



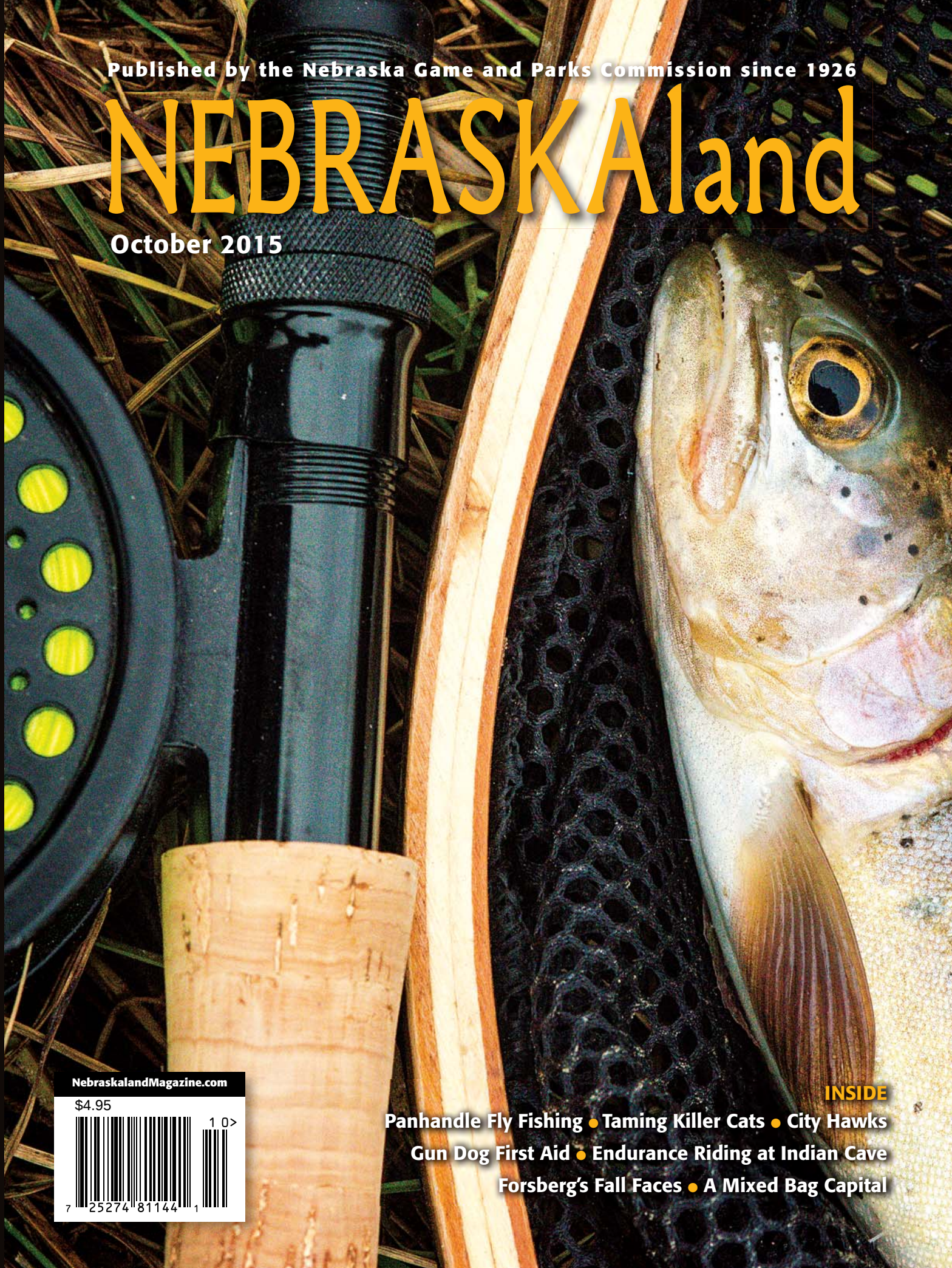
During autumn, don't forget to look up. This photo was taken in east Lincoln near 70th and O streets. Photo by Steve Andel.

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INSIDE

Panhandle Fly Fishing • Taming Killer Cats • City Hawks
Gun Dog First Aid • Endurance Riding at Indian Cave
Forsberg's Fall Faces • A Mixed Bag Capital



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NEBRASKAland Magazine

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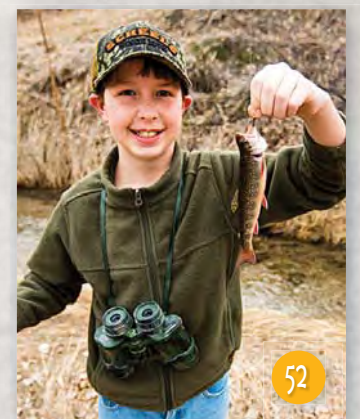
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ON THE WEB...



WHEN YOU SEE THIS SYMBOL IN THE PAGES OF *NEBRASKAland Magazine*, VISIT NEBRASKALANDMAGAZINE.COM AND VIEW OUR INTERACTIVE DIGITAL EDITION FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Cover: Stockings of cutthroat trout at Open Fields and Waters properties along the White River west of Fort Robinson State Park have provided another unique opportunity for Nebraska anglers. See the story on page 52. Photo by Justin Haag.

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Olsen's Owls
From June until the first of August we saw as many as six screech owls in our backyard at one time. They have since moved on, but we were thrilled to have them for that time. We hope they return in the future.
Jim Blake
Lincoln, Nebraska



Howard Greene of Sutherland submitted this photo of Snake River Falls in Cherry County.



My Dream
Would you consider this cicada photo? It's in black and white, but my goal is to have a photo in your magazine sometime in my life!
Suz Swanson
Hastings, Nebraska

Luke Meduna of North Platte photographed this yucca on June 22 on top of Mexican Canyon Overlook in Fort Robinson State Park. The Northern Lights can be seen in the background.



Summer Heat, 1936
I enjoyed the article about the heat of 1936. I was born on June 4, 1936. My mother always told me about how hot it was when I was a baby. She would lay me on the floor in front of the screen door and wring a dish towel out of cool water. As the breeze blew through the wet towel, it kept me cool.
Faith Keil
Allen, Nebraska

Correction: In Gerry Steinauer's article "The American Plum" in the Aug/Sept issue of NEBRASKAland Magazine, Sherri Seifer's name, of Rafter 7S Jellies, was misspelled.

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Mixed Bag

A Mammal Brief

Pronghorn

By Lindsay Rogers

Although the fossil record indicates there were previously many members of the Antilocapridae family, the pronghorn is now the only living member. It is endemic to North America and is found throughout the western United States.

Pronghorns are known for their speed; they can reach speeds of 60 mph when sprinting. They can maintain long-distance speeds of 40 mph. Although the cheetah is faster when sprinting, it cannot match the pronghorn's sustained running stamina or speed. ■

Lindsay Rogers is an outdoor education specialist with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

PHOTOS BY BOB GRIER (TOP) AND JUSTIN HAAG



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2015/2016 Fall & Winter Events

Youth Mentor Hunt Events

Date	Chapter	Location
9/4/15	Southwest Prairie QF	Stratton
9/5/15	Heritage PF	Alliance
9/7/15	Medicine Creek PF	Curtis
9/12/15	Central Nebraska QF	St Paul
9/13/15	Western Nebraska Ringnecks PF	Ogallala
9/19/15	Washington County PF	Blair
9/27/15	Burt County PF	Tekamah
9/27/15	Sandhills PF	Ainsworth
10/3/15	Dakota/Thurston PF	Walthill
10/3/15	Dixon County PF	Allen
10/3/15	Lewis & Clark PF	Hartington
10/3/15	Little Blue River PF	Hastings
10/3/15	Loup River PF	Ord
10/3/15	Otoe County PF	Benett
10/10/15	Boone County PF	Albion
10/10/15	Dodge County PF	Arlington
10/10/15	Golden Prairie PF	Neligh
10/10/15	Lincoln Creek PF	Aurora
10/11/15	Cedar River Ringnecks PF	Bartlett
10/17/15	Bazile Creek Ringnecks PF	Bloomfield
10/17/15	Cass County PF	Thurman, IA
10/17/15	Corn Country PF	York
10/17/15	Cornhusker PF	Benett
10/17/15	Custer County PF	Broken Bow
10/17/15	Douglas County - West PF	Tekamah
10/17/15	Elkhorn Valley PF	Pierce
10/17/15	Heritage PF	Alliance
10/17/15	High Plains PF	Sidney
10/17/15	Logan Creek PF	Wayne
10/17/15	Loup/Platte Ringnecks PF	Alda

Date	Chapter	Location
10/17/15	Niobrara Valley PF	Atkinson
10/17/15	Ponca Creek Ringnecks PF	Lynch
10/17/15	Republican Valley PF & Wachtel fur Immer QF	Cambridge
10/17/15	Seward County PF	Brainard
10/17/15	Webster County PF	Blue Hill
10/24/15	Antelope Valley PF	Oshkosh
10/24/15	Great Plains PF	Holdrege
10/24/15	Kearney County PF	Minden
10/24/15	Lower Elkhorn Valley PF	West Point
10/24/15	Lower Platte PF	Ashland
10/24/15	Maple Creek PF	Clarkson
10/24/15	Plains Sportsman PF	McCook
10/24/15	Prairie Hills PF	Kearney
10/24/15	Rainwater Basin PF	Geneva
10/24/15	Saline County PF	Wilber
10/24/15	Sherman County PF	Loup City
10/24/15	South Central Nebraska PF	Alma
10/24/15	Southwestern Nebraska PF	Imperial
12/5/15	Nemaha Valley PF	Humboldt
12/6/15	Platte County PF	Brainard
2/20/16	Franklin County Covey QF	Republican City
3/19/16	Platte River PF	Lexington
TBD	Cody Ringnecks PF	North Platte
TBD	Four Seasons PF	Hebron
TBD	Heartland PF	Tekamah
TBD	Mile High PF	Kimball
TBD	Nuckolls County PF	Nelson
TBD	Oregon Trail PF	Scottsbluff
TBD	Southeast Nebraska PF	Beatrice

Chapter Banquets

Date	Chapter	Location
9/17/15	Dakota/Thurston PF	South Sioux City
9/23/15	Kearney County PF	Minden
9/24/15	Burt County PF	Tekamah
9/26/15	Upper Big Nemaha PF	Tecumseh
10/3/15	Cody Ringnecks PF	North Platte
10/16/15	Cass County PF Youth Banquet	Bellevue
10/17/15	Oregon Trail PF	Scottsbluff
10/17/15	Platte River PF	Lexington
10/17/15	Western Nebraska PF	Ogallala
10/23/15	Big Red PF	Lincoln
10/23/15	Custer County PF	Broken Bow
10/29/15	Loup/Platte Ringnecks PF	Grand Island
10/30/15	Four Seasons PF	Deshler
10/31/15	South Central Nebraska PF	Alma

Date	Chapter	Location
11/7/15	Sandhills PF	Ainsworth
11/12/15	Central Nebraska QF	Howard County
11/13/15	Nuckolls County PF	Nelson
11/21/15	Prairie Hills PF	Kearney
11/28/15	Niobrara Valley PF	Atkinson
1/16/16	Lewis & Clark PF	Bow Valley
1/30/16	Bazile Creek Ringnecks PF	Bloomfield
1/30/16	Great Plains PF	Holdrege
2/5/16	Platte County PF	Columbus
2/6/16	Boone County PF	Albion
2/6/16	Plains Sportsman PF	McCook
2/6/16	Webster County	Blue Hill
2/13/16	Volunteer Appreciation Reception	Kearney

For more information visit www.NebraskaPF.com



Travelogue

By David Bristow

Hastings

The Navy probably isn't the first thing you think of when you hear the name "Hastings, Nebraska." And you might not immediately think of ships and sailors as you drive past the endless acres of funny earthen igloos along Highway 6 – but they tell a naval story of World War II.

You can see the remains of Hasting's war history on a self-guided driving tour planned by the Adams County Historical Society, adamshistory.org. The city's top attraction, however, is the **Hastings Museum of Natural and Cultural History**, which boasts of being the largest municipal museum between Chicago and Denver, hastingsmuseum.org.

Many visitors come not for history but for sports. The **Smith Softball Complex** and newly renovated **Duncan (baseball) Field** host many tournaments and is the current host of the state high school softball tournament. Race and car enthusiasts come to Hastings for **Motorsport Park Hastings (MPH)**, a 2.15-mile road course named by Forbes Magazine as one of its "Best Places to Speed Legally," Racemph.com.

Downtown Hastings features a mix of local shops and restaurants. It's a good place to park the car and go exploring on foot – something the city encourages with its fountains, bronze statues and historic buildings. The **Back Alley Bakery** is a local favorite, with fresh pizza and bread from its wood-fired brick oven. The **Lark** hosts live music with its popular Listening Room Concert Series, Hastingsdowntown.com.

Kool-Aid Days is this town's largest extravaganza, with various events planned over a 3-day schedule each year, Kool-aiddays.com. ■

Hastings History

War news from the Pacific had mostly been bleak during the first half of 1942. Then came reports of the stunning U.S. naval victory at Midway on June 3-7. Just days later, on the 10th, the government announced plans for what would become the nation's largest naval munitions plant. It would be built near Hastings.

It all happened quickly. The government forced the sale of 49,000 acres of farmland; construction began in July and was completed early in 1943. For Hastings, which suffered through years of declining population during the Great Depression, the Naval Ammunition Depot was both a bonanza and a headache. A flood of newcomers resulted in a housing shortage. Rents doubled overnight. Some plant workers complained of price gouging and discrimination. Others saw the community open their homes and welcome newcomers.

The depot itself was enormously productive, with 10,000 military and civilian workers by the end of the war. At one point it was producing more than 40 percent of the U.S. Navy's munitions. It was dangerous work. Twenty-two people died there in four separate explosions. The worst happened Sept. 15, 1944, killing at least nine and injuring 53. The blast was felt a hundred miles away. Even so, the depot's safety record was excellent by wartime standards. The plant closed in 1966.



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The Hastings Museum.



The Lark hosts live music on Friday or Saturday nights.

PHOTO BY JIM HEADLEY

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Above, Charles F. Walsh and his plane at Chadron, Sept. 13, 1911. Below, Walsh flying at Chadron same day.

A Brief History A Birdman at the Fair

By Patricia C. Gaster,
Nebraska State Historical Society

The star attraction of the 1911 Dawes County Fair in Chadron, Sept. 12-15, was the twice-daily exhibition flights by barnstormer Charles F. Walsh (1877-1912), a native of California. Walsh, flying a Curtiss biplane, was advertised by the *Chadron Journal* on Sept. 15 to be “the first aviator to make a flight in northwestern Nebraska. Our skies are used to ducks and other birds but never before have they had bird men going and coming as gracefully as the eagle.”

Walsh experienced only a slight mechanical problem with an engine switch during his flights at Chadron. But he wasn’t so lucky at Kearney, where during a previous exhibition flight on Aug. 4, the plane ran into a telephone wire and crashed into a cottonwood tree. Walsh, unhurt, arranged for another plane to be shipped to Kearney and on Aug. 9 made six successful flights before a crowd of about 4,000 people. From Kearney, Walsh traveled to Fremont where he ran into legal difficulties after his exhibition flight’s emergency landing damaged a farmer’s cornfield.

Shortly after his appearance at Chadron in mid-September, Walsh was in Neligh, where “after the first flight the machine was wrecked and the driver thrown out.” Fortunately, the aviator wasn’t hurt. In October, Walsh made



exhibition flights in Beatrice at the Gage County Fair, Oct. 2-6, where he told the *Beatrice Express* on Oct. 5 that he had been flying for a year and a half and that “there is very little danger in a straight-away flight. It is cutting the fancy stunts that has caused the death of so many of the birdmen.”

Walsh’s words now seem prophetic. His flying career came to an abrupt end scarcely a year later, when he plunged to his death on Oct. 3, 1912, during an exhibition flight in Trenton, New Jersey. He was reportedly attempting his crowd-pleasing “dip of death” stunt at the time. ■

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Foreword by Cindy Noland

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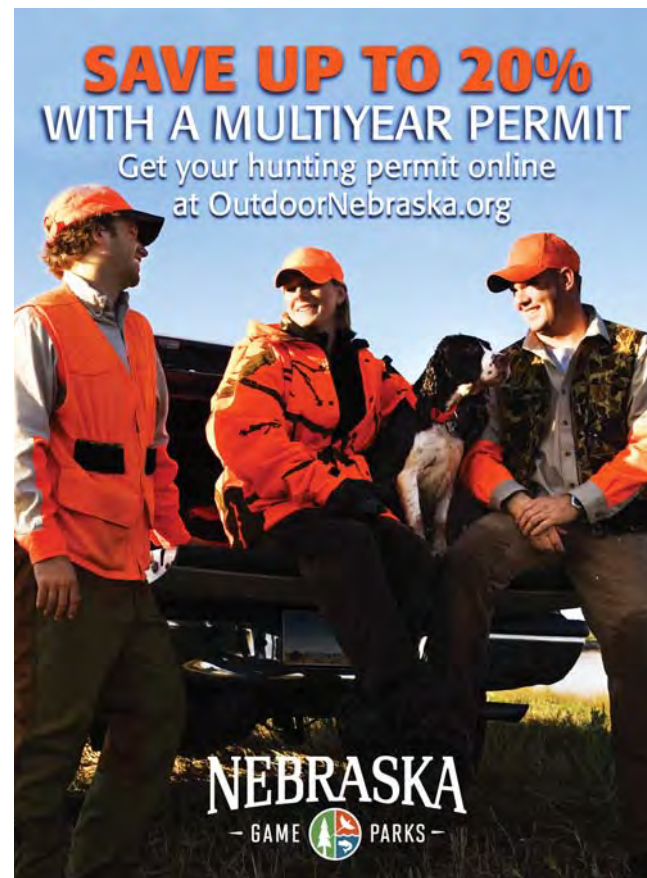
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Ride the Cowboy Trail by Horse

By Jenny Nguyen

Challenge yourself and your horse on this four-day, 86-mile journey from Valentine to Stuart while experiencing the beauty of northern Nebraska this October. We will travel approximately 20 miles per day, and invite experienced riders to join us for all or part of the trail.

Riders are responsible for their own horse(s), travel, board, feed, trailering, tack and equipment, camping/hotel, food, water, fees, etc. All horses must be Coggins tested and up-to-date on vaccinations. Horses should be comfortable with wooden bridge crossings and some traffic. Ride at your own risk.

Schedule:

Travel Day – Monday, Oct. 12: Valentine

Boarding: Cherry County Fairgrounds, \$15/night/horse

Camping: Valentine City Park, \$5/night - showers, no hookups

Day 1 – Tuesday, Oct. 13: Valentine to Wood Lake, 23.2 miles

Boarding: Mark Stoner's in Wood Lake, \$15/night

Camping: Wood Lake City Park, Free - full hookups

Day 2 – Wednesday, Oct. 14: Wood Lake to Ainsworth, 21.5 miles

Boarding: Sandhills Animal Health Center, free-will



PHOTOS BY JENNY NGUYEN

donation

Camping: East City Park, \$10/night - full hookups, showers

Day 3 – Thursday, Oct. 15: Ainsworth to Bassett, 18.4 miles

Boarding: Bassett Livestock Barn, Free

Camping: Bassett City Park, Free - full hookups, showers

Day 4 – Friday, Oct. 16: Bassett to Stuart, 22.9 miles

Boarding: Stuart Rodeo Grounds, cost TBD

Camping: Stuart City Park, \$10/night - full hookups, showers

For more information, e-mail The Farm at Butterflat Creek at lcstava@msn.com or jenny.nguyen@nebraska.gov. ■

Capturing the Historical Treasures of Nebraska Through Your Lens

By Kim Einspahr

From Adams to Antelope, Scottsbluff to Sheridan, Dundy to Douglas – each of Nebraska's 93 counties is home to historic and hidden treasures from the past. Photographers

are being called to submit original photographs for an exhibit entitled "Bridges: Sharing Our Past to Enrich the Future" that will serve as a bridge to link history, generations and culture.

The call runs through Jan. 4, 2016 and is sponsored by the Hildegard Center for the Arts, in partnership with the Nebraska Tourism Commission and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

All submitted photos will become part of a virtual exhibit, and selected photos will be included in a statewide traveling exhibit to celebrate Nebraska's Sesquicentennial in 2017, may appear in Nebraska Tourism printed materials and will be featured in a digital catalog.

Judging will be conducted by NEBRASKAland contributor Joel Sartore, George Tuck and Steve and Bobbie Olson. For details and to submit photos, visit Hildegardcenter.org. ■



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

Nebraska Bird Library

Sponsored by

House Finch

Song or calls: Song is series of warbling notes that end in "zeee," lacks musical trills and rolls.

Description: Adult male has brown cap and brown upperparts; front of head, throat, breast and rump are usually red but can vary from orange to yellow; underparts are streaked with brown. Females and juveniles are brown-streaked overall; lack white facial markings.

Habitat: Open woods, river bottom thickets, scrubby vegetation, ranchlands and residential areas.

Where in Nebraska: Locally common permanent resident in both eastern and western Nebraska. Least common in the Sandhills.

Status: Eastern and western populations are a result of rapid immigration into the state from both directions during recent years. The entire state will likely be colonized within a few years.

Fun Facts: House finches were originally introduced in Long Island, New York, in 1940 where they flourished and have since spread all over the United States. ■

To learn about more birds visit:

NebraskaBirdLibrary.org.



PHOTO BY JEFFE KURRUS

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Omaha
Harrison Village Mall
168th & Harrison
Omaha, NE 68136
(402) 504-4450

wildbirdhabitatstore.com

Wingtips by Wild Bird Habitat

House Finch were endemic west of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1940 a large number were trapped to be sold in the east as Hollywood Finch in the pet trade.

A protected native species these finch were released in New York when the plot was discovered by Fish and Wildlife.

These House Finch established an eastern population which spread west and have become a common resident bird species in Nebraska.

House Finch feed exclusively on seeds and are frequent visitors to backyard bird feeders.

House Finch will feed on Nyjer thistle seed and sunflower but seem to prefer safflower seed.





50th WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

EXHIBIT ON DISPLAY
OCTOBER 3, 2015 – JANUARY 3, 2016

DURHAM 4

Wildlife Photographer of the Year is co-owned by the Natural History Museum and BBC Worldwide.

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Supported locally by the Douglas County Commissioners, the Hawks Foundation, the Dillon Foundation, the Iowa West Foundation, the Lincoln Financial Foundation, the Mammel Foundation, the Gilbert M. and Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation, U.S. Bank, Fraser Stryker PC LLO, Children's Hospital & Medical Center and the America First Foundation. Media support provided by KMTV Channel 3.

DURHAMMUSEUM.ORG

My Photo Tip: The Poor Man's Remote

By Justin Haag

My favorite time for landscape photography is as I'm facing a rising or setting sun. In order to get a sharp image of the entire scene in low light, I place the camera on a tripod with a small aperture and slow shutter speed.

With the shutter open for several seconds, any movement of the camera can sabotage an image's sharpness. Even pushing the button can move the camera enough to cause blur.

To combat this issue, I sometimes follow the tried and true method of plugging in a remote cable release. It keeps your hands far from the camera body and eliminates movement. For the sake of convenience, though, I usually find myself resorting to what fellow *NEBRASKAland* staffers refer to as "the poor man's remote." That is, the self-timer.

Most DSLRs allow the timer to be



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

adjusted, with a default of 30 seconds or so in order for the photographer to push the button and get situated in a family photo. With one minor adjustment, it also works great for landscape photography. By setting the timer to its fastest setting, two seconds on my camera bodies, any movement caused by my finger hitting the button settles before the shutter opens. Also, at

two seconds, there's little to no change in the scene. One of the only challenges for me with this method is remembering to change the camera back from self-timer mode. It usually pops into mind at my next location, as I'm pushing the button and watching a fast moving animal escape the frame during that two-second delay. ■

Pheasant and Quail Increasing Statewide

By Justin Haag

Rejoice, pheasant hunters. The Game and Parks Commission's annual Upland Game Hunting Outlook indicates Nebraska's abundance of upland game is on the rise.

Surveys and staff reports indicate that pheasant populations are up in all areas of the state compared to last year, with the southwestern and Panhandle regions expected to provide the best hunting opportunities.

Relatively mild winter conditions and timely moisture triggered gains in bird health and habitat. Not only have birds had more cover this year, but lush conditions also have brought about an abundance of insects for them to eat.

Pheasants aren't the only game species thriving from the improved conditions. Numbers are up for sharp-tailed grouse, quail and cottontails, as they, too, have rebounded from challenges posed by drought and severe winter weather between 2009 and 2013.

Details may be found in the full report, which may be found by searching "2015 Upland Game Hunting Outlook" at OutdoorNebraska.org.



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN

Send Us Your Trail Cam Photos!



Damon Shada captured a photo of these white-tailed deer on private land north of Ainsworth.

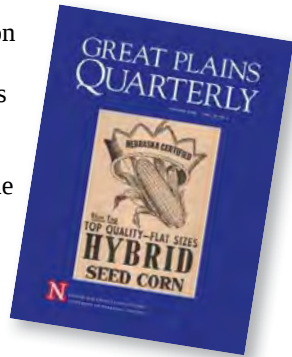
Please submit your trail camera photos by e-mail to: nebrtrailcam@gmail.com. Also include any information that will help explain your photo.

Hitler's Impact on the Great Plains Examined

By Jeff Kurrus

In the 2015 winter edition of *Great Plains Quarterly*, author Larkin Powell writes that even though Hitler never managed to bomb America, his war with the United States and the world made a lasting and surprising impact on Nebraska wildlife.

The article serves as a reminder of the many historical factors that continue to shape habitat today. More information can be found at Unl.edu/plains. ■



Never Leave the Field Early Again

By Julie Geiser

Pocket gun cleaning kits are recommended tools for every hunter. They eliminate the need to leave the field early when your gun barrel gets clogged. Lightweight and compact, the kits can fit inside a coat pocket or day pack. They make cleaning snow, mud or debris in the barrel simple, allowing hunters to resume the hunt in minutes.

Pocket kits are a must for pistol and rifle shooters or wing hunters; kits come in multiple calibers and gauges for rifles, handguns and shotguns and are reasonably priced ranging from around \$13 on up. Homemade kits should include memory-flex cleaning rod(s) to fit your firearms, brass jags, obstruction removers, T-handle, small bottle of gun cleaning solution and oil, brass patch holder, all caliber/gauge patches, and brass bore brushes for desired caliber/gauge sizes.

Most kit supplies have universal



A typical kit the author carries when she is out in the field hunting.

screw-on attachments. You can also purchase stand-alone supplies at most sporting goods stores to customize your own kit.

Other items to add might include a compact coated cleaning rod, cotton swabs, folded cleaning cloth, compact bore light, bore snakes, zip ties, toothbrush cut to fit the container or

pouch, a small folding knife or multi-tool, lens cleaning cloth for optics and a small flathead screwdriver.

Cleaning kit items can be stored in small plastic containers, zippered pouches sold at sporting goods or department stores, or small plastic bottles with a wide mouth like ketchup or mayonnaise bottles. ■

More Public Hunting Land Open

By Eric Fowler

Three new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers properties covering nearly 1,000 acres on the Missouri River floodplain in southeastern Nebraska are now open for hunting, fishing, hiking and bird watching.

The properties, acquired from willing sellers under the Missouri River Recovery Program, were mostly in crop production but were prone to flooding. They will have a mixture of early-succession plant communities associated with flooding disturbance, including willows, cottonwoods and a variety of early-successional plants valued by wildlife. They also include wetlands, but the amount of water in the sites will depend on river stage and rain and snowfall.

Hunting opportunities include deer, dove, pheasant, quail, rabbit, turkey and waterfowl. Only non-toxic shot is allowed.

One of the sites, Sonora Bend in Nemaha County, is currently accessible only from the Missouri River. The other two, Civil Bend in Cass County and Cottier Bend in Richardson County, can be accessed from the river or adjacent county roads.



For more on these and other Corps' sites along the Missouri River, go to Moriverrecovery.usace.army.mil and click on the Maps tab.

Civil Bend USACE - Cass County; 3½ E, 1 S of Union; 381 acres in two separate tracts

Sonora Bend USACE - Nemaha County; 2 N of Brownville; river access only; 190 acres

Cottier Bend USACE - Richardson County; ½ W, 6½ N of Rulo; 388 acres. ■

from NEBRASKAland's Trail Tales magazine for kids

junior journal

interesting notes for readers of all ages

by Lindsay Rogers and Donna Schimonitz

What Makes a Bird a Bird?

Lindsay Rogers, Wildlife Education Specialist
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

What makes a bird a bird? Well there's the fact that birds can fly. But so can bats, and bats are mammals. Birds lay eggs. But so do reptiles, fish and amphibians. Birds are endothermic, meaning their body temperature remains the same at all time. But mammals are endothermic, too. So what makes a bird a bird?

Laying Hard Eggs

Unlike most reptiles, amphibians and fish, birds incubate their nests. This means they sit on the eggs to keep them warm. If the eggs get too cold, the embryo inside could die. Because birds sit on their eggs, the eggs must be sturdy. This is why bird eggs have hard shells.

A bird egg shell is made of calcium. Birds get some of this calcium from seeds, plants and insects. Birds will eat old egg shells, snail shells and calcium-rich rocks to ensure they have enough calcium to produce strong eggs. All this calcium is deposited around the egg just before it is laid, and is also important for the developing embryo to be able to grow strong bones.

Hollow Bones

Bird bones are not hollow like a straw, but are filled with a network of structures to support the hard outside. Between these network structures, the bone is filled with air. This helps make the bone strong but light in weight, which is important as a bird tries to fly.

Feathers

A bird has many different kinds of feathers. The down feathers are fluffy, soft feathers that keep the bird warm by trapping air close to the body.

Body feathers are the short feathers on top of the down feathers that cover the bird's body. These feathers repel water and keep the bird clean.

The flight feathers include the wing and tail feathers. These larger, stiff feathers help steer the birds as they fly. If you have ever watched a bird soaring in the sky, you might see slight movements of the tail or wings that change the bird's direction. It is the flight feathers that are at work here.

Go outside and see for yourself why birds are amazing creatures with their own set of unique characteristics.

In My Backyard

Match the bird names with their photos.

white-breasted nuthatch,
house finch, dark-eyed junco,
black-capped chickadee,
downy woodpecker



Rocky Hoffmann



Rocky Hoffmann



Don Carroll



Don Cunningham



Rocky Hoffmann

Answers from top to bottom:
house finch, downy woodpecker, black-capped chickadee,
white-breasted nuthatch, dark-eyed junco.

NATURE CALENDAR

- **Mice store seeds and nuts underground and in nests:** mid-September through October
- **Hickory nuts ripen and fall:** Late September through mid-October
- **Insects prepare for winter:** Early October through winter
- **Look for old bird nests when walking through the woods:** All Winter



Wood mouse photo by Thinkstock

Upcoming Events

by Jerry Kane

Contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at 402-471-0641 or visit OutdoorNebraska.org for more information. Visit HuntSafeNebraska.org for a list of hunter education classes and BoatSafeNebraska.org for a list of boating safety classes.

September 24
Introduction to Trapping Workshop
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

September 26
Firearm bull elk hunting season opens

September 26
Public land antlerless elk hunting season opens

September 26
Nebraska Youth Smallbore Silhouette Invitational
Pressey Wildlife Management Area, Oconto

September 26-27
Centennial Bass Club Tournament
Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area, Ogallala

October 1
Crow hunting season opens statewide

October 1-31
Paddlefish snagging season

October 2-4
Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop
Nebraska National Forest, Halsey

October 3
Dark goose hunting season opens in North Central Unit

October 3
Light goose hunting regular season opens

October 3
White-fronted goose hunting season opens

October 3
Duck and coot hunting seasons open in Zones 2 and 4

October 3-4
Youth waterfowl hunting season in Zone 1

October 3-4
Living History Weekend
Fort Atkinson State Historical Park (SHP), Fort Calhoun

October 3-4
Historic Firearms Display
Fort Hartsuff SHP, Burwell

October 3-4, 23-24
Pioneer Longrifle Rendezvous
Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 3-5
Autumn Harvest Art Show
Eugene T. Mahoney State Park (SP), Ashland

October 4
Muzzleloader antelope hunting season closes

October 4, 11, 18, 25
Living History
Arbor Lodge SHP, Nebraska City

October 6, 20
Ladies Day at the Range
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 9
Trick or Treat at the Town
Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 9-18
German Short Hair Dog Trials
Fort Robinson SP, Crawford

October 10
Howl in the Hills Night Hike
Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Gering

October 10
Duck and coot hunting seasons open in Zone 1

October 10, 16, 17, 23, 24
Haunted Hollow Hayrack Rides
Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 10, 17
Hallowfest Ponca SP, Ponca

October 10, 17, 24
Halloween Decorating and Costume Contests
Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 10-25
Firearm antelope hunting season

October 11
Family Rendezvous
Platte River SP, Louisville

October 12
Columbus Day
Game and Parks offices closed; Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center is open

October 15
Introduction to Trapping Workshop
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 17
Living History
Rock Creek Station SHP, Fairbury

October 17
Pumpkin Carvers
Calamus SRA, Burwell

October 17-18
Youth waterfowl hunting season in Zone 3

October 21
Upland Game Hunting Workshop
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 22
Waterfowl Hunting Workshop
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 23
Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners meeting, Fairbury

October 24
Duck and coot hunting seasons open in Zone 3

October 24-25
DeSoto October muzzleloader deer season

October 24-25
Youth pheasant, quail and partridge hunting season

October 25
Archery and firearm bull elk hunting seasons close

October 25
Private land and public land antlerless elk hunting seasons close

October 27
Deer Hunting Workshop
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 28
Dark goose hunting season opens in East, Platte River, Panhandle and Niobrara Units

October 28
Deer Hunting Workshop
Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium, Gretna

October 29
Deer Hunting Workshop
Chadron State College, Chadron

October 30
Deer Hunting Workshop
NGPC District Office, North Platte

October 30
Dove (all species) hunting season closes

October 31
Eurasian collared-dove only hunting season opens

October 31
Pheasant, quail and partridge hunting seasons open

October 31
Raccoon and Virginia opossum hunting seasons close

October 31
Bullfrog season closes

Deer Stand Safety

By Jeff Kurrus

According to the Tree Stand Manufacturers Association, 82 percent of hunters who fall from tree stands are not wearing full body harnesses, and falls from a tree stand are the leading cause of injuries during the gun deer season, according to studies in both Wisconsin and Ohio. But don't wait until firearm season to begin wearing a full body harness. Start now, and visit Tmastands.com for more information on staying safe when you're off the ground during deer season. ■



This photo was taken from 20 feet up in a climbing stand on the private land of Chris Polenz in Sarpy County. Neither you nor I can survive this fall, so wear a full-body safety harness anytime you are hunting off the ground in any capacity.

NEBRASKAland Visitor



Last issue's winner of the Visitor drawing was Wayne Cross of Madison, Nebraska, who found the **firefly** on page 29.

Readers are encouraged to contact NEBRASKAland within 10 days after this issue's publication with the correct page number and name of this issue's "Visitor" – a critter found in Nebraska. We will then gather the correct entries and draw one to win a NEBRASKAland mug. To enter each month, write:

NEBRASKAland Visitor
2200 North 33rd Street,
Lincoln, NE 68503.

Or e-mail:

Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov
with "Visitor" in the subject line of the message.

HINT: This issue's visitor is not on pages 4, 12, 21, 53, or 70.

The Eastern firefly (Photinus pyralis) is common in Nebraska, and relatively large, with adults approximately ½-inch in length. Its head is protected by the reddish-yellow pronotum, with a black spot in the center. Its wings are concealed by pliable black wing covers, unlike most beetles which have hard wings covers. Fireflies are active mostly at night, when you'll see their flashes of light on a summer evening. But does that light also make them a target for predators? The answer is no; in fact, just the opposite. Fireflies contain chemicals that taste bitter and may even be poisonous to predators. Their lights act similarly to bright coloration, warning hungry birds and spiders that a firefly is not a tasty treat. Should a firefly be attacked, it can release drops of blood, known as reflex bleeding, to deter the predator, which quickly learns to look elsewhere.

Special thanks to Julie Van Meter, State Entomologist, Nebraska Department of Agriculture. Photo from Thinkstock.



Wish I Was Fishing...

By Sarah Kocher

For most fisherfolk, there are only two types of days: days when we're fishing, and days when we wish we're fishing. Fortunately, Rich Tosches's book, *Zippering My Fly: Moments in the Life of an American Sportsman*, has provided an adequate alternative for the latter.

Zippering My Fly sweeps the reader through anecdotes based on Tosches's many fly-fishing adventures. The stories, elaborate in themselves, border on fantastical when touched with Tosches's humor. Half his comedy gets its charm from its repetition; his one-liners make you feel as though you can see Tosches sitting at his computer, giggling to himself as he types about Monica Lewinsky and the breeding habits of sheep (and, of course, fly-fishing). This is paired with humor so ridiculous, you're laughing at the surprise of its randomness as much as the punchline.

The stories themselves also encompass a pleasing variety, excellent for all who already enjoy or would like to learn more about the many aspects of the sport: tying flies, international fishing trips, tournaments, the sport's challenges – including, but not limited to, aggressive cows – and, among other things, hooking your own ears with your fly rod.

Tosches nails the delicate balance between encouraging his readers to keep turning pages and to get outdoors themselves (hooking ears not recommended.) ■



A Walk on the Beach

Big Alkali Lake

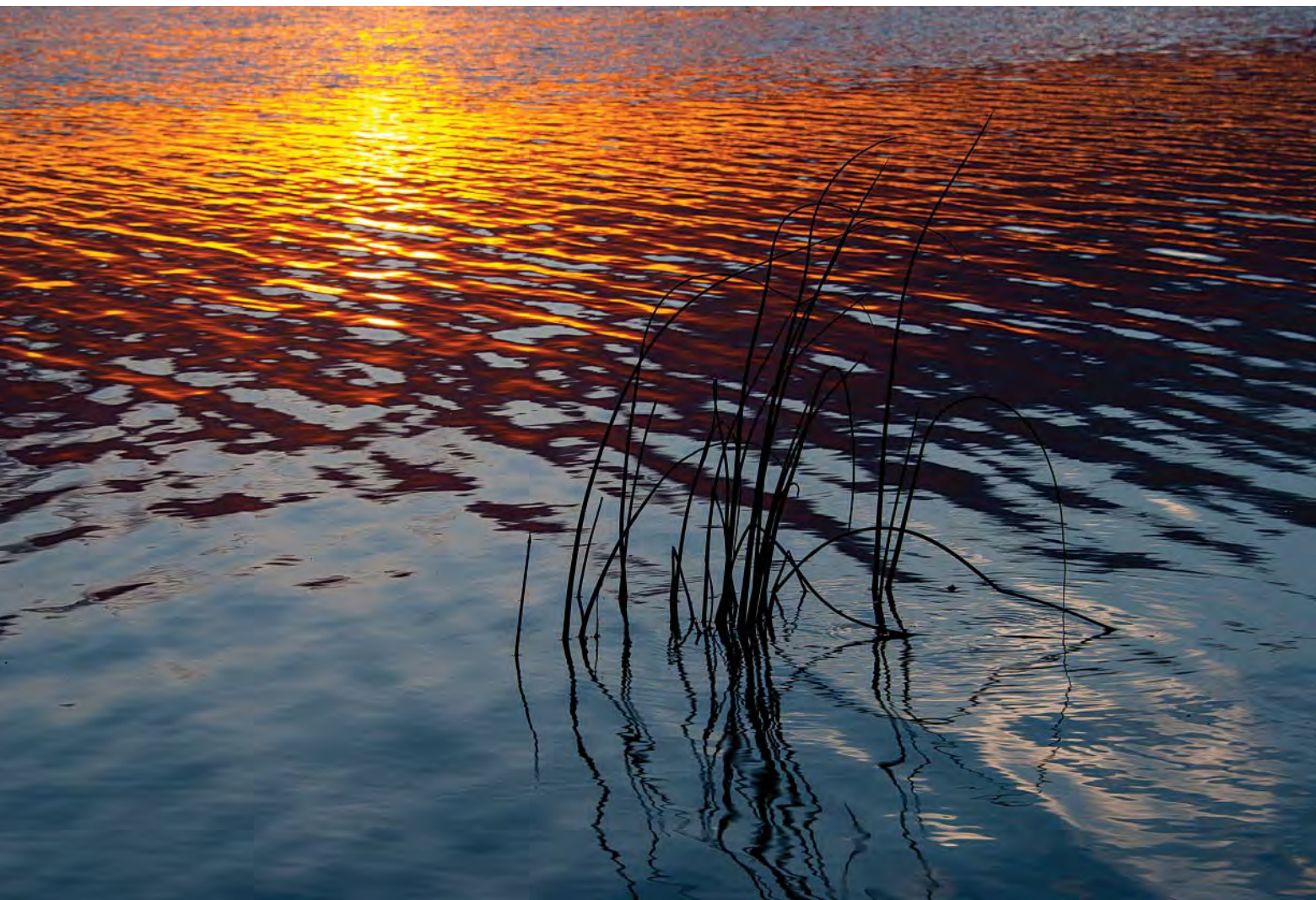
Photos and story by Gerry Steinauer

A friend and I traditionally hunt grouse in early October on the remote Valentine National Wildlife Refuge located in the heart of the Cherry County Sandhills. We stay nearby at the Game Commission's quaint Alkali Fish Camp nestled on the shore of Big Alkali Lake. Mornings before our mid-day hunts and evenings following, I often walk the beach, enjoying the Sandhills autumn.

Last year, Big Alkali's waters were low, exposing a wide, vegetated shoreline. Most plants, including scattered willows and cottonwoods hugging the high-water line, were ablaze in yellow, though the abundant bulrushes remained green, harvesting the last rays of the lowering sun. Above the beach, the endless, grassy dunes were frost-hardened a rustic red.

On most outings, the only sounds were the wind rattling leaves and the unceasing, gentle lapping of waves. The chatter of summer birds had long faded, but not all had abandoned the beach to the coming chill. Occasionally, dull-colored sparrows darted about the rushes and southbound shorebirds and waterfowl had recently left long-toed impressions in the wet shoreline sand. Tracks also told of the midnight wanderings of several raccoons, a doe and fawn deer and a lone coyote. Soon Big Alkali's waters would ice over, silence the waves and leave only the sound of the wind. ■

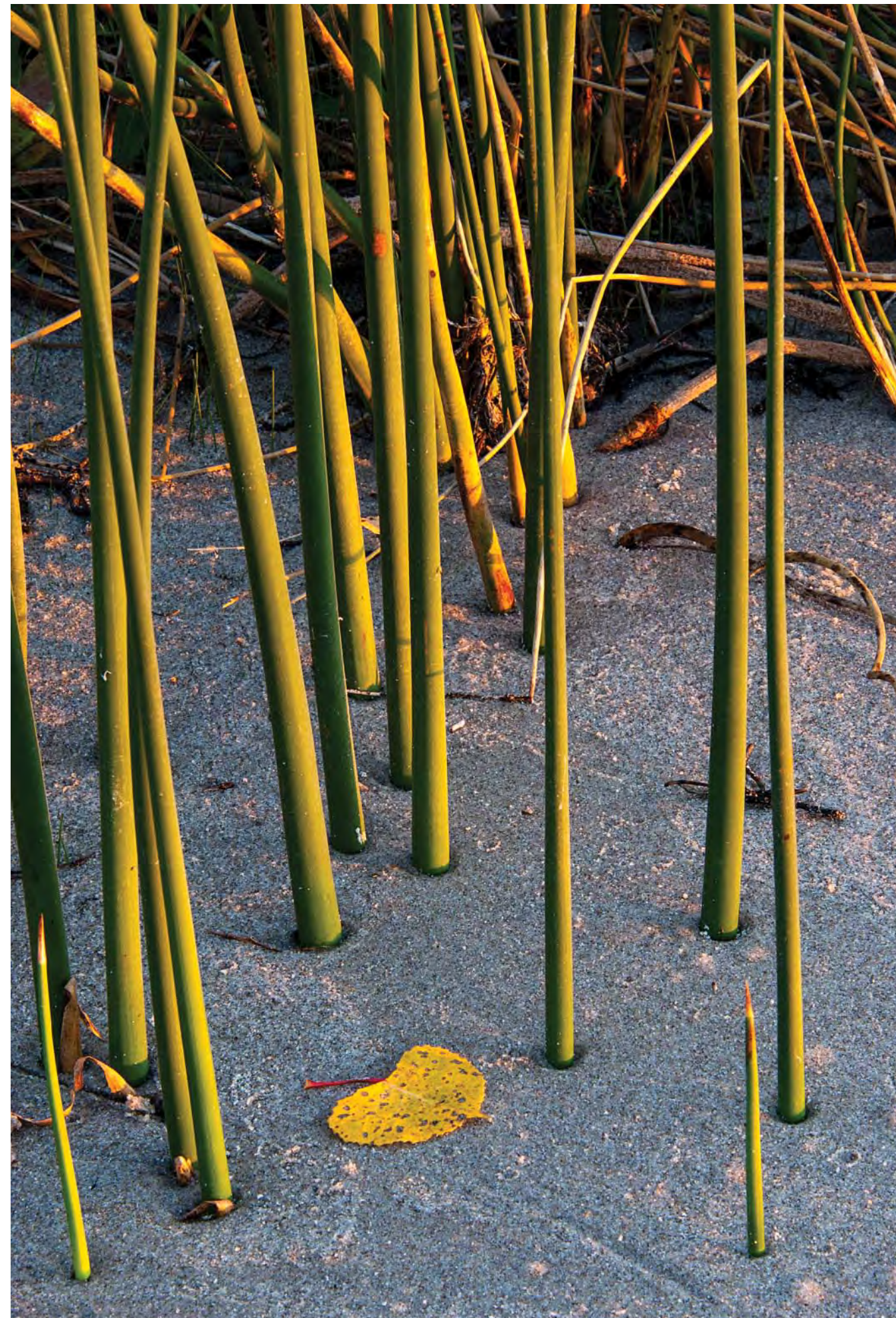
The October sun sets over Big Alkali Lake. The 823-acre lake reaches nearly 12 feet in depth, placing it among the deepest of Sandhill lakes.

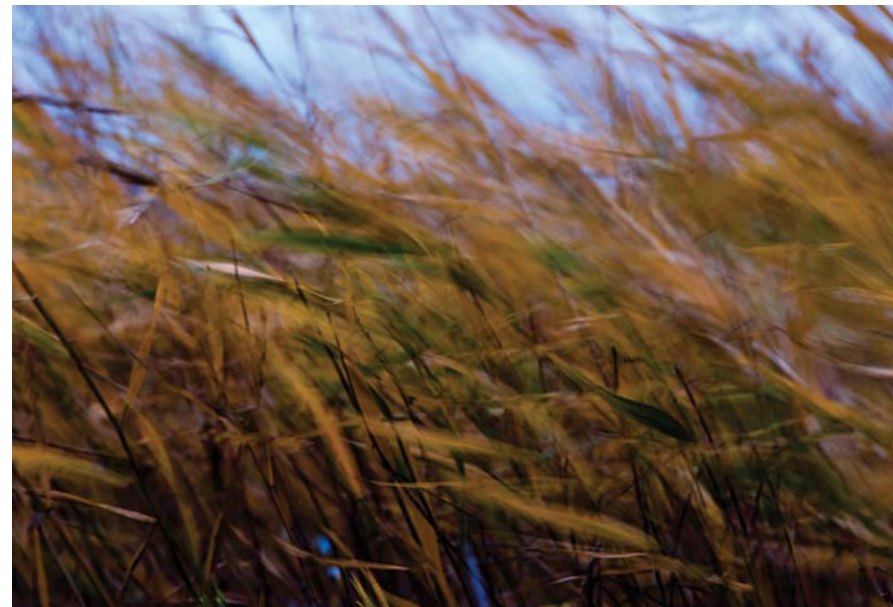


ABOVE: Hardstem bulrush is abundant in the shallows of Big Alkali. A hard sand bottom, moderate alkalinity, and the presence of invasive carp allow few species of aquatic plants to survive in the lake.

RIGHT: A first year rosette of fourpoint evening-primrose grows prostrate on the loose, dry sands of the upper beach. This beautiful, yellow-flowered biennial is found in sandy habitats over much of the state.

OPPOSITE: Hardstem bulrush remains green well into autumn, harvesting the last rays of the lowering sun.





ABOVE: The tracks of a foraging raccoon wander along the wet shoreline sands.

LEFT: Brisk fall winds rustle the stems of common reed. Stands of this native grass often reach 12 feet in height. The introduced European variety of the plant is an aggressive invader of sandbars and wetlands in the state.

OPPOSITE: A summer nest, possibly that of a red-winged blackbird, lingers among decaying rushes.

While It Lasts

The Colors of Fall

By Eric Fowler

The stroke of the paintbrush starts in the northwestern corner of Nebraska, near Fort Robinson State Park, and sweeps across the state to Indian Cave, turning the green leaves of summer hues of yellow, red, orange and purple.

It starts with the sumac, which turns a fiery red in some years even before September arrives. Vines in the understory are next, with Virginia creeper and wild grape turning shades of red. By mid-September, green ash is ablaze in yellow. When October comes, yellow has begun flowing from west to east in the cottonwoods that tower above the rivers. By the middle of

the month, burr oaks along the forested bluffs of the Platte and Missouri rivers in eastern Nebraska have begun to turn dusty brown, with red and black oaks adding spots of red.

Mother Nature's painting may be more vibrant one year than the next. If she so chooses, it might remain on display into November. Or she might send a chill down from the north, erasing the color and leaving the slate clean for the year to come.

Enjoy fall while it lasts. It's never long enough. ■

Gun Dog First Aid

Story and photos by Jenny Nguyen

In case your four-legged hunting partner gets injured in the field.

Hunting dogs are a special group. They love the hunt just as much as their masters, and they are family just as much as they are working partners. Energetic, athletic and brave, with hearts as true as steel, good gun dogs will stay quietly by your side in the duck blind, run twice the distance you do in the field and retrieve the last bird of the day with as much fervor as the first.

However, the outdoors does have its hazards. From minor cuts to more serious injuries, be prepared when your four-legged hunting companion goes down.

Bleeding

Many injuries in the field will involve some form of bleeding. Most are superficial and will require little more than direct pressure and a bandage, but heavy bleeding can be unnerving. If this occurs, stay calm and attempt to stop the bleeding on site.

Field Treatment

There are two types of bleeding: arterial and venous.

Arterial bleeding is “usually more forceful, bright red, and pulsating; it will be going away from the heart. Venous bleeding will be more constant, bluish and going toward the heart,” said Dr. Randy Acker in his book *Field Guide to Dog First Aid*.

Superficial Wounds – For superficial wounds, apply direct pressure over the wound with a clean cloth or gauze sponges until bleeding stops, then flush wound with an antiseptic cleanser such as saline solution or diluted chlorhexidine; sterile water is also an option. Bandage with more gauze sponges, or non-stick Telfa pad, and then apply vet wrap or first-aid tape. Bleeding should stop within five minutes under normal circumstances. For large cuts that require stapling, see “Cuts from Barbed Wire.”

Forceful Bleeding – For more forceful bleeding, apply pressure above the wound (toward the heart) for arterial bleeding, and apply pressure below the wound for venous. When the wound stops bleeding, flush it out with sterile water or antiseptic solution. Then bandage with gauze or Telfa pad and then vet wrap. See a veterinarian immediately.

Uncontrolled Bleeding – If you have the sinking feeling that a wound will not stop bleeding, apply pressure while the dog is immediately transported to the nearest veterinarian. An extra set of hands will help here.

Cuts from Barbed Wire

These cuts are common when hunting in the Midwest. Without thinking, a dog may run right through a fence to chase game. Cuts vary from small nicks to larger lacerations that need immediate attention. While hunting near barbed wire, be sure to keep a close eye on your dog and check for cuts regularly.

Field Treatment

Body – Small cuts are simply treated with antibiotic ointment, gauze and bandage, while larger cuts may require a skin stapler – a must-have tool for sportsmen who like to hunt with their dogs in remote areas. When you’re miles



Lacerated ear margins can bleed profusely due to high blood vessel density. A styptic pencil can be used to quickly clot small wounds.



Sandburs can cause skin irritation and infection. Carry a metal comb in your first-aid kit to remove them from your dog's hair.

First-Aid Kit Essentials

Work with your veterinarian to customize a first-aid kit that is right for your dog and your style of hunting. Here are some items that you may want to have in your kit:

Instruments: hemostat/needle nose pliers, thumb forceps/tweezers, scissors, toenail clippers, thermometer, skin stapler, metal comb

Cleansers and Antibiotics: antiseptic solution (saline or diluted chlorhexidine), eyewash (saline solution), eye ointment, antibiotic ointment

Dressing/Bandages: gauze pads/rolls, cast padding, nonstick pads (Telfa), first-aid waterproof adhesive tape, vet wrap, elastic wrap (Elastikon)

Other Items: muzzle, medical gloves, anesthetic for wound suturing (Lidocaine) and hypodermic needles, anesthetic for eyes (proparacaine drops), newspaper/magazine for splinting, antihistamine for insect bites/stings and weed allergies ■



Muzzled Dogs Can't Bite

A dog in pain and fear may bite, no matter how much he or she loves you. When treating an injury that may cause high levels of discomfort to your dog, such as bandaging a broken leg or skin stapling, it is a good idea to apply a muzzle. Carry a store-bought muzzle inside your first-aid kit or apply a make-shift muzzle using a string or shoelace.

To make a muzzle, cautiously lay a string or shoelace on the bridge of the dog's nose. Tie an overhand knot underneath the nose then bring both ends of the string behind the neck and tie together. ■



and miles away from the nearest veterinarian and your dog has a large laceration that is susceptible to infection, a skin stapler is an easy, effective way to close large cuts without messing with a needle and thread.

First, make sure severe bleeding has stopped (see "Bleeding"), and then clean the wound. If necessary, muzzle your dog and inject local anesthesia (Lidocaine) around the edges of the wound with a small, 25-gauge needle. Point the arrow of the stapler the same way the cut is running and press, placing staples one-quarter inch apart. Staples should stay in for two weeks to allow for healing before removal by a veterinarian or with a skin staple remover tool. If you suspect that the laceration is more severe than skin deep, see a veterinarian immediately, who may reopen the wound for closer examination.

Lacerated Ear Margins – Ear flaps can bleed due to a variety of reasons: excessive scratching, barbed wire or even fights with another dog. Because dogs' ears have so many blood vessels, they can bleed profusely when cut. Dogs also

tend to shake their heads and scratch when irritation occurs, which prevents the wound from clotting correctly. To treat a bleeding ear in the field, dog trainer and hunt guide Aaron Schroder at Pheasant Bonanza carries a styptic pencil in his first-aid kit. The styptic pencil is rubbed onto the wound to promote clotting. Cold water or ice and pressure work, too.

Once bleeding stops, flush the wound with sterile water or antiseptic solution. To prevent the wound from opening up again due to head shaking or scratching, cut a sock so that it fits over the injured ear. Tape the sock in place and then wrap the entire ear to the dog's head with vet wrap. An Elizabethan collar may be used at home to prevent the dog from pulling off the bandage.

Foot and Pad Injuries

A cut foot pad is a common injury that comes with hunting. Thorns, sandburs, cactus, loose barbed wire, glass, and trash are all things that can cut up a dog's feet. While running, dogs may also catch their nails on plant matter, resulting in torn or damaged nails. These injuries are typically not serious.

Field Treatment

Foot Pad – Examine the affected area carefully and remove any foreign objects with a hemostat or needle nose pliers. Clean wound with antiseptic solution and apply antibiotic salve. For larger cuts, bandage the foot with the following layers: Telfa pad over the actual wound, then wrap leg in a figure eight pattern with cast padding, and then stretchy tape (Elastikon) to keep everything in place. Wrap again with waterproof adhesive white tape for extra support, especially to hold splints (see sidebar page 35). Wrap should be snug, but not so tight that it cuts off circulation.

If a foreign object has broken off inside the pad, pain, swelling, redness and lameness will persist. See a veterinarian as soon as possible to prevent tetanus.

Nails – Torn or severely damaged nails should be removed to prevent infection. Before you begin, muzzle your dog. Then grasp nail firmly with needle nose pliers or a hemostat and pull out the entire nail in a quick, forceful motion. Stop any bleeding with a styptic pencil. Wash out toe with antiseptic solution and bandage. Nail injuries usually heal quickly and extracted nails usually grow back. Try to keep nails trimmed at all times to avoid damage throughout the hunting season.

If you cannot extract the entire nail, trim the nail as short as possible in a 45 degree angle, but avoid cutting into the quick (live part of the nail). Bandage the foot to avoid further damage and infection.

Foxtails and Sandburs

As unimposing as they seem, foxtail seeds can pose many problems to gun dogs. As these seeds dry in late summer and fall, the seed heads fall off the plant and break into smaller segments. One look under a magnifying glass will show you tiny barbs on the bristles. These seeds can make their way between a dog's toes, inside the eyes, ears and nose, and can cause infection if not treated.

Sandburs are common in parts of Nebraska, and can be especially bothersome to dogs with longer hair. Not only do they stick to fur like magnets, they also can cause skin irritation and infection. Some dog owners will choose to clip their dog's hair before hunting season.

Field Treatment

Feet – Check your dog's feet after every hunt. Look for redness and swelling between the toes, often draining with puss and frequent licking by your dog, indicating that a foxtail seed may have lodged inside. Seeds may be difficult to locate, and probing may cause your dog pain – muzzle your dog before investigating. If the seed is deep, break through the abscess with a hemostat and remove the seed. Apply antiseptic. Wounds should heal within three days.

Eyes – While a dog is running through the field, a foxtail seed may get stuck behind the dog's third eyelid, indicated by excessive blinking and pawing. If untreated, this can lead to a corneal ulcer. If you can easily see the seed and it has not penetrated the cornea, carefully remove the seed with tweezers or a moistened Q-tip. If handy, proparacaine anesthetic drops will deaden eye tissues for easier access to the foreign object, stop pain and help decrease pawing. Finally, use a saline solution to wash out the eye. For objects buried deep inside the eye, do not attempt to remove them. See a veterinarian immediately.

Ears – Symptoms include shaking of the head, scratching of the ear and head tilting. If you can see the seed, remove it with your fingers or tweezers. If you can't see it, see a veterinarian to avoid damage to the eardrum.

Nose – A foxtail seed that has made its way into a dog's nose will cause violent sneezing. If not removed, it can cause bleeding and infection. If you can see the seed, pull it out with tweezers. If you do not, see a veterinarian. General anesthesia may be required.

Hair – Examine your dog carefully, especially under the legs and abdomen. Carry a heavy-duty metal comb to remove sandburs from your dog's hair. For stubborn sandburs, use a detangler or cooking oil to help release the burs.

Gunshot Wounds

Occasionally, hunting dogs may be sprayed by gunshot pellets. Whether by careless shooting, not waiting for the bird to flush high enough or freak accident, "instances of long-range peppering by shotgun are usually not emergencies," Acker said, unless the injury involves the eyes. In extreme cases, pellets may penetrate through the abdomen and cause peritonitis.

Field Treatment

Look for holes in the skin with bruising around them,



Flotation vests for waterfowl dogs provide extra warmth, buoyancy and chest protection while hunting in cold, open water.

sometimes with hair inside the wound. With tweezers, remove hair from the wound and remove the pellet if possible. Wash out the wound and apply antibiotic ointment. If you can't find the pellet or want to ensure that you didn't miss any, have your dog x-rayed.

Drowning

Though rare, drowning may occur while waterfowl hunting. Unusually cold water, inclement weather and fatigue can cause drowning in hunting dogs. Use good judgement – consider the weather, the water temperature, water depth, your dog's physical limitations and the distance of the retrieve. Sometimes, an excited dog will jump in the water and try for a long retrieve that is unsafe. Sleet, snow and wind – weather that is characteristic of waterfowl hunting – do not help the situation. If your gut says no, call back your dog immediately.

Field Treatment

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should be performed on a dog that is not breathing and has no heartbeat. To check for heartbeat, lay the dog on its right side and feel for the heartbeat under the chest behind the left elbow. Before performing CPR, check for and remove any obstructions in the dog's mouth. If no heartbeat is detected, close the dog's mouth and breathe into the nostrils until you see the chest rise. Then perform four chest compressions over the heart area. Repeat one breath to four chest compressions "15 times per minute until dog regains consciousness or until five minutes have gone by," Acker said.

Some hunters use flotation vests on their dogs. These vests are often made with neoprene that provides insulation and



Top: Offer hunting dogs plenty of water and shade to prevent dehydration and heat stroke in warm weather.
Left: Remove porcupine quills with needle nose pliers or hemostat. If your dog has been severely hit with more than just a few quills, see a veterinarian.

buoyancy to assist hunting dogs on long retrieves and extra cold days on open water. Additionally, they can provide chest and belly protection to sharp objects, snags and tree limbs in the water. Vests can be especially helpful to older dogs.

Heat Stroke

Early season hunting typically occurs in warm weather, beginning in August and early September. Though highly preventable, heat stroke can hit a dog quickly, leading to damage of internal organs and even death. Hunters who train their dogs in the summer should also be extra careful.

Field Treatment

To prevent heat stroke, make sure your dog is well-conditioned. Rest or rotate dogs regularly and provide water and shade.

Signs of heatstroke include “rapid, noisy breathing; salivation; possible vomiting; dog is down and unable to get up; may be comatose; high body temperature (104-107 degrees) and staggering,” Acker said. If heat stroke occurs, cool down dog immediately with cool water, such as placing the dog in a lake or stream. Or, place the dog in front of an air conditioner or fan for at least 10 minutes.

Porcupine Quills

An excited dog will throw caution to the wind. I’ve seen it once while fox hunting – hounds will glue their noses to the ground and unknowingly barge in too closely to a startled porcupine. A few quills here and there are generally not an emergency, but many in the dog’s mouth or eyes can be. In this case, the immediate attention of a veterinarian is needed, who may administer anesthesia to remove the quills.

Field Treatment

If only a few quills have penetrated the skin, these can be removed in the field with a hemostat or needle nose pliers. With an excited dog, restrain its legs with duct tape or rope, and if needed, force its mouth open with a stick or belt held horizontally to the back of the mouth. Hold down the skin with your other hand and pull out the quill firmly with pliers, but try not to break any quills. Broken quills are difficult to locate and can also migrate to other parts of the dog’s body, causing infection. Do not remove any quills that have penetrated a dog’s eyes; see a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia is the condition of critically low blood sugar and may occur in humans and dogs. In anticipation for the hunt, many dogs will not eat. They will hunt hard and then get low blood sugar. Blood sugar, or glucose, is the body’s main source of energy. Low levels will result in decreased energy and possibly loss of consciousness.

Field Treatment

“Dogs will stagger and look like they are going to seizure,” said Dr. Kent Forney, a Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioner who owns the Nebraska Animal Medical Center in Lincoln.

Try to get your pet to eat, especially before a hunt. “I get up about 4 a.m. to feed my dogs and go back to bed,” Forney said. “Then at lunch I give them something they will eat, usually a can of food. This gives them the energy they need.”

Dr. Melissa Heithold of the Wayne Veterinary Clinic suggests: “Carry corn syrup or honey packets. If the dog is unable to take a meal, apply syrup or honey to the gums,” and it will get absorbed.

Words from a Veterinarian

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of care,” Forney said. “Work with your dog every day so they are ready for hunting. Then once you are done with the hunt, the dog comes first. Wipe them down with a towel, look in their eyes for weed seeds. Check the chest and abdomen for cuts. Check the feet. Feed them and give them water. Give them a clean dry bed. *Then* have a drink. Never before.” ■

Special thanks to Dr. Melissa Heithold and Nebraska Game and Parks Commissioners Dr. Kent Forney and Dr. Mark Pinkerton for their expertise.

Bandaging a Paw

The foot bandage is a must-know technique for gun dog owners. Use it to treat injury to foot pads, laceration on the legs, fractured limbs and to prevent infection. Before bandaging a foot, make sure bleeding has stopped. Flush the wound with sterile water or antiseptic wash and then apply antibiotic ointment. Bandage should be snug, but not so tight that it cuts off circulation. Replace bandage if it begins to smell or becomes wet.

Supplies:

Telfa Pads – Non-stick padding over the wound to promote healing.

Cast Padding – Provides even pressure over wound to prevent further bleeding.

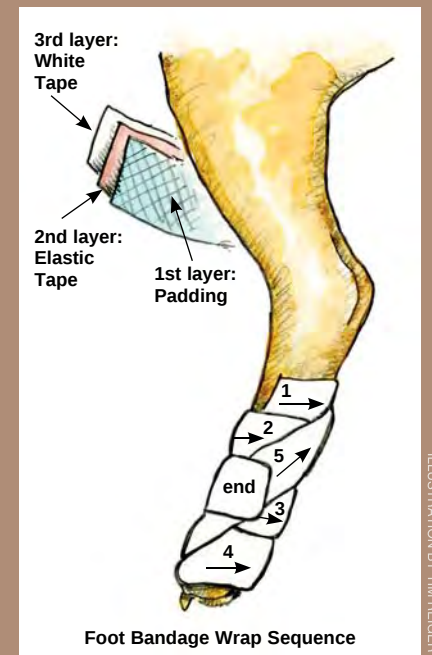
Elastikon – Stretchy tape to keep padding in place. Very sticky – use sufficient cast padding underneath to minimize contact to fur.

First-Aid Medical Tape – Adhesive tape that provides support for splints and water protection.

Splint Materials – Use sticks or a rolled-up newspaper or magazine.

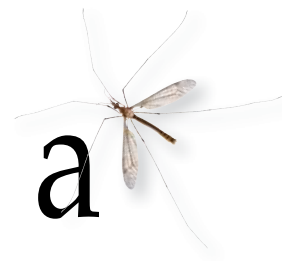
Directions:

Clean wound and apply Telfa pad directly over the wound. Wrap the leg with cast padding in a figure-eight pattern; an extra thick layer of cotton should be applied for fractures. Then wrap Elastikon over the cast padding in the same pattern. If



a fracture is present, use white tape to apply a stick on both sides of the leg so that they cover a joint above the fracture and a joint below the fracture for support. If no sticks are present, as may be the case when hunting in open grassland, carry newspaper or a magazine. The size of the bandage, or how far you wrap up the leg, will depend on the injury. ■

What to Do With a Bird-eating Cat



Story and photos by Gerry Steinauer, botanist

It was four summers ago, and I would see him in our garden or sitting on the wood pile, always slinking away as I approached. I told my wife Grace about the stray cat hanging around. Then one day, while Grace was in the backyard, the stray approached her and she petted him. Seeing that he was half-starved and sickly, she fed him and that cinched it. His new hangout was our back porch.

He was neutered and declawed; certainly this was someone's pet, either lost or abandoned. Our plan was to

keep him until we found his owner, but we never did and he was ours for good. I called him Spike, but Grace disliked the name. Then I suggested we call him Keith Richards. Like the Rolling Stones guitarist, the cat had a tousled look, an attitude and same apparent ability to survive a life of hard living. We compromised and named him KR.

KR came with issues. For one, like many male cats, he marked his territory, which when inside, included our furniture: and therefore, he stayed an outdoors cat. At night he is locked

in our garage and his days are spent roaming the neighborhood, lounging in the sun, and doing other cat things.

As for his other issue, he is a natural born killer, his hunting skills likely honed while fending for himself as a stray. The dead mice left on our back porch did not bother me, nor the deceased rabbits and squirrels. The local rabbit colony often browsed my young beets and bean sprouts to the ground, and the dang squirrels have the bad habit of snatching the nearly ripe pears from our tree. The population of both could stand a little thinning. It was the piles of feathers he left on the porch that bothered me.

The cat wasn't killing the pesky non-native house sparrows, European starlings or Eurasian collared-doves. No, KR was knocking off cool native birds – American robins, a cedar waxwing, a brown creeper, a white-crowned sparrow or two. I feared his list of species killed would soon top my life list of birds observed. The carnage peaked in spring when migrants were passing through, the resident birds were distracted with mating and nesting and defenseless fledglings were about.

His murdering came to a head one day two winters ago when our friend Jeanine, an avid birder, was visiting. Having just left through the back door, she poked her head back inside and bluntly said, "There's a dead cardinal out here," then departed. That did it, the killer KR had to be tamed.

I searched the internet for a solution. One site sold bells to hang on the cat's collar and another, battery powered beepers to warn prey that danger is lurking. Both are apparently somewhat effective, but many bell-wearing cats learn to become stealthier hunters, silencing the bells and reducing their

effectiveness. The beepers were expensive.

Then I found "Birdsbesafe" collars (Birdsbesafe.com). These wildly colored and patterned, two-inch wide bands fit over a cat's standard collar. Their website claims that songbirds see bright colors especially well. A stalking cat wearing the collar will be instantly noticed and the "birds simply fly to safety!" There were also testimonials: "*Gorilla used to kill over a bird a week without the collar; now he's down to about 1 or 2 a year, minus fledglings.*"

Of course, I didn't believe a word of it, but the collars were only about 10 dollars, so I bought one. Though large, KR didn't fight the collar and wore it with apparent dignity. A month went by, no dead birds, then another month. In the two years he has worn the Birdsbesafe collar he has deposited on our porch only a cardinal, a yellow-

feathered warbler beyond recognition to species and two fledgling robins. I estimate his bird killing has declined 80 to 90 percent. The website's testimonials seemed true, though KR's hunting of mice, rabbits and squirrels remains unimpeded.

A recent study published in the journal *Global Ecology and Conservation* found the collars similarly effective. Conducted in St. Lawrence County, New York, the study compared the hunting success of cats wearing the Birdsbesafe collar to that of cats without the collars. The collar-wearing cats killed 19 times fewer birds in spring than the collar-less cats, and 3.4 times fewer birds in fall. According to the Birdsbesafe website the collars resulted in an overall 87 percent reduction in bird killing. The collars had a less dramatic and clear-cut reduction in mammal kills, similar

to my observations. This is, however, only one study. More research is likely needed to determine the Birdsbesafe collar's true effectiveness.

In addition to that of birds, KR's collar has drawn the attention of others. For example, when our plumber came over to fix a leaky faucet he said with a smirk to Grace, "My little brother told me there was a cat in this neighborhood that wears a clown costume. So you're its owner?" "Yes, that's us," Grace responded. Perhaps the little brother was in the carload of high school kids who drove by our yard pointing and laughing at KR.

A little embarrassment, however, is worth the benefits. An ornithologist recently estimated that if only one percent of house cats in the United States wore the Birdsbesafe collars it could save 1.7 million birds annually. This is significant. ■



KR sporting his Birdsbesafe collar.

A Predatory Nature

Middle Eastern farmers first domesticated the wildcat (*Felix sylvestris*) possibly as early as 12,000 years ago to protect stored grain from rats and mice. Though now considered a separate species, the domestic cat (*F. catus*) has maintained its predatory instincts. A recent study estimated that the United States' 95 million house cats and 30 to 100 million feral cats annually kill 1.3 to four billion wild birds, ranging from songbirds to gamebirds, in addition to six to 22 billion small mammals. Feral cats make two-thirds of the kills.

For comparison, a 2010 publication estimated that 100 million to a billion birds are killed each year in the US flying into windows, 174 million die from impacts with high tension lines, and 60 million meet their end colliding with cars. This older source estimated that domestic cats kill 100 million to nearly a billion birds annually.

To study their year-round hunting habits, researchers in Georgia recently attached small video cameras to 60 free-ranging house cats. They found that one-third of the cats were killing or capturing wildlife, averaging one kill for every 17 hours outside. Besides birds, among the camera-toting cats' kills were chipmunks, voles, lizards, frogs and small snakes. Interestingly, the feline foragers brought only about one-fourth of their kills back to their residence. Roughly one-half their victims were left uneaten at the kill site and about one-fourth were eaten nearby.

Despite carnivorous cats, crash-inducing windows and high wires and speeding automobiles, it is important to remember that destruction of native habitats remains the top threat to our birds. ■



This camera-toting tabby participated in a recent study in Georgia to determine the year-round hunting habits of domestic cats.

PHOTO BY KERRIE ANNE LOYD

Fall's Wild Faces

Photos and story by Michael Forsberg

Ask a seasoned hunter or fisherman what they enjoy most about their time afield in the wild places of Nebraska during fall, and their answers may surprise you. First they may tell you about the hunt, or the fish that got away or the bounty they are bringing home to the table. But almost always those answers meander off into why they are out there in the first place: for solitude and solace, for the companionship with others, and perhaps most of all the intimate encounters they experience with the wildlife they see.

These are some of the wild faces of Nebraska we may experience this fall

during the most glorious of all months: October.

Mule Deer

Mule deer are creatures that require vast tracts of open grasslands and live in the western half of the state. During early settlement, they were nearly hunted out of Nebraska but have long since recovered to more stable populations thanks to careful game management practices and stewardship of their grassland realm. During the month of October, the bucks are entering the fall rut. Those bucks that are dominant begin to gather their harems and will soon breed.



A herd of mule deer gather on a sandhills prairie hillside in Garfield County.

A great horned owl peers out from its perch in a cottonwood grove in Saline County.



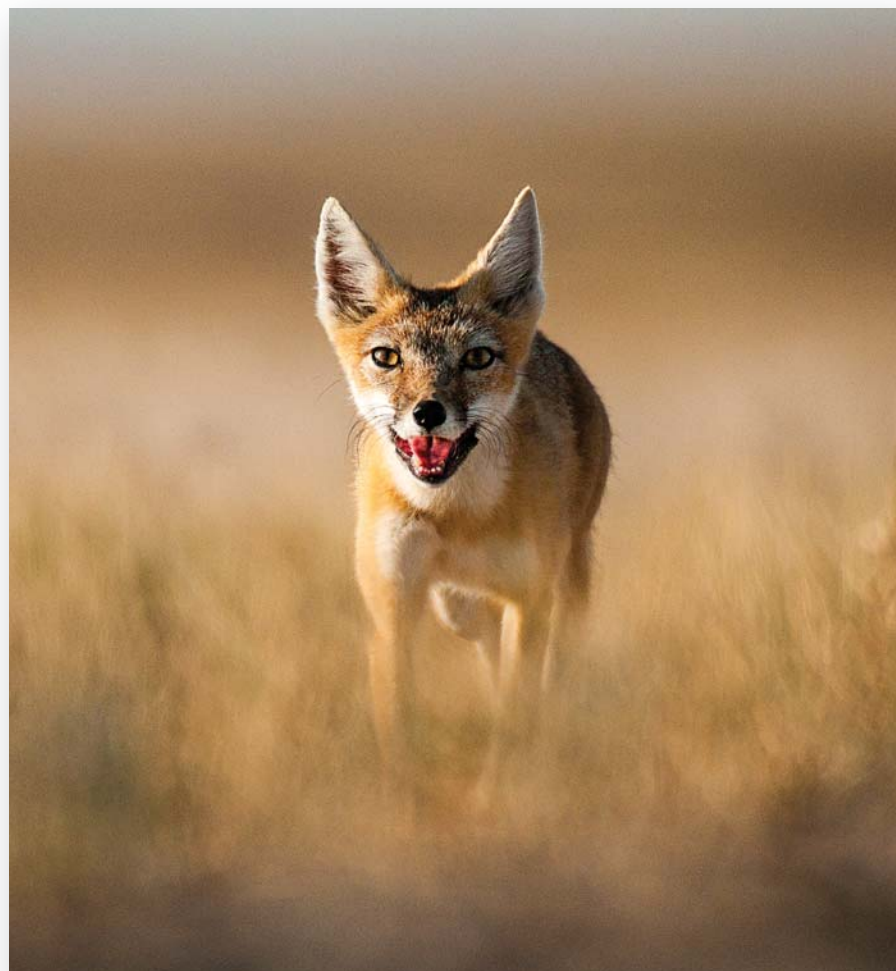
American avocets in their gray winter plumage take flight from a Pelican Lake wetland at Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Cherry County.

American Avocet

Destined for the Texas Gulf Coast, American avocets in their winter plumage lift off from a Sandhills lakeshore where they bred earlier in the summer. Migration along the Central Flyway from Canada to Mexico is in full swing as the mid-continent population of ducks and geese, shorebirds and cranes are all moving south racing winter that will lock much of the land up in snow and ice. Lakes, rivers and wetlands throughout the state are critical stopover habitats as upwards of 20 million migratory birds move north to south along this international aerial highway from prairie potholes to playa basins in the heart of North America.

Swift Fox

Only the size of a small house cat, the swift fox is a creature of the western Great Plains and found in the shortgrass prairies of western Nebraska. By October, their young pups, called “kits,” are old enough to hunt on their own and begin their fall dispersal from their parents and their natal dens. Swift foxes spend more time belowground in dens than



A swift fox trots down a two-track trail road in the shortgrass prairie of Dawes County.

any other North American canid, but they are highly tuned hunters feeding on grasshoppers, birds and rodents like prairie dogs. The kits’ survival over the coming winter will in large measure be determined by how well they have learned to hunt and the quality of native habitat that surrounds them.

Beaver

Nature’s premier water engineer, the dams, lodges and wetland complexes that the beaver creates become habitats for an entire ark of species that span the food web from tiny aquatic insects to long and lanky river otters. Beavers are most active at night, but in the fall season their constant motion spills over into the daytime as they begin to stockpile young cottonwood and willow branches for food, and bulk up their engineered infrastructure for the coming winter.



After a nighttime swim, a beaver emerges on the bank of the Platte River in Hall County.

Coyote

After wolves were extirpated from the Great Plains more than a century ago, the coyote became top dog filling

a vital role in the prairie ecosystem. By late October, this elusive and highly intelligent canine predator has put on its winter coat and will increasingly be seen hunting along

ivers, streams and lakeshores where migrating waterfowl are beginning to concentrate, and where small mammals are building up their caches for the cold months ahead. ■



A coyote pauses in the timber at Calamus Reservoir Wildlife Management Area in Loup County.

Riding the Distance

Margaret Reynolds of Kansas City, MO, and her Quarter Horse Dun Come Unzipped ("Sanka") waiting to time out for the day's ride.

Story and photos by
Jenny Nguyen

Indian Cave State Park welcomes the Nebraska Endurance and Competitive Trail Ride Association every fall.

Competitive trail riders are one of the most eclectic groups of equestrians on the planet. From Wranglers to shorts to neon-colored breeches; from draft crosses to Arabians to sure-footed mules and ponies – riders and mounts of all disciplines and breeds can be found at competitive trail rides (CTRs), an equestrian sport that tests horse and rider skills and endurance.

Indian Cave State Park near Shubert is the location of one CTR, put on by the Nebraska Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding Association (NECTRA), which is sanctioned by the national organization, the North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC). The Nebraska club was founded in 1974, and they have been returning to Indian Cave to ride for nearly four decades, making it the oldest CTR in the nation. Every fall, NATRC riders come to compete over the same set of winding trails – some of which are not open to the public – that offer views of the Missouri River from the park's many hills and bluffs.

Not a Race

Approximately 42 competitors came to Indian Cave State Park last year, which offers specific amenities for riders in its equestrian campground (see sidebar page 45). Riders arrived Friday to set up camp, check in with accredited NATRC veterinary and horsemanship judges to ensure the horses were fit to compete, and go over the trail map, rules and expectations for the next



Veterinary judge Carrie Porter of Atlanta checks mucous membranes and capillary refill of Rushcreek Allie, an Arabian mare belonging to Brenda Messick's of Ceresco.

day's ride.

Unlike endurance riding, which is a test of speed where the first horse to cross the finish line wins, a competitive trail ride is not a race, and the fastest team may not necessarily be the best team. Rather, a CTR is a test of pace. Teams (horse and rider) have a set amount of time to complete the trail, depending on their division, and early or late arrivals into camp are penalized. CTRs are designed to demonstrate the bond between horse and rider: how well riders can pace their horses, how well-behaved teams are on the trail, how well trail challenges are performed, and how well-conditioned horses are found at veterinary check points. Depending on a rider's division, teams may cover up to 40-60 miles in a single weekend.

There are four divisions of competition: novice, competitive/pleasure (CP), open, and distance only. Novice is for riders and horses new to CTR; CP is for experienced riders who prefer the distance and pace of the novice division and are often members who offer mentoring to novice riders; open division is reserved for highly experienced riders with well-conditioned and trained horses; and distance only is for competitors who do not want to compete for awards but receive credit for their mileage. Novice and CP riders typically cover 30-40 miles in a two-day competition at 3 to 5 mph, while open division competitors cover 50-60 miles in a two-day competition at 4 to 6 mph. Designed to demonstrate high levels of skill and training, trail challenges are more technical in the open division.

Additionally, novice and open divisions are divided into three classes: junior (riders age 10-17), lightweight (rider and tack weighing under 189 pounds) and heavyweight (rider and tack weighing 190 and above). The competitive pleasure division is not split into any classes. National awards may be won in both open and CP divisions.

In the 2014 competition, the oldest rider to compete was 72-year-old Noreen Altwegg of Kansas, and the youngest rider was her grandson, 14-year-old Ryan Clamm.

A Sport for All

"NATRC is the melting pot of the horse world," said Sarah Rinne, vice president of the NECTRA and national vice president of the NATRC. Not only do riders of varying ages and backgrounds compete, but competitive trail riding is also open to any horse breed and type of conformation (body build and structure), as long as the horse is healthy and fit to cover the distance satisfactorily. The sport is not about pedigrees and expensive equipment.



Indian Cave State Park is located 10 miles south and 5 miles east of Brownville on Nebraska Spur 64E.



Helen Smith of Ashland, NE, and her horse Sasha, a Quarter Horse, Arabian and Thoroughbred cross, take their 10-minute break before presenting to veterinary and horsemanship judges.

Reiners, ropers, barrel racers, pleasure riders, hunters, jumpers and dressage riders could all be found at the CTR at Indian Cave State Park in 2014, while the following breeds were present: Spanish Mustang, Quarter Horse, Arabian, half Arabian, Paint, Rocky Mountain Horse, Missouri Fox Trotter, Spotted Saddle Horse, Morgan Horse, Thoroughbred, mule, Appaloosa, Hungarian, and grade (unregistered) horses.

“A horse with a sound mind that is respectful makes the ride much safer and enjoyable,” Rinne said. “Aside from conformation, soundness and fitness develop with experience and miles. Most horses can be successful with conditioning and training.” Long Slow Distance (LSD) is the training regimen recommended to beginners.

“Conditioning long miles with less speed develops skeletal strength, muscle endurance and metabolic efficiency. Trying to condition with too much speed and stress early into training with an unfit horse is more likely to result in injury or muscle

damage that takes months to repair,” Rinne said.

The Ride

Many long-time competitors rode in specialized endurance riding saddles, while most new competitors tacked up with what they already own, whether English or western. All carried plenty of water in their saddle bags, along with a knife, a sponge dangling from a rope to cool down their horses at water stops, and a rope and halter. A trail map was given to each rider, while an accurate watch was necessary for pacing.

On Saturday morning, teams timed out with their division to ride on a clearly marked trail. In addition to completing the trail within a set time, horse and rider were also expected to fulfill several judged check points with a horsemanship judge and two pulse and respiration checks (P&R) with a veterinary judge along the trail.

Each horse and rider had their own scorecard and all started out with 100 points; the rider’s scorecard evaluated

horsemanship skills and safety, while the horse’s scorecard focused on condition, soundness and trail ability/manners. Point deductions occurred throughout the ride. Riders are able to take their scorecards home to practice the skills needing improvement or more work conditioning and training with the horse, Rinne said. Year-end awards are based upon accumulated points throughout the ride season.

Rider’s skill and equitation (form), as it applied to long distance riding, horse care, sportsmanship and safety on the trail, were judged, while trail challenges ranged from a combination of maneuvers such as backing, side passing and turns on the fore- and hindquarters.

“Those skills may be applied to challenges such as backing around a tree or up an incline, side passing over a log, and getting around natural terrain. Opening, passing through and closing a gate is common,”

Rinne said. With the exception of gates, bridges and permanent structures, challenges may not utilize man-made or fabricated objects.

The horse’s scorecard was completed by the veterinary judge, who evaluated the horse’s stress and physical condition during the ride. These checks are helpful in detecting metabolic complications and lameness.

Riders dismounted when they reached P&R checks. Teams had 10 minutes to recover before examination by a veterinary judge, during which riders did all they could to cool down their horses. Volunteers from the club and the park followed closely behind to haul fresh water to competitors on a truck.

Sweaty saddles and pads were taken off, and the sponges and water came out. Many riders used water bottles to spray down their horses’ necks and legs, while others cooled down their horses with hand fans. Sometimes, gently rubbing horses’ ears and faces or speaking softly will help to calm them down; each person had a different method of cooling down their horse.

If the horse’s pulse and respiration count (breaths in a 15-second count) did not meet criteria after 10 minutes of rest, point deductions occurred. In extreme cases, veterinary judges may pull a horse from competition, though most riders will take this step on their own accord in the best interest of the horse, Rinne said.

Upon completion of the ride on Saturday, which lasted five hours for the novice and CP divisions and 6.5 hours for the open division, veterinary judges performed another thorough health check of all horses to ensure their fitness for the next day’s ride. A Saturday night briefing was held to go over the trail on Sunday.

Sunday’s ride was much like the first day, but with a new set of trail challenges. All teams were on the trail for a total of five hours, though the open division traveled farther and faster in that time. At

the end, the veterinary judge conducted one last examination, which marked the completion of the ride.

In the competitive trail ride at Indian Cave State Park in September 2014, the open sweepstakes (overall) winner was Pistol Annie, a mule ridden by Patti Dollarhide of Kansas, and the novice sweepstakes winner was T-Bone B Blacky, a Morgan, ridden by Kerri Ross of Nebraska. The competitive pleasure division took a high point combined horse and rider score; the prize was awarded to Lethal Status, a paint horse, ridden by Sharron Ankersen of Nebraska. Prizes were also awarded to the winners of each class.

Join

That a mule, a Morgan and a Paint Horse were the 2014 sweepstakes winners demonstrates almost any horse and rider can be successful in competitive trail riding, as long as teams possess soundness of mind and body. Though it may take months of training for a new member, CTR is a great sport to meet fellow equestrians and to keep horses and riders in shape throughout the year.

The Nebraska Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding Association is always open to new members, both riders and non-riders. In addition to Indian Cave State Park, the organization has held CTRs at various locations throughout Nebraska including Rock Creek Station State Historical Park, Halsey National Forest, Chadron State Park, Branched Oak State Recreation Area, Turkey Creek Ranch and Fort Robinson State Park. Outside of CTRs, members also volunteer their time to maintain trails and amenities at many of these locations.

“People do not have to compete to be an asset to our organization,” Rinne said. “Our sport does not function without valuable volunteers, and each and every person’s contributions are appreciated.” ■

For more information, contact Sarah Rinne at saddle1up@live.com or Nectra.info.

NECTRA’s Influence on Indian Cave SP

The Nebraska Endurance and Competitive Trail Riding Association (NECTRA) was founded in 1974. In addition to organizing competitive trail riding events and advocating the sport, the NECTRA has always been active in building and maintaining the existence of trails for all outdoor users. The founding members of the club were the same people who put in trails at Indian Cave State Park – prior to their work, no trails existed there.

The organization has continued to donate both labor hours and financial support to Indian Cave SP, including improvements to equestrian campgrounds by purchasing hitching rails, trail supplies such as culverts for crossings, and members also built a picnic pavilion in the horse campground, NECTRA Vice President Sarah Rinne said.

“This is an important part of the work that we do – without trails we do not have a venue for our sport. We care about trail preservation and maintenance for all trail users,” Rinne said.

Today, Indian Cave SP offers 16 miles of equestrian trails, 12 horse corrals and numerous tie posts at each primitive campsite in the equestrian area. Each campsite has a picnic table and fire ring. A water wagon is provided during the summer and fall seasons (weather dependent), and a new vault toilet is provided in the camp as well, said Kevin Holliday, Indian Cave’s park superintendent.

CITY HAWKS



From February 2014 until March 2015, Steve Andel watched two red-tailed hawks along Antelope Creek in Lincoln. He witnessed them eat, mate and rear chicks, becoming fascinated with their daily routines. The raptors blended into a cityscape, first trying to build a nest on top of a parking garage before eventually constructing one in a pine tree. Once they had chicks, they would trade places throughout the day – one hunting while one guarded the nest – the routines of these city hawks continuing through the seasons above the Capital city.

Photographs by Steve Andel

Lincoln photographer spends more than a year photographing hawks in the Capital city.

Above: Two hawk chicks sit in their nest. They are about one month old and not able to get food on their own yet. The male and female bring food to them, which is about 4-5 times a day.

Right: During the spring and summer months the hawks would catch and eat a lot of snakes. Many times they would eat them quickly, slurping down the tail end of the snake like spaghetti.





Above: During mating season the male would catch food and bring it to the female. Here, the male has caught a vole and is flying to the female.

Right: Street lights provide a great perch for the hawks. They use them while they're hunting. In this photo the hawk is scanning the ground for food at sunset.

Opposite Top: The male hawk eats a duck in the middle of a baseball field. The duck was already dead when the hawk came upon it. He must have been happy to find food since it was the middle of winter when food is hard to find.

Opposite Bottom: Nest building is split between the female and male hawks. Both gather nesting materials from the surrounding area. The female is shown here bringing a large twig in her mouth to add to the nest.





Opposite: Distracted by eating a freshly caught squirrel, the female allows a close-up photo. Being city hawks, they are used to humans being around.

Above: A young hawk, only two months old, clings to a power line above Lincoln.

Left: Mating season for the hawks lasts from mid-February until the end of March. The hawks would mate twice a day around the same time each day. Mating would take place on light poles and in trees.

Steve Andel is a professional photographer living in Lincoln. This is his first photo essay for NEBRASKAland Magazine.



View more of Steve's photos.



Pine Ridge Streaming

Story and photos by Justin Haag

Scott Johnson of Chadron tries to lure a trout from the south fork of Soldier Creek on a crisp fall day.

For many, fall and spring means hunting. Some outdoorsmen along the streams of northwestern Nebraska will put down the shotgun and rifle, at least for a little while, and pick up the fly rod.

Dressed in dark on a crisp fall day, Vance Haug of Chadron quietly stalks his prey, checking every nook and cranny along his familiar path. Careful not to make any sudden movements, he moves with a steady hand on his gear. With the sun low on the western horizon, he finally catches a glimpse of the creature he's been seeking, resting in the shade of a steep embankment. Quietly, with patience and precision, he aims and places his shot. Before long, he is holding the animal of his pursuit in his grasp.

It's a familiar hunting story. But this isn't a deer or elk that he's gripping for a photo. Rather, it's one of the beautiful trout species swimming in a pristine Pine Ridge stream of northwestern Nebraska. On this day, Haug is carrying a fly rod instead of a rifle, and he's sneaking up on browns and cutthroats on the White River near Crawford.

The Other White River

When anglers in northwestern Nebraska say they're planning to go fly fishing on the White, the first thing that comes to the mind of many from outside the area is the river by the same name that flows through Arkansas. An Internet search for "White River Fishing" is sure to lead you to that area and all of its resorts and outfitters.

Nebraska's White, while a fraction of the size of its southern peer, is increasingly becoming a destination for anglers who opt to fish by fly in a quiet location.

Rising from springs southeast of Harrison, the White River is the picture of a pristine mountain stream as it winds its way through a narrow riverbottom dotted with hardwoods beneath the rocky, ponderosa pine-covered hills of the Pine Ridge. Its waters are crystal clear when it spills out of the hills onto the shortgrass prairie southwest of Crawford. As it flows northeast through the plains and picks up flows from other Pine Ridge streams, it cuts through clay soils that gradually tint its waters to the shade that gave the river its name. In northeastern Dawes County, the river enters South Dakota.

Three segments of the river totaling more than seven miles west of Fort Robinson State Park have been opened to fishing through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Open Fields and Waters program, which provides money to landowners in exchange for public access.

The section lies in one of the most scenic areas of the Pine Ridge, a narrow valley characterized by steep canyon walls of butte rock, lush grass and a mix of ponderosa pines and deciduous trees that provide appealing fall color. The area appeals to both naturalists and history buffs. The ghost town of Glen is along White River Road, as are remnants of an old railroad line that served Fort Robinson and Crawford.

The White River changes dramatically in a short distance

before it leaves the state. The clear babbling brook at its western vicinity flows in contrast to its muddy appearance in northeastern Dawes County, where one is much more likely to land a catfish than a trout.

In the western portion of Sioux County, the river can be crossed by a good hop in most places. For anglers who prefer their feet not leave the ground, knee boots or hip waders will keep pants dry. With such a narrow stream, anglers soon learn they must be stealthy, though.

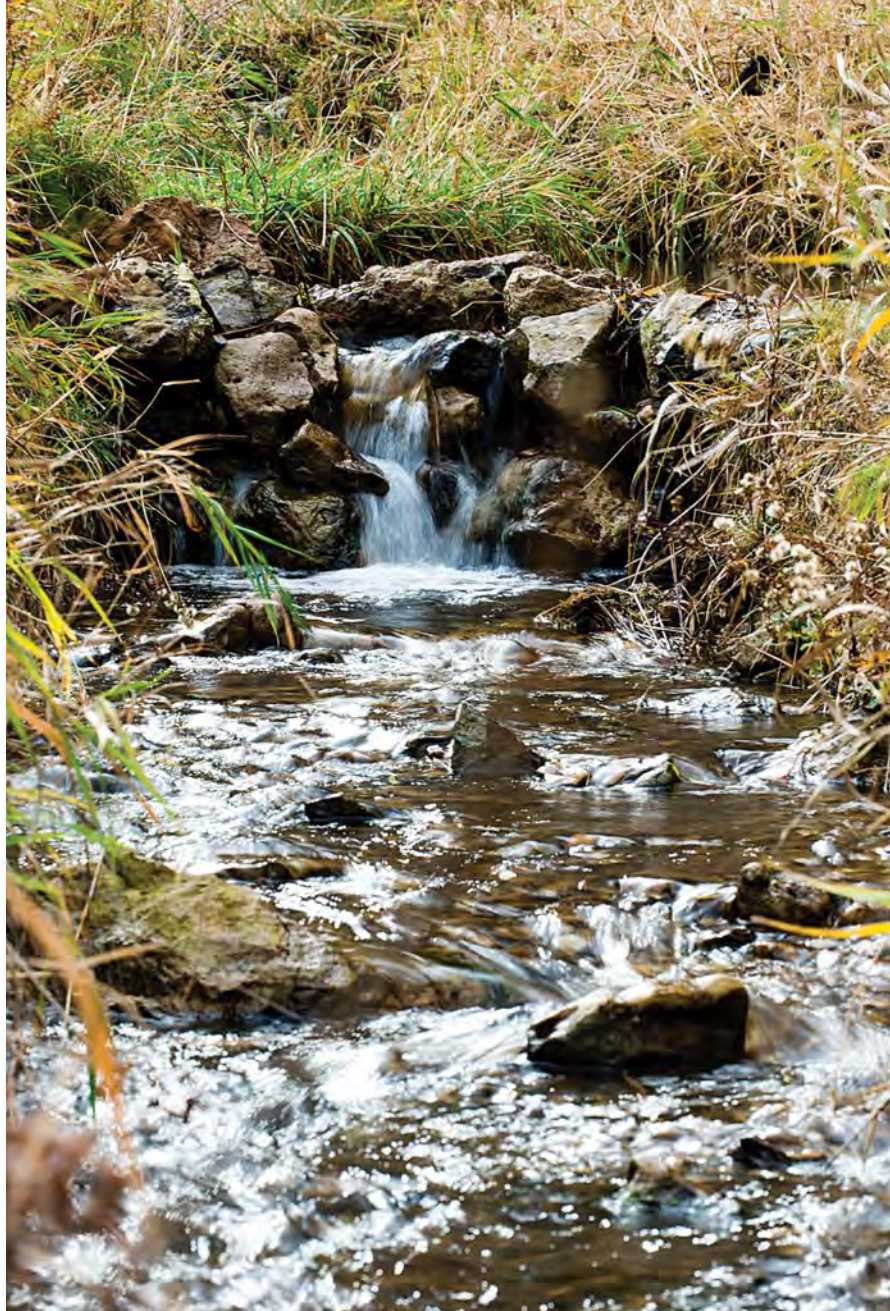
"They spook easy and a white shirt tends to give you away," Haug said, kneeling low to the ground to keep his profile hidden to the wary trout. Dark clothing or even camouflage works best.

Haug has come to know well many of the hot spots along the Open Fields and Waters portions of the winding creek, focusing on deeper pools where the river's path takes sharp turns. Areas where the water runs slower and deeper often hold fish, and he's caught some dandy browns and a lot of cutthroats, brookies and rainbows. Anglers do well when matching flies with the insects found nearby, from small nymphs to big grasshoppers. While the thrill of the topwater bite from a fly rod is tough to match, some anglers find success with spinning gear just letting a nightcrawler drift downstream. The cutthroats, which in this area are Snake River fine-spotted subspecies common in the northern Rocky Mountains, bite most readily of all the fish in the creek, he said.

Angler success along the White is something Commission officials like to see. Since 2011, fisheries biologists have



When one fishes the streams of the Pine Ridge, sights both big and small are sure to please the eye. In this case, it's whirligig beetles casting shadows on the bottom of Bordeaux Creek.



Streams of the Pine Ridge commonly flow over rocky bottoms, such as this section of West Ash Creek near Crawford. The rocks, combined with the cool groundwater that feeds the creeks, provides suitable breeding habitat for brook and brown trout.

stocked about 10,000 trout, ranging from 6 to 11 inches long, in the public access portions of the river.

“We have stocked a lot of browns and rainbows, and have put cutthroats in there whenever they’re available,” said Joe Rydell, a fisheries biologist in the northwestern district. “It’s a unique area to our state and adds to our diverse fishing opportunities.”

Soldier On

As far as opportunity goes, the White isn’t the only stream in the Pine Ridge. In Dawes, Sheridan and Sioux counties, as many as 17 creeks have

trout. Several have sections with rocky bottoms that are ideal for spawning, and most are fed by groundwater and, consequently, cool enough in places to support natural reproduction of brook and brown trout.

Most of the creeks’ miles are on private property and accessible only by permission, but some have stretches of public access. Besides the White, the other stream with considerable public access is Soldier Creek and its branches, accessible from Fort Robinson State Park and Soldier Creek Wilderness Area.

Scott Johnson, another Chadron angler, is often lured to the banks of

Soldier Creek. He said stream fishing in northwestern Nebraska hasn’t really caught on like it has in other places.

“I’ve fished at popular fly-fishing destinations farther west, and I always have just as good of time fishing on Soldier Creek as I do those other places,” he said. “People don’t realize that there are some nice fish swimming in these creeks. Most days I come over here I’m the only one fishing. When I do run into people, they’re usually hikers and are surprised to see what I’m doing.”

Johnson said fishing on Soldier Creek is best before Memorial Day and

after Labor Day. Fishing is possible in summer but becomes more challenging because vegetation crowds the narrow streams. During fall the trout are looking their best, taking on vibrant colors for the spawn.

Soldier Creek’s best fishing is on the Wilderness Area, a federal tract designated for minimum human disturbance, providing the energetic angler an opportunity to hike and explore a region known for being natural. Wilderness Areas have special rules: no mechanical vehicles, not even bicycles, are allowed, for instance.

Three forks of the creek flow through

the Wilderness Area and converge on the western edge of Fort Robinson. From there, the stream flows to Carter P. Johnson Lake and to the White River near the park’s headquarters. Both the south and the middle forks provide good fishing opportunities, while the north is mostly dry. A one-mile hike up the middle fork leads anglers to the four Wood Reserve ponds, which encompass roughly four acres and have also been stocked with hundreds of rainbows, brookies and cutthroats in recent years. Earlier this year, the Commission implemented a two-trout limit in the entire Wilderness

Area to maintain a quality fishery.

In addition to stocking in the Wilderness Area and the White River, the Commission put brook trout in Bordeaux, Chadron, East Ash, West Ash and Beaver creeks earlier this decade.

Tigers by the Tail

Johnson’s most notable catch along Soldier Creek came in May 2013. While the fish had familiar hues of copper and gold, its distinct worm-like scale pattern pointed to a slightly different species than the browns



Vance Haug sneaks up on trout along the White River. Haug dresses in dark clothes and keeps a low profile in order to not spook the wary fish.

Pine Ridge Trout Streams

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission lists eight trout streams that have public access in the three counties of northwestern Nebraska – Sheridan, Dawes and Sioux. There's at least nine others on private property that can be fished by permission.

- **Beaver Creek (Sheridan):** Northwest of Hay Springs. Brook trout. Private.
- **Big Bordeaux Creek (Dawes):** Southeast of Chadron. Brook and brown trout. Public access from Bordeaux Creek Wildlife Management Area and U.S. Forest Service land. Remainder private.
- **Chadron Creek (Dawes):** South of Chadron. Brook and brown trout. Public access at Chadron State Park, otherwise private.
- **Dead Horse Creek (Dawes):** Southwest of Chadron. Brown and brook trout. Private.
- **East Ash Creek (Dawes):** Southeast of Crawford. Brook trout. Public access on U.S. Forest

Service land. Remainder private.

- **East Hat Creek (Sioux):** Northeast of Harrison. Brook and brown trout. Private.

- **Larabee Creek (Sheridan):** North of Rushville. Brown and rainbow trout. Private.

- **Little Bordeaux Creek (Dawes):** Southeast of Chadron. Brown trout. Private.

- **Monroe Creek (Sioux):** - North of Harrison. Brook trout. Public access on the Gilbert-Baker Wildlife Management Area. Otherwise private.

- **Pine Creek (Sheridan):** South of Rushville. Brown trout. Private.
- **Soldier Creek (Dawes):** West of Crawford. Brook, brown, rainbow and tiger Trout. Public access at Fort Robinson State Park and Soldier Creek Wilderness Area. Daily bag limit of two trout on Wilderness Area.

- **Sowbelly Creek (Sioux):** Northeast of Harrison. Brook trout and brown trout. Public access at Coffee Park (closed for

flood repairs as of press time). Remainder private.

- **Squaw Creek (Dawes):** Southeast of Crawford. Brook trout. Public access at Ponderosa Wildlife Management Area. Remainder private.

- **West Ash Creek (Dawes):** Southeast of Crawford. Brook trout. Public access on U.S. Forest Service land. Remainder private.

- **West Hat Creek (Sioux):** East of Harrison. Brook trout. Private.

- **White Clay Creek (Sheridan):** Northwest of Rushville. Brown trout. Private.

- **White River (Dawes):** West of Fort Robinson State Park. Brown trout, cutthroat trout, and rainbow trout. Public access at Fort Robinson and on private land through Open Fields and Waters Program. Remainder private. ■



Pine Ridge brookies look best in the fall when they take on vibrant colors for the spawn.

and brookies he'd been landing. Instead, it was a hybrid between those two species known as tiger trout, a rare catch in Nebraska. Johnson, at the urging of a friend, applied for a Master Angler Award. His application caught the eye of fisheries biologist Daryl Bauer, who would later determine the 12-ounce fish to be a state record.

Bauer said the Commission has not yet stocked tiger trout in Nebraska's streams. Rather, they're occurring naturally. As an indicator that brooks and browns are hybridizing outside of Soldier Creek, Johnson's catch was eclipsed in April 2015 by a 13½-inch, 14-ounce specimen Tim Engelland of Gering caught from West Hat Creek in Sioux County.

Tiger trout in other parts of the nation have grown to be several pounds, so neither of Nebraska's state record fish of recent years is considered to be large by national standards. Anglers can be impressed, though, that such a species is making its presence known on its own in the Cornhusker State.

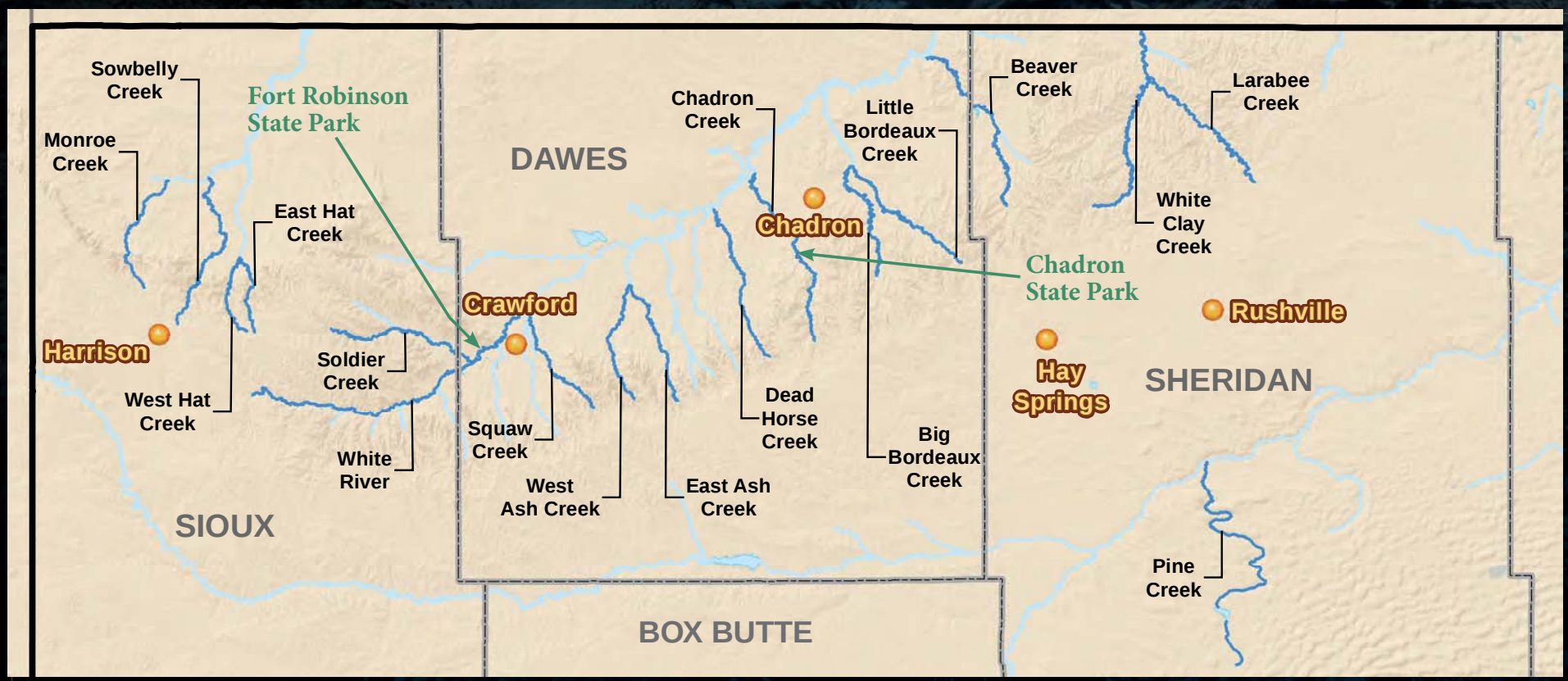
The Commission is cueing on the success of those fish and has begun raising tiger trout in its hatchery system. They'll be given some

time to grow before being released in Nebraska's streams, providing another draw for anglers. You can bet the state record will again be broken in years to come.

On the Hunt

Regardless of size, the trout streams of the Pine Ridge are a unique part of Nebraska's diverse angling scene and offer a chance at fish species not readily found in other locations. In a land known for its unique topography and the presence of charismatic creatures such as bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer and pronghorn, it seems only fitting that species familiar to the mountains of the West also exist below the water's surface.

As hunting season gears up, you can bet there will be a set of outdoorsmen who walk the streams of northwestern Nebraska seeking to bag a trophy. The prized bag of which they will boast through stories and photos, however, will possess the colorful scales of the eye-catching trout rather than hefty antlers and horns of the region's likewise alluring big game species. ■



A Letter from the Mixed Bag Capital

Choosing what to hunt could be the toughest part.

By Jerrod Burke

The term “mixed bag” summons up various images in people’s minds. For me it is a term that defines opportunities found in the southwestern portion of the state. In this case and in this area, the term “mixed bag” refers to enormous fish and game opportunities. No matter if you are on the water or in the field, it is very possible to harvest multiple species.

Just this past hunting season such an opportunity presented itself. My son Logan, son-in-law Brandon and I embarked on a mixed bag quest on a snow-covered day in December. First we discovered four turkeys slowly working their way across a corn field. We positioned ourselves in the best possible location to intercept these birds. As the birds moved in closer, it became clear that two of the birds were going to remain out of range of our secluded position, but it looked possible that two of the birds would pass inside shotgun range for Logan and me. After a few more minutes the birds were getting close. Logan was in the best position to get a shot, so I told him to pick one out and take the shot when he was ready. I would then try to harvest the second bird before he was able to depart. Logan’s shotgun barked and one bird

went to the ground. The second bird hesitated just a moment before he began his escape. I quickly got in position and was able to put the second bird in the bag.

So with a couple of nice turkeys in the bag, we decided to change locations, pick up my dad, Larry, and give some upland bird hunting a try. I unloaded my Gordon setters, Abbie and Willie, and they went to work. About 15 minutes into the hunt Willie pulled up on a staunch point. Brandon was first on the scene and in a moment a covey of 20-plus quail burst into the air. Brandon was able to put two birds in the bag. Dad and I were able to add three singles to the bag on points by Willie and Abbie. We then decided to let the rest go for another day. We moved on to another nearby location, released the dogs and within moments a rooster flushed with a loud cackle. A quick shot from Logan’s side by side added this rooster to the mixed bag. We decided that was enough for this day and retired to the house to clean birds and recall the moments of more great memories made in what I have come to call the Mixed Bag Capital.

I have lived in this area my entire life and have been fortunate to participate in many outings of this type. I was

Jerrod Burke (right), his son Logan Burke and their two dogs, Willie and Abbie, are advocates for the ample hunting opportunities, including pheasants, in southwestern Nebraska.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PHEASANTS FOREVER

2015 HUNTING SEASON DATES

BIG GAME

Fall Turkey..... Sept. 15-Jan. 31

Pronghorn

Archery.....Aug. 20-Dec. 31
Muzzleloader.....Sept. 19-Oct. 4
October Firearm..... Oct. 10-25
Late Doe/Fawn..... Nov. 1-Jan. 31

Elk

Archery Bull Sept. 15-Oct. 25
Firearm Bull..... Sept. 26-Oct. 25
Private Land Antlerless
.....Aug. 15-Oct. 25, Dec. 1-31
Public Land Antlerless
.....Sept. 26-Oct. 25, Dec. 1-31

Bighorn SheepDec. 1-22

Deer

Archery.....Sept. 1-Dec. 31
Statewide Whitetail Buck
.....Sept. 1-Dec. 31
Mule Deer Conservation Area
.....Nov. 14-22, Dec. 1-31
MuzzleloaderDec. 1-31
November Firearm..... Nov. 14-22
Restricted Statewide Buck
.....Nov. 14-22
Youth Sept. 1-Jan. 15
Landowner Sept. 1-Jan. 15
Season Choice.....Sept. 1-Jan. 15
River Antlerless Sept. 1-Jan. 15
Gifford Point WMASept. 1-
Jan. 15

DeSoto Oct. Muzzleloader
..... Oct. 24-25
DeSoto Dec. Muzzleloader
..... Dec. 19-20
Boyer Chute NWR Dec. 12-20

SMALL GAME

Pheasant, Quail, Partridge

.....Oct. 31-Jan. 31

Youth Pheasant, Quail, Partridge*

..... Oct. 24-25

Grouse* Sept. 1-Jan. 31

Cottontail, Jackrabbit

..... Sept. 1-Feb. 29

Squirrel..... Aug. 1-Jan. 31

DoveSept. 1-Oct. 30

Eurasian Collared-Dove

.....Year-round

SnipeSept. 1-Dec. 16

Virginia, Sora Rail..... Sept. 1-Nov. 9

WoodcockSept. 19-Nov. 2

FURBEARERS

Raccoon, Virginia Opossum

.....Sept. 1-Oct. 31

Muskrat, Beaver

.....Nov. 1-March 31

BobcatDec. 1-Feb. 29

Raccoon, Virginia Opossum, Long-tailed Weasel, Mink, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Badger Nov. 1-Feb. 29

Striped Skunk.....Year-round

WATERFOWL

Dark Goose

East, Panhandle, Niobrara & Platte River Oct. 28-Feb. 9
North Central Oct. 3-Jan. 15

Light Goose

StatewideOct. 3-Dec. 28,
Jan. 23-Feb. 9

Light Goose Conservation Order

Rainwater Basin ... Feb. 10-April 5
East Zone.....Feb. 10-April 15

West Zone Feb. 10-April 5

White-fronted Goose

Statewide Oct. 3-Dec. 4,
Jan. 30-Feb. 9

Early Teal

Low PlainsSept. 5-20
High PlainsSept. 12-20

Duck

Zone 1..... Oct. 10-Dec. 22
Zone 2

Low Plains.....Oct. 3-Dec. 15
High Plains..... Oct. 3-Dec. 15 and
Jan. 6-27

Zone 3
Low Plains..... Oct. 24-Jan. 5
High Plains..... Oct. 24-Jan. 5 and
Jan. 6 -27

Zone 4.....Oct. 3-Dec. 15

Coot

Zone 1..... Oct. 10-Dec. 22

Zone 2

Low Plains.....Oct. 3-Dec. 15
High Plains..... Oct. 3-Dec. 15 and
Jan. 6-27

Zone 3

Low Plains..... Oct. 24-Jan. 5
High Plains..... Oct. 24-Jan. 5 and
Jan. 6 -27

Zone 4.....Oct. 3-Dec. 15

Youth

Zone 1..... Oct. 3-4

Zone 2..... Sept. 26-27

Zone 3..... Oct. 17-18

Zone 4..... Sept. 26-27

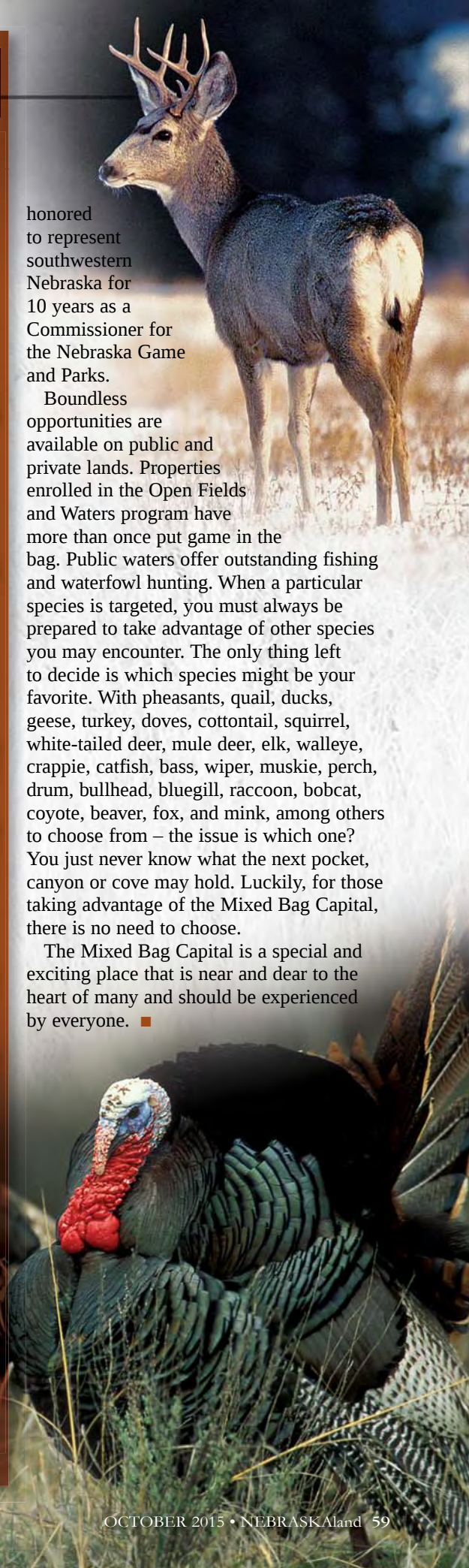
Crow

StatewideOct. 1-Nov. 15,
Jan. 20-April 6

Special Public Health Hazard
OrderNov. 16-Jan. 19

*Special regulations at some hunting sites. See the 2015 Hunting Guide for more details.

PLEASE NOTE: This is not a complete list with regulations, methods, etc. Please see all of the 2015 hunting guides for more details.



honored to represent southwestern Nebraska for 10 years as a Commissioner for the Nebraska Game and Parks.

Boundless opportunities are available on public and private lands. Properties enrolled in the Open Fields and Waters program have more than once put game in the bag. Public waters offer outstanding fishing and waterfowl hunting. When a particular species is targeted, you must always be prepared to take advantage of other species you may encounter. The only thing left to decide is which species might be your favorite. With pheasants, quail, ducks, geese, turkey, doves, cottontail, squirrel, white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, walleye, crappie, catfish, bass, wiper, muskie, perch, drum, bullhead, bluegill, raccoon, bobcat, coyote, beaver, fox, and mink, among others to choose from – the issue is which one? You just never know what the next pocket, canyon or cove may hold. Luckily, for those taking advantage of the Mixed Bag Capital, there is no need to choose.

The Mixed Bag Capital is a special and exciting place that is near and dear to the heart of many and should be experienced by everyone. ■

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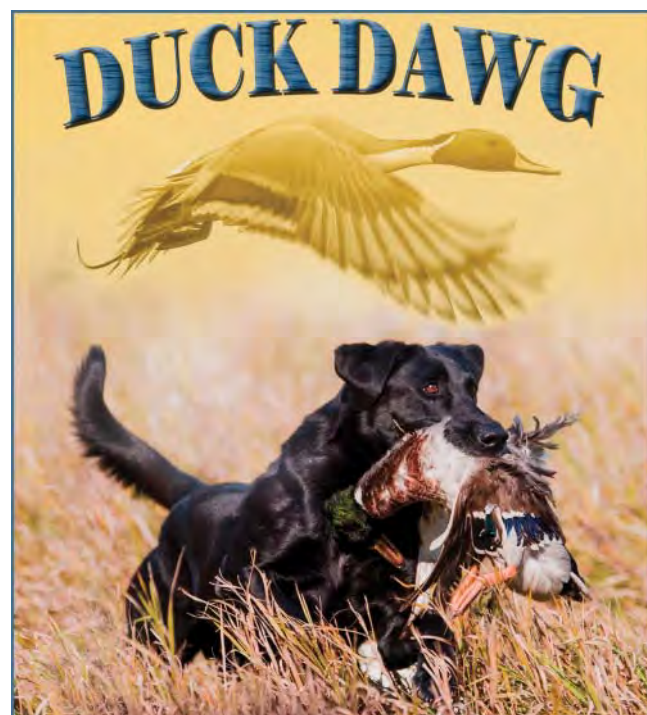
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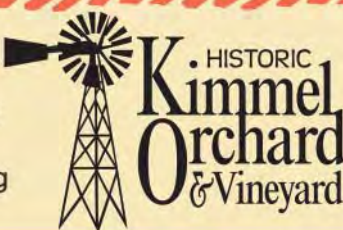
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◀ Pictured is my cousin Marion Tiller and myself in 1946 at our farm in Frontier County. Marion was home on leave from the Air Force during World War II. He and his dad were from Oklahoma and came up to hunt with me for several years. You can see the many pheasants that we shot one day.

My granddad came to the area in the late 1800s in a covered wagon and settled here. My granddad, my dad and then I farmed it for several years. My son Jim and family live on it today.

— Robert W. Tiller, McCook, Nebraska



▶ These two boys are my sons: Don, age 10, and Jim, age 9. This is when they were at our farm with their new shotguns. These were the first 20 gauge guns for them. They loved to hunt and fish with me. Both like to hunt since growing up. This picture was taken in 1965. Today, I am 85 years old and don't get to hunt as much with them and their children as I would like to.

— Robert W. Tiller, McCook, Nebraska



◀ This picture was taken at Victoria Springs, north of Broken Bow in June 1969 of our two oldest children, Scott 6, and Anna, 4. We were camped there for a few days and the fishing was great, as they both caught several trout.

— Bud and Shirley Gillespie, Broadwater, Nebraska

Send contributions to: Portraits from the Past, *NEBRASKAland Magazine*, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370. Or e-mail to Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov. Photos should show people enjoying Nebraska outdoor activities, such as camping, boating, hunting or fishing, and must have been taken before 1980. We will give priority to unusual photos or activities. When possible, please include a story about the photograph and identify the people, places and approximate date it was taken. Photos will be returned.

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Crawfish Mac and Cheese

An American classic made with Gruyere, Irish cheddar cheese and crayfish.

By Jenny Nguyen

Fresh crustaceans are hard to find in Nebraska, and they often do not figure into this writer's budget. Having lived near the ocean for most of my life, crab, lobster and shrimp were some of my favorite foods to eat. Sadly, moving to Nebraska meant that I would have to give up seafood. That has been mostly true – though when my paycheck allows it, I have found some nice seafood restaurants in Omaha. And occasionally, I do find a few treasures at the grocery store.

But seafood in Nebraska is not a water-to-table experience. I am not eating locally or sustainably, and at times, I do feel guilty about that, though not guilty enough to give it up altogether; I was born and raised by the ocean – it's in my blood. While I may not forfeit my appetite for seafood anytime soon, there is one crustacean that does exist naturally in the Midwest. Crayfish, crawfish, crawdads, mudbugs, yabbies – whatever you call them, are commonly found in Nebraska waters. Though a freshwater

crustacean, they are related to lobsters and taste pretty darn close, albeit they are much smaller in size.

Crayfish are relatively easy to catch, and if you live by a canal, this is about the time of year to catch them during low water. Julie Geiser wrote a fantastic how-to story on catching crayfish in the 2014 October issue of *NEBRASKAland*. If you can't find it, give Donna Robinson a call at 402-471-5490 for back issues.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cooking Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 pound of cooked crayfish tail meat, peeled
- 1 pound of cellentani pasta, or equivalent
- 1 quart of whole milk
- 4 cups of Gruyere (or Swiss) cheese, shredded
- 2 cups of Kerrygold Reserve Cheddar, shredded
- 1 stick of butter (8 tablespoons), divided
- ½ cup of all-purpose flour

- kosher salt, to taste
- ½ teaspoon of nutmeg
- pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1 cup of Panko breadcrumbs
- fresh parsley, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 375° Fahrenheit. Cook pasta according to package directions for al dente. Drain well.

2. Heat milk in a saucepan, but do not boil. In a large non-stick pot, melt 6 tablespoons of butter and then add ½ cup of flour. Cook over low heat for 2 minutes, stirring constantly with a whisk. Still whisking, add the hot milk and cook for 1-2 minutes, until thickened and smooth.

3. Take mixture off the heat. Add the Gruyere, Irish cheddar, salt, cayenne pepper and nutmeg and stir until the cheese melts. Stir in the cooked pasta and crayfish. Pile the mixture into baking dishes.

4. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and combine with Panko breadcrumbs. Sprinkle over mac and cheese. Bake for 30-40 minutes, or until pasta is browned on top and cheese sauce is bubbly. Sprinkle freshly chopped parsley on top before serving. ■

This recipe and photograph originally appeared on Jenny's Food for Hunters blog at Foodforhunters.com.



PHOTOS BY JENNY NGUYEN

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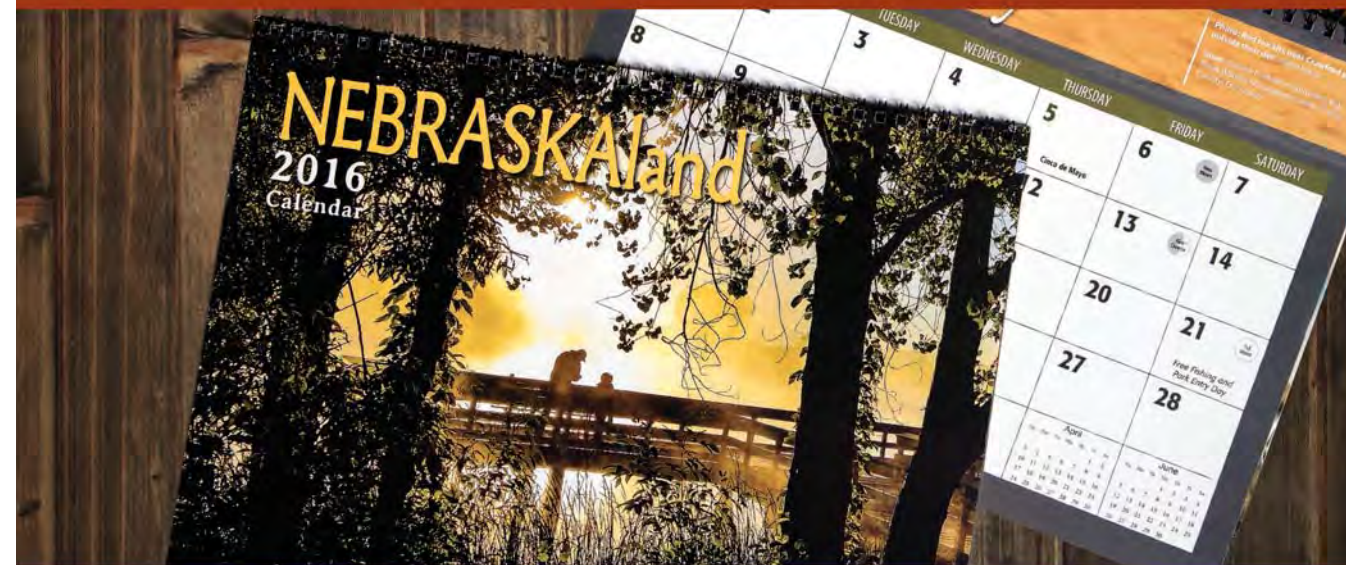
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Mating Monarchs

Looking into the sun, at first I thought that odd-shaped creature fluttering off in the distance was a small prairie sparrow of some kind, loping along as if its own weight was too heavy, struggling to fly. But when this winged creature lit on the stalk of a tall prairie plant, I quietly moved closer and couldn't believe my eyes. It was two mating monarch butterflies. In more than 20 years of photographing on the prairie, I had never seen this before. It was a poignant moment to be sure.

Monarchs are diminishing in number throughout North America due to continued habitat loss of both their prairie ecosystem and their forested wintering grounds in Mexico. But somehow this experience deep in the grasslands of the Nebraska Sandhills gave me some hope.

Each spring succeeding generations of short-lived monarchs move up the Great Plains as far north as Canada, following the prairie bloom. In fall they make an astonishing long-distance migration to the forested highlands of central Mexico. I doubt these monarchs are the generation that will make the long distance journey to their wintering grounds, but hopefully their next generation will, continuing an ancient migratory tradition as long as we allow them to do so. In large measure, it's up to us.

Michael Forsberg
August 19, 2015



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