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magazine

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NEBRASKA
— GAME  PARKS —

Nebraskaland

Volume 97 • No. 8
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PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

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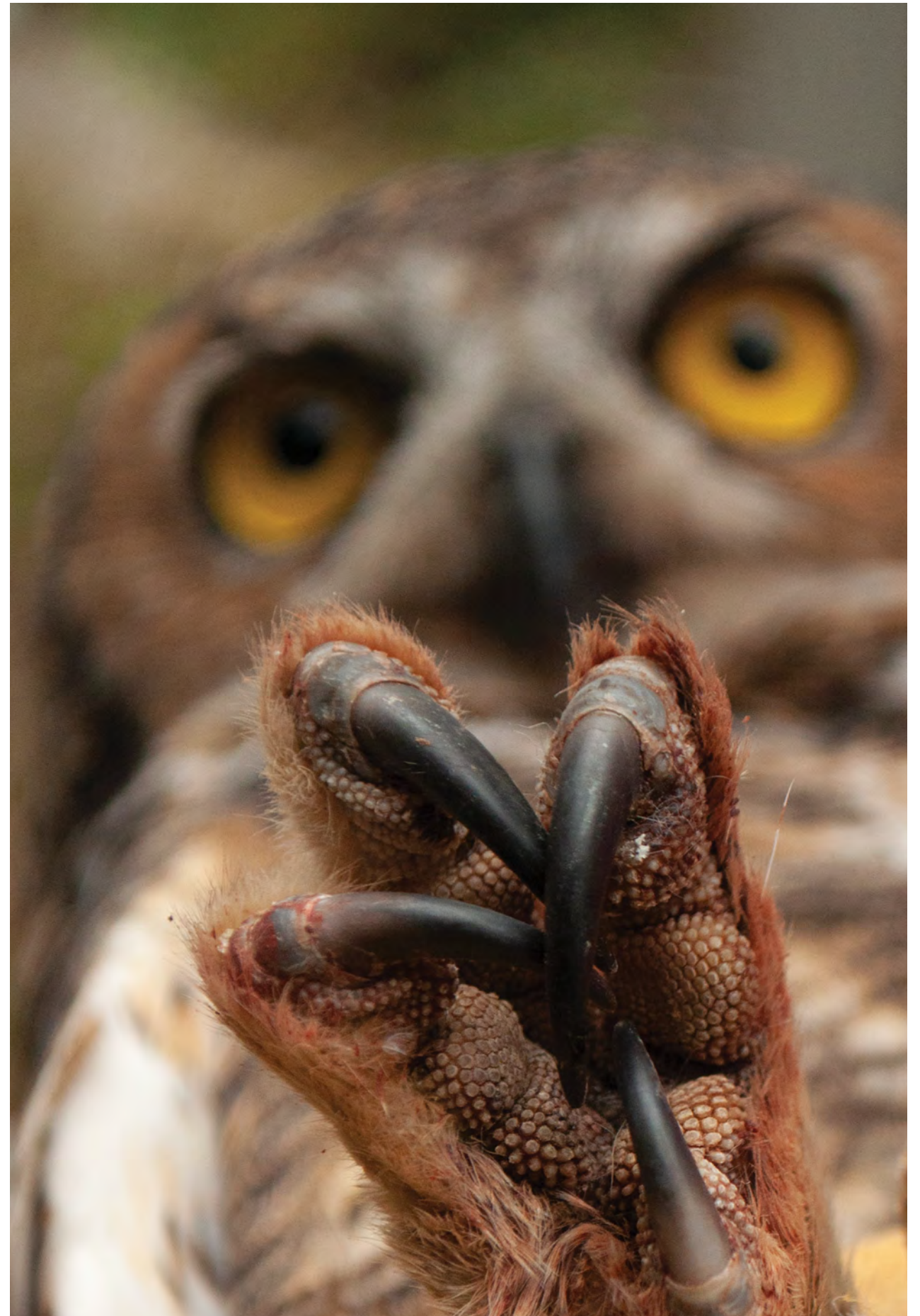
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Karen Kutz Smith, Omaha
Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Opposite: Dina Barta, Lincoln
Great Horned Owl at Fontenelle Forest
Raptor Recovery

Alan Nash, Scottsbluff
Supper in the Fields





Bob Waldeisen
Northern Cardinal and a Red-
headed Woodpecker



David Auman, Lincoln
Sandhill Cranes in Hall County



Jessica Mikoloyck,
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National Balloon
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Please include your postal address
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condensed and edited. Photographs are
also welcome.

FALL FOLIAGE

The trails at Platte River State Park offer a barrage of fall color this time of year.

PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED: THE UTE LADIES'-TRESSES

By Gerry Steinauer

The Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) is an eloquent little orchid with an intriguing name. The word "Ute" because the plant occurs within the historic range of the Ute Tribe in Colorado and Utah. The word "tresses" because the many small, ivory-colored flowers, arranged in spirals on the flowering spike, resemble the braids (tresses) of a woman's hair.

Listed as both a state and federally threatened species, this rare, late-summer blooming perennial has a limited range in Nebraska. A thousand or so individuals grow only in alkaline wet meadows along a two-mile stretch of the upper Niobrara River Valley in Sioux County.

Range-wide, the Ute ladies'-tresses has populations scattered over the northwestern United States and southern British Columbia where it grows in old oxbows, gravel bars, wet meadows and seeps at elevations ranging from 4,300 to 7,000 feet. The Nebraska population is its easternmost location.

The orchid was discovered in Nebraska in 1996 when a botanist surveying for the plant in Wyoming's Niobrara Valley wandered across the border. In 1997, hoping to find more populations, the Nebraska Game and Parks surveyed alkaline and some freshwater meadows throughout the Panhandle. No other Ute ladies'-tresses were discovered. We did find the nodding ladies'-tresses (*S. cernua*) growing in western Sandhills alkaline meadows and the uncommon Great Plains ladies-tressses (*S. magnicamporum*) in one alkaline meadow in the upper Pumpkin Creek Valley in Scotts Bluff County.

Several factors may explain the Ute and other ladies'-tresses' sporadic distribution in Nebraska and range-wide. For one, the orchids' microscopic seeds can be wind-blown for great distances allowing establishment in isolated locations. In addition, ladies'-tresses form associations with mycorrhizal soil fungi that infect the roots and aid in nutrient and water uptake. In return, the orchids supply the fungi with carbohydrates through photosynthesis. The tiny orchid seeds, which lack endosperm (starch supply), are especially dependent on fungal infection for germination and growth. In short, the orchids can grow only in habitats also suitable for their needed fungi.

The Ute ladies'-tresses' distribution is also likely limited by habitat management. In Nebraska, the plant grows in meadows that are hayed or grazed in early summer

(June through mid-July). In late-summer hayed or grazed meadows, the cutting or nipping of the orchid's flower stalks prevent seed production, which over time, would threaten its survival at such sites.

Being at the extreme of the Ute ladies'-tresses range reduces the odds that we will discover other populations of the plant in western Nebraska. Adding to the difficulty, it is a big landscape to survey for such a small orchid that is choosy about its habitat.



PHOTO BY GERRY STEINAUER



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PHOTOS BY JEFF KURRUS

A BB GUN BEGINNING

By Jeff Kurrus

Henry Matulka of Gretna went on his first hunting trip when he was 5 years old. Without a driver's license to operate a vehicle, or his own money to purchase gear, he was reliant upon someone taking him. That person was his dad, Tim.

With BB gun in hand, Henry continued to accompany his dad on dove, waterfowl, deer, and turkey hunting trips, waiting for the day he could pull the trigger on something besides his Red Ryder lever action. That day came three years later when he killed his first tom turkey with his dad beside him, but Henry already knew that success afield is not measured in the amount harvested.

"It's fun," he said with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's never been about shooting stuff."

Tim agrees, which is why he involves his son in every part of the hunt. "The preparation and strategy is the fun stuff," Tim said, his excitement reminiscent of Henry's.

"Anytime we start getting ready for a hunt, I feel like a kid myself."

From practicing with their duck and goose calls to cleaning guns, Tim takes Henry through the entire process. Then Henry goes even further.

"He's always watching YouTube videos," Tim said. "I mean, he already knows more about some of this stuff than I do. He's always trying to learn."

This is obvious when you're around Henry. When he's belting out a hail call, you know he could call in a duck. When he's honking, you know geese will be listening. But because it's not always just father and son, Tim reigns him in when they're around larger groups of more experienced hunters.

Yet that doesn't mean an 11-year-old can't act his age. "You can't expect a young kid to stay still in a blind for hours," said

Tim. "You got to let them move around. And you definitely can't force them to keep their head down the entire time birds are working above a blind. How are you going to get them excited if they're not allowed to watch?"

Because Henry has been able to watch, this time of year – like it does for so many hunters – comes with the feeling that the blind is where you're supposed to be. "I really like to fish," said Henry, who is on the water all through the summer, "but because the hunting seasons are shorter, and you don't get to go as much, I just like it better. This time of year I get the feeling that it's time to shoot some ducks."

But he's not emerging from the truck after all the work is done and everyone is climbing into a blind. He's watching the wind to see where they should set the decoys in relation to the blind, and he's advising his dad anytime he can about how they can have a more successful hunt.

Take 'Em Hunting

By Cara Pesek

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, along with Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, the National Wild Turkey Federation and Plains Equipment Group, is thrilled to announce a new challenge for hunters beginning Sept. 1.

The Take 'Em Hunting Challenge encourages hunters to take a pledge to introduce someone new to hunting during the 2019-2020 hunting seasons. Those who take someone new hunting can upload a photo of their hunting trip to the Commission's website and will be registered to win great prizes including a camo John Deere XUV590M crossover utility vehicle from Plains Equipment Group valued at \$15,300; gift cards to Cabela's and Scheels, a Nebraska State Park stay, shotguns, and outdoor gear all donated by partners who are invested in recruiting more hunters.

"Everyone learned to hunt from someone, and they likely have wonderful memories of those early hunting trips," said Jim Douglas, director of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. "Here in Nebraska, we are proud of our strong hunting heritage. But in order for that heritage to last, we must share it with others."

Hunting is critical to future conservation of our natural resources. Every time a hunter buys a hunting permit or habitat stamp, his or her purchase directly funds programs that support habitat conservation, hunting access, wildlife



research and much more. Additionally, excise taxes that hunters pay on firearms, ammunition and other hunting equipment generate an additional \$1 billion for conservation work each year. "It is crucial that we recruit a new generation of hunters to maintain our cherished natural resources. The best thing a hunter can do for conservation is to introduce someone new to hunting," said Douglas.

Hunting is a great way to spend time outdoors, experience nature, unwind and make memories with friends and family. The Take 'Em Hunting effort offers an extra incentive for hunters to take someone along for a hunt. Special youth seasons are an especially great time to take young hunters out. The challenges allows participation in upland, waterfowl, deer, turkey hunting and more.

Prizes will be given away throughout the challenge until May 31, 2020, with the grand prize utility vehicle winner announced in June 2020. For more information or to take the pledge, visit OutdoorNebraska.org/TakeEmHunting.



And Tim will listen. When his son and hunting partner has an idea, is getting cold, or has noticed the food supply has been vanquished, they'll make an adjustment to their trip. Together.

Tim wants to pass along the same love for hunting as his own father passed onto him growing up near Grand Island. "My time in those Rainwater Basin marshes as a kid are some of my fondest memories," Tim said. "It's why I do what I do today."

Henry's 11-year-old take is similar. "I just like walking into a marsh and going to hunt."

All it seems Henry ever needed was someone to take him. Which is exactly what happened.

For more information on youth hunting, including mentoring, permits and seasons, visit OutdoorNebraska.org/hunting.



CEDAR CANYON NORTHWEST OF CRAWFORD. PHOTO BY BOB GRIER

FOG

By Martha D. Shulski

As author Olivia Drescher wrote, “Fog is rain that whispers.”

Fog is our opportunity to experience the mystical environment of a cloud without ever leaving the ground. It provides a picturesque backdrop for those wishing to capture a moment in time. It is generally short-lived, which can make capturing these moments somewhat tricky.

Fog can also, unfortunately, lead to automobile accidents when visibility is significantly reduced. By definition, fog causes a reduction in horizontal visibility to a distance of about half a mile or less. One way we characterize clouds is by their distance from the surface, therefore what makes fog different than a cloud is simply altitude.

The normal recipe for a cloud includes three ingredients: water vapor, a particle such as dust for the vapor to condense onto, and an upward motion of air. In the case of fog, the upward motion that would lead to cooling and condensation of those water droplets is not actually necessary. There are quite a few types of fog; the only thing that distinguishes one type from another is how those droplets formed.

When winds are light, the skies above are clear and there is a shallow layer of moist air at the surface, fog can occur in the late evening through early morning. This is the time of day when the air temperature dips close to the dewpoint

temperature, or the temperature at which dew begins to form. As the warmth of the day takes hold, these droplets, termed radiation fog, normally make an exit and dissipate. This type is normally seen in fall and winter.

Another common type is advection fog. Often seen over cool waters, this fog occurs as moist air advects (a fancy word for moves) over a cold surface. The vapor-rich air cools and condensation occurs so that a cloud is formed.

On really cold winter days, fog also can form when water vapor is added by either a natural or artificial source. This could be a lake that has held onto some warmth or steam from a power plant. And in the case when temperatures are well below freezing, those supercooled water droplets – water that exists in liquid form even when the temperature is less than 32 F – can deposit on whatever surface they contact.

The next time you’re emerging from the warmth of a cabin into the crisp fall air, and you are met by stillness and the translucent white blankets filling the depressions in the landscape, soak in the fleeting whispering rain.

Martha D. Shulski, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is the director of the Nebraska State Climate office.

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QUAIL CHOKES

By Jarrod Spilger

Nebraska remains a great place to bag bobwhites, however quail can be difficult to hit.

Even after all these years, the sudden explosion of a dozen bobwhites at my feet still surprises me, even when my dog is on point and I know the flush is imminent. I guess that's what makes quail hunting so fun.

To help connect with speedy quail, open up your shotgun's choke. This is easy in modern shotguns equipped with screw-in choke tubes. (To open patterns in fixed-choke guns, try a spreader load.) Most shotguns come with three tubes: full, modified, and improved cylinder. The latter two are OK for quail, but there are better options.

As my pointing dog, Phantom, gained experience and held her points increasingly longer, my shots at quail got increasingly closer. So, I started experimenting with increasingly more open chokes. First, I switched to **skeet**, which is more open than improved cylinder, favored by skeet shooters, and a great all-around quail choke.

Eventually, I opened up even more to a **cylinder** choke, which has no constriction since it measures the same as the shotgun's bore, and by the end of the 2017-2018 season, I was using a **diffusion** or **spreader** choke. It creates a wide open pattern almost immediately after leaving the gun,

making it much easier to connect with close-range quail, especially those shot over a staunch pointer.

Open up this season and watch your quail hit rates improve.

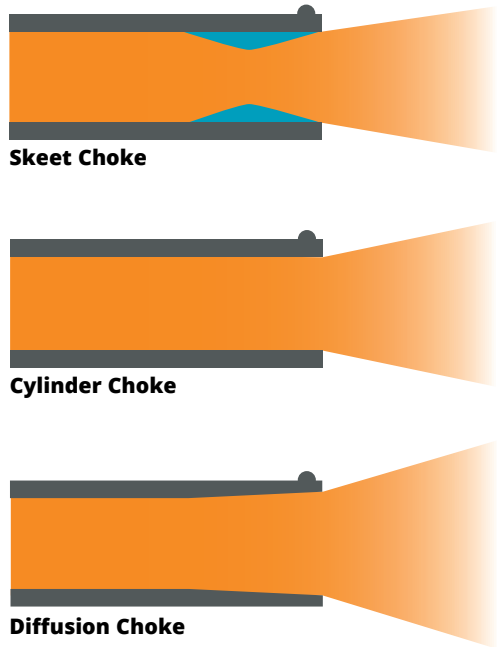


ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW FAUGHN



UPLAND SLAM

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September 1, 2019 — January 31, 2020

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Thoughts on Waterfowl

BY DR. MARK VRTISKA
PHOTOS BY JOEL JONES

It's just my humble opinion, but I believe those of us involved in fish and wildlife conservation on a professional level are "wired" a bit differently than the rest of society. There's some innate draw or attraction to wild and natural things and places that is difficult to explain, let alone understand. That attraction has led us down a path of life that isn't just a job or a career, but a vocation that is inexplicably intertwined with our lives, passions, and hobbies.

Those passions and hobbies manifest themselves in a variety of ways, whether it be simple hikes up secluded mountain trails, catching bluegill through the ice, or observing a rare bird species to add to the life list. Engaging in our favorite activities adds fuel to our commitment to doing our jobs, but also reminds us of that unspoken oath we took somewhere along the line to conserve our natural resources.

The sight of ducks on cupped wings provides that source of fuel for me. I never – ever – get tired of seeing it, but when it happens on a gray November day over my decoys, it's a really good sight. If also in response to my calling and they don't flare when I raise my shotgun,

a truly marvelous one. That sight doesn't occur often, and I find it a bit evil in that it'll set you on a trajectory (obsession?) to see it again despite those early mornings of slogging through soft-bottomed marshes only to watch empty skies.

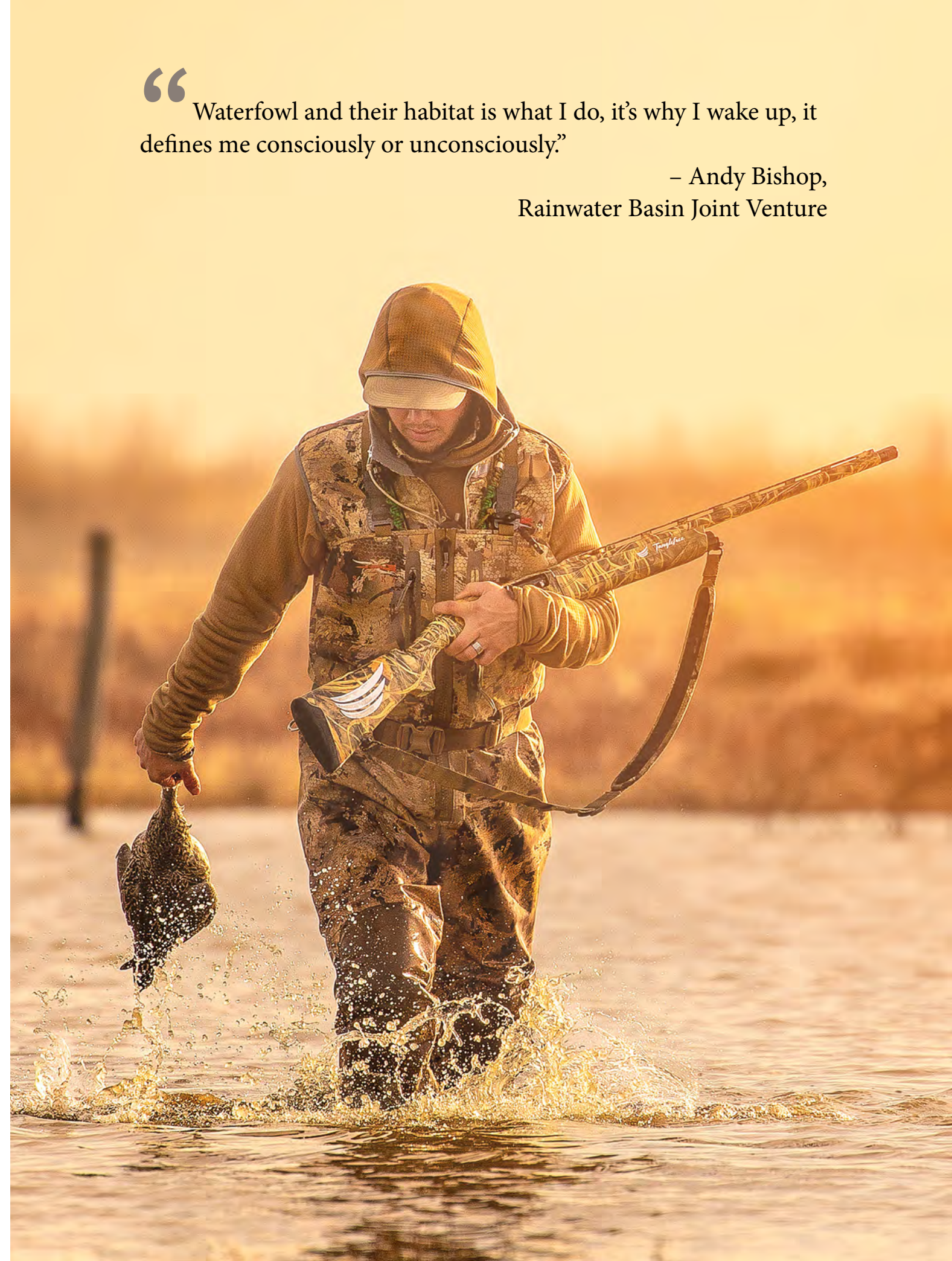
It's probably strange then to know it wasn't that experience that engulfed me into the waterfowl conservation world, but the sight of looking into a duck nest on a Montana prairie that did it. However, two years later after some of my colleagues took me duck hunting, it seemed I was destined to be where I'm at today. I feel lucky to be in a position to know that both of those experiences are connected. I also carry a sense of responsibility that to participate in one, I must have the other.

I'm now at the point in my life where I want my grandkids and others to experience what I've experienced in the marshes. Will ducks on cupped wings elicit the same feelings in them? Will they understand my work and my passion were connected as a means to provide their kids with the same opportunity? I can only hope and for now, simply relish their being in the duck blind with me. [N](#)

Joel Jones is a freelance photographer living and working out of Lincoln, Nebraska. A native of Halifax, England, Jones aspires to shed a positive light on the hunting community through his photos. He loves to travel, hunt and photograph the outdoors.

“Waterfowl and their habitat is what I do, it's why I wake up, it defines me consciously or unconsciously.”

– Andy Bishop,
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture





“ Long before a gun is in hand, I want my daughters to first realize the value in exploring different landscapes and observing wildlife up close. If they grow up to respect hunting, understand conservation, and realize the critical connection between the two, then I have done my job.”

– Angelina Wright, Ducks Unlimited



“ Waterfowl have a way of connecting people across both space and time. Playing a role in the conservation of such a symbol is a great way of tipping one’s hat to everyone they ever have or ever will share a blind with.”

– Greg Wright, U.S. Forest Service



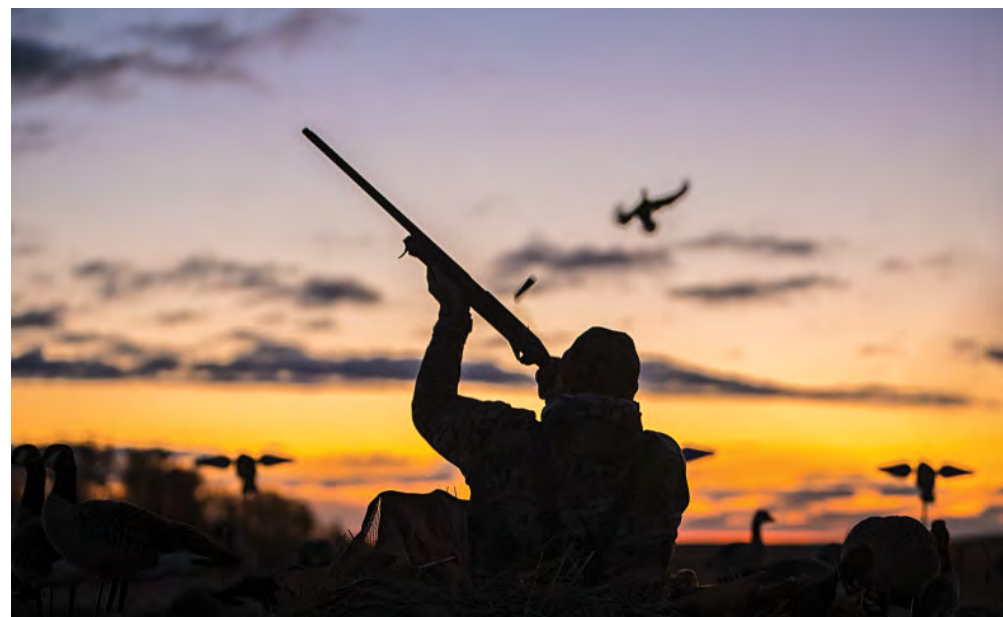
“There is a feeling of awe I get when thinking about how these birds fly thousands of miles to be at this very spot.”

– John Denton,
Ducks Unlimited



“I picture a wetland filled with mallards in the early morning darkness ... the unmistakable sound of wings overhead.”

– Kyle Smith,
Nebraska Game and
Parks Commission



“Dogs ... I’ve hunted without them, but those hunts were not complete.”

– Scott Wessel,
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Outdoor Nebraska

By Renae Blum

October is a prime time to be outside, with more to offer than just colorful leaves and Halloween festivities. Check it out! If you'd like to learn more about the park events listed below, visit Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov. 

What To Do in October



Fall hunting

Throughout the month | Statewide

Good hunting continues this month. Take to the field for the pheasant opener on Oct. 26, and enjoy other hunting opportunities, such as antelope, elk, turkey and dove.



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-HEATLEY

21st Annual Halloweenfest

Oct. 19, Ponca State Park

Halloween in the Hollow

Oct. 26, Ash Hollow State Historical Park

Dusty's Pumpkin Fest at the Cody's

Every Friday and Saturday in October, Buffalo Bill State Historical Park

Take advantage of reduced lodging rates

Throughout the month | Various locations

From October to April, you can stay in select Nebraska state park cabins and lodge rooms for 30 percent less than at any other time of year. The discount applies Sunday – Thursday, excluding holidays. Book a reservation online at OutdoorNebraska.org or by calling 402-471-1414.



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-HEATLEY

Heritage Days at Fort Atkinson

Oct. 5-6 | Fort Atkinson State Historical Park

This special living history weekend includes traditional buffalo processing and hide tanning, live snake presentations, reenactments and period music played on traditional instruments. See demonstrations of Dutch oven cooking, view antique tractors, and try your hand at old-fashioned apple pressing. Learn more at wcheritagedays.org.

View and photograph native sparrows

Throughout the month | Statewide

With about 18 species migrating through the state in October, sparrows are one of the most visible groups of birds this month. Most species can be found in brushy, grassy areas. Not too excited about viewing sparrows? Give them another look, suggests Game and Parks' nongame bird program manager Joel Jorgensen. "Some of these sparrows, once you get a close up view of them, can be stunning," he said.



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

Fall in Nebraska

PHOTOS
BY NEBRASKALAND STAFF



ABOVE: Late October light casts shadows on a leaf and grass in Sarpy County. – Jeff Kurrus

RIGHT: Wild clematis decorates the foreground at sunrise along White River Road in Sioux County. – Justin Haag





ABOVE: Changing leaves at Calamus Reservoir State Recreation Area in Loup County. – *Eric Fowler*



LEFT: The leaves of sumac project their striking fall appearance along Bone Creek at Keller Park State Recreation Area in Brown County. – *Justin Haag*

RIGHT: Smith Falls State Park near the Niobrara River in Cherry County. – *Jon Farrar*





LEFT: Autumn light plays off clouds above a lone tree along a country road at sunrise in Chase County. – *Eric Fowler*

BELOW: Trees and grasses show their fall colors in the Ash Grove area at Calamus Reservoir WMA in Loup County. – *Eric Fowler*

RIGHT: Leaves from a cottonwood tree rest along the shoreline of Smith Lake south of Rushville in Sheridan County. – *Justin Haag*

The fall foliage at the following state parks are spectacular to see (peak times dependent on first frost):

- Arbor Lodge State Park, Nebraska City (late September to early October)
- Chadron State Park, Chadron (mid-to-late October)
- Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford (mid-September to mid-October)
- Indian Cave State Park, Shubert (early-to-mid October)
- Niobrara State Park, Niobrara (late September to mid-October)
- Eugene T. Mahoney and Platte River state parks, Ashland and Louisville, respectively (mid-October)
- Ponca State Park, Ponca (early-to-mid October)
- Smith Falls State Park, Valentine (late September)



Don't Let Women Vote if you want to keep drinking

By David L. Bristow, History Nebraska

If you let women vote, will they take away your beer? There was a time when many Nebraska men feared their wives and daughters would do just that.

Nebraska ratified the 19th Amendment 100 years ago, granting women the right to vote. The amendment took effect in 1920 after it was ratified by the required three-fourths of the states.

By then American suffragists had been campaigning for women's voting rights for more than 70 years. Nebraska Territory's first legislative session in 1855 included a pro-suffrage speech by Amelia Bloomer. Many Nebraskans took up the cause over the decades.

Letting women vote was controversial for a lot of reasons. Even many women opposed it. Some feared it would upset traditional gender roles, or believed that women were unsuited for the rough-and-tumble of politics. Women were seen as a civilizing and moral influence on men. Would that status be lost if women became involved in the dirty dealing of partisan politics?

Meanwhile, many women were involved in both the suffrage and temperance movements. Temperance advocates argued that America's high level of alcohol consumption

WHO
and
WHAT
WERE
BACK
of the
OPPOSITION
in
NEBRASKA?



From *The Woman Citizen*, Feb. 8, 1919.

subjected women to needless poverty and domestic violence. By the late 19th century, temperance groups favored prohibiting alcohol entirely.

Traditional-minded men feared that politically active women would drive them to drink – and then prevent them from drinking. Nebraska's brewers, distillers, and saloon owners financially supported anti-suffrage efforts in order to stop Prohibition in Nebraska.

United States' entry into World War I in 1917 helped shift public opinion. German immigrants made up nearly a quarter of Nebraska's population, and most were strong opponents of both suffrage and prohibition. German immigrants had founded big Nebraska breweries such as Metz, Krug, Storz, Fremont Brewing Co., and others. Wartime paranoia threw suspicion on all things German.



Wilber, Nebraska, May 1, 1918. History Nebraska RG813-0-40



Before a women's suffrage parade in Blair, July 11, 1914. History Nebraska RG1073-4

A 1917 limited-suffrage law allowed Nebraska women to vote in some local elections – or would have, if it hadn't been tied up in court. Anti-suffragists used Nebraska's referendum law to challenge it. They gathered enough petition signatures to suspend the law until a statewide referendum.

Suffragists suspected fraud. More than 18,000 of the 30,000 signatures had been gathered in Omaha. The river city had long been notorious as a "wide-open" town full of saloons, and it was ruled behind the scenes by crime boss Tom Dennison.

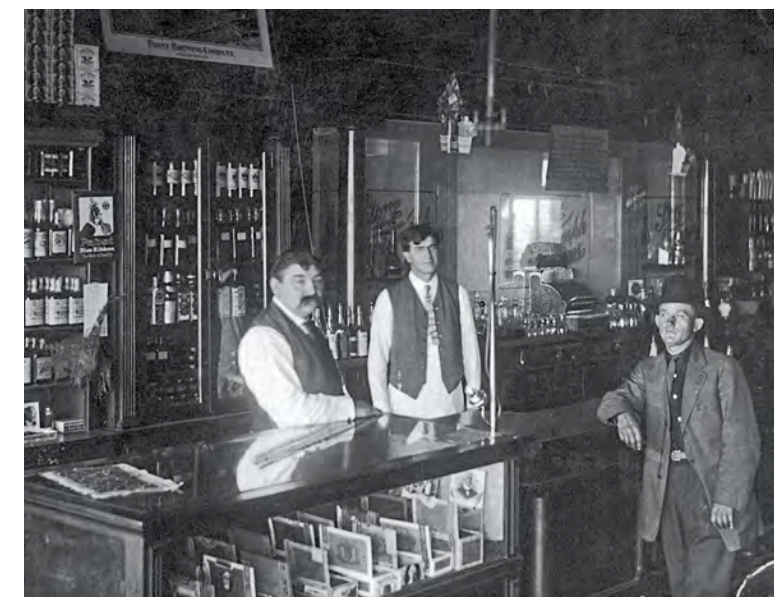
The Nebraska Woman Suffrage Association demanded to see the petitions and, sure enough, found whole pages of signatures signed in the same hand, or listing fake addresses, or signed with the names of dead men. It was never clear exactly who was behind the fraud, but suffragists were certain that "liquor interests" played a role.

But it was almost a moot point by the time the women won their court case in June 1919. The 19th Amendment was on its way to becoming part of the U.S. Constitution. By then Nebraska's statewide Prohibition law was already in effect and the 18th Amendment (federal Prohibition) had been ratified.

Prohibition came first, in other words. You couldn't blame women voters for it. The 18th Amendment was repealed in 1933, and Nebraskans voted to repeal statewide Prohibition the following year. By that time most people thought

Prohibition had been a mistake – but they took for granted that women voters should have a say in the matter. [N](#)

The exhibit Votes for Women: Nebraska's Suffrage Story is at the Nebraska History Museum in Lincoln through January 2, 2021. history.nebraska.gov



Fred Bargemann's Saloon in Bancroft, before Prohibition. History Nebraska RG3334-1-41



Breakfast in the Blind

By Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley and Julie Geiser

When you've been up and dragging decoys since 4 a.m., you're ready for some grub by the time the ducks have flown and the midmorning lull begins. Whether you're hunting from a heated pit blind, camouflaged among the reeds or lying in a small layout blind, there's never a reason to go hungry. Read on for ideas beyond energy bars and good old raisins and peanuts.

Kitchen-ready Blind

Hunting from a heated blind can be like staying in a 5-star hotel. Not only is it warm, spacious and comes with all the bells and whistles, you also have the luxury of being able to eat an actual breakfast. Even if the ducks aren't flying, there's always time for hot coffee, eggs, bacon and shooting the breeze.

Here are tips for prepping breakfast in the blind:

- Whisk raw eggs ahead of time and store in a plastic container to take to the blind. For scrambling, plan for two eggs per person. Keep cold.
- Dice any meat, onions, mushrooms and peppers ahead of time and store in a separate container(s).

- Pre-prepare food that can be easily reheated in the blind, such as breads, biscuits and gravy.
- Cook in a nonstick skillet for easy cleanup. Use a lid for faster cooking on extra cold mornings.
- Heat cleaning water while you are eating to save time.

If needed, use biodegradable Campsuds for all your washing needs.

- Always follow food safety guidelines at home and in the outdoors.

- Bring hand wipes and a trash bag for easy cleanup.

For simpler, hot breakfasts, try just-add-water meals, instant oatmeal or breakfast burritos. Keep a coffee/tea kettle in the blind or fill a thermos before you leave home. Younger hunters might appreciate hot cocoa.

See page 38 for Julie's

recipe for biscuits and gravy.

Hunting on a Bucket

When hunting in natural cover, you will have to carry food in your pack, bucket or sled. Choose high-energy but simple, lightweight food. A few things to consider:

- Be aware of noisy, bright-colored, reflective packaging



Opposite: Boni Edwards, front, and Linda Bauer talk over the steam of coffee and breakfast cooking in the goose pit. They were participating in a Beyond Becoming an Outdoors-Woman goose hunt in Lincoln County on a January morning.

Above: When hunting early in the season, guests will appreciate fresh fruit and vegetables from your garden, if available.

PHOTO OPPOSITE BY JULIE GEISER, PHOTO THIS PAGE BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY



Spencer Brooks of Bennington, front, and Terry Bisgard of Omaha enjoy a laugh over cooking breakfast in a pit blind.

Duck Blind Biscuits and Gravy

by Julie Geiser

Biscuits: At home, prepare biscuits from a box mix such as Bisquick, or for a quick fix, buy refrigerated biscuits and bake ahead of time. Pack in a hard container so they don't get smashed on the way to the blind.

Gravy: The night before, brown a package of sausage – I like Jimmy Dean's. Move the cooked sausage to one side of the pan, and then add 2 cups of milk to the sausage grease. Heat up the milk and grease, and then add ½ cup of flour and stir with a fork until the lumps are gone. Next, stir in the sausage, and continue

to whisk in more flour, a little at a time, until gravy thickens to desired consistency. Add salt and pepper to taste.

If you're unable to make gravy from scratch, buy a dry, white gravy packet and follow the directions.

Pour the sausage gravy into a sturdy container to take to the blind.

Eggs: In the blind, add whisked eggs into a hot pan and scramble. When set, move the eggs to the side of the pan, and then pour in pre-made gravy to reheat. Place



PHOTO BY JULIE GEISER

biscuits on top of the eggs to warm them, flipping once or twice.

This is a hearty breakfast – serve on paper plates that won't bend.

that can blow your cover. Transfer food to a quieter, more neutral-colored bag or container if necessary.

- Bring a small trash bag to avoid accidental littering on the marsh.

- Use hand sanitizer before you eat. Jenny knows a duck hunter who contracted giardia after wading through a pond.

- Use a dry bag to protect food from moisture.

- Hard cheese keeps well in the outdoors. Babybel is a favorite – the wax sealing provides some protection from heat, being smashed in your pack and grimy, bloodstained hands.

- Jerky, summer sausage and meat sticks are high in protein and heavily salted. They can last several days without refrigeration, and if you've been sweating, will help replace the sodium you've lost. See page 40 for

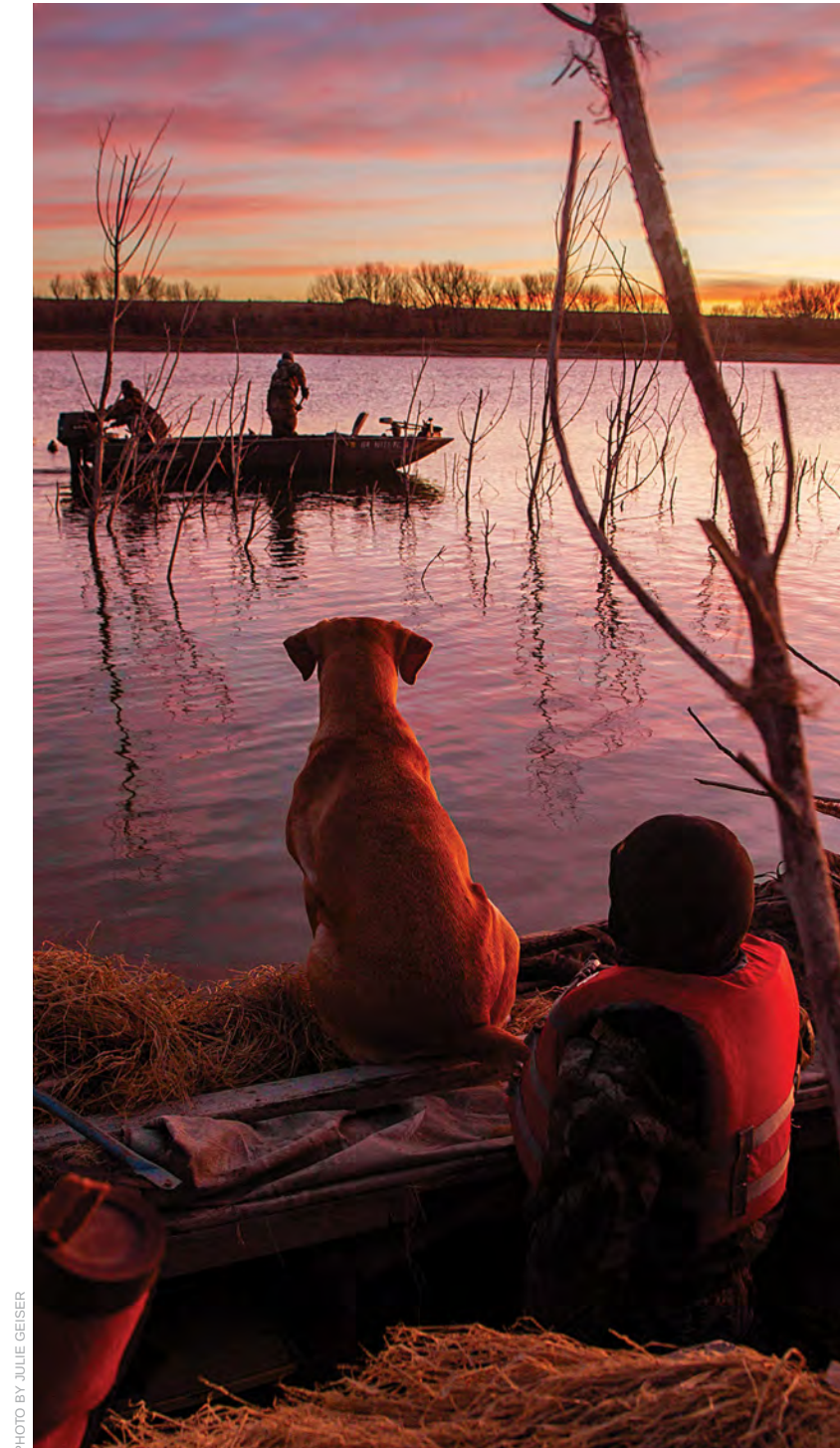


PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

PHOTO BY JULIE GEISER

The sun rises over Elwood Reservoir as Kaleb Berggren and his dog watch as decoys are set out.



PHOTOS BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Two duck hunters watch the sunrise from a pit blind in Burt County.



Haidar Kazem of Alvo pours a cup of hot tea from a thermos while duck hunting at Pawnee Lake State Recreation Area.

Jalapeno and Pineapple Wild Game Jerky

by Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds of venison round or skinless Canada goose breast
- 1 cup of 100 percent pineapple juice
- 2 teaspoons of jalapeno powder
- ¼ cup of soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons of kosher/sea salt
- ¼ cup of Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup of packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons of Wright's hickory liquid smoke
- 1 teaspoon of garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon of Prague powder #1 curing salt

Directions: Remove silver skin and fat off meat, and then slice meat against the grain about ¼-inch thick. In a bowl, whisk together pineapple juice and remaining ingredients. Add the sliced meat to the marinade, cover and refrigerate for 24 hours. Stir the meat occasionally.

Evenly space out meat strips on dehydrator trays; do not allow any of the pieces to touch or overlap. Turn the dehydrator to 160 degrees Fahrenheit and dry the meat until it bends and cracks but does not break. Check meat periodically to make sure that you do not



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

overdry the jerky, which will turn it hard and brittle. Dry time will depend on dehydrator efficiency and personal preference. I took mine off after 5 hours.

Jenny's jalapeno and pineapple wild game jerky recipe.

- Don't forget to incorporate fiber into your diet. Throw a bag of baby carrots, snap peas, celery sticks, etc., along with to-go cups of hummus or peanut butter into your bag. Fruits such as apples, bananas and easy-to-peel mandarin oranges are portable and quiet to eat.

- If all else fails, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches require no refrigeration. They are packed with protein and heart-healthy fats that will keep you feeling full.

These tips can apply to hunting from a boat or a layout blind.

Layout Blind

Layout blinds don't allow much room for movement, so food must be packable, require little prep and not be messy.

- Aside from granola, energy and candy bars, homemade energy bites can offer a quick pick-me-up. See page 42 for a no-bake energy bites recipe.

- Wraps and pita sandwiches are alternatives to traditional sandwiches. Pack pickled hardboiled eggs to eat on the side – they are filling, high in protein and they keep well.

- Snacks: Dehydrated and freeze-dried fruit complement trail mix. Fruit leather and bars are also tasty.



Boat Blind

Depending on your rig, hunting from a boat blind can get cramped and cold. While you might not be able to cook a huge breakfast like you would in a large ground blind, there is still some room for comfort. With your movements hidden from keen-eyed birds and possibly enough space for a heater and small stove, you have options.

- A thermos can be easily packed into a boat – hot chili or homemade soup goes far on a cold day.
- Tuna/salmon pouches and meat spreads are convenient – bring crackers.
- If a small camp stove is available, Mountain House makes convenient freeze-dried breakfast in a can – just add boiling water, cover and then stir.
- Breakfast burritos are our go-to for a hot, easy and filling meal. Fully assemble the burritos at home and then double wrap in foil. When ready to eat, heat through – still wrapped in foil – in a warm skillet or on top of your blind's heater grates, turning occasionally.

Feed Your Dog

Dogs digest food differently than humans. Although hunters shouldn't overfeed dogs before an outing, make sure you do give them something before high-energy activity. More importantly, ensure your dog is fit and able before the hunting season begins.

- The occasional bowl licking in the blind is allowed, and maybe a few pieces of sausage now and then – though dog-specific protein snacks are preferable.
- Always provide water to keep dogs hydrated.
- Gatorade helps maintain blood sugar levels during more intense hunts.

Hunting always works up a good appetite. Keep these tips handy for this upcoming season. **N**

PHOTOS BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Monster Energy Bites

by Jackie Freeman

Jackie Freeman is a lifestyle coach in Bloomfield, Nebraska. These monster energy bites are one of Jackie's go-to snacks, whether she's training to run her third Boston Marathon or kayak racing on the Missouri River.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of rolled oats
- ½ cup of peanut butter
- ¼ cup of raw honey
- ½ cup of vanilla-flavored protein powder
- 2 tablespoons of mini M&Ms
- 1 tablespoon of mini chocolate chips

Directions: Mix ingredients together, roll into balls and store in zip-top bags.



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Precook the filling at home and breakfast burritos become a cinch to make in the blind. They require no plates and silverware, therefore there's little cleanup.

Ghost, a Labrador retriever owned by Aaron Schroder of Lyons, Nebraska, pines for food while the photographer eats her breakfast.



FINDING HISTORY

IN THE SANDHILLS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARK HARRIS

Long ago on grassy hills, a hunter stalks a deer. Wearing skins of the same animal, he loads a thin-shafted spear onto a wooden spear thrower. Rising from cover, he whips the spear into a silent, shallow arch. The stone spear point strikes a mortal wound, but the still-mobile deer bounds away never to be found. Frustrated about the loss of good meat and his prized speckled brown point, the dejected hunter heads home, belly growling.

Two thousand years later, wearing a pink plaid shirt, black sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat, UNL anthropology student Jodi Enders walks a narrow

river's shoreline in the Nebraska Sandhills. Sweeping her eyes along the base of a cutbank she spots a thin, glossy stone edge jutting from the sand, and the hunter's spear point is once again held by human hands.

The prehistoric scenario is pure imagination; the hunter could have simply dropped the point, but Jodi Enders surely was the next human to see it.

This was no chance discovery. Enders spotted the artifact after walking 12 days in isolated regions of the Nebraska Sandhills with a dozen other anthropology students on a quest to find human sites lost

to history. Led by archaeologists Rob Bozell and Courtney Ziska, and by UNL Professor Phil Geib, this University of Nebraska field school targeted Nebraska's little-known Snake River, which discreetly rises from underground springs 20 miles south of Gordon, winds under two remote highways and then enters the Merritt Reservoir 60 miles east.

"We are trying to determine what people were doing in the Sandhills throughout human history, who they were and when they were here," Bozell said. "To understand this one needs data in the form of artifacts. Projectile points, cutting blades, hide scrapers and other tools tell stories. Arrowheads can tell you when, and pottery can be linked with certain tribes."

On massive ranches like that of the Sasse family, 30 miles southeast of Gordon, Bozell and crew were the very first to conduct systematic archaeological surveys. "We found sites ranging from 1800s ranching all the way back to 10,000 years ago," he said. The older discoveries place humans here around the time when the Sandhills first became habitable after grasses took root in the once-shifting sands.

Though Nebraska's Sandhills provided ample game, it was void of crucial tool-making stone. People living here would have coveted the tools they carried; acquiring more lustrous flint meant travelling far. West toward the Rockies was one option, but rich pockets of high quality stone also existed to the east. Ancient people living in what is now the Central Republican Valley, or in Cass and Sarpy counties, lived in virtual hardware stores.

After thousands of years of human inhabitation, the Sandhills are heavily peppered with artifacts, but most will never be found. "In



Nebraska's remote Snake River region holds remnants of ancient peoples dating back 10,000 years, but most artifacts will be hidden for eternity.



A bison neck bone is one of many animal bones discovered in an excavated Plains Apache village, which existed in an era when large animals were downed with projectiles made from wood and stone.



Plains Apaches once lived on this site along the Middle Loup River near Mullen, Nebraska. Carefully excavated artifacts lend knowledge to their way of life during the 1600s.

this region most artifacts lie from just under the surface to 30 feet deep,” laments Bozell. “Less than one percent of what’s out there is above ground.” The eyes of a dozen relentless anthropology students better the odds, though. The sea of grass reveals nothing, but ever-present gopher mounds expose the sand, as do cutbanks and cattle trails. Any exposed artifact was likely long buried and then unearthed by animals, people, or erosion.

Ceaselessly scanning the ground, the students trudge over rolling

terrain. Conversations are difficult in search lines 20 meters apart, and earbuds are not allowed. Strong winds bring relief from loathed deerflies, but the trade-off is blown sand irritating eyes, ears and noses.

This daily grind catches many students off guard. A few would rather not be here, but they will not graduate as an anthropology major without a field school under their belt. “Those of us who are really obsessed with archaeology don’t mind putting in the energy to make these discoveries,” said UNL junior Reagan Duranski of Lincoln.

“I sing songs in my head all day and daydream of what I’ll do when I get back home. I imagine taking the longest shower ever and eating whatever I want.”

Most students here are city-raised and new to outdoor experiences, but becoming an archaeologist means learning to work all day under the sky – what to pack, what to wear, which snakes pose threats, what direction thunderstorms are moving, and orienteering without a cell phone. Pitching a tent was a first for most, or as in the case of one young

man, a second. “I practiced setting it up in my garage,” he laughed.

All students are stunned by the region’s endless hills, but particularly wide-eyed was one from New England, astonished by the vastness of privately owned ranches and the absence of human structures and services. Two hours round trip from stores, forgotten personal items loom large. Those who packed bug-bite cream become saviors. Craved foods are hopelessly distant – café lattes are of another life. One bathroom within the rancher’s home is shared



A stone drill (top), along with three stone arrow points, are among many artifacts found. The darker obsidian point (middle) came from afar and was likely traded for.

by all 12 students, and a communal dinner prepared by the ranch family is devoured at day’s end.

Evenings are for socializing. Lasting friends are made around campfires while sharing adventure stories and diving deep into topics suited only for anthropology fanatics. Blistered feet are cared for. And then, often to the sound

of yipping coyotes, they retire into tents hoping it won’t storm. At dawn they rise and repeat. There are more artifacts out there and most have remained undiscovered for a remarkably long time.

“We don’t find many artifacts from the more recent nomadic tribes,” said Bozell. “After the 1700s, Nebraska’s inhabitants



University of Nebraska anthropology student Michelle Hayes attentively sifts through bucket-loads of dirt, hoping to spot artifacts.



An arrow shaft straightener, made from a bison rib bone, is one of the more unusual finds unearthed from the Plains Apache camp.

in and transitioned through the region over several centuries.

Along the Middle Loup River near what is now Mullen, Nebraska, one mid-1600s Plains Apache village thrived. Originally discovered in 1947 by an advanced archaeological team surveying for a potential reservoir project, most of the village remained unearthed until 71 years later when the student team descended upon it with shovels, trowels, and sifters.

Using ground-penetrating radar and a magnetometer to locate best areas to dig, the team first noticed burned structural remains which were once frameworks for small dome-shaped houses that would have been covered in hides, grass or possibly clay. No one will ever know if the structures burned

during occupancy or by prairie fires after the village was abandoned.

In precisely dug rectangular trenches the team located fireplaces and a diverse assortment of stone artifacts. Nearby garbage pits brimmed with bones from bison, deer, antelope and small mammals. Turtles were also on the menu, as their numerous shells revealed. A few pottery sherds helped to identify the Plains Apache tribe, while carbon dating of the village's organic matter pinned down the era.

Originally from arctic Canada and Alaska, the Plains Apaches began migrating south over 1,000 years ago. Their artifacts have also been located along the Republican River and westward to the foothills of the Rockies, but the Mullen site seems to be one of a handful that was an actual village, likely consisting of extended family bands. "Dozens probably lived in this village on and off for several years or even decades," Bozell said.

To live in the Nebraska



Back in the Lincoln lab, Talon O'Connor works to clean and label artifacts found over the course of the summer's field school.

quickly adopted European technology, abandoning stone tools and pottery, leaving far fewer artifacts to discover."

Of those tribes that inhabited the western Sandhills at one time or another, most are familiar to us, such as various Lakota (Sioux) bands, Cheyenne, Comanche, Arapaho, and Pawnee. But less known to the average Nebraskan are the Plains Apaches, who lived



Gathered around the fire late evenings, students like Will Roe talk about the day's adventures. Fieldwork is a struggle for some.

Sandhills 400 years ago meant bringing down bison and other large game with wood and stone tools. Bows and arrows or spears with spear throwers were top technologies. Butchering and hide cleaning required stone blades and scrapers, while bone awls and stone drills were used to make clothing.

Travel would have been grueling in an era without horses, but the Plains Apaches would have journeyed far enough to encounter surrounding groups and to trade goods, which was possibly how they acquired one unique little arrowhead discovered within the village. Made of shiny black obsidian, it came from the Rockies or the Southwest.

Although white people were establishing their foothold on the

same landmass during this village's era, European influence was still a world away. The steady trickle of fur traders would be 100 years to come – the systematic eradication of Plains Indians another hundred more. But the Plains Apaches left Nebraska before white men appeared, the last departing in the early 1700s. Likely pressured by the Comanche from the west or the Pawnee from the east, they eventually formed lasting alliances with the Kiowa to the south.

Stark contrasts exist between these hardy peoples who lived in the Sandhills hundreds or thousands of years ago and the budding archaeologists examining what they left behind. But to learn about these long absent cultures is to respect their rugged way of life and to wonder, as did Jodi Enders

after discovering the spear point. "How long were they out hunting that day?" she asks. "How far did they walk? What was their camp like? What were they like?"

Artifacts yet to be discovered may cause theories to shift, ever correcting as the sciences do. Beneath our feet they lay – 30 feet or half-an-inch below fields and roadways, beneath buildings and backyards. You likely passed over a stone artifact today. What of our things will survive thousands of years, and what of that will be worth finding? And those distant-future people studying the 21st century ... what will they think of us? [N](#)

Mark Harris is the associate director of the University of Nebraska State Museum.



VALA'S PUMPKIN PATCH, PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

VISIT SARPY COUNTY

By Emerson Belitz, Nebraska Tourism Commission

Sarpy County, located in Nebraska's metro area, is filled to the brim with a wide variety of things to do, see and eat.

Fontenelle Forest in Bellevue is one of the state's oldest conservation organizations. With its nature hikes, stunning boardwalk trails and new TreeRush Adventure course, Fontenelle is the perfect way to experience the natural world.

Bellevue Berry & Pumpkin Ranch is a great place to spend an October afternoon. This pick-your-own farm offers hayrack rides, haunted attractions, trails and more. Or spend a day at Vala's Pumpkin Patch. With over 50 separate attractions, from the Pumpkinapolis 500 Carts to the Haunted Trail and Graveyard, you're in for a whole day of family fun.

Take a trip to Gretna and visit the Schramm Education Center. This newly renovated interactive exhibit features 23 tanks and aquariums and is home to the world's largest common snapping turtle, Big Snap Daddy.

Plan a full day at Papio Fun Plex located in Papillion. Featuring go-karts, laser tag and more, an outing here is sure to please younger family members.

Or, visit La Vista's Beyond Golf to play indoors year round. Whether you're looking to practice during the off-season or just have a little fun, Beyond Golf offers over 250 simulated courses along with a bar and kitchen.

Sarpy County is home to many unique breweries, wineries and distilleries, each with their own signature style. Sip on a handcrafted malt whiskey at Cut Spike Distillery or a barrel-aged ale at Lucky Bucket Brewing Company. Savor the taste of a California red at Wine Cellar 510 or the award-winning

flavor of Kros Strain Brewing's Mosaic pale ale.

If you're in search of great food at great prices, your next stop should be For the Love of Food Truck in Bellevue. Their menu, ranging from unique burritos to a legendary watermelon salad, will turn you into a food truck groupie.

For fresh and delicious Japanese and Asian cuisine, head over to Hutong Sushi & Grill in La Vista. They serve signature items such as the Husker Roll, Nebraska Roll and La Vista Roll in addition to an extensive menu of sushi dishes.

Visit We'll Smoke U BBQ in Gretna and enjoy their selection of pork, beef, turkey and chicken dishes, and make sure to try out their delicious Big A\$\$ Nachos. This small family-owned restaurant gives Kansas City barbecue a run for its money.

Then top off your meal at Springfield Drug & Soda Fountain with a sundae, malt or traditional soda from the only true soda fountain in Sarpy County.

Spend the night at your "home away from home" in Papillion at Cordes Cottage. This renovated 100-year-old house retains much of its original décor, and is a great place for retreats, meetings or weekend getaways.

Sarpy County has multiple camping grounds that offer everything from primitive camping to glamping. Check out Falconwood Park Camping and Glamping, Walnut Creek Lake Recreation Area and KOA Omaha. Sarpy also offers a variety of more traditional hotels.

For more vacation destinations and ideas in Sarpy County, see visitnebraska.com.



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Sarpy County awaits with a wonderful mix of fun things to see and do. Check out Vala's Pumpkin Patch, Bellevue Berry & Pumpkin Ranch, Scary Acres or Haunted Hollow for some great fall fun you won't find anywhere else. Sample the offerings at one of our many local breweries, distilleries and winery. And with over 2,300 affordable rooms, free parking and no minimum night requirements, Sarpy County is the perfect place to stay during football season. Kick off your adventure today at GoSarpy.com!



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NATURE'S WIND CHECKER - MILKWEED

By Ryan Sparks

Hunters obsess about the wind. Wind can carry human scent long distances, either alerting animals like deer and elk to a hunter's presence or wafting scent away where they aren't likely to detect it. However, understanding wind currents in hilly, broken terrain can be incredibly frustrating. Hills and thick stands of trees often create a vortex of air, recirculating scent back toward a hunter's position. Luckily, nature provides hunters with the ultimate long-distance wind checker – milkweed pods.

Milkweed pods contain hundreds of tiny feather-like seeds that float on the lightest air currents. Milkweed plants rely on the wind to disperse these seeds, so using them to visualize downrange wind makes sense. I especially like to use them before deer

season while deciding where to put a tree stand. It's amazing how often the wind seems perfect, but not far downwind the air is doing something completely different.

I drilled a small hole into the bottom of a pill bottle and stuffed the seeds inside with the fibers facing toward the hole, and then secured the cap. When I want to check the wind, I pull out several seeds and release them into the air. This practice has led to a new understanding of the wind, and I've moved several tree stands that are now much more productive.

Milkweed is a native wildflower important for bees and other nectar-seeking insects, especially monarch butterflies. In fact, monarchs lay



PHOTO BY RYAN SPARKS

their eggs on just one type of plant – milkweed. By using milkweed pods to check the wind, you'll know exactly what the wind is doing and help spread a native wildflower, benefiting both you and the ecosystem.

HUNT HARLAN

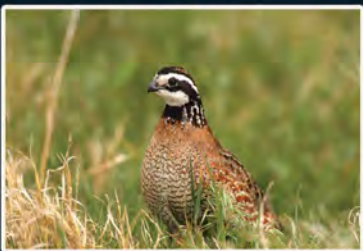
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TREE STAND SAFETY

By Julie Geiser

As you hit the field this deer season, be sure to keep tree stand safety in mind. Every year hunters have accidents, some fatal, when hunting out of a tree stand.

Before the season starts, here are some tips to consider:

- Always check old tree stands for safety. Look at welds, nuts and bolts to make sure they are secure.
- Check all tree stand straps and replace any that are weathered or frayed.
- Always use a safety harness and life line when in a tree stand; check these to make sure they are not weathered or frayed and are in good working order.

All new tree stands come with a safety harness as part of the tree stand – use it. Follow the directions on how to correctly put it on. Another option is buying a vest-type safety harness which is easier and faster to use. Use a lifeline, which attaches to the tree above your head and is tied off at the bottom of the stand. Lifelines are equipped with a Prusik knot that attaches to the safety harness tether with a carabiner. If a fall occurs, the knot will tighten itself on the lifeline preventing the hunter from falling to the ground.

The Prusik knot slides up and down the lifeline rope. Putting a carabiner through the loop allows you to attach to your harness.



Know how to use the relief system strap on the safety harness if you should fall from a tree stand and are suspended. The relief system takes pressure off the arteries in the groin area. Practice hanging from a tree a couple feet off the ground with a friend present to help you out if needed. Knowing how it feels to hang, to get back into a tree stand, and to lower yourself to the ground should you have a fall is a must.

Be sure to have a cell phone within reach to make a call in case a self-rescue can not be accomplished, and always inform a spouse or friend of your hunt plan so someone knows where you will be and when you will return.

Don't be a statistic this deer season; make your hunt a memorable day by keeping safe.



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OF FLOODS AND FOSSILS

By Roger Welsch

There’s an old folktale here in Howard County that during the 1890s we were in deep drought. So the Catholic community of Loup City brought in a Bishop from Omaha to pray for rain, but the more Protestant-inclined Dannebrog hired instead a Pawnee “doctor” to perform rituals and incantations to break the dry spell. Loup City wound up with .23 inches the following week. In Dannebrog, Oak Creek ran 4 feet deep down Main Street. The story was funnier when it wasn’t so close to the truth. Now the joke runs that over the very wet spring and summer of 2019 people were seen gathering gopher wood in cubit lengths.

Some towns in central Nebraska have been flooded at this writing (August 2019) three times, in the span of only a few months. In the past I have seen the quiet, lazy Middle Loup River go all a-roar once in a springtime, perhaps with the spring thaw, but so far this year I have seen it bank to bank, snarling and roiling, on three different occasions. Bridges have been washed away and highways threatened. Entire fields have been washed out; old channels reoccupied by this river that had always been quiet and predictable; sand, trees, and wreckage of old buildings piled midstream or in abandoned channels like pick-up sticks tossed onto a gaming table. People who buy and sell land by the acre must be running their calculators overtime. The southern boundary of our parcel is the main channel of the Middle Loup, which means

we have maybe 10 acres less than we had six months ago.

An indication of how long it’s been since our river has careened across the landscape like this can be found scattered on some of the sandbars – bones and teeth of Pleistocene animals long extinct suggest that some of the land now washed away hasn’t been disturbed for 10, 20, or even 30 thousand years! Imagine that! Buffalo crossing the river on the ice or perhaps over boggy sandbars during the last great Ice Age were mired down and died, sand washed over the remains. The river shifted beds perhaps as far as a quarter-mile in another direction, and there they lay undisturbed until the floods of this last spring and summer, to be found by modern kayakers, hikers, and canoers. And now they decorate living room walls beside flat screen televisions.

Those old bones must be as mystified by where they now find themselves as we are when we pick them up from the white sandbars of the Middle Loup River. I think we should make some noise about this. There are some states where you can hunt pheasants, ducks, or deer, and maybe pull trout from a clear water stream. Big deal! Here in Nebraska we hunt elephants and giant bison and pull extinct camels and horses from streams with strange names like Loup, Platte, and Dismal. There are rumors that Game and Parks will be limiting hunters to one woolly mammoth per season, however. Seems fair!



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DRY SPOTTED TAIL CREEK ADDITION

By Justin Haag

Anglers, fish and a diverse set of wildlife will soon enjoy a new stretch of trout stream in the western Panhandle.

Construction is underway to add nearly three-quarters of a mile of trout stream on Dry Spotted Tail Creek just west of Mitchell in Scotts Bluff County. The new stream section, which is being constructed to receive water from the creek's existing straightened channel, will result in new wetland habitat for many aquatic species and terrestrial wildlife on the Platte River Basin Environment's 1,360-acre Spotted Tail wildland between Mitchell and Morrill.

Mark Porath, Aquatic Habitat Program manager for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, said Dry Spotted Tail Creek is one of the streams in the North Platte Valley that demonstrates how water resources can benefit both agriculture and wildlife habitats.

The creek itself, which has headwaters north of Mitchell, did not necessarily have stream flow all the way to the North Platte River until irrigation infrastructure was developed in the region by early farmers. Porath said the active irrigation return flows keep the water temperature cool enough to support rainbow trout, a cold-water species, in the heat of the summer.

Unfortunately, the straightened channel has cut into the soil about nine feet, consequently acting as a drain on the surrounding wetland and lowering the water table.

Workers this summer created the new meandering stream

channel that was engineered to work with variable water flows across Nebraska's soils. By balancing erosion and deposition, the new stream will maintain a higher water level and restore the wetland habitat. The project is designed to produce 25 acres of seasonal wetlands and 34 acres of upland habitat.

The new channel will feature rocks and other habitat structures. Late this summer, water was introduced to the new stream to establish wetland vegetation. Next year, workers will construct a permanent structure to divert the bulk of the flow from the old channel to the new stream section. This structure will be unique among Nebraska's trout waters because the new diversion will allow return flows to continue down the old channel in a flood event, preventing damage to the new section.

Porath said the project is a collaboration between the Commission, Platte River Basin Environments, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever. Funding for the project is provided by the Nebraska Environmental Trust (\$275,000), the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (\$400,000), National Water-Quality Assessment (\$100,000), Trout Unlimited (\$39,000), Platte River Basin Environments (\$35,000) and Pheasants Forever (\$2,000).

The team's investment is sure to pay big dividends for anglers, hunters and a wide variety of wildlife species.



The new trout stream at Dry Spotted Tail Creek meanders to the North Platte River with water diverted from the old straight channel.

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These photos are from the 1950s and 1960s – coyote hunting in the Shubert area. The sight dogs were carried in the back of our Chevy pickup truck in a compartment we called the dog box (above photo). It was made to slide in the bed of the pickup and had a trip rope attached to the spring-loaded doors in the back. When a coyote was deemed close enough to release the dogs, the trip rope would be pulled. The dogs would then attempt to catch and kill the coyote. Sight dogs were a cross between greyhound and staghound. The greyhound provided the speed, and the staghound provided stamina and strength.

My dad, Alfred Shafer, owned several sight dogs when I was growing up. Some of the names of his dogs I recall were Spud, Blackie, Champ, Bill, Duke, and Smasher. We usually had at least two dogs at a time. My Uncle Charlie (Shafer) also had sight dogs. A minimum of three dogs were released at a time to catch a coyote. I remember one time four dogs were released on two coyotes. The dogs split up in pairs and each pair successfully caught a coyote.

Coyote hunting was an exciting activity for our family. I vividly recall two stories. One was when I was about 10 years old. Dad and I walked out with four dogs to block a section being walked by others to kick up coyotes. Dad held the collars of two dogs, and assigned me to man the other two. His instruction was, “If a coyote comes, hold on to the dogs until I tell you to release them.” Well, a coyote did appear and when the dogs I was holding saw it, they bolted. Needless to say, I did not hold them back. The dogs



took off and my arms straightened out as they broke my grip. In the end all turned out well – the coyote was caught.

Another time I was driving the pickup with Uncle Charlie riding shotgun. We were trying to get ahead of a coyote to release the dogs. We had just made a turn to go up a hill. Uncle Charlie said to me, “Hurry up!” I replied, “I have the gas pedal floor-boarded!” He said, “I don’t care, get going!” We did make the catch that day.

The photo above shows (from left to right): Wayne Shafer, my brother; David Harshberger, a friend; Terry Shafer, my cousin; and me – taken in 1960.

– Lonnie Shafer, York

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



PHOTO BY GERRY STEINAUER

A TATTERED ROSE

By Gerry Steinauer

Arriving late on a June evening, a quick reconnaissance of our South Dakota farm revealed a patch of wild rose in prime bloom in the prairie behind the house. I made a mental note to return later with camera in hand.

That night, however, rain, cold and wind set in for two days and my camera stayed in its bag. The morning of the third day broke with still leaden skies, but with no rain falling. I grabbed my camera and made my way to the roses.

Ah, the disappointment. The roses had not weathered the storm well, their petals were torn and frayed and fading, their anthers wet and withering. In other words, they did not appear photogenic, but having been cooped up, I had a strong urge to “photograph something.” I snapped a few quick photos of the tattered roses.

Typically, I would have just walked away from such an imperfect subject, as, like most wildflower photographers, I seek only the freshest, most colorful and well-composed of blooms and avoid the less than beautiful.

Let me describe the lengths I will go to capture the ideal

wildflower photo, one that will make Nebraskaland readers, or my friends, say “Oh, that’s nice.” Often I will walk a prairie or woodland for half an hour searching for the “perfectly-arranged” flower or flower cluster to photograph, then wait until evening or come back the next morning when the sunlight is mellow and prime for picture taking. If a flower is shaded, I sometimes use a reflector to illuminate it with warm, appealing sunlight. And lastly, I frequently remove overhanging grass blades, specs of dirt from a petal, or other distracting objects that might taint an image.

While in the rain-soaked prairie, I held no illusions that my rose photos would be praise-worthy. Later, however, when I viewed them on my computer, I liked them. The flowers, though weather-beaten and worn, were interesting; they had character; and they told a story of a storm endured, likely a more interesting tale than if unblemished.

The lesson of my tattered rose: perhaps in my photographic endeavors, I should more often seek the typical, the flawed, the weathered as, in reality, that’s what nature is.





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