

Outdoor Oklahoma

JULY / AUGUST 2026 — ONLY \$10 A YEAR



A PUBLICATION OF THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



PANORAMAS



Jon West

Decades ago, the Wildlife Department operated a program called the Oklahoma **Angler Recognition Program (ARP)**. I didn't know it existed until I came across an old trifold pamphlet tucked away in the Porter field office.

The ARP was designed to recognize anglers who caught exceptional fish in Oklahoma. It was meant to encourage and celebrate the catch of trophy-size fish, and to obtain information on the larger fish caught in the state. It engaged anglers by offering them a well-defined goal to strive for and a reward for achieving it.

This thought process led me to rejuvenate the dormant ARP.

ODWC already engages anglers through free fishing clinics, The Dock on our website, Facebook posts, and the State Records program.

I'm excited to say the new ARP is now up and running, and I hope all anglers — residents or nonresidents of all ages — will participate.

The ARP recognizes anglers based on species caught, method of catch, and the fish's length.

While ODWC's State Records program uses weight to define trophy fish, I opted for a length-based program to simplify the process and make the ARP more accessible to more anglers.

Fish can be quickly measured, photographed and released, reducing handling time and improving survival rates of released fish.

The ARP has two award levels: **Trophy Angler** and **Master Angler**.

For a Trophy Angler award, you must catch a fish that meets the minimum length requirement for that species from Oklahoma waters. Upon approval of your signed entry form and your photo showing the fish measurement, you get a digital certificate. Trophy Anglers will also be listed on ODWC's website and in an annual report.

Catch and certify five or more Trophy Award fish consisting of multiple species, and an angler can apply for a Master Angler award. Master Anglers will get a digital certificate plus a challenge coin unique to the ARP. Master Anglers will also be listed on ODWC's website and in an annual report.

My vision was to create an exclusive club that anglers aspire to join, with the only entry requirements being legally fishing in Oklahoma and reeling in a qualifying fish.

In ODWC's Fisheries Division, it's sometimes difficult to see how our work directly impacts anglers. Research, sampling, monitoring and reporting are all essential to fisheries science and regulatory guidance, but those efforts often resonate only with biologists. This renewed ARP is our attempt to create a real impact for Oklahoma anglers.

I'm genuinely excited to help make anglers' time on the water even more meaningful. I believe the ARP offers something tangible that fosters community, celebrates achievement, and lets folks know that ODWC is committed to enhancing their fishing experience. ♥

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Jon West". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "J" and "W".

Jon West, Fisheries Regional Supervisor

Scan this code to see qualifying lengths by species:



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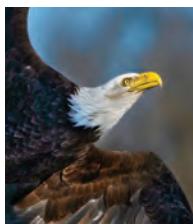
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Now available: Outdoor Oklahoma T-shirts!



ON THE COVER:

America's symbol, the mighty bald eagle, triumphantly rises from the water with its catch in this stirring image captured in Pawnee County by Randy Watkins of Agra. It's a fitting choice to grace the cover of our annual Readers' Photography Showcase issue as our nation celebrates an important milestone

—250 years of American independence. View this year's other winning Showcase images starting on Page 18.

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OKLAHOMA



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

NOTES ON WILDLIFE • OUTDOOR TIPS • READERS' LETTERS • ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS
COMPILED BY DON P. BROWN

OKFUSKEE COUNTY YIELDS NATION'S TOP RIO GRANDE TURKEY

Oklahoma's 2026 spring turkey hunting season was an overall success, logging more than 10,000 birds harvested for the first time in at least a decade. And one of those birds turned out to be the No. 1-rated Rio Grande turkey in a national record book!

On April 23, while hunting near Paden in Okfuskee County, **Matt Dixon** of Virginia bagged a Rio with nine beards, measuring in total length an astounding 62.8

inches. After evaluation by the National Wild Turkey Federation, Dixon's bird was declared the No. 1 Rio Grande atypical turkey in the organization's national record book, which has registered more than 10,000 harvested turkeys since 1982.

The harvest was also recognized as the No. 5 turkey of all species in the record book, both typical and atypical.

Dixon's record-breaking Rio weighed 21.5 pounds.

Adding to this season's overall success were several remarkable single harvests, including a Rio from private property in Beckham County on opening

morning. When hunter **Jackson Mendoza** of Sayre examined the bird, he counted seven individual beards measuring 39.5 inches total.

It appears another bird with seven beards was taken by **Nate McCaslin**, 13, in Caddo County on April 25. He posted a photo of the beards on The Tailgate, an ODWC webpage where anyone may share photos of their harvests.

This spring's decent turkey season continued an upward harvest trend since 2022, when only about 4,000 birds were taken. Hunters reported 10,096 turkeys taken statewide this spring, compared with 7,727 in spring 2025, 5,865 in spring 2024, and 5,183 in spring 2023.

ODWC's Eastern Wild Turkey Coordinator **Eric Suttles** said favorable weather conditions contributed to higher numbers of turkeys and increased hunter participation.

Management strategy changes that began in 2021 (one tom limit statewide and an April 16 opening date) appear to be producing positive results, he said.

Rio Grande Wild Turkey Coordinator **Marcus Thibodeau** said the single bird limit, requested by constituents, has played a major role in supporting population recovery. "Since the decline in turkey numbers, our agency has remained focused on habitat restoration and research, and hunters are now seeing the benefits of all of these efforts."

Notable this past season was a drop in the number of jakes taken, Suttles said. "Typically, jakes account for approximately 25% of the total harvest. However, during the 2026 spring season, that percentage dropped to 15%."

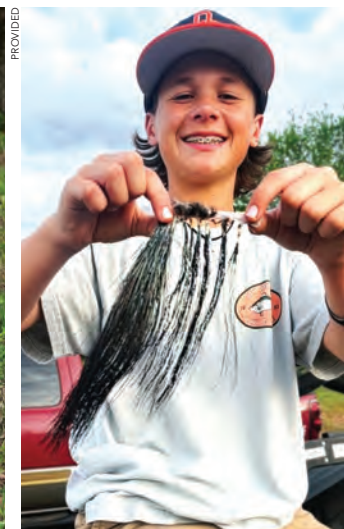
And we would be remiss if we didn't also mention that Thibodeau, ODWC's own Rio turkey coordinator, also became a member of the notable harvest list. On April 21, hunting in Ellis County, he took a tom sporting five beards. 🍀



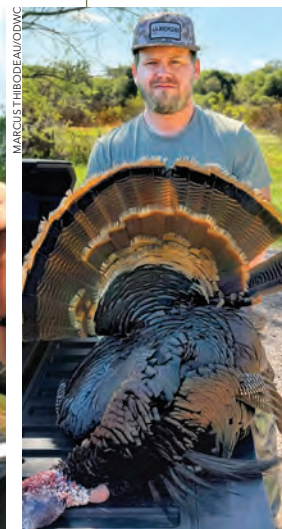
Hunter Jackson Mendoza shows his turkey with seven beards to game warden Tucker Blackburn, based in Roger Mills County.



Matt Dixon took this gobbler that now ranks as the No. 1 Rio Grande atypical harvest in the NWTF record book.



Nate McCaslin posted this photo to The Tailgate, noting "Turkey had 7 beards!"



Marcus Thibodeau's Rio from Ellis County sported five beards.

MICHAEL J. HILLIARY JOINS WILDLIFE COMMISSION FROM DISTRICT 6

Lifelong Comanche County resident Michael J. Hilliary of Meers has joined the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission from District 6, which includes Blaine, Caddo, Canadian, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Jefferson, Kingfisher and Stephens counties.

Gov. Kevin Stitt appointed Hilliary to succeed John P. Zelbst of Meers, who served 16 years on the Commission.

Hilliary is executive vice president of the Hilliary Co., a family-owned telecom company headquartered in Medicine Park, providing fiber optics, telephone, internet and television services along with radio and print media operations. He is actively involved in the company's telecom operations, particularly in rural construction projects, capital planning and keeping the company's growing fleet and infrastructure aligned with long-term goals.

"It is an honor to serve," he said about his appointment to the Commission.

"Understanding the issues with Oklahoma's wildlife and the issues faced by the Oklahoma Wildlife Commission are very important to the state."

He's been deeply involved in agricultural youth development for years, especially in the area of shooting sports for Elgin Public Schools and Comanche County 4-H. He welcome the students to his personal shooting range and is now adding a skeet field.

Hilliary serves on the board of the Oklahoma FFA Foundation and is a member of the Oklahoma Broadband Expansion Council.

Hilliary manages Hilliary Farms and the Meers-Saddle Mountain Ranch, the family's cow-calf operation. His early experience in agriculture gave him a deep appreciation for hard work and the rural way of life.

He and Cheryl have been married since 1998 and have three children: Shawn, a 2025 Oklahoma State University graduate and now an agricultural science teacher at Catoosa High School; Hayden, a student at Murray State College and member of the national champion collegiate shooting team; and Carter, an eighth-grader at Elgin Middle School.

The state's Wildlife Conservation Commission is the eight-member governing board of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. It establishes state hunting and fishing regulations, sets policy for the Wildlife Department, and indirectly oversees all state fish and wildlife conservation activities. Commission members are appointed by the governor for eight-year terms and confirmed by the Oklahoma Senate. ♡



LATEST DURABLE LICENSE CARDS FEATURE CRAPPIE, SQUIRREL

BY MICHAEL BERGIN, SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

The newest pair of durable license cards are now available, featuring images of a crappie and a squirrel, both painted by local artist Shea Meyer. Each card may be ordered for \$6 through your Go Outdoors Oklahoma account.

These collectible plastic cards are durable and waterproof, easily carried in a wallet or pocket.

The cards can carry up to nine licenses or privileges, which are encoded on the back side. The card is valid proof in the field or on the lake whenever needed to verify your licenses.

A portion of the sale of each card is designated for outreach efforts aimed at recruiting, retaining and reactivating lapsed hunters and anglers — important because the Wildlife Department relies on hunting and fishing license sales for funding.

Meyer created the artwork featured on retired collectible cards that featured a mallard, white bass, sunfish, black bear, wild turkey, pheasant and catfish. He won the Department's annual waterfowl stamp

design contest in 2014, and was a runner-up in the contest in 2022 and 2023. He's a lifetime license holder, outdoorsman, and educator at Stratford Schools. He is an accomplished outdoorsman and a supporter of conservation.

To get a new collectible card, log on to your Go Outdoors Oklahoma profile and click "Purchase Licenses." If you already have a current hunting or fishing license, you can still buy a collectible card from the License Catalog. Or, when buying any license, you can add a collectible card to your purchase. ♡



ODWC CELEBRATES AGENCY EXCELLENCE AND NATIONAL HONORS

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is proud to celebrate our dedicated employees honored with prestigious awards in the agency, across the state, and on the national stage. We congratulate these outstanding professionals for their commitment to protecting Oklahoma's natural resources and serving the public.



Jaylen Flynn

ODWC 2026 GAME WARDEN OF THE YEAR

Winner: Jaylen Flynn, based in Blaine County.

Flynn's investigative work in 2025 brought numerous commercial poachers to justice, breaking up multiple illegal guiding and baiting operations and generating over \$26,000 in fines and potential restitution in just a single 24-hour period. Renowned for his tireless work ethic, positive attitude and natural leadership, Flynn sets the gold standard for wildlife law enforcement.

Honorable Mentions: Kudos go to runner-up **Trey Hale (District 4)** and the district nominees **Cody Morris (D1)**, **Cody Youngblood (D2)**, **Matt Penwright (D3)**, **Jacob Harriet (D5)**, **Andrew Vaughan (D7)**, and **Lydia Ge**



Kelly Adams

2026 CONSERVATION CHANGE AGENT AWARD

Winner: Kelly Adams, Communication and Education supervisor.

This regional honor from the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) recognizes individuals who act as catalysts for positive growth and innovation within conservation agencies. Adams has continually pushed ODWC to maximize its impact on hunting, fishing and wildlife watching. By fostering novel ways to communicate and evaluate conservation strategies, her vision and leadership are making a difference in the lives of those who love the outdoors.



David deMontigny

ODWC R3 CHAMPION AWARD

Winner: David deMontigny, game warden based in McIntosh County.

The R3 Champion Award highlights exceptional efforts to recruit, retain and reactivate hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts. DeMontigny's consistent dedication to community outreach and mentorship in McIntosh County has bridged the gap between the public and the resource. He ensures that Oklahoma's sporting heritage is passed to the next generation.

2026 SPIRIT OF ODWC AWARD

Winner: Jeff Pennington, Central Region wildlife supervisor.

This award honors an employee whose daily work reflects the core values of customer service, teamwork and problem-solving. With over 30 years of service, Pennington is a fixture of professional leadership. Whether leading crucial prescribed burns to improve wildlife habitats or representing the agency at national conferences, he tackles each task with infectious pride and dedication.

Honorable Mentions: **Kristen Gillman** (Wildlife), **Sean Robertson** (Accounting), **Jessica Brown** (Federal Aid), and **Maria Goldsmith** (Property).



Jeff Pennington

2026 GOLDEN POST AWARDS

Top Five Finalist: ODWC for National Social Media Presence from the Government Social Media Association (GSMCON).

Earning notable national recognition, ODWC was named a Top Five Finalist for Best Overall Social Media Presence in the United States and Canada. Spearheaded by **Daisy Creager**, communication and education specialist, ODWC's digital platforms successfully navigate high-stakes conversations, share wildlife information, and build public trust daily. This recognition spotlights the creative strategies that make ODWC a national leader in conservation communication. 🍷



Daisy Creager



NEWEST FISHING, HUNTING REGULATIONS GO ONLINE MID-JULY

Get an early look at the newest version of the statewide regulations when the 2026-27 Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Regulations is released on the Wildlife Department's website.

Check at wildlifedepartment.com in mid-Ju-

ly for the new version.

The standard printed booklet of the new regulations will be available in late August. Those can be picked up for free anywhere that hunting and fishing licenses are sold. 🍷

GAME BAG

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS TO THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

We'd like to hear from you! Send your letters to Outdoor Oklahoma Letters, P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3465, or send e-mail to donald.brown@odwc.ok.gov.

Dear Wildlife Department,

Thank you for your commitment and devotion to educating our students. The kids love the fishing and archery stations each year. We look forward to your continued support in the future.

The Purcell Fifth-grade Team

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wildlife Department staff helping out with the Purcell Outdoor Classroom were **Brian Meskimen, Zach Hanson** and **Lt. Chad Strang** from the Law Enforcement Division; **Hayden Moore, Corrie McClees** and **Nick Baynham** of Fisheries Division; and **Cameron Gammill** of Wildlife Division.

Dear Col. Nathan Erdman and Lt. Col. Wade Farrar, ODWC Law Enforcement Division,

I want to express my appreciation for assistance from ODWC state game wardens **Brandon Lehrman** and **Lt. James Edwards Jr.**

On April 30, 2026, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation was requested to step in for a missing person investigation. Ultimately the investigation led to Sandy Sanders Wildlife Management Area. ... I reached out to Edwards and requested him and additional game warden assistance along with resources such as ATVs and UTVs. Given my background as a game warden and knowledge of Sandy Sanders, I was aware of just how challenging this scene could be largely due to the terrain, overall size of this area, and an active hunting season going on.

Edwards and Lehrman arrived with ATVs and UTVs. Edwards and Lehrman remained on scene the entire time and assisted in securing the large area and assisting with moving personnel as well as sharing their knowledge of the area. Their efforts were greatly appreciated and recognized in allowing us to continue our investigation.

I would also like to mention ODWC Wildlife Division employees **Scotty Webb, Ron Smith** and **Joe Nabone**. Each of them arrived on scene and were helpful with their knowledge of the terrain and helping to control ingress and egress at the large area.

All of the ODWC personnel carried themselves in a professional way that represented the ODWC well. Their efforts were greatly appreciated.

Special Agent **Daniel Perkins**, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation

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OKLAHOMA
DEPARTMENT OF
WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION

US Army Corps
of Engineers

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OFFICIAL SUPPORTER OF
AMERICA'S LAKES AND WATERWAYS

OUTDOOR CALENDAR

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES, GO ONLINE TO LICENSE.
GOOUTDOORSOKLAHOMA.COM/EVENT/EVENTS.ASPX

NOTICE: Events were scheduled at press time; they are subject to change.

JULY 2026

- 4** Independence Day (state offices closed July 3).
OKC Free Fishing Day, no city permit required.
- 5** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Falconry, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 11** OKC's Youth Hooked on Fishing, 10 a.m., South Lakes Park.
- 12** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Microfishing/Reel Talk, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 18** KECO Kids Fishing Derby, 8 a.m., Ackley Park, Elk City. Register:
license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx.
Okla. Youth Hunting Program volunteer training, 10 a.m., Mustang. Register:
license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx.
- 19** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Muley Trapping, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 26** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- **National Wild Turkey Federation** events (date) in. Info: your.nwtf.org/members/events.
- **Tackle the Basics** free fishing clinics, 6 p.m. July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 at Jenks-Zebco Pond and Arcadia Cons. Educ. Area. Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx.
- **Hunter Education Courses** (date) in Shawnee (10); Cherokee (28). Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx.

AUGUST 2026

- 1** OKC Free Fishing Day, no city permit required.
OKC's Youth Hooked on Fishing, 10 a.m., Dolese Youth Park.
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, High Plains Chapter banquet, Guymon.
Tickets: <https://tickets.rmef.org/s/14234>.
- 2** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, DeerCon Promo, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 3** Okla. Wildlife Conservation Commission meets, 9 a.m., Oklahoma City.
- 9** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 15** Quail Forever, Central Okla. 89er Chapter banquet, Oklahoma City. Tickets:
<https://events.pheasantsforever.org/events>.
- 16** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Fish Structure/Learn to Hunt Waterfowl, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 23** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Game Warden Stories, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 30** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, Leopard Darter Survey, 8 a.m., OETA.
- **Ducks Unlimited** events (date) in Perry (1); Wagoner (8); McAlester (14); Bartlesville (15); Broken Arrow (22); Altus (27); Guthrie (29). Info: ducks.org/events.
- **National Wild Turkey Federation** event (date) in Dewar (1); Edmond (13); Woodward (15); Poteau (20); Elgin (22); Broken Arrow (29). Info: your.nwtf.org/members/events.
- **Hunter Education Courses** (date) in Afton (1); Walters (8); Edmond (8); Minco (8); Marlow (8); Muskogee (8); Dewey (9); McAlester (15); Butler (15); Stillwater (15); Bristow (15); Porum (15); Skiatook (15); Pryor (15); Owasso (22); Elk City (22); Fort Cobb (22); Ada (22); Broken Bow (22); Tishomingo (22); Woodward (22); Shawnee (22); Blanchard (29); Altus (29); Okmulgee (29); Ponca City (29); Guymon (29). Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/ViewEvent.aspx.

** FOR HUNTING SEASON DATES, GO TO
www.wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/seasons **



Freshwater jellyfish spend the majority of their lives as tiny, inconspicuous polyps attached to rocks or plants on the lake floor. The jellyfish stage we see in Oklahoma lakes, as seen here, is actually a rare, short-lived part of their life.

FINDING "JELLYFISH" POSSIBLE IN OKLAHOMA WATERS

BY KELLY ADAMS, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION SUPERVISOR

If you are swimming in an Oklahoma lake this summer and see tiny, translucent umbrellas pulsing through the water, don't worry, you aren't seeing things. You've just discovered the freshwater jellyfish (*Craspedacusta sowerbii*).

Despite the name, they are not true jellyfish. They are an invasive species of hydrozoan cnidaria native to the Yangtze River valley in China. It is believed these jellies made their way to the United States on imported aquatic plants in the late 1800s. Today they can be found in calm waters across the nation, including local spots such as Lake Arcadia near Edmond.

These creatures are about the size of a nickel and are completely translucent or white. A common question is, "Do they sting?" While they do use tiny stinging cells to catch zooplankton, their stingers are far too small to penetrate human skin.

You'll usually only see them in late summer or early autumn. They spend most of their lives as tiny polyps attached to underwater surfaces, only transforming into the swimming medusa stage when water temperatures rise above 80°F.

Freshwater jellyfish were first reported in Oklahoma in 1930. Recorded locations include Elmer Thomas, Stroud Lake, Tenkiller, Grand Lake, Texoma, Wetumka, Broken Bow, Robert S. Kerr, as well as in the Muddy Boggy and Little River.

Because these animals require very specific conditions to appear, seeing a bloom is a rare and special way to experience the hidden wonders of Oklahoma's natural world. For more information, scan the code. And if you think you have found any invasive species, contact a biologist at (918) 200-4815 or report online. 🐾



WELCOME TO THE DOCK!

Are the fish biting? You bet! Step onto The Dock and take a gander at some great catches made recently by Oklahoma anglers. Here's a few we thought you would enjoy! To see more or submit a photo of your catch, go to www.wildlifedepartment.com/fishing/the_dock or scan the code:



Antonio Galbreath, striped bass hybrid, May 23, 2026, Oklahoma County.



Don Martin, saugeye, April 29, 2026, Lake Ellsworth.



Ray Tomlin, crappie, April 11, 2026, Sardis Lake.



Regina Clearman, blue catfish, April 27, 2026, Lake Texoma.



Miranda B., paddlefish, May 5, 2026, Fort Gibson Reservoir.



Hunter Brooks, largemouth bass, May 4, 2026, Lake Lawtonka.

GAME WARDEN'S JOURNAL

ACCOUNTS FROM THE FIELD BY THE PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO ENFORCE THE FISH AND WILDLIFE LAWS OF OKLAHOMA.



On May 22, game wardens were notified of unlawfully dumped trash in the Fort Gibson Public Hunting Area near State Highway 51 and North Clear Creek Road. They found a large number of 5-gallon buckets and paint. The information needed for the paint store to trace the buyer wasn't on the buckets. Please contact game warden **David Garrett** at (918) 431-2562 or game warden **Cody Youngblood** at (918) 431-2552 by phone or text with any information. You can remain anonymous.



On April 19, a landowner sent photos from his trail camera that was facing the entrance of his property, allegedly showing illegal hunting activity. Game warden **Dylan Jones**, based in



Ellis County, went to the scene and found an 12-gauge shotgun hull on the edge of the road. He found a wad in the direction where a wild turkey was standing by a cattle guard when killed. Using the photos, Jones and game warden Lt. **James Edwards**,

based in Beckham County, developed a suspect living in Oklahoma City. They interviewed the suspect and got a full confession. Wardens issued citations for illegal possession of wildlife not legally taken, shooting from a public roadway, hunting with the aid of a motorized conveyance, and hunting without landowner consent.

IT'S THE LAW:

Bullfrogs may be taken with hook and line, gig, spear, bow and arrow, or other methods except firearms under a resident or non-resident fishing license. Daily limit is 15. Bullfrogs may not be sold. 🐸

An oilfield worker west of Cleo Springs reported seeing a vehicle drive by a flock of wild turkeys several times before returning and

shooting from the back driver-side window. Game warden **Phillip Cottrill**, based in Major County, quickly responded. After searching for hours, Cottrill and game warden **Tristian Leonard**, based in Woods County, came upon a vehicle matching the description. Three Iowa residents in the vehicle admitted to shooting at a tom from the county road but accidentally killed a hen. They said they picked up the hen and left it in a ditch. Citations were issued; charges were pending in Major County District Court. Thanks to those who speak out for wildlife and conservation.

On April 18, game warden **Michael Taylor**, based in Cotton County, received a report that two turkeys had been poached on private property near Waurika Wildlife Management Area by two subjects. Taylor contacted game warden **Tucker Clem**, based in Jefferson County, to assist. Taylor located two subjects in a vehicle that matched the given description. The two subjects were non-residents on the WMA without required licenses. Clem interviewed the subjects and learned there was a third subject attempting to hide. That subject, a resident, was called out by Taylor without incident. Guns and turkeys were seized as evidence, and charges of hunting without landowner consent, illegal possession of wild turkey, obstruction, and nonresident hunting on a WMA without a game bird permit were pending with the Cotton County District Attorney's Office.

Game wardens from across the state helped ensure athletes, families and spectators at the Special Olympics Oklahoma Summer Games had a safe and enjoyable event in Stillwater in May. Game wardens are proud to support an organization that celebrates determination, courage and community, and it was an honor to serve alongside the incredible athletes who inspire us all.

(Reports from Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission files.)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please help make a difference! When violators break the law, they steal fish and wildlife from you! Report violations anonymously by calling Operation Game Thief at (800) 522-8039. You could earn a cash reward.

2025 CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

"WE WILL TEACH THE GENERATIONS TO COME ..."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and Oklahoma Station Chapter Safari Club International sponsor a creative writing contest for middle and high school students. Boy and girl winners are chosen from two age divisions. Students' essay theme can be "Hunting: Sharing the Heritage" or "Archery: What I Like About Archery in the Schools and Bowhunting." Winners in the age 15-17 category receive a guided oryx hunt at Rockin S Ranch in Texas, and winners in the 11-14 age category receive a hunting trip with Rack Attack Outfitters of Fairview (or similar) and a scholarship to the Outdoor Texas Camp. In this issue, Outdoor Oklahoma honors senior female winner Adalee Ward, 17, from Weleetka High School.



By Adalee Ward

When I go hunting, I like to learn new things about the animals with my mom or grandparents. I like to spend time with my family when we are setting up blinds, tree stands or tripods. My family makes it easy to enjoy the overall process of tracking, cleaning and sighting in our guns or getting our hunting site ready.

My sister and I laugh while putting on our camo because of how big they are on us.

In the cool morning air of opening day, we wait and watch the animals. I feel calm and happy because we are in the woods or in the fields tracking an animal, and especially when we explore our terrain and look at animal burrows and dens. Learning different ways to prepare, scout or hunt, to include what animals to hunt for during their season.

Hunting means different things to many people, but for my family it's tradition. To some, it is a joyous experience, pastime or hobby. To my grandparents, it is a way of life because they hunt as a way to provide for the family. For my mom, it is a way to keep our family's heritage alive and growing. Our land has been hunted for many generations, since it was allotted to my Native American ancestors by the United States government.

We have a 1929 Remington .30 caliber. My mom used it as her first gun, and then it was handed to me the first time I went hunting. We also pass down animal calls and techniques to younger generations.

Sometimes we use our ancestors' ways to hunt when we bow hunt, but only if we are good at shooting. They mostly hunted deer, such as whitetails, or E'co as they would say, but they also hunted wild turkeys and fish with spears.

They used the deer for gloves in the winters, bookbinding, and many other things. Deer skin was used to produce buckskin as well as a chamois-like leather. They traded it for things like iron tools, kettles, knives, firearms, ammunition, and gunpowder. They also hunted small game like rabbits.

They use other weapons as well, such as tomahawks and war clubs. Bow and arrows were effective when it came to speed, accuracy, stealth and mobility. War clubs were blunt and effective for a quick blow at a close range. Tomahawks are flexible weapons in warfare that could be thrown from a medium distance or used in hand-to-hand combat. Rifles could be fired several times without reloading. Spears were used for hunting and fishing; they were not used much in war.

Even though we do not use the same technique as our ancestors, we still continue to hunt. We still provide for our family and keep traditions alive. We will teach the generations to come what we learned from the past, even if it is just preparing a kill to be processed, because this to me is a way to keep our heritage going for years to come. 🍖



ODWC APPLAUDS STATE WINNERS IN YOUTH ARCHERY, SHOTGUN SPORTS

Each year, thousands of students across Oklahoma participate in the **Oklahoma National Archery in the Schools Program (OKNASP)**, **Varsity Archery Program**, and **Oklahoma Shotgun Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP)**, all included in a slate of educational offerings from the Wildlife Department's Communication and Education Division.

The state final tournaments for each program are held in February for OKNASP and in April for OKSSSP. ODWC would like to recognize the winning teams and individuals from these tournaments.

OKLAHOMA SCHOLASTIC SHOOTING SPORTS PROGRAM

The Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP) celebrated its 13th year in 2026. This program started in 2013 with 20 pilot schools and now has over 200 middle and high schools involved.

After two regional tournaments involving about 1,000 students, the top-scoring 16 high schools, eight junior high schools and 80 individuals advanced to the state shoot April 15 at El Reno. Teams compete in a bracket-style competition until winners are determined through eliminations.

Damon Springer, OKSSSP coordinator, said shooting sports has grown in popularity over the past few years and most colleges in Oklahoma have a shooting team with several offering scholarships. "Several high school seniors have signed letters of intent with colleges in Oklahoma for the fall semester."

Top finishers this year were:

- **Senior Division:** Woodward, team champion; Tayton Caddell, Boise City, boys individual champion; Addison Darling, Merrit, girls individual champion.
- **Junior Division:** Jason Padgett, Verden, boys individual champion; Jayden McElhannon, girls individual champion.



OKSSSP 2026 Champion Junior Team: Boise City



OKSSSP 2026 Champion Senior Team: Woodward



Jayden McElhannon: OKSSSP Jr. Individual Girls Champion



Tayton Caddell: OKSSSP Sr. Individual Boys Champion



Addison Darling: OKSSSP Jr. Individual Girls Champion



Jason Padgett: OKSSSP Jr. Individual Boys Champion

OKLAHOMA NATIONAL ARCHERY IN THE SCHOOLS

Kelly Boyer, OKNASP and Varsity Archery coordinator, congratulated competitors in this year's Grand State shoot Feb. 25 in Tulsa.

A total of 1,357 youths in 84 archery teams from 76 schools and groups competed at the state event. "We harbor some of the most talented young archers in the nation," Boyer said.

Top finishers this year were:

- **High School Division:** Locust Grove, team champion; Skylar Beasley, Antlers, boys individual champion; Lakin Quinn, Locust Grove, girls individual champion.
- **Middle School Division:** Locust Grove, team champion; Grady Bullock, Chouteau-Mazie, boys individual champion; Makyah Davis, Locust Grove, girls individual champion.
- **Elementary School Division:** Altus, team champion; Liam Barnett, Northmoor, boys individual champion; Emery Anderson, Northmoor, girls individual champion.

Also, the National Archery in the Schools Program selected several Oklahoma shooters for the national 2026 Academic All-American Teams. These student archers demonstrate excellence in the classroom and on the archery range.

- **Middle School Bullseye Academic All-American Team:** Cash Ellis and Jay Vann, Locust Grove; Remington McBride and Parker Ward, Altus.
- **High School Bullseye Academic All-American Team:** Caden Eyestone, Chandler; Carson Morehead, Locust Grove; Adian Crase, Cameron Schools.
- **High School NASP 3D Academic All-American Team:** Adian Crase, Cameron Schools.



OKNASP 2026 High School Champion Team: Locust Grove



OKNASP 2026 Elementary Champion Team: Altus



OKNASP 2026 Middle School Champion Team: Locust Grove



Skylar Beasley: OKNASP 2026 High School Boys Champion



Lakin Quinn



Liam Barnett



Makyah Davis



Grady Bullock



Emery Anderson



From left, summer tanager, snowy egret, indigo bunting.

HERE'S TO THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE!

★ REFLECTING ON WILD AMERICA AS NATION OBSERVES 250 YEARS ★

BY JENA DONNELL, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION SPECIALIST

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, we dug deep into field guides and reference books to find Oklahoma fish and wildlife that have a tie to our nation's history and heritage. From the red, white and blue to those "officially" named in 1776, we've got dozens of wild America examples and trivia to fire up your Fourth of July party.

THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE

The United States has long been represented by the red, white and blue, even before the first Stars and Stripes flag was created in 1777. And these patriotic colors can be found in Oklahoma's natural communities.

In addition to **summer tanagers**, **snowy egrets**, and **indigo buntings**, Oklahoma has **cardinal shiners**, **whooping cranes**, and **blue suckers**; **red foxes**, **checkered whites**, and **blue jays**; along with many other red, white and blue species!

Oklahoma's fish and wildlife also may embody the symbolism behind the red, white and blue. When the Great Seal of the United States was adopted in 1782, red was

★ WILD TRIVIA ★

The summer tanager is the only all red bird found in Oklahoma.

The bald eagle — our national bird — does not molt into the tell tale white head and tail until about 4.5 years of age.

Most blue feathers aren't the result of a pigment. Instead, the blue color is produced when light is refracted by proteins in the feather and the remaining colors are absorbed by the melanin layer at the center of the feather barb.

said to signify hardiness and valor; white, purity and innocence; and blue, vigilance, perseverance and justice. The hardy **Red River pupfish** can endure high water temperatures, salinity and alkalinity in the braided rivers and streams of southwestern Oklahoma. The **mourning dove** is a time-honored example of innocence and purity. And the **scissor-tailed flycatcher** — Oklahoma's state bird — is alert to passing insects and quick to defend its territory.

SINCE 1776

While the Founding Fathers were drafting and signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776, two German naturalists were publishing their own works. Instead of creating a new government, Johann Christian Daniel von Schreber was describing the **striped skunk**, and Philipp Ludwig Statius Müller was documenting the **eastern red bat**, **black-necked stilt**, **rusty blackbird** and **tricolored heron**. Though 1776 was the first time these five species had been described for science, they had been previously named, observed and collected in the Americas. (European colonists around Jamestown in the 1600s referenced skunks as "poulcats," because their behavior and body type loosely resembled European polecats.)



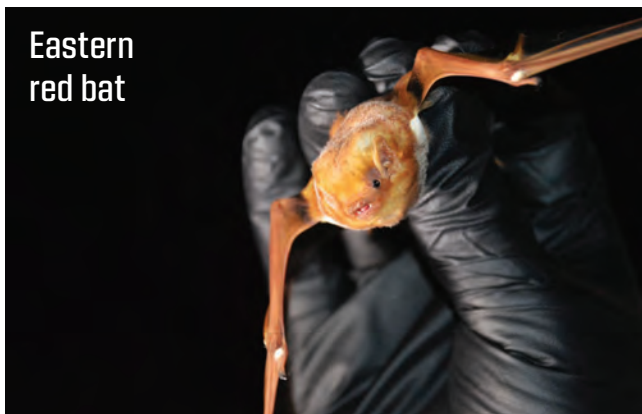
★ WILD TRIVIA ★

The eastern red bat is thought to occur in each of Oklahoma's 77 counties.

After mating, the black necked stilt pair crosses bills and runs together for a few steps. Sometimes the male drapes a wing over the females back during this ritual.

The scientific name for the striped skunk, *Mephitis mephitis*, means "noxious vapor" or "stink stink" in Latin.

Eastern red bat



Striped skunk



American snout



American kestrel



American bullfrog



ALL-AMERICAN NAMES

From the **American toad** to the **American robin**, there's no shortage of All-American species. Oftentimes, early naturalists and explorers used "American" monikers to help distinguish New World species from Old World. (It was also trendy to include regional names back in the day.) At least 55 species of fish and wildlife found in Oklahoma carry "American" in their common or scientific names. Another 70-ish Oklahoma plants carry the name.

Here's a list of Oklahoma's All-American species:

Birds (24): American avocet, American barn owl, American bittern, American black duck, American coot, American crow, American golden-plover, American goldfinch, American herring gull, American kestrel, American pipit, American robin, American redstart, American tree sparrow, American white pelican, American widigeon, and American woodcock. Seven other species tip their hat to the country in their scientific names: brown creeper, dickcissel, long-billed curlew, northern parula, redhead, whooping crane, and yellow-billed cuckoo.

Amphibians (2): American bullfrog and American toad.

Reptiles (2): American alligator and North American racer.

Mammals (12): American badger, American beaver, American bison, American black bear, American elk, American hog-nosed skunk, American mink, American parastrelle, American perimyotis, North American deermouse, and North American porcupine. The pronghorn's scientific name is *Antilocapra americana*.

Fish (4): American eel, American gizzard shad and American paddlefish. The redfin pickerel's scientific name is *Esox americanus*.

Invertebrates (11): American bird's wing moth; American bumble bee, American burying beetle, American carpenter ant, American carrion beetle, American copper, American dagger moth, American lady, American pistol casebearer moth, American plum borer moth, and American snout.

Plants (72): Alkali American-aster, American alum-root, American ash, American barnyard grass, American basswood, American beakgrain, American beautyberry, American beech,

★ WILD TRIVIA ★

The American bullfrog is Oklahoma's state amphibian. While it has expanded into western states and become an invasive species there, it is native to Oklahoma.

The American carrion beetle lays its eggs on dead vertebrates, and the hatched larvae feed on the corpse. The American burying beetle buries the carrion and lays its eggs in the same burrow.

North American porcupine young are called porcupettes.

American bellflower, American bindweed, American bird's-foot trefoil, American bitter-sweet, American black elderberry, American black nightshade, American bladdernut, American bluehearts, American brooklime, American buckwheat vine, American bungleweed, American bugseed, American bulrush, American burnweed, North American calceolaria, American columbo, American cupscale, American eelgrass, American elm, American featherfoil, American feverfew, American germander, American ginseng, American groundnut, American hazelnut, American hogpeanut, American holly, American hornbeam, American ipecac, American knotweed, American licorice, American lopseed, American mistletoe, American pennyroyal, American pillwort, American pinesap, American plum, American pokeweed, American prickly ash, American purple vetch, American red raspberry, American rubyspot, American sea-blite, American silverberry, American smoketree, American snowbell, American spongeplant, American star-thistle, American strawberry-bush, American sweetflag, American sycamore, American trout-lily, American water plantain, American watermilfoil, American water-willow, American waterwort, American white waterlily, American wild carrot, American wisteria, American witchhazel, American woodland strawberry, and American yellow lady's slipper.



Bald eagle

NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Title 36 of the **U.S. Code** designates a national floral emblem, a national tree, a national mammal, and a national bird, all of which occur in Oklahoma!

The two plant symbols were designated within the last 40 years, and neither is identified to species in the respective proclamations. The **rose** was selected as the national floral emblem in 1986. While a type of garden rose or "**Noisette rose**" was first cultivated in South Carolina and is thought to be one of the first American rose classes, it is a hybrid of Old World rose species. (Ditto for a variety named for George Washington's mother, the **Mary Washington rose**.) At least seven species in the genus **Rosa** are thought to be native to Oklahoma, including the **Carolina** or **pasture rose**.

The genus **Quercus**, or **oak**, was recognized by Congress as the national tree in 2004. At least 25 oak species have been documented in Oklahoma, including the widespread **post**, **blackjack** and **bur oaks** as well as the lesser known **bluejack**, **Mohr** and **swamp chestnut oaks**.

The two animal symbols have an even more recent "official" history. The **American bison**, North America's largest native mammal, was designated the national mammal in 2016. Massive bison herds once ranged across the Great

Plains but were overhunted and eventually extirpated from Oklahoma. Captive herds have since been re-established at sites including the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge and Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. And while the **bald eagle** has long been considered the national bird — and was adopted in the Great Seal in 1782 — it wasn't officially named a national symbol until 2024. More than 300 pairs of bald eagles are thought to nest in Oklahoma.

★ WILD TRIVIA ★

Rumor has it Benjamin Franklin wanted the wild turkey to be a national symbol. And though he once criticized the eagle design in the Great Seal in a letter to his daughter, he never proposed the wild turkey be adopted as the national bird.

Oaks can be divided into two sections: red oaks and white oaks. Members of the red oak section typically have awns at the ends of leaf lobes and bear acorns on the previous year's wood. Members of the white oak section lack awns on the leaves and bear acorns on the current year's wood.



DALE PARSONS



BANDY WATKINS

2026

Readers' Photography Showcase

Magnificent Astounding Beautiful

These words easily describe the amazing sights to see in the following pages of Outdoor Oklahoma!

Welcome to the 2026 edition of the Readers' Photography Showcase, our annual celebration of the natural world around us. These images were submitted by our loyal and talented readers, and we sincerely thank all of them who shared these visual treasures with all of us; everyone is much richer as a result.

This year, nearly 300 people submitted about 860 photos. We consider each one and select the entries that we believe are the best of the best. Our sincere gratitude goes to all who participated, and congratulations to those whose names appear here. Excellent photography has always been a hallmark of Outdoor Oklahoma magazine, and this showcase is one way our loyal readers contribute to that legacy!

As usual, a few photos really stand out every year, and those vie for the coveted cover shot. You've seen the selected image on this issue's cover, but the others in the running are noted in their captions. Now, on to the spectacular sights!

— Don P. Brown, editor, Outdoor Oklahoma





Kellie Carter, Newcastle
Black bears, Ouachita Mountains

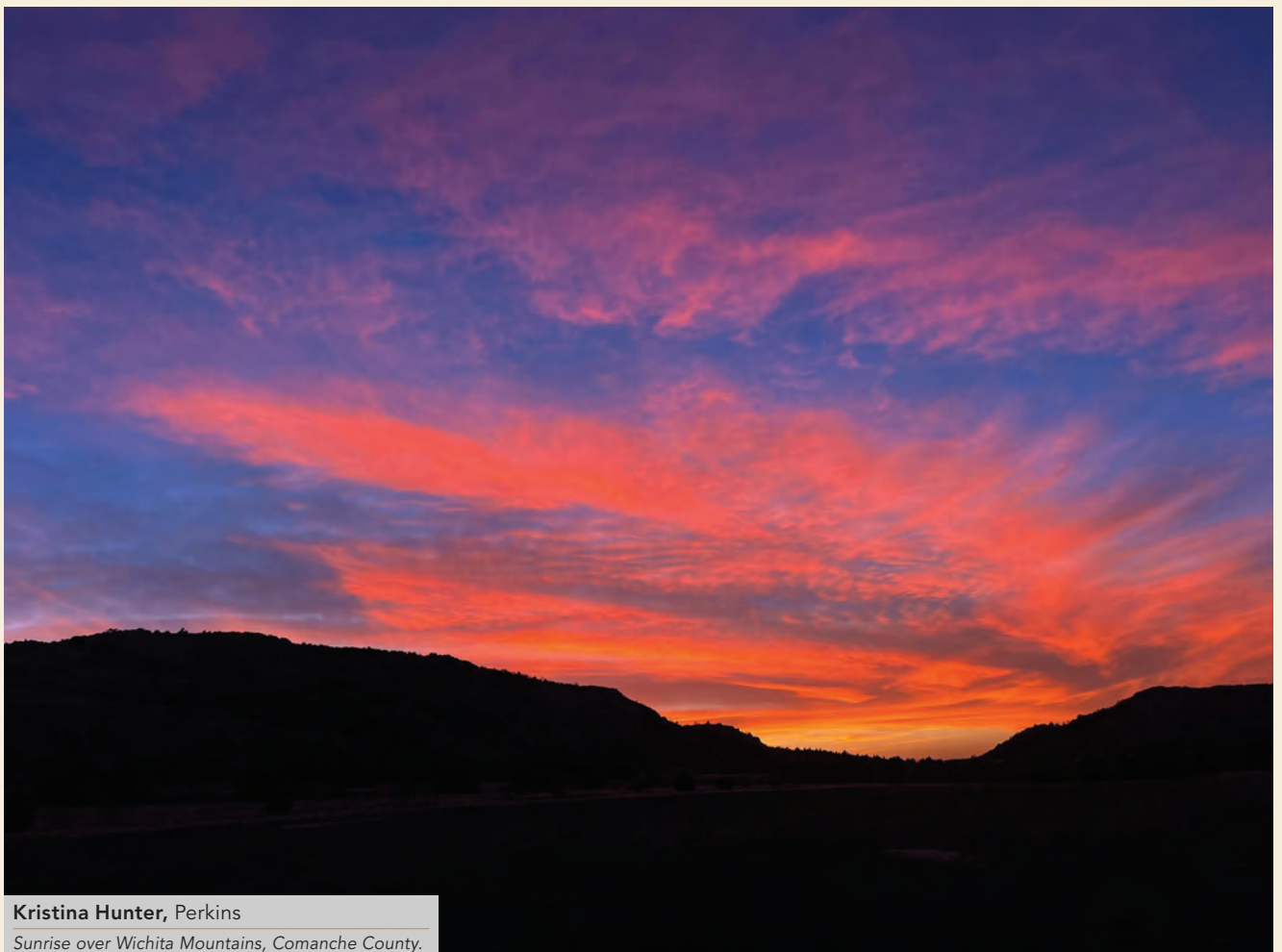
"I captured this mama and baby team while on a photo hike in the Ouachita Mountains in southeastern Oklahoma. I was carrying the longest lens that I own, plus an extension, so I was able to zoom in on them from a distance. It was an exhilarating day! To see such a beautiful sight, the black bears and the spectacular landscape, it is my favorite photo from that trip!"



Jessica Webster, Henryetta
Hummingbirds in silhouette, Okmulgee County.



Kevin Tipton, Norman
Pileated woodpecker, Lake Thunderbird, Cleveland County.



Kristina Hunter, Perkins
Sunrise over Wichita Mountains, Comanche County.



Christopher Johnson, Park Hill
Eastern screech-owl, Cherokee County.



David Garrison, Chandler
Milk snake, eastern Oklahoma.

Caleb Johnson, Kingfisher
Great horned owl



Holly Lackey, Council Hill
Bobcat

"Hanging out the passenger window resulted in this amazing image of a bobcat at the Honey Springs civil war battlefield."





David Garrison, Chandler
Bighorn sheep, Cimarron County.



Melanie Emerson, Choctaw
Black-tailed prairie dogs, Canadian County.

COVER FINALIST: Beth Young, Sparks
Northern cardinal

"A male cardinal in all its beauty escaping a winter storm as it blew in."

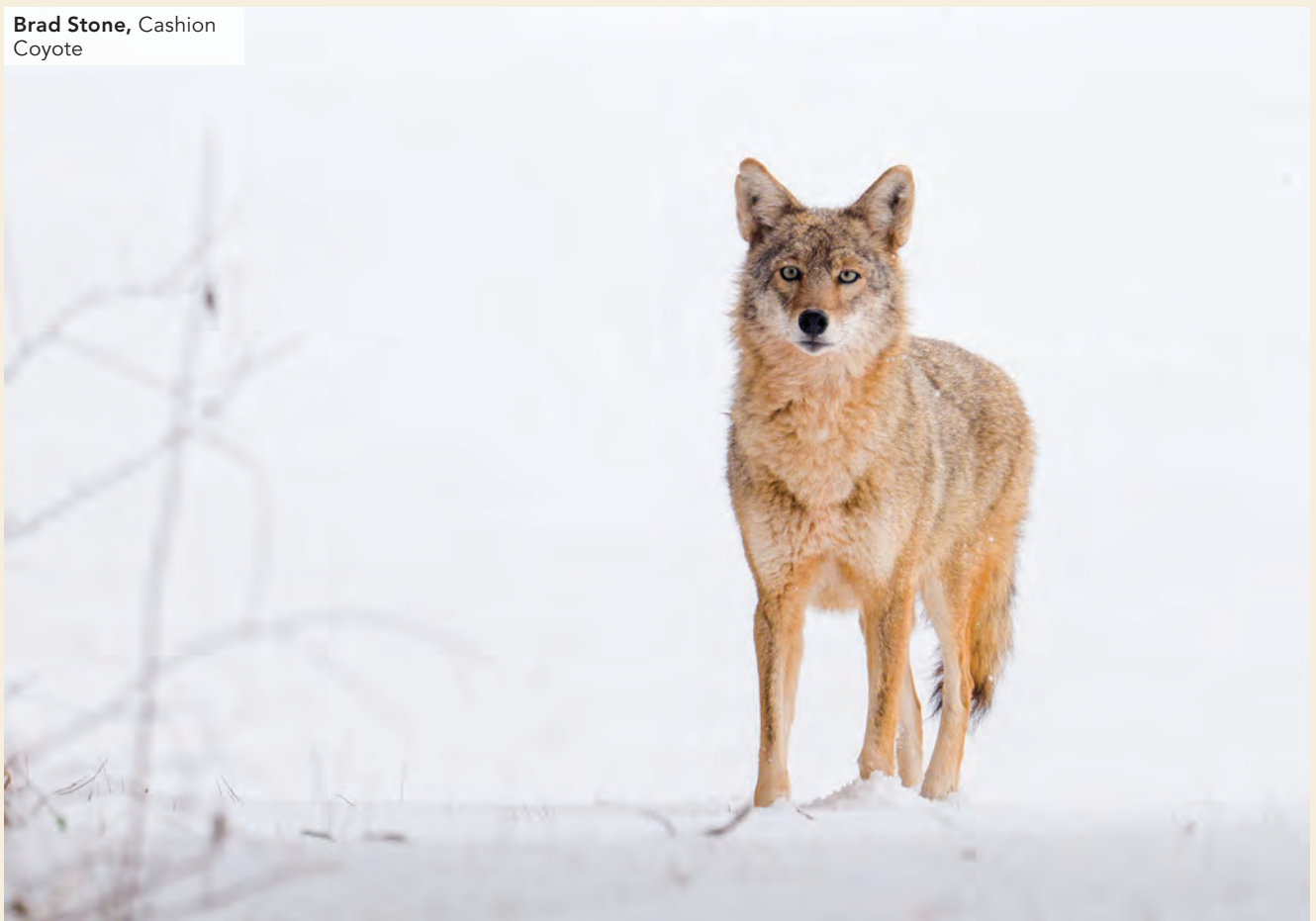




Gina Linthicum, Corn
Frosted spider web



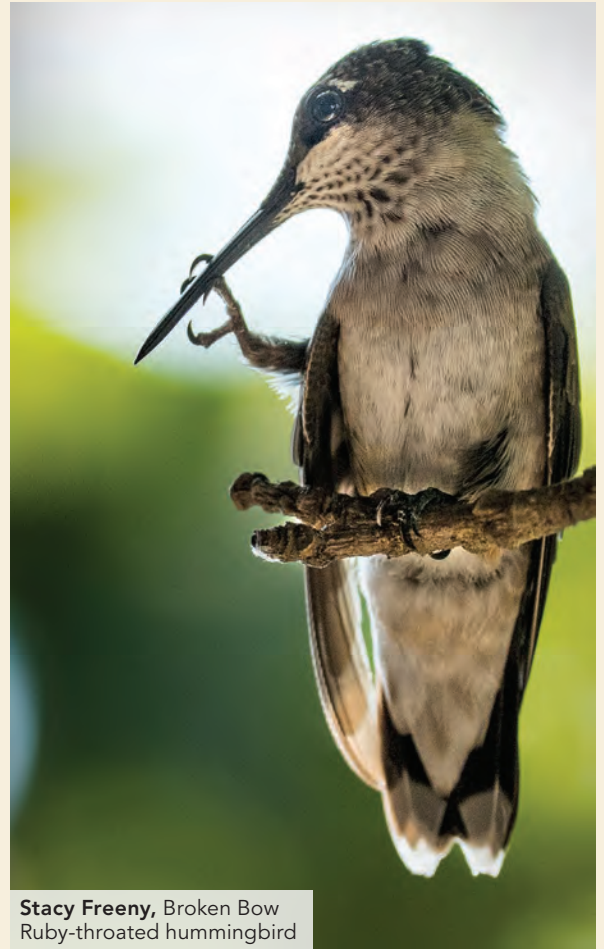
Kendall Van Zanten, Bartlesville
LeConte's sparrow



Brad Stone, Cashion
Coyote



Donna Tate, Tulsa
Swallowtail caterpillar



Stacy Freeny, Broken Bow
Ruby-throated hummingbird



Megan Madden, Del City
Black widow spider, Oklahoma County.



Kelsey Reed, Bristow
Jumping spider



Ernie Cox, Bixby
Black-tailed prairie dog



Stefanie Leland, Choctaw
Monarch butterfly, Purcell Lake, McClain County.



Ted Warkentin, Lawton
European honeybee

Stacy Freeny, Broken Bow

White ibises, snowy egrets, little blue heron

"What a wonderful moment at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area. How exciting to capture three species in one photo!"



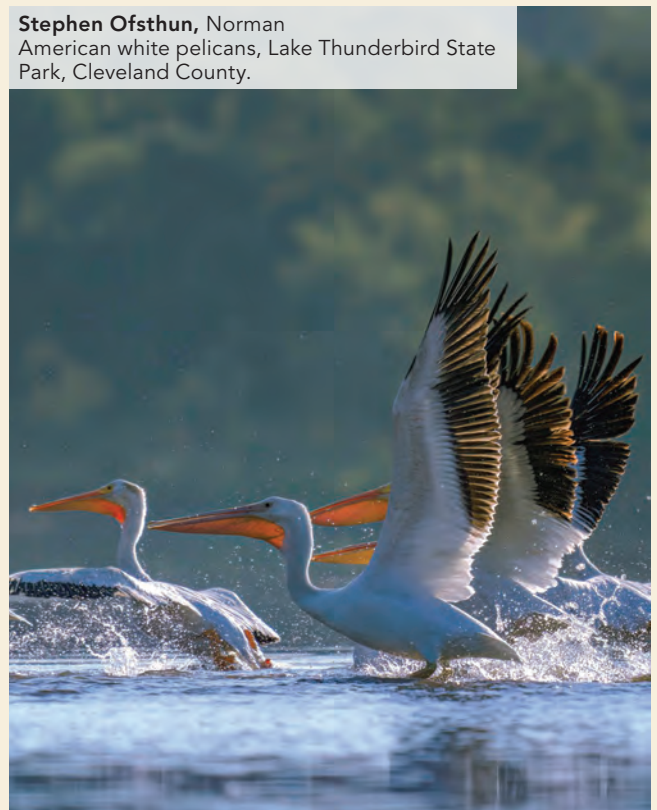


Scott Smith, Newcastle
Whooping crane

"There are only around 600 whooping cranes in the wild. What a blessing that they come through Oklahoma near the Great Salt Plains."



Alice Slaughter, Talihina
Sunset at Carl Albert Lake, Latimer County.

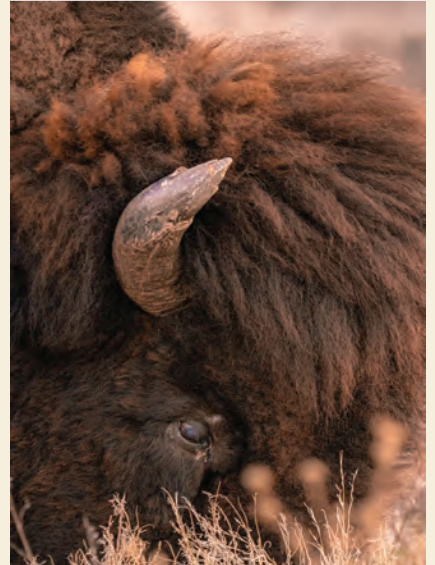


Stephen Ofsthun, Norman
American white pelicans, Lake Thunderbird State Park, Cleveland County.



Casey Galvin, Bridgeton, Mo.
El Capitan, Gloss Mountains State Park, Major County.

Fredrick Balmoria, Abilene, Texas
American bison, Comanche County.



Deborah Smith, Newcastle
Bighorn sheep, Cimarron County.



Cara Miller, Roosevelt
Northern bobwhite, Kiowa County.

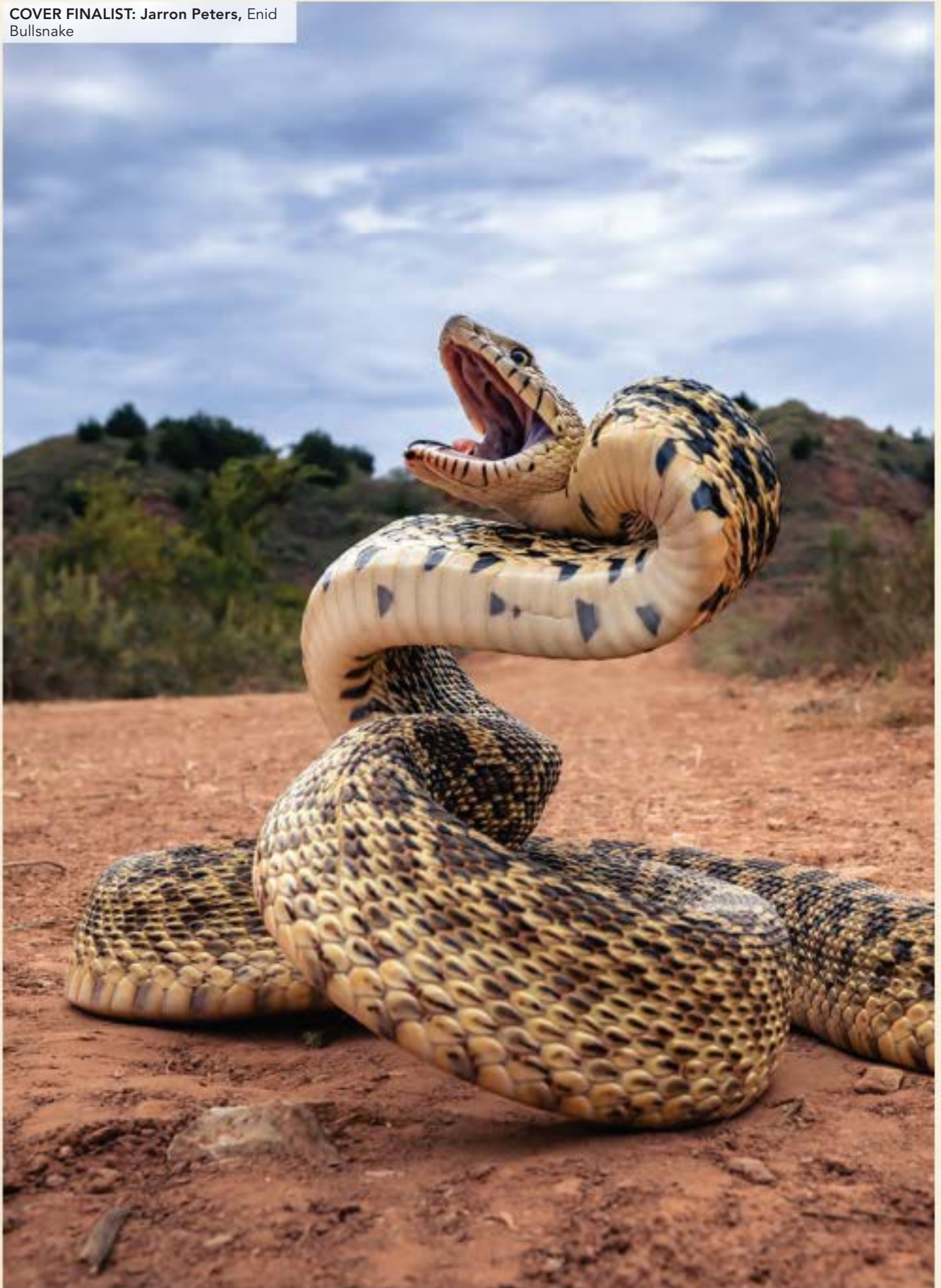


Kaylee Fast, Tulsa
Carolina wren



Cointa Escobedo, Tulsa
Eastern meadowlark

COVER FINALIST: Jarron Peters, Enid
Bullsnake



Brad Stone, Cashion
Painted bunting



Steve Metz, Tulsa
Scarlet tanager, Adair County.



Kaylee Fast, Tulsa
Red-headed woodpecker





Kellie Carter, Newcastle
Cedar waxwing



Sherman Barr, Edmond
Yellow-shafted northern flicker



Steve Metz, Tulsa
Blue-winged warbler, Cherokee County.



Mark Robinson, Bixby
White-tailed deer, Joseph H. Williams
Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, Osage County.



Desiree Branson Cline, Honobia
Black bears, McCurtain County.

"At first the cubs were enjoying playing with the feather, when mommy bear came over to investigate what was going on. She took the feather away from the cubs. Of course the cubs wanted it back."





Lisa Scroggins, Orlando, Okla.
Rio Grande wild turkeys



Donald Shannon, Bray
White-tailed deer, Stephens County.

COVER FINALIST: Kaylee Keirse, Owasso
Wild purple passionflower







Martin Menton, Tulsa
Bald eagles



Christopher Johnson, Park Hill
Prairie lizard, Cherokee County.

Meagan Coates, Shawnee
White-tailed deer, Comanche County.



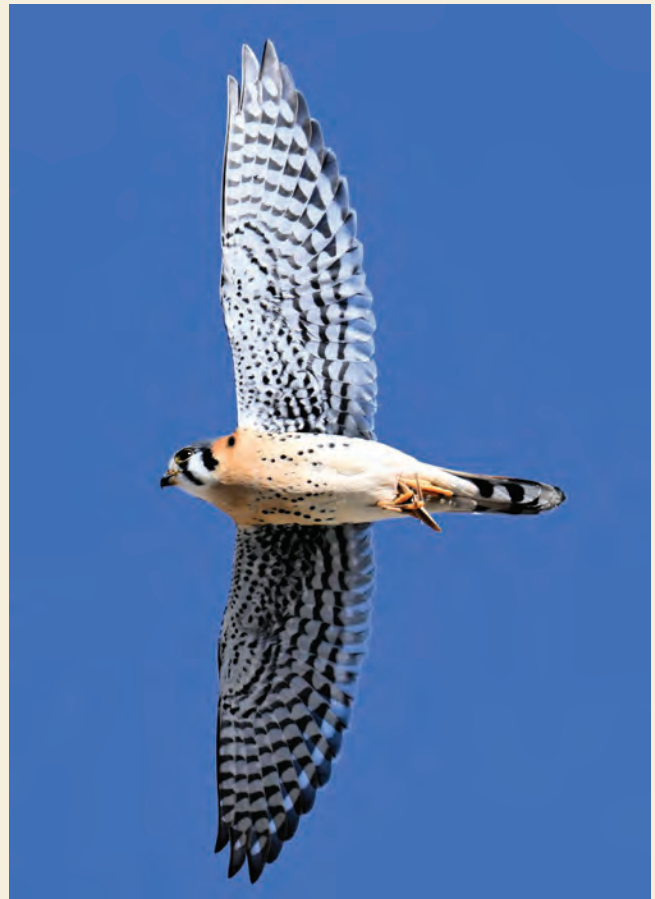
Bridgette Feters, McLoud
Robbers Cave State Park, Latimer County.



Alan Munkus, Ardmore
Great egret

Shi Ingalls, Harrah
Bald eagles

"This is a pair of mated eagles that have a nest near Lake Eufaula. The female is on the right and is noted by her larger size. This pair raised three eaglets last season."





Ernie Cox, Bixby
White-tailed deer, Osage County.

"A deer was lying quietly in the grass, watching me without the slightest worry. As I lifted my camera, a tiny fawn stepped out from its hiding place. The mother stayed perfectly calm, almost as if she wanted to proudly introduce me to her baby."

Joshua VanTuyt, Lawton
Gray tree frog, Wagoner County



Bryan Dahlvang, Oklahoma City
Painted bunting, Lake Stanley Draper, Cleveland County.



Karen Reading-Bunch, Oklahoma City
White-lined sphinx moth



Ted Warkentin, Lawton
Monarch butterflies



Jacie Brown, Blackwell
Rio Grande wild turkeys

Donald Shannon, Bray
Wilson's snipe, Stephens County.



Beth Young, Sparks
Scissor-tailed flycatcher

"This scissortail is having a little fun with its midafternoon snack in the summertime."



Deborah Smith, Newcastle
Barred owl, Osage County.



Kellie Carter, Newcastle
Barn owl, Lake Wister State Park, Le Flore County.



Dee Carter, Newcastle
Raccoons, McGee Creek State Park, Atoka County.



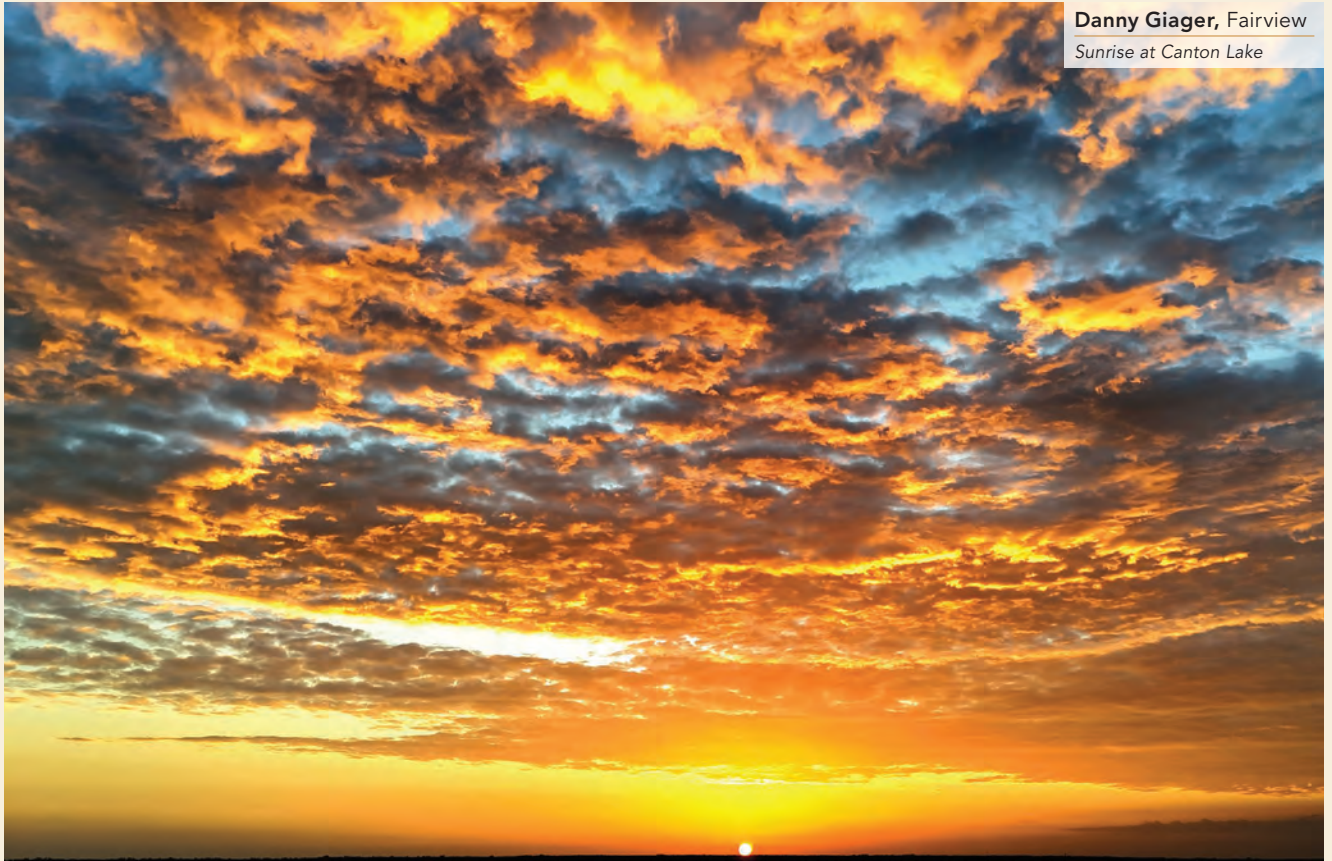
Mandee Thomas, Lawton
Grass spider, Comanche County.



Susan Stewart, Tulsa
Storm clouds at Sardis Lake, Latimer County.



Ian Gollahon, Broken Arrow
Scissor-tailed flycatcher, Tulsa County.
"This bird was picking blackberries off this bush and tossing them in the air then catching them in its mouth. I had no idea they did this."



Danny Giager, Fairview
Sunrise at Canton Lake



Coleton Bunyard, Stillwater
Turkey vultures



Kolton Webb, Mustang
Blue-eyed grass

"A cluster of blue-eyed grass blooms with bright yellow centers rising from fresh green foliage, showing the delicate detail of this small but striking Oklahoma native."



Phyllis Owens, Prague
Clouded sulphur butterfly, Seminole County.

Joe Hapgood, Edmond
Eastern bluebird

"The male would catch insects in the pasture and meet this female at the fence. He would pass the morsel to her, then she would carry it back to the nest to feed her young. They successfully raised three broods this past season."



Stephen Ofsthun, Norman
Gulf fritillary butterfly

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Sign in or shop online as a guest. Some items also available in person at ODWC headquarters, 1801 N. Lincoln Blvd. in Oklahoma City.

****Prices listed on these pages do not include \$3 online ordering convenience fee.**



ODWC LOGO DRINKWARE

Double-wall high-grade stainless steel 16-oz coffee mugs and 20-oz tumblers made by Yukon with DuraGrip powder coat finish featuring the new ODWC arrowhead logo. Tumblers come in navy, white, and bottomland camo; mugs come in olive drab and navy. They are vacuum-insulated and BPA-free. (Online sales only.) — \$20

DURABLE COLLECTOR'S CARDS

Every hunting and fishing license holder can upgrade to a customized hard plastic card that won't be damaged by water, sun, dirt, or regular wear and tear like paper documents. Cards hold customer and license information on one side; the other side features artwork from Oklahoma artists that changes periodically. Several designs available. (Account sign-in required.) — \$6



OKLAHOMA HABITAT DONOR WINDOW DECALS

Show your support of the Wildlife Department's conservation efforts with these striking window decals. — \$10 each



NEW OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA CAPS

These sleek fabric caps sport the latest Outdoor Oklahoma logo design! They are the Richardson 112 model, mid-pro shape, pro-curved visor, adjustable snap-back, 60% cotton/40% polyester. Various colors and styles will be available (subject to availability). (Online sales only.) — \$20



YUKON FLOATING GUN CASE

Welded waterproof construction, thick foam padding for protection, 500d tarpaulin exterior shell, carry strap and handle, universal fit for shotgun or scoped rifle. (Online sales only.) — \$70

YUKON ODWC BACKPACK COOLER

Double duty — works as cooler or padded gear bag, keeps ice for days, air tight zipper, rugged welded construction, 20 can with ice capacity. (Ships separately from other Outdoor Store items) — \$140.00

YUKON LUNCHBOX COOLER

Keep your cool with an ODWC-logo lunchbox with four pockets and a welded thermal foil liner that is antimicrobial and leak-resistant. It will hold eight cans and is 12.5 inches long. — \$27

RIVERSIDE DRY BAG

This handsome high-capacity dry bag sports the ODWC shield. Measuring 28 by 15 by 9 inches, it has four pockets and a rugged exterior shell. — \$80





WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATES

Dress up your vehicle while showing your support of our great state's wildlife resources by getting a wildlife license plate. Nine Wildlife Conservation Plates are available to serve as your regular, rear-bumper license plate. The plates cost just \$41.60 (original or replacement) above your regular annual registration fee with proceeds going to Oklahoma's Wildlife Diversity Program. The forms are available at local tag agencies, or online at tinyurl.com/wildlifetag.



OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA T-SHIRTS

Show that you support ODWC's magazine and TV show with these logo tees! These Bella unisex soft shirts are machine-washable and come in two designs: white with logo, and black with angler and logo. — \$25.

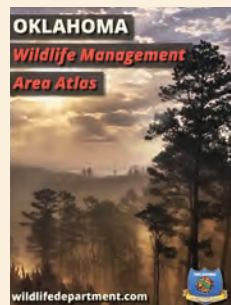
ODWC LOGO WATER BOTTLE

Made of high-grade 18/8 (304) stainless steel, this ODWC-logo 32-ounce bottle is highly durable and corrosion-resistant. With copper plate insulation and double-wall vacuum seal, it keeps beverages cold for 24 hours or hot for up to 6 hours. Includes Sip 'n Chug Leakproof Lid. — \$27



HABITAT DONOR CAP

Top-quality, American-made cap displays the Bass Habitat Donor Patch, which designates you as a supporter of the Wildlife Department's conservation efforts. Wearing this hat means you care about future generations and the great hunting and fishing tradition. — \$20



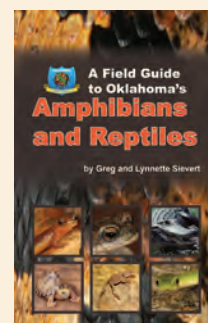
OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA ATLAS

The Wildlife Management Area Atlas presents maps of Oklahoma's WMAs and ODWC-owned fishing lakes. At 109 pages, the atlas features lands purchased before 2018. Each map shows special features such as parking sites, camping areas, and food plots. Your atlas purchase comes with a bonus one-year subscription to the award-winning *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. — \$25

LATEST

A FIELD GUIDE TO OKLAHOMA'S AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Get an introduction to Oklahoma's 140 species of salamanders, frogs, turtles, lizards, snakes and alligator in the 4th edition of our guide to the state's amphibians and reptiles. Six species accounts have been added and range maps have been updated throughout the guide. Your field guide purchase comes with a bonus one-year subscription to the award-winning *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. — \$20



OKLAHOMA WATERFOWL HUNTING STAMP

Oklahoma "duck stamps" are always popular with collectors and hunters. While each year's stamp features a different handsome design sure to add appeal to any stamp collection, funds from



stamp sales are used for many kinds of waterfowl management projects. 2026-27 stamp on sale in August. — \$21 or \$31

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The amazing colors found in Outdoor Oklahoma are on full display in this image of a blue grosbeak perched on purple thistles, captured by Ranae Maberry of Calumet and submitted for this year's Readers' Photography Showcase competition. Hungry for more stunning photos? It's a feast for the eyes inside this issue.

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