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magazine

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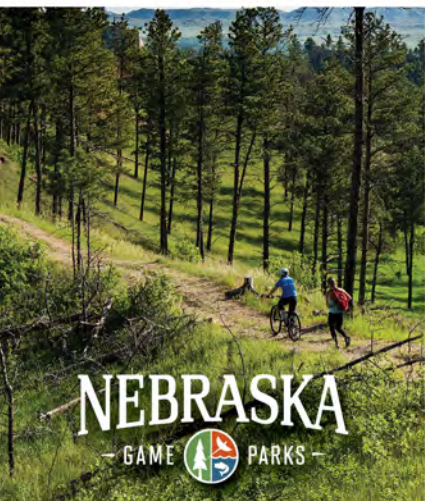


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December 2020



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The Nebraska Deer and Game Expo is coming to the Lancaster Event Center, Lincoln NE on January 15-16-17, 2021. An outdoors expo full of everything you would expect and more, including a Big Buck Contest, 3D Archery Challenge, Outfitters, manufacturers, suppliers, media and the list is growing!

You have spoken and they have listened! Be sure to connect with the Nebraska Deer and Game Expo at **nebraskadeerandgameexpo.com** and stay on top of their exhibitor list and news of additional info! Big game, small game and everything in between, it's been too long and you won't want to miss this show!

nebraskadeerandgameexpo.com

Nebraskaland

Volume 98 • No. 10
December 2020

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PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

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In addition, statewide habitat programs and costshare assistance through your local chapter might be available. For more information and access to these options, visit our website at:

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condensed and edited. Photographs are
also welcome.*

CAUTIOUSLY AWARE

A wary mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) peeks out from behind a thicket near Chadron in Dawes County.

PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH, AND PARKS

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED: THE NORTHERN REDBELLY DACE

By Melissa Panella

The northern redbelly dace (*Chrosomus eos*) has a name that sounds fitting for the holidays. This little minnow is among the most colorful in the state and appears festive in its attire of glitzy red belly and olive-colored back. Northern redbelly dace frolic in small, cool-water streams located mostly in Nebraska's Sandhills.

In Nebraska, northern redbelly dace have been limited to the relatively small headwater tributaries of the Niobrara, Loup and Platte rivers. They use cool, clear streams with slow-moving water, which are spring-fed from the Sandhills and are shaded by logs and brush. Most cool-water streams range in temperature between approximately 62 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Northern redbelly dace also are found in the quiet waters of marshes or ponds built by beavers. They eat algae, plant material, zooplankton, invertebrates and occasionally other small fish. Northern redbelly dace do not seem to have the ability to move from one river basin into another, so they are dependent

on high-quality conditions and availability of natural resources where they currently live.

The northern redbelly dace is listed as a threatened species in Nebraska, because there are few places that satisfy this minnow's specific habitat needs. Changes like channel modification, culverts and water-control structures can affect the spring-fed streams this species relies upon and lead to population declines. Populations of northern redbelly dace are vulnerable to threats in several other states as well.

The good news is that northern redbelly dace can successfully be conserved in Nebraska. Their populations can be sustained as long as the creeks they inhabit are kept in good condition and not overrun with predatory or exotic fish. It is also important not to collect this small minnow as a bait fish. With a bit of care, northern redbelly dace can continue to enliven Nebraska's cool-water streams with their bright, jolly colors.

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NebraskaWildlifeFund.org

Look for the Peregrine Falcon image on your Nebraska tax return.





PHOTO BY SHARLA MEESTER

AN IRRUPTIVE BUT WELCOME VISITOR FROM THE NORTH

By Stephen J. Brenner, Nongame Bird Biologist

For many species of birds, annual migrations and seasonal movements follow relatively predictable patterns. This is not to downplay the awesome feat of bird migration — flying from South America to North America *and back* in the same year is no easy task. For most species, though, these long-distance routes are more or less the same for generations of individuals.

Most warblers, vireos and flycatchers, for example, will leave their wintering grounds in Central and South America to pass through the Great Plains in spring, breed in the northern forests of Canada in summer, and then fly back down south and cross the Gulf of Mexico to get back to the tropics by the end of autumn.

For some species, however, annual movements, particularly where individuals will spend the winter, is not so predictable. These species have “irruptive” movements between breeding and wintering grounds that can change literally from one year to the next. These irruptions usually occur due to limitations or surpluses in a given species’ food supply.

One of the best and most beautiful irruptive North American species is the common redpoll. Redpolls are a quintessential songbird of the far north, breeding in the taiga and scrub-

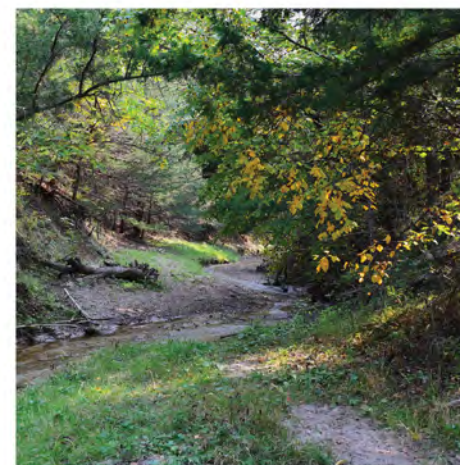
dominated edges of the tundra in Canada and Alaska. So why are redpolls considered an “irruptive” finch? Redpolls (like other breeding finches of the far north) will follow the seed production of plants like spruce, birch and pine. And in years when these plants struggle up north, redpolls will move south to find greener pastures. This is why observers in states like Nebraska see variable numbers of redpolls in consecutive winters. In years where the seed crop up north is productive, Nebraska hosts few redpolls, making our winters much less colorful.

The good news — experts predict there is a good chance redpolls will move south in larger numbers this winter. Redpolls will readily visit feeders and could easily be overlooked when occurring with groups of more common species, such as the similarly sized American goldfinch. Redpolls also can be found in birch trees and weedy fields.

Their plumage is generally frosty white with drab brown tones featuring extensive streaking on the flanks; they also have tiny bills. Males sport a bright red cap and even brighter pink breast, which offers an excellent contrast to the white plumage of their bellies and the white snow covering your tray feeder this winter.

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OTOE CO, NE - 240 AC.

This farm is a pinnacle upland property! Small timbered fingers give way to acres upon acres of grass. A waterway gently winds its way through the property where you'll find a few catch ponds along the way. Located on the eastern side of the farm is an elaborate building that consists of three partitions. On one side you'll find a large open bay that is used primarily for equipment storage. Along the interior sides of the bay are individual dog kennels that have access doors to the outside where they are protected under the overhang. Centrally located in the building is the mudroom where you can store all your gear for those long days hunts. There's also a large basin sink and grooming table where you can treat your four-legged companions to the utmost care that they deserve.



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PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

KATE'S BARS: A REVIEW

By Eric Fowler

Granola bars have been a staple in my pack forever — a simple, convenient way to keep fueled up on a pheasant hunt or stoke a fire on a long, cold day in the photo blind. There are plenty to choose from, many of which are loaded with sugar and artificial ingredients: Things my wife likes to call “crap.”

A line of energy bars from Kate's Real Food have none of that. They are made simply, with organic ingredients including oats, chocolate, peanut butter and fruit, and are sweetened with natural honey. There are no empty calories here, Kate's says, only real food and real energy. There's no gluten either.

As for the taste? Each of the six flavors

offered are excellent, but the Grizzly Bar, with peanut butter and dark chocolate, tops the list for me. The Tiki Bar, with mango and coconut, is a close second. I'm not sure why anyone would prefer milk chocolate, but the Tram Bar, which Kate Schade concocted as a snack to fuel her days on the slopes in Jackson Hole and was the bar that launched her company, might be your pick.

So if you're looking for something to throw in your pack as you head to the deer stand or duck marsh this month, look for Kate's Real Food energy bars online or at a Natural Grocers, Whole Foods or Wal-Mart near you. For more, visit katesrealfood.com.

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PHOTO BY CHRIS HELZER

CIRCLES IN THE SNOW

By Martha D. Shulski

Snow cover provides a wealth of opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts. It insulates the ground during cold spells, helps replenish soil moisture reserves as meltwater percolates and unfortunately, helps to increase flood risk under the right conditions. As snow melts, we witness fluxes of energy. While probably not the phrase you were expecting, a transfer of energy is ultimately what causes solid crystals to morph into liquid fortunes.

Energy we receive from the sun, called shortwave radiation, is one factor that produces snowmelt. The most obvious, but not the most powerful, is through direct absorption of sunlight by the snow.

Snow is a great reflector of those solar rays; a lot of energy — sometimes up to 95 percent — simply bounces off, so to speak.

However, when this shortwave energy is absorbed by any object not covered by snow, such as tree trunks, fence posts or grasses, that's when the magic happens. These

darker objects absorb sunlight — 80 percent more than snow — and transform solar into thermal radiation, which warms the surrounding air. Melt circles start to form around these objects, and the bright white blanket slowly darkens. As more ground is exposed, more sunlight is absorbed by the darker landscape, which heats the surface and the air, speeding up the melting process.

Other fluxes of energy result in snowmelt also. A warm ground can transfer heat to the snowpack, nudging the melting process. Water vapor in the atmosphere can land on the snow causing melt through condensational warming. In fact, this has been shown to produce significant melt during warm spells in the winter when sun angles are low.

Finally, rain on snow is a rapid, but sometime destructive, way to cause snowmelt; just think of March 2019 as an example.

Here's hoping you can enjoy the snow before energy fluxes transform the white canvas back to familiar hues.

IT'S DEER SEASON



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— GAME  PARKS —

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PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

LET 'EM HUNT

By Todd Mills

Enabling others is a natural action for many, and much like we can enable our children, we can also enable our hunting dogs. We want the best for them. Why not try and help them by doing some of the work? I will tell you why. Your hunting dog has been bred to hunt. Let 'em hunt.

Growing up in a small northwestern Iowa town, upland hunting was my first love. And unlike Nebraska, Iowa allows hunters to hunt the road sides and ditches. The shooting hours also close earlier in the day, at 4:30 p.m., and each day before that time we would drive dirt roads looking for birds as they came to the road for gravel.

Even when we spotted roosters, the birds would often slip us, either by running out into the corn field or just sitting tight. Many times, I would leave the ditch and quickly get to my

truck, wanting to get on to the next spot while the dog would mysteriously stay in the ditch. I would yell at the "undisciplined" dog for not coming to my side. Moments later, a rooster would explode from underneath while I stood there with no gun and my mouth wide open.

It was in those early days that I learned my lesson on paying close attention to every detail in my dog's body language. Here are a couple of tips that might help you understand what your dog is trying to tell you.

Water Dogs

Put your dog in a place where she can see the bird fall. But if you can't, then she must be able to take direction from you. If your dog has been trained to take hand signals in water and land, allow her to work the area thoroughly

before giving her any direction.

Dogs that have been enabled are constantly looking back, hoping you can provide some help when all they really need to do is hunt the area they've been sent. And if at all possible, don't walk to the area the bird fell without allowing the dog to search.

Field Dogs

Pretty simple rule here. Stay on your dog's tail. Regardless of where you think the birds might be, your dog always knows best. Learn the body language and cues your dog gives when she's on a trail.

Training dogs is time-consuming, repetitive and rewarding. Remember that just like children, they have to find their way. Patience and a firm belief in the process will allow a good gun dog to prosper in the field.

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NEBRASKA
— GAME  PARKS —

THE OUTSIDER

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JEFF KURRUS

A combination of early-morning sun and smoke from breakfast in the goose blind make for interesting rays of light.



ABOVE LEFT: Hunters arrange goose decoys on New Year's Day outside of Ashland.

BELOW LEFT: A Lab retrieves a Canada goose.

BELOW RIGHT: A hunter looks out of the blind, his lanyard of calls and bands indicative of his time in a waterfowl blind throughout the years.

"I won't," I smiled. "I can promise you that."

As a *Nebraskaland* photographer, you're along for the ride. I've never been put in an illegal or compromising position, but I've been with multiple people who were unfazed by my fancy camera equipment, people who simply wanted me to take whatever was thrown my way.

I received one of these potential curveballs in 2014 while covering the Patriot Hunts program, an organization dedicated to planning hunts for wounded veterans, first responders and their families. I walked into a cabin that housed a group of Purple Heart recipients and knew the



I know when I'm the outsider. As a longtime *Nebraskaland Magazine* writer and photographer, I'm well aware when I'm interrupting someone's hunting or fishing trip. So when I went on a top-secret hunt near Ashland with a group of hunters I barely knew, I had been gifted an exclusive trip.

But it wasn't the first time I had been on a hunt like this.

On the night before the open day of pheasant season in 2008, I was at Frank's Bar with Scott Miller of Lincoln and his friends before hunting his dad's land near Trenton. I was about to witness my first true Nebraska pheasant hunt, complete with the stop-off trip at Cabela's on the way out for last-second supplies, a group dinner and hunting on land that had been in the family since 1942.

So when Russ Schellpeper, a close friend of Scott's, came up to me in the bar — his 6'3 frame gazing down at me in a not quite grimacing, but definitely not inviting, glare — I was ready for just about anything.

"It was Scott's idea to bring you here," he said. "Not mine."

I took a sip of my beer and continued to stare at him, knowing he wasn't finished.

"We do this every year, and we do things a certain way. Don't mess it up."



ABOVE RIGHT: My host poses with a white Lab and mallard shot near Ashland.

BELOW LEFT: A homemade ice-breaking airboat is employed during a frosty morning goose hunt near Ashland.



atmosphere before I entered.

They bantered constantly, counting each others' bullet holes and shrapnel wounds and searching for anything they could find to make fun of each other. So when they said to me, "So you're the guy they sent from *Cosmopolitan Magazine*," all I could do was smile. Then I immediately retaliated, knowing they would have swallowed me for sure if I backed off in any way.

Schellpeper had prepared me to respond to just about any situation, as I made it a point to hustle like crazy getting every image I wanted on his opening day pheasant hunt with him barely knowing I was there. The result: We've hunted together multiple times since and text each other frequently — usually questionable insults left best off the pages of this family publication.

So when I was invited into the Ashland blind last winter

with a group of people I did not know, I was extremely prepared for anything that would come my way. There were the few, customary questions that arise regarding "how did you get into this line of work" and "how did you get to Nebraska in the first place" because of my Southern accent, but I knew I had not impressed them in any way.

But I was OK with that. See, just as they have their hunting crew, I have mine. We do things a certain way, invite the people we want to go and the days' assignments usually go like clockwork. It's smooth. Comfortable.

When we host an outsider, it often works out perfectly. But there was at least one day I was hunting with a new partner, and he told me that the tom turkey we were pursuing wasn't worth the 400-yard walk through a muddy creek bottom to get to him. We never hunted together again.

Much like I don't know if I'll hunt with the Ashland crew

again. They have their system. They know who's calling and who's calling the shot. They know who's cooking, who's putting out decoys and who's assigned to the homemade airboat to retrieve birds or open up a hole skimmed with ice.

Geese are their preference. While they killed several mallards, the ducks were an afterthought. I've hunted with duck hunters who travel the entire Central Flyway in pursuit of greenheads and would never be able to comprehend this.

But you know what? This crew could care less what those guys think. They're after Canada geese and, quite frankly, they didn't invite you in the first place.

They did invite me, however, and I remain very grateful. Through my years of working for *Nebraskaland Magazine*, the people I have met and the memories I have made and witnessed are immense. The Summit Lake ice-fishing cook-

out of 2010 ranks right up there with the coyote hunting trip to the Sandhills with Chris Pokorny in 2012. The quickest turkey hunt I ever covered was with then-18-year-old Brad Cheloha of Columbus, and one of the longest was with then-63-year-old Lloyd Warren of Beatrice and his son, James.

My memories of this day near Ashland, less than 15 minutes from my house, as an outsider are just as special. From the airboat ice breaker to the indelible image of the retriever walking the dead goose through the decoys, I'll never forget this day.

If not for the images I was able to capture, but for one more reminder of how thankful each of us should be if we have someone to hunt with. [N](#)

Thanks to Andy Mink of Complete Retrievers. Learn more about his dogs at completeretrievers.com.

A Canada goose is retrieved during my waterfowl hunt near Ashland.



Outdoor Nebraska

By Renae Blum

It's a mistake to think there's nothing to do outdoors in the winter. There is, with just a little creativity and a warm coat. Try any of these activities to get started. [N](#)



A BLUE JAY AT A FEEDING STATION IN DAVES COUNTY
PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

Winter bird feeding

Throughout the month | Statewide

Food is scarcer for birds in the winter, so give them a boost with a backyard bird feeder or two. Black oil sunflower seeds, peanut kernels, white proso millet and Niger thistle are all great options, but you can experiment to see what type of feed works best in your area. Providing a source of open water also is a great way to attract birds.

Ice-fishing at Frye Lake

As ice conditions allow

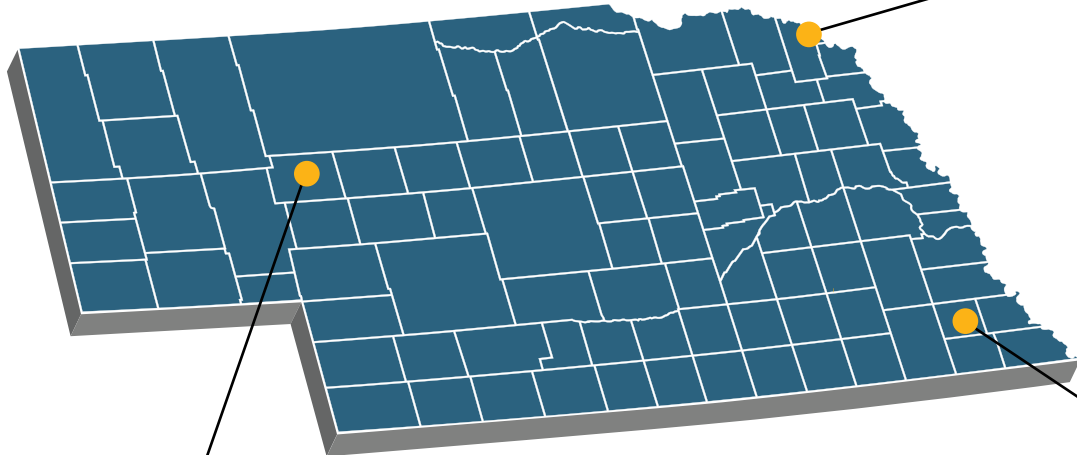
Nebraska's Sandhills lakes are generally great ice-fishing destinations, and Frye Lake is one of the best right now with good numbers of quality panfish and lots of bass. As with any ice-fishing outing, a good strategy is to keep moving and cutting holes until you find the fish.



LARGEMOUTH BASS CAUGHT WHILE ICE-FISHING
PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS



STARS ABOVE PONDEROSA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG



What To Do in December

Stargazing

Throughout the month | Statewide

In December, stargazers can witness a transition between summer and winter constellations. Stay up late enough and you'll see summer constellations going down in the west and winter ones coming up in the east. Also, mark your calendar for the Geminid meteor shower on Dec. 13-14, most likely the best of the year, and the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on Dec. 21. The two will look like a double star in the western sky.



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING AT INDIAN CAVE STATE PARK
PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing at Ponca State Park

As weather conditions allow

Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing are a draw for visitors at Ponca State Park. Throughout the winter, the park provides groomed cross-country skiing trails when there's adequate snow. However, visitors are free to snowshoe or cross-country ski at any time. Come and see the most popular views at the park during a unique time of year.

Muzzleloader deer hunting at southeastern WMAs

Throughout the month

Among the wildlife management areas in southeastern Nebraska, three of them — Hickory Ridge, Osage and Table Rock — stand out. These large, heavily wooded areas have good hunter access, are well managed, and hold good populations of game animals. They're also off the beaten path, so usually you'll encounter less traffic.



MUZZLELOADER DEER HUNT WITH JOSHUA NETHERTON (LEFT) AND MENTOR, TOM WELSTEAD.
PHOTO BY JENNY KOUENWHEATLEY



Ice Bubbles

Story and photos by Chris Helzer

As a photographer drawn mostly to small subjects like bugs and flowers, it can be hard to find much to photograph after the end of the growing season. Most invertebrates die, migrate or go dormant. Plants wither and turn brown. It's fun to seek out interesting texture and patterns after a fresh snow or on a frosty morning, but those opportunities are relatively uncommon during most winters.

When I start to feel especially stir crazy, one of my go-to remedies is a trip to a frozen pond or wetland. As long as it's cold enough to freeze the surface of those water bodies, I can usually find something worth investigating and photographing up close.



ABOVE: Pockets of air trapped in the ice along a wetland edge create intriguing patterns at the Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies in Hall County.

LEFT: The texture of the ice surface made these bubbles look like part of a painting at the Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies.



Trying to figure out the reasons for various bubble/air pocket shapes — as seen above at Lincoln Creek in Aurora — is fun, but sometimes it's nice to just appreciate the results.

Sometimes, I find insects, seeds or other little treasures encased in ice. Other times, I enjoy exploring the shorelines and other edges where ice freezes, thaws and refreezes, forming intricate lines and designs. Those options, though, pale in comparison to my favorite subjects: ice bubbles.

I've spent many happy hours wandering across the ice with my eyes pointed downward, searching for bubbles. Some might call that eccentric or strange. I prefer "peculiar," but either way, it sure beats sedentary boredom. Sure, it's cold, and I am always worried about having 4 inches of clear, solid ice, but the fresh air and exercise is perfect. Plus, I try to stick to shallow wetlands or pond edges where the water is only a few feet deep.

Besides enjoying the aesthetic beauty of frozen bubbles, I also like trying to figure out the science behind what I'm seeing. I think I understand the basics, but I can't always decipher the chemical and physical processes that form those little capsules of air within the ice. I'll try to share what I've gleaned from reading and talking to other scientists, but I know there are nuances I haven't yet grasped.

The Science

To start with, water has in it a lot of gases, including oxygen, carbon dioxide and methane. Oxygen is released by actively respiring plants. Carbon dioxide is a byproduct of carbon-based life forms like plants and animals being broken down by aquatic bacteria and other microbes. Methane is produced when that same decomposition happens in the soil beneath the water, where low levels of oxygen (anaerobic



conditions) exist. Those and other gases remain dissolved in the water of ponds and wetlands, where they are repeatedly cycled in and out of plants, animals and microscopic creatures of many kinds.

The other important factor to understand is that frozen water can hold less air (those combined gases) than liquid water can. Have you ever looked closely at ice cubes when you pull them out of the tray in your freezer? Often, the outer edges of the cubes are clear, but the center is opaque. That opaqueness is the result of countless miniscule bubbles in the middle of each cube. As the water in the tray freezes from the outside in, that cooling water forces out the air it can no longer hold in solution. Much of that air gets pushed toward the center of the cube until it erupts into tiny bubbles,

around which the remaining water freezes.

As I understand it, bubbles of air in frozen lakes and wetlands arise from the same basic process. Air is forced out of cooling water and forced into “clusters of air” (bubbles) as ice forms around it. I see a lot of variation in the size, depth and number of ice bubbles during my explorations. I assume the speed with which the water freezes plays a big role in that, in addition to some other factors. An example of one of those other factors is when the top of the ice thaws on a warm day and then refreezes overnight. The air being squeezed out by freezing water is prevented from being pushed continually lower by the layer of hard ice below it. That has to influence how the resulting bubbles look, but I’m far from smart enough to predict the result.

Other Phenomena

When I’m out, I also notice and photograph other intriguing phenomena, such as pockets of air around plant stems and “streams” of tiny bubbles radiating outward from both plants and dead animals embedded in ice. The pockets of air around plant stems, especially close to the top surface of the ice, might be caused by the ice melting around the edges of those stems as the sun warms them. The streams of tiny radiating bubbles are a little trickier for me to explain, but I suppose it has to do with air being forced out of the saturated dead insects, leaves or stems as they freeze.

Sometimes, the majority of ice in a frozen wetland is as opaque as the center of those ice cubes I mentioned



ABOVE: The streams of bubbles from this dead damselfly larva may be a result of air being forced from its body as it froze.

LEFT: Wetlands like this one at Deep Well State Wildlife Management Area can be a treasure trove of frozen bubbles and other surprises.

earlier, and there’s not much to photograph. If I were better organized and analytical, I’d try to keep track of the weather and other conditions that lead to the formation of opaque ice. That would save me the disappointment of bundling up on a cold blustery day, only to find ice I can’t do much with photographically.

On a good day, though, I’ll find that the surface of a wetland or lake has numerous layers and patches of ice that have frozen and formed in various ways. As I explore those sites, I’ll often find clear ice with bubbles visible several inches or more below the surface, various colors and tones of frozen water, and air pockets and streams of tiny bubbles around frozen plants and other organisms — especially near the shore.



Looking Peculiar

When the conditions are right, I can spend hours happily hunched over or prostrate on the ice with my camera and tripod. While I don't see anything strange about that, I'm sure others disagree. I usually try to find locations far from roads, but sometimes I have to endure the periodic pickup or other vehicle slowing down as they pass by. The driver usually gives me a side-eye stare — you know, the one with

which they pretend to be looking straight ahead while using every bit of their peripheral vision to record what I'm doing, as well as my license plate and general description.

I can imagine the subsequent conversations later, with a spouse or neighbor:

"Did you notice that peculiar stranger out on the wetland today? He can't be ice fishing in a foot and half of water, can he? What in tarnation do you suppose he's up to?"

I'm not sure the truth would make them feel any better.

Maybe one of these days, a brave and curious passerby will stop and make their way out to where I'm photographing bubbles to ask me about it. If so, maybe we can have a lively and engaged conversation about the air-holding capacity of freezing water. Or maybe they will pull out their own camera and begin photographing ice bubbles, too. [N](#)

Chris Helzer is the Nature Conservancy's director of science in Nebraska.

ABOVE: Radiating streams of bubbles from a plant stem beneath the ice at the Helzer family prairie.

LEFT: Bubbles, duckweed and rushes in a frozen wetland at the Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies.



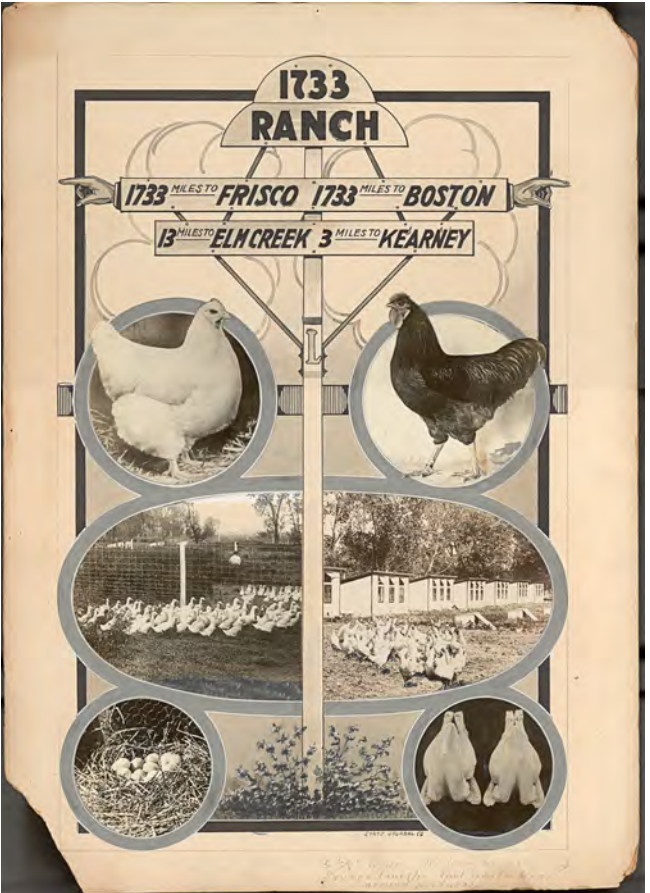
Early 1920s photo showing the Lincoln Highway sign erected near the 1733 Ranch. Courtesy of Bob Puschendorf

1,733 Miles from Somewhere

By David L. Bristow, History Nebraska

Kearney has long promoted itself as the “Midway City” located halfway between the coasts, exactly 1,733 miles from both Boston and San Francisco. The number 1733 shows up in various places. There was the 1733 Ranch with what was said to be the world’s largest barn. Local signs and maps touted the number, and not many years ago, a Kearney store offered 17.33 percent off during a sale. Back in the days of the Lincoln Highway (present day U.S. 30), a road sign boasted that Kearney was “1733 miles to Frisco, 1733 miles to Boston.”

University of Nebraska-Kearney geography professor John Bauer became fascinated with the number. It didn’t seem to add up. On a U.S. map, Kearney looks closer to San Francisco than to Boston. Bauer noted the great circle distances as 1,263 miles between San Francisco and Kearney, and 1,486 between Kearney and Boston. Was 1,733 simply a made-up promotional claim by local boosters?



The 1733 Ranch’s central location was a big part of its marketing. History Nebraska RG3316-0-61



Shown in about 1890, Kearney’s Midway Hotel (1808 Central Ave.) advertised itself as being 1,733 miles from both San Francisco and Boston. History Nebraska RG2178-18



Originally known as the Watson Ranch, the 1733 Ranch had a 500-foot-long dairy barn that was a Lincoln Highway landmark. History Nebraska RG2608-0-2951

Digging deeper, he found that some people claimed that the 1,733 distance was based on the old Lincoln Highway. Bauer checked a 1915 Lincoln Highway guidebook. It measured 1,752 miles from San Francisco and 1,632 miles from New York City, where the highway ended. The Lincoln Highway didn’t even go to Boston.

So it was starting to look like 1733 was a made-up number, or at best a wild guess by Kearney boosters. This is the town, after all, that once campaigned to replace Washington, D.C., as the U.S. capital. What wouldn’t Kearney say to puff itself up?

Bauer was curious as to when this idea originated and how it fit with the city’s self-promotion as the “Midway City.” That led him to sources much older than the Lincoln Highway. Turns out the boosters were right. Bauer found the answer by looking at early railroad maps and timetables. The 1,733 figure matches an old railroad route, and has been promoted by the city since at least 1890.

Bauer’s article, “1,733 Miles from Where? Kearney, Nebraska’s 1733 Identity” appeared in the Summer 2015 issue of Nebraska History Magazine. [N](#)

Visit History Nebraska’s website at history.nebraska.gov.

Not Going to Eat That?

Your Dog Will

Story and photos by Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley

Pheasant heads, freezer-burned fish, deer liver, duck feet ... these are things that I might have tossed in the past. There are parts of an animal that I simply can't use. Or waste from freezer-burned meat. Or meat that ended up not tasting good. I hate waste, but it happens. So, when my husband and I brought home our 8-week-old Pembroke Welsh corgi puppy last winter, our problems were solved. I've come up with a few creative, easy ideas to use as much of the game and fish that we accumulate throughout the year as possible.

But first, talk to your pet's veterinarian before introducing any new foods. Once you get the OK, have fun exploring these wild treats.

Bird Heads

Pheasant, chukar, grouse, duck, etc., all work here. The bones in the heads of game birds are soft, and the meat and brains are enticing to dogs. With kitchen shears, cut off the beaks before offering to your dog (not pictured), which can be sharp and hard. Do not offer head-shot birds to avoid lead poisoning.



ABOVE: The author's puppy, Fergus, enjoying dehydrated walleye skin.

LEFT: The bones in the heads of game birds are soft, and the meat and brains are enticing to dogs. The feathers also could be beneficial to a dog's digestion, but make sure you cut off the beaks before eating (not shown).



My dog digests limited amounts of feathers OK. According to many sources, including nakedbeasts.com — who provides “holistic healing pet treats and chews for dog and cat owners — fur and feather in a canine's diet can be beneficial: “The fur and feathers are fully digestible and provide an essential source of manganese as well as a natural means of colon cleansing. By allowing the natural fibers of the fur and hair to sweep off the excess debris of food and gunk along your pet's

intestinal walls, they are more readily available to absorb minerals and nutrients more efficiently.”

Feed fresh or for longer shelf life, dehydrate in a food dehydrator. To dehydrate, run kitchen shears along the neck and top of the head to open up the head cavity, which will allow them to dry more thoroughly and prevent early spoilage. Dry times will vary, but I like to dry at 135 degrees for about 4 hours and then turn the temperature up to 165



Organ meat should be an essential part of every dog’s diet, and deer liver is fully loaded with vital nutrients. The next time you shoot a deer, take the liver home to make chews for your dog.

degrees until fully dried. Allow heads to cool completely before storing them in a partially closed zip-top bag in the refrigerator. Watch for condensation in the bag, which would indicate that the heads were not fully dried.

Use within two weeks. Freeze for longer storage.

Fish Jerky

Jerky is a great treatment for freezer-burned fish fillets or fish that might not taste as good as you’d hope. My husband caught a whole mess of bullhead catfish one summer, which were unfortunately unpalatable for the table — no problem for Fergus though. Dry boneless fillets at 165 degrees for several hours; dry time will vary.

Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month. Vacuum seal and/or freeze for long-term storage.

Deer Flank Jerky

That thin flap of belly meat that runs between a deer’s ribs and its hind end is called the flank. It’s often layered with silver skin and fat, which I don’t like to run through my meat grinder because the silver skin binds up my machine. Flank is too gristly to make jerky for human consumption, and the thick layers of fat are a pain to remove for slow cooking. Fortunately, all that won’t matter to your dog. The more silver skin, the longer the chew will last.

Cut the flank into desired-size pieces and dehydrate at 165 degrees until fully dried. Fat is desirable, but trim off excess layers; feeding a dog too much fat at one sitting can cause diarrhea.

Flank jerky will keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 month. Venison fat can go rancid quickly, so watch for that.



Venison flank is heavily laced with silver skin, and it’s a chore to clean. However, with minimal effort, you can turn it into jerky for your dog.



The bones in duck or goose feet don’t splinter, and they are full of beneficial cartilage.

Deer Liver Chews

Out of all the wild game and fish I’ve given Fergus, deer liver chews seem to be his favorite. Organs are highly nutritious

for dogs, so it makes me feel good that I no longer have to leave most of the liver with the gut pile. I keep it frozen until we’re ready to make these treats.

Cut the liver into fourths and soak it in water for 30 minutes to release excess blood. Then rinse and cut into bite-size pieces, accounting for 30 percent shrinkage. Pat completely dry with paper towels. Lay on dehydrator trays, allowing room in between each piece for air flow, and dehydrate at 135 degrees for 3 hours. Then turn up heat to 165 and dehydrate until fully dried but still chewy.

Duck/Goose Feet

The bones in duck or goose feet don’t splinter, and they are full of beneficial cartilage. Wash feet thoroughly and clip off the toenails before feeding fresh to your dog. For a longer-lasting treat, dehydrate waterfowl feet at 165 degrees until fully dried.

Fish Skin

If every angler had a dollar for all the fish they’ve filleted in their life If you can’t turn that work into money, then you might as well save money by turning the fish skins into dog treats. Dry fish skins at 165 degrees until fully dried; small scales are OK. Lay them flat on trays or twist them to make “sticks.” 🐾

Disclaimer: Feed at your own risk and supervise dogs when offering wild game treats. Gradually introduce new foods to avoid stomach upset and account for allergies. Store all treats in the refrigerator or freezer. If mold occurs, do not feed.

The Not So Plain Plains Onion

Story and photos by Gerry Steinauer

Of our state's six species of native onion, the Plains onion, though small in stature, has the largest, and in my opinion, most elegant flowers. Unlike the other onions, its flowers are scented, a sweet fragrance reminiscent of



The rising prairie sun adorns the delicate flowers of Plains onion.

hyacinths or cloves. Unfortunately, hidden among the prairie grasses, this uncommon little onion is rarely seen, except when exposed by its colorful May blooms.

Rose-colored Petals

Aptly named, the Plains onion (*Allium perdulce*) grows throughout the central Plains from South Dakota through central Nebraska and into northern Mexico. In our state, it is found in mixed-grass prairie mostly on loam to loamy sand soils, but avoids the pure sands of the Sandhills.

In spring, the plant sprouts two to four slender, grass-like leaves from a bean-sized bulb with a fibrous coating and typical onion odor and taste. In favorable years, the bulb also sends up a single flowering stem at the top of which develops a tight head of urn-shaped blooms with rose-colored petals that fade to purple. In the onion's far southern range, the flowers are white to pale pink in color, and oddly, nearly odorless.

After the small, black seeds mature in midsummer, the stem and leaves wither, and the plant survives the heat of late summer as a bulb only. In autumn, if moisture is plentiful, the bulb sprouts a rosette of leaves to harvest the fading sunlight and replenish its bulb with starches before winter's onset. In a rock garden on the warm south side of our brick house, where the plant is grown as an ornamental, these leaves persist well into winter, even when covered in snow.

In Nebraska, the Plains onion is most similar in appearance to the prairie onion (*A. textile*), which grows in our dry, western prairies and has white, unscented flowers. The Canada onion (*A. canadensis*), common in eastern Nebraska prairies, differs from the Plains onion by having white to lavender flowers in an open head. It is also a taller and more robust plant.

The Hidden Onion

During my career, I have crossed paths with the Plains onion perhaps only 10 times. The first was about 20 years ago, when I came upon a couple of flowering plants in a small, degraded prairie in Hamilton County. The largest population I have encountered was located on a high prairie ridge top overlooking the Missouri River near Santee and contained a



The Plains onion's species name *perdulce* translates from Latin to "sweet" in reference to its fragrant flowers.

few hundred flowering plants.

The onion grows in a small prairie on our South Dakota farm where in most springs there are less than 50 flowering stems. In 2013, the year after the severe drought of 2012, my wife, Grace, saw a strange phenomenon and called me from the farm: "There's a thousand little purple onions blooming in the prairie."

"Interesting," I thought.

The next spring, when the number of flowering onions had returned to normal, I investigated. On my hands and knees, I parted the prairie grasses and searched for non-flowering onions near flowering plants. Sure enough, with leaves merely a few inches tall, they were far more abundant than flowering plants. The Plains onion was more abundant in our prairie, and likely elsewhere, than their blooms typically indicate.

The 2012 drought set the stage for 2013's prodigious onion bloom by stressing the prairie grasses, killing some and shrinking the roots of others. With plentiful spring rain and released from competition with the still recovering grasses, the onion bloomed in abundance and littered the soil with its long-lasting seed. Prairie management and other aspects of climate might also entice the onion, as well as other spring

wildflowers, to bloom. Abundant soil moisture, for example, likely stimulates fall leaf growth and photosynthesis providing the onion with plenty of energy for flowering the next spring. Well-timed prescribed fire and livestock grazing in prairies can also stress grasses, reducing competition for the onion.

In the rough-and-tumble prairie, the Plains onion does not roll the dice when it comes to flowering and seed production, which requires extensive energy. In unfavorable years, many plants survive as a bulb only with no above-ground growth, or they sprout only leaves and no flowers. The wise little onion waits patiently for favorable conditions, and only then does it send forth its beautiful blooms. If lucky, you might be there to see them. 



Plains onion bulbs were a food source for Native Americans. They were eaten raw, fried, roasted or boiled in soups.



The seeds of Plains onion, six per papery capsule, ripen to a shiny black in midsummer.

Clear Creek Goose Hunt

An Adventure Story

Story and photos by Julie Geiser

I love to duck and goose hunt and go whenever the opportunity presents itself. One of the first places I hunted waterfowl years ago was at Clear Creek Wildlife Management Area near Lewellen. I still love going to this public hunting area. For those who have never been to Clear Creek, there are a few things to know before you hunt.

When the duck and goose season begins, hunters can access the seasonal refuge and special hunting areas, which has 10 pit blinds available for hunters to use. Both areas are open to hunting, fishing, trapping and other outdoor activities on a first-come, first-served basis until the Monday before

Thanksgiving. After that, the refuge becomes a no-hunting, waterfowl refuge, and the pits are drawn for by hunters in the morning at the Clear Creek check station. This is typically the peak of the season and drawing for the blinds is a fair way to make sure all hunters get a chance to hunt.

Before heading out anywhere, I like to check the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Public Access Atlas online to view the area with GIS. With this tool, it's easier to set up a plan of attack before stepping foot on the ground, but having hunted for years in this area where very little changes from year to year, I knew the area well.

My husband, Tom, and I usually hunt together as it's a great way to spend time doing what we both love, and it's safer to hunt with a partner. We can also carry in more decoys and gear that way as decoys are a must; a dozen or two usually does the trick.

Watching the weather recently, we planned a hunt

based on a snow advisory. We packed three sleds with three dozen duck and goose decoys consisting of floaters and shells, along with waders, guns, food, water and a heater as temperatures were slated to dip into the single digits. The third sled was also packed in anticipation of the birds flying and us shooting straight.

We were going to lose an hour driving to the Mountain Time Zone and knew that other die-hard hunters would have the same game plan. We strapped our gear down and loaded the sleds under the topper of the truck, ready to get up with the stars the next morning.

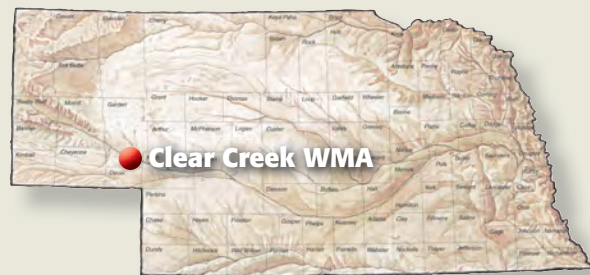
Arriving an hour before shooting

time, we quickly parked and unloaded our sleds as two sets of headlights came down the road. We started our 20-minute walk in the snow and cold, the sleds glided smoothly, and we set out to get a pit along the river. Along the trail we met another hunter; he and two friends were setting up in the reeds along the river bank. We wished him luck and kept walking.

As we approached pit eight, the sound of hundreds of birds thundered into flight in front of us — who knew how many ducks and geese were right in front of the pit. Being pitch dark, there was no way to avoid spooking them and getting into the pit undetected. Tom proceeded to set up



Tikka, the author's dog, retrieves her first duck from the river at Clear Creek, making a special memory of the day.



Clear Creek Wildlife Management Area is located about 4 miles southeast of Lewellen and encompasses more than 6,000 acres of riparian woodlands, wetlands, river channel, lake bed and upland grasslands.



Canada geese land in the slushy water on the North Platte River.



Tom and Julie Geiser and their dogs, Tikka and Annie, played a winter advisory just right and had success on ducks and geese during this hunt.

floating decoys in the river and shells on the sand bar, while I put together Robo ducks, got our gear situated in the pit, hid the sleds in the weeds and lit the heater. Warming in the pit, we were glad we weren't sitting in the weeds like the young guy we met along the trail and his friends; we've done that many times in our younger years.

Luckily, when shooting time arrived, there were great numbers of ducks and geese flying back and forth from the refuge to Lake McConaughy following along the river channel, giving us and the guys hunting from the weeds ample opportunities for shots.

Teal did their normal acrobatic flight, eluding several of my shots, and many landed in front of the pit out of sight along the edge of the river out of the wind. Mallard after mallard came to our calls, and we got our fair share

as we lured them close to our decoy spread. What really made my day was watching my dog on her first duck retrieve.

After the sun popped out, the geese started to fly, starting with four that came to check out the dozen goose shells. With wings cupped, the big birds called to us and circled in perfectly for us to drop two. This time, my dog got to retrieve her first goose out of the water. Anyone who hunts with a dog knows how great it is to watch them work and love what they were born to do. It also saves birds from getting away in the current that my old body could never chase down.

A little while later, a flock of eight geese came to our calls. The birds circled three times before locking up over our decoys. Tom shot two as I tried to get my shooting finger out of my fold-over mitten to touch my safety

off. Laughing in disbelief, I shook my head. What else can you do in the heat of the moment when things don't go as expected?

As the sun came out, the entire area changed from cloudy and bitterly cold to a warm 14 degrees.

Our cohorts from downriver were making their way past our pit back to the parking area with almost three limits of ducks — a good day of hunting for them. Tom and I started to pack up for the day with seven geese and six ducks between us — not bad for a few hours of hunting. We were glad we packed that third sled.

We'll be back to hunt Clear Creek again. Perhaps you should make a trip there yourself.

For a map of Clear Creek, visit <http://outdoornebraska.gov/waterfowl-checklist/>.



Decoys can be hauled easily across the snow by using decoy bags and sleds. Two or three dozen will do the trick during the early part of the waterfowl season.

FOR YOUR TOP-SECRET HUNTING INVITATION

By Jeff Kurrus

Hopefully, a magical moment will happen to you at least once or twice during your lifetime of hunting. You'll get invited to a top-secret hunting destination you've always wanted to go. When this happens, keep a few things in mind.

Never go back alone. This should seem obvious, but I'm convinced now it's not. Recently, a mutual friend allowed me and a buddy to fish a lake where he had permission. As soon as we got off the lake, my buddy was so excited that he proposed the idea of bypassing our other friend and asking the landowner ourselves.

“Not a good idea,” I told him. “You just don’t do that.” As irresistible as a good hunting or fishing location might be, this idea is never OK.

And you definitely never tell yourself, “He won’t care,” and go back yourself. If you ever have to look over your shoulder while hunting or fishing, you know you’re not in the right place.

Try to do it their way.

This is not the time to break out your newest duck call (unless they ask) or direct where to take the fishing boat as soon as you arrive.

Be patient. You'll have your chance to offer suggestions. Remember, just be happy you got in the door.

Leave when they leave. I take this tip directly from my travels as a *Nebraskaland* photographer. Unless there's an emergency, you're with the group. If they stay all day, you do, too. There should be no special trips to take you back to the truck.

On the Ashland hunt (pages 22-29), I found myself in the middle of a prairie midday bloodtrailing a deer one of the guys had shot the night before. It never even occurred to me to do anything different. I was along for the ride.

If you can follow these simple steps, maybe, just maybe, you'll get invited back.

And if not, be really happy you were invited in the first place. There is a long list of people who would love to be in your spot.



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

When invited to a new spot, like this duck blind near Beatrice, help where you can. Stay as long as your host wants and be a good hunting partner, and you might get invited back.

If at all possible, don't turn it down because it's bad timing. You might be making a silent declaration that you have better things to do than go to the mecca of waterfowl hunting. Your invitation may be permanently revoked. Do your best to drop everything and go.

Bring some sort of payback. Jerky, the host's liquor of choice — something. You definitely won't be able to pay your host back, but you'll certainly show your host you understand how reciprocation works. Personally, I always bring a camera and try to spend time taking pictures — for this publication and for the host — just to show my appreciation. Then I send my results as soon as I can.

Don't invite anyone else. This is not a time to ask if your buddy can go. The host invited you. Hold off on asking if your son or daughter or 89-year-old grandpa can go. Your ticket is for one.



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A GOOD HIDING PLACE

By Jeff Kurrus



By this point in the year and into January, Canada geese have seen it all. While the greatest decoy spreads can entice birds, nothing does better than a great hide. Having written a number of migration reports for Ducks Unlimited in years past, the No. 1 piece of advice from guides and hunters across the nation is hide.

If you can see the birds clearly, then they can see you clearly. The two images on the page are a prime example. After seeing a flock of geese land into a cut corn field, our group gained permission and set up our A-frame the next day. While I believe the A-frame to be an excellent blind, our hide was

not. As seen in the image above, we had too many bare spots on our blind. The geese came back, just as they did the evening before, but something wasn't quite right. They buzzed us right outside of shooting range and were gone.

Two days later, my son and I tried a different tactic. We hid two laydown blinds in the same field and worked on our hide even more. The result: The flock landed 10 yards from the blinds, which are both pictured below. A few more minutes of work made all the difference.

Now, if we just could have gotten them to fly before shooting time was up.



PHOTOS BY JEFF KURRUS

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HUNTERS HELPING THE HUNGRY

GIRL SCOUTS TRAINING

By Julie Van Meter, State Entomologist,
Nebraska Department of Agriculture

In 2020, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) continued outreach and education efforts related to invasive plant species. One new effort found NDA partnering with the Girls Scouts Spirit of Nebraska Council, which offered invasive species training to Girl Scouts troops and their leaders.

Outreach to groups that participate in outdoor activities, such as the Girl Scouts, can be effective in increasing awareness about invasive plant pests and their potential affects on Nebraska. The more people looking for these pests, the more likely that infestations can be found early, so mitigation or eradication measures can be implemented.

Two trainings were offered to Girl Scout leaders in the Lincoln and Grand Island areas, which provided leaders with information on invasive species of concern to Nebraska, how Girl Scouts can help monitor for invasive species and prevent their spread, and ways to include invasive species information in regular meeting activities or badge work.

NDA also was fortunate to partner with the UNL Department of Entomology/UNL Bee Lab and Girl Scouts on a virtual Girl Scouts camp called Insects – The Good, The Bad, & the Ugly. This camp was hosted twice and included Girl Scouts from Nebraska and several other states. Participants received a box full of items to help them investigate the insect



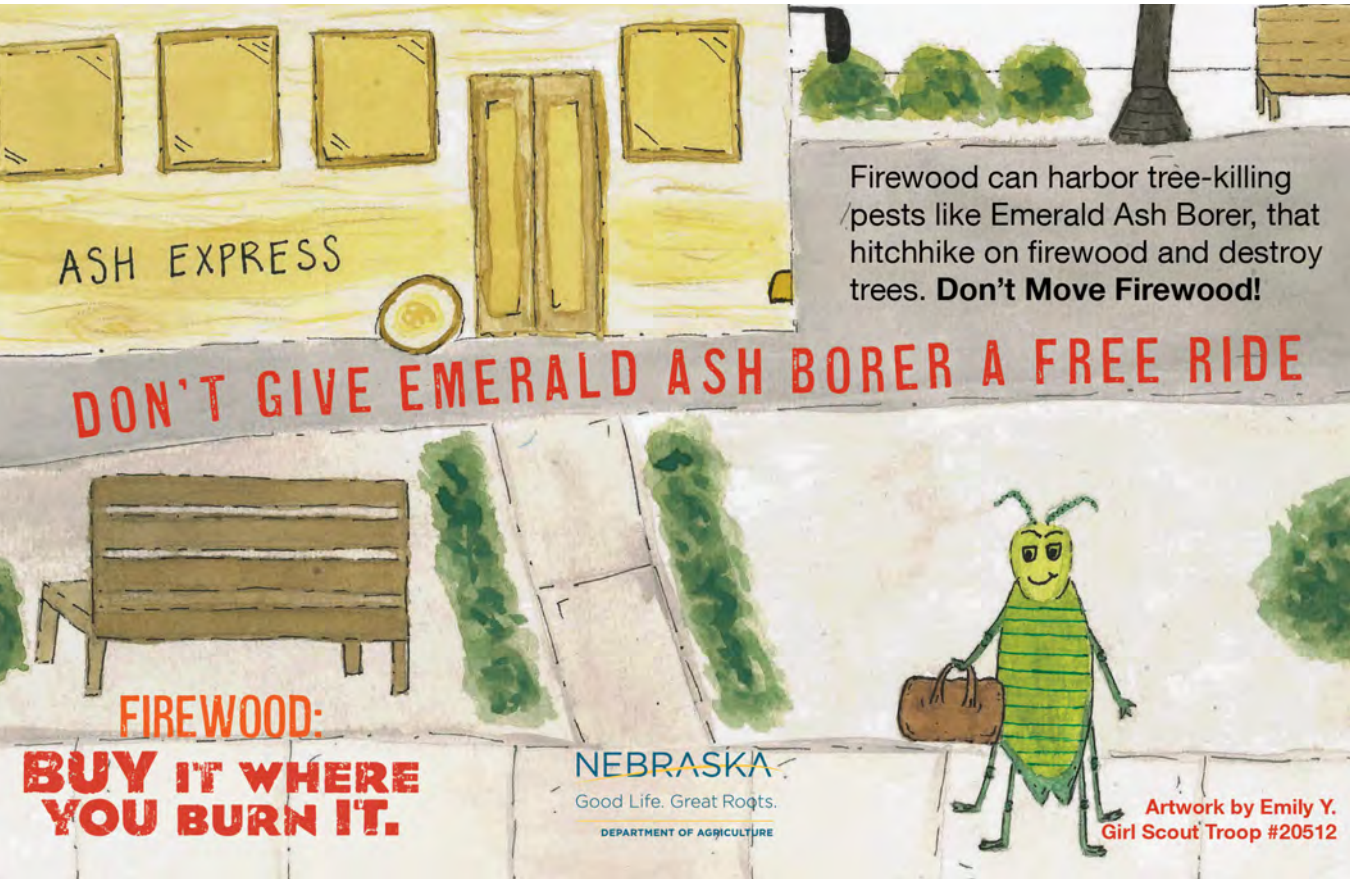
Contents of the box sent to each girl who participated in the virtual camp.

world; items included a hand lens, sieve and smartphone lens. They also received materials to build a bumble bee house and native pollinator homes, and a starter kit to create their own pollinator garden.

NDA staff taught the Girl Scouts about several invasive species and the risk of pests moving in firewood. Girl Scouts were provided a gypsy moth trap and were trained to set and monitor it in their backyard. They also learned how to report their findings.

Girl Scouts who participated in the camps were encouraged to submit original artwork focusing on firewood as a pathway for spreading invasive species. NDA will be using some of this artwork to help spread the Don't Move Firewood message. The artwork in the ad below was created by Girl Scout Emily Y. of Troop #20512.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE VAN METER



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This was taken after the rifle season deer hunt in November of 1988. The four of us graduated from Scotus Central Catholic High School in Columbus in 1983. We hunted from tree stands along river property near Genoa. Pictured left to right are Dan Korger (Columbus), Chris Pokorny (Omaha), Dave Koziol (Lincoln) and me, Jim Heimann (Albuquerque, New Mexico).
 – Jim Heimann, Albuquerque, New Mexico

This is a picture of my dad, Robert Duncan, taken in the spring of 1970. The walleye weighed 9 pounds, 8 ounces, and was caught at Harry L. Strunk Lake. He was as proud as could be to receive a Field and Stream Master Angler Award later that year.
 The picture was taken in front of a mural that was on the wall of the café he owned in Lebanon, Nebraska. Later that year, he, my mother and sister Peggy moved back to Memphis, Tennessee, where our families lived.
 – Pam Duncan Springer, McCook



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 2000. 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. Text may be edited and photos adjusted for reproduction. All photos will be returned.



I have been getting *Nebraskaland Magazine* for roughly 35 years. My favorite part is Portraits From the Past. Pictured above is another successful fall turkey hunt in 1987. From left is Donna Ring, Ed Ludwig and me.
 – Dan Ring, Springfield



This photo was taken in late summer 1986 in front of our cabin at Sherman Reservoir in Loup City. We are holding channel catfish. Pictured from left are Laura Vrtiska (me), Ken Andersen (my dad) and Lisa Barcel (my sister). My parents shared ownership of the cabin with my grandparents for 20 years. I have so many fond memories of fishing for crappies, walleyes and catfish during our trips out there, as well as boat rides, inner tubing, swimming and family time. We would even go hunting for fishing “treasures” (lures, weights, bobbers) in late summer as the water level in the lake would go down due to irrigation releases.
 – Laura Vrtiska, Cedar Creek



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

HOME BASE

By Justin Haag

It's too heavy, takes up too much space, but remains a significant part of the mission.

When I plunged into the ice-fishing scene about 15 years ago, I decided I needed a sled to become a "real" ice angler. I had long admired the ingenuity in the various homemade sleds encountered on the ice, often being pulled by grizzled old-timers, and wanted one of my own.

Before Clam and Frabill were constructing the modern sled-shanty combos that populate today's frozen waters, the homemade wooden sled served ice anglers well. A box situated on skis or sled runners not only provides storage, but also hole-side seating.

From a sheet of half-inch plywood, a two-by-four and various pieces of scrap metal, I constructed what would become the home base for many winter days to come. I designed it with storage for poles and tip-ups, handles and, of course, a towrope. Later modifications would include rod holders and attachments for carrying the spud bar and gas auger.

At just 15 years old, I guess calling this item an antique would be stretching the definition by quite a bit. Yet, while it may not be nearly as vintage as many of the sleds that provided the inspiration for its construction, I'm declaring that the "new red sled" has evolved to the "old red sled."

My memory is filled with images of my son and daughter pulling it across the hard water — whether it be across a layer of slush on a 45-degree day or the rock-hard surface of a sub-

zero outing. It started when each of them was about 3 years old, and, with each passing year, their feet have done a little less sliding while getting from place to place.

Since the red sled's construction, our ice-fishing arsenal has expanded to include many "necessities." Among them are a flip-style shanty, which is much lighter, provides cover from the wind and cold, and, admittedly, probably carries gear more effectively.

The old red sled sometimes stays home on quick trips. On family outings, however, you can bet I'll be throwing it in (and maybe throwing out my back while doing so). Usually, we put it in the center of our seven-person hub-style shanty — a nice mix of old technology and new. It appropriately serves as seating, and even a table for preparing lunch. The hub of the hub.

The feet of my once small children — now a high school senior and an eighth-grader — no longer dangle above the ice as they sit on the plywood structure. Unlike earlier years, they pull it without "spinning their wheels" as we arrive and depart.

The sled's once shiny paint job is showing some scratches, but it is otherwise holding up well. Just as it cannot truly be called an antique, I figure I have a few years to go before I can claim to be one of those grizzled old-timers. When the day comes, however, you can bet "old red" will still be up to the task. We'll see if I can say the same about my back.

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