely no reason for a suspension to have taken place over this. The school should make a public apology to Camron and his Mother for their lack of common sense in taking this action.

"The act of sighting in a deer rifle and hunting are perfectly lawful in Kansas and it is not a school administrators place to impress their personal feelings against it to a child." Stoneking said.

Researchers Suspect Blood-sucking Parasitic Eyeworm Caused 2010 Quail Decline

By Daniel Xu
OutdoorHub

It's only about an eighth of an inch, but it's the stuff of nightmares. Researchers from Texas Tech University say that eyeworms (*Oxyspirura petrowi*) may be responsible for the widespread decline of quail in Texas during 2010. It is no secret that quail have fared poorly in the Lone Star State for the past several years, but biologists and hunters were astonished to see a surge in bird populations early in 2010. Then, just as quickly as they came, the birds disappeared.

"It was very green and lush, and we had a lot of quail," said Ron Kendall, a professor of environmental toxicology at Texas Tech and lead author of the study, which was published in the *Journal of Parasitology*. "Then, we didn't have any quail when we approached October 1. We do not believe it had anything to do with habitat. Habitat in 2010 was the best we had seen in many years. It had to be something else. We think infection with these eyeworms can negatively impact vision of quail. These birds need to be 100 percent performance ready to get away from a Cooper's hawk. If you are a quail in the wild and if you have vision impairment it could negatively impact your ability to get away from a predator."

The study came about after conservation

groups searched for answers after the drastic 2010 die-offs. Funded by the private Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation, researchers at Texas Tech surveyed birds across a 19-million-acre parcel of land in Texas and discovered that many of the birds did indeed carry eyeworms. Some of the scientists initially doubted whether a parasite could affect game bird populations on such a large scale.

"When we first got into this research project and started peeling back the layers of this onion, we asked if it's possible for a parasite to move that quickly through a population on a large area," Kendall said in a press release. "And we answered the question. It's 'yes.'"

Experts believe that the quail became infected with eyeworms after eating the crickets that were their hosts. Once inside, the parasites traveled to the ducts behind the birds' eyes, feeding off blood there. Eyeworms can lay a large number of eggs, which mature into egg-laying adults themselves in just a few weeks. Eventually, the feeding frenzy of the eyeworms inflames a quail's eye ducts, causing visual impairment and even blindness.

"We did a size comparison," Kendall said "If these parasites were in a human and you compared the size of the quail eye to the human eye, it would be like having a

worm about the size of a toothpick behind your eye. Now, imagine having up to 40 or 50 of them in there, and we have seen this in the wild. That could certainly impair your ability to see and cause serious inflammation. And once they're in there, what we are figuring out is they're not leaving the eye. They are there to stay. There's no way for the quail to get these parasites out once they invade the eye."

The researchers suspect that eyeworms have been in Texas for quite some time, but heavy rains in 2010 boosted the number of insects who can carry the parasite. Scientists say that the effects of eyeworm on the quail population may be cyclical, but that the search for a remedy is already underway.

"There's evidence of eyeworms all over the Rolling Plains now," Kendall added. "We need a cure; we need a strategy to cure it. So we're in the process of a major research and development effort to find a remedy. There's been evidence for some time that eyeworms were in the Rolling Plains, but we didn't know how to assess their potential impact. Maybe this might provide more interpretation of why we have such large cyclic crashes of quail. We don't know yet. One thing we do know is that there have been increased reports of quail flying into objects, such as barns and houses. This might answer why."

Ice fishing safety: 3 tips that could save your life

By Steve Pennaz
The Fishing Wire

Ice anglers are pretty happy right now. Early cold temperatures have jump-started the period we call “early-ice,” and with it, some of the hottest bites of the entire ice fishing season.

And while I admit I’m one of those anxious anglers who can’t wait to tap panfish, walleyes and pike after a good deal of time in the deer stand, I have to remind myself that safety comes first; I am not bulletproof.

I’ll be honest, I’ve fallen through the ice, pushing hard to get on a good bite, and it’s a traumatic experience. The reality is anglers die every year across the Ice Belt because they didn’t abide by a simple ice safety checklist.

Pardon the pun, but there is no hard and fast rule when it comes to ice formation. Smaller bodies of water can freeze overnight, while larger lakes can take weeks to form fishable ice. And areas with current and springs may never

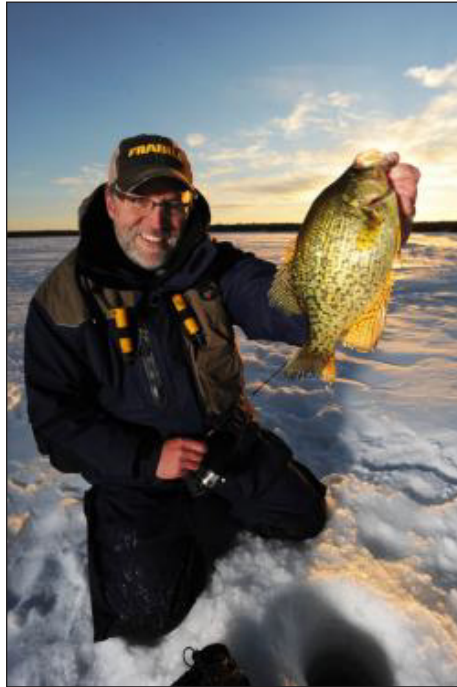


Photo by Bill Lindner

develop ice safe enough for hardwater fishing. Looks can be deceiving. In fact, ice thickness can vary greatly throughout the same lake - and the entire winter.

A general rule of thumb for fishable ice thickness is 4 inches for fishing on foot, five inches for a snowmobile or ATV, and at least 8 inches for a car or light truck.

These days there’s more in my ice fishing arsenal than the requisite auger, rod combos, jig box and flasher. During early- and late ice a spud bar like Frabill’s various ice chisels allow me to test the ice as I’m fishing on foot.

Second, early ice can be dangerously slick, and falling is a hazard that’s often overlooked but can be easily prevented. Severe head trauma is no laughing matter. That said, I wear Frabill Ice Creepers, inexpensive and removable studded cleats that fit easily over various styles of winter boots.

Lastly, I never leave home without my

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Lure Color a Big Part of Ice Fishing Success

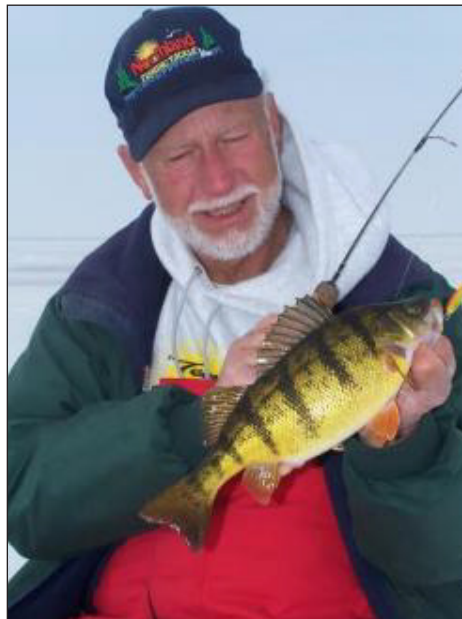
In open water or through the ice, color can play a role in how many fish you catch

By Bob Jensen
The Fishing Wire

Whether you’re fishing in open water or through the ice, the color of your lure can affect how many fish you catch. That is especially obvious when an angler is fishing through the ice and is watching a depth-finder. You see everything that goes on directly below that hole. If a fish comes in and looks at your bait but doesn’t eat it, you know about it. If that happens too often, and three or four times is too often, something needs to be changed. One of the things that should be considered for change is color. There are times when fish are very color conscious. Following are some ideas on color that apply to open water and ice-fishing.

The general rule-of-thumb that many successful anglers use when selecting a lure is to go with a bright bait, something with orange or chartreuse in it, in stained or dirty water. However, some choose to start with black or purple.

In clear water, natural or subtle colors are often preferred. Some like baits that resemble the primary forage fish in the body of



In open water or through the ice, color can play a role in how many fish you catch.

water being fished, but some anglers prefer a bait that looks nothing like the dominant

baitfish. The theory there is, if the predator fish are seeing and eating the same thing day after day after day, something that looks completely different will be more appealing. Kind of like the person who eats hamburgers day after day after day. After a while, hamburgers lose their appeal and a hotdog looks more appealing. Give them something different and they’re more likely to eat it. I don’t know what fish are thinking, but I do know that sometimes in clear water they like natural looking baits and sometimes they like baits that look like nothing that swims in that lake or river or pond.

Color can be especially important in ice-fishing. Fish can really check a bait out when you’re ice-fishing. The bait is only going up and down, and usually pretty slowly. In open water, if you’re casting or trolling, the bait is moving, and often pretty fast. The fish in open water need to respond quickly. Under the ice, they can take their time, and if that bait isn’t exactly what they want, they don’t eat it. Lure action and size certainly make a difference, but so does color.

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Rutgers researcher says climate change pushing some fish species to cooler waters

By Ken Branson
The Fishing Wire

Climate change seems to be pushing several species of fish and crustaceans northward along the east and west coasts of North America which could have serious effects on birds, marine mammals and those who depend on fishing for food and income.

"As temperatures have warmed in the waters off our coasts, animals with a low tolerance for that warming have just picked up and shifted," says Malin Pinsky, a marine biologist at Rutgers who is leading a team researching these shifts. "I hesitate to say 'moved,' mainly because we don't yet know whether fish are actually swimming, or whether they're simply reproducing more slowly in their old ranges and faster in their new ranges."

Pinsky says lobsters that were once abundant off Long Island have moved to cooler waters of Maine while summer flounder and black sea bass, once common to the waters off Cape Hatteras, have moved north and are now more abundant off the coast of New Jersey.

During the past 18 months, Pinsky, an assistant professor of ecology and evolution in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, has published two papers -- Climatic Change in October



NOAA The black sea bass is among many marine species shifting its range northward to cooler waters as the water in its traditional range warms up.

2012 and Science in September 2013 -- documenting this trend and exploring its implications. He and his team have found that the shift northward is happening at different rates among the species not because of their biological differences but due to the rate and direction of climate

change in their waters.

The data behind this research is now available at a new website, OceanAdapt, built by Pinsky and his colleagues and

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COLOR

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We all have our favorite colors. For walleyes, I really like baits that have some orange or chartreuse in them.

When largemouth or smallmouth are the quarry, crawdad or watermelon colors are go-to, and I also like white for smallmouths.

I like something with pink for crappies, and black for bluegills.

And then again, I've seen plenty of times when something completely different worked better than those colors, and that's what makes fishing both fun and challenging. You just never know. It often works well to start with the color you caught 'em on last time. If they're still eating that color, good deal. If they're not, you need to try something else.

Some folks believe that the only reason baits are offered in different colors is so the lure-makers can sell more lures. The truth is, if that color doesn't catch fish somewhere at some time, it won't be around very long. Next time you go fishing and aren't getting bit as often as you would like, try a different color. Sometimes color will be the difference between action and no action.

FISHING

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Frabill ice picks, another indispensable (and inexpensive) piece of ice fishing gear. They are the one piece of ice fishing gear that may very well save your life!

Hats off to Frabill for designing special ice-pick holsters into all of their new I-Series jackets and bibs for rapid deployment. However, you can still sling them around your neck and stuff them into the front pockets of whatever you wear.

In the event that you do break through the ice, turn back the direction you came, bury the picks and pull while kicking your feet. Once on the ice, roll away from the hole and head to the nearest warm and dry location.

Follow the ice thickness guidelines for fishable ice and add these three must-haves to your ice fishing arsenal. Like grandpa used to say, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

I admit, ice fishing is a whole lot more fun with the peace of mind that I've got safety on my side.

Good luck on the ice this winter!

Threatened listing for Gunnison Sage-grouse

Sportsmen urge proactive measures to avoid similar fate for Greater Sage-grouse

From The Outdoor Wire

The Gunnison Sage-grouse was declared a threatened species on November 12, 2014 under the Endangered Species Act, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and its partners are urging proactive conservation strategies to avoid a similar fate for the Greater Sage-grouse.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision, which results in management of the Gunnison Sage-grouse changing hands from state to federal control, was issued despite efforts to postpone it by states and other entities. The mid-sized game bird, whose core population numbers fewer than 5,000 birds, occupies only 7 percent of its historic range.

Sportsmen emphasized the need to avoid a similar fate for the Greater Sage-grouse, currently being considered for an ESA listing, by implementing strong management plans from the Bureau of Land Management and Western states.

"The decision on the Gunnison Sage-grouse should not deter responsive management efforts for the Greater Sage-grouse, and the time to act is now," said Ed Arnett, director of the TRCP Center for Responsible Energy Development. "Adequate resources and political will is needed from all parties to keep the



This April 2014 photo provided by Colorado Parks and Wildlife shows a Gunnison sage-grouse with tail feathers fanned near Gunnison.

Greater Sage-grouse from being listed as a threatened species, including cooperation and coordination among communities, counties, state agencies, conservationists, industry, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM."

"Good work is already underway by many of these stakeholders," said Miles Moretti, president and CEO of the Mule Deer Foundation. "By holding the course and expanding these efforts, we still have time to avoid an ESA listing - and its negative repercussions - by implementing sound conservation plans in states that harbor populations of the Greater Sage-grouse."

"This should be a wakeup call to the

administration to strengthen leadership and conservation efforts for the Greater Sage-grouse," said Terry Riley, director of conservation for the North American Grouse Partnership. "We can avoid repeating history for the Greater Sage-grouse - but only if the administration ensures that conservation plans are solid, grounded in science and not politically compromised."

The Greater Sage-grouse, a popular game species that has been significantly affected by development in core areas of habitat, is located in 11 Western states and two Canadian provinces. Sage-grouse currently occupy only 56 percent of their historic range and number somewhere between 200,000 and 500,000 birds. The administration faces a September 2015 deadline to render a decision on whether to declare the Greater Sage-grouse a threatened species.

"Good conservation for sage-grouse is good for sportsmen too," added Moretti. "Healthy sagebrush ecosystems also mean healthy populations of big game animals and sportsmen's access to quality experiences. Our actions today will have widespread repercussions tomorrow."

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the TRCP is a coalition of organizations and grassroots partners working together to preserve the traditions of hunting and fishing.

DOVE

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question about whether or not lead shot should be banned for dove hunting is not something Texas is prepared to make independent of other jurisdictions and based solely on the findings of this study. This

research offers an important data point in the larger discussion, but there are many other factors to consider."

An internationally recognized shotgun ballistics expert, who has authored more than a dozen similar studies involving waterfowl and upland game birds, designed the study. The study examined three, 12-gauge, 2 3/4-inch loads designed

and manufactured to mirror loads that are used most often by dove hunters. The different load types included: 1 1/8 ounce of No. 7 1/2 lead shot, 1 ounce of No. 6 steel shot, and 1 ounce of No. 7 steel shot.

The cost of the study was approximately \$500,000 and was funded with dedicated Migratory Game Bird and Texas White-winged Dove stamp revenue.

CARP

Continued from Page 28

rapidly reproduced thereafter. The fish, which can grow as much as 100 pounds, are a growing problem, with fisherman catching 20 carp on a normal day, and a whopping 180 fish on a good day. They

compete with local fish and mussels for food resources, such as plankton.

Congress and others are increasingly worried for native fish species because once Asian carp - like silver and big-head carp - become rooted in an ecosystem, they are virtually impossible to eradicate. This could devastate the Great Lakes' \$7 billion fishing industry.

To counter the carp, researchers have been testing various strategies to prevent a Great Lakes invasion, including sound barriers, food attractants, sonar fishing tracking and commercial fishing.

These techniques may be considered as Congress aims to land on a permanent solution to the issue at hand, a goal of theirs according to the new bill.

How much did YOUR stamp secure?

By Paul J. Baicich

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

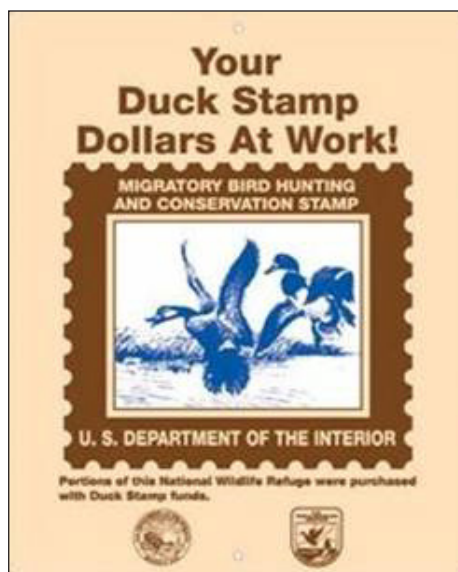
The bold sign reads, “Your Duck Stamp Dollars at Work!” You can find this popular sign at a number of Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) and National Wildlife Refuges across the country.

But it really raises a question: “How much did your stamp secure in the way of wetland and grassland habitat?”

With that in question in mind, we attempt here to pursue a reasonable answer for everyone who has bought a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp in the last year.

According to preliminary numbers from the USFWS, there were about \$53 million that came into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) in 2013. The MBCF is where about \$24 million from sales of the Duck Stamp were deposited last year.

The combined fee-title and easement acres of wetland, bottomland, and grassland habitats secured during the year were



60,000 acres (or about 7,000 acres for refuges and 53,000 acres for small wetlands and associated grasslands in the Prairie Pothole Region).

That comes out to about \$883 per acre

of habitat secured. If 98% of the price of a Duck Stamp goes into the MBCF for habitat preservation, that's \$14.70 per stamp. Then, the \$14.70 accounts for 1.66% of an acre, or 725 square feet.

In our opinion, that's really impressive. It's an area slightly less than 27 feet x 27 feet... or almost the combined floor space of an average bedroom, kitchen, and dining room in a new home in the USA in 2013. The comparison is appropriate, producing a “bedroom,” “kitchen,” and “dining room” for waterfowl, long-legged waders, shorebirds, and many other birds and wildlife. Moreover, to be able to stand somewhere on a refuge or WPA and think that “my stamp” secured a block that's about 725 square feet, should be enough to make anyone feel proud.

To accentuate the significance of that sort of conservation contribution, you can now download a new Certificate of Conservation made available by the Friends, one to which you can attach a valid \$15-stamp and show off your role in preserving 725 square feet of crucial habitat.

Senate vote to increase Duck Stamp fee is a win for sportsmen

Measure would channel millions of dollars to wetlands and waterfowl habitat conservation; vote follows House advancement of companion bill last month

By Katie McKalip
TRCP Blog

A bipartisan bill that would raise the price of a federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25 and channel millions of dollars toward wetlands and other waterfowl habitat conservation passed the Senate December 2nd, winning loud praise from conservation and sportsmen's interests that have consistently championed the measure.

The Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014 (S. 2621), introduced by Sen. David Vitter of Louisiana, would increase the cost of a Duck Stamp, the annual permit required to hunt migratory waterfowl, for the first time since 1991. Today's action follows a November vote by the House of Representatives to advance a companion bill (H.R. 5069), introduced by Rep. John Fleming of Louisiana, that drew similarly broad bipartisan support.

“At a time when millions of acres of wildlife habitat are at risk of being lost forever, congressional approval of this bipartisan legislation is a critical boost for wetlands conservation,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service Director Dan Ashe. “By restoring the lost purchasing power of the Federal Duck Stamp, this legislation will give us the opportunity to work with thousands of additional landowners across the nation to maintain vital habitat for waterfowl, grassland birds and hundreds of other native species.”

Ashe continued, “I want to thank the bill's sponsors, congressional leaders and millions of hunters and other conservationists for purchasing Duck Stamps and contributing to the preservation of habitat that all Americans can enjoy for generations to come.”

“The National Wildlife Federation and our fantastic state affiliates strongly supported the price increase (we unanimously adopted a Resolution supporting an increase last year at our Annual Meeting), as did the hunting community at large,” said National Wildlife Federation President and CEO Collin O'Mara. The bill already passed the House so it is on to President Obama's desk to be signed!

National Wildlife Federation's founder J.N. “Ding” Darling conceived of the idea of using Duck Stamps to raise money for the

purchase of wetlands and he also illustrated the very first stamp. It's a great example of conservationists coming together to fund critical conservation (the North American conservation model in action).

“Since 1934 sales of Federal Duck Stamps have generated over \$800 million to preserve over 6 million acres of critical wetlands habitat in the United States as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System,” said O'Mara. “Wildlife refuges not only serve as habitat for ducks and geese, but they provide countless benefits such as flood mitigation, water filtration, and habitat for more than 700 bird species, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, more than 1,000 fish species, and one-third of endangered or threatened species. Refuge visitor spending also generates billions of dollars every year for local communities.”

“For decades, duck hunters have proudly paid their own way,” said Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) President and CEO Whit Fosburgh, “funding

Continued on Page 36

Poaching Spree Results in Lifetime Revocations, Jail Time, and Over \$100K in Fines

From The Outdoor Wire

What started out as a deer spotlighting case eventually resulted in exposing a poaching spree that lasted for three months and was responsible for the illegal killing of at least 8 deer, one elk, and a moose. At sentencing that concluded on November 14, 2014, District Judge Dane Watkins Jr. sentenced Adam Harris of Archer, Idaho & Brandon Harris of Ririe, Idaho with lifetime license revocations, jail time, and combined fines over \$100,000.

In October of 2011, Madison County Sheriff's Deputies observed a vehicle spotlighting on the fields above Cress Creek Trail. The deputy attempted to stop the vehicle, after a short chase the vehicle became stuck in the snow, and the suspects fled on foot. Conservation Officers from Idaho Fish and Game, with assistance from Idaho Bureau of Probation and Parole, and Madison County Sheriff's Office began investigating. This was an especially egregious case of poaching, because the animals were killed at a time of the year when they are very vulnerable and concentrated on the winter range. The investigation showed that several more



Poacher's tools and some of the animals stolen from the citizens of Idaho Photo by G. Losinski/IDFG

animals were wounded and never recovered.

District Judge Dane Watkins Jr. sentenced Adam Harris to an underlying prison term of two to five years. His term is to run concurrently with a previous prison sentence that Adam Harris is already serving. Watkins also ordered Adam Harris to pay a \$500 fine for each count, a reimbursable damage assessment of \$14,680 and a lifetime revocation of

hunting privileges.

Adam R. Harris, 33, pleaded guilty to two felonies. Count I: Unlawfully killing or possessing a cow moose. Count II: Unlawfully killing or possessing a spike elk and at least five deer. Pursuant to a plea agreement, a third count of unlawful possession of a firearm by a prohibited person was dismissed by prosecutors.

Brandon C. Harris, 35, pleaded guilty to two felonies. Count I: Unlawful killing or possessing a cow moose. Count II: Unlawfully killing or possessing a spike elk and at least eight deer. District Judge Dane Watkins Jr. sentenced Brandon Harris to an underlying sentence of two to five years. Brandon Harris was credited for his time served and allowed to continue his release from prison on parole. Watkins also ordered Brandon Harris to pay \$200 in fines for each count, a reimbursable damage assessment of \$104,250 dollars, and a lifetime revocation of hunting privileges.

At the time of the incident, Adam Harris was on parole and fled the state. He was arrested in Michigan and extradited back to Idaho to face the charges nearly two years later.

CLIMATE

Continued from Page 31

funded by the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service.

Much of the information on the website helps to explain how the ecology, business and economics of sport and commercial fishing are connected to the effects of climate change and how difficult it is to adapt to the resulting changes. The challenge now, says Pinsky, who will publish a study in Oceanography this month, is for fisheries, which provide a source of protein to 60 percent of the world's population, to adapt to these changes.

In the case of the black sea bass, for

instance, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, which regulates certain fisheries in the eastern United States, still allocates quotas among states according to their distribution in the late 1980s and early 1990s. At that time, black sea bass was more often caught in Virginia than in New York, while the bass is now found further north.

The regulations require that fish caught in North Carolina, for instance, be distributed and sold from North Carolina. While the number of black bass that can be harvested in North Carolina is the same as it was two decades ago, the black bass population has dwindled in those waters -- forcing fishermen from North Carolina to travel to New Jersey to do their harvesting.

Pinsky says there needs to be fun-

damental changes made for fisheries to remain healthy as changes in climate continue to affect the stability of marine life.

While a number of species like the black sea bass are shifting their habitat range, not all species are moving at the same rate, Pinsky says. Although it isn't clear how this separation of predators will affect the food web in the future, it may force birds and mammals that rely on fish to survive, to find new food and prey elsewhere.

"We don't necessarily foresee a catastrophic collapse," says Pinsky. "Species that are heavily overfished are especially sensitive to climate change, and so allowing overfished species to recover may be one of the best things we can do for preserving fisheries in the future."

Bad news for knife owners

By Jim Shepherd
The Outdoor Wire

While archery is growing in popularity, political correctness is constantly gnawing away at our core beliefs. One of those core beliefs- at least as they were taught to me, was the belief that a man without a pocket knife wasn't really totally prepared for much of anything. A sturdy pocket knife for work could be used for, well almost anything. If you were a gentleman, you had a small, single blade "gentleman's knife" that was available for any emergency -including removing a stray thread from a lady's dress.

Today, the innocuous pocket knife can be a quick ticket to the lockup in several cities around the country. And those cities include, but aren't limited to the "usual suspects" when it comes to infringing on the right to self-protection.

Knife Rights has prepared a listing of the places they call the "10 Worst Anti-Knife Cities in America" - and the mishmash of indecipherable regulations, Catch-22 contradictions and general over-reaching is such that this is a list anyone who carries a pocket knife -even occasionally- should be aware of.

Read Knife Rights' rationale and the 10

"winners" and you'll know what I mean.

The 10 Worst Anti-Knife Cities in America

The ten worst anti-knife cities stand out for their outright persecution of honest knife owners and extraordinarily restrictive anti-knife ordinances, far more severe than even the state laws in those areas.

All too often this results in unwary citizens being subject to arrest and prosecution, and loss of a knife that is perfectly legal elsewhere in the state.

1. New York, NY (majority of pocketknives will result in arrest, aggressive persecution of knife owners, over 60,000 to date)

2. Philadelphia, PA (all knives are illegal to carry except when actually in use on the job)

3. Ocean City, MD (many common pocketknives are illegal, Catch 22 traps many citizens)

4. San Antonio, TX (all locking-blade pocketknives are illegal to carry except on the job)

5. Rocky River, OH (2.5-inch blade limit)

6. Boston, MA (2.5-inch blade carry limit, including in any vehicle)

7. Cleveland, OH (2.5-inch blade carry

limit, registration of any sale or gift of a longer bladed knife)

8. Chicago, IL (2.5-inch blade concealed carry limit, 2-inch blade limit for 18 and under, but minor cannot legally obtain any knife)

9. Corpus Christi, TX (illegal to carry any fixed blade knife or a folder with a blade longer than 3-inches except when actually in use on the job)

10. Aspen, CO (Any concealed knife is illegal to carry in public)

More details on each of the 10 worst cities' knife restrictions can be found at: www.KnifeRights.org/10WorstBest2014

See what I mean - in, Philadelphia and San Antonio, particular knives are illegal to carry except "when actually in use on the job"- how do you legally transport those legal tools on the job- to the job without breaking the law? And if I carry my Ka-Bar openly in Aspen, Colorado, am I legal?

Forewarned, however, is forearmed - or fore-disarmed if you're headed to one of these cities.

It's verification of something many already realize. The problem with America isn't common sense. The problem is that common sense apparently isn't as common as it used to be.

Second Cover Crop Survey Confirms Yield Boost

On Tuesday, November 18, USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program released the results of the 2013-2014 Cover Crop Survey, which assesses the benefits, challenges, yield impacts, and scale of adoption of cover crops. The North Central Region of the SARE program worked with the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) to survey more than 1,924 farmers across the country (44 states in all), many of whom have grown cover crops. The results of the survey confirm that farmers are seeing multiple benefits from cover crops, including increased yields of corn and soybeans following the cover crop.

Of the 1,924 farmers who responded to the survey, 630 provided data comparing corn yields from fields that did have cover crops to corn yields from fields that did not have cover crops. Similarly, 583 farmers provided data comparing soybean yields from fields that did and did not have cover crops. When a cover crop was planted before corn, corn yields increased by an average of five bushels per acre, or 3.1 percent.

Farmers who planted a cover crop before planting soybeans saw an average soybean yield increase of 4.3 percent.

These yield increases, while significant, are lower than the yield increases found in last year's Cover Crop Survey (9.6 percent for corn, and 11.6 percent for soy). According to Rob Meyers, Regional Director of Extension Programs for SARE, "much of the difference in yield impact between the two years of surveys may be attributed to the drought in 2012, which highlights the moisture-management benefits of cover crops."

Key Findings

According to SARE, key findings of the survey include:

♦ Of 1,427 cover crop users who identified the three cover crop benefits they desired most, 74 percent chose increased soil organic matter, 51 percent cited reducing soil erosion and 35 percent said they hoped cover crops would reduce soil compaction. Controlling weeds appealed to 28 percent, while providing a nitrogen source was chosen by 23 percent and nitrogen scavenging

by 17 percent. Increases in yield in the following cash crop came in close behind with 16 percent.

♦ The most popular cover crop species were winter cereal grains—including winter wheat, cereal rye and triticale—used by 73 percent of the 1,600 farmers who answered this question. Legumes, which could include clover, winter pea, vetch and others, were used by 55 percent, while an equal percentage planted brassicas such as oilseed radish, mustards, rapeseed, turnips and related plants. Annual grasses (which could include annual ryegrass, sorghum, sudangrass, oats and similar plants) were planted by 53 percent of the respondents, and multi-species mixes were used by 34 percent of the growers.

♦ Nearly half, or 48 percent, of 1,691 farmers reported using a herbicide to terminate their last cover crop. Tillage was the choice for 21 percent of the respondents. Selecting cover crops that winter kill was the top strategy for 20 percent, and mowing

Continued on Page 36

Congressional leaders step up to protect traditional fishing tackle

By Mary Jane Williamson
American Sportfishing Association

A provision to prohibit federal funds from being used to regulate lead fishing tackle and ammunition under the Toxic Substance Control Act was included in the omnibus federal spending bill released. The American Sportfishing Association (ASA), which strongly supports this action, has been working for the past several years on passage of similar legislation that will provide a permanent exemption for traditional fishing tackle.

“We applaud Congressional leadership, and House and Senate appropriators, for protecting the nation’s 60 million anglers from unjustified restric-

tions on fishing equipment that anglers have safely used for decades,” said ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman. “On multiple occasions, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been petitioned by anti-fishing organizations to federally ban fishing tackle containing lead based on its impact on wildlife, a position that is not based on sound science.”

Nussman further said, “While the EPA has consistently rejected these petitions, we have advocated all along for a permanent fix to prevent an unnecessary ban from being approved. This temporary legislative fix supports and reinforces the EPA’s previous decisions and will aid us in our efforts toward a permanent

solution, hopefully through inclusion in a Sportsmen’s Package bill in the 114th Congress. Continuing efforts to set aside the EPA’s rulings through petitions and lawsuits demonstrate a clear need for a permanent, legislative solution.”

The spending bill’s text exempting lead fishing tackle and ammunition from regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act can be found here. More information on ASA’s continuing efforts against bans on lead fishing tackle can be found on ASA’s issue webpage. The omnibus spending bill, which is a short-term measure to keep the federal government operating for the near future, is expected to be signed into law in the coming days.

STAMP

Continued from Page 33

countless conservation initiatives all across the country that have helped increase duck numbers and improve wetland habitat. Yet we want to do more.”

“The price of a Duck Stamp has not been increased since 1991,” Fosburgh continued. “During that time, the price of a first class U.S. postage stamp has increased 14 times.

Duck hunters and waterfowl enthusiasts understand the importance of our Duck Stamp purchases, and we thank Congress for putting aside politics to pass this common-sense bill.”

“This week’s actions represent a much-needed win for wetlands conservation, Prairie Pothole protection, the National Wildlife Refuge System and sportsmen’s interests,” said Steve Kline, TRCP director of government relations. “From a practical perspective, they also mean more ducks and better hunting seasons – as well as increased

funds to expand and enhance access to places where waterfowlers can enjoy quality days afield.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov.

Inspired by the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the TRCP is a coalition of organizations and grassroots partners working together to preserve the traditions of hunting and fishing.

CROPS

Continued from Page 35

was employed by 10 percent. Only one percent reported using a roller-crimper, and 6% replied “Other.”

◆ In the 2013-2014 survey, the mean difference in yield for corn among farmers with 0 to 3 years of experience in cover crops was an increase of 2.04 bushels per acre, while farmers with 4 or more years of experience in cover crops reported a mean increase of 6.76 bushels per acre. A similar pattern was evident in soybeans. Farmers with 0 to 3 years of cover crop experience reported a mean increase of 1.09 bushels per acre, while growers with 4 or more years of experience in cover crops saw a mean increase of 2.84 bushels.

◆ Median seed costs, with data “tails” removed, were \$25 per acre. As with the seeding/establishment costs, regional data

breakdowns of seed costs showed a wide range by geography, from a median seed cost of \$25 per acre in the Midwest to a median of \$40 per acre in the West.

◆ 88 percent of respondents who answered a question about barriers to adoption said that cover crop adoption is always limited or somewhat limited by the cost of cover crops; 81 percent said that cover crop adoption is always limited or somewhat limited by a perception that they are tough to terminate; and 72 percent said that adoption is always limited or somewhat limited by a perception that cover crops reduce yields in the following cash crops. Other barriers include a lack of access to planting equipment and lack of information about the practice.

◆ The top three challenges identified by cover crop users were time and labor required, establishing the crops, and seed cost. Time and labor was also the leading barrier to cover crop adoption among non-

users.

◆ Of 419 respondents who answered a question about whether they managed their farm to provide forage for honeybees, 70 percent said they either planted bee-attractive plants to provide forage or managed their cover crops to provide forage for pollinators.

◆ In the three years preceding the survey year of 2013, cover crop acreage had increased by an average of about 30 percent per year among surveyed cover crop users. When farmers were asked to project their 2014 acreage, they forecast adding about 10 percent more acres of cover crops.

The increasing popularity of cover crops points to the great work that SARE has been doing for many years to assess, demonstrate, and publicize the benefits of cover cropping. We look forward to working with USDA and partner organizations to build upon the survey’s findings and promote the widespread adoption of cover crops.

Study finds many Ohio deer infected by house cats

By Gazette Staff
Billings Gazette

If you're deer hunting in an area known to have a lot of feral house cats, you might want to make sure you cook your venison properly.

That's because a new study published in the journal *EcoHealth* has found that a large percentage of whitetail deer in the greater Cleveland, Ohio, area are infected with a parasite associated with feral domestic cats.

"This study documents the widespread infection of deer populations in northeastern Ohio, most likely resulting from feral cats, and highlights the need for consumers of venison to make absolutely certain that any deer meat planned for consumption is thoroughly and properly cooked," said Gregory Ballash of the Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine at Ohio State University and lead author of the study.

Two hundred free-roaming cats and 444 white-tailed deer were tested for the parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*, which causes toxoplasmosis. Almost 60 percent (261) of the deer showed evidence of infection and more than 65 percent (164) of the studied cats tested positive.

According to the report, approximately 14 percent of the United States' human population is infected with toxoplasmosis by the age of 40, with an estimated 1 million new cases diagnosed each year. Cats, both domestic and wild (such as bobcats), play a critical role in the spread of toxoplasmosis because they serve as the definitive hosts, fulfilling the requirements needed for the parasite to sexually reproduce and complete its life cycle.



A recently published study of white-tailed deer in Ohio showed almost 60 percent of 444 deer tested positive for a feral domestic cat virus.
Gene Fischer photo

Domestic cats are often infected at less than one year of age. Once infected, they can contaminate the environment by shedding hundreds of millions of infectious eggs (called "oocysts") via their feces. Free-roaming cats — those that are allowed free access to the outdoors — are more likely to be exposed and infected, thereby contributing more frequently to environmental contamination than indoor cats.

Similar estimates for white-tailed deer infections have been found in Iowa (53.5-64.2 percent), Pennsylvania (60 percent),

Mississippi (46.5 percent), and Ohio (44 percent), suggesting widespread environmental contamination.

The odds of deer from urban locations testing positive for toxoplasmosis were nearly three times those of deer from suburban areas when adjusted for age and gender. The study found that densities of human households, and likely cats, were a significant predictor of infection in deer.

The parasite is believed to infect about one-third of the world's population and one study has shown a decline in working memory in infected humans over age 65.

Study to uncover the unknown lives of Whooping Cranes

From The Birding Wire

A new, innovative research study is underway that will help wildlife biologists discover important birds information about one of the most interesting in the world, whooping cranes.

Biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Parks & Wildlife, U.S. Geological Survey, Crane

Trust, the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, and the International Crane Foundation have teamed up to tag and monitor adult whooping cranes to learn more details about their everyday life. The adult cranes will be tracked using satellite GPS technology which can uncover unknown migration stops, habitat use, nesting areas, and more.

Although this highly endangered

species has been studied for years, new innovative ways to gain information is as important as ever to help keep the species on the road to recovery.

Learn more about this new study through a great 9 minute video from one of the partners, Texas Parks and Wildlife. See the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPjPmdVf36k>

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