

Nebraskaland
magazine

P.O.Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503
nebraskaland@nebraska.gov

To renew your subscription or change your
address call **1-800-632-5263**



Saving Wildlife and Wild Places

The Nebraska Wildlife Conservation Fund
works to connect people and nature through
education, research and habitat restoration.
Learn about the fund, the projects it
supports and how you can help at

NebraskaWildlifeFund.org

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



Nebraskaland

April 2019





**A fishing challenge
for reel experts.**

*Four varieties. One state.
Epic bragging rights.*

FIND THE DETAILS AT
OutdoorNebraska.org/TroutSlam



*Spring is one of nature's
greatest performances*

American Spring
A Three-Night **NATURE** Event **LIVE**



Be part of this nationwide event! Be a citizen scientist!

Celebrate Urban Birds | Bird Cams | Great Sunflower Project
Monarch Larva Monitoring Project | Track-a-Lilac

Learn how to participate in Nebraska
netNebraska.org/springlive

And be sure to watch
April 29, 30 & May 1 | 7 p.m. CT



Nebraska's **PBS** & **NPR** Stations

netNebraska.org

Nature is a production of THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC for WNET and PBS. American Spring LIVE is a production of Berman Productions, Inc. and THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC for WNET. Nature: American Spring LIVE was made possible in part by the National Science Foundation and Anne Ray Foundation.



Additional financial support was provided by the Arnhold Family in memory of Clarisse Arnhold, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, the Kate W. Cassidy Foundation, the Lillian Goldman Charitable Trust, Kathy Chiao and Ken Hao, the Anderson Family Fund, the Filomen M. D'Agostino Foundation, Rosalind P. Walter, the Halmi Family in memory of Robert Halmi, Sr., Sandra Atlas Bass, Doris R. and Robert J. Thomas, Charles Rosenblum, by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and by the nation's public television stations.

FEATURES

22 UNVEILING THE MYSTERIOUS MUSHROOMS of Indian Cave State Park
Story and Photos by Gerry Steinauer

28 OUTDOOR NEBRASKA
What to Do in April
By Renae Blum

30 TURKEY TRIFECTA
Story by Ryan Sparks. Photos by Jeff Kurrus

36 PASQUE FLOWER JOY
Story and Photos by Chris Helzer

38 DANCE PARTY
Story and Photos by Eric Fowler

46 NEBRASKA AIRMAIL IN THE 1920s
By History Nebraska

50 A RARE BIRD
and a rare opportunity
Story and Photos by Eric Fowler

52 WALLEYE TROLLING 101
Story and Photos by Jake Jadowski

DEPARTMENTS

8 Your Nebraska

12 In the Field

56 Mixed Bag

64 Portraits from the Past

66 The Last Stop

ON THE WEB

To see more content, including photos, videos and additional articles, visit Magazine.OutdoorNebraska.gov/digital.

RADIO-COLLARED BIGHORN SHEEP AND LAMB AT CHADRON STATE PARK IN DAWES COUNTY. PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

Nebraskaland
magazine

Published by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission since 1926. The Commission is dedicated to the conservation and protection of all the state's natural resources and the people who use them.



Administration

Director Jim Douglas
Deputy Director Tim McCoy
Commissioners
Chairman - Robert Allen, Eustis
Vice Chairman - Dan Kreitman, Wahoo
2nd Vice Chairman - Pat Berggren, Broken Bow
Dick Bell, Omaha
Rick Brandt, Roca
Scott Cassels, Omaha
Jim Ernst, Columbus
Doug Zingula, Sidney

Commission Offices

Headquarters/Southeast District Office
2200 N. 33rd Street Lincoln, NE 68503
Phone 402-471-0641

Northeast District Office
2201 N. 13th St. Norfolk, NE 68701
Phone 402-370-3374

Southwest District Office
301 E. State Farm Rd. North Platte, NE 69101
Phone 308-535-8025

Northwest District Office
East Hwy. 2, Box 725 Alliance, NE 69301
Phone 308-763-2940

Bassett Office
524 Panzer St., Box 508 Bassett, NE 68714
Phone 402-684-2921

Kearney Office
1617 First Ave. Kearney, NE 68847
Phone 308-865-5310

Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium/Schramm Education Center
21502 W. Highway 31 Gretna, NE 68028
Phone 402-332-3901

Omaha Office
8495 Frederick Street, Omaha, NE 68124
Phone 402-595-2144



OutdoorNebraska.org

Any program that receives federal funding from the National Park Service, or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, gender, marital status, national origin, age, disability or political affiliation. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, facility, or service, should contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-0641, the Equal Opportunity Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-2024, TTY/TDD 402-471-4693; United States Fish Wildlife Service, Civil Rights Coordinator, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203; Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Mail Code 0008, Washington, D.C. 20240-0001.

Magazine Staff

Communications Director Christy Firestone
Public Relations Manager Cara Pesek
Editor Jeff Kurrus
Associate Editor Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley
Regional Editors Eric Fowler, Julie Geiser, Justin Haag
Contributing Editor Michael Forsberg
Regular Contributors Renae Blum, Chris Helzer, Ryan Sparks, Gerry Steinauer
Art Director Tim Reigert
Graphic Designer Mel Severin
Photo Librarian Jaclyn Cruikshank Vogt
Circulation Donna Robinson
For address changes and questions about your subscription, e-mail donna.robinson@nebraska.gov or call 800-632-5263
Advertising Sales Manager
For advertising information contact Shane G. Gilster, 402-742-0125
Email: shanegilster@gmail.com

Nebraskaland Magazine Copyright 2019, all rights reserved.
Nebraskaland is available in audio from the Nebraska Library Commission Talking Book and Braille Service, Suite 120, 1200 N St., Lincoln, NE 68508. 800-742-7691. Nebraskaland Magazine and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission reserve the right to reject any advertising not in keeping with the agency mission.
Rates: \$18 for one year; \$33 for two years; \$44 for three years. Nebraska recipients must add appropriate sales tax. To subscribe call 1-800-NEBLAND (632-5263), or go online to: NebraskalandMagazine.com.

Conservation Officers

ADMINISTRATION (Lincoln)
Craig Stover (Administrator) 402-471-5531
Duane Arp (Asst. Administrator) 402-471-5531
Jeff Clauson (Asst. Administrator) 402-471-5531

NORTHWEST (Includes counties covered)
Jim Zimmerman (District Supt.) 308-641-6138
Kelsey Glodowski (Box Butte, S 1/2 Sheridan, Grant) 308-763-8226
Sean McKeehan (Kimball, Banner, Scotts Bluff) 308-672-1824
Dan Kling (Sioux, Dawes) 308-430-0572
Kyler Prochaska (E 1/2 Dawes, N 1/2 Sheridan, W 1/2 Cherry) 308-430-3984
Terry Brentzel (Deuel, Garden, Grant) 308-458-7650
Frank Miller (Cherry, Hooker) 402-389-0444

NORTHEAST (Includes counties covered)
Tom Zimmer (District Supt.) 402-641-9590
Dale Davis (Keya Paha, Brown, Rock) 402-760-0712
Jonathan Andreasen (Holt, Boyd) 402-340-3981
Kyle Gaston (Dodge, Colfax) 402-719-6226
Greg Hesse (Greeley, Wheeler, Boone, S 1/2 Antelope) 402-843-6567
Mitch Johnson (Knox, Antelope, Pierce) 402-613-8612
Jeff Jones (Knox, Cedar) 402-762-5022
Jon Reeves (S 1/2 Thurston, Burt, Washington) 402-889-8508
Andrew Heyer (Pierce, Madison, Stanton) 402-613-2241
Cory Krause (Cuming, Wayne, Stanton, Dodge) 402-380-6410
Steve Oberg (Colfax, Platte, Madison, Stanton, Nance) 402-910-3366
Owen Johnson (Dixon, Dakota, N 1/2 Thurston) 402-266-1759
Doug Pollard (Loup, Garfield, Valley) 308-730-7050
Ethan Teter (Boating - eastern Nebraska) 402-620-8129

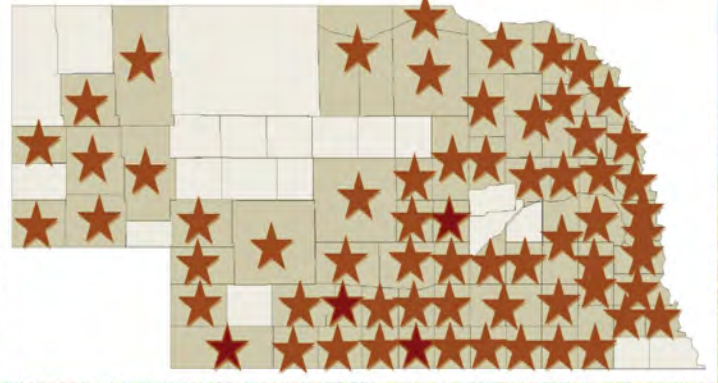
SOUTHWEST (Includes counties covered)
Roger Thompson (District Supt.) 308-530-3097
Matt Brandt (Sherman, Howard) 308-202-0819
Tim Williams (Hall, Hamilton, Merrick) 308-380-7331
Pat George (Harlan, Franklin, Phelps) 308-920-2762
Matt Andrews (Gasper, Furnas, Frontier, Red Willow) 308-746-2418
Brian Piernicky (Red Willow, Frontier, Hayes, Hitchcock) 308-340-6627
John Lee (Hitchcock, Dundy, Chase, Hayes) 308-414-1432

Nicholas Fix (Keith, Perkins) 308-289-0427
Bryce Streger (Keith, Arthur) 308-440-3847
Sean Schultz (Keith) 308-760-0145
Brandon O'Neal (Lincoln, McPherson, Logan) 308-530-3157
Alex Hasenauer (Lincoln, McPherson, Logan) 308-660-4671
Mike Thome (Dawson) 308-529-8146
Ray Dierking (Custer, Thomas, Blaine) 308-870-0322
Taylor Dixon (Dawson, N 1/2 Gosper, N 1/2 Phelps) 308-217-2108
Eric Javins (Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, Webster) 402-902-2017
Kevin Bergstrom (Boating - central Nebraska) 308-520-1031
Daryl Teter (Boating - central Nebraska) 308-440-1863
Scott Eveland (Boating - western Nebraska) 308-289-0017

SOUTHEAST (Includes counties covered)
Levi Krause (District Supt.) 402-949-0593
Rich Berggren (Douglas) 402-619-1355
Dan Evasco (Sarpy) 402-616-5961
Heath Packett (Cass) 402-210-0888
Russell Mort (Otoe, Johnson) 402-209-1506
William Krause (Nemaha, Richardson, Pawnee) 402-274-8063
Matt Taylor (Thayer, Fillmore, Jefferson) 402-200-9597
Matt Seitz (Gage, Saline) 402-806-0915
Dina Barta (Lancaster) 402-890-6463
Dudley Sorensen (Lancaster, York) 402-937-3422
Travis Shepler (Lancaster) 402-613-2312
Trevor Stahlecker (Lancaster) 402-314-9641
Stacey Lewton (Lancaster, Seward) 402-890-7140
Mike Luben (Saunders, Butler, Polk) 402-443-6392

Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever
No-Till Grass Drills and
Seed Mixes Available

Over 65 drills are available with the support from local PF and QF Chapters, NGPC, NRCS, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.



Custom Mixes

Wildlife Habitat Mixes

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever strive to make every acre count on the landscape. With over 280 species of grasses, legumes and wildflowers available, cost effective seed mixes are designed for maximum results. Pricing includes delivery to your location in 6 to 8 business days with High Quality Customer Service!



Honey Bee and Monarch Mixes



For more information about grass drills or to place a seed order visit www.NebraskaPF.com or call 844-SEED-NOW.



 Instagram Photos

Follow us (@nebraskaland)
and tag us in your photos
to be featured in an
upcoming issue.

Opposite: Connor Nichols,
Bellevue
Foggy morning feather in
Lincoln

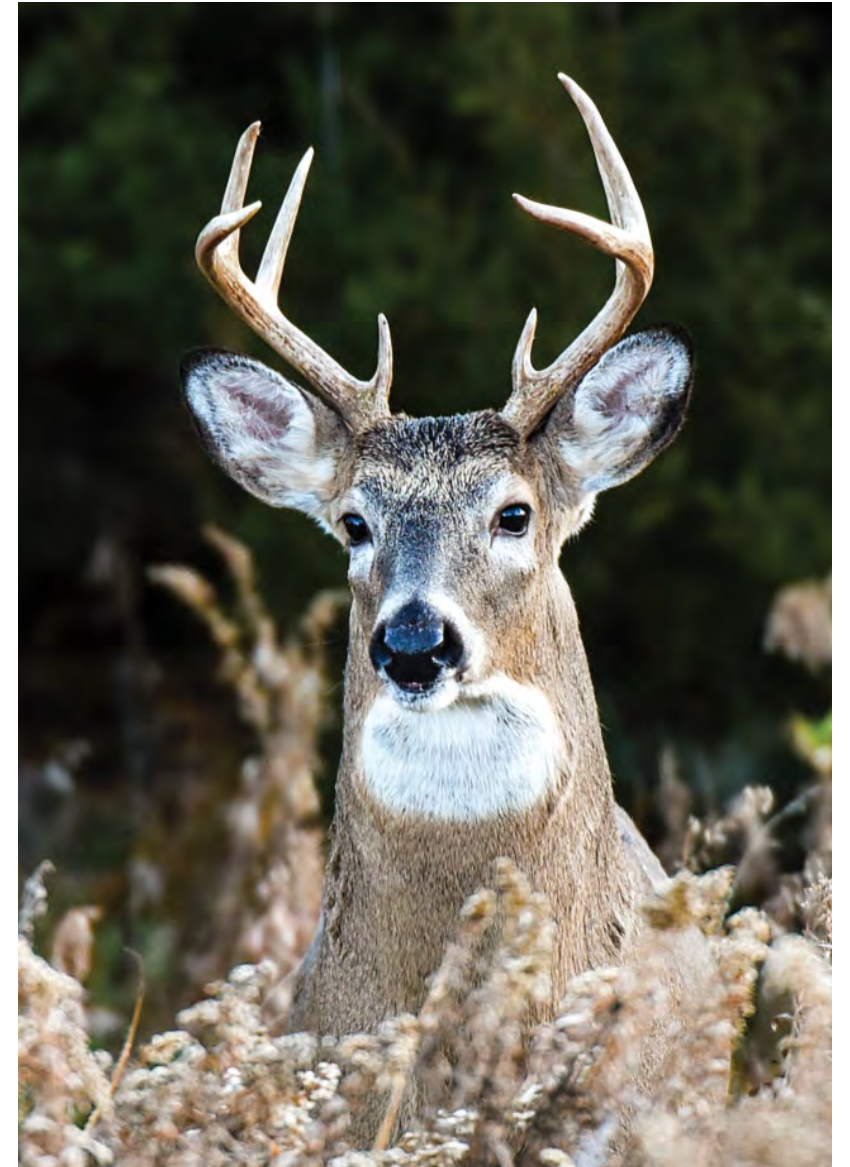
Richard Jones, Gothenburg
Moon

Jessica Mikoloyck, Scottsbluff
Moose in the Wildcat Hills





Bart Torbert, Crawford
Hoarfrost



Steve Zechmann, Lincoln
White-tailed buck



Gordon Warrick, Valentine
River otters on the Niobrara River

Ted Beedy, Nevada City, California
Mountain bluebird at Chadron State Park



Send your comments and photos to:
Jeff Kurrus, Editor
Nebraskaland Magazine
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503
or email Jeff.Kurrus@Nebraska.gov

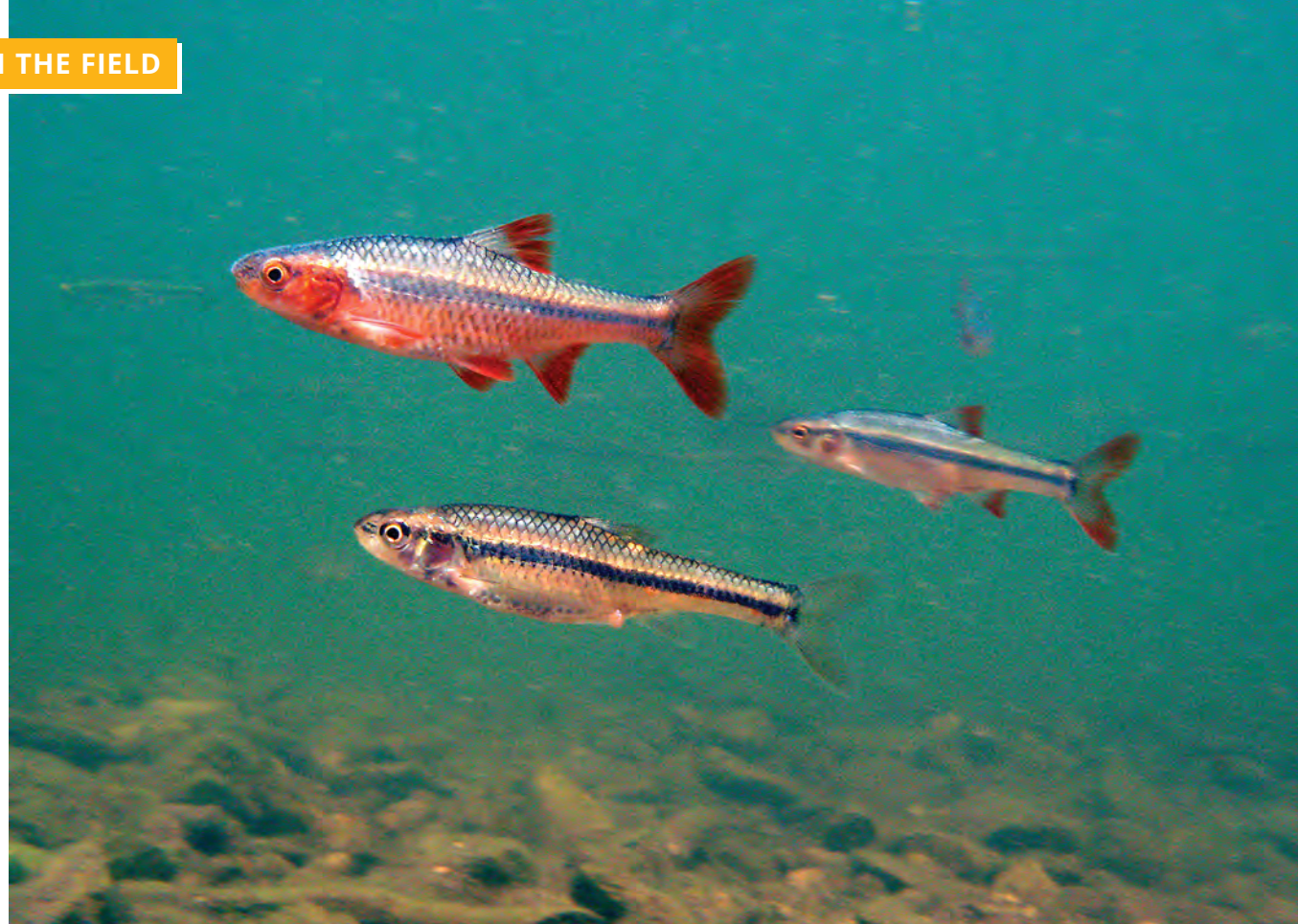
Please include your postal address
and telephone number. Letters may be
condensed and edited. Photographs are
also welcome.

CEDAR WAXWINGS

Cedar waxwings sit in a crabapple tree.

PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER





TOPEKA SHINERS. PHOTO BY MICHAEL FORSBERG

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED: THE TOPEKA SHINER

By Melissa Panella, Wildlife Biologist

It's easy to get excited about a trophy-sized trout or bass, but there are also many unique small fish to appreciate in Nebraska. A fine example is the Topeka shiner (*Notropis topeka*) which inhabits high-quality, small coolwater and small warmwater prairie streams. The scales of the breeding male are tinted from silver to gold in color, and the head and fins are golden-orange. A dark lateral line extends from the head to tail fin. This silver and gold beauty only grows to about 2 to 3 inches long.

Topeka shiners are state and federally listed as endangered. Their numbers have declined because much of their historic habitat has been altered or degraded. In Nebraska, they are only found in clear, calm water in pool-like habitat in Cherry and Madison counties. These pools can be within the stream or in habitats such as overflow pools and oxbows of the river. Topeka shiners can survive in streams that only flow

intermittently, provided that the pools can be sustained by natural groundwater seepage.

Males occupy small spawning territories and are known to chase other fish out of their area. You may find Topeka shiners in proximity to green and orangespotted sunfish. However, Topeka shiners are restricted in their ability to disperse to new habitat because it is difficult for them to make their way among streams.

Protection and enhancement of prairie streams where Topeka shiners live is the best hope for the species. Stream restoration efforts could also be beneficial but only in places where there is permission to reintroduce them to those locations. Clean, clear water is important to Topeka shiners. Prevention of heavy silt and pollutants from contaminating the stream is healthy for the fish and for maintaining water quality that anyone can appreciate.

LAND FOR SALE

\$1.1 BILLION
293,000 ACRES
sold company wide
in 2018



ANTELOPE CO, NE - 40 AC.

Location, Location, Location! What an opportunity for a hard to come by smaller parcel. Water! Water! Water! This beautiful acreage has an incredible amount of water in and around it. This property would be an ideal set up for a weekend cabin overlooking the creek valley. Cedar Creek flows along the eastern edge of the property along with a good well with solar panel and pump flowing into a pond. A small patch of native grasses are home to pheasants and quail as well as providing great cover for the travel corridors of the whitetail deer that call this area home. If you are looking for the perfect smaller tract in the right area to hunt big then this is the property for you. These parcels do not last long so call today for your showing of this little slice of paradise!

THAYER CO, NE - 69.65 AC.

This unique property offers a little bit of something for everyone. There's tillable and pasture acres, timber and travel corridors for hunting, and an old sand/gravel pit to run ATVs and UTVs on. Both power and water are available on the northwest portion of the property next to the sheds. An elevated tower blind sits at the south-eastern portion of the property. Enjoy the comfort of the blind while patiently waiting for deer along a travel route to and from the Little Blue River bottom. This farm would make an excellent addition to your grazing or farming operation or if you're just wanting an income producing property to hunt or four-wheel on, this is it. Call today to schedule your private showing!



CONTACT JASON OR LUKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AMAZING PROPERTIES



JASON SCHENDT | BROKER
jason.schendt@whitetailproperties.com
402.707.4885



LUKE WALLACE | AGENT
luke.wallace@whitetailproperties.com
402.340.6187



WHITETAIL TROPHY PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM



Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC | dba Whitetail Properties | Nebraska & North Dakota DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC. | Lic. in IL, MO, IA, KS, KY, NE & OK - Dan Perez, Broker | Lic. in AR, CO, GA, MN, ND, TN, SD & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker | Lic. in FL, OH & PA - Kirk Gilbert, Broker | Lic. in NM & TX - Joey Bellington, Broker | Lic. in IN - John Boyken, Broker | Lic. in LA, MS, GA & AL - Sybil Stewart, Broker | Lic. in TN - Chris Wakefield, Broker | Lic. in TN - Bobby Powers, Broker | Lic. in AR - Johnny Ball, Broker | Lic. in SC - Rick Elliot, Broker | Lic. in NC - Rich Baugh, Broker | Lic. in MI - Edmund Joel Nogaski, Broker





PHOTO BY CHRIS HELZER

GOATSBEARD

By Chris Helzer

Goatsbeard, aka western salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*), was introduced to North America from Europe and Asia and has spread across most of the continent. However, unlike some introduced species, goatsbeard has not become an invasive species that exerts its dominance by pushing other plants out of the way. For the most part, goatsbeard has instead inserted itself gracefully into the prairies and other natural areas of Nebraska, adding attractive little highlights to our landscapes.

As a biennial, goatsbeard spends its first year of life as a grass-like rosette of leaves and blends well into its surroundings. In its second season, however, it produces spectacular yellow blossoms about the time spring is transitioning to summer. Despite the beauty of its flowers, goatsbeard is probably most recognizable to Nebraskans

when it produces seed. Anyone who spends much time outdoors is surely familiar with its fist-sized dandelion-style seedheads, and many people reading this have probably picked one and blown the seeds into the air.

Regardless if blown by wind or people, those seeds can travel long distances, allowing goatsbeard to spread itself far and wide. Goatsbeard is not a strong competitor with most perennial plants, however, so it grows best where its seeds can land on a patch of bare soil where nearby plants are absent or weakened by drought, grazing or other disturbances. While it is non-native and often characterized as a weed, goatsbeard is almost never truly problematic; it's just kind of a bonus wildflower, introduced for our enjoyment.



HOME TO ALL YOUR BIGGEST FANS

HUNT MERRIAM'S TURKEYS IN NEBRASKA



Come chase wild turkeys through 500,000 acres of public access land in beautiful Nebraska. Three over-the-counter permits mean you can take home a trio of birds, including our famous Merriam's. There are plenty of turkeys in every county, so no matter where you go, there's a Tom calling. **Will you answer?**

Plan a trip today at OutdoorNebraska.org/WildTurkey





PHOTO BY JOEL G. JORGENSEN

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL

By W. Ross Silcock

Anyone who has painstakingly searched through a flock of gulls in Nebraska in fall will understand how difficult it is to pick out anything that isn't a ring-billed or herring gull, which have white heads and pale gray backs or "mantles." But a European invader, the lesser black-backed gull (LBBG), has come to save us from monotony. The LBBG is a large gull with dark gray or blackish adult or near-adult plumage that thankfully stands out like a sore thumb in a flock of the more common gulls. As the observers of the first Nebraska LBBG stated: "The mantle and back were charcoal gray, much darker than [those of] either the ring-billed or herring [gull]".

The first North American record of LBBG was in 1934, and numbers have increased steadily since the 1970s, as the European populations have increased. LBBGs, like other large gulls, are beneficiaries of modern society, which produces an abundance of food. Morsels leftover or thrown out in a fast food parking lot or garbage dumps can be a substantial meal for a scavenging gull. It is thought that since most North American LBBGs are more dark gray than blackish, they belong to the subspecies *graellsii*, which breeds in Greenland.

The LBBG was first noted in Greenland in the 1980s, and breeding was confirmed in 1990 in two locations in the southwestern part of the island. Increasing numbers of these Greenland birds are wintering in eastern North America, first along the Atlantic Coast, and spreading since the 1990s into interior North America.

Nebraska's first report of LBBG was in 1992, an adult discovered at Pawnee Lake State Recreation Area in Lancaster County. The first with tangible evidence was photographed in 1994 at Lake McConaughy in Keith County. Since the mid-1990s, LBBG has become an expected spring and fall migrant, and occurs occasionally in mid-summer and mid-winter. Each spring and fall nowadays there are multiple reports; in spring, 15 or more individuals are usually reported.

Gulls are ignored by a lot of people, reviled by others, but sifting through flocks in early spring or late fall is a favorite pastime of serious birdwatchers. The addition of the LBBG has added a bit of spice to otherwise dreary days.

Visit the Birds of Nebraska – Online (birdsofnebraska.org) for more information about Nebraska birds.

FORT KEARNY
OUTDOOR EXPO
NEBRASKA
 — GAME PARKS —

Saturday, May 12th • 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

FREE for the whole family!

PLAY • RELAX • LEARN

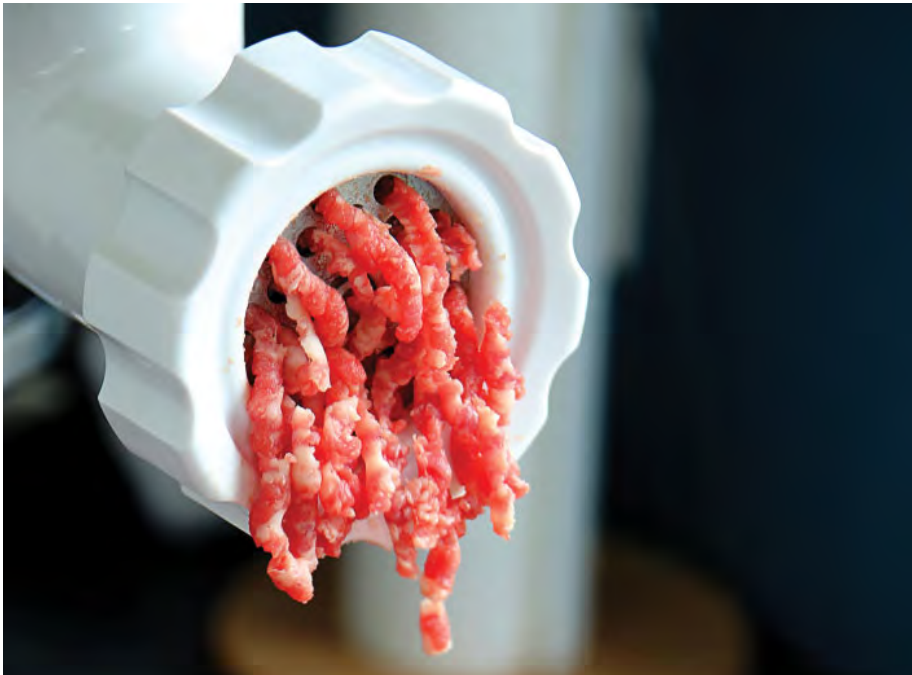
Kids Outdoor Discovery Zone	Fishing Kayaking	Atlatl and tomahawks
Hunters Challenge Trail	Hotdog Campfire Roast	Archery
Campground Games	Shooting	Bowfishing
6,000-gallon aquarium and touch tank	Hunting seminars	Outdoor Survival Skills
		Cowboy Action Fast Draw Shooting

rockIT event pros

Find out more at FortKearnyExpo.com

Park Permit Required • Food vendors on site

Parker



VENISON BOLOGNESE

By Ryan Sparks

Bolognese is a meat-based sauce created in Bologna, Italy. Unlike its bright red, tomato-based North American counterpart, this sauce is all about the meat. A true Bolognese is slowly cooked to produce a thick and silky sauce. This version uses venison and is the perfect winter meal to celebrate the hunt with friends. If you have leftover Bolognese, mix it with a béchamel sauce to make an unbelievably good lasagna. One note about the soffritto (mixture of onions, carrots, and celery): take your time and dice everything evenly small (¼-inch max). Put your knife skills to work and ensure the mixture incorporates into the sauce.

Servings: 6-8
Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 3-4 hours
Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup butter

- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 large carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup diced pancetta – about 4½ ounces/125 grams (If you can't find pancetta, bacon works as a substitute.)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2¼ pounds ground venison (I add pork fat to my ground venison. If you don't, substitute ¼ pound of venison with fatty ground pork.)
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 can (28 ounces) San Marzano tomatoes
- 1 cup venison broth (beef broth can be substituted)

To Serve:

- Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
- Dried pappardelle or tagliatelle



- (any broad, flat pasta will work)
- Fresh basil
 - Good olive oil
 - Butter

In a large pot or Dutch oven, add the butter and the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, and half of the salt. Sauté for 5 minutes until the vegetables are soft.

Add the diced pancetta and cook for 10 minutes or until the pancetta is golden.

Increase the heat to medium/high and add a third of the venison,

stirring and breaking lumps with a wooden spoon between each addition. Adding the meat gradually allows the moisture to evaporate, which is how to caramelize meat properly. When the first third of the meat is beginning to caramelize, add a third more. Stir to break lumps. Repeat with the remaining meat. When the meat is cooked and no lumps remain, continue cooking for ten minutes.

You want the meat to become crispy in spots. Bits of meat will stick to the bottom of the pot, which you will deglaze with the wine later. Watch

over the pan though – you don't want the meat to burn.

Pour the white wine into the pan. With a flat wooden spatula, scrape all the caramelized bits from the pan. Push the meat around and be sure to scrape it all off. By the time you're finished, the wine will have evaporated.

Add the milk, tomatoes, beef broth, remaining salt and a generous grinding of black pepper. Bring to a boil and then lower to a soft simmer. Simmer gently for 1½ to 2½ hours, stirring every half hour. The sauce is

ready when it has thickened and very little liquid remains.

Add a generous amount of grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, which boosts the flavor and produces an incredibly creamy result. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed.

Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the package, then drain and return to the pot.

Add the sauce and stir to coat. Divide between bowls and garnish with your choice of fresh basil, a pat of butter, good olive oil, and more Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Unveiling the Mysterious Mushrooms

OF INDIAN CAVE STATE PARK

By Gerry Steinauer, Botanist, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

When in the rugged, wooded bluffs of Indian Cave State Park, Chance Brueggemann is always on the lookout for mushrooms. Last summer, while hiking with Chance, he would occasionally stop, point out a mushroom and rattle off its scientific name, usually with an added comment, such as “that one is parasitic on oaks” or “I’ve eaten that one, it’s not bad.”

Mushroom identification is extremely difficult, and only few Nebraskans can name more than the common edible species. Considering Brueggemann has been studying mushrooms as a hobby for only a few years, his knowledge is impressive.



The rare rosy veincap grows on a hardwood stump at Indian Cave State Park.

A Mushrooming Hobby

In 2014, Brueggemann, who grew up in nearby Auburn and attended Peru State College with a major in biology, began working at Indian Cave as a temporary employee. His main job was the onerous task of controlling invasive woodland weeds. Now employed by the Northern Prairies Land Trust, he is the park’s full-time woodland ecologist.

“I became interested in mushrooms during my second year at the park,” Brueggemann said. “I’d be out working and see all these amazing shapes and colors and began wondering what these mushrooms were. I had no clue.”

He started taking photos and comparing them to those in a borrowed field guide. He then bought his own field guides as his interest increased.

It turns out, the 3,400-acre Indian Cave, located adjacent to the Missouri River in Nemaha and Richardson counties, was the perfect place for his mushrooming hobby. The park receives about 33 inches of precipitation a year. In the wooded hillsides, canopied by varied hardwoods including oaks, hickories and other trees, that moisture helps create ideal mushroom habitat. It is not a stretch to say the park may support our state’s greatest mushroom diversity per acre.

Brueggemann collects mushrooms for later detailed examination, and for uncommon species, eventual deposit at the University of Nebraska’s Bessey Herbarium. He dries the herbarium specimens overnight in a standard fruit drier set on low, preserving them for long-term storage.

When photographing or collecting mushrooms, he also records habitat information which can aid in species identification. Because many mushrooms grow only on or near specific trees, soils or other habitats, he notes nearby

Chance Brueggemann in oak woodlands at Indian Cave beside a dryad’s saddle mushroom. A dryad is a tree nymph in Greek mythology.



..... What is a Mushroom?

Mushrooms are fungi, a group of unicellular or multicellular spore-producing organisms that feed on organic matter. In addition to mushrooms, the fungi include yeasts, molds and rusts. Defying traditional belief, recent studies have found that fungi are more closely related to animals than plants.

Mushrooms, also known as macrofungi, are a somewhat artificial and convenient grouping of fleshy-bodied fungi with large fruiting bodies visible to the human eye. Macrofungi include the classic toadstools, puffballs, morels, shelf fungi, cup fungi, jelly fungi and many other groups. Microfungi include yeasts, molds and rusts and are visible only by the diseases, decay and molding they cause.

Mushrooms are deceiving. What we see – the toadstool or puffball, for example – is only the organism’s short-lived fruiting body, the tip of the mushroom iceberg so to speak. A mushroom’s long-lived, main body and feeding stage, the mycelium, is hidden below ground or in other substrates, such as decaying leaves and logs.

The fruiting bodies form from nodules on the mycelium. A toadstool is a fruiting body with a stem and cap. The underside of the cap has gills or pores in which prolific microscopic spores develop. As the cap ripens the spores fall and are dispersed by the wind and rain.

Other mushrooms lack stems and caps and therefore gills and pores. In puffballs, for example, the spores develop in the interior of the fleshy, ball-shaped mushroom and are dispersed as it degrades. Many outdoorsmen and women are tempted to kick dried puffballs, amused by the resulting spore cloud.

The mycelium is composed of a mass of threadlike (one cell thick) hyphae that, similar to plant roots, snake through the soil or other substrate. Here, they release enzymes and acids that break down organic matter, mainly plant cells, into simpler compounds they can ingest. Hyphal strands can spread up to an inch a day, sometimes forming huge mycelial masses in the soil. The world’s largest known organism is a fungus whose mycelium spans roughly 2,400 acres of an Oregon mountaintop.

tree species and the substrate in which the mushroom is growing, such as moist soil or rotting wood. He also records the date, because just as plants flower at a certain time of year, mushroom species fruit at specific times as well.

In the field, Brueggemann often “takes a good sniff and nibble” of unknown mushrooms, though he avoids tasting those from known toxic groups and always spits out the nibble. “Mushrooms can have a distinct smell or taste that are clues to identification,” he said. “Their odor can range from earthy to fishy to sulfurous, while their taste can vary from bland to sweet to spicy hot like a pepper.”

He also performs simple chemical tests. This involves placing a drop of potassium hydroxide and/or ammonia on a mushroom. The subsequent chemical reaction causes the flesh of some species to change color. A drop of potassium hydroxide on the cap of the ringless honey mushroom, for example, will turn its flesh red, whereas the same chemical placed on the closely-related and similar looking bulbous honey mushroom results in no color change.

Some species can be determined only through examination of their microscopic spores. At home, if needed, Brueggemann makes spore prints to determine a mushroom’s spore color, often a distinguishing characteristic. To make a print, he cuts the mushroom’s cap from the stem and places it gill- or pore-side down on a sheet of white or black paper. Usually within



PHOTO BY CHANCE BRUEGGEEMANN

Drops of potassium hydroxide turn the flesh of the cinnamon bracket purple, distinguishing it from other bracket mushrooms which grow on hardwoods.

24 hours, the spores fall from the drying cap, depositing a color impression on the paper. This can be white or brown, and sometimes yellow or even purple.

For those species requiring even finer observation, he scrapes spores from the prints using a razor blade and places them on a microscope slide. An added drop of dye illuminates diagnostic micro-structures on the spores’ surface, such as ridges, indentations and warts. Using a ruler imbedded in the lens, he measures the spores, which can range from a few thousandths to a few hundredths of an inch in length, depending on species. The spores’ shapes, mostly oval to round, are also telling.

A recently purchased microscope has taken Brueggemann’s ever-increasing skills to a new level. His talents have grown to the point where he recently helped lead a few mushroom identification workshops at Hitchcock Nature Center in Pottawattamie County, Iowa.

New Discoveries at Indian Cave

In his five years of mushrooming at Indian Cave, Brueggemann has discovered 12 species never before documented in Nebraska. Among these are the **ringless honey mushroom**, a parasite on hardwood trees; the **cinnamon bracket** (page 24), a saprophyte on dead



PHOTO BY CHANCE BRUEGGEEMANN

Brueggemann documented Nebraska’s first known black-staining polypore mushroom at Indian Cave. Its flesh turns black when bruised or injured.

hardwoods, favoring hickories; the **black staining polypore** (page 25), a parasite on oaks whose flesh turns black when bruised; and the beautiful and delicious **golden chanterelle** (page 25).

The latter has a “fruity aroma, reminiscent of apricots and a mildly peppery taste.” At the opposite extreme of palatability he has discovered the highly toxic and appropriately-named **destroying angel**, a rather nondescript, white toadstool in the genus *Amanita* whose members cause the majority of deaths from mushroom consumption.

Most interestingly, perhaps, Brueggemann also discovered Nebraska’s first known **truffle** (page 26) at Indian Cave. In the fall of 2017, while raking leaves from a firebreak in oak woods, he uncovered a strange orange mushroom from just below the soil surface. “I had never seen anything like it,” he said. “The mushroom was roundish, firm and had an aroma reminiscent of rotten eggs. I took several photos and documented its habitat.”

A few months passed before he got around to identifying the mysterious fungi. He thought it might be a truffle, but was skeptical as his field guides showed no truffles occurring in our state. Long web searches for similar-looking truffles and truffle-like mushrooms also proved fruitless.

Baffled, he took photos to Dr. Gerard Adams, a forest pathologist at UNL, to see if he could identify the mushroom.



PHOTO BY CHANCE BRUEGGEEMANN

The golden chanterelle is rare at Indian Cave State Park, where it grows in association with oak trees. It is a highly sought-after edible mushroom.

..... Mushroom Ecology

Mushrooms have varied feeding habits. Some species are parasites that feed on living plant tissues, such as roots or tree trunks. The highly delectable chicken of the woods, for example, is parasitic on oak trees, often growing at the base of the trunk.

Other species – shelf-like oyster mushrooms, for instance – grow and feed on dead plant matter such as downed logs and leaf litter. They break down tough organic compounds, such as cellulose, making its carbon, nitrogen, and other minerals available to plants and other organisms while building soils in the process. Without these vital fungal decomposers, the world would be awash in dead plant material.

Mycorrhizal mushrooms, such as the edible and much sought-after morels and boletes, obtain carbohydrates through mutually-beneficial associations with plants, most often trees. Their hyphae either form sheaths around a plant's roots or grow between the root cells and act as root extensions bringing distant soil, water and nutrients to the plant. In return, the plants provide the mushrooms with sugars produced through photosynthesis.

Nearly all plant species, from wildflowers to trees to crops, have associations with a few to many mycorrhizal fungi; the survival of many plants depends on this association. The rare western prairie-fringed orchid that grows in eastern Nebraska wet meadows, for example, has microscopic seeds with no starch reserve. In the soil, the seeds must first be infected with mycorrhizal fungi before they will germinate and grow. Until the plant develops leaves to photosynthesize, which takes several years, it is entirely dependent on the fungi for food and water.

Prairie restorationists and foresters often apply mycorrhizae to the seeds of prairie plants or the roots of young trees before planting to stimulate seed germination and tree growth and survival. Among their other values, some mushrooms contain anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-cancer agents useful in medicine. Some species can break down environmental toxins into non-toxic compounds and are being used to purify toxic soils. The relatively unstudied fungi surely have other values waiting discovery.

He too was baffled, but had Brueggemann collect a specimen of the fungus, which he sent to an out-of-state lab for DNA analysis and comparisons that led to positive identification.

The tests showed the mushroom was the truffle *Stephensia shanorii*, a little known species with no common name. It has been collected only 10 to 15 times from deciduous woods in Illinois, Maryland and Ohio, but never as far west as Nebraska, leaving Brueggemann to wonder if other mysterious truffle species are lurking in eastern Nebraska oak woodlands.

Truffles, which commonly grow under oaks and other hardwoods, are strange in that their fruiting bodies are stemless and remain underground. They emit potent odors when ripe, a unique strategy among mushrooms to attract animals, ranging from squirrels to bears. The animals dig them up, ingest them and disperse their spores through their feces.

Though their spore dispersal strategy is rather unappetizing, some truffle species are considered culinary delights. High-end restaurants pay hundreds of dollars a pound for some North American truffles, while a single large European white truffle, which can weigh several pounds, can bring six figures. In areas of relative truffle abundance, such as the Pacific Northwest, highly-trained dogs are used to sniff them out.

It is unknown whether *S. shanorii* is edible, but judging from its sulfurous odor it is unlikely.



PHOTO BY CHANCE BRUEGEMANN

Brueggemann unearthed Nebraska's only known truffle, *Stephensia shanorii*, while raking a fire-break in oak woods at Indian Cave.

The Park's Rich Mushroom Diversity

At Indian Cave, Brueggemann has identified about 80 mushrooms to the species level. Others, such as the extremely difficult "little brown mushrooms," he can identify only to the group level. In coming years, he expects to unearth many more species in the park.

When asked how many mushroom species grow in Nebraska, he said the answer to that question is unknown. He explained that there have been no recent mushroom surveys in our state, and that earlier collections made in Nebraska, which reside at various herbaria here and in other states, have never been evaluated for accuracy of identification, nor tallied.

Complicating the situation, "we have no mushroom experts in Nebraska, absolutely none," said Bob Kaul, curator at the Bessey Herbarium. "Mycology [the study of fungi] is a dying field. Few universities now train field mycologists, and many that are trained are plant pathologists who deal only with fungi that are forest or crop pests."

Although the Bessey Herbarium has more than 50,000 fungus specimens in its collections, the vast majority were collected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when Nebraska colleges and universities employed mycologists.

"UNL hasn't had a field mycologist on staff since the 1960s," Kaul said. The fact that Brueggemann has found 12



PHOTO BY GERRY STEINAUER

Stump puffballs, common in eastern Nebraska, eject spores when pelted by raindrops or bumped by animals.

new state records at Indian Cave alone attests to our state's lack of mycologists and surveys.

North America has roughly 10,000 known mushroom species. The nearby states of Minnesota and Colorado have both documented about 1,300 species, and Nebraska's mushroom diversity could be similar. Accurately determining which mushrooms grow in Nebraska, let alone their abundance, range, habitats, and conservation needs, will require professionally trained mycologists, as well as other self-trained amateurs with a passion for discovery like Brueggemann.



PHOTO BY GERRY STEINAUER

The widespread mica cap mushroom dissolves into a black inky, spore-laden liquid when mature. They commonly grow in clusters near or on rotting hardwood stumps or roots.



PHOTO BY CHANCE BRUEGEMANN

Resembling a creature from the ocean floor, the crown-tipped coral mushroom can be found growing in moist areas on decaying hardwoods spring through fall.

Outdoor Nebraska

By Renae Blum

Weather in April can be unpredictable. Nevertheless, there are plenty of reasons to get outside. Here are just a few.



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Morel mushroom hunting

Season typically begins mid- to late April | Statewide in woodlands

The search for this wild-growing delicacy is on. While morels are notoriously fickle, they do favor certain conditions, often emerging on warm, sunny days following spring rains. They grow in both moist floodplains and upland woodlands, and are often most plentiful at the base of cottonwoods and elms that have recently died.

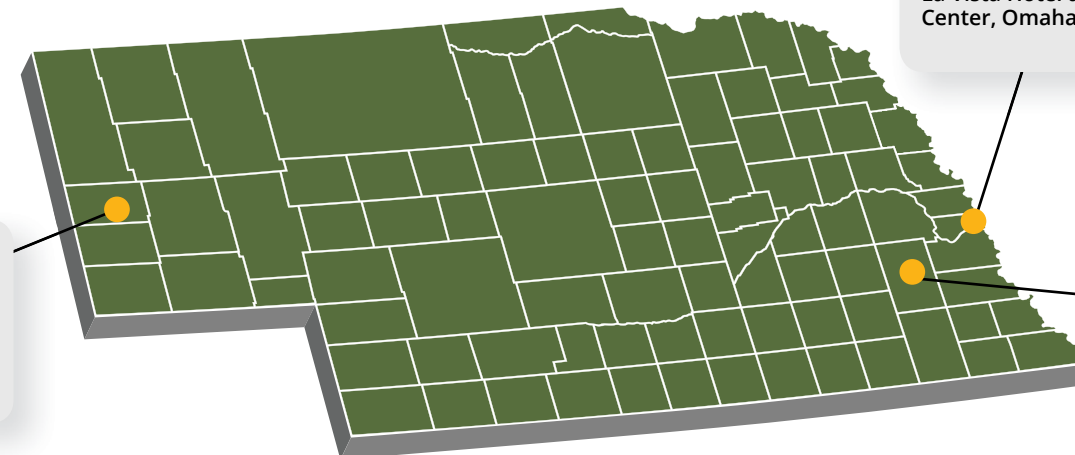


PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

Spring turkey shotgun season

Starts April 13 | Statewide

Enjoy the best turkey hunting in the nation, with plentiful and affordable permits, during the 2019 shotgun and archery seasons. The youth season opens April 6.



Earth Day Celebration

April 13
Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Gering

Pope & Young Club Biennial Convention

April 10-13
La Vista Hotel and Conference Center, Omaha

Turkey Calling Clinic

April 9
Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

What To Do in April



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Stay in a cabin or lodge room

Throughout the month | Various locations

April is the last month to take advantage of winter lodging rates at a Nebraska state park. Rates are 30 percent less than at any other time of year. Book a reservation online at Outdoornebraska.org or by calling 401-471-1414. Some restrictions apply.



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

Fish for crappies

Throughout the month | Statewide

"April can be the best month for crappies because of the pre-spawning concentrations," said Nebraska Game and Parks fisheries education specialist Larry Pape. Pape recommended looking for crappies gathering around structure such as standing timber or breakwaters, and using live bait, particularly small minnows, where allowed. To find great places to fish, consult the 2019 Fishing Forecast, available at Outdoornebraska.org/fishingforecast.



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

Celebrate Arbor Day where it all started

April 26-28 | Arbor Lodge State Historical Park

Celebrate the tree planter's holiday where it all began at the mansion home of Arbor Day founder J. Sterling Morton. Enjoy free admission to the mansion April 26-28, and on Saturday and Sunday you can also take in musical entertainment, living history, local Arbor Day poetry and Arbor Day history.

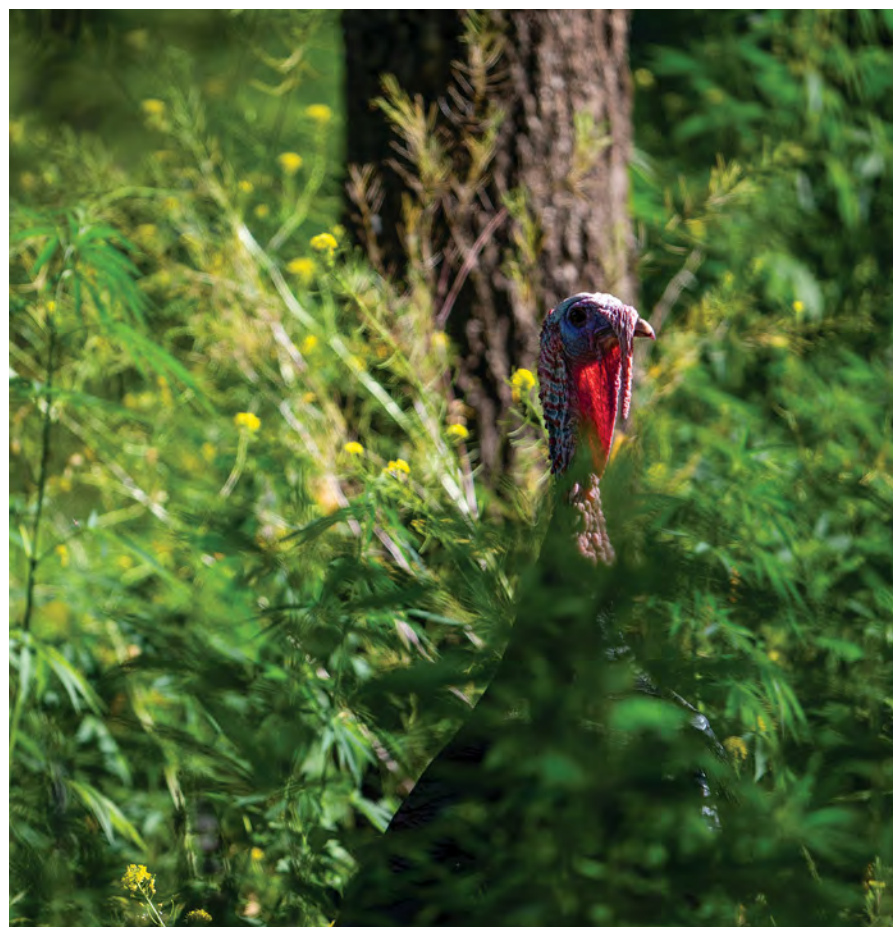
TURKEY TRIFECTA

Story by Ryan Sparks. Photos by Jeff Kurrus

Dedicated turkey hunters dream of completing a “grand slam,” or killing a bird from each of the four subspecies of the North American turkey. To complete a grand slam, a hunter might travel from Alabama to Texas to South Dakota to Florida. As a teenager, while enjoying the developing turkey hunting in Nebraska, I dreamed about this turkey hunting adventure, but realized it would be a long time before I could roam the country in

pursuit of turkeys. Instead, I devised a different challenge.

I was already obsessively hunting turkeys with a bow and conventional shotgun, but when I spotted a used muzzleloading shotgun for sale, I had an idea. I realized that with Nebraska’s three-bird limit I had the opportunity to hunt turkeys with a bow, muzzleloading shotgun, and conventional shotgun all in one season. I had no idea what an incredible experience it would be and



Nebraska has turkey hunting so good that hunters have the opportunity to harvest three birds with three different types of weapons.



Because turkeys have such keen eyesight, archery hunting for these birds can be quite difficult.

how my adventures could help other hunters challenge themselves as well.

Bows and Beards

Bowhunting turkeys is more difficult than hunting them with a shotgun for two reasons. First, archery equipment limits a hunter’s shooting range. Second, and most importantly, a bow must be drawn before shooting. A turkey’s excellent eyesight is its principal defense. They can see almost as well as a hawk and don’t have to shift their focus to see objects at different distances clearly. Everything within their field of view is always in focus.

With such a good sense of sight they can notice the slightest motion.

To hide the movement of drawing, archery hunters use natural blinds constructed of branches, brush, and grass or manufactured “pop-up” blinds – so named because they unfold and set up quickly. At the time, I used a pop-up blind for its convenience, but I now enjoy making impromptu natural blinds and trying to draw when the bird is looking the other direction.

The other major difference between archery and shotgun hunting is that archery season opens earlier, when

birds are less aggressive and sometimes grouped in large flocks. As males become more aggressive, they will part ways, and flocks become smaller. This makes calling more effective later in the season because it’s easier to call in a single turkey than an entire flock.

When turkeys are grouped together, it’s a better strategy to make soft calls to entice hens or set up along known travel routes. As with all hunting, no two situations are the same, but it’s a good idea to start slow and soft and gradually increase the volume and aggression of your calling.

To prepare for my opening morning of archery season, I hiked up a grassy fence line to the top of a hill that overlooked a field where I had seen turkeys feeding the previous week. As the sun inched downward, a group of birds made their way into the field. One by one they took flight and roosted in a group of cottonwood trees for the night. I knew the next morning they would glide down the opposite side of the creek and begin their day in the field below.

Well before sunrise, I stood atop the same hill and listened as several hens yelped from their roost and two toms



Finding roosting spots for turkeys is an excellent tool for knowing where to start hunting in the spring.

responded with thunderous gobbles. Under the cover of darkness, I was able to sneak within 100 yards of where the birds were roosted. However, it was dead still, and I was nervous they would hear me setting up the blind. I was glad I left plenty of time before sunrise, because it took nearly an hour to get in position, place my decoys, and unfold the blind without creating too much noise. Thankfully, the turkeys continued calling, and their vocalizations helped to cover any noise I made.

As the first glow of sunlight dimly lit the field, I could barely make out the turkeys in their roost. When I was confident there was enough light for

them to see my decoys, I made several soft yelps on a slate call to get their attention. A hen responded loudly with a challenging tone, and one of the toms shifted on its branch to face me. I didn't make another noise, and 10 minutes later the turkeys pitched off their roost and landed 200 yards to the east.

The hens scratched and pecked in the cut bean field, uninterested in my decoys, and the toms followed suit. As the group turned and began moving the other direction, I made several loud yelps and cuts. I knew this would either aggravate or frighten the group, but it was my last chance before they slipped away into the timber. The loud calling infuriated the

lead hen, and she immediately turned and ran my direction.

The other turkeys watched from afar as she inspected my decoys, pecking them and trying to figure out who had been so insubordinate. Eventually, she began feeding again. The other birds sidled toward her. It seemed to take them a lifetime to reach me, and each step they took my heart beat faster.

One of the toms hesitantly hung back, but the other strutted on the heels of the last hen. When he was finally in range I took a deep breath, drew my bow, and took aim. The arrow struck home, and the tom turned and ran toward the timber, but he didn't make it far before

collapsing in the bean stubble. The first leg of my challenge was complete.

Stalk for Spurs

Hunting turkeys with a shotgun gives you more mobility than bowhunting. While bowhunting, you must conceal yourself with a blind, but shotgun hunting is more flexible as every tree offers a place to hide, and aiming involves a fraction of the movement compared to drawing a bow. This allows a shotgun hunter to move from place to place, calling to locate active birds and quickly setting up a decoy when they respond. Also, you can sometimes stalk within range of birds by using the terrain

to hide your movement. This style of turkey hunting is called "run and gun," and it's my favorite way to hunt turkeys.

The first week of my shotgun season left me scratching my head. I wasn't having any problems finding birds, but I couldn't lure the toms away from their hens. When hens are receptive to a tom's attention, it's hard to compete with the real thing. I had thought getting a turkey with a regular shotgun was going to be the easiest part of this challenge, but the birds were proving otherwise. I tried every strategy I could think of – locating a roost and setting up near it in the morning, actively calling and moving quickly to cover lots of ground and setting up on travel corridors waiting for birds to pass by. Nothing worked.

Midway through the second week of shotgun season a thick fog settled in as I was walking back to the truck after another unsuccessful morning. I was hiking along the bottom of a steep field edge when I saw three dark shapes walking along the top of the hill 100 yards in front of me. Using my binoculars, I could just make out the three jakes through the fog. They were in the middle of a wide-open field, in a hurry, and were moving toward the

neighbor's fence line. I didn't have time to set up, so I moved as quickly as I could, using the steep hillside to block my movement from their view.

During my dash, I lost sight of the birds but guessed they would be approaching the fence soon. There were two steep terraces between me and the top of the hill, and I crawled toward the upper one with a strutting tom decoy in hand. As I reached the top of the rise, I raised the decoy and made several soft purrs with my mouth call. I slowly lifted my head to look, but before I could see over the terrace I heard fast crunching footsteps, and the decoy exploded from my hand. When the jakes saw the decoy, they charged in prepared for a fight. Their strength in numbers must have given them courage, and the lead jake spurred the decoy while I was trying to stay out of sight. Fueled on adrenaline, I stood and shot the closest bird where he stood. As the other two ran away in confusion, I sat down to collect myself. It was one of the most memorable hunts of my life.

Struts and Smoke

Having never hunted with a muzzleloader, I practiced extensively



The author poses after a hunt on his way to three birds with three different weapons.

before the season. After patterning the shotgun with a variety of shot sizes and powder loads, I reached a combination where I was comfortable, but the shot would have to be 25 yards or less. I was excited to try muzzleloader hunting, because it would allow the same mobility of conventional shotgun hunting with the added challenge of limiting my range. This decreased range meant I was going to have to get a tom to commit to the decoys and not hang up in the distance.

After a long day of spotting turkeys, gauging their direction of travel, and trying to figure out how to snake along a creek or follow a finger of trees to reach them, I had yet to get in front of one. However, I had watched two separate toms use the same fence crossing. I decided to settle in and spend the rest of the afternoon within shooting distance of the crossing. There were two gnarly cedar trees to the west. Using hand pruners and a folding saw I created an opening at the base of the tree and stuck the cut branches in the ground in front of me. After creating my hide, I placed a hen decoy 15 yards to the left of me facing away. I did the same with a strutting tom decoy at 10 yards but turned him facing toward me. Toms

often approach hens from behind and other males from the front. Setting my decoys like this would shorten the distance between myself and an approaching tom by making him pass between me and the decoys.

I spent the next hour making occasional yelps with no response. It had been a long day, and with the lack of action I was beginning to nod off when I heard the unmistakable spit of a tom behind me. For those unacquainted with this term, a tom will sometimes make a “pfft” sound when it is excited or angry. It almost sounds like a muffled sneeze. Unlike a gobble which can be heard from a long distance, if you hear a spit it means a turkey is close by and fired up. I suspected a tom had snuck in behind me, so I shouldered my gun, waiting for it to appear. Ten minutes went by and I hadn’t heard anything more, so I slowly turned and peered through the tree, but couldn’t make anything out.

Bridging my shotgun between my shoulder and knee to free up my hands, I used a slate call to make a few gentle purrs and whines. These soft calls often bring a bird the last few critical yards. From the corner of my eye, I was surprised to see the turkey approaching from the

right instead of the fence crossing to my left. He ducked between two strands of barbed wire and accelerated his approach until he was just out of range. Slowing, he went into a strut and moved toward the tom decoy. At this point he was only 10 yards in front of me and looking my direction. When he turned to look at the hen, I aimed at the base of his head and pulled the trigger. A billow of smoke erupted from the gun and I couldn’t see what happened. Then I heard the sound of wings beating the ground and raced to my feet. As the smoke settled, I knelt over the bird, having harvested three birds with three different weapons in one season.

The Good Old Days

This challenge made me realize how good the turkey hunting was in Nebraska. I had so much fun I made it a tradition and was able to accomplish the feat every year from 2007-2012 until I moved to attend graduate school. Two of the years I even switched out my compound bow for a recurve with the same success.

Looking back, I couldn’t have been luckier. I had no idea that Nebraska was quickly developing the best turkey hunting in North America. It led to a passion that continues today and taught me what it takes to be a successful turkey hunter. More importantly, it made me appreciate the amazing hunting in my home state.

Since those days, turkey hunting has only gotten better. The turkey population has exploded over the last decade, and now Nebraska has the reputation of being a turkey hunting destination and welcomes hunters from around the world. With hunting opportunities in every county, nearly 1 million acres of public access, three permits available for the spring season and two in the fall, it’s easy to understand why. Making things even sweeter, Nebraska’s spring season is one of the longest in the country, so there is plenty of time to challenge yourself as well.



Turkey hunters use a variety of calls, including slate calls, to lure in aggressive toms looking for a mate.



A tom turkey goes into full strut in Cass County.

Pasque Flower Joy

Story and Photo by Chris Helzer

The first time I discovered pasque flowers at the Niobrara Valley Preserve was during the summer of 2017, when my wife, Kim, and I were out hiking. We were exploring the hills north of the river where I'd previously spent little time, and I was shocked to find hundreds of plants on the north-facing slopes of those hills. The plants were well past blooming by that point and didn't even have any remnant seed heads left from their early spring flowering period. I had to take a picture of a plant and send it to Gerry Steinauer, heritage botanist with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, to confirm my identification. Despite more than 20 years of visiting the Niobrara Valley Preserve, I had never seen a pasque flower, and now we'd discovered more plants in one place than I'd seen in my entire life.

Pasque flowers are one my favorite prairie plants. This is true even though I don't live in a part of the state where they grow, and I have only seen them in the wild a few times. I can clearly remember the first time I ever saw pasque flowers in bloom – it was in April 1996 at Fort Robinson State Park, and the flowers were mostly buried under snow. More recently, I found some plants blooming in the sub-alpine meadows of the Colorado Rockies during a summer vacation trip. Every other time I've found them, however, they had wilted blossoms, were going to seed, or were well past blooming. As a result, the discovery of hundreds of pasque flowers in a place I visit regularly was a pretty exciting event.

As soon as we found the hordes of pasque flower plants in 2017, I pledged that no matter what happened, I was going to return and catch them in flower the next April. As spring arrived, I was watching weather forecasts, scouring social media for any posts about pasque flowers blooming, and reaching out to colleagues in various locations, asking what they were seeing. In the middle of the month, a couple colleagues made a trip up to the Niobrara Valley Preserve, and I sent them with a map, asking if they could take a few minutes to check on "my" pasque flowers. They sent back a cell phone photo of a single blooming pasque flower. It was go time! When I checked the forecast, however, it was calling for a winter storm, and about a foot of snow fell on the site the next day. I stayed home and worried.

It was nearly two more weeks before I finally made my way up to the Niobrara Valley Preserve. That was a long two weeks, full of misgivings and doubt. Despite trying to assure myself there was no way those plants were opening their flowers beneath the snow, I was just sure I was somehow going to miss out. I envisioned arriving for our April 30 staff meeting to find only wilted petals and dried stalks. I drove up

extra early on the 30th, arriving more than an hour before my meeting was supposed to start. As soon as my truck pulled to a stop, I hopped out, unloaded my ATV, and sped up into the hills, my heart in my throat.

When I reached the ridge Kim and I had walked the previous summer, I spotted a small patch of blooming pasque flowers and breathed a huge sigh of relief and joy. Twenty yards farther ahead, I came around a small bend and saw a patch that took my breath away. I stumbled off the ATV, dragging my camera bag behind me, and dropped to the ground by the nearest plant.

Call it serendipity, dumb luck, or divine providence, but not only was nearly every pasque flower at the site in full bloom, the sky was also filled with light clouds, providing gorgeous, bright, diffused light for photography. I spent most of the next hour on my belly, trying to shoot every possible composition I could conceive of – extreme close-ups, portraits of individual plants, and group shots of big flower patches. I used every lens in my bag. Eventually, I had to decamp and hurry back to headquarters for my meeting, but when we had a break in the early evening, I grabbed a few colleagues and went back out for more.

I'm sure there are readers who have seen bigger patches of pasque flowers than what I'm describing, and for whom seeing abundant pasque flowers is a regular, even mundane part of their spring routine. Congratulations to you. For me, that April 30 was a day I'll remember for a long time, even though I hope to return to the site many times in the future when the flowers are blooming. I was flying high that day, celebrating the beauty of the world and my good fortune. Of course, the day is also memorable because the very next day I broke my fibula, which required surgery and about two and a half months of recovery, but that's another story.



Even at only 6-8 inches tall, these pasque flowers added tremendous color and texture to the otherwise brown hills during late April at The Nature Conservancy's Niobrara Valley Preserve.

Pasque flower (*Anemone patens*) is a perennial plant in the buttercup family. Other common names include wind flower and prairie crocus. Every part of the plant is covered with dense soft hairs, including the flowers, which range in color from pale blue to violet.

Those flowers measure about an inch or two long and approximately 1½ inches across when open. Seeds are arranged in a spherical shape, and each seed is attached to a long

feathery plume. The seed head closely resembles that of a clematis plant.

Flowering can begin as early as late March and continue as late as early June, but peak bloom is typically in April. Pasque flowers are often the first plant to bloom in their neighborhood, or at least the first plant to produce relatively large, showy flowers. Because of this, and their overall attractiveness, they are popular horticultural plants

and commonly used in gardens and landscaping.

In the wild, pasque flowers are found in scattered locations around Nebraska, but are most common in the northern Panhandle. They are also found here and there across most of the northern tier of counties and a few other isolated places around the state. Pasque flowers usually grow in dry, often rocky soils in prairies or open pine woodlands and prefer full to partial sun.

Dance Party

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ERIC FOWLER

There are some things you just have to see to believe, and others you have to hear. Few provide a treat to both of those senses like watching prairie grouse perform their courtship dances in the spring.

Sitting in a blind before first light, you will hear the birds fly into the lek before you can see them. When the greater prairie-chicken's eerie, moaning call hits your ears, you will wonder what kind of creature could make such a noise, and then understand why their lek is also called a booming ground. And even after you've heard it, you still might not believe how much noise can be made by a sharp-tailed grouse clicking its tail feathers together. Sprinkle in the clucks, hoots, coos and squawks, and it's music to a birdwatcher's ears, or anyone's for that matter.

Until darkness fades, you will strain your eyes until you find the source of the sounds. When the subject is clear, you might shake your head in wonder as you watch male sharptails inflate the purple air sacs on their necks, stomp their feet and dance in circles – or at the larger, orange air sacs of the prairie-chicken and its upright pinnae feathers. You will watch almost as intently as the males watch each other when they crouch low to the ground in a face-off. And you might wonder if any birds ever lose an eye when they launch themselves in the air and bare their claws at each other.

And they do it all just to try and get the girl, who will occasionally pop in on the lek to check on the boys, strolling through with a sense of indifference that causes them to try even harder to impress her.

The dance begins in mid-March and will last into May at a prairie near you. It's something everyone should see and hear. And you still might not believe it.





Top left: Brad Mellema of Grand Island photographs a sharp-tailed grouse lek from a public viewing blind on the Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forest near Thedford. Left and above: The pair of male sharptails sparring on the previous spread and the grouse on this one were photographed from the same blind. Males stomp their feet and dance in circles, inflating purple air sacs on their necks, in an effort to impress a mate.

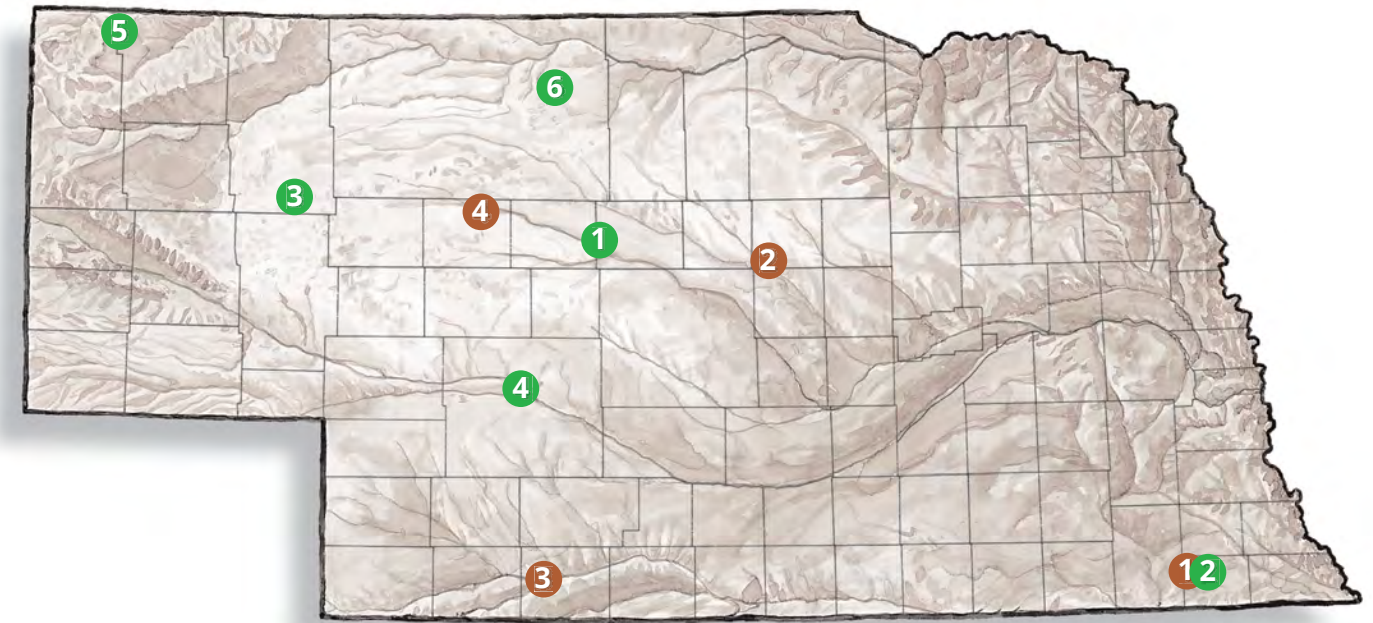


Greater prairie chickens spar and display on a lek in front of a public viewing blind on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge where Michigan photographers Al Charnley, at left, and David Stimac spent time last spring. These grouse and the one on the following spread were photographed within yards of the blind.





A male greater prairie-chicken raises its pinnae feathers and inflates air sacs on its neck in an effort to attract a mate on a lek on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge.



Viewing

Nebraska has two species of prairie grouse: the greater prairie-chicken, found throughout central Nebraska and in some locations in the southeast, and the sharp-tailed grouse, found primarily in the Sandhills and Panhandle.

Males begin to arrive on leks in late February and remain into early May, but courtship displays don't begin in earnest until mid-March, and activity peaks in mid-April. The best way to experience this unique ritual is from a lek-side blind. A list of these opportunities ranging from free, self-guided blinds on public land, to guided blind visits packaged with lodging and/or breakfast, follows.

Grouse arrive at leks well before sunrise. If you are using a public blind, plan on being settled in at least 45 minutes before sunrise and staying until the birds leave roughly 2 hours later so you do not disturb the lek. If possible, visit the day before so it will be easier to find your way in the dark.

Free Public Blinds

- 1 Bessey Ranger District, Nebraska National Forest, Halsey/Thedford.** Sharp-tailed grouse and prairie-chickens. Two blinds available April 1, first come, first served. 308-533-2257, fs.usda.gov/main/nebraska/home
- 2 Burchard Lake WMA, Burchard.** Prairie-chickens. Two blinds, first come, first served. 402-335-2534
- 3 Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Ellsworth.** Sharp-tailed grouse. One blind, by reservation. 308-762-4893, fws.gov/refuge/Crescent_Lake

- 4 N-CORPE, North Platte.** Prairie-chickens. One blind, March 18-May 3, reservations required. 308-534-6752 or 308-414-2140, ncorpe.org/wildlife-viewing
- 5 Oglala National Grassland, Nebraska National Forest, Crawford.** Sharp-tailed grouse. One blind, reservations required Friday-Sunday, remainder first come, first served. 308-432-0300, fs.usda.gov/main/nebraska/home
- 6 Valentine National Wildlife Refuge, Valentine.** Sharp-tailed grouse and prairie-chickens. Two blinds available April 1, reservations required. 402-376-3789 or 1889, fws.gov/refuge/valentine

Guided/Outfitted Trips

- 1 Big Blue Ranch, Burchard.** Prairie-chickens. 402-865-4335, bigblueranch.com
- 2 Calamus Outfitters, Burwell.** Sharp-tailed grouse and prairie-chickens. Also host of annual Nebraska Prairie-chicken Festival April 12-14, 2019. 308-346-4697, calamusoutfitters.com
- 3 Prairie-Chicken Dance Tours, McCook.** Prairie-chickens. 308-345-1200 Ext. 318, prairiechickendancetours.com
- 4 Sandhills Motel and Glidden Canoe Rental, Mullen.** Sharp-tailed grouse and prairie-chickens. 308-546-2206, sandhillsmotel.com

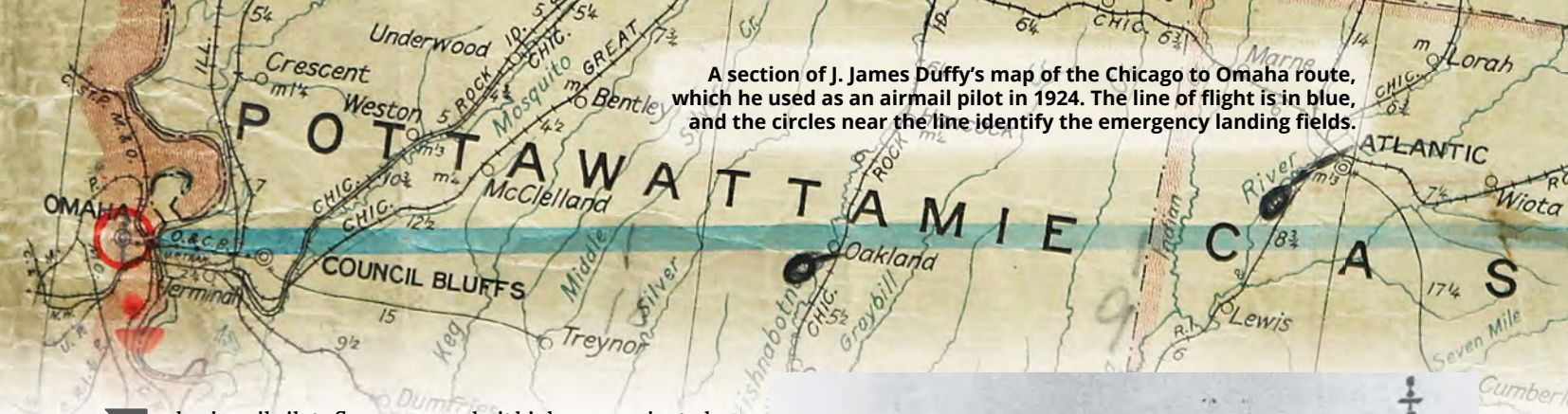
Nebraska Airmail in the 1920s

By History Nebraska

Albeit brief, the early era of Nebraska's airmail flights was known for open-cockpit planes and navigation by landmarks, forced landings and commonplace crashes.

De Havilland DH-4 airmail planes at Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben Field near 60th and Center streets, circa 1922. The DH-4 was a British two-seat light bomber during World War I; the U.S. Army Air Service also used them and the U.S. Postal Service modified them for airmail service. HN RG3882-263-a





A section of J. James Duffy's map of the Chicago to Omaha route, which he used as an airmail pilot in 1924. The line of flight is in blue, and the circles near the line identify the emergency landing fields.

Early airmail pilots flew open-cockpit biplanes, navigated by landmarks and simple maps, and landed in grassy airfields. By 1930 their facilities and technology had changed dramatically. What seems quaint in hindsight was in fact a time of rapid change.

Airmail service began in 1918. The first route was between Washington, D.C., and New York City. Regular coast-to-coast airmail flights began in 1920.

Nebraska's first airfields along the coast-to-coast route were in North Platte and Omaha. Airmail pilots used Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben Field (near the famous racetrack) until 1924, when the Air Mail Service moved its operations to Offutt Field at Fort Crook. Offutt Field was literally a field in those days – no paved runways – and the army did little flying at



In 1919 the Post Office decided that North Platte would be the best second airmail stop in Nebraska. HN RG2929-148

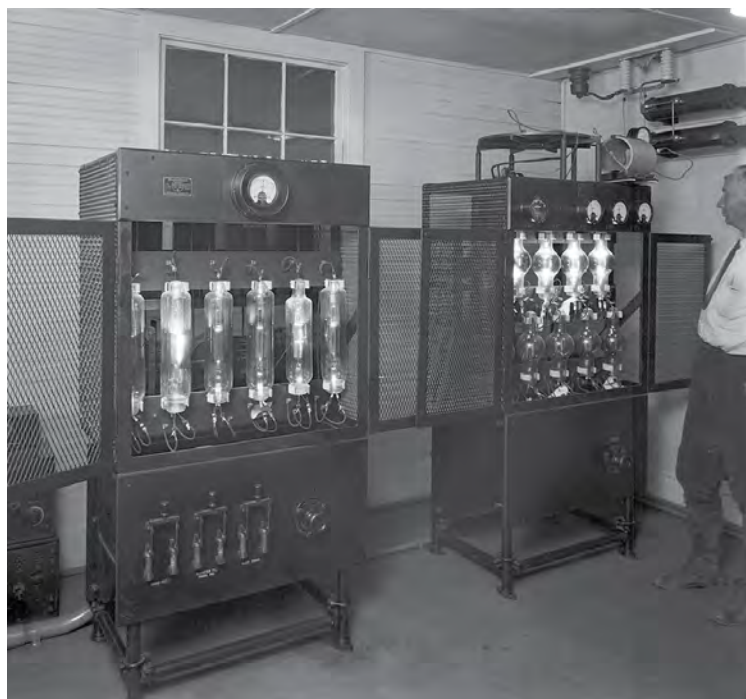
the time.

The de Havilland DH-4 was the standard airmail plane during the early years. It began as a British two-seat light bomber during World War I. Modified as an airmail plane, the pilot sat in the rear cockpit, while the front cockpit was enclosed to hold the mailbags.

Pilots navigated with simple maps and followed landmarks such as railroads and rivers. The Platte River Valley has long



Pilots Jack Knight, at left, and Clarence Lange model cold weather flight suits, circa 1920. Knight became an Air Mail Service legend in 1921 by flying an extra leg of the first transcontinental night airmail flight. HN RG3882-266-a



U.S. Air Mail radio equipment, June 1924, probably at Offutt Field rather than Ak-Sar-Ben. HN RG3882-1-622-1



A Boeing 80A at Omaha Municipal Airport, June 5, 1930. Mayor Richard Lee Metcalfe stands in center. Boeing Air Transport (today's United Airlines) took over airmail flights in 1927 and introduced its tri-motor Model 80 the following year. More than an airmail plane, the 80A carried 18 passengers in its heated, leather-upholstered cabin, where a stewardess attended to their needs. HN RG 3882-1-25-1

been a preferred land route across Nebraska. Now it became an aerial highway.

Forced landings and crashes were common, and pilots were vulnerable to changes in weather. Fog was especially deadly. Then as now, pilots had to see the ground in order to land safely. They often carried flares to drop. That at least marked ground level.

Nebraska's first airmail fatality occurred near Marquette in 1928 when a pilot crashed into a tree. He had been flying low to avoid headwinds. The pilot survived, but he was carrying a passenger who did not.

Night flying added other risks. The Post Office staged its first coast-to-coast round-the-clock flight on Feb. 22-23, 1921. Pilot Jack Knight flew in darkness from North Platte to Chicago, following bonfires along the way. When the Post Office began regular overnight flying in 1924, beacon lights marked the route's emergency landing fields.

Radio was another exciting new technology. Experiments

with two-way radios aboard airmail planes began roughly the same time that consumers were starting to buy radio receivers for their homes. In December 1923, Jack Knight and a government radio engineer kept in touch with Omaha for 100 miles, and checked in while passing Mead and Grand Island. But it took several more years for radio to become common on airmail planes.

This early era was brief. Boeing Air Transport (today's United Airlines) took over airmail flights in 1927. Three years later, Boeing began carrying both mail and passengers in its new tri-motor Model 80, a big metal-clad biplane with an enclosed, leather-upholstered cabin in which a stewardess attended to passengers' needs. In just 10 years, much of what we take for granted in aviation had gone from novelty to a way of life.

Based on Kathleen Alonso, "Trail above the Plains: Flying the Airmail through Nebraska from 1920 to 1930," Nebraska History (Winter 2018). See history.nebraska.gov

A Rare Bird

and a rare opportunity

Story and Photos by Eric Fowler

Last spring, Chad Gideon, a friend of mine, called and told me I needed to get down to his place on the Platte River near Wood River ASAP: There were nine whooping cranes hanging around the property he and his family own. There were two problems. One, I was on the way to the Sandhills, where I was meeting up with some folks to photograph sharp-tailed grouse and prairie-chickens (see page 38). And two, my luck dictates that these calls rarely lead to photos, as by the time I arrive, the subject that spurred the call is usually long gone. Not only that, but the river is long and wide, the birds move, and the odds of being in the

right place for a photo are long.

But after three successful days on the grouse leks, I pulled the plug on that shoot and headed south to test my luck.

I picked up Chad at his house in the afternoon and headed for the river. We were walking down a trail to the crane viewing blind he'd built on the banks a few years ago when we spotted the white, red and black heads of two whoopers through the vegetation of an island in the middle of the river about 200 yards away. We watched from the blind for about 10 minutes, me snapping photos with my telephoto lens which, even with my largest teleconverter attached, still wasn't long



A pair of whooping cranes walk past an empty photo blind on the Platte River near Wood River.



Whooping cranes fly above the central Platte River Valley last spring.

enough, and definitely not sharp enough, for a quality photo. But when you're this close to one of the rarest birds on earth, undetected, you snap away. And then we watched the story of my life unfold as the birds walked within 50 yards of the overnight photo blind I helped him build on that island last year. Really? I'd spent several nights in that blind, sleeping with the cranes. Had I known ...

The pair worked their way downriver, feeding in the shallows and occasionally pausing to dance. When they were well out of range, we moved to another blind my friends at the Crane Trust granted me access to, hoping to see the other seven whoopers. We did, hundreds of yards away on the far bank.

The next morning we were back in the Trust blind, but the seven whoopers were gone. We spotted the pair, but they were far from Chad's blind. He suggested we take a drive

down Shoemaker Island Road and there, feeding in a meadow managed by the Platte River Recovery and Implementation Program, we found the pair again. They must have felt sorry for taunting me the night before. As we watched from the truck, the pair took flight, flew right over us and started circling, giving me several photo ops, some too close as I was geared up for photos in the field and had no time to change. With each pass they gained altitude. We watched with binoculars until they were specks in the sky and then gone, heading north to their next stop between the central Platte River Valley and their breeding grounds in Canada.

This majestic species provided photo ops for many last spring along the Platte. Still endangered, but numbering more than 500 now after falling to 15 in the mid-1900s, there will be more in the years to come. Maybe even when I'm in Chad's photo blind.

Walleye Trolling 101

*Story and Photos by
Jake Jadowski*

Like most of us, I've fished for all kinds of fish in a whole bunch of different places. But regardless of species and location, most of the fishing I've done has been centered around my rod, my lure and me. Whether I'm flipping jigs for largemouth bass or bottom bouncing for walleye, most of my success or my failure is mine alone. Like golf, there is no guarantee that two guys using the same ball and driver will hit a tee shot that lands in the middle of the fairway. Likewise, there is no guarantee that two guys in the same boat, using the same lure and tactics, will catch the same amount of fish. I truly enjoy this individual element of fishing.

But I've also learned that there is a lot of fun to be had while fishing as a part of a team, and trolling crankbaits for walleye is the ultimate team sport. It takes a team to manage the chaos of running multiple lines, attaching planer boards, changing out lures, fixing giant tangles, switching motors, controlling the boat, fighting the fish,

netting the fish, getting the boat back on course and redeploying all the lines. Success is shared, and it requires the contribution of everyone on board. When trolling crankbaits for walleyes, it doesn't matter if you reeled it in. It feels like every fish is your fish, and it's a blast.

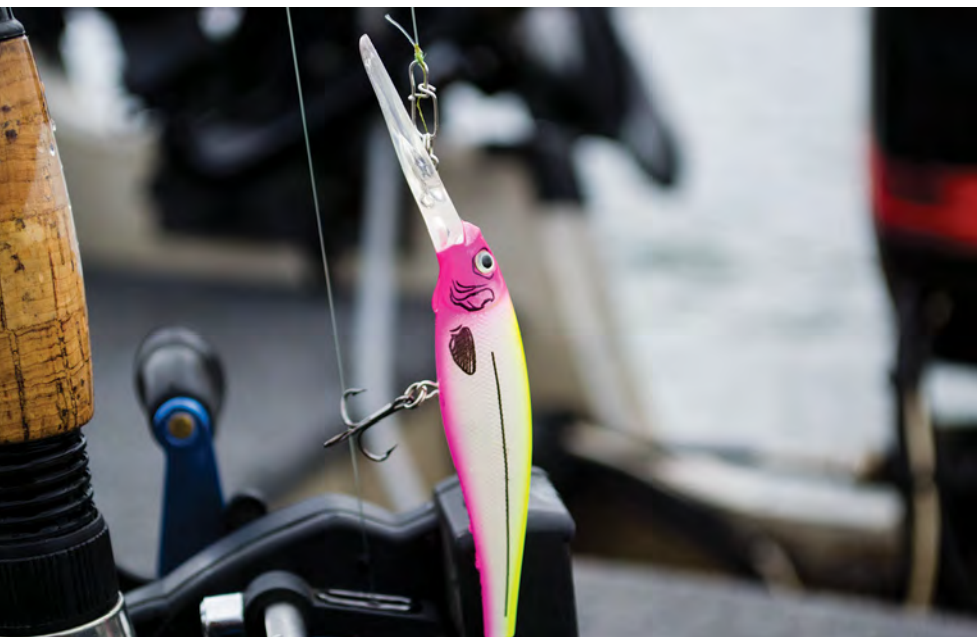
Unfortunately, failure is also shared. And my team did a lot of that before we got smart and upgraded our equipment and developed a system that was efficient enough to occasionally fill up the livewell. Our first attempts at trolling resulted from a slow bottom-bouncing bite as we tried to cover more water in order to locate fish. This was fun. We found that the bite could be fast and furious. However, as we increased the amount of time we spent trolling, we quickly learned that our system was not good. Hand rods resulted in varying rod tip locations that altered the depth of our lures. There was no way to know how much line we had out. And even if we did, we didn't know how much line to

Keith Jadowski (left), Brett Smith and Jake Jadowski show off a stringer of walleye at Lake McConaughy.





Rod holders maintain and control more than one rod when trolling while also allowing anglers a hands-free option.



Quick clips connect the angler's line with the eye of the crankbait so that fast changes can be made without having to retie each new lure.



In combination with the Precision Trolling app, using a line counting reel is the most accurate way to determine the depth that a crankbait will run.

let out to achieve a desired depth. And even if we did, we had no idea how much to let out to get a specific lure to run at the depth we wanted. In short, we didn't know what we were doing and even when we did catch fish, we didn't know how to repeat it.

All good lessons are learned by errors. As we messed it up, we got smarter. So to keep you from making these same mistakes, here are a handful of essentials for anyone interested in getting out their box of crankbaits and teaming up with some buddies.

Rod Holders - In addition to being able to maintain and control your rod tip, these allow you to run more than one rod and they keep your hands free so that you can help a buddy get untangled or land a fish.

Line Counters - Getting crankbaits to the target depth is a huge part of finding success while trolling. The depth that a given crankbait can run depends on the amount of line that you let out. The best way to consistently keep the lure in the target zone is to know exactly how much line has come off your spool. Swapping out a baitcasting reel for a line counting reel is a must.

Precision Trolling App - Line counters are awesome, but they don't tell you the whole story. They simply tell you how much line has come off the spool. They don't tell you how much line to let out to get a certain crankbait to run at the depth that you want. They don't tell you how to adjust that number when you change to a different type of crankbait. And they don't tell you how the particular brand of line, type of line, and pound test line on your spool alters the depth that a crankbait will run. But the Precision



Brett Smith holds this Nebraska walleye close to the camera after removing the crankbait from its sharp jaws.

Trolling app does. Simply enter the line that you are using, the crankbait that you have tied on, and the depth that you want to achieve, and the app instantly tells you how much line to let out. Buy it in the App Store. A guy could make a strong argument that it's the most important piece of equipment in the boat.

Quick Clips - Once you are armed with a line counter and the Precision Trolling app, you've unlocked the mystery of your crankbait box. Tie on as many as you need to until the fish tell you want they want. Better yet, tie on a quick clip once and snap on cranks as fast as your heart desires.

Lastly, don't forget your camera. In the event that you figure out the right depth, the right speed, and the right crankbait, you're going to have a pretty cool photo opportunity. In fact, you may never want to tee it up by yourself again.

Trolling Tips

- Before deploying or re-deploying your lines, make sure your crankbait is running true in order to prevent tangles and to ensure that your lure gets down into the strike zone.
- Don't be afraid to experiment with different crankbait types, sizes and colors. Eventually, the fish will tell you what they want.
- Just because state fishing regulations may allow you to use more than one rod doesn't mean you have to. Keep it simple until you figure out a system that works.
- Crankbaits are manufactured to create irresistible action under the water. But don't shy away from an occasional jerk of the rod tip to vary the action and give your lure some extra life.
- Maintaining a trolling speed between 2 and 3 mph is a pretty good rule of thumb. But feel free to experiment with slight speed adjustments or abrupt changes in speed to entice strikes.
- Just because a given crankbait is capable of reaching a maximum depth doesn't mean the fish are at that maximum depth. Experiment with different depths within the water column to create strikes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEBRASKA TOURISM COMMISSION

VISIT BROWNVILLE

By Erin Lenz, Nebraska Tourism Commission

When it comes to the art scene, Brownville provides experiences from performing to theatrical to cultural arts. Live music with an intimate setting, the Brownville Concert Series brings to the area nationally acclaimed talent from New York cabarets, Broadway, jazz, classic, bluegrass and rock. Attend one of the dazzling 2019 performances, such as the April Verch Band, a musical comedy journey titled “Diva Moments” with Christina Bianco, captivating ballads from the jazz-spiced chops of The Amazing Marilyn Maye and more. You can also enjoy live theatre in Brownville at the oldest repertory theatre in Nebraska, located in a century-old church, The Brownville Village Theatre.

View a collection of American folk art at the Flatwater Folk Art Museum, located in a beautifully renovated church. See other forms of art represented throughout the town including artist exhibits at the Schoolhouse Art Gallery & Nature Center, functional stoneware pottery made using Nebraska clay at New Earth Clay Pottery, and flame-blown glass work created at River View Glass.

Hungry? Order food from a menu created with locally produced items at Bluebird and after your meal, treat yourself to a scoop of handcrafted Nebraska-made ice cream. Taste a variety of wines while exploring the 100-year-old barn and the turn-of-the-century, all brick cave at Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard and Winery.

Learn more about the history of the area by taking a historical tour throughout Brownville. Visit the Captain Bailey House and Carson House, destinations included on the National Register of Historic Places. The Governor Furnas

House Museum, where Governor Furnas and his family lived, documents historical activities and events related to historic Brownville. Other historical stops in the town include a finely preserved 1875 railroad depot and caboose at The Brownville Depot and Railroad History Museum, Dr. Spurgin’s Dental Office featuring antique dental tools and oddities, and an original historic cabin – the 1854 Didier Log Cabin.

Enjoy the great outdoors and scenery of the Missouri River with the Steamboat Trace Trail that spans 21 miles and runs from Brownville to south of Nebraska City. Linking to the Steamboat Trace Trail is the Whiskey Run Creek Nature Trail that has more than 200 artistic displays, trees, shrubs and flowers, and runs through Governor Furnas Arboretum, an affiliate site of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum that provides eco-tourism, birding, garden tours and more.

Shop at Mary’s Emporium located in Brownville’s iconic “October House” and browse through an eclectic blend of new, estate and artisan jewelry and accessories. Relax and unwind in the outdoor seating at the Brownville Market or shop for coffee, candy, craft beers and more.

With all there is to do in the area, you’ll want to stay a night or two. Stay in unique Brownville accommodations at River Inn Resort, a bed-and-breakfast that floats on the Missouri River. While you’re there, take a ride on The Spirit of Brownville – a two-deck, 150-passenger excursion boat – to take in all the natural beauty of the Missouri River.

Whether you’re looking to revel in the arts, try new wines or learn about Brownville’s history, this charming small town will instantly win you over, making you want to stay a little longer.



**MARY'S
EMPORIUM**

JEWELRY:
Vintage, New & Handmade

313 Main St. Brownville, NE
(402) 825-1240

Brownville, Nebraska



**BROWNVILLE
MARKET**

Water • Pop • Coffee
Ice • Candy • Tobacco
Cold Beer

308 Main Street
Brownville, NE 68321
402-825-1240

29th Incredible Season in 2019!

**BROWNVILLE
CONCERT
SERIES**

March 31
Rastrelli Cello Quartet
From Brahms to Beatles

May 3, 4, 5
April Verch Band
An Evening with April Verch

May 31, June 1, 2
Christina Bianco
Diva Moments

July 12, 13, 14
The Amazing Marilyn Maye

August 9, 10, 11
Oberlin & Harkness
Lush Life: Billy Strayhorn

September 6, 7, 8
Nicolas King
Shakin' the Blues Away

October 4, 5, 6
Jon Weber
From Joplin to Jarrett

November 1, 2, 3
The Who Generation
A Tribute

December 6, 7, 8
Christmas Gala
Merry Christmas, Baby!

Buy Tickets Online at www.brownvilleconcertseries.com
or on Facebook or call 402-825-3331.

RIVER INN RESORT
Bed & Breakfast Brownville, NE

B&B EXCURSION BOAT RV PARK

PHONE: (402) 825-6441
EMAIL: RIVER.INN.RESORT@GMAIL.COM
WEBSITE: WWW.RIVER-INN-RESORT.COM
ADDRESS: BOX 96, BROWNVILLE, NE 68321

SPIRIT OF BROWNVILLE
EXCURSION BOAT

**SPECIAL ATTENTION
GIVEN
TO
REPAIR WORK**

**GASOLINE
REPAIR
OILS**

Garage

Founded in 1956 for the sole purpose of preserving the historical heritage of Brownville, the **Brownville Historical Society** welcomes visitors to our museums, the Land Office where the original Homestead was filed, Sage Museum celebrating the Native American history, the Wheel Museum with displays on the Civil War, Missouri River history and commerce, agriculture and many other displays, the Railroad History Museum, along with the Carson House and Bailey House and the Didier cabin all examples of some of the earliest homes in Nebraska. From April to October our museums are open every weekend and by appointment. For more information about BHS and our events visit our website at www.brownvillehistoricalsociety.org

GO APE

By Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley

Conquer your fears and take in Eugene T. Mahoney State Park's breathtaking views from a new perspective. Opening April 11, Go Ape Treetop Adventure is the park's latest outdoor addition, allowing visitors to dangle among the birds and journey across the park's forest canopy by rope and zipline.

Go Ape will test your critical thinking, coordination, balance and stamina as you navigate your way across suspended obstacles, swings and exhilarating ziplines. Fun and challenging for individuals and families, this high-ropes course can also provide team building opportunities among companies and groups.

Treetop Adventure usually takes 2-3 hours to complete, and participants will be safely secured by harness at all times. The course is open to anyone ages 10 and up. However, participants must be at least 4 feet, 7 inches tall and weigh no more than 285 pounds. Good physical fitness is required, but no great deal of athleticism is necessary.

A state park permit is required to enter Mahoney State Park. The cost is \$49 per person for ages 16 and older, and \$39 for ages 15 and under. For more information and reservations, visit goape.com/locations/Nebraska/Ashland.



PHOTOS BY ERIC FOWLER

CHADRON STATE COLLEGE

FOLLOW YOUR FRONTIER

Surrounded by western Nebraska's beautiful Pine Ridge, students at Chadron State College succeed in high-quality academic programs, and enjoy their opportunities to get involved and have fun.



1-800-CHADRON
cscadmissions@csc.edu

GET STARTED TODAY AT CSC.EDU



MAHONEY STATE PARK
**Celebrating local wine
craft beer and spirits**
MAY 10 & 11, 2019



SipNebraska.com



SEEK YOUR ADVENTURE

Study environmental restoration science, fisheries & wildlife, applied climate science, or water science at Nebraska.

N

SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES

go.unl.edu/seek_knowledge

FORT ROBINSON STATE PARK FISHING UPGRADES UNDERWAY

By Justin Haag

Anglers visiting Fort Robinson State Park in coming months may be disappointed to find some of their favorite ponds without water, but are sure to enjoy the same places in coming years.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission drained Grabel Ponds and Cherry Creek Pond to make way for the first phase of an Aquatic Habitat Program project to improve conditions for fish and anglers at the two ponds, along with the Cherry Creek diversion pond and the lower Ice House Pond.

The project will deepen the ponds, create aquatic habitat features for fish, reshape embankments, install new outlet structures and develop improved access for anglers. Plans call for refilling the ponds and stocking fish by early fall. Although some areas are closed for the construction, Fort Robinson visitors may still find fish at Carter P. Johnson



Lake, Soldier Creek or the White River.

Joe Rydell of Alliance, Commission fisheries biologist, said the ponds provide angling opportunities to countless park visitors each year but are in need of an upgrade and have untapped potential. Fed by coldwater streams and springs, many of the ponds in the 22,000-acre park served the Crawford National Fish Hatchery, constructed in the late 1920s.

Funding for the project is being provided by the state Aquatic Habitat Stamp and the federal Sport Fish Restoration Program.



GRABEL PONDS (ABOVE) AND ICE HOUSE PONDS AT FORT ROBINSON STATE PARK. PHOTOS BY JUSTIN HAAG



Everything You Need, For Anything You Need To Do.

Kubota's full line of hardworking equipment has a proven reputation for high-quality engineering, versatility, power and reliability.



Offering the area's most complete inventory of Kubota products since 1984.

9317 S. 144th St.
Omaha, NE
402-895-6661



KUBOTA
OF OMAHA
Ag Solutions Group

KubotaUSA.com



© Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2018



Pond-Tini

Pontoon Boats

800-657-2184

pondtini.com

60 **Nebraskaland** • April 2019

April 2019 • **Nebraskaland** 61

History NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA

LET HISTORY BE YOUR GUIDE.
est. 1867

Visit 8 fascinating historic sites & over 500 historical markers!
Download the "Explore Nebraska History" app today!

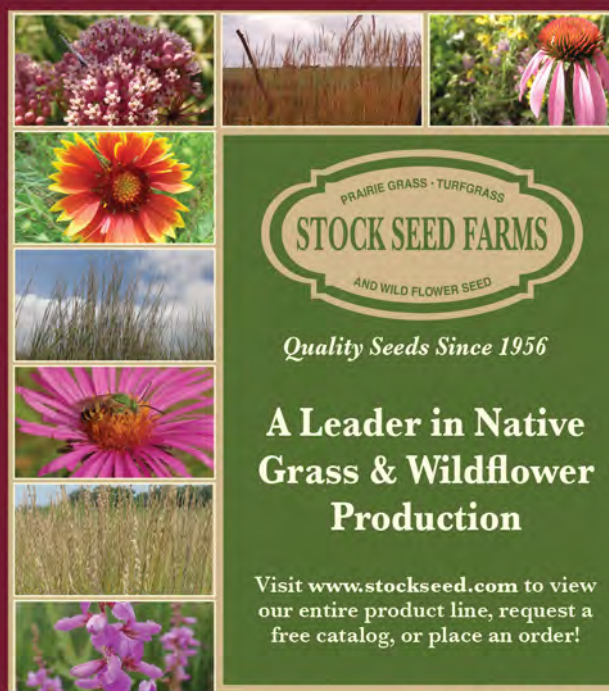
Available on:

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store



history.nebraska.gov



PRAIRIE GRASS • TURFGRASS
STOCK SEED FARMS
AND WILD FLOWER SEED

Quality Seeds Since 1956

A Leader in Native Grass & Wildflower Production

Visit www.stockseed.com to view our entire product line, request a free catalog, or place an order!

Email: prairie@stockseed.com • Phone: 800-759-1520
28008 Mill Road Murdock, NE 68407

SANDSTONE GRILL

HOME OF AMAZING FOOD AT GREAT PRICES

Make your trip to Burwell complete with lunch and dinner at the Sandstone Grill.

- Gourmet Salads
- Homemade Soups
- Creative Sandwiches & Burgers
- Locally Raised Bison
- NE Raised Steaks
- Seafood
- Homemade Desserts
- Full Wine, Beer & Liquor Selection




SandstoneGrill.com
308.346.4582

EAT • SHOP • STAY
DOWNTOWN BURWELL



Newly remodeled Historic hotel in downtown Burwell. Spacious boutique style suites with private bedrooms.



Nightly Lodging
Book Now!
SandhillsSuites.com

Stationery • Gifts • Home Decor
mariposa-design-events.com
Located in the Sandhills Suites Lobby



Premier compact pontoon manufacturers for over 30 years!

HOTWOODS

308-381-6275 Grand Island, Nebraska
www.hotwoods.com



Four Pontoon design to assure the ultimate in stability.

ALL-ALUMINUM DOCKS AND WALKWAYS

DO IT ONCE, DO IT RIGHT

ANTIQUE GUIDE



"A Treasure-Hunting Experience"

www.aardvarkantiquemall.com



Open Daily
9 am to 9 pm
Call for Holiday Hours

5800 Arbor Road
Lincoln, NE 68517
402.464.5100

*25,000 Square Feet *Over 250 Dealers
Lincoln's largest antiques and collectibles mall.

Three Levels
6,000 Sq. Ft.

Where Old Meets New!

Accents Etc

307 Norris Ave, McCook NE 69001
Antiques, Books, Framing & Gifts

308-345-7480 • www.accents-etc.com



Monday - Friday
9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



ANTIQUES PARADISE

Antiques and Collectibles

5500 Sq. Ft. & Large Parking Area
402.223.0121
Open 7 Days a Week

827 W. Court (West Hwy. 136 & Hwy 4)
Beatrice, NE 68310



— www.antiquesparadise.com —

Bargain John's Antiques

American Antiques from 1850 to 1930

700 Washington Blvd. PO Box 705
Lexington, NE 68850
Exit 237 - 2 miles North off of I-80 on Hwy 283

308-324-4576

The Ostrom's
John ~ Lars ~ Joni

Complete Inventory Cataloged at
www.bargainjohn.com
Nationwide Shipping Available

Grain Bin Antique Town

North Platte, NE 10641 S. Old Hwy 83

Something for Everyone!

From
Primitives to
High-End
Antiques

308.539.7401
www.grainbinantiquetown.com




Heartland
ANTIQUE MALL

EST. 1986

216 W. 3rd, Grand Island, Nebraska
308-384-6018
www.heartlandantiques.com

10,000 Square Feet with over
30 Dealers offering Mid-
Nebraska's Finest Antiques from
Primitive to Victorian.

Mon.-Sat.: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Sun.: 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The Treasure Trove

Tea Room
Antiques & Collectibles

402.269.8072
315 5th St., Syracuse, NE
patti@syracuseteatime.com



Bring in this coupon for 10% off any item!

www.syracuseteatime.com

NEBRASKA JUNKATHON

FLEA MARKET/ANTIQUE SHOW

SARGENT, NEBRASKA Memorial Day Weekend
May 24, 25, 26 2019

Thompson's Treasures

Antiques & Uniques

308-527-3799
308-750-9435



Find us on Facebook



My grandfather (left), Walter Adamson, and his father-in-law, Joe Edwards, photographed around 1922 with coyote pelts and hounds from a hunt on the Adamson Ranch in Cherry County in the Sandhills. The Dan Adamson family homesteaded in the Sandhills and acquired the Diamond Bar in 1913, which Walter and Elvin Adamson owned. This became part of the the Adamson Cattle Company, which is still owned and operated by my brother, Marv Adamson, and his sons, Ryan and Jeff. The Edwards Ranch, the site of the Lake Post Office (mail was delivered on horseback), is now operated by the Ford family. Our dad was Elvin Adamson, who served as a Game and Parks commissioner and was a state senator. Joe Edwards and Dan Adamson were our great grandfathers.

– Marge Adamson Harris, Lincoln

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.



BACK TO MERLIN

By Jeff Kurrus

The photographers at *Nebraskaland Magazine* shoot a lot of photos. So many, in fact, that we must have a searchable database to find our images. For us, this cloud-based system is called Merlin and, at the time of publication, contains 212,604 images, with many more that have yet to be entered.

For an image to be in Merlin, it is culled from a larger group of images and ID'd. Person, place, activity, etc., are recorded so they can be easily searched. We also include animal names and, when applicable, their scientific names.

So when I recently received the following letter from reader Bob Zimmerman of Lincoln, I couldn't help but smile and cringe at the same time:

*Hi Jeff,
I've been a subscriber and collector of Outdoor Nebraska/Nebraskaland Magazine for many years and have a collection dating back to the 1930s. I'm also a long time Brittany owner, occasional breeder and member of the American Brittany Club. I've noticed a recurring error in Nebraskaland. Quite frequently*

the dog breed Brittany is referred to as a Brittany Spaniel. The American Kennel Club no longer refers to the breed as a spaniel and hasn't for close to 40 years. When this was changed, the logic was that the Brittany pointed game and that was not characteristic of any of the other spaniels. So the AKC dropped spaniel and the breed is now referred to as the Brittany.

I'm hoping that bringing this to your attention will get the minor offense corrected. I've got to admit, I always cringe and grit my teeth when an outdoor publication incorrectly refers to Brittanyans as spaniels.

Similarly, the AKC breed name Pointer is correct. The breed is not an English Pointer.

After a little research of my own, it looks like Mr. Zimmerman is right. I'm sure glad Merlin has a correction option for the 821 Brittany and pointer images I've catalogued. One last note: the picture above is of a Brittany, and was photographed at Pheasant Bonanza in Burt County. See, I'm learning already.

TAKE YOUR FAMILY HUNTING IN NEBRASKA!



**The family hunt is
alive and well in Nebraska!**

**Turkey and deer tags are readily available,
and those 15 and under can get deer and
turkey permits for only
\$8 - even for non-residents.**

Get the details at OutdoorNebraska.org/YouthPermits