

The Voice of Outdoor Kansas

**July-
August 2014**

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

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Go to our Web site,
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for additional KWF information

Wildlife management turns political in Kansas

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism is mandated, pursuant to Kansas statutes, as designated by the *Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act* of 1975, to review all current and proposed species on a five-year interval. Accordingly, the Department has accepted petitions from the public for the five-year review in 2013, to be completed in 2014.

A Threatened and Endangered Species Task Force consisting of members representing various disciplines including state and federal agencies and nongovernment organizations review the currently listed species and those species proposed for listing. During this review, species can be added, removed, or moved within their current designated listing based upon submitted petitions. These petitions must have documented scientific evidence to support a decision for a given species by the task force.

The task force then makes a recommendation for each species to the secretary who in turn makes recommendations to the KWPT Commission. These recommendations and any amendments thereto are published in the *Kansas Register* for public comment for at least 90 days. The secretary then submits to the commission the recommended changes, if any, that should be made to the list of threatened and endangered species or species in need of conservation.

The Threatened and Endangered (T&E) Task Committee reviewed the status of 10 species to complete the five-year review of listed species. Numerical review forms and comments from expert panels were utilized along with scientific literature reviews and

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



KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

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President's Message

By Troy Schroeder

I talked a little about pollinators in the last issue. Earlier this spring, I had the privilege of attending a pollinator workshop in Lawrence sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center with most information provided by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. The good news is that pollinators have become a popular topic these days with a lot of agencies and groups bringing their plight to the forefront. The bad news is that it is necessary to do so because pollinator numbers are declining at an alarming rate and they could be considered the "canary in the coal mine" so to speak.

So what is the big deal about a bunch of insects? There are over 100,000 species of bees, butterflies, moths, beetles and flies that are responsible for pollinating plants that provide human food. Without help from the pollinators, many species of plants would fail to produce fruit, vegetables, berries, nuts and seeds that we eat.

Monarch butterflies, one of the most visible and popular pollinators are declining in number. Numbers this past winter were the lowest in history. Although not native, the economically important honey bees have declined dramatically due to a not totally explained problem called colony collapse disorder. Many of our native bee species are also declining at an alarming rate. Causes for pollinator decline include habitat loss and the use of pesticides.

In Kansas, nearly all of the land is in agriculture production and pollinator



decline will have to be addressed there to have a significant effect. A couple of possibilities include decreasing the use of neonicotinoid pesticides and creating habitat with buffers that include flowering plants. Perhaps the practice holding out most hope is the growing use of cover crops which are being planted between production crops to improve soil health.

Folks that live in towns and cities or have small acreages nearby can also provide pollinator habitat by creating mini prairies or butterfly gardens. Even the smallest area can provide valuable habitat for pollinators. KWF and several other groups are trying to find ways to assist homeowners in providing these small but valuable habitat islands. We plan to provide more information on creating these areas in the future.

Kansas Wildlife Federation launches improved website

The new Kansas Wildlife Federation website improves experiences for everyone searching for the latest news, calendar of events, featured Kansas wildlife and wildlife habitat, Kansas Ecosystems or the Spotlight on emphasized issues, both national and statewide. Plus, there is now an archive of most of the past popular Kansas wildlife photos and captions that can easily be viewed by effortlessly scrolling, whether you want

to revisit your favorites or discover the ones you missed. Social networking is improved for you to see the hundreds of people who like the KWF on Facebook and Twitter.

The new website was created by One Tree Hill Designs at <http://onetreehill-designs.com>. The newly launched KWF website has quadrupled the number of visitors. It is for you to enjoy at www.kswildlife.org.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

- July 12** Arkansas City Butterfly Count, Cowley County [Shawn Silliman](#) 620-442-4133
- July 12** Papermaking Workshop, Shawnee County [Jeff Hansen](#) (785) 806-6917
- July 19** KWF Board meeting,
Aug 5-7 Mid-/Shortgrass Range School, Scott County [Tim Christian](#) KGLC 620-241-3636
- Aug 19-21** Tallgrass Range School, Chase County [Tim Christian](#) KGLC 620-241-3636
- Aug 21** KWPTC Commission Meeting,, Wetland Ed Center, Great Bend
Sept 5-6 Bluestem Farm & Ranch Supply Wildlife Appreciation Days, Emporia
- Sept 13** 12th Annual Justin Corbet Memorial Shoot, www.justincorbet-foundation.com
- Sept 19-21** Kansas Native Plant Society's 36th Annual Wildflower Weekend, Pratt [2014 AWW](#)
- Sept 20** Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Rock Springs 4-H Ranch, Junction City
- Sept 27** Beau Arndt Outdoor Appreciation Day, Emporia
Oct 4 QUWF Jayhawk Chapter Banquet, Holidome, Lawrence John Hill 785-847-9555
- Oct 16** KWPTC Commission Meeting, Martinelli's Restaurant, Salina
Nov 12-13 Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas, Manhattan
- Nov 7-9** Kansas Herpetological Society annual meeting, KSU, Manhattan
- 2015**
June 6 11th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament, Scott Waters, 785-545-3345

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

Ralph Cramm passes away

Ralph Cramm passed away April 14th, 2014. Born December 25, 1927 in Hutchinson, Ralph's kindness and generosity was known to many. Ralph was a natural salesman; he never met a stranger. He began his sales career at the Wichita Beacon in 1947 and during that time also published a local magazine, *Round Town* for two and a half years. After leaving the Beacon, he worked at UHF TV station KEDD for a short time. In 1961, he went to radio sales at KLEO. In 1964, he moved to KFDI as an advertising salesman and outdoors editor. He was an avid outdoorsman all of his life and excelled at hunting and fishing. He had a daily hunting and fishing program on KLEO and later KFDI radio for decades. He was a frequent speaker at Isaac Walton League meetings and was very active in the Wichita Optimists Club. He was preceded in death by his wife Mary. A memorial was set up with the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

In addition to the many donations to the memorial, KWF recently received the following letter:

The enclosed check is from the family of Ralph Cramm in his honor. There are eight of us and we wanted to give back some of what our father left us. We all agreed that Kansas Wildlife Federation was a great organization to contribute to in honor of our father

As you probably know our father was an avid outdoorsman. He loved hunting and fishing. My mom decided many years ago that the only way to spend time with my dad during hunting season was to become a hunter herself. She also was a very accomplished hunter once she began going with him.

Fred Cramm

The Woodlands, TX.

Plans are to host a Family Fishing Derby in the Wichita vicinity in September in memory of Ralph. Look for further details in the next KWF Newsletter.

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Kansas Wildlife Officers

Association

Iola, KS

Quail & Upland Wildlife

Federation

Buffalo, MO

KANSAS WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Officers and Board of Directors

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

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

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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

Kansas Wildlife Federation Newsletter
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New catch, photo and release contest

Youth age 15 and under are invited to participate

If you're 15 or younger and have recently caught a largemouth bass, crappie, bluegill or any species of catfish, you could win some new fishing gear through the first ever "Catch, Photo and Release" contest, which starts June 20. Fishing's Future, the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Cabela's and KVOE Outdoors want to hear about your latest fishing adventure.

To enter, send a photo and story (200 words or less) of your catch to kvoeoutdoors@gmail.com. Entries can also be mailed to KVOE Outdoors CPR contest, PO Box 924, Emporia, KS 66801. All entries must contain a photo, story, the angler's date of birth, phone number and a home mailing address.

The contest will run June 20, 2014 to August 22, 2014. Four major prize packages will be given away on August 29, including \$50 Cabela's gift certificates. Four weekly winners will be randomly drawn to receive rod and reel combos, compliments of Cabela's, and a fishing hat and assorted lures. All winners will be announced on the KVOE "What's in Outdoors" radio show each Friday. Multiple entries from each contestant are acceptable.

Winning entries can be viewed at www.kvoe.com/on-air/what-s-in-outdoors, www.fishingsfuture.org, and on Facebook at facebook.com/fishingsfuture.

For more information, visit www.kvoe.com, or send an e-mail to outdoors@kvoe.com.



1st Annual Catch, Photo & Release Contest



Fishing's Future, KDWPT FishKs, Cabela's and KVOE What's in Outdoors want to hear your fishing adventures. Youth 15 years of age or younger are asked to send a photo and share stories concerning catching Largemouth Bass, Crappie, Bluegill and any species of Catfish!

- The contest runs from June 20 to August 22 with four major prize packages including \$50 Cabela's gift certificates being given away on August 29th.
- Four weekly winners, one for each category, will be randomly drawn and will receive rod and reel combos compliments of Cabela's, a fishing hat and assorted lures.
- All winners will be announced on the KVOE What's in Outdoors show each Friday. Multiple entries from each contestant are acceptable.
- To enter, please send photo and story (200 words or less) to kvoeoutdoors@gmail.com. If you don't do email, you can mail your entry to: KVOE Outdoors CPR contest, PO Box 924, Emporia, KS 66801
- All entries must contain a photo, a story, the youth's date of birth, phone number and home mailing address.



Families have fun fishing together and anyone is allowed to help young anglers write their story to reflect on their experience. Please STRETCH the truth if necessary! Our first awards will be June 20th so get your entries in now.

All photos and winning stories will be posted on the KVOE What's in Outdoors page at <http://www.kvoe.com>, on the Fishing's Future web page, www.fishingsfuture.org, and their Facebook page, facebook.com/fishingsfuture.



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research, distribution and survey data. The recommended status from the T&E Task Committee is based on biological factors and current scientific information available. The results of this effort are:

Species Reviewed	Current Status	Recommended Status
1) Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Delist
2) Black-capped Vireo	Endangered	Delist
3) Many-ribbed Salamander	Endangered	Delist
4) Chestnut Lamprey	Threatened	SINC
5) Silverband Shiner	Threatened	SINC
6) Spring Peeper	Threatened	SINC
7) Redbelly Snake	Threatened	Threatened
8) Smooth Earth Snake	Threatened	SINC
9) Longnose Snake	Threatened	SINC
10) Northern Long-eared Bat	unlisted	SINC

To review the Committee's reasoning for their recommendations, go to: <http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/KDWPT-Info/Commission/Upcoming-Commission-Meetings/June-19,-2014> and look up *Threatened and Endangered Species Task Committee Status Recommendations for 2014* in the June 19 Briefing Book.

Following the presentation of the Committee's recommendations by Committee Chair Ed Miller, Secretary Jennison made the following comments:

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission:

First of all, I want to thank the Threatened and Endangered Species Task Force for all of the time and effort they put into the five-year review. The Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act is an important tool in the conservation and protection of our state's natural resources. One of my favorite conservation quotes is by Theodore Roosevelt. He said it numerous times and in different ways. On one of those occasions, he was addressing a joint meeting of Congress, and I think it is the most complete statement on the importance of conservation.

"The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life. As a nation we not only enjoy a wonderful measure of present prosperity but if this prosperity is used aright it is an earnest of future success such as no other nation will have. The reward of foresight for this nation is great and easily foretold. But there must be the look ahead, there must be a realization of the fact that to waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed."

Roosevelt understood the role our natural resources play in the success of our economy as well as the importance our natural resources will play in future economies.

In 1975, the Kansas Legislature clearly made a commitment to conservation and our state's future by enacting the Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act.

In 1997, the Kansas Legislature added language to the Act that attempted to balance our conservation efforts for a particular species with the social and economic conditions of the affected area. While K.S.A. 32-960a was not retroactive, it sent a very clear message that there needs to be human dimension considerations in plans to establish programs deemed necessary for the conservation of nongame threatened and endangered species.



Photo by Great Plains Nature Center www.gpnc.org

It is difficult to know for sure what a legislature's motivation or intent was, but K.S.A. 32-960a was either an attempt to control agency actions or recognition that to be successful long-term, our conservation efforts cannot lose public support.

Public support does not mean putting our finger in the air and drifting whichever direction the wind is blowing. This agency must be a leader in conserving our state's natural resources. Sound science and best management practices must be at the very core of our philosophy and our efforts. That does not mean that the human dimension aspect should be ignored. What it does mean is that our recovery plans should be flexible enough to include strategies that conserve not only the targeted species, but also address issues concerning the local economy and local society.

If we cannot find that balance we will lose public support for conservation, and the Kansas landscape, flora and fauna will pay the price – "...undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed."

It is with that in mind that we have changed the T&E Task Force's recommendation as it relates to the redbelly snake. The department's recommendation to the commission will be that the status of the redbelly snake be reduced from Threatened to Species in Need of Conservation (SINC).

This recommendation encompasses the department's attempt to balance the need for conservation and action identified in the expert review by our T&E Task Force with social and economic concerns within the redbelly snake's range. The department will use the authority already set out in 115-15-4 to establish a recovery plan for the redbelly snake as a SINC species.

The recovery plan will include some methods and procedures available to the department through authority of K.S.A. 32-958, such as research, census, habitat acquisition and maintenance as well as live-trapping and transplantation, if appropriate. In addition, the department will look to other units of government, nongovernmental organizations and individuals interested in partnering to voluntarily protect and develop redbelly snake habitat within its range. This process will follow the legislative mandate set out in K.S.A. 32-960a(d) to establish a volunteer local advisory committee to work with the secretary to adapt the recovery plan and disseminate information to the public.

There will be those who will say this is a political decision and they would be partly accurate. To anyone in the natural resource profession who has been paying attention, the last several years have

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Affiliate News

Geary County Fish and Game Association

The Geary County Fish and Game Association completed its 27th year of Environmental Education Enhancement, known as Triple EEE during the week of April 28th-May 2nd. The 5th grade students of USD# 475, Geary County numbered over 600. Approximately 100-120 were present each day at Sportsmen's Acres, Milford Nature Center and the Milford Fish Hatchery.

Each day eight groups were divided up to build bird houses. Demonstrations in soil conservation/water control were presented by Geary County, Ft. Riley and Dickinson County Conservation Districts.

Mr. Gene Moore, Taxidermist, showed and explained about different animals and birds. He demonstrated the art of Taxidermy by showing different mounts.

This year Kolling Pharm provided something different by showing the candling and hatching of quail eggs. Students observed the chicks emerging from the shell and were able to hold the quail chicks.

The Milford Fish Hatchery provided a demonstration of weighing and measuring fish. They also explained the feeding of different species in the hatchery.

The Nature Center provided a scavenger hunt for the students. They also viewed the various animals and birds native to Kansas which are held in captivity at the Center.

This event was chaired and coordinated by Chris Blodgett with the help of 20-25 volunteers.

The Geary County Fish and Game Association has a new website. Be sure to check it out at www.gearycountyfishand-game.net



A 5th grade Junction City student is assisted by a Geary County Fish & Game Association volunteer as he assembles a bird house during the 27th Annual Triple E Days.

Kansas Wildlife Officers Association

Because of his work in natural resource education and his regular column in the "International Game Warden" magazine, Officer Ben Womelsdorf received the Natural Resource Education Advancement Award. He continually provides assistance within the hunter education community and taught 17 classes last year. He is a dedicated educator with a well-rounded

approach in hunter education, boating education and other program efforts and news releases.

Stationed in Iola, Ben has Allen County and the north half of Neosho County as his area of responsibility. Ben also serves as president of the Kansas Wildlife Officers Association an affiliate of the Kansas Wildlife Federation. Ben kept the KWOA membership aware of 2014 legislative actions that impacted KWOA and the public which they serve.

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been fairly enlightening. We have seen the federal government overreach in Kansas with respect to the black-footed ferret and now the lesser prairie chicken. I am not arguing or objecting to the merits of protecting either species. What I am objecting to is that the federal government has given no regard to local economies or local society in either instance. The federal government's complete

disregard for local concerns when dealing with threatened and endangered species has – and will – impact us all and the good work we are trying to do in conserving our threatened and endangered species. We cannot afford to make the same mistake.

It is important that we have the tools to protect our natural resources.

The smallest snake in a localized area deserves our attention. However, if we do not use common sense in giving a small snake our attention we could lose our ability and authority to address species on a much broader scale – with greater impact and consequences to the future of Kansas.

Robin L. Jennison
Secretary
KDWPT

When Governor Hayden created the cabinet-level Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks in 1989 by combining the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and the Kansas State Park Authority, conservation organizations across Kansas warned that this day would eventually come. The day when wildlife decisions by the KDWP Secretary would be blatantly political. That time is here.

Stream Monitor

Philip Barnes PhD

Dr. Barnes has worked with the Marion Reservoir Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) from 2006 through 2013 monitoring the quality of water in the two major tributaries of the Marion Reservoir and in-flow and out-flow of the Reservoir. Numerous grab samples have been taken besides the samples recorded by the automated samplers. Samples are taken every week from the first week in April to the last week in September on a weekly basis and/or after any significant rainfall. From October through March, samples are monitored once a month.

Water sample data calculate flow rate and flow volumes and analyzed for total suspended solids, total nitrogen and phosphorus, atrazine, and *Escherichia coli* bacteria. The loads will be assessed to examine if the source of the contaminant is derived from an erosion source or potentially by application of fertilizer. The data allows the WRAPS project to investigate the watershed for potential sources of the contamination. Marion Reservoir has experienced severe blue-green algae bloom every summer since 2003 because of the excess phosphorus load from the watershed. The harmful toxins released by the dying blue-green algae can kill animals and are harmful to humans.

Marion County Commission paid for the water quality monitoring from 2006 through 2011. Dr. Barnes has continued to gather samples, without compensation for 2012, 2013 and 2014. He is a volunteer member of the Marion Reservoir WRAPS Stakeholder Leadership Team. The valuable information Dr. Barnes and his staff provide the project allows the project to determine if the conservation practices, information/education activities are succeeding in reducing the contaminants entering Marion Reservoir annually.

The work Dr. Barnes has done for the Marion Reservoir WRAPS program is an extension of his work as an associate profes-



Dr. Phillip Barnes, left, from Wamego, receives the 2013 Stream Monitor award from Angela Anderson, Kansas Wildlife Federation Administrative Vice President.

sor and research engineer in Kansas State's Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering. His responsibilities include monitoring surface water quality in impaired Kansas watersheds. Once sources for these impairments are identified, economic best management practices (BMPs) are developed to reduce the impairment.

Over the past 15 years Dr. Barnes has been involved in monitoring streams impaired by pesticides. For example, atrazine is a commonly used broadleaf herbicide used on corn and grain sorghum. In the early 90's a majority of the streams and reservoirs contained levels of atrazine over the 3 ppb drinking water standard. Kansas farmers adapted BMPs to reduce the loss of atrazine in surface runoff and today most of these same waters meet the drinking water standard. New contaminants that Dr. Barnes'

environmental team is monitoring include bacteria, sediments and nutrients in surface water.

Dr. Barnes has several recently-written water-related publications that include his research on water contaminants such as fecal bacteria and phosphorous. In addition, ongoing water-related projects include assessment of soil type as it relates to sediment management and phosphorous loading of water; land and stream sediment process restoration in an agricultural watershed; and, the ways politics affects water resource management.

The Watershed Institute and Land Trust of Overland Park sponsored the Stream Monitor of the Year award.

For all his efforts Dr. Phillip Barnes deserves to be recognized as the 2013 Stream Monitor of the Year by the Kansas Wildlife Federation.

Water Vision Tour locations announced

Twelve locations throughout the state have been set for Governor Sam Brownback's Water Vision Team to visit and receive input on the first draft of the Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas.

"To date the Team has attended more than 160 meetings with more than 9,000 Kansans to gather input on what should be addressed in this Water Vision," said Tracy Streeter, Kansas Water Office

Director. "It is so important that all water users have a chance to share their comments on this first draft as this could be a turning point for addressing our state's water issues."

The input sessions will be held July 7-11, 2014 at the following locations:

Monday, July 7 – Wichita, St. John

Tuesday, July 8 – Liberal, Garden City, Dighton

Wednesday, July 9 – Colby, Stockton, Assaria

Thursday, July 10 – Manhattan, Washington, Kansas City

Friday, July 11 – Ft. Scott

For a detailed list of the addresses and times for each stop on the Vision Tour, visit: http://www.kwo.org/50_Year_Vision/50_Year_Vision.htm.

Brownback pushes back on threatened prairie-chicken

Governor calls it a case of regulatory overreach

By John Hanna

The Associated Press

Kansas Governor Sam Brownback announced on June 3 he is pushing the federal government to assume some costs for protecting the lesser prairie-chicken by expanding incentives for farmers to enroll their land in a longstanding conservation program.

Brownback also said Kansas will return to federal court in early June to seek additional time for farmers, ranchers, and oil and natural gas producers to respond to the federal government's decision in March to list the bird as threatened. Kansas residents were supposed to decide last month whether to participate in conservation efforts. They faced restrictions and federal fees to continue business activities in areas with prairie-chicken habitats.

The Republican governor criticized the listing of the lesser prairie-chicken as a regulatory overreach by the federal government that threatens the state's economy. He scheduled a news conference June 3 in Wichita to discuss new actions by the state and outlined them in a Statehouse briefing for The Associated Press beforehand.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has said the listing is justified by a steep decline in the bird's numbers in recent years. The five states affected — Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas — had fewer than 18,000 in 2013, down almost 50 percent from 2012.

Brownback released a letter dated



Thad Allton/The Capital-Journal

A display showing the lesser prairie-chicken sits in the hallway on the second floor of the Kansas statehouse.

June 2nd to U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, calling on the U.S. Department of Agriculture to pursue "enhanced incentives" for farmers to enroll land in the agency's Conservation Reserve Program, which pays farmers not to cultivate. Brownback said doing so would expand lesser prairie-chicken habitats; with such a move, the federal government also would pay farmers to help protect the bird, rather than the other way around.

"If they're upset about loss of habitat, the federal government has a fabulous tool that is available and that they've been cutting back on," Brownback said during the Statehouse briefing. "Instead, they're putting the costs on the private landowner and energy industry."

Federal farm legislation enacted earlier this year cut the cap on acres in the conservation program by 25 percent, to 24 million from 32 million. Kansas acreage in the program has decline by 28 percent since 2008, to less than 2.4 million. Conservationists have attributed the national decline to rising commodity prices.

A new Kansas law that took effect last month declared that the federal government has no authority to regulate lesser prairie-chickens inside the state and allows the attorney general or county prosecutors to sue to block federal conservation efforts. Kansas also joined Oklahoma, Nebraska and North Dakota in a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Tulsa over the process leading to the lesser prairie-chicken's listing at threatened.

Brownback said the plaintiffs in that case will file a new version of the lawsuit this week, seeking more time for farmers, ranchers and energy producers to respond to the prairie-chicken listing.

J. Michael Vess, chairman and managing owner of the Vess Oil Corp. in Wichita, said his company recently abandoned three western Kansas sites where it was ready to put up drilling rigs and has backed away from exploring 10 to 15 sites because of the listing.

"We just don't see how we can drill in western Kansas right now if our locations are in the designated habitat areas," he said in an interview before Brownback's news conference.

Deer fawns: If you care, leave it there

This is peak season for encountering white-tailed deer fawns. If you come across one that appears to be abandoned, the best thing to do is leave it alone.

It's common to see fawns by themselves. A mother deer will leave a fawn during the day, both to look for food and so her scent doesn't attract predators to the fawn, which is nearly scentless. People often mistake a fawn as abandoned when, in fact, it is being properly cared for by its mother.

If you care, leave it there. In almost all

cases that is the best thing for the animal.

If you find a fawn, give the animal distance. The mother will not return if you are present, which may delay nursing for a hungry fawn. Most often the mother will return at night or when no predators are nearby. White-tailed deer view humans as predators.

Even if you think the animal is injured, you still should leave it be. It's best to let nature take its course. Wild animals are not pets. They may carry diseases and are not suited for captivity.

If you feel compelled to intervene, call a licensed wildlife rehabilitator. Keeping a wild animal without the proper permits is illegal. Most people are not trained in animal nutrition and do not know how to raise a wild animal without it developing a dependence on humans. The result is an animal that cannot survive in the wild.

A list of licensed Kansas wildlife rehabilitators and their phone numbers is at <http://kdwpt.state.ks.us/Services/Rehabilitation>.

Aerial survey shows lesser prairie-chicken numbers increase

Biologists emphasize the value of improved habitat

The 2014 lesser prairie-chicken aerial survey showed a nearly 20 percent increase in the species' range-wide population, up from an estimated 18,747 birds in 2013 to 22,415 this year. While wildlife biologists are encouraged by the increase, they note that prairie-chicken numbers can fluctuate up and down from year to year, mainly due to grassland habitat conditions influenced by rainfall.

The range-wide increase was not evenly spread across the four habitat regions distributed among five states—Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The mixed grass prairie region showed the biggest gain, a region that includes the northeast Texas Panhandle, northwestern Oklahoma and southcentral Kansas, where more rain produced better prairie habitat. The sand sagebrush region in southwestern Kansas, southeastern Colorado and the northwestern Oklahoma panhandle, where persistent drought continues to take a toll, showed a significant population decline.

“Just as with last year's population decrease, we shouldn't read too much into short-term fluctuations over one or



two years,” said Bill Van Pelt, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) grassland coordinator. “What these numbers show is the importance of maintaining good prairie habitat. Increased rainfall led to improved habitat in part of the lesser prairie-chicken's range, allowing populations to respond to better conditions. This population response underscores the importance of implementing the Lesser Prairie-chicken Range-wide Conservation Plan, a blueprint to work

with private landowners and industry to protect and restore habitat and recover the species.”

Companies, landowners, farmers and ranchers that did not enroll by the federal listing deadline of May 12 can still enroll in the range-wide plan and receive regulatory assurances their operations can continue under an accompanying Certificate of Participation. Participating compa-

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Critters need water too!

Last October, Gov. Sam Brownback launched the 50-year water vision designed to inform Kansans of the state's water challenges and to seek input into short- and long-term water planning goals. At the April 2 meeting organized by Jim Mason, a Naturalist at the Great Plains Nature Center and former Kansas Water Authority board, in Wichita, audience comments, Mason said, mostly focused on aquifer depletion and irrigation.

“When two-thirds of mussels in the state are extinct or an endangered species, we should be paying attention,” Mason said regarding current water concerns. In his *Critters Need Water, Too!* document prepared for the meeting, Mason noted the list of animal species in decline within Kansas reveals that dangerously large percentages of those animals most closely tied to water habitats are in trouble and compared them to the “canary in the coal mine.”

Saying “Unfortunately, Kansas has a long history of giving overriding priority to consumptive use of water, to the extent that sometimes I wonder that any water leaves

the state at all,” Mason mentioned personal observations.

“Small streams and long reaches of some rivers have disappeared from the western half of the state because the Ogallala has been emptied to the extent that it no longer supports those streams and rivers. We are mining the aquifer and exporting it as pork and fat beef. Over the last 30 years, I have watched as the cottonwood trees along the Arkansas River in western Kansas have died. When there isn't enough ground moisture to keep a riverbank cottonwood going, you know things are getting serious. And this is not just a matter of keeping trees and minnows and frogs alive.”

Mason also expressed concern for municipality water needs, a water quality standard that allows Kansans to fish edible catch and swim in toxin-free water, and implementation of agricultural Best Management Practices affecting water, several of which qualify for cost-share programs.

His water vision desire concluded with the inter-connectivity of living organisms: “I hope I have demonstrated that when I stand

here and speak out for protection of aquatic species of wildlife, I am not ignoring the Kansas economy or the future of the people who live here and their descendants. It's all part of one piece. Critters need water, and people are critters too. I hope the 50-Year Vision that comes out of the current planning effort recognizes the importance of water to maintain all the living creatures that inhabit this state. It's a matter of enlightened self interest to do so.”

The following is Jim Mason's entire water vision statement:

A quick glance at the list of animal species in decline within the state of Kansas reveals that dangerously large percentages of those animals most closely tied to water habitats are in trouble. According to the most recent accounting available:

Mussels: 31 out of 48 (64%) 8 Extirpated, 7 Endangered, 4 Threatened, 12 SINC

Amphibians: 12 out of 29 (40%) 3 Endangered, 7 Threatened, 2 SINC

Continued on Page 10

10 of the best things about camping

By Dani Tinker

National Wildlife Federation

Camping provides some of the best opportunities to take photos and show off all the cool things you're doing. A gorgeous landscape, mouth-watering food, great friends and crazy adventures. This summer, capture and share your cookout or Great American Backyard Campout memories using the hashtag #campie (a selfie taken while camping out) on Instagram or Twitter.

Here's a countdown of the 10 best things about camping that you can include

in your #campie. What's your favorite thing about camping?

10. Silliness

The weirdo in us all can be exposed during a campout. Whether you release your inner nature nerd or everyone learns you are scared of marshmallows, it is a great time to let go and be yourself. My friends, for example, told me that I have crazy eyes in all my #campies. Those have been (mostly) excluded from the post. Be silly, it's fun.

9. Food

I won't lie, the grill intimidates me.

That's why I cook my chicken sausage over the fire. There are a few cookout favorites with easy instructions including chicken, Portobello burgers, hamburgers and hot dogs. If you've mastered the basics, try some new grilling recipes and show your delicious food in your #campie.

8. Smiles

It's no secret that being outside makes you happier. My bet is that you'll have a good time, resulting in smiles.

7. Adventures

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WATER

Continued from Page 9

Fish: 47 out of 144 (32%) 5 Endangered, 13 Threatened, 29 SINC

For the fish, the indications are now that 2 species are extirpated from the state.

These figures should be a wakeup call to all of us that our stewardship of Kansas' surface waters is seriously lacking. Preservation and restoration of water quality and baseline stream flow regimens is essential for survival of aquatic species, and ultimately, ourselves also. These creatures are the "canary in the coal mine" that we should be paying attention to. If we can succeed in returning these various species to a healthy population level, we will be doing ourselves a favor too.

Agriculture accounts for more than 80% of water usage in the state, and as the major player in the game, the involvement of the agricultural sector is critical to the success of any attempt to address the three big problems identified in the 50 Year Vision process: water quantity shortages in the western half of the state, water quality problems in the eastern half and reservoir sedimentation. I applaud the efforts of the Vision Team to seek a realistic way forward, and I also applaud Governor Brownback for elevating this discussion within the state. Unfortunately, Kansas has a long history of giving overriding priority to consumptive use of water, to the extent that sometimes I wonder that any water leaves the state at all.

Small streams and long reaches of some rivers have disappeared from the western half of the state because the Ogallala has been emptied to the extent that it no longer supports those streams and rivers. We are mining the aquifer and exporting it as pork and fat beef. Over the last 30 years I have watched as the cottonwood trees along the Arkansas River in western Kansas have died. When there isn't enough ground moisture to keep

a riverbank cottonwood going, you know things are getting serious. And this is not just a matter of keeping trees and minnows and frogs alive. Many farmers who were not fortunate enough to be situated over the "fat" part of the aquifer have already given up irrigation because either their part of the aquifer is just plain gone, or they can no longer pump the water at a reasonable cost. There is no equally profitable agricultural paradigm they can transition to. Will the rest of the irrigators just keep drawing the aquifer down until every producer is out of business? Where do the municipalities get their water at that point? You cannot have cities without a water supply for the people living in them. Every year that this situation goes on unchanged, we get closer and closer to creating the Buffalo Commons. And no nefarious government body is responsible; we are doing this to ourselves.

Regarding water quality, I believe the Clean Water Act set a very reasonable, common-sense standard: Surface waters should be fishable and swimmable. You should be able to go fishing at a stream, river or lake and find a diverse and healthy population of fish that are safe to eat. And you should be able to jump into the local swimming hole and not worry about being exposed to toxic chemicals or catching a debilitating disease. I think those are goals every Kansan would see as desirable. I hope we can all agree to make them attainable as well. We have come a long ways from the bad old days of the 1970s when the CWA was passed. Point sources of pollution have largely been taken care of.

What remains is to address non-point sources, and, again, agriculture must be involved to reach those goals. It is to every producer's advantage to fully implement Best Management Practices on their land. Every ton of topsoil that washes off a crop field is a blow to the farmer's main capital resource. And every pound of fertilizer or chemical that does not stay where it was applied is a

waste of the farmer's money, reducing the profitability of their operation. It only makes sense to keep the soil, fertilizer and chemicals in place and not let them get away.

Reservoirs will inevitably silt in over time. Each river, particularly in a state like ours, will carry suspended material in the water column and when that water slows down, in an impoundment for instance, that material will fall out. However, there is a reason why El Dorado Lake is in much better shape in that regard than so many of our other lakes, namely most of its watershed is in the Flint Hills and the topsoil is anchored by a continuous cover of prairie grasses and forbs. This is instructive for how we can make progress and reduce the sedimentation going forward. We must do all we can to keep topsoil on the land and not allow it to be stolen from farmers by erosion. I know there are numerous cost share programs and advisory capabilities among the different state and federal agencies to help producers get this done, and I hope more can be done to augment these programs and increase participation in them by producers.

I hope I have demonstrated that when I speak out for protection of aquatic species of wildlife, I am not ignoring the Kansas economy or the future of the people who live here and their descendants. It's all part of one piece. Critters need water, and people are critters too. I hope the 50 Year Vision that comes out of the current planning effort recognizes the importance of water to maintain all the living creatures that inhabit this state. It's a matter of enlightened self interest to do so.

Editor's Note: The Kansas Water Office has scheduled 12 meetings in mid-July to collect input into the first draft for the *Vision for the Future of Water in Kansas*. The meetings will have been conducted by the time you receive this newsletter but you can submit comments online. See the Kansas Water Office website for details <http://www.kwo.org/>.

2014 marks the 80th anniversary of the Duck Stamp

By David Zumbaugh

Most people, especially waterfowl hunters, are aware that the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act was signed into law by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934. However, did you know that efforts to establish a federal hunting license were in the works in the 1920's? Early conservationists were concerned about the degradation of important wildlife habitats and strived to develop legislation to preserve land and water resources.

Although Congress gained some traction with certain bills, there was no funding mechanism due to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. At that time a Congressman from Texas, Richard Kleberg, proposed H.R. 5632, requiring all waterfowl hunters aged 16 or older to buy a \$1 stamp every year. Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, a Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist and Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey quickly sketched out a design of a pair of mallards for the stamp.



The first duck Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp (Duck Stamp) created by Norwood "Ding" Darling.

Sales of the first stamp exceeded 600,000 and the revenue was immediately put to use buying and preserving critical wetland habitat. A reprint of the drawing was released in 1984 as a 20 cent postage stamp, selling over 123 million copies, making the image the most published wildlife art in history.



The 2014-15 Duck Stamp was created by South Dakota artist Adam Grimm.

Total sales of duck stamps are approaching 130 million, generating almost \$1 billion, of which 98 cents of every dollar are spent buying or leasing land for the National Wildlife Refuge system. A 5,200 acre refuge was established near Sanibel Island, Florida in 1976 to honor Ding Darling.

Eddie Eagle GunSafe program reaches 27 millionth child

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe® program, NRA's groundbreaking gun accident prevention course for children, has achieved a new milestone by reaching its 27 millionth child.

Created in 1988 by past NRA President Marion P. Hammer in consultation with elementary school teachers, law enforcement officers, and child psychologists, the program provides pre-K through third grade children with simple, effective rules to follow should they encounter a firearm in an unsupervised setting: "If you see a gun: STOP! Don't Touch. Leave the Area. Tell an Adult."

"Eddie Eagle GunSafe has received so many stories from parents and teachers telling us how tragedies were avoided thanks to the program," said Kyle Weaver, NRA Executive of General Operations. "Firearm-related accidents among young children have been on a steady decline since the NRA launched the Eddie Eagle

program. It's a testament to the NRA's commitment to child safety and Eddie's lifesaving message."

The NRA encourages citizens nationwide to join the more than 26,000 educators, law enforcement agencies, and civic organizations heightening gun accident prevention awareness in their communities through Eddie Eagle GunSafe. Program materials are free for any law enforcement agency, educational facility, hospital, or library in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, incidental firearm-related deaths among children in Eddie Eagle GunSafe's target age group have declined more than 80% since the program began.

"The message is simple, easy to remember and fun for kids to learn," said National Community Outreach Department Manager Eric Lipp.

The Eddie Eagle GunSafe program has been praised by numerous groups and

elected officials, including the Association of American Educators, the Youth Activities Division of the National Safety Council, the National Sheriffs' Association, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency, and 26 state governors.

Eddie Eagle's message is enhanced through mascot costumes made available exclusively to law enforcement agencies. The program recently reached a second milestone by distributing its 400th costume, received by the Lebanon Police Department in Lebanon, Tennessee, who plans to work with local schools to reach more than 3,200 children. Agencies interested in purchasing an Eddie Eagle costume are eligible to receive funding assistance through NRA Foundation grants.

Visit <http://eddieeagle.nra.org> or call (800) 231-0752 for information on the Eddie Eagle GunSafe Program and to request free teaching materials.

P&Y exempts lighted nocks, bow-mounted video cameras

From The Archery Wire

As a result of changes to the Club's By-laws that passed a vote of the Board of Directors and passed ratification by the voting membership, standard lighted nocks and bow-mounted cameras will be exempted from the "no electronics attached to the bow or arrow" rule.

Since the late '80s, the Club has had bowhunting equipment definitions and Rules of Fair Chase that state "no electronics attached to the bow or arrow." This is part of the Club's By-laws constitution and governs the acceptability of animals into the Club's Records Program.

"I was pleased to see such a large percentage of our voting members chose to change our by-laws to allow lighted nocks and bow mounted cameras," says Jim Willems, President of the Pope & Young Club. "It is generally accepted that such equip-

ment does not aid in harvesting an animal and can actually enhance the overall hunting experience. It's good to get the issue behind us and move on to other important matters."

This change is the result of much internal discussion and debate. The exemptions read as follows:

RULES OF FAIR CHASE #7: [Not] by the use of electronic devices for attracting, locating or pursuing game, or guiding the hunter to such game, or by the use of a bow or arrow to which any electronic device is attached, with the exception of lighted nocks and recording devices that cast no light towards the target and do not aid in range finding, sighting or shooting the bow.

DEFINITION OF A HUNTING BOW, EXCLUSIONS #2: Electronic or battery-powered devices shall not be attached to a hunting bow, with the exception of record-

ing devices that cast no light towards the target and do not aid in range finding, sighting or shooting the bow.

DEFINITION OF A HUNTING ARROW, EXCLUSIONS #1: No electronic or battery-powered devices shall be attached to the arrow, with the exception of lighted nocks.

"Fair Chase bowhunting is at the top of the list for the Pope and Young Club. Recently the Club's membership voted to allow lighted nocks and bow mounted recording devices, changing a longstanding rule of no bow mounted electronic devices for an entry into the Club's Records Program," says Ed Fanchin, Records Chairman for the Pope & Young Club. "This rule change does not in any way change

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Dust-Bowl-Era refuges look back on 75 years

By Paul J. Baicich

Birding Community E-bulletin

In the 1930s, the Dustbowl brought widespread ruin across the Great Plains, but in North Dakota, the ecological disaster had at least one good outcome: the establishment of a large number of National Wildlife Refuges.

Biologist, J. Clark Salyer, hired at the age of 32 in 1934 to manage the Division of Wildlife Refuges, actually handpicked many of North Dakota's Dustbowl-era refuges. Salyer crisscrossed the drought-parched state in his Oldsmobile station

wagon, sometimes driving 600 miles a day, to find distressed farmlands and buy those that he could. In spring 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed executive orders establishing 29 of these new purchases as wildlife refuges.

The wetlands and grasslands secured at that time continue to provide vital breeding habitat for a remarkable number of dabbling and diving waterfowl plus a home for such regional specialties as Yellow Rail, Marbled Godwit, Franklin's Gull, Black Tern, Sprague's Pipit, Chestnut-collared Longspur and a group of special spar-

rows including Baird's, LeConte's, and Nelson's.

In May and June of this year, 29 of these refuges will mark their 75th anniversaries while facing a new ecological crisis: the rapid conversion of surrounding prairie grasslands and wetlands to spreading agriculture, oil and gas development, and other uses. Will Meeks, Assistant Regional Director for Refuges for the USFWS Mountain-Prairie region recently remarked, "As our native prairie lands vanish, the refuges are becoming more vital than ever as natural oases."

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NASP National Tournament growing strong after 11 years

By J.R. Absher
The Archery Wire

Preliminary estimates indicate the 2014 National Archery in the Schools (NASP) National Tournament held at the Kentucky exposition Center in Louisville, Ky. May 8-10 obliterated the previously held attendance record by more than 1,000 participants.

According to NASP President Roy Grimes, more than 10,500 student archers from 39 states preregistered for the 11th annual event, surpassing the record set in 2013, when 9,426 youngsters representing 600 schools participated, reflecting an attendance increase of 10.25 percent. A year earlier, the 2013 attendance was more than a 17 percent increase from 2012. For three years running, the event has been certified by Guinness® World Records as the largest archery tournament in the world.

Launched in 2002 as a combined project of the Kentucky Departments of Fish & Wildlife Resources and Department of Education, NASP has spread to 47 states and 14 countries. Today, more than 2 million students participate annually. The first National Tournament was held in 2004.

In standard NASP competition, archers ranging from grades 4 through 12 shoot 5 practice arrows and 3 ends of 5 scoring arrows from 10 and 15 meters, for a total

of 40 (10 practice and 30 in competition) arrows launched per archer. (For those doing the math, based on an estimate of 10,500 archers, that works out to 432,000 arrows shot in just more than two days!) Flights began at 4:45 p.m. Thursday, and took place throughout Friday and Saturday in a highly regimented fashion, in order to efficiently move more than 10,000 shooters through the 1,350-foot shooting line within a 24-hour window.

The tiebreaker, scholarship shoot-off, and the awards ceremony began at 5:00 p.m. Saturday and lasted into the evening.

This year a record \$77,000 in scholarships was awarded to five girls and five boys. The scholarship sponsors included Mathews Inc. and Gordon Composites at \$20,000 each, Plano and Morrell Targets with \$10,000 each, Field Logic and Saunder's Archery at \$5,000 each, BCY Bowstrings and New Archery Products with \$2,500 each, and NEET Archery Products and United Bowhunters of Kentucky each donated \$1,000.

For the first time this year, the NASP National Tournament included an additional venue for competitors, with the first NASP/International Bowhunter Organization (IBO) 3D Challenge event, in which participants shot arrows at realistic foam animal targets using the same equipment and shooting

distances. More than 2,500 students preregistered for the inaugural NASP/IBO Challenge.

As with any event of this size and scope, there were a number of travel-related incidents that prevented some of the student archers from participating. Flight cancellations due to bad weather in Dallas kept two members of the New Mexico state champion team from Aztec Schools from arriving in Louisville. And the team from Flower Mound School in Lawton, Okla., narrowly dodged a tragedy when the charter bus they were traveling in was engulfed in flames on the turnpike outside Tulsa early Thursday morning. The 34 students, parents and coaches aboard the bus were safely evacuated, but all their archery gear and personal belongings were destroyed.

Next up for NASP is its World Tournament at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison, Wis., July 11 - 13. Joining the top U.S. youth archers will be their NASP® peers from Canada, Africa, and the United Kingdom. Immediately following the World Tournament will be the 2014 NASP® All-Nation All-Star Championship, also at the Madison venue, July 14- 16.

For more information visit: www.naspschools.org or contact Roy Grimes: rgrimes@nasparchery.com.

ARCHERY

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the definition of Fair Chase bowhunting, nor does it assist the bowhunter with taking an animal. The integrity of the Records Program must always be maintained and is

not compromised with this rule change. The Pope and Young Club has a responsibility to protect the primitive aspects of bowhunting and at the same time we must also embrace change."

This change will officially go into effect on August 1, 2014, as new Fair Chase Affidavits are created and distributed to our corps of volunteer official measurers. The

change IS RETROACTIVE -- meaning that animals previously taken, as well as those taken from this point forward, will now be eligible to be entered into the Records, provided they meet all other conditions/criteria.

For information on the Pope & Young Club, please contact: www.pope-young.org

Box 548, Chatfield, MN 55923 • Ph: 507.867.4144

HABITAT

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nies pay enrollment fees, allowing them to continue oil and gas production under certain restrictions, while providing funds to conserve prairie-chicken habitat. As of early June, 160 oil, gas, wind, electric and pipeline companies had enrolled approximately 9 million acres across the five states, committing more than \$43 million for habitat conservation over the next three years. Enrollment fees are deposited

with WAFWA and administered to fund conservation efforts by private landowners to benefit the lesser prairie-chicken in the five-state region.

West Ecosystems, Inc. of Laramie, Wyo., is the contractor conducting the lesser prairie-chicken aerial survey effort. Begun in 2012, it is the first large-scale, helicopter-based survey to locate lesser prairie-chicken leks or breeding areas across the High Plains region in all five states within the bird's range. The survey results are then used to estimate the population. The survey is a collaborative effort involving WAFWA's Lesser Prairie-chick-

en Interstate Working Group and is funded through industry enrollment fees, state wildlife agencies, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Organized in 1922, the WAFWA represents 23 states and Canadian provinces, spanning from Alaska to Texas and Saskatchewan to Hawaii - an area covering nearly 3.7 million square miles of some of North America's most wild and scenic country, inhabited by over 1500 premier wildlife species.

More information, including the range-wide plan, is available on the WAFWA website at <http://www.wafwa.org/>.

Bullfrogs can prove quite a challenge

Kansas bullfrog season runs from July 1-October 31 and for those looking for the ultimate summer fishing challenge, this is it. Anglers can attempt to catch these four-legged amphibians with several different techniques.

Bullfrogs may be taken by hook and line, dip net, gig, bow and arrow, or crossbow, and a line must attach bow to arrow, and the arrow must have a barbed head. If you're really up for a challenge, bullfrogs can also be taken by hand. The best method is to walk quietly through the water at night and shine a bright light along the bank until a pair of glowing eyes appear. Temporarily blinded by the light, frogs can be grabbed or netted.

The daily creel limit is eight, with a pos-session limit of 24. A valid fishing license is required for any person to take, catch, or kill bullfrogs, except persons exempt by law from having such license. □

Considered by some as a delicacy, frog legs have a taste and texture that resembles a cross between shrimp and fish. A popular way to cook them is to dip the legs in egg and then into a mixture of flour and corn meal, seasoning salt, and pepper. The legs are then fried to a golden brown and served up hot.



Photo by Derek Ramsey

American Bullfrog *Rana catesbeiana*

The Mighty Bullfrog Hunter ...

By Phil Taunton

Frogging.

What a way for the outdoorsman to beat the heat during hot summer nights. Bullfrogs can be legally taken day or night by traditional fishing techniques, dip nets, gigs, or bow and arrow. The mighty bullfrog hunter, clad only in cutoffs and old tennis shoes, who stalks his quarry at night and snatches 'em up barehanded, is in for some fun and exciting moments. A good waterproof flashlight and a gunny sack is really all the fancy equipment he needs. Insect repellent and a gallon or two of courage are helpful accessories that may come in handy at times!

It's always nice to have a partner along to share your hunting pleasures and experiences with, as long as you know he (or she) can be trusted not to divulge favorite hunting areas and never exaggerate to others about your outdoor prowess. All experienced froggers learn to expect the unexpected. Once, while bracing myself to capture a behemoth frog whose mere presence at a Missouri State Frog

Hopping Contest would frighten all the other contestants away from the starting line, I put my hand on a big black water snake. The anaconda-sized serpent apparently wanted bullfrog for dinner and was transfixed in a stalk of his own. Since the snake had spotted the prize first, I took it upon myself to promote good sportsmanship and quickly vacated the area. No apologies necessary! It wouldn't surprise me if THAT frog had the snake for dinner, but I'll never know. You talk about "walking on water!" I was out of there.

On another occasion some years ago while frogs of every sort chirped backup and crickets and cicadas sang melody to the bullfrogs' foghorn bass, my daughter, Tiffany (then six years old), and I decided to leave the comforts of our cabin at Council Grove City Lake to explore the weedy lake shore and hunt bullfrogs. A certain mystique all its own befalls the lake once the sun sets.

After sticking the flashlight under my chin a couple of times while growling and chasing the little urchin, we

were ready for some serious frog hunting. Grandma said she would allow us to catch the star of the band, only if we agreed to let the frogs go. Their antics and thunderous "baa-rumphs, baa-rumphs" are really entertaining but there seemed to be fewer of them around anymore. I never did tell her about the big ole black anaconda!

I would shine the flashlight into the frog's eyes and Tiffany did a good job of scooping them up with a big dip net. It was quite cumbersome in her little hands. How clubbersom? We were soon to find out!

Having caught and released several bullfrogs, and after watching the small fish and the crawdads of the shallows dart and scurry to escape the light and find cover under the mossy rocks, we decided to return to the cabin. Suddenly there came a horrifying sound in the form of a frightening hiss originating from under the weeping willow tree. When I flashed the light in that direction,

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Fresh air at Clinton Lake

By D.M. Zumbaugh

In the 70's, when I was going to college at Fort Hays State University in Hays, KS, Bob Hope was the featured performer at our Homecoming "concert" one year. That's right, Bob Hope! Shortly afterwards he was on Johnny Carson and lamented about his Kansas experience, "I knew I was in Kansas when I went into the bathroom and there were whitecaps in the toilet bowl". What a reputation for a great state like Kansas to have!

Unfortunately, the fresh air Hope described was too much for us recently on a fishing excursion to Clinton Lake, near Lawrence. We literally got blown off the water as conditions deteriorated to be too dangerous in a fishing boat. The stained body of the lake had three-foot swells frothed on their crests, reminding me of the cappuccino I had enjoyed earlier. Increasing in intensity, these waves were threatening to swamp or even capsize the 16-foot, V-bottomed Lund we were being bounced vigorously around in.

Although Kansas boasts some of the best sport fishing in the country for walleyes, white bass, crappies and stripers, you must be cautious on the reservoirs in springtime. Weather conditions can

change quickly with storms or a simple change in prevailing wind direction, posing serious threats to unwary boaters. Keep advised of wind direction, as this is just as important as velocity. For example, at Clinton, a west or northwest blow affects the water surface significantly more than a breeze straight out of the north or south.

Always do a safety check on your boat every time you launch. Ensure that you have adequate fuel, the batteries are charged and the motor is in good working order. Make certain everyone on board has an approved personal flotation device (PFD) and that they are quickly accessible. Be watchful of your environment to avoid submerged stumps and rocks as these fish attractors can also damage props and hulls and put you and your craft in a vulnerable situation.

A legend on this lake is Chester Pew who is a die-hard crappie enthusiast. Now in his 90's, he has explored every submerged rock and stump and rarely fails to come home with a full stringer. He claims the low water conditions in the last few years has impacted opportunity, but not his motivation.

Clinton is an exceptional fishery

with ample access for bank fisherman and boaters as well. Well designed boat ramps are strategically placed and there is a full service marina with convenient hours. There is a 5 acre trout pond that is stocked several times a year and a 1-acre children's fishing pond.

Clinton State Park has 400 campsites, shelters, kid's playgrounds and a swimming beach. There are hiking and biking trails and an archery range. To find out more about Clinton visit www.kpwp.state.ks.us or call 785-842-8562.

Our best fishing efforts yielded four shiny crappies and one stubborn wiper, which is a hybrid between a white bass and a striper. Aggressive jigging with different colored grub tails was apparently not on the piscatorial menu and action was slow at best. Recent fronts with the associated precipitation, pressure changes and cloudy/sunny skies have made fishing success inconsistent so far this year, even though water temperature was 62 F. There were some fishers luckier than us, as several nice walleyes were witnessed at the fish cleaning station near the marina.

I will not be deterred and expect to be back out to Clinton soon. Hope to see you there!

BULLFROGS

Continued from Page 14

it fell upon a horrendous EYE levitating above the ground. Thoughts of the snake to end all snakes raced through my mind. I had barely regained my composure and was prepared to take the situation in hand when I heard a dull "whomp!" Tiffany had viciously tee-balled that EYE with the dip net! Her ability to knock the monster out of sight would have made The Babe or Hammering Hank Aaron proud.

The flattened heap emitted a groan and, when I recognized a pair of size 12 tennis shoes sticking out from under the dark green tarp, I knew it would be a long time before I heard the end of this little episode.

My father had snuck out of the cabin while we were exploring the lake and covered up with a tarp used to protect the riding lawnmower from the elements. He was peeking through a hole in the tarp and that was the "floating"

EYE my light fell upon, not some alien man-eating monster!

All he could say when we were patching the cut on his head and trying to stop the bleeding was that I deserted Tiffany, leaving my daughter to fend for herself: even jumped in the lake trying to make a getaway! I alibied and tried to explain that I had merely taken a step or two back in order to plan our defense. You know, just in case there were TWO hissing, one-eyed, green mossy-type critters to contend with.

I must admit though, my pants did get a little wet!

The bullfrog is a ferocious predator in its own right. Being up to eight inches long, with another nine inches of stretched out leg behind him, they can catch and eat anything from a beetle to a sparrow. Where plentiful, other frogs can make up the majority of the bullfrog's diet. Insects, fishes, small snakes, moles, birds and even bats are considered prey.

Frog legs, regarded as a delicacy in many restaurants, have a taste and texture similar to shrimp. A popular way to

cook frog legs is to dip them in egg and then into a mixture of flour, cornmeal, seasoning salt and pepper. Fry them to a golden brown in about a half inch of peanut oil. The legs may also be broiled or baked. Contrary to popular belief, not all legs will try and jump out of the skillet!

Bullfrogs abound in lakes, ponds, marshes and streams throughout Kansas, the Sunflower State. They may be legally harvested from July 1 through October 31. The bullfrog's loud bellying call may be heard for over half a mile and often betray their location. A valid fishing license is required to take bullfrogs (unless exempt by law). The daily creel limit is eight frogs, and the possession limit is 24. As with all hunting and fishing, permission is required to enter private land.

When night fishing is non-productive and the set lines are running slack, let frogging pick up the action. Be sure to take the kids along and always be prepared for the unexpected, especially those things that go "baa-rumph" and hiss in the middle of the night!

OWAA announces 2014 honorary award recipients

Five earned special recognition during the concluding banquet at OWAA's 87th Annual Conference

At its recent annual conference in McAllen, Texas, the Outdoor Writers Association of America, "The Voice of the Outdoors," honored five with its most distinguished awards.

OWAA Presents Excellence in Craft Award to Brent Frazee

Brent Frazee of Kansas City, Missouri, received OWAA's 2014 Excellence in Craft Award. Frazee has been a member of OWAA since 1980. The award honors an OWAA member "for outstanding effort in upholding the OWAA Creed and continued excellence in craft."

"Brent Frazee has taken Kansas City Star readers afield with fishing, hunting,

hiking and camping stories for a quarter century," said Bill Graham, immediate past president of OWAA and a media specialist for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

"His outdoor page is the next best thing to being outdoors. Brent brings nature and conservation alive, telling folks where to go and how to have more success outdoors. But he also shows how and why people and nature interact, why each is important to the other. People matter to Brent as much as the outdoors and that's why readers have taken his stories and photos to heart over the years."

Editor's note - Brent also serves as President of the Outdoor Writers of Kansas. This organization has been instrumental in raising funds to send 6-10 Big Brothers/Big Sisters youth from Kansas to the Kansas Wildlife Federation's Outdoor Adventure Camp in June each year. KWF wants to thank OWK for its support of OAC and getting 10-12 year olds outdoors.

Brent was also awarded the Kansas Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Award as Conservation Communicator for 2013. We also want to congratulate Brent Frazee on his well deserved awards.

River Network announces 2014 River Heroes Awards to celebrate those who protect and care for waterways

Kansas riverkeeper honored as one of five River Heroes by River Network

Empowering communities throughout the Tijuana River Watershed, giving back as a tireless volunteer river trail steward in Illinois, developing national showcases of urban renewal in Rhode Island, improving water quality in Maine's Casco Bay, and being a leading advocate for rivers in Kansas are just a few of the accomplishments of an extraordinary group of individuals who have dedicated themselves to protecting our most vital natural resource—water.

Since 2002, sixty-two individuals from around the U.S and world have been honored with this prestigious award.

"We couldn't be more impressed than we are by the important work these individuals and their organizations are doing to make a meaningful impact on water resources around the nation", said Nicole Silk, River Network President. "Their dedication to - and love of rivers and water- is what inspires us all."

Laura Calwell was named the 2014 River Hero by the River Network. She is

with the Friends of the Kaw and serves as the Kansas Riverkeeper. For over 20 years, Laura worked tirelessly as both a volunteer and as Kansas Riverkeeper for Friends of the Kaw to promote public awareness of the Kaw, an outstanding natural resource and valuable drinking water source in the state of Kansas. Each year she paddles the entire 170 mile Kansas River to check on its health and condition. Laura has been instrumental in moving sand dredging operations out of the river, and led the effort to institute the Kansas River Inventory, the first comprehensive, publicly available inventory documenting the entire river system's on-going conditions, structures, animal and plant life and recreational opportunities.

In addition, each year River Network celebrates one individual's accomplishments with the James R. Compton River Achievement Award. This year's honoree is Rebecca Wodder (Washington, DC). Rebecca is a nationally known environ-

mental leader who has devoted her career to conservation causes, beginning with the first Earth Day in 1970 and as a Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson (WI) on environmental and energy issues. Most recently she served at the U.S. Department of the Interior as Senior Advisor to Secretary Ken Salazar, advancing river and watershed objectives. Rebecca was nominated by President Obama for the post of Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. She previously served as President of American Rivers from 1995-2011.

River Network hosted the 2014 River Heroes Award winners at a banquet during this year's River Rally conference in Pittsburgh, PA May 30-June 2.

Editor's Note: Laura Calwell was awarded the Kansas Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Award for Stream Monitor in 2007 and 2011. Congratulations, Laura.

20 years ago, Lawrence prairie blazed the trail for conservation easements in Kansas

By Giles Bruce

Lawrence Journal-World

Off a gravel road southeast of Lawrence, on a hilltop behind a gated fence, amid the cropland and country homes, sits a serenely beautiful tallgrass prairie, undisturbed by development, agriculture or time. It's a glimpse — a small glimpse, but still — into what the settlers saw hundreds of years ago, when all the land surrounding this 16-acre prairie looked just like it does (though there may have been buffalo and antelope on it then).

And it's all thanks to Tom Akin, or, more accurately, his wife, Dorothy, who loved the prairie and its native plants. "She was always very interested in flowers and birds," said her son, Larry, who now lives on the farm and manages the prairie. So in June 1994, five years after Dorothy's death, her husband granted the prairie in her honor to Kansas Land Trust as the state's first conservation easement, meaning the land will stay a prairie in perpetuity.

His decision 20 years ago paved the way for dozens more Kansas property owners to preserve the natural characteristics of their land. The Kansas Land Trust, based in Lawrence, now holds 54 conservation easements across the state, including 11 in Douglas County, making up more than 22,000 acres.

"When the Land Trust started 24 years

ago nobody knew about conservation easements, so volunteers and others had to get out and find people to do them," said Ginny Moore, executive director of the Kansas Land Trust. "Now it's so popular and we have so many people coming to us ... we have to say it'll be 2016 before we can get to it."

Most of the properties held by the Land Trust are private, making the Akin Prairie, which is open to the public, unique. In fact, Kansas ranks 49 out of the 50 states in its percentage of land that can be visited by the public.

The Kansas Land Trust was started in 1990 by environmental activists after a Lawrence real estate developer plowed 80 acres of pristine native prairie because he wasn't satisfied with the offers he was getting from conservation groups to sell. Two years later, the group helped get the law allowing conservation easements passed in the state Legislature.

Under a conservation easement, the land stays privately owned and can still be bought and sold but must continue to be used in the way wanted by the person who granted the easement. If someone violates the agreement, the Kansas Land Trust has the right to sue (in 24 years, it has yet to come to that).

During the recently finished legislative

session, in a move they said would spur economic development, conservative lawmakers introduced legislation that would have limited the duration of conservation easements. Opponents argued that this would defeat the purpose of the conservation tool. The bill was defeated in the Senate.

Located at 1850 North 1150 Road, the Akin Prairie contains 218 plant species, including the federally protected mead's milkweed, as well as lead plant, compass plant and New Jersey tea. "All of those only survive in quality pastures or prairies that have been around for thousands of years," said Jerry Jost, conservation director for the Kansas Land Trust. "You can't recreate this kind of diversity."

He said one reason it's important to protect native plant species is because you never know what kind of medicinal remedies or treatments we might one day discover from them. The land also supports different kinds of wildlife, including the regal fritillary butterfly, which relies on native plants for food.

"Ecologically, the Akin Prairie is a remnant of the great North American tallgrass prairie," said Kelly Kindscher, a founding member of the Kansas Land Trust and environmental scientist with the Kansas

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Three Kansas state parks make 'Top 36 Stunning State Parks' list

Out of more than 7,500 U.S. state parks, Kansas makes the list three times

While compiling a list of some of our country's best state parks, The Active Times couldn't ignore the state of Kansas; in fact, they couldn't ignore the sunflower state three times. Out of more than 7,500 U.S. state parks to choose from, three Kansas state parks made the media group's "36 Stunning U.S. State Parks" list. Kanopolis State Park was listed No. 14, Lake Scott State Park No. 23, and Wilson State Park No. 34.

The following write-ups accompanied a photo of each park in the publication:

Kanopolis State Park

This state park is situated amidst the striking Smoky Hills region of Kansas and is treasured for its many miles of hiking trails that meander through canyons, prairies, and wooded creek bottoms. The

sublime Dakota sandstone bluffs and craggy Horsethief Canyon decorate the park and its surrounding area presenting pristine views of what's considered some of Kansas' most stunning scenery.

Lake Scott State Park

Named to National Geographic's list of the country's 50 must-see state parks, this aptly named "stunning oasis" has everything you could want in a park. Spanning 1,020 acres, the natural features include wooded canyons, rugged bluffs and fresh springs. Lake Scott is large enough to accommodate boating and fishing and the extensive trail system allows horseback riding. With more than 26 archeological sites in the area, the remarkable features are more than just aesthetically pleasing.

Wilson State Park

This 945-acre park is tucked away in the center of the Smoky Hills and is well attended for the scenery its location affords. Hiking trails offer unrivaled views of native Kansas prairie and the Wilson Reservoir. Camping accommodations and cabins are available throughout the park and land is dedicated to mountain biking, fishing and hunting (in season only).

The next time you plan a family outing or a weekend on the lake, consider checking out one of Kansas' many list-worthy state parks before crossing state lines. You just might find something stunning right here at home.

To view the complete list of The Active Times' "36 Stunning U.S. State Parks," visit www.theactivetimes.com/36-stunning-us-state-parks.

Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament sees big results

Ninety percent of youth caught fish during the one-day tournament

Despite 20 mph winds, seasonally-cool temperatures, and storms that loomed on the horizon, 125 youth reeled in fish during the 10th Annual Glen Elder Youth Fishing Tournament at Waconda Lake on June 7. Hosted by the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT) and the Waconda Lake Association, the five-hour event allowed 139 youth to experience a challenging, but fun-filled day of fishing.

"The fishing was much better this year compared to last year's cold and very windy conditions, and most anglers were able to bring in a few fish with drum, white bass, and walleye leading the way," said tournament director and KDWPT district fisheries biologist Scott Waters.

Local volunteers provided 43 boats and ninety percent of the young anglers caught at least one fish, including 236 drum, 125 white bass, 107 walleye, 82 channel catfish, 56 wipers, 10 crappie, 1 largemouth

bass, and 1 flathead catfish.

Participants competed for awards in categories such as most fish caught, the biggest fish caught for a given species, and the smallest fish caught. The 2014 tournament winners from each category are as follows:

MOST FISH

Jaxson Heenan (Lucas), 23 total caught

BIGGEST FISH

Walleye: Brody Widrig (Beloit), 23.5 inches

Crappie: Bryanna Kuehn (Beloit), 14.5 inches

Channel Catfish: Grant Arasmith (Jewell), 27 inches

White Bass: Payton Hake (Cawker City), 15.5 inches

Wiper: Michael Boyle (Beloit), 25.5 inches

Largemouth Bass: Evan Blue (Beloit), 12 inches

Drum: Nicholas Racette (Natoma), 22

inches

SMALLEST FISH

Mykayla Valdepena (Beloit), 6.5 inches (walleye)

"We would like to extend a very special thank-you to all of the boat drivers and volunteers who provided their time and equipment on Saturday, the Waconda Lake Association for providing lunch and helping cover the cost of t-shirts, and Wayne Miner who donated 150 dozen night-crawlers," said Waters. "We also want to thank the 80 sponsors who donated nearly \$4,000 in prizes. Because of their generosity, each youth was able to take home a Berkley tackle bag, t-shirt, goodie bag of tackle and gift certificates, and other prizes. Lastly, a special thanks to Connor Chance and the staff of the Glen Elder area office for assisting with the event."

To find out how to fish in next year's event on June 6, contact Waters at (785) 545-3345.

Registration open for Tuttle Creek Assisted Deer Hunt

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism, Riley County Fish and Game Association, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Tuttle Creek Lake are currently accepting applications through July 31 for the upcoming 2014 Tuttle Creek Youth/Disabled Assisted Deer Hunt, September 6 and 7. This hunt, which is offered free of charge, is open to resident youth age 11-16 and those with a certified disability.

Participants will need a Kansas hunting license, deer permit, and, if required by Kansas law, must have completed an approved hunter education course. Assistance meeting these requirements, includ-

ing scholarship assistance to purchase a hunting license and deer permit, can be provided.

If needed, rifles and ammunition will also be available to hunters. Each participant will be guided by an experienced hunter, and arrangements have been made with area lockers to provide basic processing of harvested deer free of charge. Other items provided for this hunt include accessible hunting blinds, hunting locations, hunter orange hats and vests, and transportation to and from the field.

Participants will be required to attend a firearm safety presentation and sight-in

at the Fancy Creek Shooting Range at 4 p.m., Sunday, August 17.

For more information, or to obtain an application, contact U.S. Army Corps of Engineers natural resource specialist Steve Prockish at (785) 539-8511, ext. 3167, or by e-mail at Stephen.E.Prockish@usace.army.mil. Applications can also be found by visiting: <http://www.nwk.usace.army.mil/Portals/29/docs/lakesites/tuttlecreek/DeerHunt.pdf>

This event is made possible by Friends of Fancy Creek Range, Kansas City Chapter of Safari Club International, Kansas State Rifle Association and the Tuttle Creek Lake Association.

PRAIRIE

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Biological Survey. "It's one of a little over 100 remnants left in Douglas County, which seems like quite a few, but it's one of the few

that's of high quality."

As Douglas County continues to develop, the importance of conserving what remains of its natural heritage only grows in the eyes of environmentalists. Let the Akin Prairie, with its serene beauty, its window into the eyes of the pioneers, serve as an example, they say.

"When we describe Lawrence to folks elsewhere, we say, 'It's not typical Kansas. It's not flat and boring. It rains a lot. And we've got trees and prairies, that pastoral landscape, that prairie landscape,'" Kindscher added. "It's what we all like about the place and like to share with others."

NSSF issues statement on 'Operation Choke Point'

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) issued the following statement on May 29, 2014:

The National Shooting Sports Foundation has been investigating the possible role of the federal government in influencing banks in their lending and business banking relationship decisions regarding companies in our industry. We have heard from several industry members that they had banking relationships terminated by their lending institutions.

We respect the right of financial institutions to make business decisions based on objective criteria. It is unacceptable, however, to discriminate against businesses simply because they are engaged in the lawful com-



National Shooting Sports Foundation

merce of firearms, an activity protected by the Second Amendment.

NSSF staff has met with members of the House Financial Services Committee and members of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee concerning several

documents that have surfaced from the FDIC labeling companies in the firearms and ammunition industry as “high risk.”

As a result, we have worked with U.S. Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO) and expect that he will offer today an amendment to the FY15 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, which would prevent federal funds from being used as part of “Operation Choke Point” or in any effort targeting companies involved in the lawful commerce in firearms.

We will continue to investigate the extent of any improper government involvement and will update our members as more information becomes available.

Spotlight on prairie potholes — Ducks like them, why you should too

By Stacey Detwiler
American Rivers

The Proposed Clean Water Rule
Earlier this spring, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers released a draft rule (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/04/21/2014-07142/definition-of-waters-of-the-united-states-under-the-clean-water-act>) to clarify the scope of the Clean Water Act in an important step forward to restoring protections for small streams and wetlands. Despite nearly thirty years of comprehensive protections, two Supreme Court cases and the resulting administrative guidance put protections for small streams and wetlands into question.

You can read more about the details of the proposed Clean Water Rule in my previous blog (<http://www.americanrivers.org/blog/protecting-roots-rivers/>) and learn more about why it's important. To summarize, the proposed Clean Water Rule clarifies what is and is not protected under the Clean Water Act. It's an important step towards restoring historical levels of protections for waters that provide our drinking water supplies and support fish and wildlife where we boat and swim. Prairie potholes are one type of wetland that currently aren't guaranteed protections, but with a strong proposed Clean Water Rule, could once again be covered under the Clean Water Act.

What are prairie potholes, anyway?

Across the upper Midwest, especially in states such as Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, prairie pothole

wetlands (<http://water.epa.gov/type/wetlands/potholes.cfm>) stretch across 5.3 million acres. Sometimes called the “duck factory” of the Midwest, the prairie pothole region supports more than 50 percent of our nation's migratory waterfowl. Most prairie potholes themselves are less than an acre in size, little more than depressions in the landscape that fill up with snowmelt and rainfall. Some of these depressional wetlands are present all year long, while others form only after rainfall. Threatened by increased agricultural protection and development, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that today only 40 or 50 percent of the original number of prairie potholes that covered the region remain (<http://www.fws.gov/Refuges/SmallWetlands/>).

Why care about them?

Prairie potholes aren't just important for ducks. Prairie potholes recharge groundwater supplies, slowly allowing water to infiltrate into the earth over time (<http://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Wild-Places/Prairie-Potholes.aspx>). They also help to slow and store floodwaters, reducing the impacts of downstream flooding. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that each acre of these small wetlands reduces flood damage to roads by \$6.11 every year and provides \$29.23 worth of flood protection to agricultural lands (<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pfw/sd/sd10.htm>).

Are they protected under the Clean Water Act?

Right now, probably not. Two Supreme

Court cases and the resulting administrative guidance put protections for these types of wetlands that might be outside of a floodplain or that lack a clear surface connection to downstream waters, sometimes called “geographically isolated” waters, into question.

However, the science is clear that prairie potholes are connected to downstream waters. For example, studies demonstrate that prairie potholes act as nutrient sinks, capturing and filtering out excess nitrogen and phosphorous from agricultural practices (<http://www.fwspubs.org/doi/pdf/10.3996/122009-JFWM-027>). When prairie potholes are filled in or degraded, these pollutants aren't captured and downstream water quality suffers. Multiple studies show that the loss of prairie potholes results in increased flooding in the region, such as along the Red River in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa (<http://pubstorage.sdstate.edu/wfs/167-W.pdf>).

The proposed rule recognizes this connection and clarifies that these types of waters could be protected if there is a significant connection to downstream waters. In other words, if a prairie pothole in question collectively with other similar waters would have a more than speculative effect on the biological, physical, or chemical integrity of downstream protected waters. The proposed rule doesn't categorically protect these types of waters, but the EPA and the Army Corps are looking for the public to comment on whether that should change in the draft.

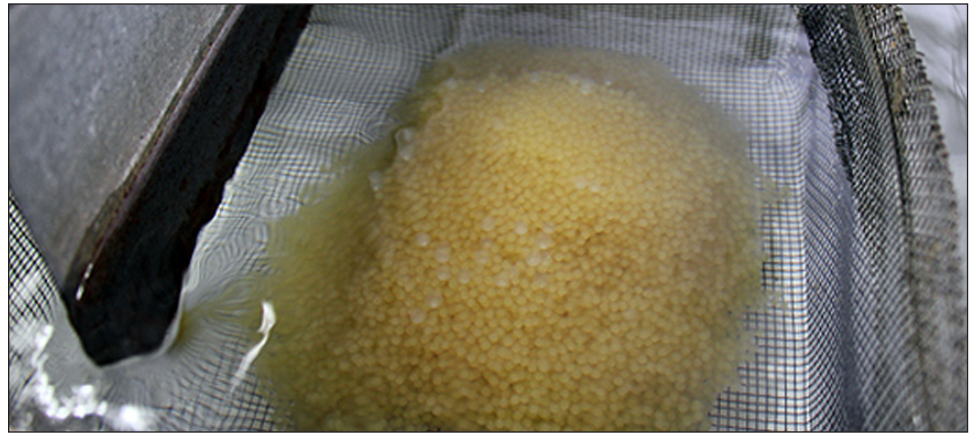
Pratt hatchery provides safe haven for millions of channel catfish eggs

A hatchery setting keeps natural predators, bacteria and fungus away from eggs

Seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit is the perfect water temperature – when it comes to artificial channel catfish spawning, that is. Each year, staff at the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) Pratt hatchery conducts an artificial spawning program that produces channel catfish eggs in the millions. It's a process that's tried and true, and that thousands of anglers depend on each year. Here's how it's done.

The process begins in early spring when hatchery staff prepares several ponds with an ideal breeding ratio – 2 males for every three females. When summer hits, staff submerge steel cream cans in knee-deep water to simulate a natural cavity where catfish would normally nest. Once the cans are fully submerged, a male will enter and prepare a nest site and then herd a ready-to-spawn female into the can where eggs are deposited and fertilization can begin. When waters reach the ideal temperature of 74 degrees, hatchery staff will check the cans twice a week and collect any fertilized egg masses, which can average 1.5 to 2 pounds each.

"The purpose of this process is to increase hatch rates. On our first day of collection, we got 908,000 eggs – 80 percent of which we can get to hatch in a controlled environ-



ment," said KDWP fisheries biologist Brett Houdyshell. "Our goal this year is to collect approximately 3 million eggs."

Once the fertilized eggs are collected, they are placed in special troughs with constant water circulation where the young can safely hatch. After about eight days, the fry are able to swim up and out of the egg mass and into connected tanks where food is available.

"Channel catfish readily take fish food, so by their eighth day, they will be eating a prepared fish food," said Houdyshell.

Some fry will grow to fingerlings where they will be stocked in new or renovated waters, while others will stay in the hatchery system where they will continue to grow and be stocked the following fall as intermediate or catchable-size fish, ranging from 10-12 inches.

Channel catfish are just one of many fish species that KDWP hatchery staff produce around the state. For more information on KDWP fish hatcheries and stocking reports, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click "Fishing."

CAMPING

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I've learned to embrace the adventures of camping. Hiking, biking, fishing, playing cards, building a sand castle or a fort. Activities like these provide rare opportunities to connect with not only nature, but the wonderful friends and family in your life. Let your #campie capture the experience.

6. Lounging

Suggested places to lounge: blanket, bench, sand, chair, grass, log, hammock, towel, or any other comfortable surface.

What to do while lounging: talk, play games, tell stories, eat, watch the campfire, sleep, read, listen for birds, or enjoy doing nothing.

5. Campfire

Aside from the pressure of building a campfire successfully, this may be my favorite part about camping. It's mesmerizing to watch the flames dance. There's

also a sense of accomplishment that comes with cooking food over a fire. Be aware that when you take firewood from home to a campsite, you risk carrying a tree killing insect or disease. You should be fine if it's within a few miles.

4. Gazing at the Sky

Camping is an excuse to get away from light pollution and marvel at the brilliance of the night sky. I hope to catch a rare glimpse of a shooting star, try to identify constellations. Perhaps my favorite game, however, is star surfing. Everyone participating stands still and has 15 seconds to look up and choose a star. Keep your eyes on that one star. When the timer says "begin," all must spin as fast as possible while keeping your head up and eyes on your star. Spin for 30 seconds. When the timer says "surf," everyone jumps into a surfing position, bringing their gaze back to normal. You should be very dizzy, and it will be hard to keep standing straight up.

Lying on the ground, under a tree, and gazing up at the sky during the day is also relaxing. You can watch clouds float by

and birds fly overhead.

3. S'mores

I have to say, I'm a s'more traditionalist. One regular marshmallow, two bricks of chocolate, and two graham crackers is all I need. S'mores with Peeps, peanut butter cups, peppermint patties or cookies sound tasty, but nothing beats the nostalgia of good old fashioned s'mores. Browse through some of these creative s'more recipes, and show off your own creations in a #campie.

2. Good Company

Campouts are defined by the friends and family you're around. It's an opportunity to bond with new and old friends, and spend quality time with family. You'll leave with stronger connections and fond memories. Even if you go camping by yourself, you'll get to know a certain individual much better. Show us who you're camping out with in a #campie.

1. Nature

You don't have to go far to discover the wonders of the natural world (the moth, not the car).

USDA, partners usher in a new era in conservation

Prairie grasslands designated a critical conservation area

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has announced “a new era in American conservation efforts” with an historic focus on public-private partnership. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership

Program (RCPP), created in the 2014 Farm Bill, will fund a number of conservation activities across Kansas.

“This is an entirely new approach to conservation,” Vilsack said. “We’re giving private companies, local communities, and other non-government partners a way to invest in what are essentially clean water start-up operations.”

RCPP replaces the former NRCS Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) program. These two programs also worked with conservation partners to implement conservation using a landscape approach.

The RCPP will competitively award funds to conservation projects designed by local partners specifically for their region. Eligible partners include private companies, universities, non-profit organizations, local and tribal governments, and others joining

with agricultural and conservation organizations and producers to invest money, manpower, and materials to their proposed initiatives.

“Local decision making is empowered through this program-bringing together conservation groups, cities and townships, sportsmen groups, universities, agricultural associations and others-to design conservation projects that are tailored to our needs here in Kansas,” said Eric B. Banks, NRCS State Conservationist.

Through RCPP, partners propose conservation projects to improve soil health, water quality and water use efficiency, wildlife habitat, and other related natural resources on private lands. With participating partners investing along with the Department, USDA’s \$1.2 billion in funding over the life of the five-year program can leverage \$2.4 billion for conservation.

Secretary Vilsack announced Prairie Grasslands, which includes all of Kansas, as one of eight critical conservation areas (CCAs) that will compete for one third of the total available funds.

The RCPP has three funding pools:

- * 35 percent directed to eight CCAs including the Prairie Grasslands Region.

- * 40 percent directed to regional or multi-state projects through a national competitive process.

- * 25 percent directed to state-level projects through a competitive process established by NRCS state leaders.

Kansas NRCS has established five natural resource priority concerns for which proposals will be accepted. These include soil health, water quality, water quantity, plant condition, and fish and wildlife habitat. Proposals for this program are now being accepted. Pre-proposals are due July 14, and full proposals are due September 26. For more information on applying, visit <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=3D256049>

For more information and priorities on RCPP, visit Kansas NRCS web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

To learn about technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/Get-Started or local USDA service center <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=3Dnrcs>.

For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill.

Prairie Siege

By Jay Strangis

The Game Is Rugged.

This issue’s cover might be a bit misleading. It gives the appearance of development, land planes and heavy equipment, on the brink of destroying or forever altering a waterway—something all too common today. In truth, this old poster art (so generously supplied by Remington Arms Company) was a promotion for Ducks Unlimited, showing the creation of an impoundment and its quick and welcome adoption by waterfowl such as the pintail and mallards shown.

Times have changed, and so has our perspective. We now know that it’s much more difficult to create habitat than to preserve it, and water, in and of itself, does not make waterfowl habitat. Wetlands are complex, and so are the needs of waterfowl.

What is eerie about the cover image for me, and as it might apply today, is the emptiness of it all. There is no witness to



this scene. Anyone familiar with the back roads of today’s Dakotas knows this scene. Heavy equipment parked in the middle of nowhere. Giant trenchers, dozers and land planes. All set against the wide expanses

amid an eerie silence. Why is it so quiet?

The water on the front cover reminds me of much of the water on our prairies today. Bare shores are kept that way by flooding and recession. Water collects in places where there never used to be water. And in the spirit of silence, residents simply shrug and blame mysterious underground aquifers for rising water—a kind of magic show in which no one wants to pull back the curtain to see the truth. Why is it so quiet?

Today conservation groups are singing their hosannas about the results of the 2014 Farm Bill that ties the breaking of native prairie to lowered insurance subsidies. But that won’t fix the firestorm of land conversion of the previous years, when grassland was converted to cropland at a rate not seen since the Dust Bowl era—again in an eerie silence. Between 2006 and 2011, more than 1.3 million acres of grassland

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Ten tips for safe boating

The tragic death of a man at Tuttle Creek Reservoir on May 18 is a sad reminder that fun on the water can quickly turn catastrophic. The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP), the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) and Safe Kids Kansas strongly encourage outdoor enthusiasts to be prepared and follow these tips for a safe and enjoyable boating experience.

1. Wear a life jacket. Boating accidents can happen without warning, leaving no time to locate and put on a life jacket. Always have children wear a life jacket while on boats, around open bodies of water or when participating in water sports. Kansas law requires that all boats have one U.S. Coast Guard-approved, readily-accessible personal flotation device (PFD) for each person on board. Children age 12 or younger are required to wear a life jacket at all times when on board a boat, and KDWP strongly recommends that adults do the same.

2. Designate a “Water Watcher.” Regardless of a swimmer’s age or skill level, it’s smart for a responsible adult to keep watch when anyone is in the water. If there are several swimmers, designate a Water Watcher for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) to prevent lapses in supervision. Download a Water Watcher card here <http://www.safekids.org/other-resource/water-watcher-card>.

3. Learn CPR. Learn adult, infant and child CPR. Many local hospitals, fire departments, Red Cross offices, and recreation departments offer training at little to no cost. It will give you tremendous peace of mind, not only around the water, but also in everyday life.

4. Learn how to safely help someone in distress. All too often, the victim of a

drowning has succumbed while trying to rescue someone else. Hurriedly jumping into the water without wearing a life jacket is a recipe for disaster. Instead, try to follow these steps in succession: a) reach out to the victim with a long pole, b) throw a rope or preferably a life ring, or c) row out to the victim. As a last resort – and after donning a life jacket – you could try to enter the water while carrying a spare life jacket or ring with you. Never jump into the water to rescue someone if you’re not wearing a life jacket yourself.

5. Adhere to a “no drinking” policy while boating. Boating under the influence is just as deadly as drinking and driving a car. Penalties can include large fines, suspension or revocation of boat operator privileges, and jail terms. To be safe, only consume alcohol when on land, and never before operating your boat.

6. Allow only those who have completed boater education to operate the vessel. In Kansas, anyone age 12-20 must have completed an approved boater education course before operating a vessel without the direct supervision of an adult. Approved adults include anyone age 18 or older who has completed the course or any adult age 21 or older. No one younger than 12 years of age may operate a vessel without supervision, regardless of a boater education certification.

7. Know the rules of the water. Many people are unaware that there are operating rules for boats on the water, which include being able to recognize buoy markers and the proper use of navigation lights. Knowledge of these rules can prevent dangerous, and even deadly, situations.

8. Educate yourself and your children about swimming safely. Teach children how to tread water, float and stay by the

shore. Make sure kids swim only in areas designated for swimming. Swimming in open bodies of water is not the same as swimming in a pool. Be aware of uneven surfaces, underwater trees and rocks, currents (yes, there are currents in Kansas reservoirs) and changing weather.

9. Keep warm. A dip in the lake may be tempting on a hot day, but remember that the water temperature may be too cold for prolonged swims – particularly in the spring and fall. Children are at a higher risk for hypothermia, so keep them out of the water or only allow short swims when the water is cold. If a swimmer seems cold or is shivering, get them out of the water immediately, and wrap them tightly in a dry blanket or towel.

10. Make sure your boat has all the required equipment and is thoroughly tested before hitting the water. Safely operating a boat – like safely operating a motor vehicle – requires attention to the vessel’s worthiness to be on the water.

In the last five years, there have been 28 boating-related fatalities in Kansas. Twenty-six of the fatalities were from drowning. Only four of those victims were wearing life jackets, and other medical conditions contributed to their deaths. Two other victims were wearing life jackets but suffered traumatic injuries. Ten of the 28 victims were fishing, four were hunting and four were kayaking. Twenty-seven were males, of whom 24 were 18 years of age and older.

For more safe boating information, including a list of current boating regulations, visit www.ksoutdoors.com and click “Boating.”

For more information about child safety topics, including boating and water safety, visit the Safe Kids Kansas website at www.safekidskansas.org.

MAGAZINE

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on the northern prairie were converted to cropland, an area about a third larger than the entire Boundary Waters Canoe Area—and it went away quietly. Ask those people seeking your conservation dollars exactly what they did to stop this—Hint: supporting the new Farm Bill is not the correct answer. Hell, we all supported a

new Farm Bill. But who really raised their voices? It’s interesting how it’s so quiet while the war rages, but so noisy once a truce is called.

But this war’s not over. Think about land conversion in the missing years of 2012 and the spring of 2013, when commodity prices were at their highest levels. How high would that raise the acreage number when the accounting is finally complete? And how has your conservation organization performed when it comes to crying out about the driving force called

ethanol? Even the soft-reporting USA Today ran a feature on the carnage of the biofuel boom, just this month! It’s not old news, though we wish it were. And it breaks the silence, which is a good thing.

Finally, if you decide to break the silence, don’t blame the farmer. Blame the game, not the player. It’s the game that’s rigged.

Editor’s note: Jay Strangis is Editor for the American Waterfowler magazine. His article appeared in the June/July 2014 issue.

Five widespread myths about pheasant & quail populations

Pheasant Blog Pheasant's Forever

Not only are certain myths about pheasant and quail populations prevalent, belief in them takes the focus away from what really has an impact on sustainable bird numbers – the creation and management of upland habitat. Here's a closer look at five widely-held beliefs about America's most popular upland gamebirds.

Myth: Stocking pheasants and quail works to restore wild populations.

Busted: During the last half century, there has been a colossal amount of money spent on supplemental stocking programs by state and local governments, sportsman's groups and private individuals. Countless studies have shown that stocked pheasants, no matter when they are released, have great difficulty maintaining self-sustaining populations. Predators take the main toll, accounting for 90 percent of the deaths; at the same time, predators are conditioned to the idea that pheasants are an easy target.

Pen-raised birds do provide shooting opportunities and are a good way to introduce new hunters to hunting in a controlled situation; they're also handy for training dogs. But the bottom line is stocking pen-raised pheasants and quail will not effectively increase populations. Only by addressing the root problem that is suppressing populations – the availability and quality of upland habitat – can a long-term positive impact be made on upland bird numbers.

Myth: Predators are the main reason there are fewer pheasants and quail.

Busted: Yes, coyotes and fox will eat pheasants and quail, and raccoons and skunks are likely culprits when it comes to raided nests. But predators don't eat habitat, which is far and away the biggest reason why pheasant populations decline. High annual losses to predators should not be misunderstood to mean that predation is responsible for long-term upland popula-

tion declines. Landscapes with good habitat often have high numbers of pheasant numbers, as well as high numbers of many potential predators.

The impact of predators is magnified and often pinpointed as the primary problem after habitat conditions deteriorate. Confine pheasants and quail to smaller and smaller parcels of habitat, and a predator's job gets a whole lot easier. Thankfully, well-designed habitat projects can reduce predation by up to 80 percent. Through the addition and management of habitat, not only does there tend to be a decrease in the impact predators make on existing nests, but more habitat is likely to increase the number of nests and the overall gamebird population. And habitat for pheasants and quail comes at a fraction of the cost of other intensive predator reduction methods that are cost-prohibitive across a large area.

Myth: Turkeys eat quail chicks.

Busted: A single Florida study from the 1930s noted an instance of turkeys destroying quail eggs. No biological study since has documented turkeys damaging quail nests or feeding on chicks. Turkey researchers have not found a single quail chick or egg fragment while examining thousands of turkey stomachs. In addition, scientists monitoring quail chicks fitted with radio transmitters and watching quail nests via remote cameras have yet to catch a turkey in the act. Given that literally hundreds of studies of wild turkey food habits and predation on quail have been conducted over the past 80 years, the lack of evidence is remarkable. The conclusion is that turkeys have no direct role in the decline of quail.

Myth: Hunting is hurting pheasant numbers.

Busted: Extensive research has shown hunting has little-to-no effect on pheasant reproduction and populations. Hens and roosters are easily distinguished in wing-shooting situations, and because hens are protected through game regulations, pheasants are actually managed much more conservatively than many other gamebirds. And because roosters are polygamous – that is, they will mate with multiple hens – hunting in effect is only removing a “surplus” of males not absolutely necessary for reproduction the following spring.

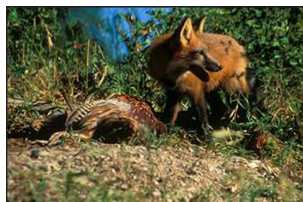
Most of a pheasant season's harvest takes place during the opening weekend, sometimes as much as 50 percent. Additionally, the majority of pheasant hunters are most active during the first two weeks of the season. Considering these factors, liberal, lengthy, roosters-only seasons do not harm populations.

Myth: Habitat isn't the biggest key to healthy pheasant and quail populations.

Busted: Two factors affect upland bird populations above all others: habitat and weather.

And while we can't control the weather, we can influence the amount and quality of upland habitat. Habitat

is what supports strong and healthy pheasant and quail populations – one need only look at how pheasant populations rose in the late 1980s, 1990s and 2000s coinciding with increases in Conservation Reserve Program upland acreage, and their subsequent decreases as those acres diminished. Historically, a lot of money has been spent trying to stock pheasants and to battle predators. Had these dollars been invested in habitat restoration, pheasants, quail and other upland wildlife would've benefited.



How to catch summertime catfish

By John E. Phillips

There are a large number of places you can find great summertime catfish. Check out some of John Phillips' suggestions below.

I've enjoyed catching and eating catfish all my life, since I live in a state with four of the top 25 catfishing lakes nationwide and one of the country's top rivers. Here's where to locate catfish.

Small streams

Small, out-of-the-way streams, creeks, and rivers offer some of America's finest catfishing. They often have quality populations of catfish and receive very little fishing pressure. Identify slack water and deep holes behind boulders or logs breaking the current, just below waterfalls or at the foot of shoals. Catfish usually hole up behind points or bends in the creek or stay bunched up in deep, unseen holes.

Use a portable depth finder to locate the deep holes. When fishing for cats from a canoe, remember the rounded sides and the bottom of the canoe will make the depth finder's suction-cup transducer head shoot its signal at an angle, instead of shooting it straight to the stream's bottom. Tape the transducer to a 2x4-inch piece of wood with electrician's tape, and tie the wood to the side of your canoe for an accurate picture.

Farm ponds and small lakes

Farm ponds and small lakes generally hold the highest concentrations of catfish of any waters and like small streams, often receive little fishing pressure. Also check out your state's public fishing lakes. A friend of mine tells me that to concentrate pond catfish, he throws about five pounds of cheap dry dog food out on the water to



Farm ponds and small lakes can hold large concentrations of catfish.

draw in two- to four-pound catfish.

Rivers

States may have specific rivers that produce numerous catfish. I asked long-time fisheries biologist Bill Reeves why. Reeves explained, "Sometimes rivers have so many catfish because the sheer size of the river provides abundant bait and cover. Also, more anglers will fish these easy-to-access areas. Overpopulation due to too little fishing pressure makes catfish underfed and underweight."

Tactics

Yo-yoing catches plenty of catfish. Mechanical Fisher manufactures the Yo-Yo, a stainless steel spring enclosed in a metal frame with 20-feet of coiled trotline staging and a snap swivel on the end of the line. Tie the Yo-Yo to a green limb overhanging the water. When the catfish takes the bait, the Yo-Yo's trigger will trip.

Fishing jugs means that once the catfish takes the bait and tries to dive, the jug will resist and set the hook deep in the catfish's mouth, making the jug bob up and down or move. Plastic jugs like gallon milk jugs and bleach bottles are too big for jugging because the wind can blow them. I prefer the pint and quart jugs that I spray fluorescent orange to show up well. Tie lines of various lengths to your jugs. Then you can change out the lines on your jugs, if you find the catfish feeding in deeper or shallower waters.

Limb-lining and set poling enables anglers to fish for catfish along riverbanks with several hooks at once. Limb-lining involves tying a hook, a bait, and a weight to the green not brittle limbs of overhanging trees or bushes. You can make set-poles by sticking small green limbs or river canes into the soft earth of the bank and baiting them. Set your lines at different depths.

Trotlining for catfish equipment includes main lines, anchors, buoys, and droplines. Anglers tie main lines to trees or bushes on riverbanks on opposite sides or to the bank and then place anchors and buoys on the ends of the lines in the middle of the lake. Trotliners attach droplines to their main lines every 18 to

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Solar-power bird report at Ivanpah

By Paul J. Baicich

Birding Community E-bulletin

In March, we wrote in the E-bulletin about a problem with birds being roasted as they fly through the Ivanpah solar-power facility in San Bernardino County, California: <http://refugeassociation.org/?p=9218/#more>

There was news of further developments in early April from a confidential report released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory. (The report was made public in response to a Freedom of Information Act request that The Press-Enterprise of Riverside, California, filed in February.) Among other

activities, butterflies and other winged insects fly into the bright zone, followed by insect-eating-birds, and those in turn are being followed by falcons and other raptors. Unfortunately, all of them become susceptible to roasting by the heat of the facility.

Remains of birds found at the facility include Cinnamon Teal, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Roadrunner, Yellow-rumped and Townsend's Warblers, and House Finch.

So far, tracking the problem has been difficult. According to the report, small birds may be completely incinerated, severely injured birds may be dying off-

site, and those that fall to the ground may get carried away by scavengers.

See here for more information:

www.pe.com/local-news/topics/topics-environment-headlines/20140408-solar-ivanpah-project-described-as-deadly-trap-for-wildlife.ece

Clearly, reports like this indicate that there need to be more and better options and more serious monitoring of projects like this which purport to provide new or improved forms of otherwise desirable energy. Accordingly, the 28-page USFWS report recommended that Ivanpah suspend operations during peak migration times for certain species.

Ten things you can do to help birds during summer months

From The Birding Wire

Billions of birds in North America are carrying out a host of activities related to raising their young and preparing for migration-and there are many simple things the nation's 45 million birdwatchers can do to help our birds in those life-sustaining tasks.

According to American Bird Conservancy (ABC) President George Fenwick, "The next three months are critical. Some studies suggest that perhaps as many as half of all migrating birds do not make it back home, succumbing to various threats along the way. Our birds need all the help they can get."

Fenwick added: "Simple instinct is not always enough to keep the birds alive given the enormous tracts of habitat that have become suburban sprawl; the draining of waterways; the loss of biomass to pesticides; air and water contamination; and other threats such as window glass, cats, and wind turbines."

Here are American Bird Conservancy's recommended top ten things concerned individuals can do to help birds breed successfully and prepare for fall migration.

1. Leave baby birds alone. If you find a baby bird out of its nest, don't pick it up or bring it indoors. Although people mean well by "rescuing" the baby birds they find, in almost all cases, the parents are nearby and know best how to care for their young. An exception is injured birds, which can be taken to a local wildlife rehabilitator for treatment.

2. Ensure dogs and cats stay away from young birds. Free-roaming cats kill billions of birds every year, taking an especially high toll on fledglings. Loose dogs also have an impact on nesting birds; for example, roam-

ing dogs are suspected of recently wiping out a colony of threatened Least Terns in Florida. Keep your pets contained, and be especially cautious near beach-nesting birds.

3. Keep things fresh. Your birdbath or other water feature should be cleaned regularly and kept filled with fresh water. Hummingbird feeders also need special attention, as hummingbirds will be switching back from an insect-rich diet to nectar in preparation for flights south in the fall. Be sure to thoroughly clean hummingbird feeders and replace the sugar water before it ferments-usually within three to seven days depending on the heat and sun.

4. Maintain your land in a bird-friendly fashion. Consider letting some of your yard or other property go "wild," or garden with native plants. Even small wild areas act as sources of food and shelter for birds through the summer. Avoid or minimize tree trimming to prevent disturbance to nesting birds. Where possible, avoid mowing grass in large fields and roadsides until after July to enable ground-nesting grassland birds to safely fledge.

5. Be a good landlord. If you're lucky enough to have swallows or phoebes nesting on your porch or carport, keep the nest intact. The birds will be gone soon enough, and in the meantime, they will help you out by eating hundreds of insects each day. If you have active nest boxes, clean them out after the young have fledged. Old nesting material attracts parasites and can be a source of disease.

6. Don't spray: Stay away from pesticides. Reconsider using pesticides, since even products labeled as "safe" will likely have negative consequences on birds. For example, many home and garden products include neonicotinoids, or "neonics," which

have been found to be deadly to both bees and birds in even minute amounts.

7. Celebrate good times ... without balloons. When weddings, graduations, and other parties are on your list of to-do's, put balloons on your list of don'ts. Birds can become entangled in the long ribbons; individuals have been found hanging from trees or asphyxiated. Birds may also ingest the deflated balloon itself, which can eventually block the digestive tract and cause the animal to starve.

8. Turn the outdoor lights out. Review your outdoor lighting for unnecessary disturbance to night-flying birds (as well as wasted energy). Bright artificial lights can disorient migrating birds and make collisions with windows, buildings, and other structures more likely. Consider putting steady burning lights on motion sensors. Or, if your outdoor lighting needs permit, consider blue and green LED lights as they are less distracting to night-migrating birds.

9. Be a bird-friendly boater. If you're boating, avoid disrupting birds. Boats operated in proximity to nesting birds can cause behavioral changes, even leading to nest abandonment and failure in some cases. If you notice congregations of birds, steer clear to enable them to spend their energy on gathering food and raising their young.

10. Gone fishing? Remember the birds. Discard fishing line properly in trash receptacles, since entanglement in line is a common and preventable source of bird mortality. If you accidentally hook a bird, don't cut the fishing line. Instead, net the bird, cut the barb off the hook, and push it backward to remove. Just as important, be sure to use only nonlead fishing gear. Scores of birds suffer mortal poisoning from ingesting lead weights in fishing gear.

Charity evaluator issues advisory warnings

Charity Navigator, the nation's largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities, has stripped their rating of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and other animal rights groups and replaced them with a "Donor Advisory" warning.

Charity Navigator rates organizations from one to four stars, with four being the highest rating possible. According to Charity Navigator, a "Donor Advisory" means that "serious concerns have been raised about this charity which prevents

the issuance of a star rating."

The move comes after Feld Entertainment, Inc., operator of the Ringling Brothers Circus, recovered \$15.75 million in attorney fees from HSUS and their codefendants who include Born Free USA/Animal Protection Institute, Fund for Animals, Animal Welfare Institute, and the American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) as reported by U. S. Sportsmen's Alliance in early June.

Except for ASPCA, each of the code-

fendants also had their rating revoked.

Charity Navigator explains on their site that they take no position on the allegations made or issued by third parties. They follow that with "However, Charity Navigator has determined that the nature of this/these issue(s) warrants making this information available so that donors may determine for themselves whether such information is relevant to their decision whether to contribute to this organization."

What makes Goldfinches wait until July to nest?

From eNature

By July, most songbirds are in the final stages of raising their young, but not the American Goldfinches.

These appealing, colorful birds are just getting started.

Notoriously late nesters, goldfinches have been waiting for the thistles to bloom. When this happens in July, it signals the goldfinches that they can start building their nests which are made primarily of the silver fibers and down of thistle blooms. Generally, the nest is built in the fork of a horizontal tree limb, 4 to 14 feet above the ground.

The female builds a durable, neat cup of thistle and cattail fibers, so dense that



Male American Goldfinch © Mdf

it will hold water. In it she lays 4 to 6 pale blue to white eggs and then she incubates them for 12 to 14 days, until they hatch.

The attentive male often feeds his mate while she sits on the nest.

By the time the eggs hatch, the thistle has gone to seed, which is perfect timing for feeding young goldfinches. The parents nourish these chicks by consuming the thistle seed themselves, and then regurgitating the partially digested, milklike cereal into the mouths of their nestlings. This is as close as birds come to mammals that feed their young milk from mammary glands.

Baby goldfinches are fully feathered and out of the nest 10 to 16 days later. Almost immediately, they join their parents at bird feeders across America. That's when many people suddenly notice so many goldfinches as the summer progresses.

Why do some birds sing through the night?

From eNature

Is something (or someone) keeping you awake these spring nights? Waking you up before sunrise?

Many questions come to eNature about night birds calling and other weird and incessant noises in the dark. It seems that there's a lot of activity taking place when most of us expect our birds to be resting.

What's going on? And who's making all that noise in the dark?

Depending on the kinds of calls, and the location in North America, they could be any of at least four bird species.

Whip-poor-wills and their relatives are famous for calling their names, over and over again, sometime into the thousands of times without stopping. Unless you like to fall to sleep to the call of the whip-poor-will, it can become annoying.

Northern Mockingbirds are well known night callers, especially if there is a full moon. Enthusiastic mockingbirds can stay up ALL night, mimicking every bird song in the book as well as other sounds such as bells, whistles, and sirens. These are birds that can try the patience of the most committed bird-lover!

If the call is coming from a wetland, it is



Northern Mockingbird

probably one of the two night-herons, the black-crowned or yellow-crowned. They make squawks and cackles, and sometimes scary noises that will wake the heaviest sleeper.

Owls make another kind of noise in the night, which can range from the hooting of great horned owls to the whinnings of screech-owls.

All of these birds are protected by state and federal laws, and nothing can or should be done to disturb them, not matter how annoying they are. The best solution is to either enjoy them, or to put plugs in your ears.

Are you hearing your local birds' and their squawks, chirps or cackles in the



Great Horned Owl

night? We always love to hear your stories!

To listen to these bird calls and many others, please visit our Birding Audio feature. <http://www.enature.com/birding/audio.asp>

And be sure to use our Local Guides to find out which birds are in your neighborhood. <http://www.enature.com/zipguides/>

CATFISH

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20 inches and tie a hook to each dropline. Don't forget that state regulations govern how many hooks, and what type of line they can use.

Fishing with jump boxes involves trot-

lines that lie inside a square box with each line having an anchor and a float on one end and sometimes a float in the middle. The end float suspends the hooks off the river's bottom, marks the beginning of the line and pinpoints the anchor's location. The outer edge of the box contains hooks wedged between rubber gaskets. Jump-box fishermen throw anchors and floats out the

backs of their boats as they motor forward to cause their trotlines to jump out of the boxes and sink to the bottom.

Have more fun and take more catfish this summer in these places using these tactics.

Author's note: Before using any of these techniques to catch catfish, check your state's regulations.

With all that banging, how do woodpeckers avoid brain damage?

From eNature

There's a reason construction workers don't operate jackhammers with their foreheads. Well, there are several reasons, but one is to avoid concussions. But what protects the woodpecker from similar injuries?

For starters, the woodpecker maintains a perfectly straight strike as it bores into a tree — like a machine almost — which minimizes the rotational forces on its brain. And it's these rotational forces that sever neuronal connections and result in concussions.

Also, the woodpecker's brain fits snugly in its skull, and the bone around the brain is dense yet somewhat forgiving. Experts have likened this bone to the foam inside crash helmets.

The muscles in the woodpecker's head, which contract to absorb and distribute shocks, provide further protection. The same holds true for the woodpecker's tongue, the base of which wraps around the bird's brain.

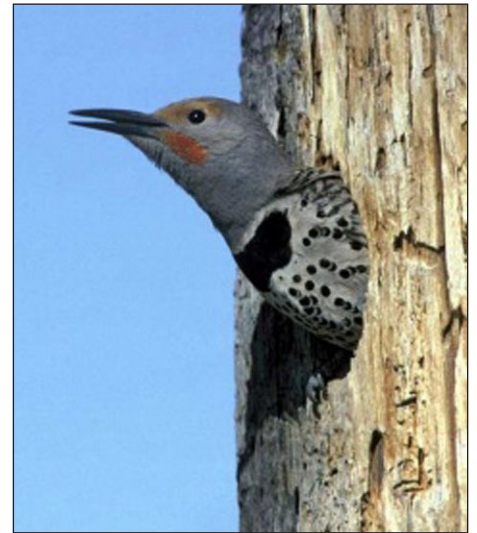
And not all woodpeckers are using their heads on trees when they're making noise. The Northern Flicker, also known



Red-bellied Woodpecker, adult female © birdphotos.com

as the Yellow-shafted Flicker (or the Yellowhammer to fans of the University of Alabama football team) is known for drumming against buildings, trees, other solid objects—even cars! This behavior has been observed in many other woodpecker species as well.

Flickers seem to particularly love the gutters of suburban homes— and for



Northern Flicker

some reason often pick early Sunday mornings to demonstrate just how loud they can be!

Learn more about all our woodpecker species. http://enature.com/fieldguides/view_default.asp?curGroupID=1&curFamilyID=237

Service names environmental policy, law expert as its new associate director

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has named former Justice Department Acting Assistant Attorney General Robert G. Dreher as its new Associate Director, beginning May 18.

Mr. Dreher brings to the Service considerable experience from the government and for-profit and non-profit sectors, having represented environmental organizations, federal agencies, tribes and businesses in a wide range of environmental matters.

"We are delighted to welcome Mr. Dreher to the Fish and Wildlife Service," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "His extensive experience in conservation policy, environmental law and natural resources management will be invaluable as we move forward with a number of key initiatives, not least among them our efforts to

halt wildlife trafficking and illegal wildlife trade, which poses an immediate danger to the survival of many of the world's most treasured species."

Before joining the Service, Mr. Dreher served at the Department of Justice, most recently as the Acting Assistant Attorney General for its Environment and Natural Resources Division. Here, he oversaw nearly 450 attorneys enforcing federal environmental laws, prosecuting environmental crimes, and defending federal agencies as they implement federal environmental laws and manage federal lands and natural resources.

Prior to that, Mr. Dreher served as Senior Vice President and General Counsel of Defenders of Wildlife; Deputy Executive Director of the Georgetown Environmental Law & Policy Institute at Georgetown University Law Center; Counsel

to Troutman Sanders LLC; and Deputy General Counsel of the United States Environmental Protection Agency. He began his career with the Boston firm Hill & Barlow, and spent 10 years with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (now Earthjustice) as a staff attorney and managing attorney of its Washington, D.C. office.

Mr. Dreher is a graduate of Yale Law School, and holds an M.A. from Brown University and a B.A. from Harvard College.

As the Service's Associate Director, Mr. Dreher will be the principal advisor to the Director on major policy issues, and will represent the Service's priorities within the Department of Interior and the broader administration. He will also develop, coordinate and implement a variety of special projects as assigned by the Director.

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

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

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

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

How You Can Help:

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

Here's How to Join:

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