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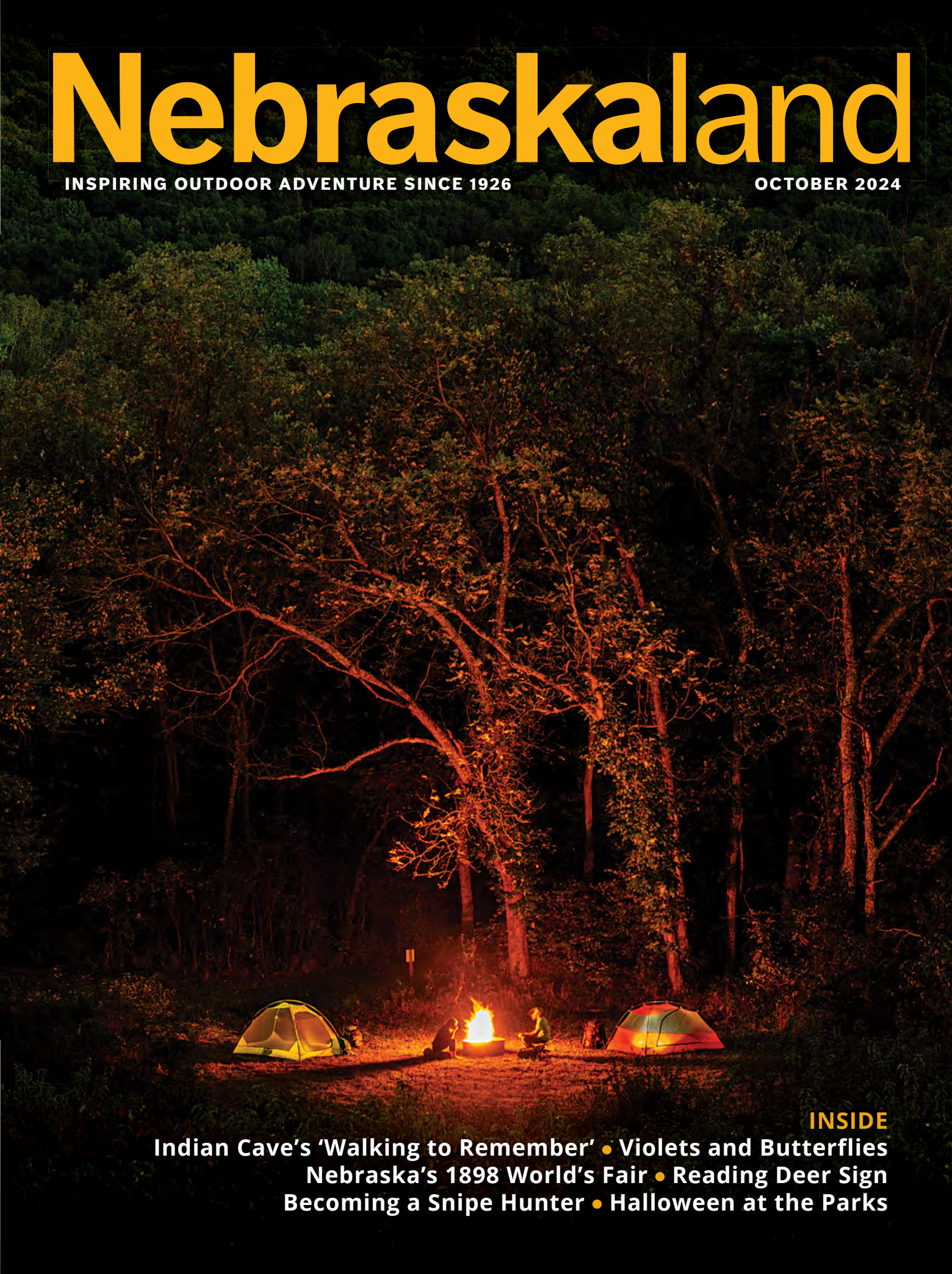


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Cover: Nick Fisher and his daughter, Adisen, of Falls City sit around a fire in a backcountry campsite at Indian Cave State Park.

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

This page: Fog rises from the Missouri River at sunrise at Bow Creek Recreation Area, a National Park Service property on the Missouri National Recreational River in Cedar County.

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Nebraskaland
magazine

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2024-25 Event Dates



Youth Mentor Hunt Dates

Table with 3 columns: County, Chapter, Date. Rows list counties from Adams to Holt with their respective chapters and event dates.

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Banquet Dates

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Please include your postal address and telephone number. Letters may be condensed and edited. Photographs are also welcome.

ORB (CIRCULAR) WEAVERS

Banded garden spiders are often found in gardens, meadows and grassy areas, which provide plenty of flying insects for them to catch.

These orb weavers typically begin to appear during autumn from early September to late October as temperatures start dropping.

This one was found in a grassland at Olive Creek State Recreation Area in Lancaster County on an early morning in late October.

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

UNDERSTANDING WHITE-TAILED DEER SIGN

By Julie Geiser

Deer are social animals who communicate with sounds and signs. The signs they leave behind and how to interpret them can be clues for hunting success.

Mature bucks can make hundreds of rubs and scrapes from late summer to the rut, the deer breeding season, but only a handful of these signs get used during the hunting season. Key factors such as food sources, cover, travel corridors and bedding areas as deer transition from summer to fall and winter play a big part in which areas you should focus.



JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

Deer Rubs

Rubs are good places to scout as they are typically along deer travel corridors. Before the rut, bucks rub on trees to remove velvet off their antlers and to build neck muscles for sparring during the rut. These rubs most likely won't produce much hunting action.

As the rut nears, bucks leave their scent on trees from glands on their foreheads to establish territories and dominance — these are the rubs to look for, especially those on the edge of a food source. If you are the only one hunting an area, this could be a good spot to set up as a buck will check his rubs every few days. If it's public land and there is a lot of hunting pressure, this area could be tough to hunt.

A rub line, where a buck has shredded several trees with his antlers, shows a distinct direction that a buck prefers to travel in the morning and evening from bedding to feeding locations or vice versa. Set up near this line, but keep your scent from blowing toward the area and stay out of sight.

Clusters of rubs with no notable pattern in thick cover tells you a buck is comfortable in this location. It could be bedding areas for one or several bucks. Find a trail or pinch-point where deer are traveling near the cluster, and this could be

a great hunting location. Hunt these areas in the mornings as the buck returns from feeding to bedding areas. This way, you won't chance spooking him away from his comfort area when trying to get into a tree stand for an evening hunt.

Deer Scrapes

A buck will scrape the ground, clearing it of vegetation, urinate in the scrape and leave scent on any tree limbs above the area by licking them or by rubbing his scent from glands on the top of his head. Scrapes become the internet of communication between deer as they travel to and from feeding and bedding areas. As does go into estrous, they will urinate in the scrape, and bucks will be able to follow their scent with hopes to breed.

Not every scrape produces deer, however, and hunters can waste a lot of time setting up on scrapes. Bucks tend to check scrapes during the night in areas with substantial hunting pressure. Bucks will also go downwind to scent-check the scrape from a distance.

Make sure the scrape location has good cover to allow a buck to feel safe to check it during shooting hours. Create mock scrapes with doe-in-estrous scents near a buck scrape to lure the testosterone-filled buck toward your ambush location.

When you have a combination of active rubs and scrapes, you know you have a good place to set up.

Trails and Scent

Scout for areas where several trails intersect, especially those that come from a thick bedding area to food sources. If there is an active rub or scrape with a trail leading to it, chances are many deer will be checking these as the rut gets into full swing.

Bucks prefer trails in thicker cover where they can check out open areas and sample the wind for does, other bucks and hunters. Be sure to cover your scent when in the field. Don't leave your scent when hunting near rubs, scrapes and along trails. Use a scent blocker on clothing and wear knee-high rubber/muck boots. Avoid touching anything with your bare skin, especially when making a mock scrape, putting out scent wicks or climbing into a tree stand.

Learning how to read deer sign can start in early spring when looking for sheds, and you can keep at it until fall. Putting time in the field can help hunters learn more about deer sign; when rubs, scrapes and trails are being used; and how to locate great hunting locations.

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Cottonwood leaves litter the ground, providing habitat and protection for a variety of insects and spiders. JULIE GEISER, NEBRASKALAND

LEAVE THE LEAVES THIS FALL

By Julie Geiser

Many people like the idea of a tidy lawn and quickly landscape after trees have dropped their brightly colored leaves or plants and flowers have wilted away for the season. It may look nice to have everything picked up, but for small creatures that live around your property, those piles of leaves, dead plant material, twigs and stems help keep them alive over the winter months.

Even the pickiest gardeners might want to change their gardening habits.

Food and Protection

Many butterflies and moths overwinter in our landscapes as an egg, caterpillar, chrysalis or adult. They bury themselves in leaf litter for protection from cold and predators.

Numerous species also disguise their cocoons and chrysalises to resemble dried leaves, blending in with the natural leaves around them and keeping them safe from would-be predators.

Bumble bees rely on leaf litter for protection as well. Queen bumble bees burrow into the ground only an inch or 2 to hibernate for winter. Leaf litter adds a thick layer of insulated protection from harsh winter weather.

Other species live in leaves as well, such as spiders, snails, worms and beetles. All these insects are important food sources that squirrels, birds, turtles, toads and many other animals rely on for food in the spring. Earthworms and pill bugs also create healthy soil by eating decaying fall leaves.

Shredding

Some folks shred fall leaves for composting, but shredded leaves do not provide the same cover as whole leaves for insects. When mowing or shredding leaves, you may destroy eggs, caterpillars and chrysalises along with the leaves.

Leaves are free mulch; they provide valuable organic matter and help build healthy soil. They suppress weeds and retain moisture underneath them. In the fall, the brilliantly colored leaves provide decoration for landscapes. Leaves will also provide a layer of protection for all the perennial plants and flowers in your landscapes.

A Happy Medium

If you think about what wild or natural areas look like in the winter, they are not picked up or manicured. Grasses, flowers and other plants are allowed to grow seed heads that birds feed on in winter and early spring. However, most of us don't want that messy look in our yards. So, how do we find that happy medium between satisfying our landscaping desires and helping to sustain wildlife populations?

Leaving the leaves doesn't always mean ignoring them completely; they can be moved to places in your yard where they won't kill grass but will still help wildlife. When possible, rake those leaves and put them into garden beds, around trees and other landscaping areas, or find a corner of your yard to pile them in along with small sticks.

Definitely don't get rid of them completely.



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GERMAN PHEASANT AND SPÄTZLE SOUP

By Ryan Sparks

This fall, my wife and I attended an Oktoberfest celebration where we sampled several German dishes (and beers). We both agreed that of everything we tried, the spätzle soup was by far the best. We also thought that wild pheasant would be an excellent substitution for the chicken traditionally used in the dish. After brainstorming how to recreate the soup, we ended up with our own version. German culinary enthusiasts will likely say it is unauthentic, but they can't argue with its delicious flavor. Making your own pheasant stock or broth gives the soup a deep, rich flavor, but store-bought chicken stock also works. Note that you will probably want a spätzle maker for this recipe. A perforated pan will work, but spätzle makers can be found online for less than \$15 and make the process much easier.

Servings: 6-8
Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cooking Time: ~2 hours
Ingredients

- Soup**
- 4 tbsp. butter, divided
 - 6-8 boneless pheasant breasts
 - 1 large yellow onion, diced
 - 2 large carrots, shredded
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 1 tsp. dried thyme
 - 1 tsp. dried parsley
 - 1 tsp. caraway seed
 - ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 tbsp. tomato paste
 - ¼ cup white wine (optional)
 - 8 cups game bird stock (optional, but highly recommended), or chicken stock
 - 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar



PHOTO BY RYAN SPARKS

- Salt to taste
- Fresh dill (optional)
- Sour cream (optional)

Spätzle

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp. grated nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 cup milk (whole is best and buttermilk works well too)
- A healthy pinch of salt

Optional equipment:
Spätzle maker

Sear the pheasant breasts in 2 tablespoons of butter in a large soup pot over medium/high heat. When nicely browned on both sides, remove to a plate.

Add the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter to the pot, along with the diced onion and shredded carrot. Lower the heat to medium. Cook for about 5 minutes until the onion softens. Add the garlic and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Add the thyme, parsley, black pepper, caraway seed and tomato paste. Cook for another 2-3 minutes. The contents of the pot should form a cohesive mixture. Add more butter if it

becomes dry to prevent burning.

Deglaze the pan with white wine if using. If not, use stock instead. Scrape any browned bits from the bottom of the pot with a wooden spatula.

Add the stock and seared pheasant and bring the mixture to a simmer. Continue simmering for 1-2 hours until the pheasant breasts easily shred with a fork.

While the soup simmers, make the spätzle: In a large bowl, beat the eggs, then whisk in the milk and cream. Add salt and nutmeg to the bowl and stir. Last, add flour and mix until smooth. The mixture should resemble melted ice cream or a thin pancake batter.

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil and place the spätzle maker on top. A spätzle maker has a small hook on it to anchor it to the rim of a pot. Place some spätzle mixture in the hopper and slide it back and forth to make the dumplings. Work in batches to avoid crowding the pot. When the dumplings float, give them another minute or so and then move them to a large bowl. Toss them with butter or a neutral oil, like vegetable or canola oil, to prevent them from sticking together.

When the pheasant is tender, remove the breasts and allow them to cool slightly. Shred them with your hands or two forks. Return the shredded meat to the pot. Add the apple cider vinegar. Simmer for another 5 minutes and taste for salt.

To serve, spoon some spätzle in the bottom of a soup bowl and top with a couple of ladles of soup. Optionally, top with fresh dill and serve with sour cream on the side for adding to the soup.



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Walking to Remember

Annual event at Indian Cave going strong

Story and photos by Renae Blum



Memorial balloons pictured before the Pink Pumpkin Walk begins.

Cool October breezes stir along a path at Indian Cave State Park, lined with pumpkins painted pink. Dozens of people wearing gray and pink T-shirts stride along the path, stopping to look. Each pumpkin is decorated with glitter, a big ribbon and the name of someone who has had cancer. Recognizing a name, families gather around the pumpkins, smiling and posing for pictures.

This annual event, called the Pink Pumpkin Walk, began in memory of Sharon Holliday of Lincoln. Her son, Kevin Holliday, was the park superintendent at Indian Cave at the time. Sharon died of breast cancer in October 2015.

“My idea to start the event in 2016 evolved from the previous year, when Sharon was fighting terminal cancer,”

Park Superintendent Jan Alexander said. “October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so it seemed fitting to hold this yearly event in memory of Sharon in October.”

In the Pink Pumpkin Walk’s first year, they saw 81 registered walkers. Last year, there were 197 — and the size of the event still surprises onlookers.

“I’ve been asked, ‘What event are you most proud of that you’ve started?’ and it’s the Pink Pumpkin Walk,” Alexander said. “I just feel honored to continue this event, and I hope that somebody else continues it when I’m not here.”

What the Walk Looks Like

The Pink Pumpkin Walk falls on the third Saturday in

October — the busiest weekend of the year for Indian Cave. In addition to the Pink Pumpkin Walk, the park also hosts a junk and craft market, trick-or-treating and hayrack rides.

It’s important to call ahead to register, Alexander said, as all proceeds go to one of several local cancer organizations. Those who register will receive a T-shirt, as well as the option to buy a memorial pumpkin to honor a loved one.

Music is a big part of the event, with certain songs played at key moments. The 2-mile walk begins to the sound of “Fight Song” by Rachel Platten, with other selected songs playing throughout. Participants don’t have to walk the entire length of the route, but they may choose to do so.

The hand-decorated and personalized pumpkins are



The Chrome Divas of Omaha, a motorcycle organization supporting those with breast cancer, rode to the event in 2023.



When registering for the walk, participants may choose to buy a memorial pumpkin in honor of a loved one.



Pink Pumpkin Walk participants walk a route lined with memorial pumpkins at Indian Cave State Park.

Sharon Holliday

1949-2015
The Pink Pumpkin Walk began in memory of Sharon Holliday of Lincoln. Her son, Kevin, wrote the following:
“Mom battled breast cancer for quite some time, which we all thought she had beat. But it had evidently spread to her spinal fluid which was incurable.



COURTESY OF COURTNEY HOLLIDAY

My mom was one of the most caring people I have ever met. She would do anything for anyone. She was a teacher at Northeast High School in Lincoln, working in the family and consumer sciences department. Many of her students today have gone on to do great things because of her culinary arts program at Northeast High.
Sharon raised five boys with our dad, Doc. We were raised in the outdoors, fishing, hunting, camping, boating, hiking, mushroom hunting, et cetera. She instilled the love of the outdoors in her kids and her grandchildren.
Mom loved Indian Cave State Park; she spent many weekends there with her grandchildren. She would be at most of the park’s annual events, assisting in presenting for the Bluebirds Across Nebraska organization.
This event means a great deal to me and my family. Every year I get to spend time with my daughter in remembering her grandma — and also being with so many different people who have family that have gone through the same experiences as I have. The people who are fighting cancer now, the people who have beaten cancer and the many we remember who have battled it. We all come together on this special day, and some day we hope there is a cure!”

scattered along the route for about an eighth of a mile. They are painted by the participating cancer organization and decorated by Indian Cave staff; Alexander says it takes them about two eight-hour days to create. Last year, they made nearly 50 of these pumpkins.
After the walk, door prizes and raffle gifts are handed out. The song “Rise Up” by Andra Day plays as Alexander recognizes registered walkers with cancer, as well as those who have recovered from cancer, with gifts.
The event is “really kind of emotional, even if you didn’t have anybody touched by cancer and you were just there watching it,” Alexander said.
She feels the Pink Pumpkin Walk is an important event to host because of how prevalent cancer is: “If you haven’t had cancer, typically you’re going to know somebody who has had cancer,” she said.
“I think it’s a good thing for the families, because it gives

them support from other people,” Alexander added. “October is a great time to be out here anyway, and enjoy the park.”

A Personal Experience

One longtime Pink Pumpkin Walk participant is Julie Buss of Humboldt, who has attended each year since 2019 with her family. “We have quite a big group sometimes,” she said. “Sometimes 16, 17 of us. Whoever can make it, makes it. I don’t say, ‘You’ve got to come.’”
Buss was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 when she was in her 40s. “I did several rounds of chemo and six weeks of radiation,” she said. “It was a lot of trips to Lincoln and back.”
Asked what the experience was like, she said, “I had to stay strong for my family. I just took one day at a time.” Losing her hair, she says, was emotional: “You just don’t think about how that would feel until you actually do it.”
Buss has now been cancer-free for 24 years, and recently retired from her job as a custodian at Humboldt Table Rock Steinauer Public Schools. The Pink Pumpkin Walk is a way for her to give back to the community, she said.
“And it’s good to see that there are survivors out there. It gives you hope,” she added.
Her favorite part of the event is the walk itself. “It’s so peaceful,” she said. She loved receiving her own pink pumpkin from family at a recent walk. “My grandkids were looking through all of the pumpkins trying to find my name on it,” she said with a laugh.
It’s hard for her to describe exactly what the event means to her. “I feel welcome, and I feel at peace when I go,” she said.
She plans to be there again this year. 🍂



COURTESY OF JULIE BUSS

Julie Buss of Humboldt (center, holding pumpkin) with her family at the Pink Pumpkin Walk in 2020.

The Pink Pumpkin Walk in 2024

This year’s Pink Pumpkin Walk will be Saturday, Oct. 19, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please register before Oct. 5 by calling Angie at 402-883-0014; registration is \$25 for adults and \$10 for kids and includes a T-shirt. When you register, you may choose to purchase a memorial pumpkin for \$20; this also includes a memorial balloon.
Check-in for the walk starts at 10 a.m. Once the walk is over, take time to check out the Jack-O’-

Lantern Junk & Craft Market from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the food trucks from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.
You can also stay for the 2 p.m. pumpkin roll for all ages, as well as Trick-or-Treat by the Buses from 3:30-5 p.m. and the Haunted Hollow Hayrack Rides from 7-9 p.m.
A park entry permit is required and can be purchased at OutdoorNebraska.gov, from permit vendors or upon entering the park.



After the Pink Pumpkin Walk, stay for the 2 p.m. pumpkin roll for all ages. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND



See what’s for sale at the Jack-O’-Lantern Junk & Craft Market.



Trick-or-Treat by the Buses. TIM REIGERT, NEBRASKALAND

Outdoor Nebraska

By Renae Blum

Make time this month to experience the beauty of fall, from changing leaves to hunting seasons, great fishing opportunities and state park events. [N](#)



Duck hunt the High Plains

Season dates vary by zone | Western Nebraska

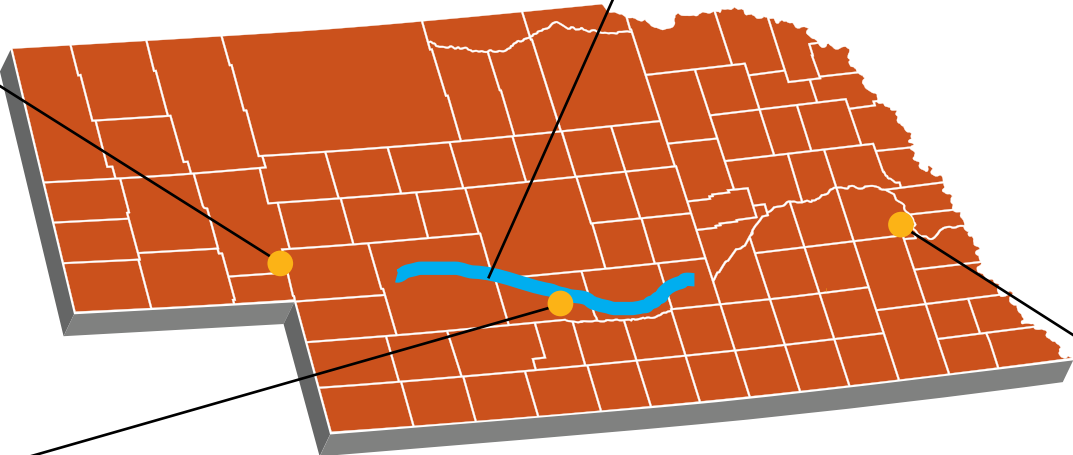
Waterfowl hunting in Nebraska is almost a religion, and October sees the regular season open in all four of the state’s duck zones. This month can be a great time to witness the early migrating prairie ducks that can include gadwall, teal, ring-necks, wigeon and even some early mallards. Spending time scouting and finding the hidden water holes is key this time of the year. A good number of camo-clad hunters will make the pilgrimage to the High Plains area of western Nebraska each year; Clear Creek Wildlife Management Area, with more than 6,100 acres, has room to explore. Be aware of special boundaries and hunting areas that come into play in November. [JULIE GEISER, NEBRASKALAND](#)



Experience Halloween Haunt at Johnson Lake

Oct. 12, 1-7 p.m. | Johnson Lake State Recreation Area

Enjoy Halloween fun of all kinds at a beautiful park. Come to the Main Campground, where the afternoon will kick off with kids’ games and pumpkin painting from 1-4 p.m., followed by campsite trick-or-treating. Be sure to participate in the campsite decorating contest; judging will take place at 5 p.m. The evening will wrap up with marshmallow roasting at 6 p.m. The event is free, but a park entry permit is required. [ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND](#)



Fish for largemouth bass at interstate lakes

September to November | Central Nebraska

Fall is one of the best times to catch big bass, and one place they can be found is in Nebraska’s interstate lakes — dozens of small water bodies scattered along Interstate 80 from Grand Island to Sutherland. According to Fisheries Biologist Daryl Bauer, they may contain largemouth bass as large as 5 or 6 pounds this year. You can fish more than one of these lakes in a day, so go explore. Find a guide to the I-80 lakes on the Fishing Guides and Reports page at [OutdoorNebraska.gov](#). [BOB GRIER, NEBRASKALAND](#)

What To Do in October



View the full Hunter’s Moon

Oct. 17 | Statewide

Experience the closest supermoon of the year. A “supermoon” occurs when the moon’s orbit is closest to Earth at the same time the moon is full. However, the sun will be shining directly on this full moon, leaving no contrast or shadows, so the best time for viewing is several days before the moon is full, says Jim Kvasnicka of The Prairie Astronomy Club — anywhere from Oct. 10-17. You can use binoculars, a telescope or your naked eye. Kvasnicka advises using a lunar filter on telescopes to reduce glare. [JUSTIN HAAG, NEBRASKALAND](#)

Attend the Wise and Wild workshop

Oct. 8 at 3 p.m. | James Family Conservatory and Nature Center at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park

This monthly workshop is designed for seniors ages 55 and up who love the outdoors. In October, the topic will be cooking with a Dutch oven — a tried-and-true method that can yield delicious results. Instructors will begin by sharing pointers, and then lead the group through a cooking demonstration on the patio, with time to enjoy the finished recipe. This 60- to 90-minute workshop is free to attend, but a park entry permit is required. [JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND](#)



Becoming a Snipe Hunter

An Overlooked Game Bird

By Jeff Kurrus

Last year I had the good fortune of seeing thousands of Canada geese during a Platte River hunt. I watched my son shoot his first buck during the firearm season in Cass County. I witnessed covey rises and pheasant flushes. I watched the sun rise on a Missouri River duck hunt, and the sun set during more than one raccoon hunt.

But the most memorable hunt, the most absurd, is easily a Rainwater Basin snipe hunt.

Day 1

It was never our plan to hunt snipes. For many, this bird conjures thoughts of flashlights, empty bags and confused buddies. Even for our group, the relationship with this bird was sketchy at best.

My son and I were jump shooting ducks in the Rainwater Basin, often having a hard time finding birds because of the dry conditions. On many of our favorite areas, there was just enough water for long-beaked birds to dip into the shallow water next to the mudflats, feeding on a variety of insects and crustaceans, but not enough to hold the number of ducks we were wanting to sneak toward.

On one of these sites, duck numbers

were down but there were a number of birds working the area that we thought were snipes. The long, straight, dark bill is the bird's most recognizable characteristic, and we could immediately see it in flight.

Unsure, we held our shots until we could gather more information. So, on the way home, I called a friend who I knew would be open to any number of hunting possibilities, common or otherwise. I described the bird I was seeing, and he told me I was looking at common snipes.

A check of Nebraska's hunting regulations told me the common snipe was a legal game bird. Because my young son and I planned to go the next day, and it looked as if he might get some shooting in, I could hardly sleep that night.

Day 2

We glassed the marsh from the road, first checking for any ducks that might have moved in. Quickly convinced this had not occurred, we set our sights on the long-beaked birds working the area — acrobatically diving toward various patches of water to drink and feed.

Then, for the next four hours, we had the shoot of our lives. Well ... at least when we were quick enough to



Common Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) at Kiowa Wildlife Management Area in Scotts Bluff County.

JON FARRAR, NEBRASKALAND



Three lesser yellowlegs, five stilt sandpipers, six killdeer, one short-billed dowitcher and two least sandpipers fly across a Rainwater Basin wetland in York County. None of these birds are legal to shoot and are not easily identifiable from a distance. Research is critical to common snipe hunting. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

pull the trigger as they flew by.

Common snipe is similar to a mourning dove in size, and at times rival these athletic fliers with their constant maneuverability. When they set their wings to land, they resemble teal. Their wings cup suddenly, and they turn on a dime as they dive to the ground. If flushed from the ground, they move away from the shooter like a bobwhite. Their unbelievable camouflage makes them nearly impossible to see on the ground and forces the shooter to stay at a constant ready position when walking.

And don't dare shoot more than one on the rise: with their mottled brown bodies, it's hard enough to find one downed bird in the marsh.

Taking on the traits of these various

game birds, common snipe quickly became one of the most challenging birds we have ever hunted.

Then, after the hunt, came the final test of the day. How would they be on the dinner plate? Because of their comparative size to dove, we first attempted to clean them the same way, breasting the birds with nothing more than our bare hands.

However, after cracking a second breastbone, which is less hardy than a dove's, we applied a pair of shears to the birds the same way many do when cleaning doves. The results were excellent, with us having a pile of breasted birds in minutes.

Lastly, we simply pan-fried the breasts in butter, salt and pepper. We wanted to taste these birds in their

simplest table fare form, and were not disappointed. We devoured them and readied ourselves for the morning.

Day 3

Because the birds work the marsh throughout the day, there was no reason to wake up early. With overcast, but steady weather continuing, we arrived at the wetland mid-morning, pockets full of non-toxic shot in our grasp, and went to work.

The birds in the area were wary, having been shot at the day before, but we were still able to pick up several birds by day's end. This prompted even more of our snobby friends back home to question what we were doing in the first place. Another hunter watching our shoot from his pickup truck seemed

to be wondering if what we were doing was even legal.

It is. Which is why we continued to do what we were happy to do, hunt for these challenging and tasty game birds as they worked their way across the marsh.

Then, as an added bonus, and testament to the value of the Rainwater Basin habitat, a lone rooster pheasant took flight at our feet while we looked for a downed snipe. Minutes later, we were comparing the size of each of them in our hands, a spectacular conclusion to one of our most memorable hunts ever.

Epilogue

A few days later, we returned to the marsh, but the snipe had completely disappeared, migrating through like other bird species on their way south for the winter.

Curious if we were alone in our snipe pursuit, we researched this species and found there was some interest in these acrobatic fliers and fine dinner guests.

Suggestions echoed our findings. Hunt with an open choke, such as improved cylinder, and use No. 6 or 7 in steel or some other non-toxic loads.

The habitat was just as we had found, shallow wetlands where the birds could use their long beaks to hunt while still standing on solid ground.

The last aspect remains the most important of all: Be open to hunting snipe. Yes, your friends are probably going to make fun of you. Yes, you're probably going to question what's become of your life.

But, if you can ignore these factors long enough to miss the first bird that zooms past, you'll be hooked.

You will become a sniper, too. 

HIP Number

The Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program, or HIP, is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service program designed to measure the harvest of migratory birds for management purposes.

All migratory game bird hunters must register annually with the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program in each state you hunt before hunting ducks, geese, swans, mergansers, coots, cranes, snipe, doves or woodcock.

The phone number for the Nebraska Harvest Information Program is (877) 634-8687. You can call Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. for help registering for a HIP number. You can also register for HIP online at OutdoorNebraska. NE.gov/HIP 24 hours a day.



A common snipe after a hunting trip in the Rainwater Basin. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

Nebraska's 1898 World's Fair

*By David L. Bristow
Nebraska State Historical Society*

More than 2.6 million people attended the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Open from June through October 1898, it was the largest public event ever staged in Omaha.

Inspired by Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition, the event was a huge financial gamble. Planning began a few years earlier during a severe economic depression, prolonged drought and crop failures. Omaha businessmen prepared to risk large sums of money to lure tourists to a city in which some 5,000 houses stood empty.

Fortunately the economy recovered by the time the gates opened. Covering 184 acres, the Exposition grounds featured a Grand Court of white classical-style buildings housing displays of technology, commerce, agriculture and the arts.

The Grand Court was built around a man-made lagoon nearly half a mile in length, its waters adorned

More than 2.6 million people visited the Exposition during its five-month run. NSHS RG2752AM





Ticket for “Nebraska Day,” June 14, 1898. NSHS 7999-34-B

with a large fountain encircling a statue of Neptune and Venetian gondolas that carried passengers. Nearby, the grounds also featured an Indian encampment, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, and two midways complete with rides, games, shows, restaurants and various concessions.

It was even more impressive at night when the newfangled



The Machinery and Electricity Building exhibited the latest technology. NSHS RG2752-01-10-1



Grand Court lit by incandescent bulbs, looking northwest. NSHS RG2752-1-11-1



“Indian Day” parade, Aug. 4, 1898. NSHS RG1739-0-3

electric lights came on. Visitors were awed by the fair’s extensive use of outdoor incandescent lighting, with 14,000 light bulbs powered by a half-dozen steam generators. Historian Amanda Johnson has argued that electric lighting was as important to the Omaha fair as the Ferris wheel was to Chicago’s Columbian Exposition. Both drew visitors and were seen as symbols of modernity and technological prowess.

Even the fair’s pretentious name sent a message. Boosters promoted it as a coming-of-age event not only for Omaha — now a regional hub city and no longer a frontier town — but also for the entire region west of the Mississippi River. And since the fair took place during the Spanish-American War, it coincided with America’s emergence as a rising international power.

The fair’s “Indian Congress,” meanwhile, was meant to represent the nation’s past. (It was a “congress” in the sense of a large gathering of multiple tribes, rather than a political body.) The Indian Wars were all but over, and the tribes were restricted to reservations. Most Americans assumed the Native population would continue its long decline, with the remainder assimilated. When President William McKinley visited the fair on Oct. 12, the Omaha Bee commented that he led a nation that was “just commencing to play its great part upon the stage of the universe,” and that he was “rendered

honor by a thousand representatives of a passing civilization that was in its way great.” Among the Native leaders greeting McKinley was the famous Apache warrior Geronimo.

In the end, Native peoples and cultures proved far more resilient. The fairgrounds, on the other hand, were temporary by design. Made of plaster and lath, the fancy white buildings were torn down within a few years, and the former Grand Court became today’s Kountz Park. 

Visit the Nebraska State Historical Society’s website at history.nebraska.gov.



Vendors sold souvenir 3D stereoview cards of the Exposition. “Shooting the Chutes” was a popular ride on the Midway. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

A Passion for Regal Fritillaries and Violets

By Gerry Steinauer, Botanist

The regal fritillary is aptly named. A glimpse of this large butterfly, with its beautiful reddish-orange wings ornately spotted with white, black and blue, effortlessly sailing above the prairie, is indeed a regal sight.

Historically, the regal fritillary occupied grasslands throughout the northeastern and north-central United States. Unfortunately, east

of Nebraska, regal populations have crashed, and the species has been extirpated from much of its former range. However, in the Great Plains, the butterfly has fared better, and this region is the species' last stronghold.

In Nebraska, the regal fritillary still graces grasslands nearly statewide, from the tallgrass prairie remnants in the east to wet meadows in the Sandhills and dry, mixed-grass plains



The deeply lobed leaves of prairie violets set them apart from most other violet species native to Nebraska. GERRY STEINAUER, NEBRASKALAND



A regal fritillary delicately sips nectar from a common milkweed. The butterfly also favors nectar from native thistles, coneflowers, gayfeathers, ironweeds and joe-pye weed. CHRIS HELZER, THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

of the Panhandle. Its local abundance varies from common to rare, dependent on habitat abundance and quality. The loss of native grassland habitats is largely responsible for the butterfly's range-wide decline. However, other factors have also played a role, including the fact that evolution has painted the insect into a corner of specialization.

Let me explain: Like many butterfly species, regal fritillary caterpillars have evolved to feed solely on a specific group of plants — in this case, violets. Unfortunately, in Nebraska

and elsewhere throughout the species' range, native violets have greatly declined in grasslands due to heavy grazing, herbicide use and other factors. As you can easily surmise, this is bad news for the regal fritillary, as its caterpillars cannot survive without food.

This is where Sarah Bailey, Conservation and Education Director for the Prairie Plains Resource Institute in Aurora, comes into play. For 14 years, she has been growing violets in a greenhouse and transplanting them into eastern Nebraska grasslands for

the benefit of regal fritillaries. This is the story of the butterfly and Bailey's violet-growing efforts to help them.

Life Cycle

Like all butterflies, the regal fritillary's life history has four stages: egg, caterpillar, chrysalis and adult. Males emerge from the chrysalis in mid-June, while the females emerge one to two weeks later. The males patiently perch on plants, waiting for females to fly by, or actively fly about prairies searching for females to mate

with. After mating, the no-longer-needed males soon die.

The eggs develop slowly within the female and are not laid until late summer or early fall. Females walk about the thick prairie vegetation laying over 2,000 eggs singly on dead and living vegetation, including violets if she happens upon them. The eggs hatch in three to four weeks, and without eating, the tiny hatchling caterpillars immediately crawl down into clumps of dried grass, where they enter a period of suspended development and overwinter.



Young prairie violets grow in tubes at the Prairie Plains Resource Institute greenhouse. GERRY STEINAUER, NEBRASKALAND

The warmth of spring propels the caterpillars to emerge from hibernation and begin feeding on tender, young violet leaves. However, there is a catch: The caterpillars can only detect violets from about an inch away, and most never find their first meal. By laying 2,000 eggs, females ensure that a few lucky caterpillars will find violets and survive.

In Nebraska, the caterpillars are thought to feed mainly on prairie violet (*Viola pedatifida*), a fairly common species of higher-quality grasslands in northern and eastern Nebraska, but they also feed on a few other violet species. Individual caterpillars feast on several violet plants throughout their slow development; therefore, violets need to be present in sufficient densities to support them. When fully developed, caterpillars enter the chrysalis stage in late spring, and the life cycle begins again.

Violets to the Rescue

Sarah Bailey's passion for regal fritillaries and violets began the summer after her freshman year at

the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2006. During an excursion to a prairie near Lincoln to photograph wildflowers and insects, she encountered her first regal fritillary, became smitten and began researching the species' natural history and dependence on violets.

She graduated in 2009 with a degree in biology and environmental studies. Serendipitously, soon after her graduation, Prairie Plains received a grant from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for regal fritillary conservation. The funds were used to build a greenhouse on their Gjerloff Prairie in Hamilton County to grow violets and other wildflowers, which are favored by regal fritillaries as nectar plants, for transplanting into grasslands. They needed someone to run the operation, and Bailey was the perfect fit.

Before explaining Bailey's method of growing violets, it is important to understand why Prairie Plains and other conservation groups do not simply harvest and sow violet seeds into grasslands to enhance their populations. Primarily, it is because it is extremely difficult to find and

collect sufficient quantities of the small and scattered violet seed pods in grasslands. Also, once ripe, the pods immediately burst open, ejecting the tiny seeds onto the soil and out of reach of the already frustrated collectors' grasp.

Soon after being hired, Bailey began digging mature violets from prairies and transplanting them into large pots in the greenhouse. Her intent was to use the seeds produced by these violets to start new plants in grow tubes. The mature violets bloomed the following spring and formed seed pods, but there was a problem: The bursting pods scattered the seeds across the greenhouse floor before Bailey could harvest them. The next year, she innovated by placing window screens over the pots so that when the pods burst, the seeds bounced off the screens and onto the bare soil in the pots.

These seeds germinated en masse in the pots late the following winter, and Bailey then meticulously transplanted each tiny seedling into its own grow tube where they matured over the summer. She transplants the young

violets into grasslands during the coolness of late September, allowing the plants to avoid the stress of summer's heat, but giving their roots time to take hold in the soil before entering winter dormancy.

Bailey grows and transplants between 1,500 and 2,000 violets annually. The majority are prairie violets, but she also grows other violets regal fritillary caterpillars are known to eat, including Missouri violet (*V. missouriensis*), which is native to eastern Nebraska wet meadows; lance-leaved violet (*V. lanceolata*), which is native to northeastern Sandhills wet meadows; and downy blue violet (*V. sororia*), which is common in grasslands and woodlands throughout the state. Her violets have been planted into prairie restorations and

existing prairies throughout eastern Nebraska.

Measuring Success

In September 2018, 300 of Bailey's prairie violets were planted into two go-back prairies, long-abandoned farm fields now mostly colonized by native and non-native grasses, in Pawnee County. They were planted in marked rows with plants spaced a yard apart to allow follow-up monitoring. Luckily, a week of good rain followed.

The following spring, the plants were counted, and beyond expectation, 93 percent survived through their first winter. Bailey said that at most transplant sites, 40 to 60 percent of violets survive their first winter. Better yet, at the go-back prairies and other



A regal fritillary caterpillar feeds on a prairie violet.

SARAH BAILEY, PRAIRIE PLAINS RESOURCE INSTITUTE

transplant sites, new violet plants are now becoming established from the originals via seed or rhizomes, shallow underground stems with buds.

Transplants and wild violets need energy and require full exposure to the sun in spring for leaf growth, flowering and seed set. If shaded by tall grass or thick thatch during this critical time, they will not reproduce and may not even survive. The go-back prairies are managed with grazing, which limits both grass growth and thatch. Well-timed haying and prescribed fire can also achieve the same result. Proper grassland management at transplant sites is crucial to sustain violets and a variety of other wildflowers adult regal fritillaries need for food.

Bailey admits that the return on investment of her violet transplants for regal fritillaries is still unknown, and true success will only be realized when the transplant site's violet population can sustain the butterfly's caterpillars. Unfortunately, the caterpillars are extremely hard to find; after years of searching, Bailey has encountered only one, complicating the measuring of success. While the long-term effects of her work are still being evaluated, she will continue to grow violets and learn. It's the passion and knowledge of people like Bailey that drives conservation. 🦋



Sarah Bailey poses for a photo before planting prairie violets in a grazed mixed-grass prairie on the Sherman Ranch in Hamilton. GERRY STEINAUER, NEBRASKALAND

ENDANGERED SPECIES SPOTLIGHT

The Mountain Plover

By Ruby Rolland, Environmental Specialist, NGPC



Mountain plover on a nest. ROB PALMER, ROB@FALCONPHOTOS.COM

Nebraska lists 32 species of plants and animals as threatened or endangered. The mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*) is a migratory bird listed as threatened in Nebraska and is found in Banner, Cheyenne and Kimball counties during the nesting season.

Despite its misleading name, the mountain plover is not a mountain-loving bird. In Nebraska, these drab-colored plovers historically preferred to nest and raise their chicks in heavily grazed or disturbed shortgrass prairies in areas with bare ground — think of prairies burned by raging wildfires, grazed by massive bison herds and sprawling with prairie dog towns.

Today, much of these “classic” western ecosystems within the

mountain plover’s Nebraska range have been lost or converted to agriculture, so these birds are often found nesting in rangeland, fields left fallow or newly planted with millet and wheat. The loss of nesting habitat is the greatest threat to mountain plover survival.

Nesting season for Nebraska’s mountain plovers lasts from March until August. After courtship and mating, these plovers lay their camouflaged eggs directly on the ground in a “bowl” they scrape into the dirt. The birds and nests blend in masterfully, but are still susceptible to predation, as well as being crushed by grazing cattle or farm equipment.

Currently, the Nebraska Prairie Partners work with landowners in

Nebraska’s List

Threatened Species

- Eastern Black Rail
- Piping Plover
- Rufa Red Knot
- Thick-billed Longspur
- Mountain Plover
- Southern Flying Squirrel
- Lake Sturgeon
- Northern Redbelly Dace
- Finescale Dace
- American Burying Beetle
- Timber Rattlesnake
- Western Massasauga
- Western Prairie Fringed Orchid
- Ute Ladies'-tresses
- American Ginseng
- Small White Lady's Slipper

Endangered Species

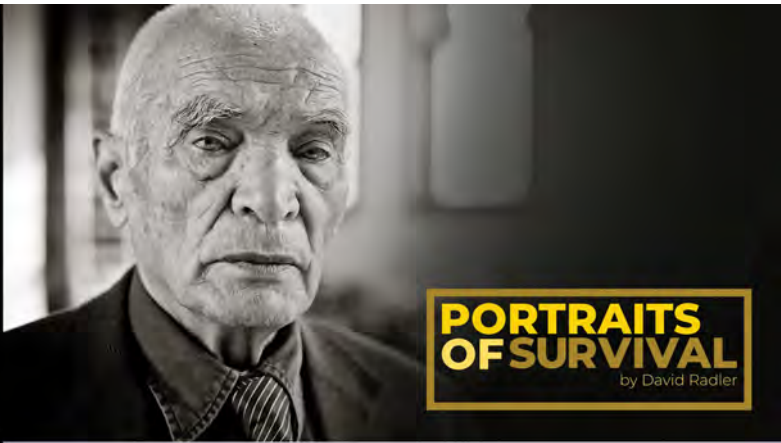
- Eskimo Curlew
- Whooping Crane
- Interior Least Tern
- Black-footed Ferret
- Swift Fox
- Gray Wolf
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Pallid Sturgeon
- Topeka Shiner
- Sturgeon Chub
- Blacknose Shiner
- Salt Creek Tiger Beetle
- Scaleshell Mussel
- Blowout Penstemon
- Colorado Butterfly Plant
- Saltwort

mountain plover habitat to provide bird-friendly management practices and assist producers with flagging plover nests ahead of planting and harvest to prevent loss.

Surviving nests produce small, speckled chicks that hatch after 30 days and are on their feet and feeding themselves within hours. Another 30 days and chicks are fully grown, independent and able to fly.

Around August, most mountain plovers leave Nebraska and begin their migration to the deserts of California and other western states to spend the winter.

For more information on Nebraska’s threatened and endangered species, visit OutdoorNebraska.gov.



PORTRAITS OF SURVIVAL
by David Radler

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DOG AILMENTS AND TREATMENTS

By Todd Mills

After a recent waterfowl hunt, I found a puncture wound on my dog’s paw. I noticed she was limping a little, but I didn’t take the time to inspect. The next day, her foot swelled and was infected. Not only was it a costly vet bill, but she wasn’t able to hunt for almost a month.

“Some of the most common injuries I see in hunting dogs are lacerations, cuts and puncture wounds,” said veterinarian Donna Mertz, who has been a source of great comfort for me and my hunting dogs through the years.

Here are a few tips to help keep your hunting partner healthy and safe.

Post Hunt Inspection

After spending time in the field or blind, thoroughly inspect your dog. Check their eyes and feet, as seeds, dust and abrasion from grass can cause serious damage. Carry saline solution and make sure to rinse out their eyes after every hunt.

Inspect their feet and underbelly for any cuts or puncture wounds. Clean any cuts you observe with clean water and remove dirt and debris, and if needed, cover the wound with a sterile dressing.

First Aid Kit

Have a kit handy at all times, and in multiple places if possible — one in your vehicle and a lighter kit for carrying into the field. A few other items that can help in emergency situations include super glue for cuts, duct tape, Vetbond tissue adhesive, sterile saline eyewash and wound spray.

Carry an emergency card with the dog’s pertinent information, including your name and address, and do research on the closest veterinary office if you’re going out of town. Do not give your dog Tylenol or ibuprofen or use hydrogen peroxide on wounds.

When in doubt, get it checked out.

Extreme Temperatures

In 2003, a heat wave hit South Dakota during the opening weekend of pheasant season. With temperatures into the mid- to upper 90s, it was estimated over 100 dogs died due to heat-related causes. Although this was a rare circumstance, heat can be fatal to your dog if you don’t take precautions.

Each one of my hunting dogs has handled heat differently, so recognizing the signs early and knowing your dog’s tolerance

is critical. Excessive panting, dry pale gums, restlessness and difficulty walking are all signs your dog is overheating. Immediately take them to a cooler area, and lower their body temperature by getting them in cool water.

During and after every hunt, pay attention for signs of injury or distress in your dog. Don’t let a bad situation get worse. Not only will this minimize the possibility of a large vet bill, it will also ensure your hunting partner will be around for many years to come.



Carry saline solution and make sure to rinse out your dog’s eyes after every hunt. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND



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CAMPFIRES, COSTUMES AND CREATURES

By Renae Blum

Combine everything you love about Halloween — dressing up, pumpkins, candy and spooky fun — with the beauty of a Nebraska state park, and you have these eight events. Nearly all are free; you just need a park entry permit to get in. Learn more and see additional events at [Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov).



Campsite decorating contest during the annual Haunted Hollow event at Indian Cave State Park. ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Ash Hollow State Historical Park

Oct. 19, 1-6 p.m. MT

Get ready to have fun at this Halloween celebration for all ages. Bring your best costume for the costume contest and enjoy some trunk-or-treating. Kids can saddle up for pony rides and play kids’ games, while individuals and families can also sample the food vendors and compete in skill games.

Branched Oak State Recreation Area

Oct. 19, 3:30-9 p.m.

Got some eerie campsite decorations up your sleeve? Show them off in a campsite decorating contest, followed



Children in the costume parade at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park near Ashland. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND



Halloween campsite decorating contest and trick-or-treating at Fremont Lakes State Recreation Area. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

by trick-or-treating at the campsites. As darkness falls, take a hayrack ride through the haunted trail. Purchase tickets starting Sept. 16 by calling the office at 402-783-3400. Other activities include pumpkin carving, a pumpkin roll and costume contest.



Young and old enjoy the pumpkin rolling contest during Halloweenfest at Ponca State Park. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park

Saturdays and Sundays in October, 12-6 p.m.

Purchase admission to this event and enjoy activities for all ages, from horseback riding to ax throwing, a petting zoo and zipline. Plenty of experiential activities are available as well, including a giant hay slide, inflatable corn maze, pumpkin bounce pad and corn cannon. If you get hungry, concessions will be available, too.

Enders State Recreation Area

Oct. 26, 2-6 p.m. MT

Old-fashioned Halloween fun is on deck at Enders, such as pumpkin carving, hayrack rides and trunk-or-treating. Dress

up for the costume contest; kids, adults and pets can join in the fun. As you enjoy the afternoon, munch on s’mores and sip hot apple cider.



Visitors inspect pumpkins on display at the annual Pumpkin Carving Festival at Calamus Reservoir SRA in Loup and Garfield counties. ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Indian Cave State Park

Oct. 11-12, 19, 26; times vary

Treat yourself to a smorgasbord of Halloween fun. The park’s 29th annual Haunted Hollow event kicks off with trick-or-treating along decorated trails at the old town of St. Deroin. The following dates include a pumpkin roll, haunted hayrack rides and campsite decorating contest. Oct. 19 features a junk and craft market, a walk raising funds for local cancer organizations and Trick-or-Treat by the Buses, starring Volkswagen buses.

Johnson Lake State Recreation Area

Oct. 12, 1-7 p.m.

Johnson Lake’s Halloween Haunt returns with plenty to enjoy. Start off by painting your Halloween vision on



Craft market at Indian Cave during the Pink Pumpkin Walk event. RENAE BLUM, NEBRASKALAND



Children compete in a costume contest at Ash Hollow State Historical Park in Garden County. JUSTIN HAAG, NEBRASKALAND

a pumpkin and playing kids’ games. Take in all the fun costumes as kids go trick-or-treating at the campsites. The day concludes with judging of the campsite decorating contest and marshmallow roasting.



Visitors trick-or-treat in the Middle Oak Creek Campground during the annual Spooktacular event at Branched Oak State Recreation Area. ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Red Willow State Recreation Area

Oct. 25-27

Know someone good with a paintbrush? Kids ages 14 and younger are invited to bring their artistic skills and compete in a pumpkin-painting contest. Those with an eye for festive décor can compete in a camper/campsite decorating contest. Make sure to bring some candy, as the event also features camper-to-camper trick-or-treating.

Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area

Oct. 19, 7-8 p.m. and 8-9 p.m.

Curious about the wild things that go bump in the night? Experience the Wildcat Hills at night during the Howl in the Hills Night Hike. This guided hike will be a little over half a mile long on uneven terrain. Please bring a flashlight, hiking shoes and a sense of adventure. Two hikes are available, with a limit of 25 participants per hike. Pre-register before Oct. 9 at [Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov).

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REPORTING GAME VIOLATIONS CAN MAKE A CASE

By Eric Fowler

I’ve witnessed a few game violations that I haven’t reported during my years in the field. For whatever reason, the idea got stuck in my head that by the time a conservation officer could get there, the perpetrators would be gone, and what could they do then?

Considering I work for the same joint that employs the folks who enforce the game laws, I should know better. They can do a lot.

Last February, while ice fishing with friends at one of the Salt Valley Lakes, we watched some hunters shoot geese after shooting hours had ended. I guess I should say we heard them shoot, since it was too dark to see much by the time it happened. This wasn’t a case of their watch being a few minutes off. It was 20 minutes after legal shooting hours. They took a crack at another group 10 minutes later.

I texted a conservation officer I had in the contacts in my phone. Soon after I did, another goose hunter, who had set up decoys on the ice on a different part of the lake, and had them packed up when he should have, walked across the ice to discuss the same question we had.

He was going to report the violation and wanted to know which vehicles in the lot were ours. Through the process of elimination, we determined the plate number of the perpetrators. Since I’d already contacted an officer, the hunter shared his contact info, and let me know he had a video of the violation.

We packed up our gear and headed to the ramp. The

violators arrived while we were loading gear into our trucks. When we asked them if they knew what shooting hours were, they said 30 minutes after sunset. That works for pheasants and deer, we told them, but not waterfowl. They played dumb, but with the gear they had, we knew these weren’t rookies who had made an honest mistake.

The next day, the conservation officer I had texted got back to me. I shared the other hunter’s contact info. She passed on that information to fellow officer Curt Prohaska, who called me soon after and got my side of the story. By the end of the day, Prohaska had talked to the other witness, watched the video and contacted the violators at their homes. When presented with the evidence, they confessed, were cited for shooting game after hours and surrendered the goose they had shot.

The moral of this story is: Don’t be dumb. Not like the hunters who blatantly violated the law with people around to witness it. Or like me and think officers won’t be able to catch up with the bad guys.

“We’re not always going to be at the places where the violation takes place,” Prohaska said. “However, it’s the public’s eyes and ears that help us in our job.”

Prohaska said witnessing a violation can leave people asking, “Is this really happening?” and “Is there anything I can do about this?”

“There is,” he said. “Give us a call, and we’ll take it from there.”

First, get every detail you can: the time and place, description of the violator, their license plate number, and, if you are able, photos or video. Nearly everyone carries a camera on their phone, and when confronted with that type of evidence, perpetrators are often quick to say, “You got me.”

A list of conservation officers can be found at OutdoorNebraska.gov (search “conservation officers”), in all of the hunting and fishing guides and on page 6 of this magazine.

There are good reasons for every game law on the books, be it size limits on walleyes, bag limits on pheasants or shooting hours. I can attest to the reasoning for the latter, as there were many times while I was hip-deep in a farm pond picking up goose decoys after a day’s hunt and had geese almost land next to me. It’s too easy.

Not every case can be this easy for conservation officers, but they won’t close any cases you don’t report.



Whether they roost on open water or ice, Canada geese often return after sunset. The birds can be easy to decoy at this time, one of the reasons shooting hours end when the sun goes down. ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND



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Pheasant hunting near Lyman, 1970

Sometime around 1970. Lyman, Nebraska. From left: brothers Bruce and Brad; my dad, Bob Bode; brother Barry and me. A good haul of pheasants and a Canada goose. In western Nebraska in the '70s, a goose was a real prize. Great hunting in those days — lots of weeds, sugarbeet fields and standing corn.

– Brian Bode, Kansas City, Missouri

Catfishing at Logan Creek, 1974

Taken in Bancroft likely summer 1974 after a good channel cat wading session in Logan Creek (the Dredge). Randy Schilling (right) married Gail Brandes (center) and went on to his career with the Game Commission in Plattsmouth. Brother Bill Schilling (15 here) is now retired in Ohio, wading for smallmouth and an occasional cat. In the '70s, we waded and cast minnows or crawdads, with a small splitshot, for great success at dusk and into the night.

– Bill Schilling, Oxford, Ohio



Fishing at Dewey Lake, 1989

This photo of me was taken in 1989 on Dewey Lake by my fishing partner, Doug King. He, Dennis Galyardt and I each caught northern pike of this size using fly rods and fishing out of float tubes. The fish in the picture was caught on a deer hair mouse that was retrieved through the reeds. A trip to the Valentine Refuge lakes was an annual event in those days and many good memories were made.

– Tip Spencer, La Vista

Attention **Nebraskaland** Subscribers

We are quickly running out of submissions for "Portraits from the Past."

If you send us yours, we may be able to get it into an upcoming issue relatively soon (first-come, first-served).

Send your originals (or good reproductions) to the address below, and we will be sure to return them.

If e-mailing pictures, please send JPEGs scanned at 100 percent original size, at a high resolution (i.e. 300 dpi) to tim.reigert@nebraska.gov. Call (402) 471-4595 if you have questions. Please include a story about the photograph, identifying people, places and approximate date the photo was taken.

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.



This looks like a lot. There's even more happening than you might guess. CHRIS HELZER

GARAGE CARNAGE

By Chris Helzer

Nature isn't always for the faint of heart, but it is consistently fascinating. For example, take the gruesome scene I found playing out on the siding of my garage last fall. A green caterpillar was thrashing about while numerous larvae were crawling out of its body. The scene was being observed by several small wasps.

Fortunately, with the help of friends — especially Dr. Enakshi Ghosh of Colorado State University — I can explain the scene to you. The caterpillar was a larva of a cabbage white butterfly, an invasive species from Europe. The emerging larvae were the offspring of a European parasitoid wasp introduced to North America to help suppress populations of the butterfly. Adults of that wasp species find caterpillars by following the scent plants release as a response to the caterpillar's feeding activity. When a wasp finds a caterpillar, she inserts her ovipositor (a skinny tube eggs feed through) into it and lays up to 30 eggs inside the hapless creature.

Just to punch up the story a little, the wasp also introduces a virus into the caterpillar that takes over its brain and keeps

it alive and moving, even as its innards are consumed by the wasp's kids. That turns the caterpillar into a kind of guardian for the larvae inside it by repelling "hyperparasitoids," which are wasps that try to lay eggs on the larvae of parasitoid wasps. I know, right?

Anyway, what I was seeing was wasp larvae exiting the caterpillar and immediately spinning yellow fuzzy cocoons, inside which they'd pupate and become adults. The larvae were probably the babies of the initial parasitoid wasp, but they might also have been the young of a second wasp that laid eggs on the larvae of the first. It's all very complicated.

Oh, and those small wasps hanging around while all this happened were yet another species of hyperparasitoids. They were waiting to lay eggs on the wasp cocoons as soon as they were created. As a result, when I checked back a few weeks later and found empty cocoons, I didn't know what species had emerged from them. It might have been a wasp that laid eggs on the caterpillar, a wasp that laid eggs on those eggs, or a wasp that laid eggs in the cocoons of either of those others. Happy Halloween.

When boating, remember to:



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