

The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

September-
October 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

2 million acres of wetlands and fragile land go under the plow

Analysis reveals hotspots for conversion
are hotspots for crop insurance payouts

By Sara Sciammacco
Environmental Working Group

A new analysis (<http://www.ewg.org/research/going-going-gone>) released by Environmental Working Group shows that 1.9 million acres, or near 3,000 square miles of wetlands and nearby habitat, went under the plow in the United States between 2008 and 2012.

EWG's researchers found that over the same time period, 5.3 million acres, or 8,300 square miles of highly erodible land – mostly fragile grassland – was also plowed up to grow row crops.

Using modern mapping and geospatial technologies, researchers documented that the most dramatic loss of wetlands occurred in three states – South Dakota, North Dakota and Minnesota – the core of the critically important Prairie Pothole Region. Exploitation of highly erodible land is more widespread, with 10 states – Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma, Montana, North Dakota, Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota, Kansas and Nebraska – accounting for 57 percent of all the highly erodible land converted to cropland.

The new analysis, titled, “Going, Going, Gone!”, is a follow-up to EWG's widely cited Plowed Under (http://static.ewg.org/pdf/plowed_under.pdf) report, released in 2012, which found that over the same four years, 23.6 million

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Protecting the Land... Passing on Our Traditions



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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Steve Sorensen

President's Message

By Troy Schroeder

In the theme of trying to increase cooperation among similar conservation groups, several of us joined the Friends of the Kaw for a pleasurable float trip down the Kaw from Manhattan to St George prior to our July board meeting. Some of us will also be attending the Native Plant Society annual meeting Sep 13-15 in Salina. A couple other events where we will be setting up our informational booth include: Friends of the Kaw Wild and Scenic Film Festival Oct 11 in Lawrence. We will be listing our events as well as those of other outdoor groups on our web site; and the Food and Family Conference sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center in Newton on Nov 2.

We cooperated with the National Wildlife Federation and Kansas State University in a national grasslands conference in Manhattan Aug 13-14. It was a good event with over 200 from across the country attending to find ways to preserve and restore our native prairies. It was appropriate to hold the event in the Flint Hills which contains most of the tallgrass prairie left in the entire country. Although we are very fortunate to have the Flint Hills in Kansas, we have lost about 70% of the prairie in the rest of the state. One topic that got

my attention was "micro prairies" which are small, yard size or less, usually in towns. These have been planted in private yards and public buildings. You may be hearing more about this in the future.

I know you are probably tired of me talking about money, but unfortunately it is something we need to complete projects related to our mission. Nearly all of our funds come from memberships and private donations. We are in the process of setting up a fund under the Greater Northwest Kansas Community Foundation. This will make it easier for individuals to make larger donations of cash, property, life insurance, etc. We will be asking for donations to fund this account in the near future. This will be an endowment account that we will only use the income generated for projects. In spite of the name, these funds can be received and used statewide.

In an effort to get youth more involved in the out-of-doors, we are planning to initiate a youth membership for 2014. You will get the details in an upcoming newsletter. In the meantime please check our website often and if you haven't yet done so, please give us your email so we can keep you updated with our email updates of timely items between newsletters.

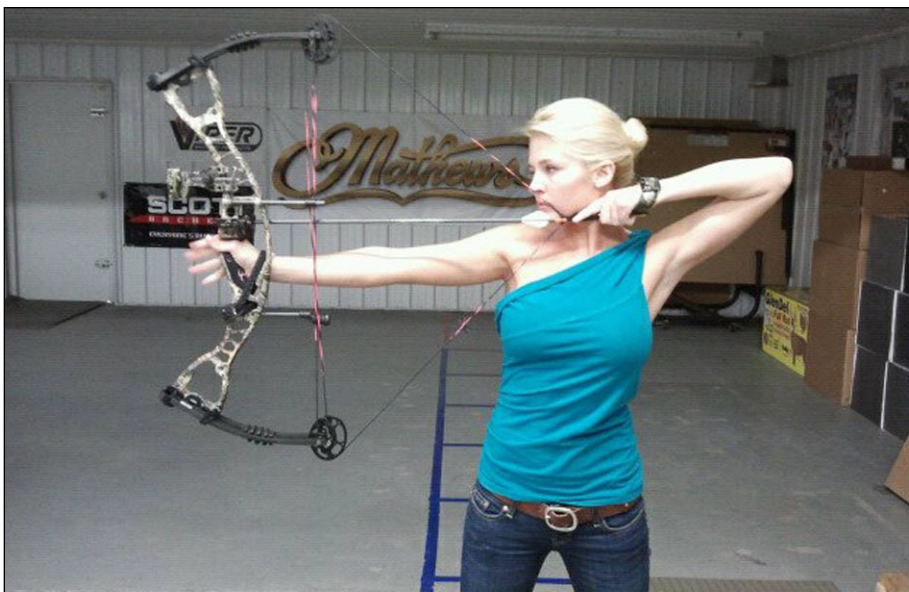
2013 duck and goose seasons set

Goose daily bag limits increased; possession limits for ducks and geese increased

The Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission listened to department staff recommendations and comments from waterfowl hunters before approving the 2013 duck and goose seasons during a public hearing held in Yates Center on August 1. Summer breeding bird surveys show most species well above long-term averages, and with good to excellent nesting habitat conditions,

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provided liberal season frameworks. Waterfowl hunters may be surprised to learn that the daily bag limit for teal during the early teal season was increased from four to six, the daily bag limit for Canada geese was increased from 3 to 6 and the daily bag limit for light

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Miss Kansas Theresa Vail practicing archery.

Get involved in the outdoors

**By Theresa Vail
Miss Kansas 2013**

My love for the outdoors and hunting began when I was just a little girl. Growing up with eight other siblings, I knew that if I wanted time with dad I would have to do things he enjoyed doing when he wasn't at home. None of my brothers or sisters went hunting with him, so this became our special time together. He taught me to appreciate the woods and the wildlife, to enjoy the serenity of it all. It wasn't about hunting so much as it was about getting away from the busyness and enjoying what God gave us. The actual "hunting" was just a bonus!

From numerous studies and from personal experience, I fully believe that the sooner you integrate kids into the outdoors, the higher chance they'll continue to stay involved and pass it on to their children. After all, that's how our ancestors started! I would also encourage parents to provide positive affirmation to their kids when it comes to their performance in outdoor activities. Children love doing things that they're praised for and are successful at. Whether it



Theresa Vail

starts in archery, hunting, fishing or any other outdoor sport, kids need to be praised for the likelihood of continuation. I cannot stress that enough!

I would encourage every woman to take advantage of the various outdoor opportunities provided every year. Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism holds a "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" workshop every fall. It teaches women about firearms, hunting, fishing and camping to name a few. Exclusive work-

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Junction City, KS

**Kansas Wildlife Officers
Association**

Iola, KS

**Quail & Upland Wildlife
Federation**

Buffalo, MO

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Officers and Board of Directors

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

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

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

Kansas Wildlife Federation Newsletter
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Wichita, KS 67277-1282

Calendar of events

- Sept 6-7** Bluestem Farm & Ranch Wildlife Appreciation Days, Emporia
- Sept 6-7** Ebenezer United Methodist Church Fishing Tournament, contact 620-342-1155
- Sept 7** Gritty Fitty Race, Lawrence to KC boat race, www.kawpaddler.com
- Sept 7-8** Whitetail Weekend, El Dorado
- Sept 12** Mr. Bill MacFarlane lecture (MacFarlane Pheasants), KSU palthoff@k-state.edu
- Sept 13-15** 2013 Annual Wildflower Weekend, KS Native Plant Society, Salina
- Sept 14** Women in the Outdoors Day, LeRoy, KS contact Jennifer 620-496-8062
- Sept 14** Friends of the Kaw Linwood Tire Cleanup, www.kansasriver.org
- Sept 14-15** NWTF JAKES Camp, White Memorial Camp, Council Grove 620-437-2012
- Sept 20** Dr. James Kroll lecture (Dr. Deer), KSU palthoff@k-state.edu
- Sept 20-22** Kansas Ornithological Society Fall Meeting, Topeka janeenwalters@cox.net
- Sept 23-29** National Estuaries Week
- Sept 24-27** Interpreting Rangeland Health Indicators Workshop, Manhattan david.kraft@ks.usda.gov
- Sept 27** 35th Annual Prairie Festival at The Land Institute, Salina
- Sept 28** Beau Arndt Outdoor Appreciation Day, Emporia contact Bob Arndt 620-794-7475
- Sept 28** Concert for the Climate, Kaw Point, KC www.concertfortheclimate.org
- Oct 5-10** The Wildlife Society's 20th Annual Conference, Milwaukee
- Oct 6-11** Society for Ecological Restoration 5th World Conference, Madison, WI
- Oct 11** 5th Annual Friends of the Kaw Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Lawrence
- Oct 12** Kansas Land Trust's 2nd Annual Disc Golf Tournament, Stilwell, carol@klt.org
- Oct 17** Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission mtg, Cosmosphere, Hutchinson
- Oct 17** National Bioenergy Day
- Oct 26** Kansas Wildlife Federation BOD meeting, Salina
- Oct 19** Oak Park Honeysuckle Removal, Wichita Lee Ann Sack 316-768-0204
- Oct 22** KDWPT Upland Bird Management Workshop, Topeka 785-273-6740
- Nov 2** Kansas Rural Center's Farming & Food Conference, Newton
- Nov 16** Twin Rivers Jr. Shooting Sport Benefit & Banquet, Emporia 620-344-1429



Brett Billings, USFWS

2013 Hunting Atlas now available online

Atlas features 60 detailed maps with more than
1 million acres of prime hunting locations

With maps showing the location of more than 1 million acres of land open to hunting, the 2013 Kansas Hunting Atlas, available online now, is a must-have for hunters. Whether you're looking for the perfect duck hunting marsh, scouting for land rich with upland birds, or scanning woodlots for the perfect place to set up your tree stand, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism's hunting atlas is the perfect tool. Better than ever, the newly-redesigned hunting atlas features maps

with shaded relief backdrops, county road names (where available), stream names, and much more. All state, federal and Walk-in Hunting Access areas are shown, color-coded for ease of use.

The atlas also features 2013 season dates and an outline of new regulations, making it quick and easy for hunters to get up-to-speed on important changes.

To view the atlas online, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Hunting," then "Where to Hunt," then "2013

Fall Hunting Atlas." Hunters can also download an electronic version of the atlas from the KDWPT website, and file downloads that can be loaded onto Garmin GPS units. There are also file downloads for Android and iOS devices that can be used with Google Earth.

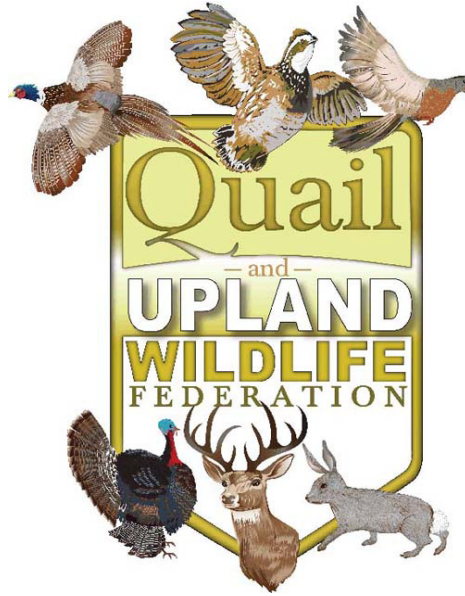
The 2013 Hunting and Furharvesting Regulations Summary is also available on the KDWPT website. Printed versions of both pamphlets will be distributed in early September.

Affiliate news

Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation affiliates with KWF

The Kansas members of Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation, Inc. have become an Affiliate II organization of the Kansas Wildlife Federation. QUWF, a 501(c)3 organization headquartered in Buffalo, MO, has over 800 members in Kansas.

"The chapters, staff, members and landowners of QUWF throughout Kansas look forward to continuing to work with KWF on conservation objectives and issues that arise on the conservation landscape of Kansas," said Nick Prough, Chief Wildlife Biologist and Director of Chapter Development for Quail and Upland Wildlife Federation. "As of June 2013, QUWF, its local chapters and members have impacted 1.8 Million acres of wildlife habitat and have spent over \$108 million dollars in their local communities and across the country's landscape," Prough contin-



ued.

"The Kansas Wildlife Federation felt that QUWF's excellent reputation



dealing with landowners and their habitat needs makes QUWF an excellent affiliate," said Troy Schroeder, KWF President. "We look forward to working with QUWF to carry out the goals of both organizations throughout Kansas."

"Of the habitat work QUWF has conducted nationwide," Prough stated, "425,000 acres have been in Kansas and our expenditures have been approximately \$28 million. Our motto says it all: Making a Difference for Wildlife, One Acre at a Time."

For more information on QUWF, go to their website www.quwf.net.

Geary County Fish and Game Association

The Geary County Fish and Game Association is conducting their Annual Fund Raiser. The prize is a Buffalo Hunt or \$500 cash. Tickets are one for \$20 or six for \$100. Enter for your chance to win a hunt for a 2-3 year-old Bull, estimated to weigh 1,000 pounds. Winner can us rifle,

bow or black powder (if large enough caliber).

Hunt will be on a ranch in Dickinson County. You shoot, we help load on your trailer or truck. Winner pays for meat processing. Drawing will be held at the Geary County Fish and Game headquarters at Milford Reser-

voir at its meeting on November 11, 2013. Need not be present to win.

If you have any questions, call Tom Goudey, GCFGA Vice President, at 785-238-7845 or 785-761-7525. You may also call Ken Schortmann, GCFGA Director, at 785-210-9072.

There is still summer left to enjoy at Kansas state parks

Make plans and reservations to visit a Kansas state park - there's still plenty of summer fun left, and the weather is perfect.

It's been a great summer, and Kansans have perhaps appreciated it more after the last two summers we've endured. Cooler temperatures and in many areas of the state, welcome rains have made the summer of 2013 one to remember. At most parks, low water levels are not a problem any longer, although a few parks ended up with too much of a good thing.

Water levels are normal or above

at Kanopolis, Cheney, and El Dorado lakes, which experienced access and boating problems because of low water for much of the summer. Current water levels have boat ramps useable. It's been a mild summer and water temperatures are perfect for boating, skiing and fishing.

For instance, water levels on Toronto Reservoir rose so high that parts of Cross Timbers State Park weren't accessible. The water level has dropped since then, so the park will be open this weekend, however there will be some areas with mud and debris left

by the water. High water at Elk City is going down, and boat ramps, docks and utility campsites are open. All facilities are expected to be ready by Memorial Weekend. Fall River State Park is open, even though the reservoir level is still high. While boat ramps are open and usable at these lakes, boaters should be alert to floating debris brought in by flooding.

All Kansas state parks are ready and waiting, so don't miss the end of summer fun. Visit a state park this weekend and find out how much fun you and your family can have.

Women and youth angler numbers increased most

Showing a resurgence in one of America's favorite pastimes, the number of Americans who go fishing is up, with more than 47 million people participating in 2012. Adding to the 42.5 million who are current or occasional anglers, more than 4.5 million first-timers tried fishing last year, a significant increase from 2011 and the highest number of new participants ever recorded. The 2013 Special Report on Fishing and Boating just released by the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and The Outdoor Foundation also shows significant increases in fishing participation among women and children.

"We're extremely pleased to see the number of first-time anglers and overall anglers, continue to rise," said RBFF President and CEO Frank Peterson. "Working closely with our industry and state agency partners, our collective effort is yielding well deserved results. Increased participation, in both fishing

and boating, leads to increased license sales, and boat registrations, key sources for funding state fish and wildlife conservation programs."

"Fishing and boating are among the most important 'gateway' activities that often lead people, especially youth, to pursue other recreation experiences," said Christine Fanning, Executive Director of the Outdoor Foundation. "We're thrilled to partner, once again, with the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation on this important research project."

The fifth annual report details fishing participation by gender, age, ethnicity, income, education and geography.

KEY FINDINGS

Fishing Participation

- In 2012, 47 million Americans went fishing (an increase from 46.2 million in 2011).

- While 9.4 million people stopped fishing, 10.2 million new or returning anglers participated in the sport, netting a

gain of more than 870,000.

- Americans made one billion fishing outings in 2012, averaging 21.3 fishing days per person.

- Forty-one percent of first-time fishing participants were female, bringing the total of female anglers to 34.4 percent.

- Adults 18 and older with children in their households participate in fishing at higher levels than adults without children.

- Fly fishing had the highest rate of first-time participants with 20.5 percent.

- Hispanic American Fishing Participation

- In 2012, 2.8 million Hispanic Americans went fishing - a slight decrease from 3.1 million in 2011.

- Freshwater fishing is the most popular type of fishing among Hispanic Americans.

- Hispanic Americans fish the most

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WETLANDS

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acres of grasslands, wetlands and shrublands had been converted to row crops.

"By taking a closer look at the data, we were able to reveal with unprecedented precision the 'hotspots' where conversion of large blocks of fragile land to row crops is most extensive," said Craig Cox, EWG's senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources. "What's most troubling is the correlation between these areas and the counties with the highest average crop insurance payouts."

For an interactive map showing county-by-county wetlands and wetland buffer conversion rates, go to: http://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v3/ewg.WET_Hotspots.html#5/40.480/-98.525.

For an interactive map showing county-by-county wetlands and wetland buffer conversion rates, go to: http://a.tiles.mapbox.com/v3/ewg.HEL_Hotspots.html#5/40.480/-98.525

In particular, the county-by-county mapping analysis shows:

- In the 71 counties that lost more than 5,000 acres of wetlands and wetland buffers, the average crop insurance payout was \$10.1 million – more than four times the \$2.3 million average across all 3,109 U.S. counties..

- The average crop insurance payout in the 235 counties that were hotspots for conversion of highly erodible land was \$5.8 million – two and a half times the national average.

- In the 12 counties that were hotspots for both wetland and highly erodible land conversion, the average payout was \$7.5 million – three times the national average.

- The total payout in the 294 counties with the highest rates of conversion of wetlands or highly erodible land was an astounding \$8.3 billion.

"The data strongly suggest that over-subsidized crop insurance policies are greasing the wheels of conversion to row crops," said Cox. "The government is picking up too much of the risk of plowing up and planting fragile land, all at a

cost of billions of dollars to taxpayers and untold environmental degradation."

Taxpayers pay, on average, 60 percent of crop insurance premiums, and in some cases the entire cost. However, premium subsidies are not subject to the same conservation requirements that apply to other farm programs.

The pending Senate-passed version of the farm bill would ensure that farmers take basic steps to protect land in exchange for receiving taxpayer-funded crop insurance subsidies and reduce those subsidies for landowners who plow up native prairie and grassland; the House version would not.

The EWG report also shows just how effective this simple conservation quid pro quo would be in slowing down wetland conversion and protecting millions of acres of fragile land.

It concludes, "Strengthening the conservation compact is the single most important action Congress could take to halt the environmental disaster taking place as millions of acres of environmentally sensitive land go under the plow."

Make walking to school safely second nature

Walking to and from school is a wonderful way to fit outdoor time and exercise into your child's busy day

By Alyson Weinberg
Be Out There
National Wildlife Federation

With childhood obesity on the rise, walking to school is a time-efficient and easy way to help get kids' hearts pumping and legs moving. Multiple studies also show that even a little time outside can improve children's academic performance and focus—meaning kids who walk to school arrive feeling more ready to dive in to their studies.

Rachel Weinishke of Bethesda, Maryland, a mom of two teenagers, says her kids' daily walk to high school gives them a great start. "School starts so early. As they walk together, without the noise of a car radio or loud kids on the bus, they can wake up to the sounds of nature. They chill out and get some exercise at the same time," she says.

With young children, parents get the added bonus of enjoying quality time with their kids while they savor the surroundings along the way, whether it's a sky full of cloud "animals," brightly-colored fall leaves or a squirrel scampering by.

Walking to school benefits kids physically and mentally, but some

parents may have safety concerns that prevent them from allowing it. The tips below, provided courtesy of National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), can help ensure a safer journey, leading the way for more mornings and afternoons spent in the fresh air rather than the car.

Walk the route to and from school with your children pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they're being followed or need help. Make the walk to and from school a "teachable moment" and chance to put their skills to the test. Make a map with your children showing acceptable routes to and from school. If your children wait for a bus, wait with them or make arrangements for supervision at the bus stop.

Instruct your children to always TAKE A FRIEND, always stay in well-lit areas, never take shortcuts, and never go into isolated areas. Teach them to stay aware of their surroundings and observe all traffic rules in place to more safely share the roads and sidewalks with others.

If anyone bothers your children or makes them feel scared, uncomfortable, or confused, while going to or from school, teach your children to trust their feelings, immediately get

away from that person, and TELL you or another trusted adult. If an adult approaches your children for help or directions, remember grownups needing help should not ask children; they should ask other adults. Instruct your children to never accept money or gifts from anyone unless you have told them it is OK to accept in each instance.

Even though there may be more safety in numbers it is still not safe for young children to walk to and from school, especially if they must take isolated routes anytime during the day or in darkness. Always provide supervision for your young children to help ensure their safe arrival to and from school.

Instruct your children to leave items and clothing with their name on them at home. If anyone calls out their name, teach them to not be fooled or confused. Teach your children about the tricks someone may try to use to confuse them or engage them in conversation. Children should also be taught that they do not need to be polite if approached and to get out of the situation as quickly and safely as possible.

Ensure current and accurate emergency contact information is on file for your children at their school.

SEASON

Continued from Page 2

geese was increased from 20 to 50. Possession limits for ducks and geese were increased from twice the daily bag limit to three times the daily bag limit. The Commission approved the following waterfowl hunting seasons:

High Plains Duck Zone: Oct. 5-Dec. 2, 2013 AND Dec. 21, 2013-Jan. 26, 2014. Youth: Sept. 28-29, 2013

Low Plains Early Duck Zone: Oct. 5-Dec. 1, 2013 AND Dec. 21, 2013-Jan. 5, 2014. Youth: Sept. 28-29,

2013

Low Plains Late Zone: Oct. 26-Dec. 29, 2013 AND Jan. 18-Jan. 26, 2014. Youth: Oct. 19-20, 2013

Low Plains Southeast Zone: Nov. 2-3, 2013 AND Nov. 16, 2013-Jan. 26, 2014. Youth: Oct. 26-27, 2013

Duck bag limit: Six ducks, including no more than 5 mallards, of which only 2 may be hens; 2 redheads; 3 wood ducks; 3 scaup; 2 pintails; and 2 canvasbacks. Possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

White-fronted geese: Oct. 26-Dec. 29, 2013 AND Feb. 1-Feb. 9, 2014.

Daily bag limit: 2. Possession limit is 6.

Canada geese: Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 2013 and Nov. 6, 2013-Feb. 9, 2014. Daily bag limit on Canada geese: 6. Possession limit: 18.

Light geese: Oct. 26-Nov. 3, 2013 and Nov. 6, 2013-Feb. 9, 2014. Daily bag limit: 50. No limit on possession.

Light Goose Conservation Order: Feb 10-April 30, 2014. No bag or possession limit.

To view a map of duck zones and to see all 2013 hunting seasons go to www.ksoutdoors.com, click on "Hunting" then "When to Hunt."

Studies explore what can be done to help the Prairie-chicken



Photo courtesy of the USFWS

By Elby Adamson

Prairie-chickens are birds in trouble. The Greater Prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*), is basically a bird of the tallgrass prairie region, that fact alone explaining in part why prairie-chicken numbers have declined. Less than four percent of the original tallgrass prairie remains unturned by the plow, most of that concentrated in a few large tracts in the Flint Hills of Kansas and part of Oklahoma.

If most people know about prairie-chickens at all, it is that they gather at leks in the spring where the males put on acrobatic displays and strut about for the benefit of the hens. Greater Prairie-chicken males make a sound something like blowing over an empty pop bottle while they are trying to impress the females. Known as booming, it is a sound, along with the dance and the vigor of this virile ritual that draws birdwatchers to the Kansas prairies each spring.

Now those concerned about prairie-

chickens wonder whether a competing and more commercially marketable sound - that of the wind - will impact the chickens' booming. Research being conducted in this area under the direction of KSU biology professors Samantha Wisely and Brett Sandercock seeks to determine how the development of wind energy might impact prairie-chickens. The research is funded by Horizon Wind Energy, PPM Energy, FPL Energy, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, the Kansas and Oklahoma offices of the Nature Conservancy as well as federal agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab. Recently, BP Wind Energy and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have joined to support the study as well.

Moreover, Horizon Wind Energy, Greenlight Energy and DISGEN have granted the scientists access to proposed wind farm sites. In Clay County, five researchers use dropnet and drift-fence-funnel type-traps to capture the birds and

then band them for study. These birds will be followed to determine such factors as age, size, and to make estimates of apparent survival rates.

"Apparent survival is a statistical estimate of true survival that takes into account re-capture and re-sighting probabilities," explained researcher Andy Gregory, a doctoral student in biology. While all the birds are banded, only females are collared with a VHF transmitter because they are the only birds considered in the demographic study that includes gathering information on population size, growth, density and distribution of the birds.

"Hens are the real driving force in the prairie-chicken population. If the hen can't find good nesting habitat, then the chance of nest success is reduced," said Robert J. Robel, emeritus professor biology at KSU and an expert on prairie-chickens. The researchers set up blinds as part of their method to observe

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Dredging update

The latest news regarding Kansas River sand dredging may not be the greatest. The most recent project studying in-river dredging on the Kaw shows that the mining operations could be causing some serious damage to our river.

Beginning in 2012, the Friends of the Kaw received a grant from the Water Protection Network to work with the Kansas State University River Systems Research Group to monitor, and study, the effects of in-river sand dredging on the Kansas River. The first year of this study is coming to a close, and the most recent report from this project may help to confirm what users of the river have been saying for years.

After surveying the dredge hole east of Topeka on several occasions, and in different river conditions, a significant impact on the bed of the river was found to take place around dredging operations. The step by step process of damage caused by dredge holes follows K-state researchers' hypothesis closely.

The initial sand removal causes a deep hole (nearly 30 feet below the



Photo courtesy of Friends of the Kaw

normal river bed).

Water flowing into the hole speeds up, and causes erosion heading upstream.

As water slows down in the hole, some sediments being carried by the water are deposited.

As the water leaves the downstream portion of the hole it picks

up speed and causes erosion heading downstream.

As this process continues, it may result in an overall lowering of the river bed. This lowering will cause banks to collapse and the channel to widen, swallowing up valuable

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SPECIES

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chickens at leks. There they make bird counts and observe their behavior. "The Greater Prairie-chicken is a charismatic species that acts as an indicator species for tallgrass prairie habitat," said Gregory. "The Flint Hills is one of the last remaining tracts of tallgrass prairie left in Kansas. Prairie-chickens ought to be doing well there."

Robel said the reasons for the sharp decline in prairie-chicken populations are many and varied. "Spraying and burning of grasslands has affected insect populations. Not only by reducing the insect population but also by changing the species of insects available to prairie-chicken chicks. Different species of insects may influence the health and wellbeing of the chicks as different

insects vary in nutritional value. "Insects prefer rangeland with lots of forbs interspersed. Pastures that are grazed heavily often have a reduction in succulents that support good populations of insects. But sometimes overgrazing leads to an increase in forbs and woody plants and results in less grass. "While prescribed burning may improve the nutritional value of grass for cattle, it can reduce nesting cover for prairie-chickens. They use last year's standing dead grass for nesting. And a lack of cover during the nesting season makes the nests more vulnerable to predation," said Robel.

From the prairie-chicken's standpoint, it would be better if ranchers burned only parts of a pasture each year instead of the entire pasture at once. That way there would be some old growth for nesting and cover. "In addition, there are simply more predators now than there were 40 or 50 years ago. Some studies have indi-

cated a ten-fold increase in mammalian predators," Robel said.

Predators of adult Greater Prairie-chickens and their chicks include: various hawks, owls, eagles, skunks, coyotes, opossums, badgers, weasels, mink, foxes, raccoons, as well as dogs and cats. Toss in snakes, crows and a few other enemies with most of the above predators and Greater Prairie-chicken eggs are also at risk. Prairie-chickens are valued as an upland game bird and in Kansas and several other states including Nebraska and South Dakota, their numbers are still strong enough to support a hunting season. In addition to predatory dangers, Ring-necked Pheasant hens sometimes victimize prairie-chickens by laying eggs in prairie-chicken nests. Because the pheasant eggs hatch a few days faster than the prairie-chicken's own eggs, the prairie-chicken hen leaves the nest early and her eggs fail to hatch.

Attention sportsmen and women!

Fish and wildlife programs on the chopping block

As a sportsman, you know that hunting and angling have deep roots in American culture. But did you know that they are also important economic drivers? There are many ways in which sportsmen contribute to economic growth in America, and much of this activity would not be possible without federal investment in conservation. Most sportsmen know that cutting federal funding for conservation not only undermines our heritage as hunters and anglers, it undermines our economy. Hunters and anglers alone account for close to \$100 billion in annual economic activity and support more than 900,000 sustainable American jobs.

Over the past year, however, there have been a number of proposals that would drastically cut funding for programs that are important to hunters and anglers. In fact, recent legislation debated in the House of Representatives would have completely eliminated funding for some of our flagship conservation initiatives like the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, the Lands & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program.

Through efforts of many of the national organizations in the conservation community have been able to hold the line and play a prominent role in preventing the worst proposed cuts to vital conservation programs, which support jobs and healthy local economies across America.

Sportsmen and Women Support Strong Conservation Funding

Dear [Decision Maker],

As our country continues the difficult process of addressing our unsustainable deficits, I understand that everyone must share the burden. But the FY 2014 Interior and Environment Related agencies appropriations bill recently debated by the U.S. House of Representatives attempts to place a disproportionate burden on programs that sportsmen support.

As a sportsman and conservationist, I believe this approach to deficit reduction is misguided. Federal investments in conservation have a substantial economic impact, and support millions of American jobs ranging from manufacturing to retail to service. These jobs are tied to our natural resources and cannot be exported.

As Congress works to reduce the deficit, I urge you to find a sustainable path forward that addresses the root causes of our deficit rather than attempting to balance the budget on the backs of these important programs. Please vote to adequately fund NAWCA, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund and state wildlife grants, among other conservation programs.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Over its lifespan, NAWCA has translated more than \$1 billion in federal funds into nearly \$3.5 billion in non-federal additional economic activity. These expenditures have created, on average, nearly 7,500 new jobs (e.g. construction workers, biologists, engineers) annually in the United States, generating more than \$200 million in worker earnings each year. Spending by hunters pays \$5.4 billion in state and local taxes. If you add in federal taxes

paid by hunters, the number doubles to \$11.8 billion.

But with Congress currently ramping up for another battle, we need your support to uphold our hunting and fishing heritage and the outdoor recreation economy. Use the form below to pass this important message to your elected officials. (For easy use, go to the KWF website (www.kswildlife.org) and copy this message and get the addresses of your elected officials.)

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

DREDGING

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riverside property and aesthetic sand bars without discretion. Friends of the Kaw has long advocated for the elimination of dredging operations from the river before they result in

irreparable damage. Results from this most recent study, and others, suggest that dredges do indeed significantly contribute to the problem of bed degradation.

This fall the US Army Corps of Engineers will complete their Environmental Assessment of the impacts of dredging. After the draft assess-

ment is posted, there will be several weeks available for the public to comment and provide input on this crucial decision-making process.

Watch the KWF blog (www.kswildlife.org) and we will keep you posted on how you can have a significant influence on the Kansas River's future.

Value of public lands for sportsmen highlighted in new report

Lew Carpenter
National Wildlife Federation

The West is filled with iconic landscapes, most of them public. With rod in hand, or shotgun or rifle shouldered, most of us have experienced the bounty public lands provide. And from our earliest days in the field when any body of water or forest held unseen potential, to our current, often thoughtfully planned excursions, public lands have always been there to provide opportunity.

For many, the true American dream is pursuing North America's trophy big game on the West's vast open spaces. It's the epitome of DIY – a complete hunting or fishing trip in the West – and also a testament to our sporting nature. It's all there: the planning, the practice, the pursuit, the stalk, the shot, and the harvest.

This sporting heritage is hard to quantify on a personal level. The value of days spent afield alone or with great friends and family, transcends material possessions. The value of public lands, however, can be quantified. The National Wildlife Federation's (NWF) new report, *Valuing Our Western Public Lands: Safeguarding Our Economy and Way of Life*, illustrates the value and scope of our western lands and sends a clear message that these lands define the American landscape and our national identity.

The bulk of the vast open spaces are in the West, where they have generated jobs and revenue from commodity production, tourism, and recreation, including hunting and fishing. As the Western economy changes from one dominated by natural resource production to one distinguished by knowledge- and service-based industries, conserving public lands becomes increasingly important as a magnet for businesses and employees seeking a high quality of life.

The NWF report can be found at: http://www.ourpubliclands.org/sites/default/files/files/NWF_PublicLands.pdf

Several recent studies and surveys within the report found that:

- Many communities near public lands managed for conservation and recreation report higher levels of economic, popu-

lation and income growth and higher property values.

- The outdoor recreation industry, including fishing and hunting, contributes nearly \$650 billion to the U.S. economy and supports more than 6 million jobs. Western public lands provide recreation for people from across the country and world.

- Americans invest nearly \$39 billion annually in natural resource conservation, resulting in more than \$93 billion in direct economic benefits.

- Extractive, commodity-based industries generate needed materials and energy and provide jobs and revenue, but have been cyclical and have become a smaller part of the overall economy.

"Public Lands are not just where I recreate; they are also where I get my food," said Armond Acri, a retired chemical engineer who hunts big game and waterfowl. "I hunt on National Forest, BLM lands, State and Federal Wildlife Refuges, and State Lands. Each year I hunt grouse, ducks, geese, deer, elk, and perhaps antelope. In a few special years I have had the privilege to hunt bison and bighorn sheep. Public Land helps me feed both my body and my soul. I cannot put a price on Public Land, but I know it is one of my most valued possessions. That is why I fight to preserve the Public Lands we all own."

Intact habitat and unspoiled backcountry are essential to maintaining fish and wildlife habitat. Proposals to dispose or devalue the land threaten a crucial part of our economy. These proposals threaten the fundamental value of ensuring that lands belonging to all Americans stay open to everyone, now and in the future.

Through the NWF report a picture of the changing West emerges. Studies show that many communities near public lands managed for conservation and recreation report higher employment, growth and income levels and higher property values. The service industries, which include health, finance and legal jobs, have diversified the economy and sustain communities when commodity-based industries experience downturns.

Industries traditionally associated with

the West—logging, mining, oil and gas drilling—are still important and provide needed materials, but are often cyclical and have become a smaller part of the overall economy.

Former WON staffer Rich Holland is Fishing and Hunting Content Director for SmartEtail.com, which offers web hosting and online commerce tools to 15,000 independent retailers affiliated with Big Rock Sports. His business and countless others lie at the heart of the public lands economy. But again, the value runs deeper than business.

"In the 1940s, my father was in his early teens when his family moved to Los Angeles from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania," said Holland. "He and his brother immediately discovered the great fishing and hunting available on public lands. That love of the outdoors was passed along to me and I still fish and hunt in many of the same places he frequented as a young man.

"On the other hand, quite a few of his favorite spots have been lost to encroaching development and government designations that prohibit the traditional activities of sportsmen," he added. "Many of the retailers we work with are located adjacent to public lands, and not just in the West but along the Great Lakes, the Eastern Seaboard and the vast watershed of the Gulf Coast. These businesses rely on continued access to public lands for families who wish to fish and hunt."

By conserving the cherished lands that drive economic growth, the American people and our national economy will be healthier and more sustainable for generations to come.

So what does it all mean in today's world? The report was created to bring the importance of public lands into the national dialogue. Several Western legislatures and members of Congress have shown they are out of touch with the public's support for keeping public lands in public hands.

The last two congressional sessions, lawmakers introduced dozens of bills seeking to diminish protection of public

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Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

Field care critical for tasty venison

Venison is healthy culinary treat if cared for properly

Everyone has heard someone say they didn't like deer meat because of the "gamey" taste. But what is gamey? The truth is, venison is a lean, healthy source of protein that is equally palatable if the proper steps are taken, beginning immediately after the shot.

There's really no trick to good-tasting deer meat; a lot of it is common sense, but it does take some effort. The most important step list is cooling the meat, and that means field dressing, or gutting, the carcass promptly. This should be done in the field soon after the shot. Remove the entrails and prop open the ribcage, letting air circulate in the body cavity. After field dressing, be sure to sign, date and affix your deer tag to the carcass, and move it to a location for processing,

taking care to keep the meat clean. If you plan to use a commercial butcher/processor, it's a good idea to call ahead and make sure they are open and can get your deer into the cooler.

If you plan to process the meat yourself, you'll need a cool, clean place to hang the carcass, which should be skinned as quickly as possible unless temperatures are very cool. Prompt skinning is another important step in cooling the meat when temperatures are mild.

Through every step in this process be vigilant to keep the meat clean of debris and hair. Don't get in a hurry. There are instructional videos available to help you butcher your deer, and doing it yourself will give you the peace of mind of knowing exactly how the meat was cared for. Large

commercial processors may mix your deer meat with that brought in by other hunters. Do it yourself and you can make custom cuts and package sizes suited for your family.

Once the meat is cooled, butchered, packaged and frozen, you can enjoy many great meals. Venison is very lean, so adding a strip of bacon to steaks or mixing beef tallow or sausage to the burger helps with flavor and cooking. The only "trick" to cooking tasty venison, is not overcooking it. Venison, and all wild game, should be carefully cooked to medium or medium rare. There is a fine line between just right and an overcooked, dry, livery-tasting (gamey) deer steak. When properly cared for and cooked correctly, venison can be as tasty and tender as beef.



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Five bird species your grandchildren may never see

Scientists who have spent decades trying to reverse the broad decline of migratory birds in the Americas will converge by the hundreds later this month in Snowbird, Utah, to seek solutions to the threats migratory birds are facing at northern breeding grounds, southern wintering grounds, and numerous migration stopovers.

The pivotal August 25-28 meeting of the bird conservation partnership, Partners in Flight (PIF), will look at progress in the struggle to conserve critical habitats, launch new conservation efforts, and form new alliances to conserve birds throughout the Americas. The meeting includes members of over 100 organizations from 16 countries across North, Central, and South America.

George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy, says the coming meeting could affect the fate of several

of the most rapidly declining migratory bird species found in the Western Hemisphere. "The stakes are quite high," said Fenwick. "Many migratory birds are far less common than they were in the early 1990s, when the effort to reverse these broad declines was launched. This is true in part because the details surrounding the migration of many of these birds has been a mystery until recently-and that have made it difficult to take corrective actions."

Fenwick says a number of new conservation measures could be launched or developed at the PIF V meeting. If they aren't, Fenwick said, the outlook for migratory bird species will darken, such as for these five that face significant challenges to long-term survival:

Cerulean Warbler: A blue and white bird so dazzling that it has been called a "flying piece of sky." It is also the most

rapidly declining warbler in the Americas. Breeding bird surveys say that the number of Ceruleans fell by 70 percent from 1966 to 1996. In the Appalachian Mountains, long a breeding stronghold of the species, large amounts of prime Cerulean habitat have been destroyed or fragmented. Unfortunately, Cerulean habitat in mountain forests has been heavily logged and converted to agriculture.

Wood Thrush: A bird best known for what the writer Henry David Thoreau described as its "ethereal" song. Since the 1960s, the Wood Thrush population is estimated to have fallen by 62 percent, from 13 million to about 5 million. This bird faces threats to its forest habitat on both its breeding grounds in eastern

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Jail time for William 'Spook' Spann

The Outdoor Wire

A professional hunter from Tennessee violated his federal probation and must spend a total of 30 days in Bureau of Prisons custody, U.S. Attorney Barry Grissom said July 31.

U.S. Magistrate Judge James P. O'Hara ruled that William "Spook" Spann, 50, Dickinson, violated the conditions of his release after his conviction for a misdemeanor Lacey Act violation in Kansas. O'Hara's order states that Spann:

- Continues on probation until Feb. 28, 2016.

- Is ordered to spend a total of 30 days during nights and weekends in the custody of the Bureau of Prisons between now and Feb. 28, 2014.

- Is ordered not to hunt anywhere in the United States or the world until Aug. 1, 2014.

Last year, Spann pleaded guilty to transporting across state lines a white-tailed deer that was unlawfully taken in Stafford County, KS. As part of the probation he was prohibited from hunting for six months, admonished not to commit any further federal crimes and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine and \$10,000 restitution.

On June 10, the federal probation office in Kansas filed a petition alleging Spann violated his probation by hunting in Tennessee and violating a Tennessee law against baiting wildlife. O'Hara ruled that Spann violated the terms of his probation by hunting in the United States within six months of his sentencing and baiting turkeys in violation of Tennessee state law.

Grissom commended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency and Assistant U.S. Attorney Chris Oakley for their work on the case.

BIRDS

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North America and on wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America.

Long-billed Curlew: A large, loud, iconic shorebird that once ranged from west of the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. In the late 1800s, market hunters all but wiped them out. This species is most threatened by rapid loss of grasslands on both its breeding and wintering grounds. For example, in Chihuahua, Mexico, where many of these birds winter, over a million acres of grasslands have been replaced by irrigated farms since 2005.

Upland Sandpiper: A foot-tall grassland bird that announces its arrival at its northern breeding grounds with a call said to resemble a "wolf whistle." Stories have been told of flocks so large during the late 1800s that it could take an hour for a single group of "Uppies" to pass overhead. But commercial hunters killed them by the trainload in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In addition, the continental population of Upland Sandpipers never recovered due to habitat loss from the widespread conversion of grasslands into overly grazed ranches and large farms. This is an iconic bird found in the Kansas Flint Hills each spring that would be a shame to not let our grandchildren enjoy.

Kirtland's Warbler: A species that was down to only 167 singing males

as recently as 1987. Today, this bird's population has grown 15-fold, and there is hope that the species will avoid extinction. Kirtland's Warblers breed only in specialized habitat of young jack pines. Once these trees grow too big, the warblers leave in search of another stand of young jack pines, which grow in the wake of a forest fire. Breeding Kirtland's Warblers are only found in Michigan in the northern Lower Peninsula and in small numbers in the Upper Peninsula—one of the smallest breeding ranges of any North American bird species. The species winters mostly in the Bahamas. Keeping the Kirtland's Warbler population recovery going will depend on the continuing success of current programs to create young jack pine forests and reduce nest-raiding by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

"The most important aspect of the Partners in Flight meeting will be our focus on the full annual life-cycle of these long-distance travelers," said Ken Rosenberg, a conservation scientist at Cornell Lab of Ornithology and a leader in the PIF initiative. "The actions proposed at the international gathering will affect habitats on these species' tropical wintering grounds as well as their breeding habitats in North America." He added that meeting participants will develop conservation strategies focusing on eight geographically based work sessions.

Terrell D. Rich, Partners in Flight National Coordinator, says that effective bird conservation has got to involve

more than just the scientific community. "It's critical that scientists find a way to mobilize the many millions of people who watch and feed birds to become active in bird conservation. We really, really need their help."

"Many of these species need us to take action, now, but the simple truth is that people need them just as much, and probably much more. They are our guardians. Without them, we are lost," said Tom Will, Wildlife Biologist and Partners in Flight Coordinator for the Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ANGLERS

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often of all ethnicities, averaging 21.6 fishing days per year.

Youth Fishing Participation

- Fishing participation for children peaked between the ages of six and 12, then decreased during the adolescent years of 13 to 17.

- In 2012, 81.8 percent of youth anglers ages six to 12 were introduced to outdoor activities by their parents.

- Participation declined among females ages 13 to 17 more sharply than among males of the same age.

- More than 45 percent of youth fishing participants ages six to 17 also participated in boating.

The full study is available online at <http://takemefishing.org/Corporate/>.

Western governors urge USFWS to approve state conservation mechanism for Lesser Prairie-chicken



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Governors of five western states have urged the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to approve the Range-wide Conservation Plan for the Lesser Prairie-chicken (RWP) as the key conservation mechanism for the species.

The Lesser Prairie-chicken is found in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. In December of 2012, the USFWS proposed to list the species as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act.

The Western Governors who signed on to the Aug. 2 letter to USFWS - John Hickenlooper (CO), Sam Brownback (KS), Mary Fallin (OK), Susana Martinez (N.M.), and Rick Perry (TX) - are instead urging Dan Ashe, the Director of USFWS, to make use of existing

public-private partnerships to conserve the species rather than listing the species as threatened. Such a listing can unduly restrict land use and state land management.

Specifically, the Governors point to the RWP, which is the work of wildlife experts who comprised the Lesser Prairie-chicken Interstate Working Group. The Governors want the USFWS to approve the RWP as a conservation enrollment program for the Lesser Prairie-chicken, a step that could preclude the need to list the species as threatened. Recently, the USFWS extended the timeline for final determination of the species’ proposed listing to March of 2014.

The Governors’ letter echoes themes in existing Western Governors’ Associa-

tion (WGA) policy resolutions, including:

Policy Resolution 11-10, Lesser Prairie-chicken Conservation, which urged a policy of cooperative management among the states to maintain and restore LPC populations while encouraging responsible development;

Policy Resolution 13-08, The Endangered Species Act, which stated that USFWS should enhance the role of state governments in recovering species, such as through the development of conservation plans;

Policy Resolution 13-04, Conserving Wildlife and Crucial Habitat in the West, in which the Governors urged federal agencies to use state fish and wildlife

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Lies of the lead menace

By Jeff Knox
The Firearms Coalition

The California legislature is on the verge of passing a bill banning the use of traditional ammunition - bullets containing lead - for hunting statewide. The justification for the ban is that the giant, endangered carrion eater, the California Condor, is seriously threatened by lead poisoning from ingesting bullet fragments in game animals. Proponents of the ban say that hunters leave carcasses or gut piles containing lead fragments in the field where the birds consume it causing them to become sick and die. Even though research into the problem was extremely sketchy, in 2007, the California legislature bypassed the scientific review process of the state's Fish and Game Commission, and instituted a ban on the use of common, lead-based bullets in areas where the condors live and feed.

The ban failed to get results. Even though 99% of California hunters complied with the ban, lead levels in condors actually went up over the subsequent 5 years. In response to this failure, rather than investigating and mitigating other possible sources for the lead poisoning, the groups that demanded the lead bullet ban in 2007 have again bypassed the Fish and Game Commission, again refused to produce credible scientific evidence and research, and again gone directly to the legislature to get the lead bullet ban expanded statewide.

That legislation passed the Assembly and is in a committee of the Senate. It could soon be voted on by the full Senate. Some reports say Governor Jerry Brown has indicated that he will sign the legislation if it comes to his desk.

There is no question that lead is a serious problem for condors. But there is a question as to the source of the lead in the condors, and unfortunately, there has been very limited solid research into this critical question. That the lead comes from the bullets of hunters has been presented as an obvious, unquestionable fact, but it has never

been proven. This blind assumption that hunters are to blame is not surprising from organizations and individuals who have been actively working to ban hunting for decades. Groups like the Humane Society of the US, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Defenders of Wildlife are radically opposed to all hunting. Some have even spelled out their intention to eradicate hunting incrementally, species by species, and state by state, starting with California. With these groups leading the charge against lead ammunition, is it any wonder that hunters are suspicious of the motives and data being presented to support the ban?

Hunters have put up their defenses - sometimes rejecting even good research if it conflicts with their interests. They see this drill as an assault on hunting. Had the process followed established protocols, hunters, when presented with solid, scientific research and good facts would have been leaders in protecting and restoring the condors as they have restored deer, turkey, goose, duck, elk and other wildlife populations - and their habitat. Hunters initiated special taxes on their gear that, along with their license fees, goes directly to shooting, hunting, and conservation programs. Those dollars make up the lion's share of US conservation funding.

One of the biggest concerns hunters have about lead bans is the cost and availability of lead-free bullet options - not to mention concerns about bullet performance. While advocates of the bans like to claim that there are good, lead-free alternatives readily available, the truth is that these projectiles, along with being expensive and often hard to find, could be declared illegal under existing federal law.

In 1984, Congress went on a bender over the trumped up issue of "cop-killer bullets." It didn't matter that no police officer had ever been killed by one of these bullets penetrating his vest, the media and politicians had gotten it into their heads that "armor-piercing" handgun ammunition existed for only one purpose - killing police officers - and they were determined to see those

bullets banned. Unfortunately, the leadership of the NRA at the time didn't believe they could stop an armor-piercing bullet ban so they decided to work with the politicians to craft an "acceptable" ban.

What was eventually passed was legislation banning the manufacture and sale of, "a projectile or projectile core which may be used in a handgun and which is constructed ... from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium." (18 U.S.C. § 921) The law goes on to give the Attorney General the power to make exceptions and exclusions.

Here's the problem though: since 1986 when that law was passed, handguns have been produced for almost every cartridge imaginable - including traditional rifle cartridges. The law bans brass and copper bullets "which may be used in a handgun," and that has become virtually any bullet. The ATF has already shut down at least one small company that was manufacturing specialty copper rifle bullets based on the idea that the bullets could be used in a handgun. With a law like this on the books, the banning of lead ammunition leaves hunters with few alternatives, and most of those alternatives could be taken away with the stroke of a bureaucrat's pen. That's a serious concern.

Lead can be a danger, but lead is not nuclear waste. Lead in the form of bullets - or bullet fragments - poses little threat to most birds, humans or other mammals. If this weren't true, the fields around Gettysburg, Fredericksburg, and Manassas, Virginia (where the water table can be less than 4 feet below the surface) would be toxic wastelands today.

Lead in paint, gasoline, and some batteries is much more dangerous because it is much more readily absorbable by humans and animals alike. The important thing about making laws and regulations regarding lead is that the laws have to be based on credible science and extensive, honest research, not assumptions, prejudices, and hidden agendas.

Neighbors helping neighbors

The tradition continues through prescribed burn associations

Neighbors helping neighbors is a proud tradition in the western Great Plains — from community barn raisings to moving cattle. Prescribed burn associations are a modern manifestation of that long-lived pioneer tradition. They are composed of ranchers and farmers, and their neighbors, relatives and friends who work together to bring back another ancient tradition, fire, which has long been a part of maintaining the natural balance of the prairie. Today, these burn associations use fire to restore native prairie vegetation that supports grassland dependent species, reduce woody invasive plants that take water and nutrients from native plants, and reduce high fuel loads across the plains.

Prescribed burn associations range in size from a handful of ranchers to much larger numbers of cooperating agricultural producers. Group members learn the safest methods to use and control fire, when to apply it for the desired vegetative result, how often to apply it to the land, and how to graze when the new grass grows lush and healthy. They also take classes on plant

identification, proper grazing techniques, fire weather behavior, fuel load estimating, fuel type burning rates, smoke dispersal patterns and how to write burning plans for their land. To educate the broader community, associations hold demonstration burns, conduct field days to show effects of burning, and teach “hands on” burning classes for their neighbors who want to learn how to properly apply fire.

PLJV supports prescribed burn associations because prescribed fire is a cost efficient tool to restore our prairies to an almost natural state in terms of both plants and animals, including the bird species that rely on these grasslands. PLJV helps prescribed burn associations find grants for funding and build partnerships with agencies and organizations that have similar habitat goals.

To burn, proper equipment — such as drip torches, spray units, ATV’s, hand held radios and fire resistant clothing — is needed. Most landowners don’t own all the equipment themselves. That’s where the association helps. Prescribed burn associations, or

individual members, may own some equipment, applying for grants to buy it or manufacturing their own, borrow from other associations, and make deals with partners like Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, or state forest services to use their equipment. Grant funds also help association members to become trained as fire practitioners and to train other agricultural producers and landowners to use this economical way of restoring and maintaining the prairie.

There are now 17 prescribed burn associations in Oklahoma, eight in Kansas, 10 in Texas and 12 in Nebraska. Each of those states also has an advisory group, called a state prescribed fire council, to help educate, train and equip the associations. Recently, a regional prescribed burn association has been formed, which includes those four states with interest from New Mexico and Missouri in joining the group.

For more information about prescribed burn associations in the PLJV region, contact Barth Crouch at 785-823-0240.

Our oldest outdoor tradition

Still under attack — still needs all sportsmen's support

By Doug Jeanneret
Vice President of Marketing
U.S. Sportsmen’s Alliance

As Benjamin Franklin said before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, “We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately.” This could certainly be the mantra for what is our oldest outdoor heritage – trapping.

No other outdoor pursuit has been as sensationalized as trapping, nor has any other pursuit had as much misinformation surround it. With trapper numbers at best static, it has and will continue to be a prime target for the animal rights lobby.

So before making a decision about

the sport, here are some facts to keep in mind:

- Trapping is our first and foremost traditional outdoor sport, having been the impetus for the opening of the new world

- Foothold traps are a vital and humane tool for wildlife management

- State wildlife agency biologists – the same people who have led the resurgence of a variety of wildlife we now enjoy – support trapping and see it as a necessary tool for managing furbearers

- Trapping has proven to be a critical element in the prevalence of waterfowl populations

- Wildlife managers also see it as extremely important in protecting the

public from outbreaks of diseases such as rabies.

Of course, the animal rights lobby continues to spread an abundance of misinformation about trapping in an effort to end what, in its opinion, is an inhumane tradition.

All you have to do is read the rhetoric produced by some animal rights groups such as those comments posted recently on an USSA article regarding America’s top 10 threats to trapping (<http://www.ussportsmen.org/trapping/americas-top-10-threats-to-trapping-2/>) after a twitter post by the group Born Free USA.

The Humane Society of the United

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OUTDOORS

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shops like this provide women with a comfortable environment to learn and ask questions. It takes the pressure off when you're around other women who want to know the same things as you.

If I could give any piece of advice, it would be to step out of your comfort zone. You'll never know what you're interested in if you don't try different things! Take advantage of the opportunities presented to you. Hunting and archery has given me the confidence to take on different challenges in life and I only hope it helps others do the same.

Theresa Vail of Manhattan was named Miss Kansas 2013 on June 8, 2013. She is a senior at Kansas State University, majoring in Chemistry and Chinese, with a goal of becoming a dentist for the Army. She is an avid bowhunter and archer. See more of her background on the Miss Kansas website at <http://www.misskansas.org/>.

USFWS

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data and analyses as principal sources to inform natural resource decisions.

The RWP uses state fish and wildlife data for its conservation strategy, includ-

ing the Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (SGP CHAT), which depicts crucial habitat areas for the Lesser Prairie-chicken. Part of the RWP conservation strategy is to use the CHAT to identify areas where habitat improvements should be concentrated.

The SGP CHAT is one of many GIS-tools being developed by Western states

that will depict crucial wildlife habitat areas in a single map layer that energy, transmission and land-use planners can use in the beginning stages of project planning. WGA also is supporting development of a Western Governors' CHAT, which will depict crucial wildlife habitat across the West when it launches this December.

PUBLIC

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land, require the federal government to sell millions of acres of the land or turn the land over to the states. State legislators and congressional members behind proposals to dispose of public lands claim that westerners believe federal management of the lands constrains natural resource development, thus depriving states of the economic benefits. In fact, the measures contradict the majority

of western public opinion and threaten the region's economy, which benefits from the diverse businesses attracted and supported by conserving public lands.

As a sportsman from the West, I have fished from Alaska to the Gulf Coast, Baja to Idaho—and many places in between—almost exclusively on public lands. Certainly there is a place for the magnificent private-land opportunities in North America – but for the common man, nothing beats the landscapes his forefathers created, paid for with his tax dollars, equipment purchases and license fees, and which is waiting with open

arms for him to conserve for his children and the generations to follow.

If you care about this American heritage, your access to public lands and wildlife, and your ability to share this with your children and grandchildren, then you need to inform yourself about the positions your elected officials are taking on public lands issues. Moreover, you need to communicate your positions to your elected officials. This is the essence of representative democracy and it is more important than ever in a time when big money is exerting enormous influence.

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How to deal with anti-hunters and harassment

As avid sportsmen and women, we may cross paths with our biggest foes: the anti-hunting community. Whether in the field, at a sporting event, a restaurant, or any other place, it is generally a rather unpleasant encounter. If this happens to you in the field, the question is: How should I handle this situation?

Remember, hunter harassment is illegal in all 50 states! Over 25 years ago, the United States Sportsman Alliance (USSA) wrote the draft hunter-harassment language that was used by the majority of states when they passed laws protecting hunters and hunting. This language has withstood all court challenges during those decades.

If you happen to encounter an anti-

hunter while in the field who attempts to disrupt your hunting experience, follow these USSA guidelines:

- ◆ Report the incident to authorities as soon as possible: Operation Game Thief in Kansas 1-877-426-3843

- ◆ Have an accurate description of the protesters, as well as a license plate number and vehicle information, if possible.

- ◆ Be prepared to file harassment charges against the perpetrators

However, harassment doesn't always just occur in the field; you can come across it during every day activities such as social gatherings or your child's baseball game. Often times you will find yourself on the defensive end against uneducated individuals and it's best to be prepared

to help educate them.

- ◆ Be courteous, not defensive. Often times individuals are not educated on how hunters are actually helping conserve wildlife, and may just need to be told the facts.

- ◆ Know your sport. Provide details on how hunters help fund conservation. Sometimes individuals do not realize that hunters pay for wildlife conservation.

- ◆ Explain that sportsmen eat their kill. The animal rights lobby constantly spreads misinformation that hunters kill just to kill.

You may not succeed in persuading anyone about the positive aspects of hunting, but you will have at least left them with a better understanding of our outdoor heritage.

Team USA takes two gold, three silver

After just missing the seemingly elusive gold team medal in the past two World Cup stages, Reo Wilde (Pocatello, Idaho), Dave Cousins (Standish, Maine) and Braden Gellenthien (College Station, Tex.) have regained their spot at the top of the podium. In a surprise match up against a young team from South Africa, the experienced American archers prevailed taking a slow but steady lead to finish with gold. Korea took bronze over the Netherlands.

Gellenthien and World Ranked No. 1, Erika Jones (Grand Island, Neb.) joined forces for the mixed team gold match and continue to be the team to beat. Taking a huge lead in the first set, Team USA held tight and finished 7 points ahead of Russia for the well-deserved gold medal. The Netherlands claimed bronze over Mexico.

Team USA's compound women, led by Jones, had high expectations for their gold medal match against Italy.

Unfortunately, several 7s in the first two ends gave Italy a 5-point lead at the half. The US women rallied with a stronger third set, lowering the deficit to only 2 points, but Italy finished out with 5 straight 10s to close the match and clinch the gold. The bronze match was an exciting pairing of two strong and emerging compound teams: Colombia and Korea, with Korea taking the bronze.

Jones' day continued with her third gold medal match, again facing Russia's World Ranked No. 2, Albina Longinova. The two battled fiercely, with Jones taking a lead after the first set, which she lost for the next three. However, she finished strong enough to force a tie and one-arrow shoot off. Jones shot a 9 to Longinova's 10, earning silver for the US.

The recurve men's team finals promised great excitement as they recreated the exact matchups of the 2012 Olympic semifinals. Last summer the

US men's team was strong enough to defeat the team from Korea, however as Korea has appeared on top of the podium frequently this summer, it seemed tides might be shifting. The wind was shifting too, creating difficult shooting conditions, which did not affect Korea's team. With only three arrows outside the gold, Korea took a 225-196 victory over the US.

The US shot well with a young team facing the toughest competition at the top of their games, and will send four archers to Paris for the World Cup Final: Jones, Ellison, Wilde, and Gellenthien. These archers will also represent Team USA in Belek Antalya, Turkey, for the upcoming World Championships and can hope to turn some of these silver medals into gold.

Complete results from Wroclaw are available here <http://www.worldarchery.org/en-us/worldcup/wroclaw/results.aspx>.

"If you teach a man to hunt, he goes hunting. If you teach a woman to hunt, the entire family goes hunting." Sylvia Payne, Director of Alabama BOW Program

The state of our nation's birds on private lands

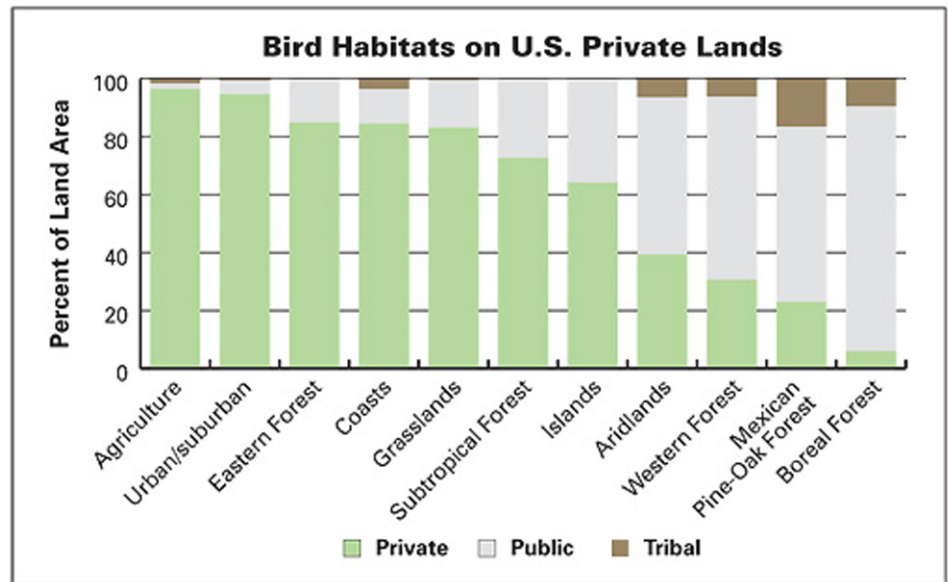
This fourth State of the Birds report highlights the enormous contributions private landowners make to bird and habitat conservation, and opportunities for increased contributions. Roughly 60% of land area in the United States (1.43 billion acres) is privately owned by millions of individuals, families, organizations, and corporations, including 2 million ranchers and farmers and about 10 million woodland owners. More than 100 species have 50% or more of their U.S. breeding distribution on private lands.

Birds are important indicators of the health of our environment. To assess bird populations and conservation opportunities on private lands across the nation, we combined the latest eBird distribution data with land ownership data from the Protected Areas Database of the U.S. As in past reports, we focused on species dependent on a single primary habitat, or habitat obligates.

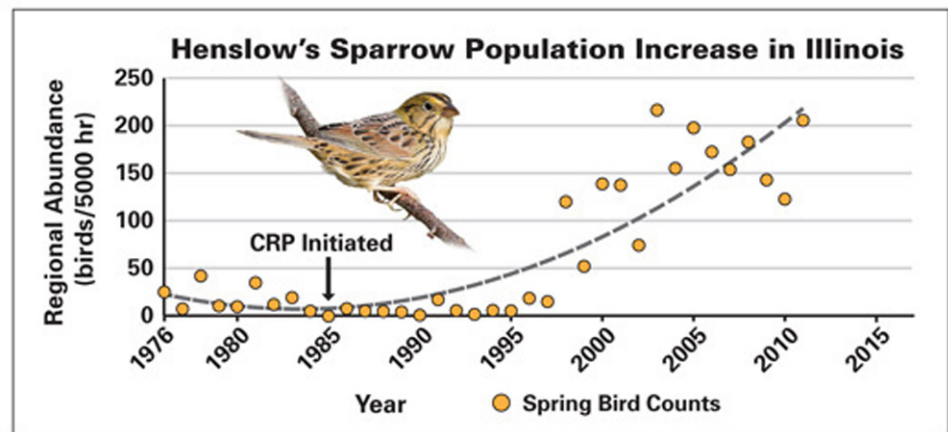
Our results emphasize the high dependence on private lands among grassland, wetland, and eastern forest birds, with important conservation opportunities existing in all habitats. Many conservation programs available to private landowners offer win-win opportunities to implement land management practices that benefit birds and landowners. The success stories highlighted in this report demonstrate that voluntary private landowner efforts can yield real and meaningful bird conservation results.

Working Lands Sustain People and Birds

Many privately owned working lands that produce food, timber, and other resources for society also provide valuable habitat for birds. Sustainable grazing systems yield better food resources for livestock over the long term, as well as healthier habitats for grassland and aridland birds. Rice-lands can provide important wintering habitat for waterbirds. Sustainable working lands can meet the economic bottom line while providing habitat for birds and cleaner water, cleaner air, and improved human health for com-



Percentage of primary habitats on private, public, and tribal lands in the lower 48 states, Alaska, Hawai'i, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Wetlands are not depicted because of insufficient data.



In Illinois, regional spring counts of Henslow's Sparrows are now about 25 times greater than 30 years ago, prior to the Farm Bill's Conservation Reserve Program. Henslow's Sparrow by Chris Wood. Graphic courtesy of James Herkert.

munities.

Private Protected Lands Have Great Conservation Importance

About 2% of private lands are formally protected, either owned or under easement with conservation as a primary land management objective. Though small in proportion, these 24 million acres protected by land trusts and private conservation groups provide a network of private protected lands nearly as large as the entire National Park Service system in the lower

48 states. Private protected lands range from small urban greenspaces to vast easements on working timberlands that provide wildlife habitat and places for outdoor recreation.

Wetlands Restoration Key to Waterfowl Production

More than half our nation's historic wetland habitat base of 220 million acres has been lost. And private land-

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ENVIRONMENT

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owners hold the key to wetlands restoration, as three-quarters of wetlands are on private land. Funding from Farm Bill programs, Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act have restored millions of acres of private wetlands. In the Prairie Pothole Region, lands enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program have yielded a net increase of 2 million waterfowl per year in the Dakotas and Montana.

Grassland Birds Benefit Most from Private Lands Programs

Privately owned grasslands are vital to 29 breeding obligate grassland bird species, with 82% of their distributions occurring on private land. Because most grasslands today are embedded within working agricultural landscapes, much of the important conservation of grassland habitat in the U.S. has been accomplished through programs under the Farm Bill. For example, the Conservation Reserve Program has reestablished natural habitat on about 27 million acres of environmentally sensitive lands with a history of growing crops, spurring regional

rebounds of grassland bird species such as the Henslow's Sparrow.

Western Ranchers Key to Aridlands Conservation Success

More than 75% of aridland bird species are declining, and private lands host 40% of aridland bird distributions during the breeding season. Ranchers are implementing sustainable grazing systems and improving bird habitat on more than 2 million acres of ranchlands in 11 Western states. Though only 1% of private aridlands are considered protected, these parcels support disproportionately high aridland bird distributions. A conservation easement on the 270,000-acre Tejon Ranch in California directly protects 18 species of aridland birds.

Forest Birds Depend on Working Private Timberlands

Private forests contain more than 40% of the U.S. distribution of 152 forest bird species. Eastern and subtropical forest birds are particularly dependent on private forests, which often contain young woodlands that are important habitat for steeply declining, disturbance-dependent forest birds. Ultimately, economic factors affect many landowner decisions to maintain standing forests or sell for development. Conservation easements and strong timber markets can provide

incentives for private forest owners to maintain working forests.

Coastal and Island Bird Populations Rely on Private Lands

Coastal habitats (which are 83% privately owned) host 25% of all bird species in North America at some point of the year; most beach-nesting bird species are of conservation concern. Similarly, private lands are important bird habitat on islands, with about 50% of land in Hawai'i, 92% in Puerto Rico, and 88% in the U.S. Virgin Islands under private ownership. In both coastal and island areas, public-private conservation partnerships on private lands are vital to sustaining some of our nation's most threatened birds.

Private Lands Conservation Needs More Support

As society requires more production (food, timber, energy) from private lands, conservation strategies compatible with working lands will become even more important for sustaining bird populations. A suite of strong programs, policies, and partnerships must be supported and expanded across our nation's varied landscapes, so landowners are empowered to choose conservation tools that fit best and serve everyone's best interest—landowners, fellow citizens, and birds.

SUPPORT

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States (HSUS), the number one anti-hunting and anti-trapping group in the nation, is often the forerunner behind anti-trapping legislation. HSUS has attempted to ban foothold traps, but doesn't just stop there. HSUS has made it clear it seeks an "outright prohibition on all body-gripping traps due to the inherent cruelty of the devices."

The Animal Protection Institute encourages people to prohibit trapping on their land, boycott businesses that sell fur, support trapping bans and encourage non-lethal wildlife controls.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is famous for its many stunts held to protest trapping

and the wearing of fur including naked women in cages, throwing fake blood on fur coats, and protesting outside of operas and other higher profile events.

Just as disturbing if not more, is the fact that some sportsmen have developed the attitude that trapping is a disposable part of our outdoor heritage. This type of short-term thinking is the result of not understanding the foes to all hunting, fishing, and trapping. It is nothing short of ignorant to think that a ban on trapping would not affect all sportsmen and women and that if the anti's are handed trapping on a platter, that they will let other sportsmen alone.

During my 18 years at the USSA, I have witnessed in states such as Massachusetts, that once the anti's stop trapping, they continue to work even harder to destroy other parts of our heritage.

Add Colorado, California, New Jersey, Florida and other states to that list.

Believe me, if all trapping were banned tomorrow, the animal rights lobby would not just roll up their tents and head home. They would focus on other aspects of our outdoor heritage. Hunting with hounds, bear hunting, and even fishing are already the next traditions in the anti's crosshairs, but they would be encouraged to continue with an even greater assault on these and other sports if trapping were lost.

Sportsmen must understand that if any one of our traditions is sacrificed, other parts of our hunting heritage may fall, as well. We should and must continue to solidify our defenses, stand shoulder to shoulder, and support each other regardless of whether we trap, shoot, fish, or hunt.

Bird killers, rabies carriers

**By J.R. Absher, Editor
The Birding Wire**

It's been well documented here at The Birding Wire and elsewhere that abandoned and feral cats as well as domestic cats permitted to roam outdoors are responsible for billions - that's with a B - of bird and small mammal deaths annually.

And now, a new study indicates that the growing proliferation of feral cat trap-neuter-vaccinate-release (TNVR) programs in some cities and regions of the country and the expansion of colonies of abandoned and ownerless cats could lead to the spread of rabies and other diseases.

Appearing in the online scientific journal *Zoonoses and Public Health* last week, the article, "Rabies Prevention and Management of Cats in the Context of Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release Programmes," reports that for the past 30 years, cats have been the primary domestic animal linked to human exposure to rabies. And over the past 10 years, the number of feral cat colonies nationally has exploded as animal-protection groups lobby to end the euthanizing of strays.

Authors of the study represented the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the American Bird Conservancy (ABC).

Currently, approximately 300 rabid cats are reported each year in the U.S., according to Jesse Blanton, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's estimated that 16 percent of those persons who undergo rabies treatment were exposed to the deadly virus by cats.

Charles Rupprecht, the senior author of the report and director of research for the Global Alliance for Rabies Control, said the growing incidence of rabid cats along with the expansion of TNVR programs could indicate things are on "a collision course."

Until the 1970s, dogs were the primary domestic carrier of rabies, when aggressive rounding-up of strays, vaccination programs and strict municipal ordinances finally helped gain control of canine rabies. That hasn't been the case with cats, he said, and the expansion of feral cat colonies is compounding the problem.

Rupprecht went on to inject one of

the most obvious and common sense evaluations of what's wrong with those ludicrous TNVR programs championed by misguided cat lovers that we've heard or read up to this point.

"We didn't think it was OK to have (stray) dogs, but we think it's OK to create artificial cat colonies where they're exposed to wildlife that can transmit rabies," he said.

"Bingo!!" we say.

Beyond the peer-reviewed study authored by scientists from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) earlier this year indicating that bird mortality caused by free-roaming feral and outdoor cats is estimated to be 1.4 to 3.7 billion, it's difficult to comprehend how some cities and counties continue permit - and SUBSIDIZE - TNVR programs.

The thought of permitting - and encouraging - packs of stray and ownerless dogs in our communities wouldn't gain a whit of support from city councils or county commissions. So why on earth promote it for cats, given the wealth of evidence that it's unhealthy, harmful, and so devastating to songbirds and ground nesters?

DNA testing tells the tale when it comes to fish

New research is revealing that merchants and fish dealers often mislabel their product as an entirely different species to fetch a better price at market. A study released last week by UK researchers found that a number of species in the skate family are sold as "sting ray wings," while a separate study produced in February by the group Oceana found that, of 1215 seafood samples from 674 restaurants and grocery stores in 21 U.S. states, a full third were mislabeled. In Chicago, New York, and Washington, DC, every single sushi bar that was tested was found to sell at least one mislabeled fish species.

How did the researchers figure all this out? Through the innovative use of DNA barcoding, in which a specific segment of genetic material (analogous to a product's barcode) in a piece of fish is used to determine exactly which species it truly belongs to. For years, we had no real way of determining the true species of a piece of seafood - a filet of fish, after all, often looks like any other filet - but this new application of an existing scientific technique is rapidly becoming a crucial tool in combating seafood fraud.

Testing a piece of fish to determine its species is fairly straightforward - scientists perfected DNA barcoding

years ago, albeit typically as part of other sorts of projects, like cataloging the complete assortment of species in a given ecosystem. Analyzing the DNA in a piece of fish is a relatively similar process.

To start, researchers acquire a piece of fish and freeze it, as fresher and better-preserved tissue samples generally yield more accurate results. Then, in the lab, they slice off a tiny piece of the sample for testing.

Read the rest of the story in *Smithsonian Magazine*, here: <http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/science/2013/08/how-dna-testing-can-tell-you-what-type-of-fish-youre-really-eating/>

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