

Nebraskaland
magazine

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



Fall into Fun at Nebraska State Parks!



**Check our online calendar for
fall events near you**



[Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov/](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov/)

NEBRASKA
— GAME  PARKS —

Nebraskaland

INSPIRING OUTDOOR ADVENTURE SINCE 1926

OCTOBER 2022



INSIDE

A Fort Robinson Halloween
Low Budget Waterfowling • Hairy Clematis
A Paddlefish History • What to Do in October
Explore Fall Bird Migrations • Often Overlooked Hunts



\$97,695*

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED PRICE
2023 Model with
Yamaha F300XA

**LUX
2200**



Celebrating 75 Years of Excellence

**LUX
2060**

\$82,995*

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED PRICE
2023 Model with
Yamaha VF250XB



SKEETERBOATS.COM

TEAMING UP WITH THE BEST

SKEETERBUILT

HUMMINBIRD

MINN KOTA



LIMITED LIFETIME WARRANTY
Limited Lifetime Structural Warranty!
10 Year Limited Transferable Structural Warranty
3 Year Limited Component Warranty

Strongest warranty compared to three of our leading competitors.
*For the original purchaser, complete details in written Limited Warranty.

Visit Us On



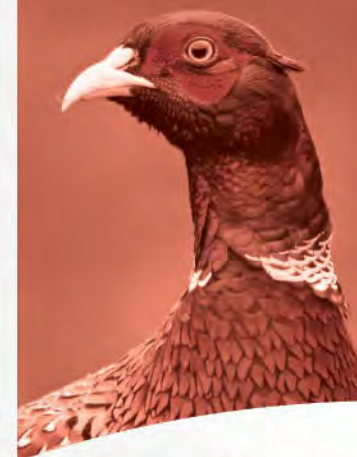
Learn more about the slam, the Top Dog award
and the prizes offered at

OutdoorNebraska.org/UplandSlam



MIXED BAG CAPITAL[®]
OF THE GREAT PLAINS

YEAR 5



NEBRASKA



UPLAND SLAM
FOUR BIRDS. ONE BIG STATE.

September 1, 2022 — January 31, 2023

Nebraska is the mixed bag capital of the Great Plains – with diverse hunting opportunities, long seasons, more than 1 million acres of publicly accessible lands and high rates of hunter satisfaction.

Experience all of this – and make some great memories – as you work to harvest all four upland bird species this season.

*Nationally Advertised Price; actual sales price determined by dealer. Price does not include freight, dealer prep, tax, title, and license. ©2022 Skeeter Products, Inc. All rights reserved. This document contains many of Skeeter's valuable trademarks. It may also contain trademarks belonging to other companies. Any references to other companies or their products are for identification purposes only, and are not intended to be an endorsement. Remember to observe all applicable boating laws. Never ride after consuming alcohol or drugs. Dress properly with a USCG-approved flotation device and protective gear. Boats may be shown with optional equipment. See your local Skeeter dealer for complete details.

FEATURES

20 HAUNTED HALLOWEEN

At Fort Robinson State Park

Story and photos by Justin Haag

26 OUTDOOR NEBRASKA

What to Do in October

By Renae Blum

28 PADDLEFISH SNAGGING

A History of a Unique Fishery

By Kirk Steffensen

34 LOW BUDGET WATERFOWLING

By Todd Mills

36 EARLY LICENSE PLATES AND DRIVER'S LICENSES

By David L. Bristow, History Nebraska

40 ON THE MOVE AGAIN

Explore Fall Bird Migration

By Olivia DaRugna

46 PIGMENTS OF THE FUR TRADE

By Dr. James A. Hanson

48 REDISCOVERING HAIRY CLEMATIS

Story and photos by Gerry Steinauer

DEPARTMENTS

8 Your Nebraska

12 In the Field

50 Mixed Bag

60 Portraits from the Past

62 The Last Stop

ON THE WEB

For more articles and
information, visit
NebraskalandMagazine.com

Cover: The ornate box turtle
is Nebraska's only native
terrestrial (land) turtle.

JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

This page: Forested bluffs
painted in fall color rise above
the Missouri River Valley
dotted with fog at Indian Cave
State Park in Nemaha and
Richardson counties.

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Nebraskaland
magazine

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



Administration

Director Tim McCoy
Deputy Director Jim Swenson
Assistant Director Roger Kuhn
Commissioners
Chairman - Pat Berggren, Broken Bow
Vice Chairman - Rick Brandt, Roca
2nd Vice Chairman - Robert Allen, Eustis
Ken Curry, Columbus
Donna Kush, Omaha
Scott Cassels, Omaha
John Hoggatt, Kearney
Doug Zingula, Sidney
Dan Kreitman, Wahoo

Commission Offices

Headquarters/Southeast District Office
2200 N. 33rd Street Lincoln, NE 68503
Phone 402-471-0641
Northeast District Office
2201 N. 13th St. Norfolk, NE 68701
Phone 402-370-3374
Southwest District Office
301 E. State Farm Rd. North Platte, NE 69101
Phone 308-535-8025
Northwest District Office
East Hwy. 2, Box 725 Alliance, NE 69301
Phone 308-763-2940
Bassett Office
524 Panzer St., Box 508 Bassett, NE 68714
Phone 402-684-2921
Kearney Office
1617 First Ave. Kearney, NE 68847
Phone 308-865-5310
Ak-Sar-Ben Aquarium/Schramm Education Center
21502 W. Highway 31 Gretna, NE 68028
Phone 402-332-3901
Omaha Office
8495 Frederick Street, Omaha, NE 68124
Phone 402-595-2144



OutdoorNebraska.org

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, facility, or service, should contact the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-0641, the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission, Lincoln, NE 402-471-2024, TTY/TDD 800-642-6112; Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Magazine Staff

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

Nebraskaland Magazine Copyright 2022, all rights reserved.
Nebraskaland is available in audio from the Nebraska Library Commission Talking Book and Braille Service, Suite 120, 1200 N St., Lincoln, NE 68508. 800-742-7691. Nebraskaland Magazine and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission reserve the right to reject any advertising not in keeping with the agency mission.
Rates: \$18 for one year; \$33 for two years; \$44 for three years. Nebraska recipients must add appropriate sales tax. To subscribe call 1-800-NEBLAND (632-5263), or go online to: NebraskalandMagazine.com.

Conservation Officers

ADMINISTRATION (Lincoln)
Craig Stover (Administrator) 402-471-5531
Duane Arp (Asst. Administrator) 402-471-5531
Travis Shepler (Asst. Administrator) 402-471-5531
Jeff Clauson (Asst. Administrator) 402-471-5531
NORTHWEST (Includes counties covered)
Dan Kling (Lieutenant) 308-430-0572
EAST SUB-DISTRICT
Sean Schultz (Sergeant) 308-760-0145
Jerod Hahn (Deuel, Garden, Grant) 308-520-5539
Keith Jadowski (Keith, Deuel) 308-289-9580
Jaden Porter (Keith, Garden) 308-289-2274
Tyler Stueck (Keith) 308-289-6260
Travis Schultz (Morrill, Cheyenne) 308-279-1292
WEST SUB-DISTRICT
Sean McKeehan (Sergeant) 308-672-1824
(Kimball, Banner, Scotts Bluff)
Kelsey Glodowski 308-763-8226
(Box Butte, Sheridan, Grant)
Hunter Pearson 308-360-1817
(Josh Widhelm (Scotts Bluff) 308-279-9133
Jacob Stoinski (Sioux, Dawes) 308-615-9017
NORTHEAST (Includes counties covered)
Dale Davis (Lieutenant) 402-760-0712
NORTH SUB-DISTRICT
Jeff Jones (Sergeant) 402-762-5022
(Knox, Cedar)
John Bauer (Holt, Bayd) 402-314-9257
Tyler Adelman 402-314-4783
(Rock, Brown, Keya Paha)
Jonathan Andreasen 402-340-3981
(Madison, Pierce, Stanton)
Mitch Johnson (Knox, Antelope, Pierce) 402-613-8612
SOUTH SUB-DISTRICT
Cory Krause (Sergeant) 402-380-6410
(Cuming, Wayne, Stanton)
Kyler Prochaska (Platte, Colfax) 402-830-8278
Matt Costello (Dodge, Colfax) 402-317-4014
Kelbi Abke (Washington, Burt) 402-237-2537
Nicholas Fix (Dixon, Dakota, Thurston) 402-508-0261

CENTRAL (Includes counties covered)
Mike Thome (Lieutenant) 308-293-8746
NORTH SUB-DISTRICT
Doug Pollard (Sergeant) 308-730-7050
(Loup, Garfield, Valley)

Statement of ownership and monthly circulation of Nebraskaland Magazine
Owner and publisher: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
Editor: Jeff Kurrus
Headquarters of Publisher and Publication: 2200 N. 33rd St., Lincoln, NE 68503
Stockholders, Bondholders, Mortgage and Security Holders: None
Average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months Single issue nearest to filing date
A. Total Copies Printed (net press run) 20,512 19,014
B. Paid Circulation
1. Mail subscriptions 16,912 16,108
3. Single-copy sales 2,430 1,750
C. Total Paid Circulation 19,351 17,866
D. Free Distribution by Mail 318 322
D. Free Distribution Outside the Mail 377 377
E. Total Free Distribution 695 699
F. Total Distribution 20,046 18,565
G. Copies Not Distributed 442 437
H. Total 20,488 19,002
I. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation 96.53% 96.23%

Matt Brandt (Sherman, Howard) 308-202-0819
Daryl Teter (Howard, Greeley, Merrick) 308-440-1863
Kyle Gaston (York, Polk, Hamilton) 402-719-6226
SOUTH SUB-DISTRICT
Matt Taylor (Sergeant) 402-200-9597
(Thayer, Fillmore, Nuckolls)
Tim Williams (Hall, Hamilton, York) 308-380-7331
Eric Javins (Adams, Clay, Webster) 402-902-2017
Pat George (Harlan, Franklin, Phelps) 308-920-2762
Ethan Teter (Buffalo, Kearney) 308-440-3847
SOUTHWEST (Includes counties covered)
Roger Thompson (Lieutenant) 308-530-3097
NORTH SUB-DISTRICT
Ray Dierking (Custer, Thomas, Blaine) 308-870-0322
Frank Miller (Cherry, Hooker) 402-389-0444
Greg Hesse 308-546-7464
(Hooker, Thomas, southern Cherry)
Alex Hasenauer (Lincoln, Perkins) 308-660-4671
Brandon O'Neal 308-530-3157
(Lincoln, McPherson, Logan)
SOUTH SUB-DISTRICT
Brian Piernicky (Sergeant) 308-340-6627
(Red Willow, Frontier, Hayes, Hitchcock)
Bryce Streger (Dawson, Gosper, Custer) 308-537-0404
Matt Andrews 308-746-2418
(Furnas, Gosper, Frontier, Red Willow)
Taylor Dixon (Dawson, Gosper) 308-217-2108
Sophia Gobber 308-222-0368
(Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock)

SOUTHEAST (Includes counties covered)
Stacey Lewton (Lieutenant) 402-890-7140
EAST SUB-DISTRICT
Heath Packett (Sergeant) 402-210-0888
(Cass)
Russell Mort (Otoe, Johnson) 402-209-1506
Rich Berggren (Douglas) 402-619-1355
Brian Arp (Douglas, Sarpy) 531-530-9011
Dan Evasco (Sarpy) 402-616-5961
Mike Luben (Saunders, Butler) 402-443-6392
Bryan Adams 402-429-1924
(Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson)
WEST SUB-DISTRICT
Dina Barta (Lancaster) 402-890-6463
Luis Nuñez (Lancaster) 531-333-6093
Mark Sullivan (Lancaster, Seward, Butler) 402-741-0636
Trevor Stahlecker (Lancaster, Saline) 402-314-9641
Matt Seitz (Gage, Jefferson) 402-806-0915

Pheasants Forever and
Quail Forever of Nebraska
2022-23 Event Dates



Youth Mentor Hunt Dates

Table with 3 columns: County, Chapter, Date. Rows include Butler, Cass, Boone, Lincoln, Lancaster, Douglas, Madison/Stanton/Pierce, Thayer, Antelope, Hamilton, Adams, Wayne, Saunders, Cuming.

Table with 3 columns: County, Chapter, Date. Rows include Colfax, Merrick, Nemaha, Scotts Bluff, Otoe, Platte, Clay/Fillmore, Furnas, Jefferson, Saline, Seward, Gage, Washington, Keith.

Banquet Dates

Table with 3 columns: County, Chapter, Date. Rows include Boone, Cass, Greeley/Wheeler, Lincoln, York, Lancaster, Douglas, Stanton/Madison/Pierce, Thayer, Antelope, Phelps, Cheyenne, Kearney, Cedar, Hamilton, Adams, Wayne, Garfield/Loup/Valley, Hall, Saunders, Cuming.

Table with 3 columns: County, Chapter, Date. Rows include Colfax, Frontier, Merrick, Kimball, Holt, Scotts Bluff, Red Willow, Platte, Dawson, Clay/Fillmore, Furnas/Gosper, Jefferson, Saline, Brown/Keya Paha/Rock, Seward, Harlan, Gage, Frontier/Gosper, Washington, Keith.

For additional events and to find an event near you visit: www.NebraskaPF.com

 Instagram Photos

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

Don Brockmeier, Eustis
Bobwhite Dive



Kirk Pridell, Papillion
Cicada Killer Wasp



Jayson Alder, Elkhorn
Barred Owl



David Rochford, Waterloo
Monarch Butterfly



Tiara Brown, Omaha
Sunset Kayaker on Zorinsky Lake

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

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



FALL FOLIAGE

Red currant leaves along
a Pine Ridge stream in
Sioux County north of
Crawford.

BOB GRIER, NEBRASKALAND



The Blanding's turtle can be found in north-central Nebraska. JUSTIN HAAG, NEBRASKALAND

CELEBRATE REPTILES

By Shawna Richter-Ryerson

Nebraska is home to nearly 30 snake, 10 lizard and nine turtle species, each with unique characteristics, habits, habitats and food sources. And in October — but especially on Oct. 21 — we get to celebrate them and their amazing adaptations during National Reptile Awareness Day.

Reptile fans have a number of ways to celebrate:

- Children may participate in a kids' reptile art contest through Oct. 17 by submitting an original piece of art featuring a native Nebraska reptile. They can learn about Nebraska's reptiles or submit their art through OutdoorNebraska.gov/ReptileArt.

- Those of any age can attend a reptile-themed event, such as the "Science of ... Lizards" virtual program set for Oct. 6. Find other events at Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov.

Though some reptiles, including snakes, are often widely

feared, there is a lot to love about Nebraska's reptiles. They help maintain healthy animal populations across our state by serving both as a predator and as prey. They eat rodents and insects and even small mammals, and in turn, serve as food for raptors, foxes and coyotes, among others.

Because reptiles are susceptible to pollution, habitat destruction and wildlife disease, their success or lack thereof also helps us know when our ecosystems need help.

And if none of these reasons have convinced you that National Reptile Awareness Day is worth celebrating, just take a look at this most loveable set of reptiles: Turtles — and the Blanding's turtle in particular. When you see his built-in smile, with gleaming yellow chin, it's hard not to smile, too.

Learn more about this often-misunderstood and diverse group of creatures at OutdoorNebraska.gov/Reptiles.

NEBRASKA LAND IS IN DEMAND



**KNOX CO, NE - 1.12 AC.
\$225,000**

Amazing lake views in "The Timbers" on Lewis & Clark Lake! Located in a beautifully wooded development off of Highway 121 on the Southeast side of the lake. This 1.12-acre lot has on-site water and electricity, located in a gated HOA community. Yearly HOA fees keep this private community well maintained with asphalt roads in place. Close distance to the public's lake water access, Lakeview Golf course, restaurants, and recreational trails. In the highly sought-after Crofton school district. Build your dream home in this secluded and beautiful development!

**JOHNSON CO, NE - 205 AC.
\$1,300,000**

PRICE REDUCED! Properties with this size and caliber of a lake are rare in any market, and the proximity to Lincoln and Omaha is just the icing on the cake! The habitat created on this property has ample cover, and water with the surrounding acres provides destination food sources for the resident deer herd. Several openings in the timber are just begging to be planted in food plots so they can hold up mature bucks during the last minutes of daylight. An internal trail system is in place and will take you to all corners of this farm. A boat house sits at the far side of the property and is complete with a deck and storage loft. If you've been looking for a property that contains ample water and offers deer, turkey, and waterfowl opportunities, you will want to take a look at this one! Property is shown by appointment only.



CONTACT JASON OR LUKE FOR A NO OBLIGATION FREE ANALYSIS.



JASON SCHENDT
Northeast Nebraska Broker
402.707.4885

JASON.SCHENDT@WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM



LUKE WALLACE
Southeast Nebraska Land Specialist
402.340.6187

LUKE.WALLACE@WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM



WHITETAIL TROPHY PROPERTIES REAL ESTATE

HUNTING | RANCH | FARM | TIMBER

WHITETAILPROPERTIES.COM

The information contained herein is deemed reliable but is not warranted or guaranteed by the Broker or Seller. The Broker (Whitetail Properties) does not assume liability for typographical errors, omissions, or for misstatements that may have been given to us. All property is subject to change, withdrawal, or prior sale. Buyers' agents must be identified on the first contact with the Broker and must accompany the buyer on showings to receive full fee participation. Otherwise, the fee participation will be at the sole discretion of Whitetail Properties. Whitetail Properties Real Estate, LLC DBA Whitetail Properties, DBA Whitetail Properties Real Estate, in the States of Nebraska & North Dakota DBA Whitetail Trophy Properties Real Estate LLC. Licensed in CO, MN, ND, SD, TN & WI - Jeff Evans, Broker. Licensed in FL, KS, MO, OH & PA - Jefferson Kim Gilbert, Broker. Licensed in TX & NM - Joey Bollington, Broker. Licensed in IN - Bill Miller, Broker. Licensed in AL, GA, LA & MS - Sybil Stewart, Broker. Licensed in TN - Tim Burnett, Broker. Licensed in TN - David Pritchard, Broker. Licensed in AR - Anthony Clinton, Broker. Licensed in NC, SC, VA, & WV - Chip Gane, Broker. Licensed in VA, NC - Richard F. Bough, Broker. Licensed in ME - Edward J. Hayslett, Broker. Licensed in IL, MD, VA - Debbie S. Lane, Broker. Licensed in CO, MT, OR, UT, WA, & WY - Aaron Mikkelsen, Broker. Licensed in NY - John Myers, Real Estate Broker. Licensed in OK - Dean Anderson, Broker. Licensed in KY - Derek Fisher, Broker. Licensed in OH - Jeremy Schaefer, Principal Broker. Licensed in NE - Jason Schendt, Broker.





Brisk fall winds rustle the stems of common reed at Big Alkali Lake on the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in the Cherry County sandhills. GERRY STEINAUER, NEBRASKALAND

HOLD ON TO YOUR HATS

By Martha D. Shulski

From comments in the grocery store check-out line to social media posts, everyone was sharing stories about the wind this spring. Every other day, there seemed to be a high-wind warning and high fire danger in a pre-green-up landscape. Deadly wildfires wreaked havoc following our fourth driest winter on record.

Just how unusual were these winds? For that answer, we'll turn to our old friend climatology. Typically, the average monthly wind speed is in the 10 mph range here in Nebraska. Of course, it can be significantly higher with the passage of a storm or frontal boundary.

This April, averages around the state were in the 15 mph range. For a monthly average speed, that is certainly noticeable and impactful. Furthermore, wind gusts reached 60 to 70 mph on several occasions.

According to the National Weather Service, wind gusts of 58 mph or greater are considered severe; hurricane strength winds begin at 74 mph.

Spring is typically a time of year when winds can be at their peak, owing to a strong temperature contrast in the northern hemisphere. Winter hangs on longer in the north, while conditions can be near summer-like in the south.

As we go into fall, that strong temperature gradient is not yet established and winds tend to be lighter than during spring. Those gradients in temperature lead to gradients in pressure, which leads to wind. Is higher than usual wind something we should expect more of in the future? That is a tough question without a simple answer. However, if we've experienced it once in Nebraska, chances are we'll experience it again.



Finding your story

starts at a place where possibilities align with potential.

Where adventures lead to accomplishments.

Where opportunities connect to engagement.

And accessibility meets affordability.



Learn more at csc.edu



Perch fish cakes seasoned with Old Bay. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

PERCH CAKES

By Jenny Nguyen-Wheatley

Servings: 4
Prep Time: 3 hours and 30 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes
Ingredients:

- 1 pound of perch fillets, boneless and skinless
- 12 ounces russet or yellow potato
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Olive oil
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ¼ cup of chopped cilantro, leaves and stems
- ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper
- ¾ teaspoon of Old Bay Seasoning
- ¼ cup of panko breadcrumbs
- 1½ teaspoons of fresh, minced dill
- ½ cup of rice flour, or all-purpose flour
- Tartar sauce
- Lemon wedges

1. Peel potato and slice into large pieces. In a small saucepan, cover potatoes with water and add a generous pinch of salt. Boil for 15-20 minutes, or until potatoes soften. Drain, mash and transfer to a medium-size mixing bowl.

2. Pat fish dry with paper towels and season with salt. Coat the bottom of a nonstick pan with oil and heat over medium-high. Brown fish on one side — do not flip — in batches; add more oil as needed. Transfer cooked fish to a bowl. Reduce heat to medium and sauté minced garlic until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Take off heat.

3. When fish is cool enough to handle, gently break it up into pieces. In the bowl with the mashed potato, mix in beaten egg, cilantro, cayenne pepper, panko, dill, Old Bay Seasoning, ¼ teaspoon of kosher salt and sautéed garlic. Then gently fold in perch. Try not to break up the fish too much; you want to be able to see the flakes. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours before frying.

4. Turn oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour rice flour onto a plate. In a skillet, heat ¼ inch of oil over medium heat. When oil starts shimmering, form cold fish mixture into ½-inch thick patties and then coat with rice flour, shaking off excess. Brown perch patties until golden and crispy on both sides, allowing plenty of room between the patties. Add more oil as needed. Keep the cooked patties warm in the oven while you cook the remaining fish.

5. Serve immediately with tartar sauce and lemon wedges. To reheat leftovers, deep fry or bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit.



Take a beginner hunting, Win Prizes!

Prizes include...

GRAND PRIZE

John Deere
XUV590M Gator
in Camo

...and
more!



LEARN MORE AT
OutdoorNebraska.org/TakeEmHunting



Haunted Halloween

at Fort Robinson State Park

Photos and story by
Justin Haag



Some say ghosts haunt the historical grounds of Fort Robinson State Park. Whether it is true, on one night in late October, the spooky side of the park will take center stage — and, judging from the previous year's success, visitors are anything but scared away.

The staff at Fort Robinson is gearing up for the park's second "Haunted Halloween," an event that features wagon rides, a chili feed and trick-or-treating, all accentuated by a cast of spooky characters and decor throughout the Soldier Creek Campground.

Though 2021 marked the first year for the "Haunted Halloween," it was not the park's first event for the fall holiday. Students of Chadron State College and nearby Crawford public schools used to create a haunted house at the Fort each Halloween. That event eventually moved into Crawford, but was discontinued after a short time.

Deb Kennedy, a park superintendent, has wanted to bring a Halloween event back to the park ever since it left.

"I love, I mean *love* fall and Halloween, and I really wanted to bring it back to the Fort," she said.

After the Fort's annual historical Christmas dinner was canceled for two straight years for coronavirus precautions, Kennedy pitched the idea of a Halloween event in the safer outdoor environment. Despite short time to prepare, the park employees pulled it off.

"All of the permanent and temporary staff pitched in. They had great ideas and had a great time working on it," she said. "We raided my pumpkin patch, dragged out my many, many Halloween decorations, a few of us pitched in some money, and I put some pressure on my family to participate and bring their campers, and we got it going."

The event exceeded expectations as hundreds of visitors from northwestern Nebraska and neighboring states converged upon the campground.

Although somewhat surprised by the turnout, Kennedy said a Halloween event is a natural fit for Nebraska's largest state park.

"What better place, with the vast history, old cemetery, large area, lots of parking, beautiful and scenic campgrounds and protection from the elements? We couldn't ask for more," she said.

This year's event is set for Oct. 29, and, if Kennedy has her way, it will top last year's.

"I have some big ideas and would like to change it up a bit."

The public is encouraged to set up camp with candy, or just bring the family that evening for the chili, a festive atmosphere and natural autumn splendor. Find more information at [Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov). [N](#)

The park's Jeep pulls a load of park visitors across Soldier Creek.



LEFT: Although bodies were long ago moved from the Fort's historical cemetery, the old stones that remain provide perfect habitat for skeletons.

BELOW LEFT: Trick-or-treaters reap the sweet rewards of visiting campsites.

OPPOSITE: Even witches enjoy the warmth of an autumn campfire.





ABOVE LEFT: Park visitors' costumes add to the festive atmosphere.

BELOW LEFT: Have you ever before seen such handsome mummies?

ABOVE RIGHT: Diane Humphries greets trick-or-treaters at her decked-out campsite.



Is It Haunted?

It seems any old building with character is subject to reports of paranormal activity. Fort Robinson has many such structures: about four dozen, in fact, with construction dating back to the 1870s. Combine the old architecture with a steady stream of overnight visitors and the fort's history of conflict between the U.S. cavalry and Native Americans, and the conditions are ripe for ghost stories.

Four investigators from the Nebraska Paranormal Society, an organization that researches the existence of ghosts and other unexplained phenomena, conducted an investigation at Fort Robinson State Park in 2010 after hearing reports of phantom cavalry soldiers, Indians and horses. The investigators gave Fort Robinson the same label as most other locations listed on their website: "inconclusive."

Outdoor Nebraska

By Renae Blum

Ah, fall. As you enjoy the changing trees and crisp autumn breezes, take some time to be outside. You can enjoy foraging for mushrooms, hunting, viewing wildlife and visiting parks. [N](#)



View and photograph orb weavers

As weather allows | Statewide

Beautiful spiderwebs make for a great photo. This month, look for webs made by orb weavers — a diverse group of spiders that build large, distinctive wheel-like webs. You can find them almost anywhere: trees, shrubs, prairies, near streams and on buildings near lights. Examples of orb weavers include the marbled orb weaver, the yellow garden spider and banded garden spider.

KEN BOUC, NEBRASKALAND



Hunt waterfowl

Season dates vary Statewide

Many waterfowl seasons open this month, and you don't want to miss it: breakfast in the blind, watching the sun rise, the camaraderie of a good hunt and your dog's excitement at retrieving birds. Memories are waiting to be made! Learn more in the Small Game and Waterfowl Guide.

JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

What to Do in October

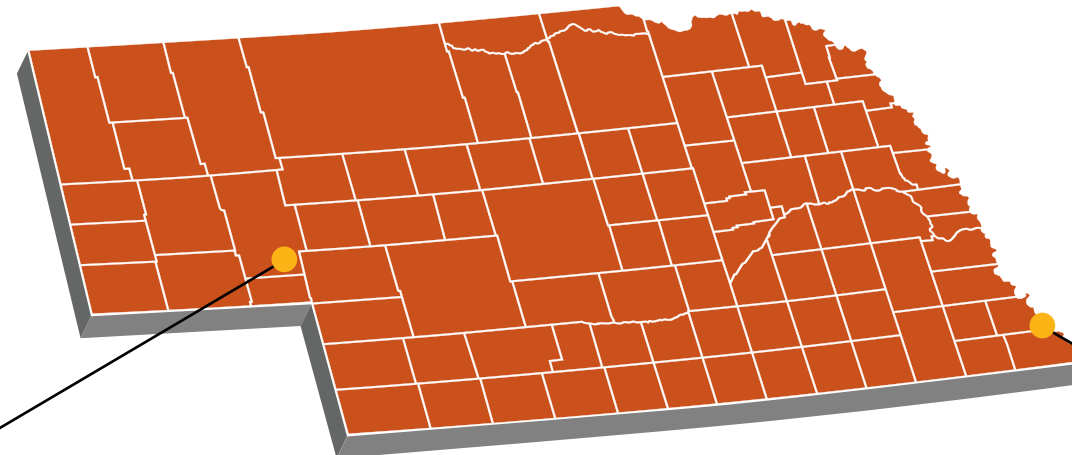


Get festive

Throughout the month | Statewide

Find a bit of Halloween fun at parks across the state throughout October. Compete in campsite decorating contests, go trick-or-treating, roll pumpkins or go back in time during a Halloween-themed living history event at Arbor Lodge. Parks from Arbor Lodge to Fort Robinson will be hosting haunted events throughout the month. Find an event near you at [Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov).

JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND



Visit Ash Hollow State Historical Park

Throughout the year | Lewellen

Once an oasis stopover for pioneers on their journey west, Ash Hollow is still an attractive place to spend time. The park offers numerous picnic tables and nine miles of hiking on beautiful trails, including one displaying deep ruts carved by covered wagons. Stop by Wednesdays through Sundays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to explore the visitor center and Ash Hollow Cave — hours go to appointment only in November, so hurry over!

ERIC FOWLER, NEBRASKALAND

Fall fungi foraging workshop

Oct. 1 | Indian Cave State Park

Join Game and Parks educators as we embark on a journey through the fungi-filled scenery of Indian Cave State Park. Biologist Chance Brueggeman will discuss mushroom facts and tips for finding them, followed by a guided hike to look for fungi in the park. Registration is required; sign up online at [Calendar.OutdoorNebraska.gov](https://calendar.outdoornebraska.gov).

JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND



Paddlefish Snagging

A History of a Unique Fishery

By Kirk Steffensen, Missouri River Program Manager

Paddlefish are a group of ancient fish species with fossilized records dating back approximately 125 million years. They are one of the largest and longest-living freshwater fish species in the world, with a lifespan of 30-plus years, and are easily recognizable by their elongated rostrums — beaklike snout — and lack of scales.

Filter feeders, paddlefish swim with their large mouths open and

filter the microscopic plankton, mainly zooplankton, out of the water. Therefore, conventional fishing methods of baiting are ineffective. Paddlefish are generally captured by snagging, which requires casting and forcefully pulling a hook through the water until you “foul hook” a paddlefish. Paddlefish in Nebraska can, on rare occasions, exceed 100 pounds, and the current snagging state record stands at 113 pounds and



Fertilized paddlefish eggs photographed at Gavins Point Fish Hatchery.

ALEX WILES MEDIA



Paddlefish are filter feeders, using their large mouths to filter microscopic plankton out of the water. Conventional fishing methods of baiting are ineffective on paddlefish. ALEX WILES MEDIA

4 ounces.

Today, the American paddlefish (*Polyodon spathula*) is the only remaining paddlefish species worldwide, and one of Nebraska's most fascinating fish species.

A Natural History

American paddlefish are native to the Mississippi River basin, inhabiting

large, free-flowing rivers, backwaters and oxbow lakes. They are extremely mobile, capable of moving thousands of miles between major river systems. In Nebraska, paddlefish are found in the mainstem Missouri River and the lower reaches of larger tributaries, including the Platte River, with the greatest numbers found in the lower unchannelized reach between Gavins

Point Dam and Sioux City.

This highly sought-after fish is generally regarded as tasty among anglers, but commercial fishermen are mostly after the female's eggs, or roe, which is processed into caviar. Paddlefish roe has become more desirable since the collapse of the Caspian Sea sturgeon market, primarily from beluga sturgeon (*Huso*

huso) and other sturgeon, including the kaluga, Ossetra, sevruga, sterlet and Siberian sturgeons, and paddlefish fisheries. Labeled as American paddlefish caviar, the product can exceed \$400 per pound. Although commercial fishing for paddlefish is illegal in Nebraska, the practice remains open in several other states. In our part of the Missouri River,



Sallie Doty of Pierre, South Dakota, caught this 34.5-inch paddlefish near Gavins Point Dam.

JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

management efforts have changed and evolved over the years, all in the hopes of protecting this unique fishery for future generations.

Fishery

The modifications to the mainstem Missouri River created the paddlefish fishery we have today. Construction of Gavins Point Dam was completed in 1955 and Fort Randall Dam in 1958. The construction of Fort Randall Dam, just north of the Nebraska-South Dakota border, formed a 39-mile

riverine reach behind Lewis and Clark Lake that isolated this population from the open Missouri River. Below Gavins Point Dam, 811 river miles remain open, flowing into the middle Mississippi and connecting other large rivers. Although fish below Gavins Point Dam can swim unhindered, the dams created a barrier to upstream movement, causing populations to aggregate immediately below both dams, making them more susceptible to capture.

At the time, as expected, anglers

quickly took advantage of the creation of this new fishing opportunity. These newly created tailwaters offered anglers a unique pursuit, different from the traditional sport fishing they were used to. Unfortunately, this unchecked enthusiasm caused overexploitation, and the paddlefish populations quickly suffered.

In 1959, anglers harvested an estimated 12,850 paddlefish below Fort Randall Dam, and three years later, only a few fish were harvested — indication of how sensitive this

isolated population was between Fort Randall and Gavins Point dams. Because of this event, harvesting of paddlefish above Gavins Point was prohibited in 1987, and the regulation is still in effect to this day.

The reach below Gavins Point Dam remained open to fishing, however, as these mobile paddlefish populations were more resilient. Still, management actions had to be implemented to protect this fishery from exploitation. It has been an ongoing two-state effort.

Management

Since the closure of Gavins Point Dam and the inception of the fishery, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks have jointly managed paddlefish. Over the next 30 years, daily bag limits and possession limits were adjusted, and the season length reduced.

In 1957, a two-fish limit and four-fish possession limit was applied, and in 1970, the limit was reduced to one fish and one in possession. The season length went from year-round to 212 days in 1974, to 151 days in 1983, and then to 30 days in 1987. Despite these management actions, anglers continued to harvest thousands of fish annually, and the fish they harvested were getting smaller and younger,

suggesting the fishery was not self-sustaining. Consequently, a public meeting hosted by Nebraska and South Dakota biologists prior to the 1989 season informed anglers of declining harvest. Anglers, in turn, supported more restrictive management actions and agreed that the fishery needed to be managed to protect this unique fishing opportunity.

As a result of that public meeting, a derby fishery season was established prior to the 1989 season. It imposed a 1,600-paddlefish-harvest quota or 30-day-maximum, whichever came first, and no harvest outside of the snagging season. The harvest quota was based on a 5 percent take of the estimated population below Gavins Point Dam. Eager anglers rushed to the water, and the harvest quota



An angler holding a paddlefish rigging. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND



Anglers fish for paddlefish by boat and bank on the Missouri River near Gavins Point Dam.

JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

was reached in just four days during that novel season. This derby-style fishery also caused safety concerns as high numbers of boaters and bank anglers created long wait lines at the creel station, boat ramps and limited parking areas.

The pressure on the paddlefish fishery remained high and monitoring was showing a population dominated by small, young fish with limited reproduction occurring. Therefore, prior to the 1992 season, the “slot” regulation was implemented, which

protected 35- to 45-inch fish by making them catch-and-release only. Fish in this size range are the main breeders in a population, and the regulation made the fishery more sustainable. Additionally, a portion of the tailwaters was closed and hooks were limited to one-half inch in size from point to shank to reduce injury and mortality to fish that were caught and released. These management actions had little effect on harvest rates, and from 1993 to 1996, the harvest quota was still achieved in just a few days.

Following another public meeting in 1996, the limited-entry paddlefish snagging season was established. Each state issued 1,200 permits through a free-entry lottery system, and the season was moved to the month of October; furthermore, anglers could only snag between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. each day.

The number of permits was increased to 1,400 in 2000 and to 1,600 in 2008 as annual harvest estimates were below the harvest objective. Due to the increasing number of

anglers entering the permit lottery but not participating during the snagging season, Game and Parks began charging a \$5 application fee in 2003. Prior to the 2007 season, the \$5 application fee was waived and successful applicants purchased a permit (\$20 for residents and \$40 for non-residents).

The current permit structure was adopted in 2016, with a \$7 application fee and permits costing \$26 for residents and \$50 for non-residents.

The present management objective

remains at an annual harvest of 1,600 fish, 800 per state. Nebraska issues 1,600 snagging permits, expecting the success rate will be around 50 percent. Fisheries biologists from both states continue to work together to manage the fishery and the harvest objectives.

Paddlefish snagging is a unique fishing opportunity, and recreational fishing is limited to a few Midwestern states: Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and

Missouri. Whether you’re interested in experiencing this unique fishing experience, enjoy eating paddlefish or spending outdoor time with family and friends, snagging is hard work, so be prepared if you ever decide to cast a line for paddlefish. 

Kirk Steffensen is the Missouri River program manager for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. He has worked on the Missouri River for more than 20 years.



Yancy Krol of Osceola, Nebraska, snags a paddlefish near Gavins Point Dam. JENNY NGUYEN-WHEATLEY, NEBRASKALAND

Low Budget Waterfowling

By Todd Mills

Thumbing through one of my favorite waterfowl magazines, I stumbled into the new gear section. It was impossible to turn the page without seeing something I could use. It made me wonder how we did it before all this new gear was available.

Long before all the technology and gadgets were invented and used by kids today, we entertained ourselves with things that cost less money. My family lived in a house the size of my current garage, so extra spending money wasn't something I could scrape together. We were very creative and resourceful due to our financial reality. As a kid growing up in a small lake town in the '70s, the passion for waterfowl hunting ran deep in my blood. Hunting was something we could do on a small budget, and it's still true today.

There are several ways to keep your budget low and still enjoy waterfowl hunting. Here are a few ideas that will go easy on your wallet and fill a few bird straps.

DECOYS

While hunting teal a couple of years ago, I was in a rush to get out the door and inadvertently grabbed the wrong bag of decoys. Now faced with the reality of not getting to my spot on time if I went back, I decided to use what I had. Much to my surprise, it didn't make much difference in decoying those teal. In fact, it made for an enjoyable eye-candy hunt as bigger ducks, not yet in season, decoyed right. The moral of the story is, you don't need the most expensive decoys to kill ducks — regardless of the waterfowl you pursue. Keep it simple, find the right price and let your scouting skills do the rest.

KEEP IT CLEAN

You can spend a lot of money on guns. In fact, for some hunters, it can become an addiction. Not that I'm against new guns or people that own them, I've just always been an over-and-under guy and through the years have found ways



If the budget is tight, no need to buy that new gun. Take care of the one you have and find time to clean it after every hunt. It will pay dividends in the long run. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

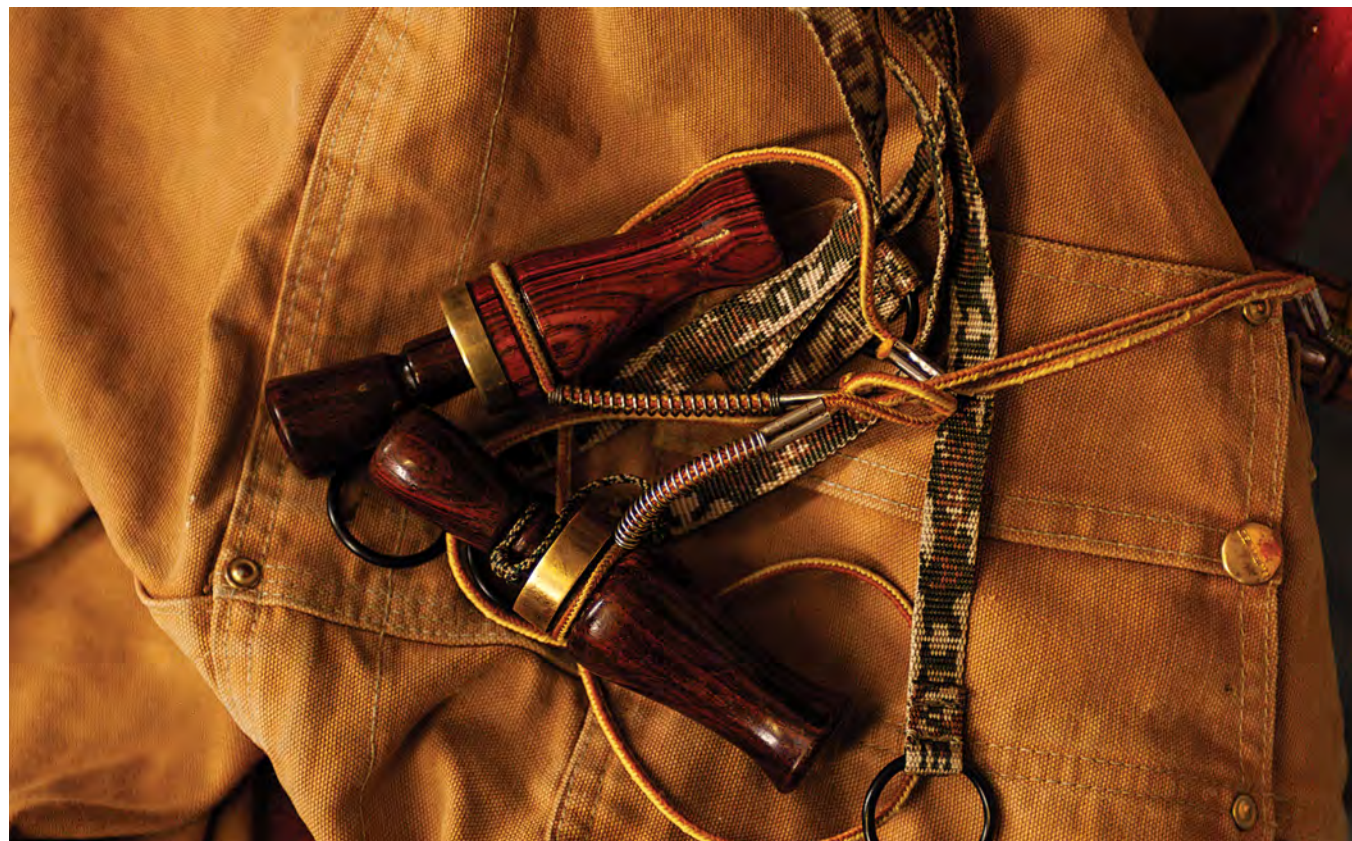
to keep my guns clean and working properly. As my buddies' fancy automatics keep jamming, my over-and-under keeps plugging away.

It's important to clean your gun after every hunt. Sand and dirt buildup in an older gun can be a disaster and may lead to costly repairs. Also remember to remove moisture from your gun when you get home to avoid rust buildup. If you're not interested in looks or having the newest and best, that old Remington 870 you owned as a kid may still be working.

CALL SAVINGS

Recently, I've reunited with an old friend on some waterfowl adventures. We had our first hunt almost 50 years ago, but seem to always be going different directions during the season. Not only is he a skilled waterfowler, he's a magician at low budget hunting. A couple years ago, I sent him a double reed call that cost about \$25. Even though he hunts often, he really never figured out how to use a duck call the right away. Much to my surprise when we got together, not only could he blow the call, he sounded pretty good. He had been practicing, and listening, and didn't need an expensive acrylic call to fool ducks. Not only that, he had put together his own motion decoy: A pulsating goose decoy almost identical to the ones you can buy for a hefty price. He told me he saved at least \$100 compared to buying one new.

Through trial and error, my friend found a way to save money and still kill ducks. And it doesn't hurt that his scouting skills are always on point. [N](#)



Master two or three sounds on that old wooden call and you'll kill plenty of ducks. JON FARRAR, NEBRASKALAND



Finding the right decoy brand is important, but scouting will create a bigger return on your time and financial investment. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

Early License Plates and Driver's Licenses

By David L. Bristow, *History Nebraska*

You drive your shiny new car home from the dealership and park it out front where your jealous neighbors can see it. Now, it's time to make the license plate.

That's what Nebraska motorists did for 10 years in the early 20th century. The state began registering automobiles in 1905, but didn't manufacture license plates until 1915.

In the meantime, the Secretary of State's office registered cars and issued numbers. Owners made their own plates by attaching metal numbers to a piece of leather.

Thanks to History Nebraska's Government Records collection, which preserves the state's early auto license records, we know who made the license plate shown



A car with an early Nebraska license plate, circa 1910. History Nebraska RG3064-0-20



An "auto livery" in Merna (Custer County) apparently didn't bother with license plates in 1910. History Nebraska RG2608-0-2381

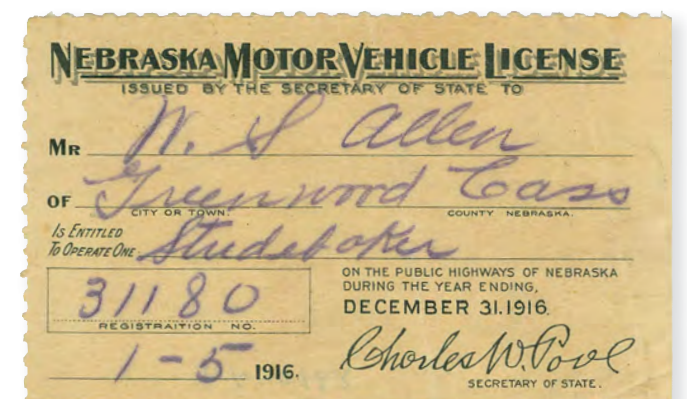


John Reuling's 1911 license plate. History Nebraska 9320-2

above. John A. Reuling of Wymore had this number from 1911 to 1915 for his 30-horsepower Halladay auto. Reuling was a local jeweler, and later a bank president, who was elected mayor while he owned the car.

It's no surprise that the car belonged to one of the wealthier citizens. Auto ownership was still expensive and exclusive, but the mass-produced Ford Model T was starting to change that.

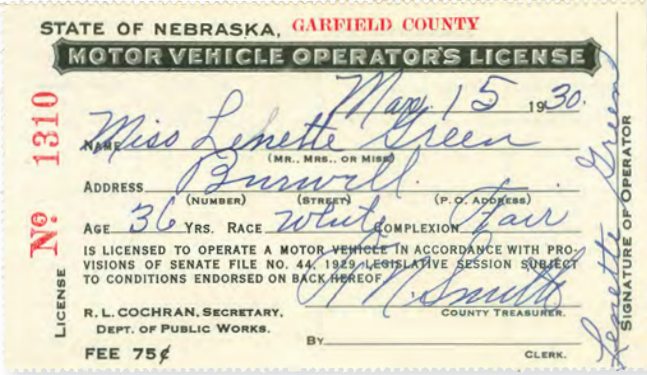
Like license plates, early driver's licenses were simple. It took many years for the driver's license to take on its current



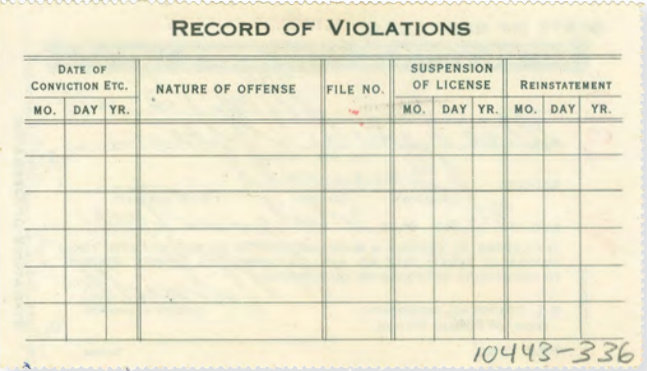
A 1916 license contained only the most basic information. History Nebraska 8910-44

role as a universal form of identification. The 1916 license shown above was a "Motor Vehicle License" that was issued annually and functioned both as a driver's license and proof of registration.

By 1930, Nebraska was one of 24 states that required a



Driver's licenses had grown more elaborate by 1930. History Nebraska 9663-11-(10) and 9663-11-(11).



driver's license. (Neighboring South Dakota didn't issue driver's licenses until 1954.) The 1930 license shown above was issued to a Burwell woman. It had no photo and a physical description that focused only on skin color. On the back was a form for a driver's previous violations, a handy feature before law enforcement officers could easily access a



After Millard's car was stolen from in front of the Brandeis Building in downtown Omaha, the police chief mailed postcards to county sheriffs. History Nebraska 9663-11-(10)

database. To protect the non-laminated license, it came in an envelope with a little window.

Not only were licensing and registration more primitive in the early days, so were the methods to recover stolen cars. The postcard shown above was printed for the Omaha chief of police and mailed to county sheriffs across the region. This one was addressed simply to "Sheriff, Falls City Neb." We don't know if Mr. Millard ever got his car back. [N](#)

Read more stories by searching "automobile" at History Nebraska's website, history.nebraska.gov



Looking north toward the state capitol on 15th Street in Lincoln, circa 1912. The car has a nonstandard license plate that lists the manufacturer. History Nebraska RG3474-47-025-015. OPPOSITE PAGE: Nebraska license plates through the years. Graphic by Ben Kruse, History Nebraska.





On the Move Again

Explore Fall Bird Migration

*By Olivia DaRugna
Watchable Wildlife Biologist*

As summer vacations come to an end and a new season of Husker football begins, many birds have already begun their journeys from northern breeding territories to their southern wintering grounds. Songbirds, shorebirds and waterfowl typically migrate at night, arriving to new locations to rest and refuel during the day. This is an exciting time for birders as our favorite locations can transform literally overnight from having almost no avian activity to an abundance of new birds scattered about.

Typically, fall migration is more prolonged than spring migration, as birds have more time to get to their wintering areas compared to the rush in spring to arrive first to claim the best breeding territories. There are also many more birds on the landscape than in spring, as all the young birds hatched during the summer attempt their first migration south. This more relaxed pace of migration, along with the addition of many more birds, offers excellent birding opportunities for both novice and experienced birders.

In Nebraska, fall migration begins as early as late June with yellowlegs returning, marbled godwits heading south, and long-billed curlews flocking together before flying south. Other shorebirds like American avocet peak their migration from mid to late August. Songbirds and raptors move through in waves starting in September

Along with shorebirds and songbirds, waterfowl — like these flocks of Canada geese and snow geese in Scotts Bluff County — usually migrate at night, arriving to new locations to rest and refuel during the day.

JUSTIN HAAG, NEBRASKALAND



Marbled godwits at Kiowa Wildlife Management Area, Scotts Bluff County. JON FARRAR, NEBRASKALAND

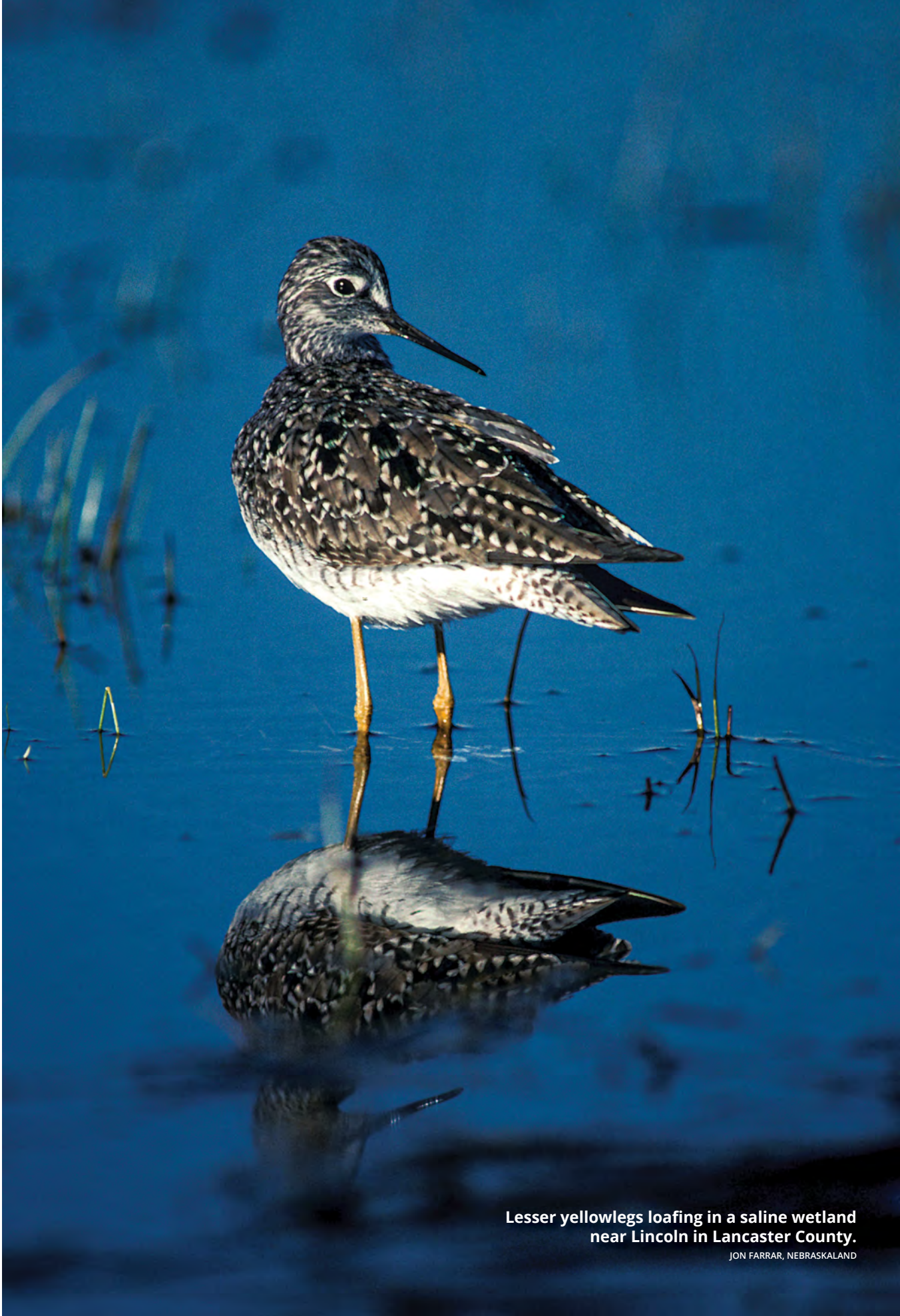


A Nashville warbler. STEPHEN BRENNER

through October, and most waterfowl typically do not pass through until October. With endless possibilities to view a variety of species during fall migration, here are just a few of our favorite places to enjoy this annual autumn spectacle.

Conestoga State Recreation Area

Conestoga State Recreation Area has wide-ranging habitats of a shallow wetland, shrubby fields and a large waterbody that attracts a variety of migrating birds. The shrubby fields and adjacent woodlands on the south end of the lake attract a variety of songbirds like Lincoln's sparrows and Nashville warblers. As with most waterbodies across the state, when water levels are low, the exposed mud flats can attract a variety of shorebirds during migration. The shallow wetlands on the northwestern corner of the lake can be an optimal location to view shorebirds in this area. During late autumn, the large waterbody draws in hundreds of snow, Canada and cackling geese as well as large flocks of redhead, lesser scaup, gadwall, and many other species of ducks.



Lesser yellowlegs loafing in a saline wetland near Lincoln in Lancaster County. JON FARRAR, NEBRASKALAND



Franklin's gulls wade at the edge of a sandbar in the Missouri River as it moves through Ponca State Park. JON FARRAR, NEBRASKALAND



A Nelson's sparrow with its short, high, hissing song emerges from dense marsh vegetation — an uncommon regular fall migrant in eastern Nebraska. CHRIS MASADA



A gray flycatcher at Oliver Reservoir. STEPHEN BRENNER



Swainson's hawk in Garden County. STEPHEN BRENNER

Lincoln Saline Wetlands

As songbirds start to migrate south, they rely on a good tail wind and favorable weather conditions to make their flight south as easy as possible. If the weather conditions turn bad, the birds will often land in the nearest area with suitable foraging habitat. When areas are dominated by development and agricultural fields, parks can be a little oasis for birds as they wait for the weather to turn favorable for their next leg of their journey. The Lincoln Saline Wetlands Nature Center can often act as this stopover oasis for many songbirds during their migration south. The availability of water and shrubby habitat attracts a variety of flycatchers, warblers and sparrows to this location. Many of the shrubs along the path are no more than 8 feet high, offering chances to view migrants near eye-level. At the adjacent Capitol Beach, hundreds to thousands of Franklin's gulls congregate and can often be viewed flying over the saline wetland.

Oliver Reservoir

Nestled in the southwestern part of the Nebraska panhandle, Oliver Reservoir and the nearby town of Kimball stand out as a beacon of vegetation and water among the vast, semi-arid grassy landscape of the Great Plains. For birds, this is like coming across the only gas station for hundreds of miles during a long family road trip. It is an essential place to stop, eat and rest before continuing through the expansive

landscape. Not only does this relatively small area attract solid numbers of expected migrants, but this site also hosts some uncommon species for Nebraska. Have a field guide ready as many similar-looking flycatchers and sparrows visit this location in late August and early September. A variety of vireos, swallows and warblers, like MacGillivray's warbler, also can be observed here.

Not every day in the fall can include early morning trips to migrant hotspots. For birders interested in catching a glimpse of migration as it happens in real time, raptors are the perfect species to watch. Raptors migrate during the day, relying on tail winds and thermals to help them conserve energy as they migrate. Raptor migration can be enjoyed almost anywhere, but it is especially good on cloudier days when their silhouettes can stand out. Lay back in a camp lounge chair and look to the sky on days with north winds, and try to find a stream of raptors flying by. Throughout Nebraska, watch for Swainson's hawks as there will usually be multiple birds soaring together in what is called a kettle. They will soar in circles as they rise to the top of a thermal before gliding out to catch the next thermal.

Fall migration is a thrilling time for all birders to view a variety of species as they make their way back south. For more ideas on places to enjoy fall migration, visit NEBirdingGuide.org. Happy birding! 

Olivia DaRugna is a watchable wildlife biologist for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area and Nature Center in Gering.

Pigments of the Fur Trade



By Dr. James A. Hanson, Historian, Museum of the Fur Trade

The following excerpt originally appeared in the Winter 2021 edition of Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly, a publication based in Chadron, Nebraska.

Because of our reverence for Nebraska history, this quarterly publication has been a mainstay for the editors of Nebraskaland Magazine for many years.

There is no doubt that early Native Americans were ingenious in developing earths and other natural products as pigments for face painting and artwork. However, the preparation of those colorants was often a slow process. At certain times of the year or in certain locations, it was impossible to find appropriate materials. Most

of the natural pigments were rather muted and included shades and tints of dull red, tan and brown. For these reasons, native people came to rely on a steady supply of brilliant colors from their traders.

For example, before receiving vermilion, Native Americans had used native red ochre, but it did not compare

to the Spanish-Dutch or Chinese mineral, and they would trade “a heap of furs” for three times as much vermilion as would lie on the tip of a knife. Verdigris, a French colorant, was used by Native Americans to “paint their faces green.”

The cover of this issue of the Quarterly includes a sample of red ochre obtained from a deposit of the ore found at Sunrise, Wyoming. It is known to have been mined there over 10,000 years ago and is listed as a World Archeological Site by the United Nations.

In their study of the Omaha tribe, Alice C. Fletcher and Francis La Flesche included the following observations in their remarks on the changes brought by traders: “Another saving of labor in comparison with old methods was involved in buying paints from the traders. The paint was sold in small packages not much larger than a paper of darning needles and the price of one of those packages in the last century was the value of 25 cents Great quantities of paint were sold, this article alone yielding a large profit to the trader.” The authors noted that the Omaha regularly bought red, green, blue and yellow paint.

Upper Missouri River fur trader Edwin Denig stated that the traders furnished Chinese vermilion, chrome yellow and verdigris. “Out of all these an Indian can please himself” He commented that “their native dyes ... have been superseded by those introduced by the traders, with all but the Crow Indians. At the present day they all mostly use the clippings of different colored blankets and cloth, which by boiling with the substances to be dyed, communicates the tint of the cloth to it in some degree. Thus rose, green, pale blue and violet colors are obtained. For black they boil the inner papers in which Chinese vermilion is enveloped.”



Opposite, top: 4-ounce buckskin bag of Chinese vermilion, one of several found in an HBC warehouse at Fort Victoria, British Columbia. Above: Pigments sold in the fur trade.

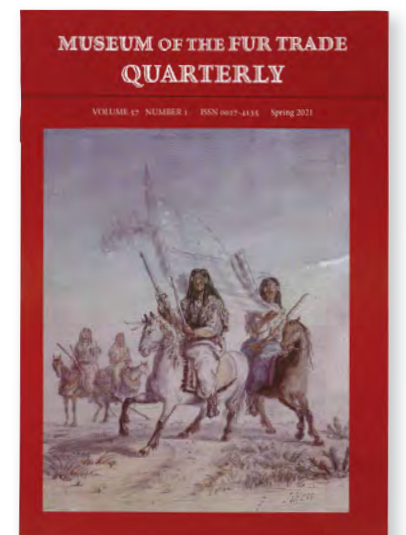


A mid-18th century vermilion keg would have held about 100 pounds. The keg is 12 inches tall and 11 inches in diameter. It is painted yellow; many French fur trade kegs were brightly painted, perhaps to enable employees to recognize trade goods from Quebec. PHOTOS COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE FUR TRADE

Early travelers repeatedly mention gifts of a few awls or a paper of vermilion to the Native Americans they encountered. Vermilion was a major item in the fur trade along with guns, powder, knives, axes, tobacco, blankets and liquor.

Native Americans were practical people. They learned three centuries ago that it was easier to drop in at the nearest trading post and buy a high-quality pigment in whatever quantity they needed. [N](#)

For more information on the Museum, visit furtrade.org.



Rediscovering Hairy Clematis

Story and photos by Gerry Steinauer

With no formal training as a writer, my *Nebraskaland* articles usually require hard work — including days pondering a storyline, late nights writing and re-writing, as well as extensive travel to obtain photos. Recently, however, the storyline and photos for an article on the rare hairy clematis (*Clematis hirsutissima*) fell into my lap.

The Plant

Although hairy clematis is common throughout much of the western United States, it is rare in Nebraska. Here it has been found in the prairie and open pine woods of the Pine Ridge in Dawes and Sheridan counties, where it appears restricted to soils formed from rare outcrops of interbedded chalk and shale, the remains of ancient sea

deposits.

A perennial with a woody root, hairy clematis has single, urn-shaped flowers that hang from stem tips. The unique flowers, which bloom April through June, have blueish-purple, hairy, leathery petals with curled tips, and are the source of the plant's other common names: sugarbowls, vase-flower and leather-flower. The seeds are clustered, each tipped with a long, hairy plume designed for wind dispersal.

Rediscovery

This past May during a meeting, Chadron State College botanist Steve Rolfsmeier, Game and Parks Commission biologist Shelley Steffl, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies biologist Chelsea Forehead and Wild



Hairy clematis flowering in the author's mother-in-law's garden.



Hairy clematis in seed.

Turkey Federation forester Bryce Gerlach mentioned they would soon be visiting a Pine Ridge ranch with the chalk and shale outcrops to plan a conservation project. Hearing this, Rolfsmeier, who knows the history and distribution of Nebraska's flora like no other, asked them to keep an eye out for the clematis while on the ranch. He explained that the plant had been collected in the area in 1974 and never again reported in Nebraska. Perhaps, it still existed there.

A few days later, while hiking on the ranch, Forehead saw a single, strange flower and asked "What is this?" Having done their research, Steffl and Gerlach said simultaneously, "It's hairy clematis."

"Steve will be so happy," added Steffl.

During their visit, they found about a dozen clematis plants. On their drive out, they ran into the rancher and told him of their botanical discovery. "Oh, that plant? It's all over the ranch," he responded. Apparently, hairy clematis is doing well on the site.

Photos Falling Into My Lap

A few days later, Steffl emailed me the story of their discovery. The following Sunday, while enjoying our morning coffee in my mother-in-law's South Dakota farmhouse, I relayed the story to my wife, Grace, who is also a botanist. "This would make a nice

little *Nebraskaland* article ... if I only had a photo of hairy clematis to go along with the story. But it's too far a drive for a single photo," I concluded.

Grace then gave me one of her looks and said, "Well, I was just outside and it's blooming in Mom's flower garden."

"What?" I said. I grabbed my camera, ran outside and photographed three flowering plants.

Back in the house, Grace explained that in early 2000s, while doing plant surveys in the Black Hills, she fell in love with the beautiful wildflower and subsequently planted seeds of the commercially available species in the garden. During the intervening years, I surely saw it blooming there, but having never before encountered the

plant in the wild — I assumed it was an exotic ornamental and ignored it. As a botanist, I am a purist interested only in native plants.

A few weeks later, it was déjà vu all over again. We were back at the farm drinking our morning coffee when Grace said, "I was just outside and last night's rain made the clematis seed heads spread to their full glory."

"You're kidding me," I responded, again heading outside with my camera.

Such is luck. [N](#)

Gerry Steinauer is a Nebraska Game and Parks Commission botanist who has been contributing to Nebraskaland Magazine since 1990.

PRIVACY SCHMIVACY!

By Roger Welsch

Linda and I bought an el Cheapo trail camera — you know, the kind you strap to a tree or post and it automatically takes a photo every time something goes by. We have long known that we are the least of the occupants on these 60 acres on the Middle Loup River and that most of the activity here goes on after we go to bed; we thought the camera might give us a better idea about who was really having all the fun here once the sun went down.

We were a little discouraged when we got our January-February 2020 issue of *Nebraskaland* and saw the magnificent photos, “*The Unseen*,” that Eric Fowler got with his camera traps at Indian Cave State Park, down along the Missouri in the southeastern part of the state. But we decided he invested more than \$50 in his cameras, probably knew a lot more about what he was doing, and was working in an area of Nebraska that is particularly rich in wildlife. But what the heck, we had the camera, so why not give it a shot?

From the very first recording chips that we took from the cameras, we were surprised. Because they were blank. In the one camera, we had not fully inserted the chip and the second, we’d forgotten to turn the camera on. OK. Try again. Well, this time, when we inserted the chips into our computer reader, we were not only surprised, we were gobsmacked. We had baited the camera with some roadkill we dragged off the highway, and apparently, our invitation to a free meal was taken seriously. We had peeks into the private lives of raccoons, possums, a coyote, a fox and a couple gorgeous skunks. (We have often gone to bed here at night wondering about the rich aroma of a skunk wafting across our yard, thinking perhaps that a car hit one out here on the highway, but now we know that it’s all just a matter of the social interaction that goes down along the river bottoms every night, all night.) During the day, there were flurries of crows and a couple of hawks (a red-tailed and a sharp-shinned).

The weekly or biweekly viewing of those camera chips has become our winter entertainment. No matter how often we got pictures of the same critters, it was fascinating to see their attitudes toward each other as they all ate at the same banquet. We enjoyed watching their interactions, keeping track of the time of night they visited, and how many days of the week they did. As I sat at my computer, sorting and deleting hundreds of photos (our camera took as many as 200 images in 24 hours), deciding which of the dozens of



images of fluffy tailed skunks or stealthy foxes I could bear to delete), I hesitate and only reluctantly discard a moment I alone got to see in these secretive creatures’ lives.

I’m not Eric Fowler, but I am lucky enough to live on wooded land along a beautiful Nebraska river. But, honestly, even if I still lived in Lincoln, I would get a trail camera and set it up in my backyard. When I did live there, I often saw foxes, possums and raccoons in my yard and along the city streets. Heaven only knows what I missed. You never know.

I recommend setting up a trail camera in your own city yard. You might be surprised. A fox? Possum? A neighbor stealing your newspaper? Or maybe his dog pooping on your sidewalk? The night holds a thousand secrets!

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.

VISIT

CHIMNEY ROCK MUSEUM

BAYARD, NEBRASKA

New Interactive

EXHIBITS • MUSEUM

Newly Remodeled

History
NEBRASKA

history.nebraska.gov/rock

Hunters Helping the Hungry



More than 700,000 meals have been provided to Nebraskans in need through Hunters Helping the Hungry. Your support is essential to continue this great program.

Buy a hoodie or t-shirt at FarmFocused.com/HHH and profits will go directly to the Hunters Helping the Hungry program. Or donate online at OutdoorNebraska.org/HHH.

Buy your gear today at FarmFocused.com/HHH
Donate or learn more at OutdoorNebraska.org/HHH



HUNTERS HELPING
THE HUNGRY

OUR SPIDER HOUSEMATES

By Chris Helzer

Most people don't care much for spiders, especially indoors. After all, spiders have long creepy legs, no one likes an unexpected web to the face, and some of them are really dangerous, right?

What if I introduced you to a spider that has relatively short legs, doesn't make webs, is completely harmless to people, and also looks like a cute little teddy bear? Ok, the teddy bear part might be a bit of a stretch, but some of us do think they're cute. Also, they eat flies. Does that help? Meet the jumping spider.

We almost always have a few jumping spiders living in our house. They tend to hang around our windows where flies are buzzing around and bumping against the glass. Jumping spiders don't use webs to catch prey. Instead, they creep slowly within range and then pounce on flies or other small insects.

When they jump, they attach a "safely line" of silk before leaping in case they miss their target. Instead of falling to the ground below, they drop a short distance before getting caught by their safety line and can simply crawl back up to where they were. In fact, if you can catch a jumping spider, you can get it to jump from one hand to the other. You can see the safety line in action if you pull your second hand away while the spider is in the air. Sold yet?

Another great thing about jumping spiders in the house is that they're great roommates. They don't leave old webs hanging around, and they spend most of their time hiding in tiny crevices around windows or other places where they're not in your way. They're also completely silent as they help reduce the number of flies and other insects flying around your home. You won't even notice them most of the time.

When we do see the jumping spiders in our house, they're usually either hunting on or near a window or making their way from one window to the next. If we approach them, they'll often turn and look at us through their big gorgeous eyes. They don't like us to get too close, but if we're careful, they'll let us watch from a distance as they hunt.



CHRIS HELZER

Our household is pretty tolerant of indoor spiders of all kinds, which I know is a lot to expect from most families. Apart from the adorable little jumpers, we have funnel web spiders in the corners of a few windows, skinny cellar spiders making webs between the ceiling joists of our unfinished basement, and parson spiders and others crawling around here and there. Those are just a few examples. We'll clear out the webs downstairs when they start getting in the way, but for the most part, the spiders live their lives and we live ours.

I've observed, photographed and held thousands of spiders over my lifetime and have never gotten bit. The vast majority of spiders are no threat to people and aren't interested in biting you unless you force them into it. Even then, most can't break your skin. Most people who think they've had spider bites are wrong, and doctors seem to be getting better at diagnosing red painful/itchy spots as the ingrown hairs, chigger bites or whatever else they actually are.

There are, of course, a few spiders with potentially serious bites. It's a very good idea to know how to identify brown recluses (violin shape on their back) and black widows (red bowtie on their belly) so you don't try to pick them up. However, while those spiders can be dangerous, they don't spend their lives trying to chase you down or waiting to attack you while you sleep.

I won't try to talk anyone into going from "burn it with fire" to hanging a welcome sign out for all spiders. That's a losing proposition, and I know it. I would, though, encourage you to keep an eye out for jumping spiders around your windows. If you spot one, consider giving it a chance to prove itself as a worthy roommate. You don't have to become best friends right away. As with any relationship, it takes time to build trust and get used to one another's weird eating habits. If you give it a chance, you might find that a little jumping spider can become a welcome sight. If not, there's always the cup-and-paper method of escorting it gently outdoors.

OPENING FALL 2022 • UNADILLA, NE

FLOWER MOUND RANCH

SHOOT. | DINE. | UNWIND.

Nebraska's Premier Luxury,
Members-Only Guided Upland
Bird Hunting Experience.

RESERVE YOUR EXPERIENCE TODAY!
FLOWERMOUNDRANCH.COM

Platte County **NEBRASKA**

See yourself here



Meet



Play



Dine



Shop



Stay



Located 75 minutes from
Omaha & Lincoln - with meeting
space for groups of up to 1,000
in space large or small!



FIND SOMETHING
GOOD HERE
visitcolumbusne.com

TRUCK STUFF

By Jeff Kurrus

I’ve been hunting and fishing for 40 years and have been tooling around this great state for *Nebraskaland Magazine* for almost 20. During all this time, there are certain items that I never leave home without.

There are always temporary tenants that last a season or two, but only the most vital of items are welcomed back into my truck year after year.

Hip Boots

“You’ll get your butt wet wearing those,” was all I heard from the old-timers while I was growing up. And while that’s happened a time or two, they’ve kept my feet dry much more often — especially during those early-morning hikes when dew dampens my entire pant legs without these boots.

Buzzbait

Following the year I caught three separate Master Angler fish species on a buzzbait, it’s imperative to have one with me at all times.

Binoculars

During spring turkey and fall waterfowl seasons, a good pair of scouting binos are invaluable.

Tumbler/Cooler/Drinks

I’m always thirstier than I think I will be, and always have a water-filled tumbler with me. A cooler with drinks also sits in the back of my truck. Any number of companies make heavy-duty versions that will remain in the back of the truck despite high winds or empty bottoms.

Hat/Sunglasses/Stocking Cap

I don’t like to squint, so multiple baseball caps and pairs of sunglasses fill my truck. Often polarized and always cheap, these glasses have saved my eyes on more than one occasion — from UV rays to flying crankbaits.

Stocking caps are also a must, as Nebraska’s wind gusts are torture during waterfowl season.

Headlamp

From an impromptu bullfrog hunt to an after-hours blood trail, a headlamp is essential truck gear.

Fly-rod

With a handful of flies and a four-piece fly-rod, I’m always ready to accept someone’s offer when they invite me to fish.



JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

For more than 30 years, Ag Dryer has set the industry standard in custom designed, built and servicing of seed tenders and grain dryers. We have brought that same custom craftsmanship and design to launch the standard in pond recreation.

- All Aluminum Construction
- Undeniably Well Built
- Fully Customizable
- Extremely Stable
- High Weight Capacity

www.pondtini.com

“The Pond-Tini was great fun for our whole family. It’s perfect for the small sandpit on our farm and the small lake down the road! No regrets and lots of memories!”

Camp Better.

LEACHRV.COM

LINCOLN NEBRASKA

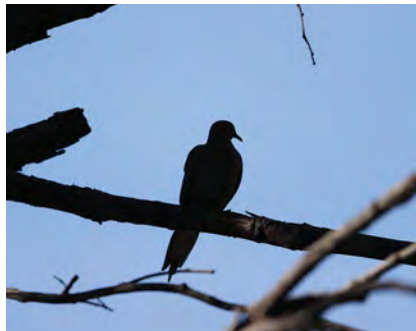
(402) 466-8581

-Sales -Parts -Service -Rentals

OFTEN-OVERLOOKED OCTOBER HUNTS

By Jeff Kurrus

By the time October rolls around, archery season for deer and the upcoming upland bird seasons are at the top of my hunting mind. However, there are a few overlooked autumn hunts that can give hunters exactly what many of us want in the first place — plentiful game and solitude.



Mourning dove in Sarpy County.
JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

Mourning Dove

Many Nebraska hunters are convinced that all mourning doves migrate south at the first sign of cold weather, but this is simply not the case. From the window of our Nebraskaland offices in Lincoln, I see doves every winter — even through the coldest and harshest of storms.

And since I grew up hunting doves in Tennessee in 20- to 30-degree temperatures during college, I'm always reminded of a simple rule: If you can find food, you can find doves. And that food can come in a variety of flavors. "We've shot dove over cut corn, milo, wheat — anything that seeds," said Nebraskaland contributor Larry Kurrus. "As long as there is some bare dirt on the ground. Dove like a clean plate when they eat."

Where you see one, you'll often see many. Some of my most memorable dove hunts in Nebraska have come during the last two weeks of the season, long after everyone else has stopped hunting them.

Squirrel

The mass exodus of leaves from trees in eastern Nebraska occurs around Oct. 15 each year, coinciding with the season's first freeze. "This year could be different," said Nebraska Game and Parks horticulturist Steve Brey. "Because it's been so dry, trees may begin dropping leaves much earlier."

Look for nut trees, including oaks and walnuts, and squirrels will eat osage orange balls as well. "As long as they're around, squirrels will continue eating acorns well into October," said Brey. As leaves begin to fall off trees, squirrels become easier to see and will move on warm, sunny afternoons after a cold overnight.

Out of all the hunts I've been on, nothing has been more addictive than an October squirrel hunt, when the forest canopy slowly opens up and you can see through the woods forever.

Teal

Also known as an opening weekend activity, mild weather and low hunting pressure can hold birds in Nebraska well into October. "In years with warmer weather like this year," said Nebraskaland contributor and lifelong waterfowl hunter Todd Mills, "the



An eastern fox squirrel in a Cass County tree. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

opening day of October waterfowl can feel like the opening day of September teal those first couple of hours."

Hunt these swift fliers the same in October as you did in September, but don't change your big duck decoys because of them. They'll decoy into just about anything. Also, in October, prepare to shoot more greenwings as the month progresses toward November. "As long as a big front doesn't push them out, you can find teal," Mills said.



Todd Mills' labrador retriever, Hope, fetches a green-winged teal while hunting in the Rainwater Basin. JEFF KURRUS, NEBRASKALAND

HALLOWEEN GUIDE 2022

Nebraska's Premiere *SCREAM* Park

October 7th - 29th
Fridays & Saturdays only



At Eagle Raceway in Eagle, NE
(11 miles East of Lincoln)

Sponsored by:

MILLARD LUMBER Inc.

EAGLEHOLLOWHAUNTS.COM



FAMILY, FRIENDS, FUN



September 17 - October 30

Sat.: 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sun: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Entrance closes an hour before closing

308.991.7214

gpapunkinberry.com

Grandpa's Punkinberry Patch

10798 726 Road, Holdrege, NE 68949

A mile south then a mile West of Atlanta



Fanny's Fruit Farm & Pumpkin Patch



11549 Rd. 46 🍊 Gurley, NE 69141

🦇 308-249-2990 🦇

fannysfruitfarm.com

The ScareCrow Patch

Friday & Saturday - 10am to 7pm • Sunday - 12pm to 7pm
Weekdays - groups by appointment

Sept. 17th thru Oct. 31st

574 Denton Road • Saint Libory, NE 68872

Two miles north of St. Libory. Turn east onto 5th Ave, on the corner of Hwy 281 and 58. Go 1/4 mile and then turn north onto Denton Rd. and go 3/4 mile to our free parking lot!

www.thescarecrowpatch.com

308.687.6254





STOCK SEED FARMS
PRAIRIE GRASS • TURFGRASS
AND WILD FLOWER SEED
Quality Seed Since 1956

Native Grasses, Wildflowers,
Turfgrass, Pasture, CRP
& Cover Crop

📍 www.stockseed.com 📍 Murdock, NE
☎ (800) 759-1520 ✉ prairie@stockseed.com

The Nebraska Trout Slam



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

Get the Details at
OutdoorNebraska.org/TroutSlam



Tom Reichner

Find the gear you need to capture Nebraska's splendor.

Camera Gear for All Skill Levels | Binoculars & Scopes | Camera & Lens Rentals
Trade-Ins Welcome | Photography Classes & Adventures | Camera Repair & Cleaning
Quality Photo Printing | Photo & Slide Scanning | Video Transfer Services



Online Orders Ship Same Day!
rockbrookcamera.com

OMAHA | 168th & W. Center | 402-691-0003
LINCOLN | 70th & Pioneers | 402-488-4200

Family Owned Since 1975!

Share your photos with **Nebraskaland** on social media



FOLLOW OUR PAGE #Nebraskaland

Nebraskaland Magazine @Nebraskaland

Take a WALK THROUGH History



WEEPING WATER HERITAGE TRAIL
A 3.2-mile self-guided trail walk featuring 14 sites highlighting the history of Weeping Water.

JUST A SHORT, SCENIC DRIVE FROM:

- MAHONEY STATE PARK
- PLATTE RIVER STATE PARK
- LOUISVILLE LAKES REC AREA

WWW.WEEPINGWATERHISTORY.ORG
Motorized scooters available for those who need assistance.
Funded In Part By Cass County Tourism • visitcasscounty.com



Brothers pheasant hunting after school, 1962-63

Good times in Newcastle. My husband, Kirk, is in the middle. He is 8 years younger than his brother, Doug, on the left and 10 years younger than his oldest brother, Buss, on the right. As you can see by the smile on his face, he was happy they let him tag along!

Both Buss and Doug served in Vietnam. Doug was in the Navy and on the USS Enterprise when an explosion and fire occurred. He served 3 tours. Buss (Mark) joined the Marines and served in Vietnam. Kirk and I got married on opening day of pheasant season in 1975. Quite sure the three brothers all bagged their limits before our 2 o'clock wedding!

They've hunted together for many, many years.

– Denise Kneifl, Newcastle



Pheasant hunting, early 1951

This is my grandfather, Lurton Tremain, pheasant hunting on our family farm near Malcolm. Here with his hunting dog and a Winchester shotgun that is over 100 years old now — which I still have.

– John Tremain, Lincoln



Catfishing near Spencer, 1973

This is a picture of Tim Mann, Earl Hipke and Allen Walters (me), all farm boys from O'Neill, after a night spent along the south bank of the Niobrara River, south of Spencer in 1973. We spent a few hours sleeping under a tarp in the pouring rain, along the banks of the river. Since none of us had ever fished along the river, this was all new to us, and we weren't sure what to expect. Lots of mud and rain, and as we put out some set lines, the rains started and the catfish also started biting. After a great night of fishing, we headed to the *O'Neill Independent* newspaper and had our picture taken in front of the newspaper office. They placed it in the newspaper the following week. Tim and Earl are still in the O'Neill area, and I am retired in Buckeye, Arizona.

– Allen Walters, Buckeye, Arizona

Send contributions to: Portraits from the Past, Nebraskaland Magazine, P.O. Box 30370, Lincoln, NE 68503-0370. Or e-mail to Tim.Reigert@Nebraska.gov. Photos should show people enjoying Nebraska outdoor activities, such as camping, boating, hunting or fishing, and must have been taken before 2000. We will give priority to unusual photos or activities. When possible, please include a story about the photograph and identify the people, places and approximate date it was taken. Text may be edited and photos adjusted for reproduction. All photos will be returned.



FALL COLOR

By Jeff Kurrus

I’ve seen a thousand campers during my tenure at *Nebraskaland Magazine* — but none that have stuck out more than this beauty. Perhaps it’s my affinity for old vehicles or the owner’s spot-on paint-matching jobs between the truck and camper, but when I came across the combo last October at Mormon Island State Recreation Area, I couldn’t stop staring. Visiting the region to shoot fall color, I encountered more color than

I had bargained for. I nearly knocked on the camper to introduce myself to the owner, but decided against it. I had come from Omaha to this region for some peace and quiet, and I imagined this person had, too. Instead, I did my rounds at the park, photographing the reds and yellows so reminiscent of a Nebraska autumn. Then, for good measure, I added a little aqua blue for a truly unique fall picture.



September 3, 2022 - January 25, 2023

Four duck species. Four tasty meals.
Unlimited flyway bragging rights.

Add an extra challenge to your waterfowl hunts this year. Take your shot at harvesting four of our most popular duck species in one year to get a Nebraska Duck Slam.

Check out details at OutdoorNebraska.org/DuckSlam

