



A bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) tree with leaf at Indian Cave State Park in autumn.
Photo by Jon Farrar.

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Trail Rides at Halsey • Fall Color
The Nebraska Table – Autumn • Raising Big Walleye
GoPro Hunt • Goose Banding



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NEBRASKAland Magazine

Volume 96 • No. 8 • October 2018

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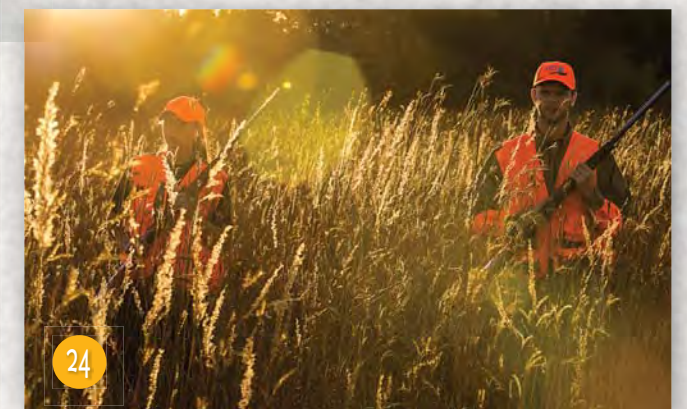
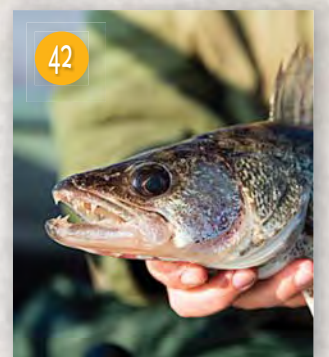
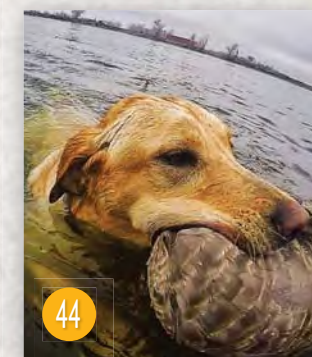
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ON THE WEB...

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

Cover: The process of Canada goose banding allows researchers to monitor changes in survival, abundance and movement. Story on page 56. Photo by Jeff Kurrus.

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 **Instagram Featured Photo**

Cory Loomis (@coryloomisphotography) of Bloomfield, Nebraska, took this image of the Milky Way over Niobrara State Park. Follow us (@nebraskaland) and tag us in your photos to be featured in an upcoming issue.

Visitor Letters

I always look through *NEBRASKAland* when I first get it, and was surprised to find both my favorite author and the visitor on the same page, 53. The cicada is in the early stages of development as the wings were pretty well started as they were just nibs, but show signs of the wings to follow. The cicada is on the upper right of the page.

Leo Turner
Lisco, Nebraska



John Schuerman of Minneapolis, Minnesota, took this photo of a fawn hiding in the grass at Duane Smith's farm near Nebraska City, Nebraska.



John Welsh of Ceresco shared this picture of his Vizla, Lilly, while hiking near their home.

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

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Nebraska's Threatened and Endangered Species

By Eric Fowler

Work has begun to update Nebraska's list of threatened and endangered species, and if approved as proposed, four small-bodied fish, one bird and one reptile would be added to the list and one mammal removed.

Proposed as threatened - McCown's longspur, timber rattlesnake, flathead chub and plains minnow

Proposed as endangered - sicklefin chub and western silvery minnow

Proposed for delisting - North American river otter

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission last updated the state's list of threatened and endangered species in 2000. These 30 species have shown documented population and range declines, most often from habitat loss, and are in the greatest need for conservation. Listing under the Nebraska Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act provides protection for the species and allows plans to be developed to prevent them from being extirpated from Nebraska.

River otters were common in Nebraska but extirpated by 1920 due to unregulated harvest and habitat loss. There are

now healthy and growing populations in most rivers across the state thanks to a reintroduction program that began in 1986. The otter would join the bald eagle as the only species to be removed from the list.

Listing proposals drawn up by Commission staff have been reviewed by species experts independent of the Commission, and the public is now being asked to weigh in at hearings in each of the eight Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners districts across the state this year and in 2019. Hearings have been held in Ogallala and Valentine. The next will be at the Commission's Oct. 26 meeting in Kearney. Following those meetings, a final public hearing will be scheduled, at which time the Commission will take action on the proposals.

For more information on the listing process and the species for which changes are proposed and the listing process, go to OutdoorNebraska.gov/ListingAction/. ■

PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER



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Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever

2018/2019 Fall & Winter Events

Youth Mentor Hunt Events

County	Chapter	Date	County	Chapter	Date
Adams	Little Blue River PF	9/29/2018	Hall	Loup/Platte Ringnecks PF	10/13/2018
Antelope	Golden Prairie PF	10/13/2018	Hamilton	Lincoln Creek PF	10/27/2018
Boone	Boone County PF	9/29/2018	Harlan	South Central Nebraska PF	10/20/2018
Box Butte	Heritage PF	10/6/2018	Holt	Niobrara Valley PF	10/13/2018
Box Butte	Heritage PF	9/1/2018	Jefferson	Rock Creek PF	10/6/2018
Boyd	Ponca Creek Ringnecks PF	10/13/2018	Kearney	Kearney County PF	10/20/2018
Brown, Keya Paha, Rock	Sandhills PF	9/30/2018	Kimball	Mile High PF	10/20/2018
Buffalo	Prairie Hills PF	10/20/2018	Knox	Bazile Creek Ringnecks PF	10/13/2018
Burt	Burt County PF	9/29/2018	Lancaster	Big Red PF	9/30/2018
Cass	Cass County PF	10/13/2018	Lancaster	Cornhusker PF	10/13/2018
Cedar	Lewis & Clark PF	10/6/2018	Lincoln	Cody Ringnecks PF	10/20/2018
Chase	Southwestern Nebraska PF	10/20/2018	Madison/Stanton/Pierce	Elkhorn Valley PF	10/6/2018
Cheyenne/Morill	High Plains PF	10/20/2018	Nemaha	Nemaha Valley PF	12/1/2018
Colfax	Maple Creek PF	10/20/2018	Nuckolls	Nuckolls County PF	10/1/2018
Cuming	Lower Elkhorn Valley PF	10/20/2018	Otoe	Otoe County PF	10/6/2018
Custer	Custer County PF	10/13/2018	Phelps	Great Plains PF	10/20/2018
Dakota/Thurston	Dakota/Thurston PF	10/6/2018	Red Willow	Plains Sportsman PF	10/20/2018
Dawson	Platte River PF	3/16/2019	Saline	Saline County PF	10/13/2018
Dixon	Dixon County PF	10//2018	Saunders	Lower Platte PF	10/19/2018
Dodge	Dodge County PF	10/13/2018	Scotts Bluff	Oregon Trail PF	10/6/2018
Douglas	Douglas County - West PF	10/7/2018	Seward	Seward County PF	10/13/2018
Dundy/Hitchcock	Southwest Prairie QF	9/8/2018	Sherman	Sherman County PF	10/20/2018
Franklin	Franklin County Covey QF	2/16/2019	Thayer	Four Seasons PF	10/20/2018
Frontier	Medicine Creek PF	9/8/2018	Valley	Loup River PF	9/8/2018
Furnas & Gosper	Republican Valley PF and Wachtel fur Immer QF	10/13/2018	Washington	Washington County PF	10/6/2018
Gage	Southeast Nebraska PF	10/13/2018	Wayne	Logan Creek PF	10/14/2018
Garden	Antelope Valley PF	10/20/2018	Webster	Webster County PF	10/13/2018
Greeley	Cedar River Ringnecks PF	10/13/2018	York	Corn Country PF	10/13/2018

Chapter Banquets

County	Chapter	Date	County	Chapter	Date
Brown/Keya Paha/Rock	Sandhills PF	11/2/2018	Howard	Central Nebraska QF	11/8/2018
Burt	Burt County PF	9/20/2018	Johnson	Upper Big Nemaha PF	9/29/2018
Cedar	Lewis & Clark PF	1/12/2019	Kearney	Kearney County PF	9/19/2018
Cuming	Lower Elkhorn Valley PF	10/27/2018	Lancaster	Big Red PF	9/23/2018
Dakota/Thurston	Dakota/Thurston PF	9/13/2018	Lincoln	Cody Ringnecks PF	9/15/2018
Dawson	Platte River PF	10/6/2018	Nuckolls	Nuckolls County PF	11/9/2018
Dundy/Hitchcock	Southwest Praire QF	1/26/2019	Perkins	Perkins County PF	8/11/2018
Gage	Southeast Nebraska PF	12/1/2018	Phelps	Great Plains PF	1/26/2019
Hall	Loup/Platte Ringnecks PF	10/17/2018	Saline	Saline County PF	1/26/2019
Harlan	South Central Nebraska PF	10/27/2018	Thayer	Four Seasons PF	10/26/2018
Holt	Niobrara Valley PF	11/24/2018			

For more information visit www.NebraskaPF.com

Travel to Sarpy County

By Erin Lenz, Nebraska Tourism Commission

Fall in Nebraska is a grand sight to behold. With colors of red, orange and yellow everywhere you look, pumpkin patches nearby and seasonal food and drink ready for you to taste, Sarpy County is the perfect destination for your fall vacation.

Explore

Discover beautiful fall colors everywhere you look when you explore one of the many parks, recreation areas and nature trails Sarpy County has to offer. Take a hike through nearly 2,000 acres of forest, prairie and wetlands at Fontenelle Forest and don't forget to say hello to the rescued birds located in the Raptor Woodland Refuge.

Also check out Schramm Park State Recreation Area, a hidden gem perfect for hikers, bikers and runners. Whether you choose to hike its 1.5 mile loop made for casual hikers or the 3 miles of trails through wooded bluffs, both offer stunning views of fall foliage this time of year.

Other notable trails include Mopac Trailhead and Nature Center, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail and Walnut Creek Lake/Recreation Area.

Do

Nothing says fall more than hayrack rides, pumpkins and haunted houses. Luckily, there are multiple destinations in Sarpy County that offer these fall experiences.

Get lost in a corn maze, take a hayrack ride, snack on kettle corn and visit the pie barn all at Vala's Pumpkin Patch & Apple Orchard. Pick your perfect pumpkin at Vala's or at Bellevue Berry Farm & Pumpkin Ranch where you can also taste their famous BBQ, take haunted walks through the woods and enjoy one of 30 private campfires.

Spend your nights getting scared at Haunted Hollow, a haunted theme park, or at the many haunted attractions at Scary Acres.



Vala's Pumpkin Patch & Apple Orchard offers entertainment for all ages.

Eat & Drink

There's a craft beer for everyone in Sarpy County. Head over to the Nebraska Brewing Company's brewery and taproom for a tour or go to their brewpub for a sit down meal and a pint of their Cardinal Pale Ale. Try one of Lucky Bucket Brewing Co.'s seasonal lineups, Oktoberfest.

Started by a couple of home brewers, Kros Strain Brewing Company has a wide variety of brews, including Fairy Nectar, an Indian Pale Ale with notes of tropical goodness.

Not much of a beer drinker? Sip a glass of wine and enjoy the vineyard views at Soaring Wings Vineyard, or take a tour of Cut Spike Distillery and try one of their single malt whiskeys or head to Patriarch Distillers for vodka and bourbon.

No trip to Sarpy County is complete without trying one of Stella's world famous hamburgers, voted Omaha's Best Burger seven years in a row. While you're there, take the Stellanator challenge – a food challenge of epic proportions.

Stay

With all that there is to do in this



area, you're going to want to stay a couple of days to see it all. Book a room at one of the many hotel options available including Candlewood Suites, Comfort Suites, Courtyard by Marriott, Embassy Suites, Hampton Inn and Suites, Holiday Inn and more.

If you're looking for more unique accommodations, check out the glamping tents at Falconwood Park. Not only will you get to camp in style, but amenities like sand volleyball, fire pits and badminton are available.

Shop

The holiday season is right around the corner and it's never too early to get a jumpstart on your shopping. Whether you're treating yourself to the perfect outfit or buying a gift for a loved one, Sarpy County has you covered. Shop for premier brands at outlet prices at the Nebraska Crossing Outlets in Gretna. Nike, Kate Spade, Columbia and Fossil are among the wide variety of brands to shop for at this mall.

Trying to find something for the outdoorsy person in your life? La Vista is also home to a Cabela's where all of your hunting, fishing and camping needs will be met. ■



Vala's Pumpkin Patch, 2 Donut & Cider Slushy

Sarpy County awaits with a wonderful mix of fun things to see and do. Check out Vala's Pumpkin Patch, Bellevue Berry Farm, Scary Acres or Haunted Hollow for some great fall fun. Sample the offerings at one of our many local breweries, distilleries and winery. And with over 2,300 affordable rooms, free parking and no minimum night requirements, Sarpy County is the perfect place to stay during football season. Kick off your adventure today at GoSarpy.com!

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A Brief History

What It Really Means to Be a Cornhusker

By Patricia C. Gaster, History Nebraska (Nebraska State Historical Society)

Nebraska farmers used to pick corn by hand after a fall frost when the corn was ripe and dry enough. Even in territorial days, devices were on the market to lighten the labor and reduce the discomfort of cracked and bleeding hands.

Probably the first device in general use in Nebraska was the husking peg. This originally was a small, round piece of hardwood, about six inches in length and sharpened at one end. It was held in the hollow of the right hand, and a loop of buckskin or soft leather was attached to the peg and passed over the middle finger to hold it in place. The sharpened end of the peg was thrust through the husks at the tip end of the ear, enabling the operator to husk the ear quickly and easily.

The next great development, at least in Nebraska, was the invention in the early 1890s of the corn husker by William F. Lillie (1852-1921) of Rockford in Gage County. Lillie originally developed the device to help his father-in-law,



A Lillie corn husker in the Nebraska History Museum collections. History Nebraska 1581-1

who had lost his right thumb, to husk corn. It worked so well that the inventor decided to apply for a patent and put it on the market.

Worn on the right hand, the point was used to penetrate the husk top, making it easier to remove the complete husk. A leather pad protected the palm of the user's hand. The *Prairie Farmer* said on Oct. 24, 1896: "The Lillie Corn husker has been in successful use for the past three years and wherever it has been introduced, it has effectually supplanted every other kind of corn husker where husking is done by hand."

Buffalo County historian Samuel Bassett noted that Lillie



Harvesting with a McCormick-Deering 15-30 tractor (manufactured 1923-29) and a one-row corn picker. Ads claimed the picker "increases your husking capacity six to ten times" over manual husking. History Nebraska RG3358-12s

perfected his device "after much thought, labor and expense. A poor man, he attempted to manufacture them and create a market under great difficulties. He succeeded in every way except financially. A grateful posterity will see that he is given the credit he deserves." According to historian James C. Olson, the Lillie corn husker was still being used in Nebraska as late as the 1920s.

That was the decade when mechanical corn harvesters began coming into general use. It was this machine that transformed the whole process of picking corn, making Lillie's device obsolete. ■



W. F. Lillie demonstrating the use of his corn husker. History Nebraska RG2411-3234

Downsized Decoy Spreads

By Jarrod Spilger

Several years ago, I purchased a half-dozen goose decoys at a local sporting goods store's clearance sale. These were no ordinary decoys, though, but rather the oversized shells waterfowlers used to refer to as "747s." I've since utilized my "Super Six" to lure in numerous Canada geese.

Many of the fields I hunt can only be accessed by foot, making a trailer full of decoys unnecessary and a large spread impossible. Instead, I pack in the Super Six and rely on their oversized stature, along with calling, to grab the attention of passing honkers. It doesn't always work, but it works often enough.

A small spread is effective because it's something different. As the season progresses, Canada geese get suspicious of huge spreads of a hundred decoys or more. However, a small spread of, say, six to 18 decoys looks like a small flock that's just landed in a field to feed.

If using less than 12 decoys, they should be slightly oversized so they get noticed. When using 12 to 18 decoys, they can be standard sized or slightly smaller for the sake of mobility.

While my 747s are effective, they're bulky. This season I'm trying a dozen of Greenhead Gear's hybrid 3-D silhouettes. They aren't completely flat like a traditional silhouette, plus they have flocked heads and motion stakes that store in the decoy body for easy transport. Best of all,

they're compact and lightweight.

Try downsizing your spread this season. It may be just the ticket for fooling wary, decoy-wise geese. ■



PHOTO BY JARROD SPILGER



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THURSTON CO, NE - 480 AC.

Truly an unbelievable property offering so much hardwood timber in one contiguous block in northeast Nebraska. Tracts of this size are hard to come by with this much to offer. A rustic 3 bedroom hunting cabin sits in a quiet location below the hardwood timber ridge. A large food plot is located just a few hundred yards from the front porch offering great wildlife viewing potential. Two large outbuildings on site to store all of your toys securely and out of the weather. Numerous food plot, tree stand, and tower blind opportunities are available on this unique property. The farm has been managed to grow trophy deer. Within a mile of the Missouri River and adjoins the bluffs overlooking the river. Thousands of acres of hardwood forest surround the area! 150 acres of tillable land. A timber harvest might also provide additional income.

JOHNSON CO, NE - 319 AC.

Here is a farm that is truly a must see! There are multiple crop fields surrounded by dense timber that continues across the north side of the farm. Each tillable field is surrounded by an unbelievable amount of timber edge giving you the option for numerous stand locations. A live creek winds its way through the northwest side of the property providing a secluded water source for the numerous deer that call this farm home. This already large acre farm walks and will hunt, much bigger than most others its size due to the topography and timber. Multiple access points throughout the property make easy access for both agriculture and getting to your tree stands undetected. The acres lying south of 50th Road are almost 100% income producing and are an added bonus to an already great property.



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Hunting Prairie Grouse

By Julie Geiser

Knowing where to find prairie grouse takes experience, keen observation skills and learning what the birds need during the early and late hunting seasons. Much of the prairie chicken and sharp-tailed grouse range lies in the Sandhills, which can mean walking up and down hills hoping to find birds.

To avoid hours of walking, look for shin- to knee-high grasses and forbs (broad-leaved weeds) that birds use for cover from predators and weather and for food. Birds feed early in the morning and mid-to-late afternoon; doing some

preseason scouting to locate food sources will acclimate hunters to an area and get them into shape.

Early in the season, birds will feed on insects such as grasshoppers and crickets along with wild plums, chokecherries and grain crops. Later in the season, look for rose hips, poison ivy fruit, grain crops and dried seed forbs. On colder days, birds will warm themselves on southern-facing hill-sides, and early in the hunting season, so will insects.

Mid-day, grouse can be found loafing along the higher hill ridges. On warm days, birds will loaf under wild plum, chokecherry and poison ivy shrubs to keep cool or they'll sit where there is a breeze out of the sun. On cold winter days, birds will warm in the sun and out of heavy winds, many times just below a hilltop or pockets where there is sunlight and little wind.

Wind can be useful; walk directly into the wind to approach birds, especially when using a dog so it can pick up the bird's scent. On very windy days, birds will sit tighter and will fly into the wind, giving shooters a brief shot.

Also, record your hunting conditions on each trip. Mark good habitat locations with GPS so you can find them again. Study where you down a bird, look at the food and cover sources, and make note the time of day and year, weather conditions and contents of the bird's crop.

Putting all this together will help a hunter beat the odds and bag more birds. ■



PHOTO BY JULIE GEISER



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Upcoming Events

by Jerry Kane

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

October 1
Prairie Blacksmith Convention Fort Atkinson State Historical Park (SHP), Fort Calhoun

October 1-31
Paddlefish Snagging season in specific area of Missouri River

October 2
Waterfowl Hunting Workshop Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 4
Wild Game Cooking Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 6
Dark Goose Hunting season opens in North Central Unit

Light and White-fronted Goose Hunting season opens statewide

All Season Hunting Workshop Mormon Island State Recreation Area (SRA), Doniphan

Duck and Coot Hunting seasons open in Zones 2 and 4

October 6-7
Youth Waterfowl Hunting season in Zone 1

Living History Weekend – Heritage Days Fort Atkinson SHP, Fort Calhoun

October 9
Upland Bird Hunting Workshop Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 12
Trick or Treat at the Town Indian Cave State Park (SP), Shubert

October 13
Halloween Campsite Decorating Contest Fremont Lakes SRA, Fremont
Howl in the Hills Night Hike Wildcat Hills SRA, Gering

Duck and Coot Hunting seasons open in Zone 1

October 13, 19, 20, 26, 27
Haunted Hollow Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 13, 20
Hallowfest Ponca SP, Ponca

October 13, 20, 27
Halloween Campsite Decorating Contest Indian Cave SP, Shubert

October 13-28
Firearm Antelope Hunting season in specific units

October 15
Crow Hunting season opens statewide

October 20
Jack-O-Lantern Junk and Craft Market, Trick or Treat by the Buses, Pink Pumpkin Walk Indian Cave SP, Shubert

Pumpkin Carvers Festival Calamus SRA, Burwell

October 20-21
Youth Waterfowl Hunting season in Zone 3

Youth Pheasant, Quail and Partridge Hunting season statewide

October 23
Deer Hunting Workshop Nebraska Game and Parks Outdoor Education Center, Lincoln

October 24
Deer Hunting Workshop Chadron State College, Chadron

October 25
Duck and Coot Hunting seasons open in Zone 3

October 26
Nebraska Game and Parks Board of Commissioners meeting, Kearney

October 26-28
Camp and Treat Red Willow Reservoir SRA, McCook

October 27
Pheasant, Quail and Partridge Hunting seasons open statewide

Trunk and Treat Fort Atkinson SHP, Fort Calhoun

Trunk or Treat Calamus SRA, Burwell

Halloween at the Hollow Ash Hollow SHP, Lewellen

October 27-28
DeSoto October Muzzleloader Deer Hunting season

October 29
Dark Goose Hunting season opens in East, Platte River, Panhandle and Niobrara Units

October 30
Dove Hunting (all species) season closes

October 31
Bull Elk Hunting archery and firearm seasons close

Antlerless Elk Hunting private land and public land seasons close

Eurasian Collared-dove Only Hunting season opens

Raccoon and Virginia Opossum Hunting seasons close

Bullfrog season closes

DIY Rod Cases

By Justin Haag

Slamming car doors, shifting cargo, stumbling feet. Each has been unkind to my fishing rods more times than I care to admit. After a fly rod somehow broke while riding freely in my truck bed this spring, it was time to take action to keep it from happening again. Of course, many excellent rod cases are available from retailers. After some research, though, I found a simple design created from a favorite inexpensive building material – PVC pipe.

Not only is two-inch PVC likely able to withstand your abuse, it can simply be cut to whatever length your rod's sections are. After cutting to length, just add end caps – one affixed with PVC glue and one not. Some use screw-in caps, but I found the slip-on variety to be adequate. Foam glued inside each end cap will absorb shock from the rod moving back and forth.

Finally, consider some finishing touches. A plain white case will protect just as well as one with a fancy paint job but might not suit your tastes. I aimed for a natural look. To do so, I scraped the pipe with a coarse rasp and gave it some sanding to simulate wood grain. A coat or two of wood stain finished the job. Maybe you want to add handles and a strap to ensure the end cap doesn't get lost.

As long as the case protects the rod, it's beautiful in my book. ■



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

More Open Fields Acres

By Eric Fowler

A record 300,000 acres of private land is open to public hunting and fishing through the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Open Fields and Waters program this year, bringing the amount of land open to public access to about one million acres.

The program pays landowners to allow access for hunting, fishing and trapping, and provides incentives for habitat improvements to benefit fish and wildlife.

As of Sept. 5, there were 280,000 acres of land enrolled for the 2018-19 program year, including grasslands enrolled in the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program for upland game hunting and other grasslands and woodlands in which hunters can pursue deer, turkeys and other game. An additional 20,000 to 30,000 acres of tall wheat stubble, also good for pheasant hunting, was expected, which will put the total acres up considerably from the 257,000 enrolled in 2017-18.

Funding for the program comes from hunting, fishing and fur-harvest

permits, habitat stamps, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program, excise taxes paid on firearms and ammunition through the Pittman-Robertson Act and conservation groups such as National Wild Turkey Federation and Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever.

The Commission's Public Access Atlas details land enrolled in the Open Fields and Waters program, as well as all other public lands open to hunting and fishing. Printed copies are available at Commission offices and permit vendors, as well as online at OutdoorNebraska.org/PublicAccessAtlas. ■



PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

NEBRASKAland Visitor



Last issue's winner of the Visitor drawing was Tom Ourada of Plattsmouth, who found the **cicada shell** on page 53.

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

To enter each month, write:

NEBRASKAland Visitor
2200 North 33rd Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

Or e-mail: Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov with "Visitor" in the subject line of the message.

HINT: This issue's visitor is not on page 13, 17, or 55.

Cicada Shell

The cicada spends most of its life underground, feeding on tree roots. When it is ready to mature, it crawls out of the ground and up a tree. What happens next is amazing! The shell, or exoskeleton, of the cicada will split down its head and back, and the cicada starts to wiggle, eventually pulling its entire body out of its own shell. This extraction is actually the end of a hormone driven process, called molting. An insect's exoskeleton is rigid and doesn't expand as the insect grows. When an insect has outgrown its exoskeleton, it will separate from that exoskeleton and grow a new one underneath. The insect's body swells causing the old exoskeleton to split, and the insect crawls out, leaving the old exoskeleton behind. Its new exoskeleton is pale and soft, but will darken and harden over the next several hours.



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

The Final Hurrah

Fall Color in Nebraska

Amy Seiler, Community Forestry Specialist - Nebraska Forest Service

When temperatures begin to cool, it is fall that offers the last hurrah, the finale of the growing season. As with all great concerts or performances, the finale is a culmination of all the good things that have been enjoyed throughout the performance. It's like a fireworks show, a grand display of color. The landscape is complete and seedheads on perennials and grasses are radiant, backlit by early morning or late evening light. During these evenings, blossoms stay on the plants longer and don't wither in the heat of the day, and the cool nighttime temperatures trigger the chlorophyll to exit the leaves of trees, shrubs and perennials ... and the display of color begins.



*Above: The sun rises over the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers at Niobrara State Park in Knox County.
Opposite: Sand bluestem seedheads glow in the afternoon sun in a Sandhills draw in Cherry County.
Photos by Eric Fowler*





*Above: Fall colors abound at Indian Cave State Park in Richardson County. The park sits on the western side of the Missouri River in southeastern Nebraska.
Photo by Eric Fowler*

*Left: A mountain bluebird lands on a sunflower stalk near Cherry Creek Pond at Fort Robinson State Park in Dawes County.
Photo by Justin Haag*

*Right: The distinct color of American bittersweet berries indicates the coming of fall at Ponderosa Wildlife Management Area in Dawes County.
Photo by Justin Haag*





*Above: White-tailed deer run across a wheat field south of Chadron in Dawes County.
Photo by Justin Haag*



*Left: Fall is signaled by the changing colors of leaves in the Nebraska National Forest near Chadron.
Photo by Justin Haag*

*Right: Fall color paints the woodlands in the upland portion of Niobrara Confluence Wildlife Management Area in Knox County.
Photo by Eric Fowler*

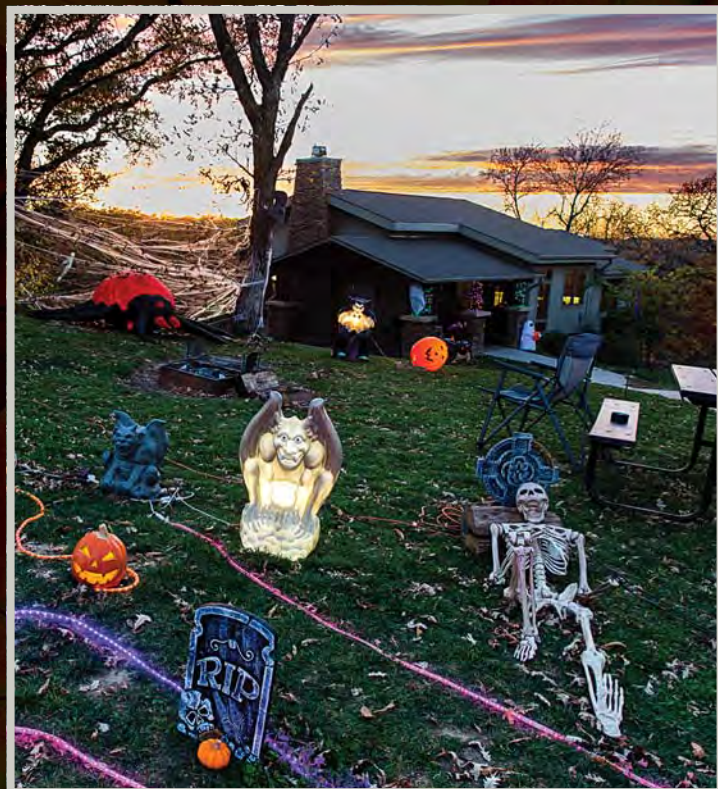


Time Well Spent

What to Do in October

By Renae Blum

Breathe deep and take in the crisp fall air, the excitement of Halloween and new hunting seasons. October is here, and there are multiple ways to enjoy this peaceful month. Read on for some ideas. To learn about fun park events coming up this month, visit Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov. ■



Halloween at a State Park

Various dates

Various locations

Enjoy the fun of Halloween in a uniquely beautiful setting, where there's plenty to do after you've gathered the last pieces of candy. Various state parks are offering events filled with fun family activities: campground decorating contests, haunted hayrack rides, pumpkin carving contests, crafts, face painting, and of course, trick-or-treating. Find events online at Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov.



Heritage Days

Oct. 6-7

Fort Atkinson State Historical Park



This two-day celebration of 19th-century Nebraska history includes hands-on learning demonstrations, children's games, traditional foods and music. Enjoy exploring the fort as living history interpreters demonstrate military and civilian life. Other activities include a farmers market, tractor show, pie eating and mustache/beard competitions, old-fashioned apple pressing and cider tasting. Learn more at wcheritagedays.org.



HUNTING AT YANKEE HILL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA. PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

Opening of Pheasant Season

Oct. 27

Statewide

The waiting is over: a new pheasant season is upon us. Some of Outdoor Education Specialist Aaron Hershberger's strategies for a new season include starting early in the day, using teamwork, taking breaks, avoiding making any commotion, and of course, having fun – all while wearing hunter orange to remain safe. Learn about other open hunting seasons at OutdoorNebraska.gov/huntingseasons.

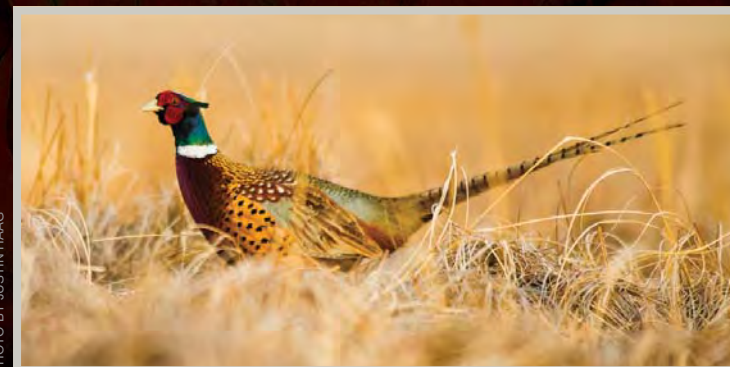


PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

Learn to Hunt Workshops

Various Dates

Various locations

For those new to hunting, looking for a refresher, or are simply interested in expanding their hunting knowledge, these free introductory workshops are for you. Five Learn to Hunt workshops will take place in October, individually covering topics such as deer, upland bird, waterfowl and all-season hunting. We will review hunting strategies, equipment, techniques and ways to get started. Learn more and sign up at OutdoorNebraska.gov/workshops.

Enjoy Fall Color Throughout the month

Statewide

October's cooling temperatures and shortening days trigger an explosion of color in Nebraska's trees, shrubs, vines and grasses. For a great viewing experience, Game and Parks' Greg Wagner recommends searching out areas with a variety of tree species. Places with high elevation or water are good places to start. They also offer incredible views and picturesque reflections.



VIRGINIA CREEPER IN DAVES COUNTY. PHOTO BY JUSTIN HAAG

The Nebraska Table

Part 3 – Autumn

By Ryan Sparks

The first cool days of autumn bring a nagging urge to be outdoors – a primal upwelling to hear the crunch of leaves underfoot, stare up at migrating flocks and breathe the sweet smell of harvest. Every fall I look forward to days spent hunting deer and quail, Cornhusker football games, trips to the pumpkin patch and rich meals of wild game. Like many Nebraskans who also love wild game, I often look for inspiration from Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley, who is our third “Nebraska Table” feature in this four-season series. Jenny’s culinary talents frequently grace the pages of *NEBRASKAland*, but I followed her work long before her time at the magazine through her website, foodforhunters.com. As a college student, I remember looking for wild game recipes outside the “wrap-in-bacon and smother-with cheese” category. Her recipes taught me preparations and techniques I still use today. Having learned so much from Jenny, it was a pleasure to interview her and learn her thoughts on hunting and cooking wild game.

How did you become interested in hunting and cooking wild game?

My husband, Rick, introduced me to wild game years ago when we first met in California. He hunted in Nebraska every year and would usually fly home with a deer or two every season and some ducks as well – whatever his cousins could send with him. He did all the typical recipes: Manwiches, burgers, wrap-it-in-bacon steaks ... When I discovered his freezer full of game, all that changed.

I was still in college at the time and that’s what I did during my spare time – I taught myself how to cook with wild game. We cooked on the weekends together when I was home, and during the week, I’d take some meat with me and experiment at my apartment near UCLA. We created our Food for Hunters website to chronicle our experiments. *The Daily Bruin*, the university newspaper, even wrote a

story on me. One of their journalists sat behind me in class and saw that I was working on the website instead of – ahem – paying attention. The paper contacted me, and I invited them over for dinner to have venison steaks with boysenberry sauce and blue cheese. They loved it, and the evening provided them with a unique story. Hunting is a completely foreign concept to most people in the big city.

How did you learn to hunt and cook? What would you say to someone interested in learning to hunt?

Just do it. People get so worked up about cooking because they’re afraid of messing up. Screwing up a recipe is little loss. If you burn dinner, there are grocery stores and restaurants to remedy that. Then try again later. To me, cooking is a creative outlet. Some recipes work out and others don’t. It’s not a big deal. As far as where to start, check out my book *Hunting for Food* for instructions and tips on hunting a wide variety of game. There are also some great websites out there dedicated to wild game cooking: Hank Shaw’s *Hunter Angler Gardener Cook* blog was a great resource when I was learning how to cook game.

What are the advantages of hunting your own food?

As long as you don’t overdo the butter, oil and cream cheese, wild game is healthier than store-bought meat. It’s lean. The animal also lived a free-range, natural life. And depending on your situation, if you have easy access to hunting near your home, it can be cheaper to fill your

Venison steak tartare served with a farm-fresh raw egg yolk.



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

freezer. On top of that, since you’re doing the dispatching, cleaning and butchering yourself, you have complete control over the whole process. I see the meme “Wild game doesn’t get recalled” circulate on Facebook every hunting season. It’s true.

What is your favorite animal to hunt and cook with?

Deer and elk are versatile. They can substitute beef in virtually all recipes, taking into account differences in cooking time. And if you shoot a young animal and take care of it in the field, most people can’t tell the difference.

What are types of preparations that many hunters overlook?

There are many hunters who think that certain parts of an animal are inedible. Anything can be edible as long as you take the time to cook it correctly. Some of my favorite recipes were made from the quarters and legs of an animal, rather than the loins and breasts. I’ve taken bone-in-shanks from a deer and braised them until they almost fall off the bone to make Italian osso buco and also Persian-style braised venison shank. The bones can be used to make broth and if you can crosscut them, deer marrow is very good. I’ve also made all

kinds of soups with the legs of game birds. And wild turkey legs, when ground, make delicious, healthy burgers and meatballs, but remember to take out the pin bones.

What is the biggest misconception about hunting and eating wild game?

I think most people’s perception of hunting and wild game is changing. If given the opportunity, I think most people are fascinated by it. I’ve spent a lot of time talking about wild game with different groups in the last few years, and rarely do I meet someone who will completely turn up their nose. Different people can have different opinions about trophy hunting and all that, but food and cooking is a common experience. People love to eat and try new things, more so now in this Instagram era. In my experience, cooking wild game has been a great way to open up bigger conversations about hunting.

And it’s all about presentation, as my mother – who is an amazing cook – taught me. If your food, plating and photos look good, you’ll win people over. Wild game doesn’t always have to be wrapped in bacon or drowned in canned brown sauce, which has its place, but as a food photographer and recipe developer, my goal is to convince as many people as I can that eating and cooking wild game is a worthwhile

experience. I do this by cooking game in as many ways as I can think of so that different people can connect with it.

What I do find interesting is how wild game is perceived in different countries. For example, eating game is so often considered “redneck” or “backwoods” in the United States. But across the pond in the U.K., a wild game dinner is an elevated experience. Hunting is the sport of gentry in Britain, whereas here, it is the sport of the common man, and it’s interesting how that is reflected in the food.

Rick and I visited Scotland in June, and we ate as much local game and seafood as we could find: red deer that was hunted on a nearby estate; wild salmon, cod, haddock, hake and lobster caught off the Scottish coast; and fresh scallops and oysters harvested the same morning from a local saltwater bay loch ... we even came home with a few new recipes to try. I can’t think of a better way to truly experience – take in a new place – than to consume an animal that spent its life living and breathing in that space, eating the grass that grew wild on its native soil, and drinking from the streams that bubbled from deep underneath that same earth. That animal is an embodiment of its environment, and the connection of being able to hunt and prepare a meal with its meat is magical. You just don’t get that experience with factory meat.

How has your experience hunting, fishing, and cooking wild game in Nebraska influenced your perception or understanding of the state?

It’s made me appreciate the state’s bounty, and how important conservation is in maintaining this bounty. I come from Southern California, where their idea of “conservation” is more hands off and fairly anti-hunting, all the while turning a blind eye to how much urban development and our very existence affects wildlife. Speaking from personal experience – when you spend your whole life living among buildings and concrete, your idea of the countryside, of the forest, and all the creatures that live in it are more fantasy than reality. This realization has changed the way I look at our wild places, and I have hunting to thank for it. Rick and I would’ve never been able to sustain Food for Hunters back in SoCal. Living in Nebraska now, we always have a freezer full of game.

I’m thankful for all our biologists who are so passionate in what they do, all the like-minded hunters and anglers who buy their hunting and fishing permits every year to support conservation, and our Nebraska landowners who are stewards of the earth and water upon which our wildlife depend.

You will find Jenny’s recipe for venison steak tartare in the following recipes. To me, this is the essence of venison in its purest form. Don’t be intimidated – as someone who has used the recipe, I can assure you it’s easy to prepare and unbelievably delicious. You will also find a recipe for foraged oyster mushroom tacos by former executive chef at Lincoln’s Hub Café Abigail Birrel, candied garden squash rings by my grandmother and lifelong cook Jane Sparks, and Sander’s Farm bobwhite quail by chef and owner of The Grey Plume in Omaha Clayton Chapman. I hope these recipes inspire you to get outside and explore Nebraska’s autumn flavors. ■



PHOTO BY JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY

Venison Steak Tartare

Yield: 4 appetizers

- ½ pound venison loin or roast (never inside straps)
- Kosher salt
- Half a shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon juniper berries, toasted and ground
- Himalayan sea salt, to taste
- Coarse ground pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped and to taste
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- Grated zest of half a lemon
- Woodland violet flowers for garnish, optional
- 2 egg yolks, from a reliable source
- Capers
- French bread, sliced, buttered and toasted

1. Trim off any silver skin and fat on venison. Cover liberally with the kosher salt and set in the freezer for 20-30 minutes to firm up. Meanwhile, soak minced shallot in red wine vinegar. Wash your hands thoroughly before handling the meat. When venison is firm, rinse salt off the venison and pat dry with paper towels. With a sharp knife, finely dice the meat. Transfer meat to a bowl and keep cold. (Never use tenderloin/inside straps for this recipe due to possible contamination from the gut.)

2. Drain shallots and combine with minced meat, ground juniper berries, Himalayan sea salt to taste, coarse ground pepper, chopped parsley, Dijon mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Taste for seasoning.

3. Divide meat into two serving bowls and make a depression in each. Lay an egg yolk into each bowl and garnish with lemon zest – edible flowers are purely decorative. Serve with capers and thinly sliced, buttered, toasted French bread. Try this dish with sliced/diced avocados.

– Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley



Foraged Oyster Mushroom Tacos

Oyster mushrooms grow wild in Nebraska. You can also buy them from a grocery store, but the wild variety has a much fuller flavor. Oyster mushrooms grow in clusters on living and dead trees, stumps, logs and buried roots. They can be found in great quantity September through October.

Yield: 2-4

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion
- 1 large poblano chile, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 6 ounces oyster mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 8 soft corn tortillas
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro, for garnish
- 1 thinly sliced avocado

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and poblano, and sauté until the onion is tender and a bit golden, about 15 minutes. Add the garlic and spices and sauté for another minute. Stir in the mushrooms, then season with salt and pepper. Cook until the mushrooms are



tender and crispy (5 to 8 minutes). Remove from the heat and stir in the lime juice. Taste and adjust the seasonings as desired.

In a small skillet, heat corn tortillas until fragrant and pliable. To assemble, layer the onion, poblano and mushroom mixture in each tortilla. Garnish with thinly sliced avocado and cilantro.

– Abigail Birrell



PHOTOS BY RYAN SPARKS

Candied Garden Squash Rings

Simple and sweet, candied acorn squash pairs exceptionally well with traditional holiday fixings like gravy, cranberry sauce and roast turkey. Feel free to substitute the brown sugar mixture with honey or maple syrup.

- Yield: 4 sides
- 2 acorn squash
 - Salt and pepper to taste
 - ½ cup packed brown sugar
 - ¼ butter or margarine
 - 2 tablespoons water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut squash lengthwise into 1-inch slices, discarding the seeds. Arrange the slices in a single layer in a shallow baking dish. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and bake until almost tender, about 40 minutes. In a saucepan combine the brown sugar, butter and water. Cook over medium heat until bubbling. Spoon the brown sugar mixture over the squash and continue baking, uncovered, until the squash is tender and the sugar has caramelized, about 15 minutes. Enjoy!

– Jane Sparks



PHOTO BY RYAN SPARKS

Sander’s Farm Bobwhite Quail

To me, quail is the perfect fall bird. It is versatile, stands up well to winter spices, and is able to take on many of the flavors you pair it with. For our ingredients, Dave and Lori Sanders own Sander’s Country Meats, just east of Lincoln, and they raise quail, rabbits, and bees, and cure a wide variety of local meats for chefs in the area. The bobwhite species in this recipe is the quail indigenous to Nebraska and we felt a perfect fit for the fall. In addition, Small’s Fruit Farm is in Mondamin, Iowa, overlooking the Missouri River Valley. Jim Small and his family have been growing fruit on this land for decades and specialize in apples. We did not use a specific type of apple for this recipe because we felt any local apple would work. Also, Shadowbrook Farm, just east of Lincoln, is a breath of fresh air for us during the late fall and winter months as produce becomes scarce in our harsh winters. Last, the coffee represented in this dish comes from Sumatra, Indonesia. We bring all of our Fair-Trade Organic coffee into the restaurant raw and roast here on site. We thought this was a great way to bridge the end of summer and fall flavors. The recipe serves four, but is easily adjustable for more or fewer guests. Enjoy!

- Yield: 4
- 4 bobwhite quail
 - 8 sprigs fresh thyme
 - 4 cups pre-made coffee, can still be warm
 - 2 oz fresh ground coffee, finely ground
 - 3 oz neutral cooking oil

- 3 oz whole unsalted butter
 - Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
 - .5 oz George Paul red wine vinegar
 - .5 oz Sander’s Farm dark honey-
 - 1 lemon for zest
- Place whole quail in a container large enough to hold them. Pour pre-made coffee over the quail and allow to sit for as long as possible. You can let the quail set for a minimum of an hour or up to 24.
- Once the quail have marinated to your desired amount of time, pull the quail out of the coffee and pat them dry. You can save the coffee marinating liquid for the sauce. Season the quail with salt, pepper and ground coffee. Heat a medium size pan over medium heat, add the cooking oil. Once oil is hot, add the quail to the pan and begin to sear them until they become golden brown. Once one side of the bird is golden brown, continue to rotate the quail until all sides are browned evenly. Once quail are browned, place them on a baking sheet, add one thyme sprig on top of each bird and bake in the oven at 350 degrees until the internal temperature of the thigh reaches 160 degrees.
- In the pan that you seared the quail in, add the 3 oz of butter and 4 thyme sprigs. Once butter is hot, add the coffee marinating liquid to the pan and reduce until the sauce is thick like ketchup or coats the back of a spoon. Add vinegar and honey, remove the thyme sprigs and season with salt and pepper, set aside. Once the birds come out of the oven,

brush them with the sauce and sprinkle with the lemon zest before you serve. You can also put a little sauce on the plate if you like.

- Small’s Fruit Farm Fall Apple**
- 2 apples
 - 1 oz George Paul white wine vinegar
 - 1 oz Sander’s Farm dark honey
 - 2 oz whole unsalted butter
 - Kosher salt and fresh cracked black pepper to taste
 - .25 oz fresh chives or parsley, minced

Wash apples and cut into quarters, leaving skin on. Remove the core of the apple and cut the apple into wedges about .25-inch thick. In a saute pan, add your butter and allow the butter to foam. Once butter is foamed, add your apples and cook until they are crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. Add the honey and vinegar and season to taste with salt and pepper. When you are ready to serve the apples, add the chives or parsley.

- Shadowbrook Farm’s Butternut Squash**
- 1 large or two small butternut squash
 - .25 oz fresh cinnamon, toast and ground
 - 2 oz Sander’s Farm dark honey
 - .25 oz coffee grounds, finely ground
 - 3 fresh thyme sprigs
 - 3 oz neutral cooking oil
 - 2 oz whole unsalted butter
 - Kosher salt and fresh cracked black pepper to taste

Cut the bulb of the butter nut away from the neck. Scrap the seeds out of the bulb and peel the neck of the butternut. Cut the neck down the middle lengthwise and then cut into .25-inch slices. Sprinkle the inside of the bulb with the coffee grounds, cinnamon, 1 oz of butter in each, salt and pepper. Wrap the bulbs in aluminum foil and bake in a 350 degree oven until they are completely tender; this should take about 1-1.5 hours.

Using the neck of the butternut, add them and the cooking oil to a sauté pan or sauce pot on medium heat. Season with salt and pepper and cook until tender. If the squash starts to develop any color, you can add little bits of water in stages to help the cooking process. The goal is to have very tender squash without any browning.

Once both types of squash are cooked, scrape the flesh out of the bulb of the butternut and mix with the softened sautéed neck. Make sure you put the butter and liquid from the roasted squash into the puree as well, discard the thyme sprigs. If you would like a very smooth puree of butternut, put this mixture into the blender with the honey and blend until smooth. If you would like the squash more rustic, mash with a fork in a mixing bowl and mix in the honey. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To assemble, divide the butternut squash mash/puree among your four plates evenly. Spoon apples on top and place one quail on top of the apples. If you have any of the coffee sauce left, you can put some on the plate.

– Clayton Chapman



PHOTO BY RYAN SPARKS

Calling Wildlife

A Duck Caller's Journey

Story and photos by Julie Geiser

What started out as a weekend woodworking project has become a life-long journey for Brent Hoover of North Platte. Hoover has a love of working with his hands and creating different pieces of art. As an outdoorsman, he has made his own arrows, fly rods and many other things that he uses while hunting and fishing. Duck calls seemed like the

next new thing to try.

About seven years ago, Hoover set out one weekend to make duck calls in his garage for his grandson and a couple hunting buddies. As Hoover turned the pieces of wood on his lathe, he realized this project was going to take much more than a weekend. "I thought I was going to walk in on a Saturday and be done," Hoover said. "It took two months to even get

something that sounded like a duck and two years to get a sound that I was satisfied with. There was no Disney ending to this project."

Hoover kept a notebook on his setbacks and progress. "It was a long process to figure out call making and solving problems in the process," Hoover said. He found an online forum that gave him access to many other call makers around the United States. The people on this site were quick to help with stumbling blocks, and Hoover felt blessed to find them. "If you had problems with a call, the guys on the site would give you some help and encouragement. They don't come right out and tell you the precise increments they use on their calls, but they let you figure it out little by little so you as the call maker can see how the smallest changes and cuts make a difference in a finished product and in the sounds that are produced," Hoover said.

Hoover made and traded calls with other call makers. He began to attend call-maker events across the country, where he has made good friends and learned tricks and techniques to make his calls unique.

After experimenting with different shapes and designs, Hoover has now settled in to his own distinct style. In addition to duck calls, he makes calls for goose, deer, turkey, predator and squirrel, too. The shape of his calls all have a hidden pattern outlined in the profile of each call's wood barrel. Duck calls have a hidden duck head, and the goose, turkey and deer calls have a profile in the wood.

The calls start with a precisely selected piece or two of wood that will look good together. Hoover has several large bins of wood pieces from local to



Brent Hoover is a game call maker from North Platte. Shown here are many of the calls Hoover makes including duck, goose, deer, turkey, squirrel and predator calls.

exotics including hedge, English and claro walnut, locust, maple, poplar, ash, black walnut, African blackwood, curly koa and desert mesquite burl. Some woods are dyed and hardened to make unique-looking calls, while other woods are plain but beautiful in their own simple way.

Hoover starts a call by drilling a hole into a small block of wood that is about one and one-half inches thick by six to eight inches long. Then he bores out the tone channel, which lies under the reed. Precise measurements differ between call makers, but that is what gives each call a different sound, the volume produced and how much air it takes to blow the call. "I tend to get picky and want a certain sound for a call, and I want my calls to be easy for

anyone to use," he said. "Every small detail in constructing a call affects the outcome of each call."

Hoover then uses the lathe to carve the animal profile into the call. The next step is dipping the call to protect the wood from moisture.

Once the wood is turned down, each call is soaked overnight in Brazilian rosewood oil and wiped down to make it water-resistant. Some of the woods aren't as oily as others, and those need repeated soakings in the oil to make them water-resistant.

Every call is unique in its look and sound. Calls can be dressed up with aluminum or brass rings, wood etchings and hand paintings that Hoover does himself. As I can attest to, these calls are absolutely beautiful and

the sounds produced are true – sounds that will call in the leeriest of wildlife.

"This year I changed more on the duck calls. I wanted more of the high-end pitch, so I changed the arc. The calls blow really easy, but I wanted to be able to reach out far with sound," said Hoover. "Experimenting is all part of call making and the love of creating."

Calls are made according to what the person buying them wants. Many are custom-made and sentimental. "I'll make several different designs from what customers tell me they want, then they can pick and choose and make changes to the call. Emails and texts are a great way to send digital images, and it doesn't take long to get a custom call put on paper," Hoover said.



Hoover tests the sound on his deer call.



Shown here is a deer call Hoover made that can make buck and doe grunts and doe bleats.



Hoover chooses a piece of wood for a call from one of his bins of wood.

One customer used to cut and remove cedar trees with his grandfather and uncle. After the gentleman's grandfather passed away, the grandson wanted a custom call made for his uncle out of one of the last remaining pieces of cedar that they had cut down together. So, the call was made and given to the uncle as a remembrance piece of his dad that can be used and handed down for years to come.

Hoover also wanted everything going out of the shop to be 100 percent handmade. "I decided I wanted to go with wood throughout the call. It takes a lot of extra time to do it this way, but that's the fun of doing it." Hoover's calls are unlike some in the call-making industry, as he constructs the "guts" of the call from wood instead of buying it in a kit, then he fine-tunes the reeds to produce the sound he wants.

Hoover is always trying new things and pushing the limits on what can be done and what he can make, from carved black walnut root goose calls with a set of handmade black walnut root guts and a carved brass band with an oil finish and the hidden goose in the profile of the call barrel, to a Russian olive predator call with dual-voice, or a painted glass hedge turkey pot call with matching striker, a hidden turkey feather in the profile of the call and an oil finish. Each call is a piece of art and adding his own artistic touches to the calls makes them even more personal. "It's a God-given gift. I've been doing art and working with my hands since I was a kid," Hoover recalled.

Hoover has sold calls to customers in California, South Carolina, Florida, Minnesota, and Louisiana, to name a few. "It's neat to meet the different people from around the country. I still really enjoy working with local people and seeing them face to face. Some of them stop by the shop just to see what I'm working on, and that's a great deal," Hoover said.

Every call Hoover makes also includes his initials along with "Colossians 3:23," which is another trademark of Hoover's. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord." Hoover does his call making according to that scripture, which goes along with the passion and reasoning behind every call he makes. ■



Hoover turns down a small piece of wood on his lathe into a duck call. Using precise measurements he cuts the outline of a duck head into the barrel of the call.

RIDE TO SUPPORT 4-H

Fundraising trail ride in the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey celebrates 20th anniversary.

By Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley

Head, Heart, Hands and Health – since 1958, the Nebraska 4-H Foundation has been supporting youth through hands-on projects that encourage them to stay active and engaged in their communities, and prepare them for the future. With programs ranging from animal science to business to the arts to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the foundation's mission is to help provide the financial backing and

manpower needed to 4-H clubs across Nebraska, which collectively serve about 143,000 young people annually.

Open to children ages 5-18, regardless of financial background, Nebraska 4-H would not be possible without volunteers and generous donations. In partnership with Nebraska Extension, the foundation is supported by 12,000 volunteers and hosts key fundraising events throughout the year.

One such fundraiser is the State 4-H Camp Trail Ride

Lillyanne Lewis of Ord rides her paint horse during the 4-H Camp Trail Ride in the Nebraska National Forest.



Local ranchers provide panels to pen in horses for the 4-H Camp Trail Ride in Halsey. They also donate Nebraska certified weed-free hay, which is required by law inside the Nebraska National Forest to prevent the introduction of invasive plants.



Top: Bruce Treffer of Cozad rides alongside his daughter, Sarah, who has been attending the 4-H Camp Trail Ride in Halsey since she was one year old.
 Bottom: Treffer's son, Greg, leads his horse over small log obstacles. Greg has also been riding since he was a toddler.



in Halsey, which began in 1999 and will celebrate its 20th anniversary this fall, Oct. 6-7.

Hands and Heart

When Nebraska Extension educators and friends of the 4-H Horse Program met in November 1998, they chose the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey as the site for the annual state 4-H Camp Trail Ride. Established in 1902 by Charles E. Bessey, this man-made forest offered recreational opportunities unlike anywhere else in the Great Plains, and for Sandhills and corn country horse riders, the forest is a pleasant change of scenery and terrain.

Originally, proceeds from the ride went to support national trips for the Nebraska 4-H Horse Program, but that has changed periodically depending on financial need. Currently, funds are used to maintain the 4-H Camp in Halsey and to provide “camperships” for young people to attend other camps throughout the year.

Located within the national forest, the Halsey camp is one of two 4-H centers in the state. It was dedicated in 1962, and in addition to hosting youth functions, the camp is also available to outside organizations and events; the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s Becoming and Outdoors-Woman Weekend called the 4-H Camp in Halsey home for many years.

Stuart Shepherd, executive director of the Nebraska 4-H Foundation, said, “The funds raised from the trail ride have

“This is a family event – people bring their kids and grandkids – with so much fellowship around the campgrounds in the evenings. The whole weekend is special, plus you can’t beat the scenery.”

— Gary Stauffer, 4-H Trail Ride Co-Chair

been vital to supporting the 4-H Camp, which also benefits surrounding towns. Weddings, graduations, proms – the camp operates as a community center for the region.”

And in turn, the trail ride could not be successful without local help.

True to 4-H fashion, the weekend requires all hands on deck. Whether it’s local ranchers who lend their panels to pen in horses or donate Nebraska certified weed-free hay – required by law in the forest; or all the volunteers who keep the event running, who cook meals and spend time mentoring young riders while out on the trail; or the Nebraska Forest Service staff who agreed to maintain and open up a small pasture – now called “Windmill 25” – to serve as parking and trailhead ... the individuals who make the 4-H Camp Trail Ride possible could not be faulted for being short on heart.

Head and Health

Horses have long been a part of Nebraska’s landscape and culture, and the state’s 4-H Horse Program aims to bring along young riders who are responsible, self-disciplined, thoughtful and caring. Many of the youth riders at Halsey are current 4-H members, but this ride is also every bit as much for the adults.

Pulling in Nebraskans from all corners of the state – both city and rural, the forest’s central location sees an average of 100 riders each year, and in some years, the foundation may welcome as many as 150. Men, women, and children of all ages – including toddlers who share the saddle with their parents – have enjoyed Halsey. They come to explore the forest’s miles of pine-shaded trails, open Sandhills country, the camp atmosphere and friendships old and new.



Horses are kept inside pens available at the Windmill 25 area in the national forest. It is also where all trail rides begin and end.

And after 20 years, many of these riders have become regulars, returning year after year – some coming back with growing families.

“There’s at least one lady who comes every year, ever since she was a 4-H youth in summer camp,” said Dewey Teel, 4-H Trail Ride co-chair.

And those who don’t ride, the delicious Saturday night steak dinner and live and silent auctions are enough to convince many locals to enter the forest.

“Whether or not a person comes to ride, most like to see that their money is going to something that is local to the Sandhills region,” said Teel.

With large stands of forest and seemingly endless, wide open spaces, 4-H trail ride guides have access to about 30 miles of trails within 10-12 sections. Morning rides on Saturday and Sunday are considered short at approximately 4-6 miles, while

the Saturday afternoon ride ranges between 10-12 miles.

“You can see for miles and miles in the Sandhills areas. But when you get into the forest – even if you’re messing around for only a minute or two – you can’t see very far and you can get lost,” said Bruce Treffer, a 4-H Camp Trail Ride charter committee member.

Additionally, if scheduling allows, riding clinics are available in some years, taught by horse experts who want to share their skills and knowledge. They may include exercises such as opening and closing gates, learning how to ride over natural obstacles and desensitizing activities.

Trail leaders recommend that first timers practice riding out with others before coming to the trail ride, which can be overwhelming to some horses.

“There’s an impact in seeing so many horses going out that first time,” said Teel. But once here, to ride as part of a

large herd is a magnificent experience.

Then at the end of the day on Saturday, after a full day’s ride and a delicious evening meal of steak, baked potato and green beans, a bonfire at Windmill 25 completes the camp atmosphere.

Join the Ride

“This isn’t a commercial trail ride,” said Gary Stauffer, who has been 4-H Trail Ride co-chair since its inception. “The area is picturesque and unique, but there aren’t many amenities, so haul in what you’ll need.”



Top: A rider urges his horse through a “scary” curtain of wood chimes, a desensitizing exercise that was part of a riding clinic available in 2014.

Left: Riders Bryan Bechtel (left) of Henderson, Kathy Potthoff of Lincoln, Terri Licking (purple jacket) of Thedford and many others ride out of the trees and into more open Sandhills country.

Staff recommends that participants drive into the Windmill 25 site with 4x4 vehicles. Port-a-johns will be provided, but those looking for a more comfortable camping experience may look to The Forest Service’s Bessey Recreation Complex and Campground, which offers water and electric hookups.

For participants not hauling in RVs or live-in trailers, the Nebraska State 4-H Camp does offer cabins for a small fee, assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. There are also motels available in the nearby towns of Halsey and Thedford.

Also, riders should be prepared for any type of weather in October. Trail riders have experienced weather from sunny and picture-perfect to rain and wind to snow. One year, a blizzard blew through the area. Although attendance took a hit, the trail ride has never been cancelled.

“Everyone still had a good time,” said Teel. “Gary just took us through the trees and it was the prettiest drag we’ve ever had. There was snow everywhere.”

If you’re still not convinced to come ride, perhaps Bruce Treffer’s thoughts might persuade you:

“Horses and horse people ... when you gather people with common interests and place them in the Sandhills – one of the largest, most unique pieces of grassland there is in the country with a national forest in the middle of it, and with the 4-H Camp nearby which provides a unique camp setting ... the whole thing comes together. This has been the best place for us to meet, ride and support 4-H. It has fit our mission so well, so we’ve never thought to move the trail ride anywhere else.” ■

To learn more about Halsey’s trail rides, visit extension.unl.edu/statewide/centralsandhills/TrailRide.

How to Raise Big Walleye

New program offers improved survival rates, catch rates for walleye.

By Cara Pesek

For years, Game and Parks biologists have stocked walleye fingerlings in popular lakes and reservoirs across the state. Results have been mixed, with some waters yielding major benefits and others seeing poor survival. Southeastern Nebraska reservoirs fall into the latter category, where there has been limited success in building robust walleye populations,

especially in waters with established largemouth bass populations.

But a new way of raising walleyes for stocking is changing that, said Jim Gleim, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's assistant division administrator for fish production. This new method has resulted in greater survival rates for stocked walleye, and better walleye catch rates for anglers.

The process is time-intensive and involves feeding young walleye a lot of minnows – about 3.5 pounds of minnows for every pound of walleye raised, Gleim estimated. It took hatchery staff years to perfect the process, which they began experimenting with back in the 1990s, and then revived and finessed in 2013.

This is how the process works:

During walleye spawn in April, eggs are collected from Sherman Reservoir, Merritt Reservoir and Lake McConaughy. The eggs are incubated at the hatcheries at North Platte and at Calamus and hatch after about two weeks. A week or so after hatching, various lakes and reservoirs around the state are stocked with fry. Some of the fry remain in the hatcheries and are stocked in other lakes and reservoirs in early June, as 1.4-inch fingerlings.

A portion of those fingerlings remain at the hatcheries for the summer and into the fall. The walleye fingerlings feed on zooplankton in hatchery ponds, at least until that food source is diminished and they need something more substantial.

Enter the minnows. As the fingerlings are feeding on zooplankton, Game and Parks staff get ready for the next step, stocking each of several ponds with 50 pounds of fathead minnows. These brood minnows spawn and produce a huge crop of 1-inch minnows, which become the feed for the young walleye, starting in late June.

It takes the walleye about a month to eat all those minnows. After that, they are fed wholesale bought fathead minnows every other week until stocking. Between late July and the first week of October, when the walleye leave their hatchery ponds for their new homes in lakes and reservoirs across the state, they will have grown to an average length of 8.1 inches.

In fisheries biologist lingo, these large, minnow-fed walleye are known as “advanced walleye.” Since the advanced walleye program was revived in 2013, biologists have stocked 21 lakes and reservoirs, mostly in southeastern Nebraska, with advanced walleye.

“We’re seeing a lot better survival,



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

and that’s mainly because they’re stocked larger, and they’re much better able to avoid predation,” said Game and Parks fisheries biologist Tony Barada. “These fish are at least two to three times more likely to survive to age one and age two compared to fingerling stockings, and in many reservoirs here in southeastern Nebraska we are creating walleye fisheries where we would have almost no chance if we only had the capabilities of stocking 1-2 inch fish.”

Angler surveys at Pawnee Lake and Lake Wanahoo have shown increased catch rates since the advanced walleye stocking program was introduced. Barada and his colleagues also used an online approach developed by University of Nebraska researchers to gauge angler behavior and interest associated with the stocking program. They looked at mentions of walleye on social media channels and other online platforms and found an increase in the number of mentions of walleye near areas where the fish had been stocked.

Game and Parks staff have begun raising advanced northern pike, muskie and saugeye, using similar production methods, Barada said. They are seeing good survival rates and increased catch rates for those species, too.

The advanced walleye program, along with the advanced pike, muskie and saugeye programs, are still relatively new and haven’t been widely publicized. While die-hard anglers have kept track of the advanced fish

stockings, more casual anglers who venture out on the water where these species have been stocked may be in for a pleasant surprise.

“People pull up to a lake and have no idea that there’s walleye in it,” Barada said. “We want to get the word out about these opportunities.” ■

Walleye Stocking

This fall, Game and Parks expects to stock more than 30,000 advanced walleye in lakes and reservoirs across the state. Stockings are scheduled for the following lakes and reservoirs:

- Swanson Reservoir
- Buckskin Hills
- Powder Creek Reservoir
- Skyview Lake
- War Axe
- Mormon Island West
- Sandy Channel #8
- Cottonmill Lake
- Gl L.E. Ray Lake
- Branched Oak
- Wagon Train
- Yankee Hill
- Burchard Lake
- Czechland Lake
- Wildwood
- Lake Wanahoo
- Wehrspann Lake
- Prairie Queen
- Lawrence Youngman Lake
- Zorinsky Lake
- Walnut Creek
- Holmes Lake



PHOTO BY ERIC FOWLER

A walleye is caught on a crankbait from Lake McConaughy in Keith County.

GoPro Hunt

By Jake Jadowski

Preparation exceeds decoy set-ups and camouflage when filming your own hunts

As a high school teacher, I routinely see all things bad about social media. There may be no quicker way to waste one's time. But as an outdoorsman, social media provides a platform to keep track of what hunters and fishermen are doing all across the country. Hunting and fishing photos and videos dominate my

Facebook and Instagram feeds and I'm probably guilty of spending just as much time on my phone as my students.

In addition to picking up tips on tactics and gear, the outdoor sector of social media has sparked my interest in filming and photography. Capturing moments and experiences on film ensures that the hunt never



A yellow Lab named Seven spends her birthday retrieving geese and doing what she loves in southeastern Nebraska.

PHOTO BY JAKE JADOWSKI



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

Jadowski, the author, adjusts his decoys before a waterfowl hunt on the Platte River in Hall County, making sure he arrives early enough to leave time to ready his GoPro cameras in an effort to record that day's hunt.

ends. But as I continue to pursue this new world of cameras, I've quickly learned that the professional photos and videos I see online don't happen by accident. It's a skill and art form that is completely different from decoy spreads and duck calling.

I'm also learning that it's pretty hard to effectively run a shotgun and a video camera at the same time. And since I'm not ready to hang up my shotgun, I've been

searching for ways to film duck hunts without compromising my ability to actually hunt. Utilizing GoPro action cameras has allowed my hunting buddies and me to satisfy both cravings.

GoPro cameras have a number of advantages over bigger and more expensive point-and-shoot cameras that make them ideal for hunters. They are small, portable, and versatile. GoPro has developed

an endless list of accessories, and they are constantly upgrading the technology and capability of their cameras.

Older models come standard with a waterproof hard case, which is essential to waterfowl hunters. In newer models, the camera itself is waterproof. Mostly importantly, you don't have to point and shoot. With a little bit of preparation, GoPros can be strategically placed

to capture your hunt without anybody needing to be behind the camera. With that basic knowledge, I figured GoPros would be a quick and easy way to get some really good footage of my buddies and me filling our limits.

Well, I was wrong – about the quick and easy part and the filling the limits part! By learning the hard way, which seems to be standard operating procedure for

me, I quickly learned that despite the versatility, accessories, and the “hands-off” nature of the camera, GoPros also have a number of limitations. Through trial and error over the last couple of years, this is how we’ve attempted to overcome those limitations and come up with a system that works for us.

Mounting and Placement of Cameras

It didn’t take long to figure out that filming from the blind produced less than desirable footage with poor fields of view and bad lighting. To make our footage worth watching, we needed to figure out a way to elevate the camera or get it into the decoys and away from the blind. We found

our solution in GoPro’s Sportsman Mount. On one end, the Sportsman Mount fastens to the back of the GoPro hard case. On its other end, this case is equipped with a c-clamp that you can tighten around nearly anything. In order to get a better field of view and better lighting, we started attaching our GoPros to varying lengths of electrical conduit that we stick into the ground or into the water. It allows us to place multiple cameras anywhere that we want to maximize the chance of filming something worth watching.

GoPros Outside the Blind

Not surprisingly, that solution led to another problem – the camera is very ineffective if nobody is within arm’s reach of the record button. And since running out of the blind



The last task before Jadowski enters the blind for the morning is making final adjustments to his GoPro cameras.



PHOTOS BY JEFFE KURRIUS

Jadowski hunts from inside the blind during a duck hunt on the Platte River in Hall County.

to hit record isn’t a very good option, we needed another solution. Luckily, GoPro makes a camera remote that connects wirelessly to the camera (using the camera’s internal wireless capability) that allows us to hit record without ever leaving the blind.

The remote is capable of connecting to and controlling multiple GoPros simultaneously. However, the connectivity range

is limited, which is something you need to keep in mind when positioning the cameras. We’ve also fashioned wrist straps using small bungee cords so we don’t have to fumble for the remote at the same time we’re fumbling for the duck call.

Also, make sure you stop recording after the action ends (another lesson learned the hard way). Failing to do so kills the

remote battery and eats up a ton of storage on the camera’s SD card.

Setting Field of View

A major advantage of the GoPro is that it doesn’t require a cameraman. But since no one is pointing and aiming the camera, accurately positioning the camera

and setting the field of view is very important. Poor positioning can result in a lot of footage of nothing but blue sky. Some GoPro models have a back screen that allows you to see the field of view, but those get covered up with waterproof backing and external batteries. So instead of just guessing about what we are aiming at, we started using the GoPro App.

The GoPro App on your smart



PHOTOS BY JAKE JADLOWSKI

Sunrise illuminates the decoys on the frozen Platte River during a late season goose hunt in Hall County.

phone connects to the camera via the camera's wireless network. Through the app, you have full

control of the camera's operation and, most importantly, it previews exactly what the camera is looking

at. Before the hunt, we quickly link up our phones with the cameras and are able to precisely set the field of view.

When the remote battery dies, the app also serves as a convenient back up. Additionally, it allows you to quickly review your footage without leaving the blind or plugging the SD card into a computer.

Limited Battery Life

This quickly became the most glaring flaw in the camera. From my experience, you can only get about an hour of film time on the internal battery – with colder weather draining the battery even faster. Unless your hunting spots are a lot better than mine, your hunt

is probably going to last longer than that. So we did some research to find the best external battery option for the GoPro Hero 4 models that we use (other models would require a different external battery).

We settled on an external battery made by Re-Fuel that replaces the backing of the waterproof case and latches and seals to maintain the waterproof nature of the case. It gives us about eight extra hours of film time, depending on how cold it is, and allows us to film all day long.

This whole operation depends on battery life. Because you're powering cameras, remotes and a phone, as well as keeping a charge on other external batteries, I have one more tip we use all the time. DeWalt makes a USB charging adapter that slides on to all DeWalt drill batteries. The adapter has two USB ports that allows for the charging of two devices at the same time.

As long as you charge your drill batteries before the hunt, you can slide on the adapter and plug in the USB end of all your charging cords

to create a mobile charging station that allows you to keep filming as long you're willing to brave the freezing temps.

Storage

When filming, there's a lot of extra footage and "false alarms" that eat up storage space. Make sure you have an extra SD card for each camera you're using. And it's always a good idea to dump all your footage onto your computer to free up space on the SD card before the next hunt.

Unfortunately, we have jobs that cut into our hunting and filming careers. Hiring cameramen and buying expensive cameras don't quite fit into our budgets. We don't know how to use high tech video editing programs, not that we have any, and we're unlikely to land a weekly slot on the Outdoor Network anytime soon. I'm lucky if I get more than a handful of "likes" on an Instagram post.

But our GoPro system is good

enough for us and that's who our videos are for anyway. They capture our finest moments and our worst shooting. We get to enjoy them together and give each other a hard time. They help us critique our concealment and our decoy spreads. Sometimes we get to show them off to friends and they get us fired up when we're missing freezing temperatures and strong north winds.

But most importantly, they preserve the time that we get to spend together in the blind. Try sticking a couple of GoPros in the mud this fall, your buddies will get a kick out of it. If nothing else, it might help prove to your wives that, "Yes, we were actually hunting that long!" ■

Jake Jadowski is a high school history teacher from Ralston. This is his first feature for NEBRASKAland Magazine.



In addition to filming waterfowl hunts, GoPros can be just as effective in filming turkey and coyote hunts. Here, Keith Jadowski is waiting to call coyotes in Boyd County.



PHOTOS BY JAKE JADLOWSKI

A GoPro Hero 4 Black captures guns firing into a flock of late season mallards in Sarpy County.

Hunting and Gathering Ain't

What's for Supper?

By Roger Welsch

When I give my mini-lecture about the Pawnee return to Nebraska, I also share a bit of their history here on this very spot on the Middle Loup River near Dannebrog. I point out that "Loup" is French for "wolf," and probably refers to the "Wolf Pawnee." Or maybe the Loup Wolf Skidi Pawnee, a delightful re-re-redundance, since all four words mean wolf. So we are saying "the wolf wolf wolf wolf people." That's a lot of wolfing. To this day the Pawnee hand signal for themselves is two raised fingers like the peace sign, moved forward slowly on the level ... two wolf ears coming through the grass.

But, I explain, the Pawnee however didn't call the beautiful, peaceful river here the "Loup" River. And still don't. They (and the Omaha, for that matter) call it "Plenty Potatoes" because of the abundance of food that was available along its banks, "potatoes" being a kind of general word for "lots of good eats." I explain to visitors that for the Pawnee, who were camped right here where I sit at this moment when the first Danes crossed the river April of 1871, setting up camp here was for all the world like camping in an aisle of a very large supermarket.

The "hunting" part of the hunting and gathering description of Native societies applies, actually, only to the hunting of wild game because they probably didn't have to do nearly as much searching for what they wanted as I have to do when I go into the Acme Giganto Food Emporium looking for something slightly out of the ordinary like caper berries in wine sauce. (Well, slightly out of the ordinary for you maybe.) The early occupants of this land knew what was edible, what was in season when, what it looked like at various stages of its growth, how it was best prepared, and where it could be found. And for that matter, they also knew where to find game most easily, and how to take it. And how to prepare it for later use. While homesteaders starved or ate maggots or impossibly salty pork, the Indians over the hill were enjoying dried buffalo and berries and taking of the abundance that was available at any particular time of the year.

In fact (I was told by Sicangu ethnobotanist Richard FoolBull many years ago) it may only have been a matter of remembering where the campers had planted it in the first place. Or perhaps where their people had planted it many generations earlier because they were smart and in many cases they made a point of planting and maintaining "wild" foods precisely for the purpose of later harvests. Like the white oaks that distinguished the Dannebrog "island" when the Danes first arrived and whose progeny still grace the village park. Pre-invasion Natives no more had to go out hunting for foodstuffs here on the Plenty Potatoes than a modern Nebraska farmer has to go out prowling country roads in a combine looking for corn to pick. He knows



where it is. He planted it!

I have on occasion during my own "hunting and gathering" expeditions stumbled on places where there had once been a pioneer farmstead, probably German, maybe a pair of juniper tree "lightning rods" the only sign of where a house once stood. And I would find now weedy plots of asparagus, rhubarb (Peistengel), or hops, now perfectly at home on the Great Plains, but once as much "immigrants" as those who transplanted and nurtured them as a civilizing factor in the Nebraska wilderness. Sorting out what came here when, what's wild, what's invasive, what's an escaped domestic, what belongs and what doesn't gets down to drawing some pretty fine lines. Not that it matters. Newcomers don't take long to become old-timers when it comes to botany.

My ethnobotanist friend Randy Ledford snarls at invasive species, and while I understand the beauty and importance of maintaining old, maybe ancient, biota, I remind Randy that, well, white guys like him and me are also an "invasive species." I think too of people who resent "immigrants" when their own name, lineage and appearance reveals a history of migration and a time when they too were cultural "weeds," planted out of place in a strange environment.

See that the Mexican Mayan lady standing in front of us in the grocery line with the tomatillos (a variety of nightshade), nopal (prickly pear pads), and huitlacoche (corn smut) in her cart? You know, she may be far more appropriate to this landscape than this grandson of a German-Russian immigrant standing there with his honey crisp apples, Velveeta American cheese, and the hot dog fixin's.

Not to mention the groceries. ■

Roger Welsch is an author, humorist, folklorist and a former essayist for CBS News Sunday Morning. He is the author of more than 40 books and has been contributing to NEBRASKAland Magazine since 1977.



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junior journal

interesting notes for readers of all ages

by Monica Macoubrie and Donna Schimonitz

Venomous vs. Poisonous

By Monica Macoubrie, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Once was on a hike in western Nebraska when the trail leader said we should be wary of poisonous snakes. I did not know it then, but there was no need to worry about poisonous snakes – because I was not going to touch or eat one.

Venomous creatures often are described as poisonous; poisonous creatures are sometimes called venomous. Both types have special toxins, and both can be considered dangerous. The true difference comes from how they deliver that toxin to their prey.

VENOMOUS

Venomous animals bite, sting or stab their prey to do damage. They need a way in to deliver their toxins. The bite of venomous snakes, such as prairie rattlesnakes, sometimes injects venom into the bloodstream of their prey through specially adapted teeth.

Snakes are not the only venomous animals out there. In fact, there are venomous creatures in just about every group of animals: mammals, amphibians, fish, insects, arachnids (spiders), snails, jellyfish and even a few plants.

There are a few venomous plants

in the world. One in Nebraska is the stinging nettle. It uses hollow hairs on leaves and stems to inject its venom. These hairs act like needles, injecting chemicals into humans and animals that walk past and producing a stinging sensation.

POISONOUS

Poisonous is similar to venomous, but instead of an animal biting, stinging or stabbing to deliver its toxin, the entire body, or large parts of it, may contain a poisonous chemical.

The monarch butterfly is a poisonous animal in Nebraska. It is beautiful, and many people do not think of a butterfly as dangerous. Some animals, such as birds, could definitely eat a monarch butterfly, but they know that they are poisonous, so they leave them alone. The bright colors of this butterfly are a warning: “I taste bad; don’t eat me.”

Plants can be poisonous. Poison ivy, hemlock, nightshade and rhubarb are Nebraska examples. Some plants, such as rhubarb, can grow in your garden and you can cook and eat the stalks, but the leaves are very deadly if eaten.

Venomous or Poisonous?

Identify in each photo if it contains a venomous or poisonous item.



rhubarb leaves



brown recluse spider



lawn mushrooms



rattlesnake



blister beetle

Answers, top to bottom: P, V, P, V, P, V, P. Only the rhubarb stems are edible, not the leaves.

NATURE CALENDAR

- Adult eastern comma butterflies appear: *September or October*
- Goldenrod is flowering throughout the state: *early July through October*
- Swainson’s hawks gather to begin migration: *August through October*
- Listen for raccoon communication at night: *September – October*



Eastern Comma Butterfly by Getty Images

Photos by Justin Haug

Banding Canada Geese

Process allows researchers to monitor changes in survival, abundance and movement over time.

By Tim Lyons and Mark Vrtiska

Canada geese are perhaps one of the most easily recognized birds in Nebraska. From record lows in the 1960s, the goose population in Nebraska has rebounded, and geese are now common throughout the state. This growth has allowed increased recreational opportunities for hunters and wildlife-watchers, but also created problems in urban areas. Effectively managing the goose population, whether to sustain recreational opportunities or mitigate a nuisance, requires data.

To collect that data, biologists from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission traverse the state to capture and band Canada geese during the last few weeks of June each year. Adult geese are in the process of replacing their feathers (a process known as molting) from last year and young geese born the current year are growing their new feathers. During this

period, geese are unable to fly and are easily captured.

Biologists capture the geese by herding them into a small corral. Once captured, geese are aged (juvenile or adult), their sex is determined, and a metal band is attached to their leg. This band contains a unique combination of numbers that identifies each individual goose. That number, as well as information about each bird's age, sex and location of capture is reported to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the federal agency in charge of organizing and managing all bird-banding data in the United States.

However, that is only the start of the data collection process, as a band must be reported, most commonly by a hunter after harvesting a banded bird, before that band can tell us anything. When a band is reported to USGS, scientists there enter information about where and when the band was encountered into

their database, which they then make available to biologists. These details provide a wealth of information that Game and Parks and other state and federal wildlife managers can use to make management decisions.

Game and Parks uses the banding and recovery data to better understand and monitor changes in survival, harvest, abundance and movement over time. For example, over the past 20 years, harvest regulations in Nebraska have liberalized, allowing for longer hunting seasons and increased bag limits. Banding and recovery data show that through this time harvest has increased and survival has decreased, but generally stabilized following each new regulatory change. More recently, estimates of population size since 2010 show no evidence of substantial declines. This suggests that current harvest regulations are not adversely affecting the population overall and

Locations of band recoveries across North America and within Nebraska from Canada geese banded in Nebraska since 2011.

PHOTO BY JON FARRAR



PHOTO BY JEFF KURRUS

Leg bands used to mark Canada geese in Nebraska. As of 2017, all leg bands must be reported at reportband.gov.

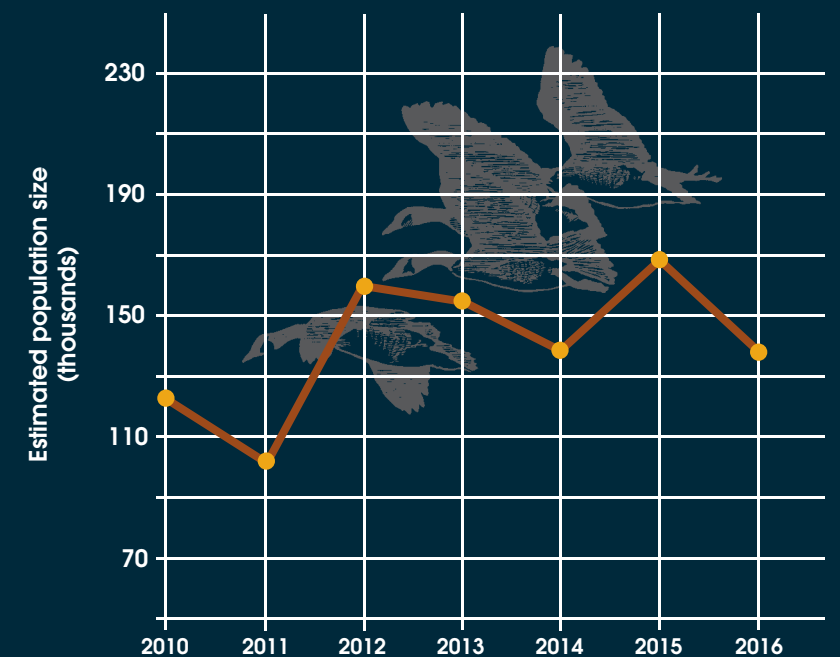
may even be helping restrict growth.

When bands are reported with detailed information about where they were recovered, it also provides important information about movements of geese, both into and out of Nebraska. Currently, most geese in Nebraska do not leave the state on their fall migration. In fact, banding data show that most geese from Nebraska are harvested in Nebraska.

Decisions based on data and evidence are the hallmark of wildlife management in North America. Banding programs help to provide that data. But because it's not until a band is reported that it tells managers anything, it's really hunters and others who report bands who are collecting the data necessary to monitor changes in abundance, set harvest regulations, and ensure managers have the information they need to make the most informed decisions they can. ■

Estimated population size of Canada geese in Nebraska 2010-2016 obtained from banding data.

Estimated Population Size of Canada Geese in Nebraska 2010-2016



MAP AND CHART INFORMATION COURTESY OF TIM LYONS

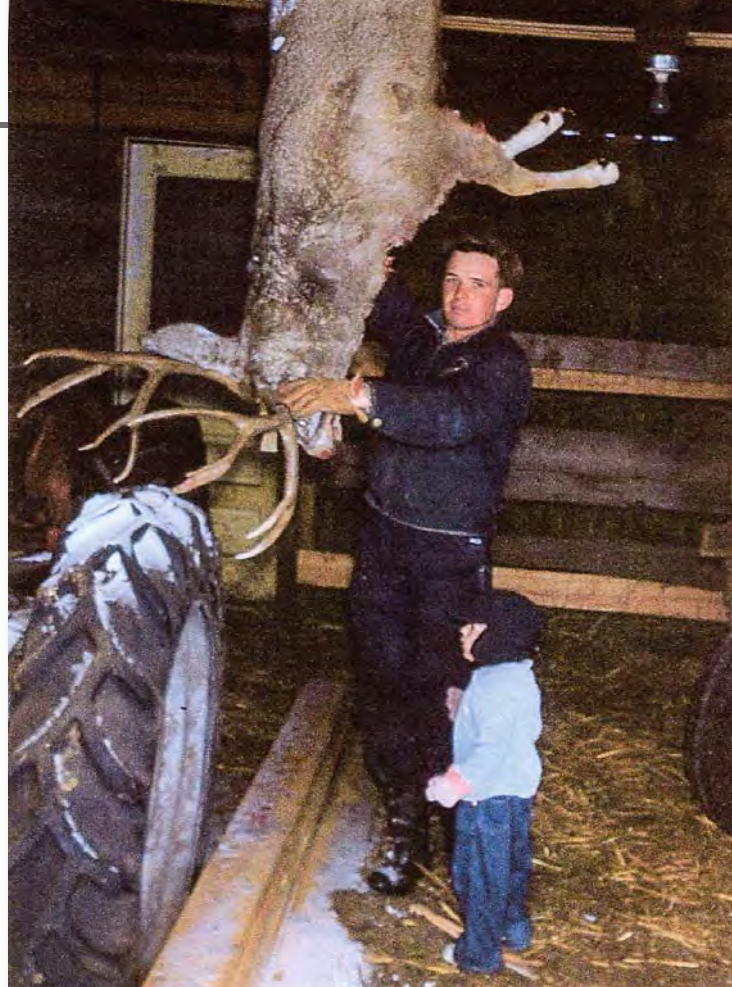
► During the mule deer season of 1954, Corky Greenough shot this mule deer south of Cody, Nebraska, on a tributary of the Niobrara River in a conifer and plumb brush covered canyon. As I remember we called this deer a 4x4 with brow tines. After field dressing, Cork brought him home to the Hibbs and Powell Ranch northwest of Cody and we hung him in the calving barn to cool out and age. Cork is admiring the buck with his son Doug.

Corky, his wife JoAnn and two sons, Doug and Dale, lived and worked on the ranch with my wife, Charlotte, our son, Bill, Jr., and me. We had about 450 head of Angus cows and heifer calves running in 4,500 acres of pasture along that tributary. Corky and JoAnn moved to Lusk, Wyoming, in the late 1990s. He passed away in March 2017.

Leonard Witherwax was a neighbor west of the ranch. He borrowed my Remington 270. He also got a mule deer near the same area a few days later.

I have many good memories of those days in the 50s when mule deer were still living in the Niobrara area. There were no whitetail along the river back then.

— W. C. Bill Hamilton, Ankeny, Iowa



◀ Here is a photo of a good group of friends (and memories of the past), on opening day of pheasant season, Nov. 1, 1980 at the Roland and Ruth Hatcliff farm a few miles east of Pleasant Hill, Nebraska. We started the morning hunt with this group and two Labrador retrievers. My dad Roland (pictured in the photo) made a few passes with the corn picker a few days before the season opener. This was on about 60 acres of corn. We would walk the field and flush the pheasants out. Those that managed to get away (and there were plenty) landed in two other cornfields nearby. We would then walk those fields and flush them again. I believe we made about three passes in each to those fields. We started at sunrise and by 11 a.m., we had our limit of 39 pheasant, 1 squirrel, and 7 quail. Those pheasants that we harvested did not even make a dent into the birds that were in the area back then. Back then, it truly was Pheasants Forever! After cleaning the wild game, we visited the Pleasant Hill tavern for stories and celebration.

— Al Hatcliff, Crete, Nebraska

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

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Annual Fundraiser Set for January 2019

Nebraska Chapter Safari Club International is planning its annual fundraiser for Jan. 25 and 26, 2019, at the Beardmore Event Center in Bellevue, Nebraska. All the proceeds will fund outdoor education, youth and women hunting programs, conservation and hunters' advocacy agendas.

This year, our featured guest is Melissa Bachman, star of *Winchester's Deadly Passion*. Ms. Bachman will speak at our membership meeting, present an afternoon seminar on Jan. 26, and be part of our evening festivities both Jan. 25 and Jan. 26.

While we are excited and proud to bring Ms. Bachman to our state, we are equally excited to bring exhibitors from around the world. Historically, our event has brought in outfitters from Colorado, Nebraska, and South Dakota as well as individuals from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Argentina and New Zealand, to name a few. This year we hope for the same, as our Board of Directors is working hard to bring in more exhibitors.

Other items of interest will be our live and silent auctions items. From hunts to

books to hunting apparel and gear to jewelry, we will have a little bit for everyone. You can join in our raffle items and take a chance to win quality firearms and beautiful jewelry.

Friday night, in addition to our auction and meeting Melissa Bachman, we will have a beer garden complete with Nebraska's own Bohlzen Beer Band sponsored by Gunderson's Jewelers. On Saturday afternoon seminars will include Melissa Bachman and the Women of SCI who will host a wine and chocolate party along with youth activities. Saturday evening will include live and silent auctions, as well as award presentations.

While membership is encouraged, we happily open our doors to non-members and encourage everyone to attend our event. Please bring your friends and children to enjoy a weekend with an organization that promotes youth hunting, outdoor education, conservation and hunters' advocacy in Nebraska and throughout the world. ■

For more information, visit nebraskasafariclubint.com or call Mary L. Middleton at 402-214-8270.



Melissa Bachman

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My favorite and most beneficial pre-season routine is checking trail cameras. This gives me a good idea of what deer have been showing up on my land and when they are frequenting certain areas of my property.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SIGHT IN YOUR RIFLE?
There is no better time than the present to sight in your rifle. Right now is also a great time to stock up on your favorite and most accurate ammo, the week before season starts tends to be a flurry in our ammo aisles.

ANY TIPS FOR PRACTICING SHOOTING AND ENSURING YOUR RIFLE IS ACCURATE?
It is extremely important to practice at the distances you will be hunting. If you sight in your rifle 100 yards, but typically hunt wide open terrain where your average shot could push 300-400 yards, you should be practicing at such distances. It is also a great idea to practice how you will be hunting, shooting off a bi-pod, free handed, laying prone, etc.

"This year I am really looking forward to hunting during the rut with my fiance and my father."

Mule Deer Study

Part of being a *NEBRASKAland Magazine* writer includes documenting interesting studies that go on in our state that many people don't realize are taking place but have an influence on wildlife and wildlife management in our state.

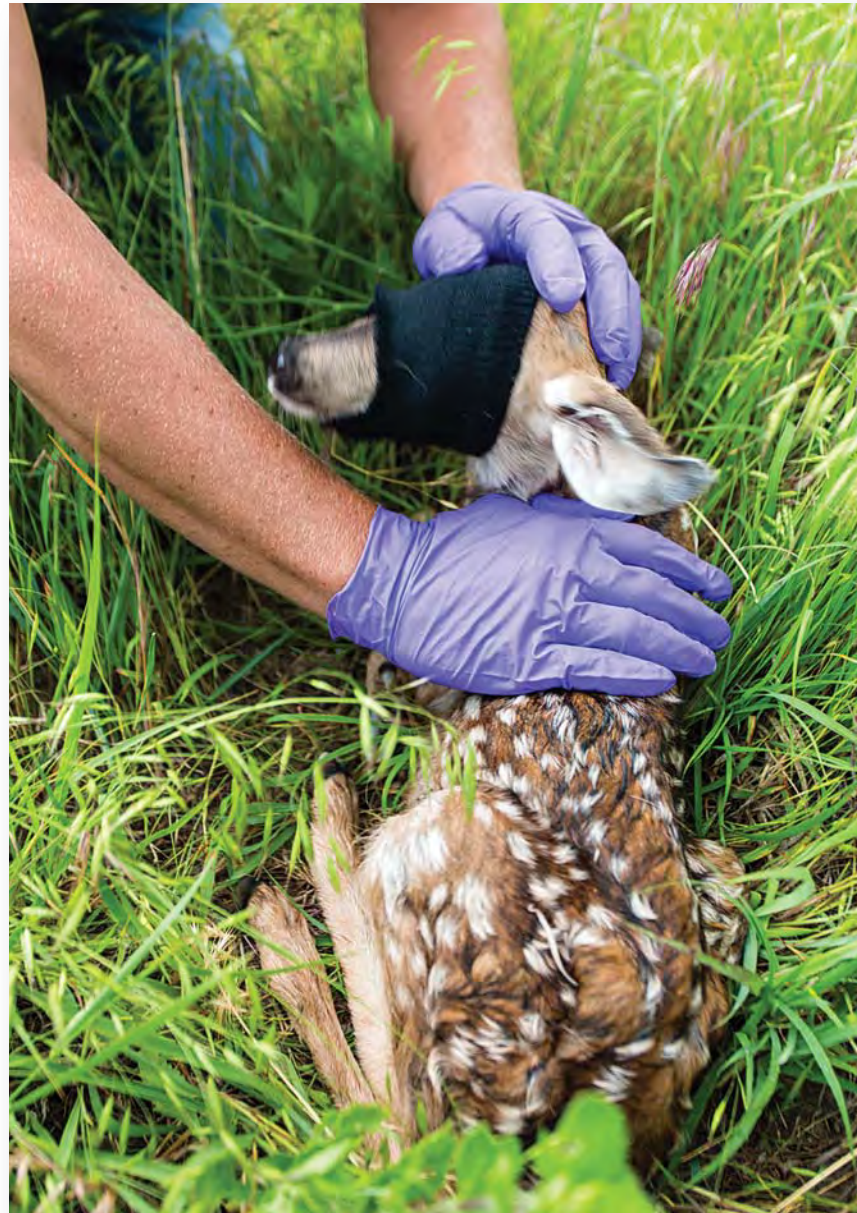
Many of these studies are partnerships between the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln or other entities. One particular study that started this February involving a UNL student is focusing on adult female and fawn mule deer survival rates, their movements, and habitat use in the southwestern portion of the state.

Tracking collars were placed on the does and fawns when they were captured. These collars allow researchers to track movements, determine habitat use and help identify cause-specific mortality.

The study sites include both high and low-density mule deer populations separated geographically by short distances, which will allow biologists to better understand the differences in herd dynamics.

Data will be analyzed throughout the next two years with a final conclusion slated to be complete in December of 2020. Nebraska Game and Parks will be able to use this data to help guide future mule deer management in southwestern Nebraska. Furthermore, this study will provide crucial population information that will enhance our ability to make harvest recommendations based on up-to-date scientific data. ■

Julie Geiser
July 17, 2018



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