

The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

March-
April 2013

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

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

Hunter education making hunters safer in field

2012 Hunting incident report indicates
hunting is a safe outdoor activity

A total of 17 hunting-related incidents were reported in Kansas for 2012, a decrease of 73 percent from 35 years ago. Since the implementation of programs such as Hunter Education and Pass It On, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) has seen a steady decline in the number reported each year.

With thousands of hunters taking to the field each year, incidents are inevitable. However unfortunate, the majority reported were considered preventable.

Last year, hunters swinging on game, namely upland birds, accounted for eight of the reported incidents. Despite most of the parties involved wearing hunter orange, eight incidents related to a hunter firing toward and hitting another hunter in the field.

"Wearing hunter orange is not enough," said Kent Barrett, KDWPT Hunter Education Coordinator. "Communication between hunters must be improved to prevent these types of incidents."

Six of the 17 reports were categorized as careless gun handling, one of the most preventable types of incidents. From hunters pointing their barrels in unsafe directions, to firing what was thought to be an empty gun, it's no surprise Hunter Education instructors are continually pressing their students to remember "load your brain before your gun."

Two incidents were reported last year during spring turkey season in which hunters were mistaken for game, one of which resulted in the year's lone fatality. In addition, KDWPT received one report of a hunter being

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Protecting the Land... Passing on Our Traditions

KANSAS WILDLIFE
FEDERATION
The voice of outdoor Kansas



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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President's Message

By Troy Schroeder

We just finished with our annual meeting and Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) awards banquet in Emporia. We again had an excellent slate of award recipients as you can see elsewhere in this newsletter. This event kicks off our year and we have many projects ahead. Our board members are the key to our success. Unfortunately we lost two valuable board members due to health issues, but we are welcoming two new board members, Cindy Higgins from Eudora, and Randy Kidd from McLouth.

Some wildlife issues we will be monitoring include the lesser prairie-chicken listing as threatened by the USFWS and the black-footed ferret re-introduction in Logan Co. A resolution in the Kansas legislature is designed to limit some aspects of this introduction. A bill that would weaken the endangered species act is also being debated. The KDWPT is proposing to remove

restrictions on center fire cartridges that are legal for big game hunting.

The thing we are most excited about is the 25th anniversary of our Outdoor Adventure Camp at Rock Springs 4-H Camp June 2-7. This is a week-long camp for 10-12 year-olds.

We are expanding our youth activities by adding a one-day camp in the Kansas City area in June of this year. Enrollment information will be available soon.

We plan to attend several outdoor related shows and events this year and look forward to seeing many of our members and supporters there.

We could use some help from our members in accomplishing some of our activities. If you would be interested in helping at our youth camps or assisting with our display booth at shows or even call your legislator about wildlife related legislation, please let us know by emailing us at info@kswildlife.org.

2013 Outdoor Adventure Camp: A summer treat for youngsters

25th anniversary of OAC

Outdoor Adventure Camp (OAC) is a six-day summer camp for kids who either enjoy the outdoors or want to learn more about it. This conservation education program is co-sponsored by the Kansas Wildlife Federation and KSU Cooperative Extension Service. This will be the 25th anniversary for this popular camp and educational opportunity.

If you are a Kansas youngster who enjoys the outdoors, now is the time to make plans to attend Outdoor Adventure Camp from Sunday, June 2 through Friday, June 7 at the Camp WaShunGa area of Rock Springs Ranch, just south of Junction City. The camp is open to boys and girls ages 10 to 12 this summer.

Mornings will be spent traipsing the grounds at Camp WaShunGa with instructors, getting a hands-on feel for how various critters and plants live together in the ecosystem we call Kansas. Afternoons are spent learning about several areas of the outdoors, including mammals, insects, birds, fish and amphibians and reptiles. Ecology, wetlands, riparian areas and watersheds are some terms you will learn about at this unique camp.

Since the prairie does not go to sleep at sundown, neither will you. Depending on the evening, you may be out and about prowling for owls, stargazing, spotlighting spiders or watching bats gobble bugs.

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Outdoor Adventure Camp

Name _____

Age _____ Sex _____

Address _____

County _____ Phone _____

Parents' Names & Day/night Phone Numbers:

Father _____

Mother _____

Group Picture Order \$10.00 Each _____

Please include payment with camp fee.

T-shirt: (Adult Sizes)

Size: ____ SM ____ Med. ____ LG ____ XL ____ XXL ____

(T-shirts included in Craft Fee)

Full \$300 fee with application due May 28.

Refund only upon written notice of cancellation
prior to May 28.

No reductions or refunds for late arrivals or
early departures.

**Make check payable to the
Kansas Wildlife Federation (KWF).**

Call 785-526-7466 for details or send
application with payment:
Outdoor Adventure Camp
C/o Theresa Berger
406 S. New York Ave.
Sylvan Grove, KS 67481
E-mail: bergkwf@wtciweb.com

Can you help?

Outdoor Adventure Camp is an ongoing project of KWF, run strictly by volunteers who feel strongly that youngsters need to have an opportunity to learn more about the great outdoors! Volunteer counselors are needed to spend a week or even just a few days supervising youngsters. We prefer a counselor for every 8 to 10 youngsters. That means for 50 kids, usually about 40 boys and 10 girls, we need 4 to 5 male counselors and 1 to 2 females.

In the past, we've had parents attend with their youngsters, grand-

parents, college students wanting to get into the counseling or camp administration field, teachers and people interested in helping children. We prefer college students who have an interest in working with kids- an internship may be worked out with instructors. We also have a few openings for junior counselors as well. You must be at least 18 years of age.

Who wouldn't like to spend a week with 50, 10 to 12 year-olds—

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2013 NWF Alternate

Representative:

Ted Beringer

KWF Affiliates:

**Geary County Fish & Game
Association**

Junction City, KS

Kansas Wildlife Officers

Association

Iola, KS

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 and anglers. 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

March 19-23

March 20

Spring Break for KS Regents Schools

Ranching for Profit Workshop - Pratt

tdchristian@cox.net

March 21

Ranching for Profit Workshop - Hays

tdchristian@cox.net

March 21

Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Com-

mission mtg. - Topeka

March 22

Ranching for Profit Workshop - Salina

tdchristian@cox.net

March 23

Ranching for Profit Workshop - Topeka

tdchristian@cox.net

April 1-4

April 6

Playa Symposium, Lubbock, TX

Flames in the Flint Hills event, Clements

www.flinthillsflyingw.com

April 14-18

April 26

Geary County F&G Assoc. EEE Days

Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Com-

mission mtg. - Wichita

April 27-29

May 18-20

Kansas Birding Festival, Wakefield

National Wildlife Federation Annual Meet-

ing - hepherdstown, WV

June 9

Symphony in the Flint Hills, Lyon County,

west of Bushong

June 21

Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Com-

mission mtg. - Kansas City

June 23

August 23

Great American Backyard Campout

Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Com-

mission mtg. - Great Bend

OAC

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Other activities include scavenger hunts, water sports including swimming and canoeing, fishing, shooting sports including rifle, shotgun, archery, and pellet gun. You'll pick your choices, or participate in all if you like.

The price of the camp includes all food, instruction and lodging. A swimsuit, sleeping gear and clothes you'll wear for a week are about all you need to bring. Sunscreen, insect repellent, a cap and water bottle also will come in handy. The price for the entire week is \$300,

which includes arts and crafts. You may want to bring a little money for snacks and souvenirs at Milford Hatchery and Nature Center. Space is limited and registration deadline is May 28.

Send your application and full fee to Outdoor Adventure Camp, c/o Theresa Berger, 406 S. New York Ave., Sylvan Grove, KS 67481. Checks should be made payable to the Kansas Wildlife Federation. If you need more information or an application, phone 785-526-7466. Evenings are best, or leave a message on the machine. You can also go to the KWF website www.kswildlife.org for an application form.

KWF honors 2012 Conservation Achievement Program winners



On Saturday, February 23, the Kansas Wildlife Federation honored 13 individuals and organizations for their conservation efforts in 2012 at the Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) Awards banquet in Emporia. The following write-ups highlight the achievement of the winners.

HUNTING

Continued from Page 1

struck by pellets from an unknown shooter; however this was considered a rarity.

Although even one incident can be tragic, the number of incidents is small in comparison to the total number of hunt days in the field. Statistically, hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities.

"Thousands of hunters take to the

field each and every hunting season and return home without an incident to mar their excursion," said Barrett. "We can maintain this legacy of safety by not taking shortcuts in recognized safety procedures and remaining aware of what we do with our firearms."

HELP

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trying to get them to sleep, keeping them in line all day and nursing cuts, bruises, poison ivy—helping kids have a great summer outdoor experience?! You'll be ready to go home and relax when it's over. Moreover, it won't cost you a dime, except for the gas to get to camp. Seriously, it is a rewarding experience. Please con-

sider helping out. Call me to get your name on the list.

This camp is funded primarily through fees collected from those attending. Outdoor Writers of Kansas provides scholarships for participants from the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program each year. Sportsman's groups throughout Kansas often fund local youngsters to provide scholarships to help with the cost. KWF volunteers donate a tremendous amount of time and money. We welcome any

donations or funding ideas to improve the program.

Anyone who wants to present a program at camp should call me. We're always looking for new ideas. Outdoor Adventure Camp is for youngsters, and they come first! It takes a lot of work by a number of volunteers to make it a positive learning experience. Can you help? Call Theresa Berger at 785-526-7466 or e-mail her at bergkwf@wtciweb.com.

Conservationist of the Year

Robert Robel

Robert J. Robel was born in Lansing, Michigan. He was accepted into medical school at Michigan State University when he was a senior in high school. He switched from pre-medicine to wildlife ecology in his junior year because he didn't want to be confined to an office if he became a doctor. While still an undergraduate he sought out advisors and had funding lined up at the University of Idaho and Utah State University for his master's and doctoral degrees, respectively.

In 1961, he was hired as an assistant professor in Kansas State University's department of zoology, before the merger that created the Division of Biology. On a Fulbright Scholarship, he traveled to the United Kingdom in 1967 to study the Black Grouse. While in the United Kingdom he was asked to help with a long-term study of the Red Deer, a close cousin to the North American Elk. He developed a management plan to help increase Red Deer numbers by culling female deer that were not capable of producing healthy offspring.

An extensive amount of Dr. Robel's research in Kansas has been devoted to upland game bird species, including Prairie-chickens and Northern Bobwhites. The research led to enhanced understanding of their behavior and habitat needs and provided management frameworks designed to maintain sustainable populations. In an effort to strengthen such research in Kansas, he helped establish the Kansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit on KSU's campus.

As well as wildlife research, Dr. Robel was involved with the National Institute of Health regarding the effects of herbicide exposure and cancer. Dr. Robel served as a consultant and science advisor for several Kansas governors, energy companies and numerous committees and task forces. For the last several years, he was on a federal advisory committee for the Department of the Interior concerning wind power and wind farms.



Robert Robel, from Manhattan, was awarded the 2012 Conservationist of the Year award. Dr. Robel passed away in late January so his wife, Anice, accepted the award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Also present is Steve Bender, left, National Wildlife Federation Regional Representative from Austin, TX.

Dr. Robel was a member of several professional societies and wildlife conservation organizations, including being a Life Member of The Wildlife Society, an Honorary Life Member of the Kansas Wildlife Federation, an Elective Member of the American Ornithologists Union, and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

He was also very active with the Kansas State Rifle Association and created a tax-exempt foundation to raise funds to promote legal shooting activities among youth and women in Kansas. In addition, he was active with the National Rifle Association and served on the Board of Directors

for 25 years. He was charged with the task of fundraising for the United States Olympic shooting team building at the Olympic Village in Colorado Springs, CO. He was a member of the United States Olympic Committee.

Dr. Robel's career achievements have been remarkable and more, importantly, a positive factor for the quality of human and wildlife in the State of Kansas and beyond. In recognition of his extensive accomplishments and contributions, the Kansas Wildlife Federation is proud to present Robert Robel as the Conservationist of the Year for 2012.

Land & Soil Wildlife Conservationist

Randy Rodgers and Helen Hands

Randy Rodgers provided years of valuable service to the sportsmen of Kansas as Upland Bird Research Biologist for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. He researched and developed options to improve habitat on private land in conjunction with crop production. Now retired, Randy is spending his time “practicing what he preached,” developing wildlife habitat on four tracts of Rush County land purchased by him and his wife Helen, also a former KDWPT biologist. They have developed state-of-the-art upland bird habitat on this land, while keeping much of it in crop production.

They used federal Farm Bill Program practices, mostly the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), to establish native grass and shrubs in strategic locations. The really cool thing is that these areas have been designed with farming ease in mind. Grassed terraces and other

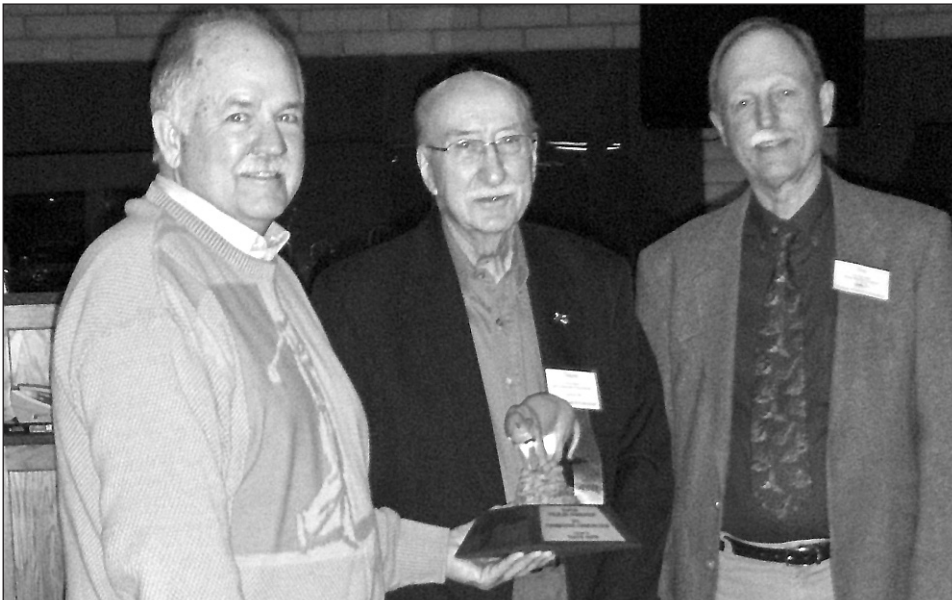


Helen Hands and Randy Rodgers, from Hays, receive the 2012 Land and Soil Wildlife Conservationist award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President, right.

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Conservation Communicator

Thayne Smith



Thayne Smith, center, from Claremore, OK, receives the 2012 Conservation Communicator award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Also present is Phil Taunton, left, representative of the Emporia Area Chapter of the Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation, which sponsored the Conservation Communicator award.

Thayne Smith was born in Healy, KS and went to school there until he was six. Because of the Dust Bowl, his father lost his job on the railroad and the family moved to Arkansas for six years. The family moved back to the Dighton area, where Thayne finished high school. Much of his love for the outdoors was established in western Kansas.

Thayne attended Wichita University majoring in journalism. His first job out of college was in advertizing for Acton Co., which made coolers in Arkansas City. This started Thayne on his road to the outdoors. His next three jobs all involved Kansas newspapers, at the Newton Kansan, the Garden City Telegram and the Salina Journal as a newspaper writer-editor-photographer.

For five years Thayne served as the Public Relations Director with the

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Wildlife Conservationist

Matt Smith

Matt Smith has had a long and successful career with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism (KDWP). He started as a District Wildlife Biologist in the SW area, and then moved to a similar position in the NW at Wilson. He took on the additional responsibility as a Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) Area Biologist.

After the retirement of the full-time Farm Bill Coordinator, Matt assumed those duties as well for a period of time. A couple years ago he was relieved of the NRCS duties and many of his district duties so he could focus on Farm Bill issues. With most all Kansas land in agriculture production and management of this land highly influenced by the federal Farm Bill, this activity is very important to the welfare of Kansas wildlife populations and their habitat.

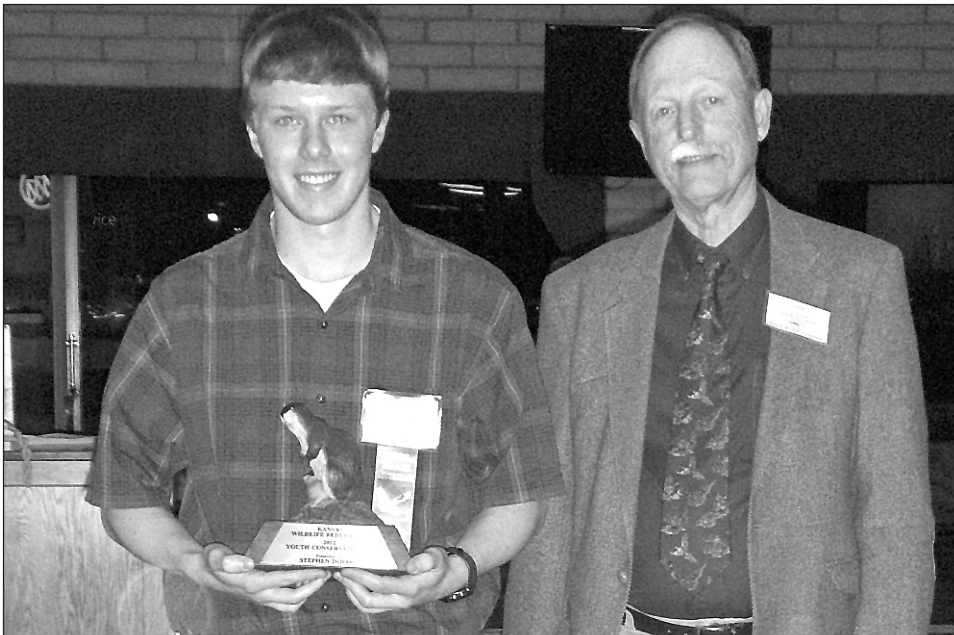


Matt Smith, center, from Wilson, receives the 2012 Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Randy Rodgers, left, represented the Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society which sponsored the Wildlife Conservationist award.

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Youth Conservationist

Stephen DeHart



Stephen DeHart, left, from Olathe, received the 2012 Youth Conservationist of the Year award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. The Bundleflower Plant and Wildflower Preserve (the Jim Ruder family of WaKeeney) sponsored the Youth Conservationist award.

Two years ago Stephen DeHart was working on Olathe South High School's Ornate Box Turtle research project at the Prairie Center. Jeff Witters had founded this project at Olathe and then took Stephen under his wing to teach him the ways of birding.

Stephen's dedication for wanting to be out in Kansas' summer heat while tracking turtles through the underbrush was noteworthy. His knowledge for Kansas' flora and fauna increased almost exponentially. He seemed to be like a sponge and soaked up information as fast as he could read or experience it.

Because of the expertise he developed that summer, Stephen was asked by Rene Gloschen, Student Naturalist Teacher at Olathe South High School, to be part of their Kansas Eco-meet

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Conservation Educator

Stephen Pletcher

Stephen Pletcher has been a teacher in the Emporia school district since the fall of 1980. He has been the Physical Education teacher at Riverside since the fall of 2006.

Steve is an innovative teacher who creates many activities that teach the standards of Physical Education. Mr. Pletcher's students are taught TREF skills, which stand for Think, Respect, Effort and Focus. His students begin a warm up activity as soon as they enter the gym and each student knows the routine and what is expected. On top of this, Steve spends a great deal of his own time outside of the school day working with students. After noticing that many of the students sit in the gym before school, he created a morning walking program for students. Students received awards for the mileage that they walked or ran. Student helpers kept track of the number of laps that students achieved.



Stephen Pletcher, left, from Emporia, receives the 2012 Conservation Educator award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Westar Energy, Inc., of Topeka, sponsored the Conservation Educator award.

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Conservation Organization

Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition



Bill Edwards, left, from Olsburg, receives the 2012 Organization of the Year award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Bill is the Vice-Chairman of the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition, the award recipient.

The Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC) was organized shortly after the formation of the National Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative (GLCI) in 1991. Since its inception KGLC has accomplished many great things to better Kansas grazing lands through collaborative education such as range schools, coffee shop meetings, youth education contests, public education meetings, and videos covering management topics.

KGLC organized as a not-for-profit in 2006. KGLC holds numerous meetings, special events, tours, implements two adult range schools each summer, and interacts with regional grazing groups such as the Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, Comanche Pool Prairie Resource Foundation, Smoky Hills Graziers Association, Kansas Graziers Association, and the Clark-Comanche-Meade Counties Grazing Group to support

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Water Conservationist

Tom Meek

Tom Meek is the District Manager for the Clay County Conservation District in Clay Center. He administers the conservation district's Water Resources and Nonpoint Source cost share programs. Tom assists the Clay County Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) staff with federal conservation programs such as the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Tom actively participates in Milford and Smoky Hill Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) groups. He has administered \$83,000 in cost share funds approved in Clay County for projects in Milford WRAPS targeted areas. Tom assisted with development of the district's 5-year plan which includes new initiatives that will focus on water quality through nutrient management and flood mitigation.

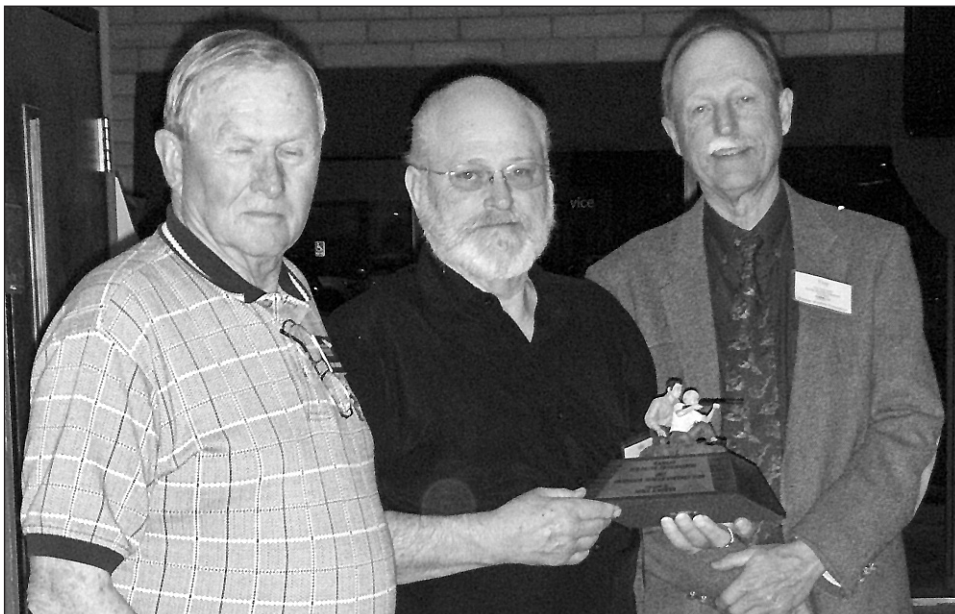


Tom Meek, left, from Clay Center receives the 2012 Water Conservationist of the Year award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. The Kansas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society sponsored the Water Conservationist award.

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Outdoor Skills Instructor

Mike Knotts



Mike Knotts, center, from Peck, receives the 2012 Outdoor Skills Instructor award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Also present was Carl Conley, left, KWF Southcentral District Director. The Outdoor Skills Instructor award was sponsored by the Geary County Fish and Game Association of Junction City.

Mike Knotts has been a Hunter Education Instructor since 1977. Having been certified by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission (now the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP)), Mike has been very active in teaching boys and girls in safely handling firearms, wildlife conservation and hunter ethics.

He has taught over 180 classes with an average of 5 classes a year, organizing 3 of them each year. Of the classes he has organized, 11,570 students have been certified and received their Hunter Education card.

Mike also has been involved with the administration of the Lake Afton Clinic for many years. He has served as an instructor at the Lake Afton Clinic for 35 years. In 2012 the clinic certified 857 students. With an average of 850 students a year, Mike has been

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Forest Conservationist

Paul and Kristan Dean

The Paul and Kristan Dean family has been improving the woodland and forest resources on their Greenwood County Tree Farm for over 40 years, following the recommendations of professional foresters and wildlife biologists. Paul Dean learned the values of forest and wildlife conservation from his father, Kenneth, who involved him in timber and wildlife habitat improvement projects since he was a boy, including the marking of 21,000 board feet of timber in 1971 for thinning and harvest. Another 20 acre timber stand improvement practice was conducted in 1981 followed by a timber harvest in 1994. Each harvest and timber stand improvement practice improved the health of the forest, removing undesirable trees, such as honeylocust and Osage orange, and releasing higher quality trees such as black walnut and bur oak which also increased acorn production for deer and other wildlife.

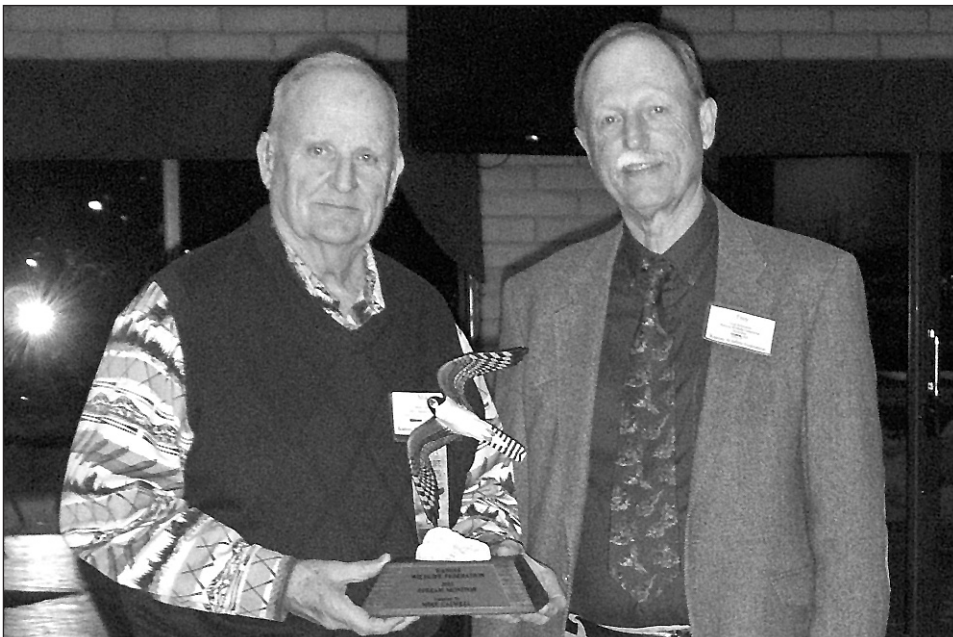


The Dean family, Paul, Kristan and Octavian, from Madison, receive the 2012 Forest Conservationist award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President, right. The Kansas State Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation sponsored the Forest Conservationist award.

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Stream Monitor

Mike Calwell



Mike Calwell, left, from Shawnee Mission, receives the 2012 Stream Monitor award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. The Stream Monitor award was sponsored by The Watershed Institute of Overland Park.

A lifelong Kansas resident, Mike Calwell has always been attracted to water. He dedicated himself to swimming, first as a high school and college All American, next as an age group and high school swim coach, and now as a Masters swimmer.

Mike is not only a founding board member of Friends of the Kaw (FOK) (www.kansasriver.org), but his vision of creating access points every ten miles along the 173 mile long river has helped drive and sustain this grassroots environmental organization. Over nearly two decades Mike has dedicated countless volunteer hours to protecting the Kansas River (known locally as the "Kaw") for future generations. With a unique and collaborative approach to working with communities on building river access points, Mike has inspired both private and public entities to donate over \$1 million

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Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist

Caleb Stotts

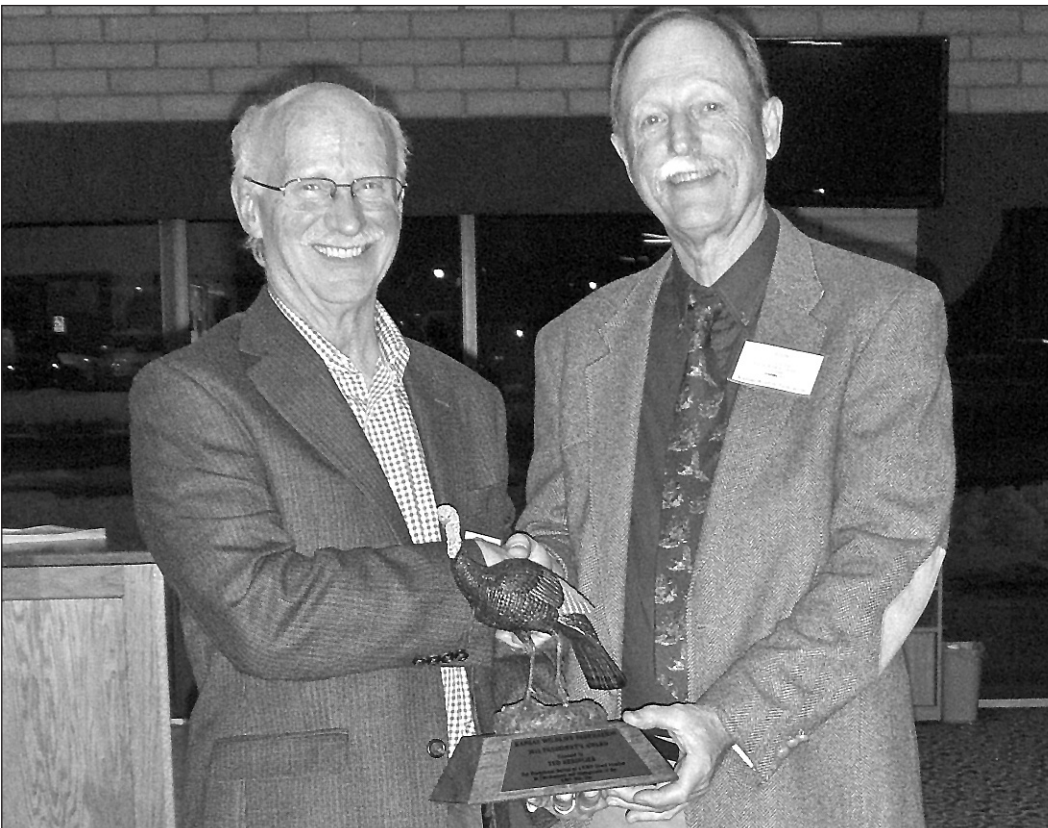
Caleb Stotts has a tremendous interest in the natural history and conservation of biodiversity on the Stotts Ranch in Elk County west of Fredonia. He manages this property as part of his family's LLC partnership trust. A University of Kansas alum, Caleb developed his interest in ecology from Kelly Kindscher. Caleb has worked actively with conservation and academic communities in improving the environmental quality of the ranch.

Caleb coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and professors at Emporia State University and Wichita State University to arrange for habitat restoration on the 6,300-acre native prairie ranch. Funded under a Partners For Wildlife grant, the management plan is to be done on a landscape-scale design. The plan calls to restore the native savanna from a closed-canopy, encroached forest and then evaluate the responses of flora and fauna. Caleb also performed the tree stand thinning and other habitat work in



Caleb Stotts, center, from Fredonia, receives the 2012 Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist award from Troy Schroeder, Kansas Wildlife Federation President. Also shown is Nick Levendofsky, left, from the Kansas Farmers Union of McPherson, which sponsored the Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist award.

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President's Award

Pictured is Ted Beringer, left from Lenexa, receiving the President's Award from Troy Schroeder, KWF President. Ted is the Northeast District Direct for KWF. The President's Award is generally given to a Board member who has made a significant contribution above and beyond their responsibilities. KWF Board members and Officers are not eligible for CAP award categories. Ted was cited by President Schroeder for his effort to get the KWF webpage established. Ted continues to monitor and operate the webpage to keep it fresh and interesting to users.



New and old faces at KWF

At the 2013 Annual Meeting in Emporia, the Kansas Wildlife Federation membership elected Officers and Board members to lead KWF during the next year. Unfortunately we recently lost two board members due to health issues.

Nick Levendofsky is from Republic and was re-elected to the Northcentral District Director's position. He farms with his family and works for the Kansas Farmers Union.

Angela Anderson, of Allen, was re-elected to a Director-at-Large position. She is the Twin Lakes WRAPS Coordinator for the Flint Hills RC&D and serves on the North Lyon County USD 251 school board.

Troy Schroeder was re-elected President of the Kansas Wildlife Federation. Troy operates a family farm near Albert, KS with his son. He has had a life long interest in hunting, fishing and other outdoor activities along with natural

resource protection.

Randy Kidd, from McLouth, was elected to a Director-at-Large position. Randy is a semi-retired veterinarian with experience as an alternative/holistic vet using (and growing) herbal remedies; homeopathic, aromatherapy, and Bach Flower remedies.

Phil Taunton was re-elected to the Southeast District Director's position. Phil, from Emporia, is a retired BNSF employee, a member of the Outdoors Writers of Kansas (OWK) and hosts a weekly outdoor radio show called What's in Outdoors at www.kvoe.com.

Cindy Higgins is from Eudora and was elected to fill a vacant Director-at-Large position. Cindy is an Outreach Coordinator for the Division of Water Resources of the Kansas Department of Agriculture in Topeka.

Steve Sorensen, Valley Center, was re-elected Conservation Vice President.

Steve is a retired supervisor from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. He has been involved in various positions with KWF for over 26 years.

Not present for the photo was Dave Hendricks of WaKeeney, newly elected Northwest District Director.

Elby Adamson was re-elected as a Director-at-Large at the Annual Meeting. He is a retired high school teacher from Clay Center and is a free-lance writer and is still involved with outdoor education presentations, Eco-meets and Environthons.

We currently have a Director-at-Large position that is vacant, as well as the Southwest District Director's position. If you would like to serve on the KWF Board of Directors, contact any of the Officers or Board members listed on pages 2-4 for information or send an inquiry to info@kswildlife.org.

STOTTS

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the field.

Caleb is great to work with, providing access to this tremendous landscape for ESU and WSU biologists (and some folks from U of Missouri as well) who have been doing studies related to black jack and post oak savanna conservation

on the ranch. He has actively inquired about their findings and has attended formal presentations by these biologists at various meetings.

Even before the activities stated above, Caleb was lead author on a paper describing the need for savanna conservation in the Cross Timbers region (Stotts et al. 2007, Okla. Native Plant Record 7:78). Caleb truly has genuine interests and active involvement in the conservation of biodiversity on the family's ranch.

The Stotts Ranch supports numerous Greater Prairie-chicken leks. Personnel from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism have surveyed GRPCs and other grassland birds there.

Caleb Stotts is an excellent steward of prairie wildlife and their habitat and a fitting recipient of the Kansas Wildlife Federation Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award for 2012.



Wealth of wildlife

Bob Gress, a member of Birds in Focus and former Director of the Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, discusses his travels to Peru at the Kansas Wildlife Federation's 2013 Conservation Achievement Program (CAP) Awards Banquet in Emporia February 23rd. He correlated how the bird species there reminded him of the wealth of wildlife we have in Kansas and how people do not appreciate the natural resources in their own backyard.

LAND

Continued from Page 7

areas were designed to eliminate point rows and other hard-to-farm spots. The remaining crop fields were laid out in even sprayer or planter widths to prevent overlap. Although the aerial views of their properties look complicated, they are strikingly attractive and fields are easy to farm. It is no surprise that these areas are also a hunter's paradise.

After a couple years, the plan proved successful. In a year of low pheasant numbers in the surrounding area, their land still had good numbers of birds. If you provide all necessary habitat components in close proximity, you will have birds. Of course, other species like rabbits and deer like it too.

One field has a low area that was developed into a wetland. When it has water, it provides a great place for shorebirds and waterfowl.

Not walking away from their life's work, Randy and Helen have demon-

strated how to build ideal upland bird habitat on a productive farm. They have already been contacted by others wanting information about creating something similar.

Randy and Helen have put their philosophy into practice for many years and implemented sound management practices for crops and wildlife. They are very deserving of being recognized as the 2012 Land and Soil Wildlife Conservationist of the Year by the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

WILDLIFE

Continued from Page 8

In the Farm Bill position Matt has excelled at coordination among various United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, non-governmental groups like Pheasants Forever and KDWPT. He has been active in working with national committees and working groups, like the Midwest Association of Wildlife Agencies, to influence the development of the conservation title of the Farm Bill in Congress. These groups have been very successful with programs such as the Conserva-

tion Reserve Program (CRP). At its high, over 3-million acres of land was planted to CRP grasses in Kansas.

Matt has always been willing to step up and do additional duties that may not have been his primary responsibility, often working in more than one capacity. An example of this occurred recently when Matt took the lead in the acquisition of the 160-acre Gurley Wetland in Lincoln County for KDWPT, overcoming several hurdles typical for these projects. Generations of hunters and wildlife enthusiasts to come will enjoy this marsh due to Matt's dedicated work. Because of his positive contact with Matt, Mr. Gurley has made additional contributions to promote youth hunting.

In addition to his official duties, Matt has worked with several professional organizations. Having served in several lower positions, he currently is the President of the Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society. Matt has been instrumental in coordinating the Kansas Natural Resource Conference, serving on the Steering Committee the last three years and as the Program Committee Chair the last two years.

Matt Smith has provided dedicated service to KDWPT and the sportsman of Kansas in a professional way. The Kansas Wildlife Federation is proud to present the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year award for 2012 to Matt Smith.

SMITH

Continued from Page 7

Kansas Highway Commission (now the Kansas Department of Transportation). He followed that with three years of free-lance writing and editing Kansas outdoor magazines.

In 1966 George Moore, Director of the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission, convinced Thayne to go to Pratt to serve as his Chief of the Information and Education Section. During his 5-years there, Thayne was the first recipient of the Kansas Wildlife Federation's Conservation Communicator's Award in 1967.

Thayne went to work for the Coleman Company in Wichita as a Public Relations Director for five years before moving to Virginia to serve in a similar

position for the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA). A move to Oklahoma found him being a PR man for Zebco Co. and then Lowrance Electronics. He has been editing magazines, free-lance writing and outdoor photography since 1989.

During all this time Thayne was very active in professional writer's organizations, regardless of where he lived. He served in various positions, including president, with the Outdoor Writers of Kansas (OWK). Thayne is the only surviving charter member of OWK, having met at Toronto Lake to form the organization in 1962. He still attends as many of the OWK meetings as possible, as recently as last November in Russell.

Thayne has served as president of the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA), the Associa-

tion of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers (AGLOW) and the Great Rivers Outdoor Writers (GROW), a four-state association of Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma. He is an Honorary Life Member of the Missouri Outdoor Communicators (MOC) and the Texas Outdoor Writers Association (TOWA).

Since 1950 Thayne has been an award-winning freelance writer-photographer and outdoor magazine editor. He has had more than 1,000 articles published in national magazines. Many of us remember reading Thayne's articles in past years. His contribution to Kansas outdoors, firearm education and wildlife appreciation deserves recognition.

It is an honor for the Kansas Wildlife Federation to recognize Thayne Smith as the Communicator of the Year for 2012.

DEHART

Continued from Page 8

team. He was unable to participate because he was already on the cross country team. Two weeks before the regional Eco-meet that fall, he stopped by Ms. Gloschen's office asking if he could be on an eco-meet team. Due to an injury he could not run. Bad for cross country but great for Ms. Gloschen! She had not found enough students who wanted to do the Eco-meet but because Stephen wanted to do this they got busy and pulled together a team. Stephen took 1st place in Ornithology and Wood-

land at both regional and State after practicing as a team only twice!

This past fall, with Stephen leading the group, Olathe South not only had 3 regional teams, but his team qualified for State. Once again Stephen took 1st in Ornithology at State. What was amazing to watch was Stephen's desire to teach the other team members about Kansas' birds. He went into great detail and made power point presentations and practice quizzes for everyone. He showed them the minute details between some of the more difficult species to identify.

Currently Stephen is in the Student Naturalist class. He has exhibited an amazing drive to learn the finest details not just in birds but in all areas

of conservation and ecology. Other students want to sit next to him in class because he has a way of teaching new study methods and giving them confidence that they too can learn to identify our native species.

It is hard to say which area of the life sciences will end up winning Stephen over, but whatever path he chooses it will always be laced with a love of wildlife.

For his deep interest in wildlife conservation and ecology and especially for his teaching contributions to his fellow students, the Kansas Wildlife Federation is pleased to present our Youth Conservationist of the Year award for 2012 to Stephen DeHart.

COALITION

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local efforts to solve priority grassland issues and concerns, primarily through educational efforts often keying on grassland wildlife species.

The Coalition helped birth the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council (KS PFC) in 2008, and has supported it with staff assistance and finances. The Coalition recently worked with KS PFC and the

Comanche Pool to secure a \$250,000 2012 Conservation Partners Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to place two regional fire coordinators in the Lesser Prairie-chicken Initiative area of western Kansas to help start and support new local prescribed burning associations.

KGLC just updated its long-term strategy guiding its growth through 2015. It includes key elements of developing and helping to implement a comprehensive statewide grasslands invasive species plan, reducing the

impacts of grassland fragmentation, continuing expansion and support for regional grazing groups where interest exists, continuing to support the use of prescribed fire as a grasslands management tool (through the KS PFC), and maintaining and expanding its cutting edge web site as a primary informational resource for ranchers, agency staffs, educators, and others.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation is proud to present the 2012 Conservation Organization of the Year award to the Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition.

PLETCHER

Continued from Page 9

During the 2009/2010 school year, Mr. Pletcher wrote multiple grants that enabled Riverside Elementary to have an exercise/walking trail built in their outdoor wildlife learning site (OWLS). He has spent many hours since improving and maintaining this trail. He organizes the staff, PTO and students in quarterly workdays on Saturday mornings to help maintain and improve the trail, outdoor classroom and planting, pruning and identifying plants and trees in the area. This is above and beyond his teaching assignment.

In the 2011-12 school year, Stephen became involved in the National Archery in the Schools Program, (NASP). After securing the funding and working with trainers, he coordinated efforts with the district maintenance crew to install a retractable net in the gymnasium. As a result of his efforts, students have the opportunity to develop their archery skills. This is the only elementary school in Emporia that provides this curriculum.

Mr. Pletcher also coordinates an extra activity with Riverside students in an annual jump rope challenge. This year, Steve will challenge his students to raise funds for the Salvation Army with this contest. As you can tell, Steve displays a great deal of energy and enthusiasm

for his job. To his students he combines high expectations for learning and behavior with a sense of fun thrown in. In short, Steve connects with his students.

Perhaps Steve's greatest strength is integrating reading and math in his Physical Education activities. He is always listening to what students are learning during PLC time at each grade level. He will try to find a way to help teach that math or reading concept to his students during a Physical Education activity.

In conclusion, Mr. Pletcher is the type of teacher everyone would want for their child. This recognition of Stephen Pletcher as the 2012 Conservation Educator of the Year by the Kansas Wildlife Federation is well deserved.

MEEK

Continued from Page 10

Tom was instrumental in starting the Clay County Water Festival in 2004, with a grant from the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (KACEE). The first Water Festival was a community-wide event associated with the Piotique Fall Festival in Clay Center. Water Festivals since then have been for all Clay County 4th Graders. He has continued the annual 6th Grade Environmental Education Day.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation has relied on Tom to provide presentations on water quality with the district's stream

trailer at our Outdoor Adventure Camp for 10-12 year-old students at Camp Washunga. He gives other educational presentations on request throughout Clay County. Tom coordinates the Conservation District's poster contest for elementary students - this year's theme is "Where Does Your Water Shed?".

This year Tom serves as Vice-Chair of the Kansas Envirothon Committee. He attended the Canon National Envirothon with the Kansas Team in 2012. Tom has served as a facilitator and/or presenter at many regional Environthons. He has helped with fund-raising for numerous local Envirothon teams and has served as a judge for the scavenger hunt for the Milford Eco-meet many times.

Tom serves on the Kansas Crossroads

Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) and has helped that group coordinate water quality events for agriculture producers.

As a farm operator, Tom has implemented many water quality improvement practices including no-till crop production, filter strips and conservation buffers, and riparian forest improvement. He is conducting an on-farm research project on the use of cover crops for soil and water quality improvement in cooperation with the Kansas State University Extension and NRCS.

For all he does for water conservation, Tom Meek is the Kansas Wildlife Federation Water Conservationist of the Year for 2012.

KNOTTS

Continued from Page 10

involved with helping nearly 30,000 students to be certified in Hunter Education.

Every year KDWPT hears of parents who attended the Lake Afton Clinic and are now taking their kids back to attend for themselves. It would be interesting to see how many second and perhaps third generation Hunter Ed students have been influenced by Mike over the years.

Mike is a Master Instructor and

the Area coordinator for south central Kansas. Mike has conducted 68 new Instructor orientations or workshops, further extending the influence he has had on young hunters from across Kansas.

Mike served on the KDWPT Advisory Committee for many years. He has the respect of the hunter education instructors of Kansas and is looked upon as a mentor to many instructors who continue serving the students during the Lake Afton Clinic.

Mike continues to be very involved with hunter education in the Wichita area and provides support for many activities throughout the area by means

of the hunter education equipment trailer that he oversees. He assists instructors as well as other shooting sports activities throughout the area. Mike is very involved in the Sedgwick County Law Days Safety Camp each summer.

He has been an instrumental part of the Young Safe Hunters organization in Wichita. In 2011 Mike was nominated for the instructor of the year award. He has been awarded the Order of the Buffalo for outstanding instructors.

The Kansas Wildlife Federation is proud to present to Mike Knotts the recognition of Outdoor Skills Instructor of the Year for 2012.

DEAN

Continued from Page 11

Because of these efforts the American Tree Farm System recognized the property in 2003 as meeting their eight standards of forest sustainability and 112 acres of woodlands surrounding Halderman Creek were certified as a Tree Farm. Most recently thousands of black walnut and bur oak were planted on 8 acres and an additional 6 acres of timber stand improvement work was completed. The Dean family accomplishes all this work on their own.

In addition to their woodlands, the Dean family has worked to improve the health of their grasslands by removing

woody species thus improving habitat for upland birds. The Deans have also established grass buffers adjacent to Halderman Creek to improve both water quality and wildlife habitat.

In 2009 the Dean's hosted a woodland management field day as part of the local Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) project. The field day informed around 30 people on proper forest management and sustaining water quality by protecting and managing riparian areas. A lawyer by profession, Paul provided his services to enable the Kansas Forestry Association to obtain Not-for-Profit status as a 501(c) 3. The Kansas Forest Service, Kansas Forestry Association, Kansas Tree Farm Committee and Kansas Chapter of the Walnut

Council recognized Paul and Kristan as the 2012 Forest Stewardship Tree Farmers of the Year for the exceptional stewardship of their property.

Paul and Kristan Dean are not only interested in conserving and managing the forest, woodland and wildlife resources on their property, they are encouraging others to leave a legacy of good environmental stewardship for future generations, including their son, Octavian.

For their dedication and interest in sustaining the quality and productivity of woodlands and the wildlife that benefit from them, Paul and Kristan Dean are the winners of the 2012 Kansas Wildlife Federation Forest Conservationist of the Year.

CALWELL

Continued from Page 11

in in-kind donations. His efforts have literally transformed the Kaw River – for the better.

When Mike started building boat ramps ten years ago, there were just three access points along the Kaw. Mike has built or assisted in building twelve ramps that now provide citizens and tourists of Kansas with recreational access to one of our state's three public waterways. The minimum price tag for a river access ramp is about \$100,000, but Mike is able to keep project costs around \$25,000 by using in-kind donations (engineering plans, construction, and other materials from

local companies and public entities).

In July of 2012, Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, arrived in Manhattan to take a Kaw river boat trip with Governor Brownback and dedicate the Kansas River as a National Water Trail. Salazar specifically thanked FOK for the work of providing accessibility. Mike's many years of providing river access was an integral part of this effort. This designation will include further assistance in project funding as well as awareness opportunities.

Since 1994 Mike has organized and led educational canoe floats on the Kansas River. Mike used his own river and paddling knowledge to develop operational and safety guidelines and logistics for these very successful float trips. Thousands of individuals have now experienced the beauty of this prairie river.

Mike's natural passion for education has led to a series of "sandbar seminars" featuring various river experts. Mike has led numerous public presentations on river morphology and the effects of sand dredging on river health and long-term viability.

Twenty years ago, Kansans considered the Kansas River a "dirty" river, if they thought about it much at all. Thanks in large part to the leadership of dedicated volunteer Mike Calwell, the state and federal government are now starting to realize the river's potential as a beautiful, historic, and recreational treasure.

For these efforts Mike Calwell deserves to be recognized as the 2012 Stream Monitor of the Year by the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

JOIN THE KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION!

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Please make checks payable to Kansas Wildlife Federation.

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

Steve Harper Scholarship renewed, to help Kansas students

The Outdoors Writers of Kansas and Kansas Wildscape are renewing the scholarship

A scholarship for Kansas students is named after Steve Harper, a long-time photo editor and outdoors writer/photographer for the Wichita Eagle, who died in 2000 from cancer at the age of 55. A scholarship in his name was suggested by Gov. Bill Graves and others. The \$1,000 scholarship program was funded by donations. Funds expired after about 10 years. The Outdoors Writers of Kansas and Kansas Wildscape are joining to renew the Scholarship.

Applications may be made by students graduating from a Kansas high

school planning on attending a Kansas four-year college, with a nature/wildlife-based major. The student must also have career goals of staying in Kansas. College students with a similar major and goals may also apply.

The program will issue one \$1,000 scholarship annually, directly to the student's college.

Harper was known for his deep love of Kansas and published hundreds of articles and photos about enjoying his native state. He also rated Kansans as some of the finest people in America, especially those that pos-

sessed great deals of commitment and motivation.

Scholarship applicants will be judged by members of the Outdoor Writers of Kansas and Kansas Wildscape. Selection criteria will include past and current involvement in nature/wildlife-related projects, scholastic achievement and projected potential.

The deadline to apply is late March. For information on applying, contact Debbie Brandt at Kansas Wildscape at 785-843-9453 or dbrandt@sunflower.com.

Clearing the way for a great migration

Every spring, more than half a million Sandhill Cranes congregate along a broad stretch of Nebraska's Platte River. One of the world's great migration spectacles, the Cranes—along with millions of Snow Geese and other waterfowl—stop to rest and fatten up as they journey to their nesting grounds in the far north. For the team at Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, the tough work of maintaining a welcoming habitat for these remarkable visitors never stops.

Rowe Sanctuary works in cooperation with several conservation organizations to provide cranes optimum roosting habitat on the river and to provide nesting habitat for Interior Least Terns and Piping Plovers. As the growing season comes to an end each year, heavy machinery is utilized to recreate what nature can no longer do.

Managing the Platte River

According to some historical accounts, the Platte River was "a mile wide and an inch deep". Wetlands and wet meadows bordered the Platte to capture and hold water that escaped past its banks, and tallgrass prairie

bordered the wetlands and wet meadows. Each spring, snow melt from the Rockies would provide scouring flows that removed new vegetation that grew on sandbars during the previous growing season.

Today, reduced flows in the river make it necessary for mechanical clearing to maintain wide channels and open sandbars that cranes and other species prefer. Large equipment is used to remove woody vegetation on established islands. Once the island has been cleared, then it is disked in order to inhibit the woody growth even further. This process must be repeated over time; otherwise the trees will come back.

Dealing with Invasives

With each passing year, management work within the river channel has become more difficult due to invasive plants. Non-native species such as purple loosestrife and phragmites have spread at an alarming rate in the Platte River valley, with salt cedar becoming a major concern as well. All three of the plants mentioned remove an incredible amount of water

from the river, while at the same time choking out native vegetation. Rowe Sanctuary is working with local, state and federal agencies to combat this ever growing threat to the Platte River Basin.

The Importance of Prairie & Wet Meadows

Prairie and wet meadows in the Platte River Valley have decreased over time; these areas play an important role during the sandhill crane's stay here in March and early April. The cranes utilize these areas for feeding, loafing, and as secondary roost sites.

Prairie Management

Native prairie is defined as land that has never been cultivated and consists of grasses and flowering plants (forbs) that were originally found in that region. Rowe Sanctuary has over 770 acres of native prairie and an additional 300 acres of restored grasslands.

The prairie and wet meadow areas are managed by haying, grazing, and prescribed burns. This is done on a rotational basis, with each practice benefiting the prairie.

Prairie-chicken spring dance a birder's delight

From March through May, male chickens dance, fight and call to attract mates

Each spring, one of the most extraordinary mating rituals in all of nature occurs right here in Kansas — the courtship of the prairie grouse, more commonly known as the prairie-chicken. On specific sites in otherwise indistinguishable tracts of natural prairie landscape, groups of male chickens gather at dusk and dawn in elaborate dances designed to attract females.

These areas — called leks or booming grounds — are actually formed in fall when the order of dominance is established among the males. At this time, mature males gather in these relatively high, flat areas and attempt to establish their own small territories as close to the center of the lek as possible, where activity will be highest in spring. Although young males visit the lek, they are kept to the edges and seldom given the opportunity to establish their own territories.

While the fall activity is important and interesting, it is the spring lekking, or “booming,” activity that most fascinates naturalists, both professional and amateur. Beginning in March and lasting through the end of May, male chickens display an incredible array of vocalizations and maneuvers to win the right to mate.

Avid bird watchers and novices alike are mesmerized by this site, and it's not difficult to find a place to witness it. For a list of prairie-chicken viewing opportunities, visit the Natural Kansas website www.naturalkansas.org/birding.htm#PCV or phone the Kansas Depart-

ment of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's Emporia Office at 620-342-0658 or the Pratt Operations Office at 620-672-5911.

In the mating ritual, the male chicken's tail is elevated; horn-like feathers (called pinnae) on the neck are raised over the head; and the wings are lowered with the primary feathers spread. The bird stamps its feet while moving forward or in circles, and this is followed by a series of rapid tail snaps and fans. At the same time as the tail is clicked open and shut, a whoom-AH-oom sound is given as the bright orange air sacs on the neck of the greater prairie-chicken (orange to plume in the lesser) are inflated for maximum exposure. The lesser prairie-chicken exhibits similar behavior, but the sound is higher-pitched, and the air sacs are a reddish color.

A second major display is flutter-jumping with associated cackling calls. The male jumps several feet into the air, flies forward, and lands. In so doing, the bird advertises its presence as well as the location of the lek. Flutter-jumping is typical of the peripheral males when females are near the center of the display ground.

A female will typically fly to the edge of a lek and walk slowly toward the center. When the hen enters a male's territory, the male's behavior changes greatly. Lekking is performed with high frequency and extreme posturing. The male will display in circles around the female, showing all aspects of its plumage. At the peak of this performance, the

dancer often spreads his wings and lays his head flat to the ground, as if bowing to the hen. If suitably impressed, the hen will stoop low to the ground, signaling that she is ready to mate.

Occasionally, fights break out among competing males. This is mostly ritual, as well, involving short jumps; striking with feet, beak, and wings; and face-offs in which the competitors whine and attempt to stare each other down. Injuries do occur but are seldom serious.

With its large, colorful air sacs, horn-like pinnae, and feathers growing all the way to its feet, the prairie-chicken is one of the most beautiful birds in Kansas. And its mating ritual makes it one of the most fascinating birds to watch. Kansans are lucky to have the largest population of prairie-chickens in the world, so viewing opportunities are good.

Two species of prairie-chicken can be found in Kansas. The greater prairie-chicken, the most populous, can be found throughout portions of northcentral and eastern Kansas, especially in the Flint Hills region. The lesser prairie-chicken, which is slightly smaller and has reddish-orange air-sacs, can be found in pockets of native sandsage and shortgrass prairie in western Kansas. The lesser prairie-chicken male produces a higher-pitched, bubbly sound, or “gobble,” leading to the term “gobbling grounds” for their leks. On a quiet spring morning, the sounds of both species can carry as far as 2 miles across the open prairie.

Crappie limit reduced at Glen Elder Reservoir

Officials with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) want anglers who fish Glen Elder Reservoir, also known as Waconda Lake, to be aware that the daily creel limit on crappie is now 20. Before Jan. 1, 2013, the daily creel limit on Glen Elder crappie was 50, which is the statewide creel limit, unless special regulations such as this are implemented.

The Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission approved the new creel limit at a public meeting in October. Biologists made the recommendation after receiving public comments and entering harvest and sample data into a management model. The new limit should reduce overall harvest and spread harvest out among anglers. Few lakes in the Midwest can boast the quality of crappie fishing

anglers have enjoyed in recent years at the 12,000-acre reservoir in Mitchell County. And while April and May are generally thought to be the most productive months for crappie fishing, ice fishing for the delicious panfish can also be excellent. The 20-fish daily limit includes both white crappie and black crappie in combination. The possession limit is three times the daily creel.

Kansas inventor introduces computerized fishing rod, the SmartRod

**By Agnieszka Spieszny
Outdoor Hub Reporter**

To give anglers an edge on the water, inventor Ed Hope from Wichita has created and patented a “smart” fishing pole. The Tackobox Poletap SmartRod uses computer-controlled accelerometer technology to detect when fish bite, giving the user time to react to reel in the catch.

In an email message, Hope said the technology is ideal for anglers that bank fish, fish at night, use multiple poles, those trolling and drift-fishing, and for anglers with visual or hearing disabilities. He also mentioned that this might help the young and digitally-oriented

into the sport of fishing.

Hope’s “Poletap” technology is water-resistant and works with any reel. It works by combining a microchip with an accelerometer that measures sensitivity through the entire rod as well as a preset tilt mode that reads angle changes (for fish who slowly make away with their catch). When a bite is detected, the rod alerts the angler with a light and sound alarm. It automatically shuts down temporarily when the angler begins to reel the fish in, so as to not disturb other anglers. There is the option to turn off the sound alarm and alert the user with flashing LED lights.

The system works with the touch of

a single button. Anglers set the setting to high, medium, or low sensitivity based on the wave situation, ranging from fishing in tumultuous waters to a calm night on a quiet pond. “We have succeeded in creating a product that has [advanced] technology yet it is simple to use and easy to understand,” Hope said. “You can actually hand it to anyone and they will operate it correctly without reading instructions.” When turned on, the rod can still be carried around by anglers without going off, as it is designed to respond to tugs on the line.

Currently, the SmartRod is raising production funds through Indiegogo.

KDHE issues fish consumption advisories

Advisories provide guidelines for eating fish taken from certain locations

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) are issuing revised fish consumption advisories for 2013. The advisories identify types of fish or other aquatic animals that should be eaten in limited quantities or, in some cases, avoided altogether because of contamination. General advice and internet resources are also provided to aid the public in making informed decisions regarding the benefits, as well as the risks associated with eating locally caught fish from Kansas waters.

Definitions

Bottom-feeding fish: buffalo, carp, carpsuckers, catfish (except flathead catfish), sturgeons, and suckers.

Predatory fish: black bass, crappie, drum, flathead catfish, perch, sunfish, white bass, wiper, striper, walleye, saugeye, and sauger.

Shellfish: mussels, clams, and crayfish.

General population: Men and women 18 years of age or older.

Sensitive populations: Women who are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are nursing and children age 17 or

younger.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), perchlorate, chlordane, mercury, lead and cadmium: Toxic chemicals and heavy metals that pose serious health risks, particularly to fetuses and children. Developmental and neurological problems are some of the risks related to prolonged or repeated exposure.

Meal size (before cooking): Adults and children age 13 and older = 8 ounces; children age 6 to 12 = 4 ounces; children younger than 6 = 2 ounces.

Statewide Advisory

Sensitive populations should restrict consumption of all types of locally caught fish, including species of fish and waters not specifically covered by an advisory to one meal per week because of mercury. Sensitive Populations should restrict consumption of largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass (black bass) to one meal per month because of mercury. The general public should restrict consumption of these species to one meal per week because of mercury.

Location Advisories:

Do not eat bottom-feeding fish taken in the Kansas River from Law-

rence (below Bowersock Dam) downstream to Eudora at the confluence of the Wakarusa River (Douglas and Leavenworth counties) because of PCBs. Do not eat any form of aquatic life, including fish and shellfish, taken from Horseshoe Lake located in units 22 and 23 of the Mined Lands Wildlife Area (Cherokee County) because of perchlorate. Do not eat shellfish taken in the Spring River from the confluence of Center Creek to the Kansas/Oklahoma border (Cherokee County) because of lead and cadmium. Do not eat shellfish taken in Shoal Creek from the Missouri/Kansas border to Empire Lake (Cherokee County) because of lead and cadmium. Do not eat bottom-feeding fish taken from Cow Creek in Hutchinson and downstream to the confluence with the Arkansas River (Reno County) because of PCBs. Do not eat bottom-feeding fish taken in the Arkansas River from the Lincoln Street Dam in Wichita downstream to the confluence with Cowskin Creek near Belle Plaine (Sedgwick and Sumner counties) because of PCBs.

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KDWPT offers boating maintenance tips

Pre-season maintenance can ensure a safe, trouble-free boating season

In March anglers and recreational boaters are eager to get on the water. This means it's time to prepare boats and trailers for a trouble-free boating season. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KD-WPT) recommends the following simple steps so that your boat works properly and safely before launch. Not only will you have more fun, but you and your family will be safer.

Outboard motor

Replace the lower unit grease. Grease all zerks on the motor, and make sure the steering mechanism is lubricated and working smoothly. Clean or replace spark plugs. Check fuel lines. Remove the prop and check for nicks or gouges. Remove any old fishing line or weeds from shaft. Grease the shaft and replace the cotter pin on the shaft nut. You can start the motor in your driveway if you have a pair of motor muffs, which attach to a garden hose and force water into your motor's water intake ports. Never start your motor dry. If your engine is oil injected, fill the oil reservoir and test the temperature warning signal device.

Trailer

Grease the wheel hubs. Check the tires for weathering and proper inflation. Check wire connections and make sure all lights work. Lubricate the trailer winch and check the winch strap for wear. Make sure the hitch is sound and safety chains are in place. Check the ball and tighten if necessary.

Batteries

Batteries should have been charged every 30 days throughout the winter. Inspect and clean all battery connections. Water levels should be checked in each cell, and batteries should be fully charged before the first trip. Check the batteries several days before a trip to make sure they are holding a charge.

Electrical gear

Check all bilge pumps and electrical gauges. Tighten any loose connections and secure wire harnesses.

Safety Gear

Inspect all life jackets and throwable cushions. They must be in good working condition to be legal. Be sure a sound-making device or working horn is on board. Test the boat

lights, clean connections, and replace bulbs if needed. It's also important to make sure your boating registration is up to date.

In addition to these items, boaters should make sure drain plugs work and keep a spare on board. Other items should include first aid kit, anchor, paddle, tool kit, electrical tape and wire connectors, a variety of spare fuses, extra two-cycle oil, spare trailer light bulbs, and extra life jackets.

And don't forget boater education. Any person born on or after Jan. 1, 1989, must complete an approved boater safety education course in order to operate a motorboat or sailboat on public waters in Kansas. This requirement does not apply to a person accompanied by and under the direct supervision of a person age 17 or older who either possesses a certificate of completion of an approved boater safety education course or is legally exempt from the requirement.

For more information, click "Boating" on the KDWPT website, ksoutdoors.com, phone 620-672-0770, or email erika.brooks@ksoutdoors.com.

FISH

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Restrict consumption of all types of fish to one meal per month from the Little Arkansas River from the Main Street Bridge immediately west of Valley Center to the confluence with the Arkansas River in Wichita (Sedgwick County) because of mercury and PCBs.

Rescinded Advisory

Last year's advisory for Blue River from U.S. 69 Highway to the Kansas/Missouri state line (Johnson County) has been rescinded. The one-meal-per-week advisory for all types of fish because of mercury has been superseded by the statewide mercury

advisory for sensitive groups.

General advice for eating locally caught fish in Kansas

1. Sensitive populations should consider restricting their total mercury intake as related to both supermarket fish and locally caught species. Concerned parents and other persons may wish to consult with a physician about eating fish and mercury exposure.

2. Mercury exposure can be reduced by limiting the consumption of large predatory fish. Larger/older fish of all types are more likely to have higher concentrations of mercury.

3. Avoid the consumption of fish parts other than fillets, especially when eating bottom-feeding fish. Fatty internal organs tend to accumulate higher levels of fat-soluble contami-

nants such as chlordane and PCBs.

4. Consumers can reduce their ingestion of fat-soluble contaminants such as chlordane and PCBs by trimming fat from fillets, and cooking in a manner in which fat drips away from the fillet.

5. In water bodies where advisories or warnings related to harmful algae blooms have been applied, fish should be consumed in moderation and care taken to only consume skinless fillets. Avoid cutting into internal organs and as a precaution, rinse fillets with clean water prior to cooking or freezing.

For more information about KDHE's Fish Tissue Contaminant Monitoring Program visit http://www.kdheks.gov/befs/fish_tissue_monitoring.htm.

How to age spring tom turkeys

A few simple measurements can provide approximate age of birds

The regular Kansas spring turkey season runs through May 31, and many hunters have already bagged a big gobbler. Proud hunters often compare the size of their birds, and this can lead to many friendly arguments. But another, less tangible question often puzzles turkey hunters: How old is that bird?

Many myths surround this subject. Some say that any bird over 20 pounds is at least three years old. Others say that a 9-inch beard is a sure sign that your turkey is at least 4 years old. Still others claim that a sharp spur 3/4-inch long indicates a three-year-old bird. What's the truth?

Biologists with the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism provide information that would seem to settle much of the debate about a turkey's age. First of all, many things can affect the weight of a bird, so

weight is not a factor. Spur and beard length, however, are important factors in determining a turkey's age. Use the following rules of thumb to determine approximate age of your bird, keeping in mind that these are approximations for this region of the country and that habitat and other factors may affect these guidelines:

Spur Length = Age of Turkey

1/2 inch or less = 1 year (jake)

1/2-7/8 inch and blunt = 2 years

7/8-1 inch = 2+ years

1+ inch and sharp = 3+ years

1 1/4 + = 4 years

Beard Length = Age of Turkey

3-5 inches = 1 year

6-9 inches with amber tip = 2 years

10+ inches = 3+ years

To differentiate juvenile and adult birds from a distance, look at the tail fan while the bird is strutting. A bird

with longer feathers in the middle or on the side of the fan is a juvenile while uniform length in tail feathers indicates an adult bird. With a harvested bird, you can distinguish adult from juvenile by examining the two outermost primary wing feathers — those longest feathers on the end of the wing. On adult birds, these two primaries will be rounded and have white barring extending to the very end. On juvenile birds, these feathers will be much more pointed and have no barring near the tip.

Of course, any tom turkey is a prize, and the opportunity to watch and hunt these fascinating birds is one of the most exciting outdoor activities of spring. The turkey season is long, running from early April through the end of May each year, so Kansas should offer the avid hunter many opportunities yet to come this spring.

KDWPT voluntary electronic turkey registration online

Photo electronic turkey registration helps hunters comply with transportation laws

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) reminds all spring turkey hunters that immediately after taking a turkey, the permit holder must sign the carcass tag and record on it the county, date, and time of kill, then attach the carcass tag to the bird in a visible manner before moving it from the kill site. During the spring season, only turkeys with a visible beard may be taken, so the beard of the turkey must remain naturally attached to the breast while in transit from the kill site to the permittee's residence or a commercial place of processing or preservation.

However, a bird may be dressed for transport if the hunter obtains a transportation confirmation number after electronically registering the turkey on the agency's website (ksoutdoors.com), or the permittee has retained photographs necessary for electronic

registration until registration occurs.

What is electronic registration? Using a camera-reading cell phone, this convenient system allows the permit holder to upload two images of a just-killed turkey, making it legal to transport the bird without the carcass tag attached. (At this time the system does not work with certain cell phones.) Here's how it works:

Click the "Check-in Turkey" button at <https://programs.ksoutdoors.com/Programs/Electronic-Turkey-Check-in>.

Here, either Login to an existing account or create a new account. (Save this account information; it will be used for other purposes such as deer check-in and future special hunts.)

If you have created a new account, you will need to click "Check-in Turkey" again.

Once logged in, fill out all the

information requested.

Upload two photos of the turkey. One of the photos must be a close-up shot of the turkey tag attached to the turkey. The tag must be visible and filled out with the correct information. The second photo must be a view of the complete turkey with the tag attached and beard visible.

Once files appear, click the "Submit" button to finish.

Keep the confirmation number with the turkey tag.

This is not a telephone registration system, and it is not required. The system allows KDWPT staff to see the turkey and the hunter's completed tag without the time and expense of maintaining a check station. This flexibility is a benefit to both the hunter and KDWPT. For more information, go online to ksoutdoors.com and click "Electronic Turkey Check-in" in the "Topics" box.

Outdoor cats kill between 1.4 billion and 3.7 billion birds a year, study says

By Juliet Eilperin
The Washington Post

Outdoor cats account for the leading cause of death among both birds and mammals in the United States, according to a new study, killing anywhere between 1.4 billion and 3.7 billion birds each year.

The mammalian toll is even higher, concluded researchers from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ranging between 6.9 billion and 20.7 billion annually.

The analysis, published Tuesday in the journal *Nature Communications*, suggests feral and owned cats pose a far greater threat than previously thought. One study in 2011 estimated cats in the United States kill roughly half a billion birds annually.

Peter Marra, the paper's senior author and a research scientist at the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, said he and his colleagues "pulled together all the best estimates" from 90 different studies to reach their estimate, taking into account the difference in behavior between owned and unowned cats.

"I don't think there's ever been an attempt like this," Marra said in a telephone interview, adding the new esti-

mate is "conservative."

Researchers estimate one pet cat kills between one and 34 birds a year, while a feral cat kills between 23 and 46 birds a year. As a result, the new study provides a wide range of the total bird death count. "It's not a single number," Marra said.

George Fenwick, president of American Bird Conservancy, said in a statement that the findings should serve as "a wake-up call for cat owners and communities to get serious about this problem before even more ecological damage occurs."

"The very high credibility of this study should finally put to rest the misguided notions that outdoor cats represent some harmless, new component to the natural environment," Fenwick said. "The carnage that outdoor cats inflict is staggering and can no longer be ignored or dismissed."

Cats pose the greatest danger to birds and mammals living on islands, because there are fewer opportunities for these animals to escape. Cats are responsible for helping drive 33 species of birds, mammals and reptiles to extinction on islands, including the Stephens Island wren from New Zealand in the late 1800s, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Scientists have a hard time measuring the impact of cats on small mammals in the United States because they lack precise population counts for these species, Marra said.

"We don't know how many Eastern cottontail rabbits are out there, and we don't know how many chipmunks are out there," he said.

By contrast, researchers estimate the United States is home to between 15 billion and 20 billion adult land birds. Cats kill about 10 percent of them each year, according to the analysis.

Marra and two other scientists, the Smithsonian Institute's Scott R. Loss and Tom Will from Fish and Wildlife, conducted their analysis as part of a broader study of humans' impact on bird mortality. Roughly 150,000 to 400,000 birds in the United States die in wind turbines, according to recent estimates, while between 10 million and 1 billion birds die annually after colliding into glass.

The fact that humans can take action to prevent some of these deaths — such as adopting policies to reduce feral cat populations and altering how wind turbines are designed — should provide some hope, Marra said.

"These are things that are reversible once we understand them," he said. "That's the important thing here."

Hunting celebrity 'Spook' Spann sentenced

Hunting celebrity William "Spook" Spann, from Dickson, Tennessee, was formally sentenced in the U.S. District Court in Kansas City February 28 for a deer he shot illegally in 2007.

As per a plea agreement initially levied against Spann last November, according to court records provided, Spann's sentence includes -

- Paying \$10,000 in fines for the crime.

- \$10,000 in restitution for the value of the buck.

- Spann is also in three years federal supervised release.

- He has been ordered to "forfeit to the United States the antlers in question, the mold of the antlers and any exact

reproduction of said antlers."

- Spann also had his hunting privileges suspended for six months within the United States, and for an additional six months within the state of Kansas.

Spann was hunting in central Kansas in mid-November 2007 when he arrowed a buck of about 230 Boone & Crockett inches on land he'd leased hunting rights from the landowner for \$5,000, according to court records. Along with a cameraman, Spann stalked the buck and shot it during legal shooting hours, with legal archery equipment.

The crime was that his hunting permit was a "Non-Resident, Hunt-Your-Own-Land" deer permit he'd purchased earlier in the month. Most non-resident

deer permits are awarded after a spring drawing process, and for one or two large deer management units within the state.

The permit he placed on the buck was only valid on lands Spann owned or land he rented and actively farmed for profit.

That the illegally taken buck's antlers were eventually taken across state borders also qualified for a violation of the Lacey Act, a federal wildlife violation.

Spann went on to garner a lot of media attention via footage of the hunt shown on hunting videos and outdoors television shows. He's also appeared at many hunting shows, and operates a hunting website.

Kansas Wildlife Federation
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Wichita, KS 67277-1282

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

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