



# Outdoor Oklahoma

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012 - ONLY \$10 A YEAR

**In this Issue:**

**Score a Memory with the  
Controlled Hunts Program**

# Panoramas

A new year has arrived and you are likely focusing in on a range of new resolutions (or perhaps old ones that you are still striving to achieve). Maybe you are exercising more, spending less or even cutting back on the sweets. Hopefully you are also planning and preparing to enjoy the outdoors more during 2012 as well. And for annual hunting and fishing license holders, that means renewing your licenses for 2012.

You can obtain your new licenses online at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's website at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com), or anywhere hunting and fishing licenses are sold. This may even be your year to purchase a five-year hunting, fishing or combination license, allowing you to secure a full five year's worth of licenses without having to remember every year to renew. It also costs less than buying an annual license every year. A five-year hunting license or five-year fishing license costs just \$88, and a five-year combination hunting and fishing license costs only \$148.

Most sportsmen who hunt or fish with annual licenses would spend \$125 on five year's of hunting licenses or fishing licenses, and they would spend \$210 on five year's worth of annual combination hunting and fishing licenses. Sportsmen who hold a five-year license will still be required to purchase other applicable annual permits such deer and turkey licenses, appropriate waterfowl stamps, land access permits and other permits where required, but at the start of a new year, when others are hustling to get a new annual license, you'll be able to check at least one task off the list while saving money at the same time. Purchasing your five-year license in 2012 would most definitely be a resolution that pays off.

When you buy your hunting or fishing license, you are contributing more to wildlife conservation with one small purchase than many people may do in a lifetime. That's because the Wildlife Department, the state agency charged with conserving Oklahoma's wildlife, does not receive any general state tax appropriations. Instead, it is funded by sportsmen like you through your purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and special federal excise taxes on sporting goods that manufacturers pay to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who then disburses those funds to state agencies like the Wildlife Department for wildlife conservation.

Many people love wildlife, and if you are reading this, you are probably counted among that group. But, I especially want to applaud your involvement with conservation if it includes purchasing a hunting and fishing license. Nobody else in Oklahoma can say they contribute to wildlife conservation quite like a hunter or an angler can claim. The importance of keeping that tradition alive cannot be stressed enough, and it starts with you and me. Speaking of starting, now is the perfect time. Don't let another day go by without renewing your annual hunting or fishing license. And for that matter, don't let another day go by without getting out there and enjoying a new year in the outdoors. I wish it full of adventure, excitement and enjoyable encounters with the wildlife and natural world of our great state.

Sincerely,



Nels Rodefeld,

Editor

# Outdoor Oklahoma

JANUARY/FEBRUARY • VOLUME 68 • NUMBER 1  
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## On the Cover

The Wildlife Department's controlled hunts program could be your chance at a hunt you won't forget, be it for an elk or trophy buck at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge like this one photographed by Kim Hart.

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Published by the Oklahoma Department  
of Wildlife Conservation

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Subscription Services: 1-800-777-0019

Subscriptions are \$10 per year, \$18 for two years and  
\$25 for three years. Single copies are \$3 (\$4 if mailed).  
Any costs of production and distribution not covered  
by subscription costs are borne by the sportsmen of  
Oklahoma through their hunting and fishing fees.

Art direction by  
STROUD DESIGN, INC.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
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Wildlife Conservation. Reproduction in whole or in part  
without permission is prohibited. Outdoor Oklahoma  
(ISSN 0030-7106) is published bimonthly by the  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box

53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Periodicals postage  
paid at Oklahoma City, OK, and additional mailing  
offices. Notification of address change must include both  
old and new addresses and ZIP codes, with six weeks notice.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Outdoor  
Oklahoma, P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

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P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152, or Office for  
Human Resources, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N.  
Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203.

 Printed on recycled, recyclable paper.

LARRY D. BROWN

# Off the Beaten Path

NOTES ON WILDLIFE • OUTDOOR TIPS • READER'S LETTERS • ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS  
COMPILED BY MICHAEL BERGIN

## DAVID FOLTZ HONORED BY SHIKAR SAFARI AND ODWC

Every day Oklahoma game wardens face a number of challenges and exciting opportunities to be part of wildlife conservation in Oklahoma. They play a critical role in communicating with sportsmen and enforcing the state's wildlife laws, and each year one of them is honored for their service with the Wildlife Department's Game Warden of the Year Award and the Shikar Safari Club International's Officer of the Year Award.

The 2011 recipient, recognized at the December meeting of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission, is David Foltz, game warden stationed in Garfield Co.,

Foltz works closely with other Department employees both in the Law Enforcement Division as well as other divisions and is active in a number of projects and programs of the Wildlife Department. He was hired as a game warden in September of 1980 and has served in Garfield County ever since.

Foltz's father, Delbert Foltz, is a retired game warden for the Wildlife Department and received the Oklahoma Game Warden of the Year Award in 1978.

"David is an asset to the Department, and he's made us proud," said Robert Fleenor, law enforcement chief for the Wildlife Department. "David has community spirit and is a great asset to the sportsmen of our state. His qualities go above and beyond what's required in his normal duties as a game warden."

Not only does Foltz have a strong working knowledge of his assigned county and surrounding area, but he knows the sportsmen and landowners in the region and frequently works with other game wardens in his district.

Foltz attended Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, while working in construction. In his spare time he enjoys hunting and fishing and working on old automobiles.

Shikar-Safari Club International was started more than 55 years ago and is limited to 200 members worldwide. While it is a social organization, its sole purpose is hunting and conservation and issues that affect hunters and conservation. The club has a foundation that puts almost \$1 million into wildlife and conservation every year, including more than 30 scholarships a year for children of wildlife professionals majoring in wildlife fields. The scholarships, each \$4,000 a year, are designed to perpetuate an interest in wildlife careers and conservation.

For more information about game wardens, or for information on having a career as a game warden, log on to [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com). --x

## SUPPORT YOUR SPORT WITH A HABITAT PATCH



The Wildlife Department's 2012 habitat donor patch, featuring the pronghorn antelope.

Approximately 97 percent of the land in Oklahoma is private property, creating an ever-important need for more public land for hunters, anglers and conservation efforts. Sportsmen can help increase public hunting and fishing lands by ordering the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's 2012 pronghorn antelope habitat donor patch or donor hat, available now in the Wildlife Department's Outdoor Store at the back of this issue or online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

The revenue generated from the sale of the Wildlife Department's habitat donor patches goes into the Land Acquisition Fund, which is used to purchase, lease, or acquire easements for property to be used for public hunting and fishing.

"Habitat patches are an important way for wildlife enthusiasts and sportsmen to support public hunting, fishing and conservation, and also gain a collectable item," said Melinda Sturgess-Streich, assistant director of administration and finance for the Wildlife Department. "This program ensures public hunting and fishing for the future sportsmen and women of Oklahoma, as the Department has purchased approximately 1.2 million acres of public land."

To purchase a donor patch or hat, turn to the Outdoor Store at the back of this issue and fill out and submit an order form, or log on to [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) --x



## THIRD BLACK BEAR SEASON A SUCCESS WITH SEASON QUOTA MET IN ONE WEEKEND

Oklahoma's third black bear archery season opened Oct. 1 of 2011 and closed the next day after the season quota of 20 bears was reached.

The season was open in Latimer, LeFlore, Pushmataha and McCurtain counties, and hunters harvested a total of 31 bears with archery equipment. Last year hunters harvested 32 bears on opening day, and in 2009 hunters harvested only 19 bears over the course of 28 days.

According to Joe Hemphill, southeast region wildlife supervisor for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the quota of 20 bears is very conservative.

According to Hemphill, the harvest of 32 bears in 2010 and

female hunter in Oklahoma to kill a black bear, also harvested a bear this year.

Two of the bears had been previously been tagged as nuisance bears. State wildlife officials trap, tag and relocate bears that come up to trailers, cabins and homes in search of food. A total of 18 male bears and 13 female bears were harvested, including 15 from LeFlore Co., 11 from Pushmataha Co., four from McCurtain Co. and one from Latimer County.

As with hunting seasons on all species, Department personnel review all available data following the season and work to provide optimum hunting opportunities while ensuring long-term conservation of the species. --X

## NEVER TOO EARLY FOR PLANNING A MEMORY

It's may be early in the year, but it's not too early to mark your calendar for the 2012 Oklahoma Wildlife Expo, slated for Sept. 29-30 at the Lazy E Arena, just north of Oklahoma City.

If you want to introduce someone to the wonders of the outdoors, the Wildlife Department's Wildlife Expo is just the right opportunity, offering hands-on learning opportunities in a number of outdoor hobbies and disciplines from camping and fishing to marksmanship and outdoor cooking.

The 2011 Expo once again drew record crowds Sept. 23-25 with an estimated attendance of more than 59,000 visitors. Last year's record crowds were estimated at just over 51,000. In addition to record crowds, on site surveys of Expo visitors showed that nearly half of visitors surveyed were visiting the event for the first time, about half tried an activity they had never done before, and the vast majority of those surveyed gave high rankings for their overall experience at the Expo.

Held at the Lazy E Arena, just north of Oklahoma City, the free Oklahoma Wildlife Expo is hosted by the Wildlife Department in partnership with a range of organizations, other state agencies, individuals and outdoor-related companies to generate an interest in the outdoors and conservation. That mission is accomplished through hands-on education and learning

opportunities in which visitors can try everything from shooting a shotgun to petting an alligator.

Kayaking in a pond built into the floor of the Lazy E Arena, catching a fish from a stocked pond, or riding a mountain bike on a dirt trail are all part of the experience of the Wildlife Expo. Additionally, visitors can shoot archery, sample wild game meat, test-drive an ATV, see wildlife firsthand, watch hunting dog demonstrations and even win prizes such as a John Deere Gator off-road utility vehicle. Everything from birdwatching and birdhouse building to seminars on how to pack a mule for a hunting trip is included at the Expo, and it is all free of charge.

To keep up with details on the 2012 Wildlife Expo, log on to [WildlifeDepartment.com](http://WildlifeDepartment.com) regularly as the event approaches. --X

In the last issue, we reported that a number of handcrafted bows were given away at the 2011 Wildlife Expo, but incorrectly reported the name of the organization whose time, generosity and craftsmanship made the giveaway possible. Thanks to the Oklahoma Selfbow Society for their hours and hours of volunteer work, their support and preparation for Wildlife Expo and the Wildlife Department, and for their generous giveaway of handcrafted bows to the youth of Oklahoma.

## MOUNTAIN LION KILLED BY VEHICLE NEAR MINCO PROVIDES RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY FOR WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

*Erik Bartholomew, furbearer biologist for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Mike O'Meilia, program supervisor for the Wildlife Department, conduct research on a mountain lion that was killed by a vehicle in November near Minco.*

A mountain lion was found dead Nov. 1 along HWY 81 north of Minco after having been hit by a vehicle, causing a stir on online message boards and social networking sites for days following the event and providing an important research opportunity for biologists.

According to Erik Bartholomew, furbearer biologist for the Wildlife Department, the young 130-lb. male mountain lion said the animals are rare and elusive and that biologists have had few opportunities to study them up close in Oklahoma, Bartholomew and a team of Wildlife Department biologists collected data on the cat to determine its age and condition, and the animal itself will be used for educational purposes by the Department.

"We took general measurements of the body of the animal," Bartholomew said, which included the cat's weight and measurements of its body, head, tail and paws. Additionally, a tissue sample was collected for DNA analysis to try and determine the origin of the lion, and a tooth was also pulled so that it could be sectioned and stained to more precisely determine the age of the animal."

"His fur did have some faint spotting, and based on that, he would be a sub-adult between 12-20 months old," Bartholomew said.

Bartholomew said the mountain lion might have been following the South Canadian River corridor in search of new territory, as young males are sometimes pushed out of the territories of older, dominant males.

"These young males tend to have very large home ranges and can have movements of over 200 square miles. They go out, they look for new territory, and this one unfortunately ran into a car."

River corridors are major travel passageways for all types of wildlife. Bartholomew said since humans build cities and towns along rivers, close encounters with wildlife will occur, but a mountain lions basic instinct is to avoid people.

Bartholomew said the Wildlife Department receives scattered reports of mountain lions "all the time," but only three have been confirmed this year, including one in the Tulsa area and another whose photograph was captured by a trail camera near Sand Springs.

Also called "panthers," "cougars" and "pumas," mountain lions are native to Oklahoma, and Bartholomew said it is a common misconception that the Wildlife Department denies their existence in the state. Another common but false rumor is that the Wildlife Department has released mountain lions in Oklahoma.

“There is no doubt from the Wildlife Department’s standpoint that mountain lions occur in Oklahoma, but the Wildlife Department has never released them here,” Bartholomew said. “Additionally, we have never confirmed reproduction of mountain lions within the state. Without reproduction, we do not have a population. What we have are transient animals moving through the state looking for new territory.

Many wildlife species and domestic animals can be and often are mistaken for mountain lions, so getting confirmed, verifiable sightings can be challenging.

“As scientists, we can only rely on those sightings that are verifiable and confirmed, and fortunately we have had the evidence in recent years to confirm several sightings,” Bartholomew said.

Still, Bartholomew said the cats are rare in the state and that few people will ever have the opportunity to see one in the wild.

“Mountain lions are very secretive,” he said. “Even in states like New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado where there’s lots of mountain lions, very rarely are they seen. In fact most of the ones that are seen are the ones that are hit on the road.”

One of the state’s most elusive species, mountain lions were originally found throughout Oklahoma and were thought to have been eradicated in the state during the 19th century. There have been few documented cases since the late 1900s, but in the last decade, the Department has documented several confirmations. In addition to those this year, an adult male was killed illegally in Cimarron County in February of 2010. In April of 2010, a young radio-collared male from Colorado traveled through Texas County in the Panhandle and is now living in New Mexico. In the fall of 2009, trail cameras from Tillman and Atoka counties recorded mountain lions. In 2006,

a mountain lion in Cimarron County was killing a landowner’s goats and was shot, and in 2004, a young radio-collared male from the Black Hills of South Dakota was hit by a train near the town of Red Rock.

Several characteristics distinguish mountain lions from other wildlife and domestic animals. Its tail is more than half the length of its body, and it has black tips on the tail and ears. Their coat is primarily tan in color. Males average seven feet long and weigh about 140 pounds, while females average six feet in length and weigh about 95 pounds.

There is not a mountain lion hunting season in Oklahoma. However, the law allows mountain lions to be taken by licensed hunters, but only when a mountain lion is committing or about to commit depredation on any domesticated animal or when deemed an immediate safety hazard. Individuals who kill a mountain lion must immediately call a game warden or other Wildlife Department employee.

Officials with the Wildlife Department rely on the public to report verifiable sightings, photos and reports of mountain lions to help document the species in Oklahoma.

“The only way we get information is when people report it,” Bartholomew said. “If people send us trail camera photos and we can confirm the location, that’s great information for us. Likewise this one was hit on the road, and somebody turned it into us. That’s the only way we can get data on these animals because they’re so secretive. There’s so few in this state that we rely on the public in order to gather information on them.”

To submit photographs and report sightings of mountain lions in Oklahoma, call Bartholomew at (405) 385-1791. --x

—*Michael Bergin, associate editor*

## MOUNTAIN LION TRACK (LEFT) VERSUS DOG TRACK (RIGHT)



- 1. Claw marks generally absent. If present, they will be sharp and narrow.**
- 2. Four tear-drop shaped toes, grouped asymmetrically.**
- 3. Trapezoidal-shaped heel pad.**
- 4. Three-lobed heel pad with two indentations along rear margin.**



- 1. Toenail prints generally present will be broad and blunt.**
- 2. Four, round-shaped toes, grouped symmetrically.**
- 3. Triangular-shaped heel pad.**
- 4. Heel pad lacks distinct indentations and three-lobed appearance.**

# BIRDING Now

Compiled by Rachel Bradley

*With its mild winters and 11,600 miles of shoreline, Oklahoma is an attractive wintering location for bald eagles, and organized viewing opportunities exist across the state every year. You might even spot one on your own at a lake or river, but not unless you get outdoors.*

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

Oklahoma's mild winters make the state a great fit for eagles during the coldest months of the year, and a number of opportunities are available to see one.

Wintering eagles begin arriving in Oklahoma in November and early December. Their numbers peak in January and February, and most birds have left for their northern breeding

***With a wingspan longer than seven feet, the bald eagle is a majestic and graceful bird of prey that makes frequent winter visits to the Great Plains.***

grounds by the end of March. Additionally, Oklahoma is home to a resident eagle population that has grown since the late 1980s from no birds to over 80 pairs. Eagle populations have fluctuated over time, and were once on the national endangered species list (from 1972 through 2007).

Today eagles are a common sight during the winter at lakes and reservoirs. A number of organized and self-guided eagle viewing opportunities at as many as 15 locations this winter are outlined on the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's website at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

Lakes and their spillways have historically served as reliable Oklahoma bald eagle viewing areas. Lakes with the highest concentration of eagles are Kaw, Keystone, Texoma, Tenkiller, Ft. Gibson, Grand, Canton, Great Salt Plains, Tishomingo and Spavinaw.

Specific bald eagle migration patterns vary each year depending on weather and other factors like severity of northern winters, and water discharges from individual reservoirs will often determine how attractive a particular lake is to bald eagles. These conditions can change overnight; therefore, a good wildlife viewing rule of thumb is to call ahead for up-to-date wildlife viewing information.

With a wingspan longer than seven feet, bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) in Oklahoma are primarily found in the eastern and central portions of the state, and the peak viewing time for bald eagles in Oklahoma will extend into February.

To learn about eagle viewing sites and upcoming viewing events, tour dates and times, log on to [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) and select the "Wildlife & Land Management" tab, then choose "Birds and Bats." --x

# BACKYARD BIRDING TODAY

## Planning for Bluebirds

Bluebirds begin marking territory in late February, so now is the time to put a bluebird box in your backyard.

“Bluebirds may produce up to two or three broods, or groups of offspring, per year,” said Mark Howery, wildlife diversity biologist for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. “They typically start the first group sometime in early March, so now is the best time to put up the boxes.”

Ideal box placement sites are in mowed or grazed areas near power lines, fence-posts or scattered trees, which provide good feeding perches.

“Bluebirds are quite territorial, so remember to place boxes 100 yards apart if you put up multiple boxes,” said Howery. “However, if

you place them closer together, you may attract chickadees, wrens and titmice because bluebirds are less likely to defend their territory against other species.”

Predators will often take over the boxes and build nests on top of the brood so they will not survive. Place the bluebird boxes on a metal post to protect the birds and their brood from predators, such as non-native house sparrows.

“Monitor your bluebird box and remove any evidence of sparrows taking over the box,” said Howery. “This will increase

the chance for a healthy, young bluebird population.”

Be a citizen scientist and take part in the Wildlife Depart-

ment’s Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox Survey. Your nesting season results allow wildlife diversity biologists to better maintain Eastern bluebird population.

Visit the Wildlife Citizen Science page on [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) to take part in the Oklahoma Bluebird Nestbox Survey. This survey is conducted by the Wildlife Department’s Wildlife Diversity Program, which is dedicated to those animals that are not hunted, fished, or trapped.

## Feeding Winter Birds Now

While you can prepare now for bluebirds that will be nesting this spring, don’t forget that a number of birds are spending their winters here today. You can find hours of enjoyment in your own backyard while supplementing these wintering birds’ diets with a backyard bird feeder of your own.

Keeping a bird feeder full of healthy seeds in your backyard is easy and inexpensive, and there are several types of feeders and feed choices depending on what birds you want to attract. Log on to the Wildlife Department’s winter bird website at [okwinterbirds.com](http://okwinterbirds.com) to learn more about the birds that winter in our state and how to benefit them during this time of year. The site is full of photographs, bird identification tips, range maps for various species and what seed choices work well for attracting them to feeders. --x



DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI



WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM



WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM

**To deter squirrels, place a slinky on the pole of a hanging feeder (left). The movement of the slinky startles squirrels so they do not like to try climbing up the pole. Another method is to buy a squirrel guard (right). The slope makes it difficult for squirrels to climb under the guard to access the seed.**

*Rachel Bradley is the Wildlife Diversity information specialist for the Wildlife Department. The Wildlife Diversity Program is a program of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation that monitors, manages and promotes Oklahoma’s rare, declining, and endangered wildlife as well as common wildlife species not hunted, fished or trapped.*

*The program began in 1981 and is funded largely by the sale of ODWC specialty license plates, publications and other various products and private contributions. Individuals may donate any part of their state income tax refund to the program. The Wildlife Department receives no general state tax appropriations.*

*To learn how you can contribute to the Wildlife Diversity Program monetarily or through citizen scientist programs, contact Bradley at (405) 521-3087. Look for notes from Rachel Bradley on a range of unique wildlife in future issues of Outdoor Oklahoma.*



# Traveling the Great Plains Trail of Oklahoma

Throughout the heart of western Oklahoma weaves a series of auto-driving loops designed for putting travelers in position to view native wildlife experience unique landscapes, and enjoy the hospitality of historical small towns.

We've been telling you about these scenic loops, collectively known as the Great Plains Trail of Oklahoma, in *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine throughout the past year, and we are going to keep providing up-to-date seasonal details with you in 2012. Upcoming issues will feature timely details on various loops of the Great Plains Trail to help you plan a drive across the captivating landscapes of western Oklahoma.

The series of 13 loops cover 1,777 miles and include 33 counties

while positioning tourists so they have the chance to spot everything from deer and turkeys to prairie chickens, great horned lizards, scissortail flycatchers and even prairie dogs.

Each loop provides the traveler with three days of accessible wildlife species, unique geologic features, large-scale prairies, and gorgeous sunsets and sunrises. For more information, visit [greatplainstrail.com](http://greatplainstrail.com). The site provides road maps of each of the 13 loops, along with what species of wildlife travelers may expect to see.

To request printed copies of road maps detailing the Great Plains Trail, contact Melynda Hickman, wildlife diversity biologist for the Wildlife Department, at [mhickman@zoo.odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:mhickman@zoo.odwc.state.ok.us) or call (405) 424-0099. --x



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OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM



*The Great Plains Trail of Oklahoma is a series of 13 driving loops across western Oklahoma where you can spot avian predators like bald eagles (left), wetland birds like little blue herons (bottom right) or stunning landscapes like the Gloss Mountains (top right).*

# OKLAHOMA YOUTH WIN OUTDOOR GETAWAYS THROUGH WRITING CONTEST

Youth from Inola, Broken Arrow, Owasso and Boone-Apache schools have been awarded outdoor getaways for winning an outdoor writing contest designed to help youth share their hunting heritage.

Contestants in the annual youth writing contest — sponsored by the Oklahoma Station Chapter of Safari Club International and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation — chose between two different topics and submitted entries to not only share their interest in the outdoors, but also to compete for a chance at a unique outdoor trip. Topic choices included “Hunting: Sharing the Heritage” or “What I like about Archery in the Schools and Bowhunting.”

Winners in the age 15-17 category will receive an all-expenses-paid antelope hunt in a western state. They were Dylan Dunn, 17, of Inola School and Kaitlyn McCormick, 16, of Broken Arrow High School. Winners in the age 11-14 category

receive a scholarship to the YO Ranch Apprentice Hunter Program in Texas. They were Triston Hasty-Grant, 13, of Owasso Eighth Grade Center and Brianna Sawyer, 14, of Boone-Apache Middle School. Safari Club International’s Apprentice Hunter Program is a unique, hands-on course designed for girls and boys aged 11-14. The program covers such diverse topics as history of hunting, the ethical basis of modern sport hunting, wildlife management, field identification, tracking and interpreting sign, game cooking and the SCI Sportsmen Against Hunger Program.

“This has become a popular contest,” said Colin Berg, education supervisor for the Wildlife Department. “We always enjoy the process of going over each essay and trying to select winners. It can be challenging because there are some talented youth who are passionate about the outdoors who submit essays to this contest.”

The scholarship to the YO Ranch Apprentice Hunter

Program and expenses for the antelope hunts are covered by the Oklahoma Station Chapter of Safari Club International with funds raised at the Chapter’s annual banquet.

The youth writing competition is designed to promote America’s hunting heritage among Oklahoma’s youth. It provides them an opportunity to express the importance of hunting in their lives and to affirm their commitment to carrying on the hunting tradition. Students use the essays or short stories to relive memorable hunts, to explain why hunting is important to them and to recognize mentors who have influenced them to grow as hunters.

The contest winners will be eligible for entry in the Norm Strung Outdoor Writers Association National Youth Essay Contest, whose winners are awarded cash prizes and scholarships.

The Wildlife Department and the Oklahoma Station Chapter of Safari Club International will submit the win-

ning essays to the National Youth Writing Contest held annually by the Outdoor Writers Association of America.

Students are not the only winners. Educators Craig Savage from Inola High School, Beverly Stevens from Greenville Schools and Sam Moreton from New Life Ranch camp have been awarded scholarships to attend an eight-day conservation education school at Safari Club International’s American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) at Granite Ranch near Jackson, Wyoming. The AWLS program is conducted during the summer and presents an outdoor program for educators that concentrates on natural resource management. Participants learn about stream ecology, map and compass usage, fly tying, shooting sports, wildlife management, the Yellowstone ecosystem, camping, white-water rafting, educational resources, how to implement outdoor education ideas and language arts and creative writing in an outdoor setting. ❧



**Dylan Dunn**  
**11th Grade**  
**Age 17**  
**Inola High School**

### **Hunting: Sharing the Heritage/Archery**

When I joined the Inola Air Force ROTC, I found out that the instructors also taught Archery in the Schools, marksmanship and hunter education. Prior to the introduction to these activities, I had never been exposed to anything like

this. My friends convinced me to take part, telling me that this was the only class in school where you could shoot guns and bows and get certified to hunt. Prior to this, no one in my family ever hunted or even fished, so as for having a hunting heritage, there wasn’t any.

I have come to love shooting, but archery has become my favorite. To be honest, at first I didn’t see a need for hunting or the need to protect the animals, much less the environment. All of this changed since I completed the hunter education course and was able to combine that with archery. When Sergeant Savage and his son took me on a hunt, we spent the weekend walking the woods and looking for deer sign and learning about nature. I saw for myself how each species affected the other and how to tell which animals were in an area. At night we sat around the campfire and I listened while Sergeant Savage and his son recounted stories of their previous hunts together. I was saddened to learn that Sergeant Savage had lost his oldest son Kenneth several years before, but he and younger son Dillan brought him to life again as they told stories, reliving their hunts in Alaska and Texas, where the three of them had shared this wonderful world together. I came to see that for them it was not so much about the hunt, but about being together and growing closer.

On our last day, we woke to a cool wet morning just before dawn. The three of us went to the locations where we found the deer had been crossing and feeding. Sergeant Savage had me set by a very large oak tree and told me that he would be no more than a hundred yards to my right. I now held the bow in my hands that Sergeant Savage has used to bring down a moose in Alaska. I had practiced with it and learned how to use the sites, but I just hoped that I would not freeze when the time came to shoot something besides a target. I sat there in the darkness, listening to the noises all around me, wondering what kind of creatures were at play. When the sun rose, I saw that there were two squirrels just above me and they seemed to be playing a game of tag; jumping from branch to branch. As I sat there being as quiet as I could, it felt as if hours had gone by, my legs were going to sleep and I was fighting to not do the same. Just as I started to nod off I heard a noise to my left. It was a doe with another smaller doe just behind her, which later Sergeant Savage explained was probably her fawn from a previous year. As they walked by, the first doe stopped for just a moment and I could feel my heart rise into my throat and my muscles tense. I remembered that Dillan had told me to stay calm if this happened; if she didn't smell me she would move on and hopefully a buck would come by following them. It was hard to let those two does go by, but I did and just like he said, about fifteen minutes later a six point buck came within thirty yards of me. I brought the bow up, drew it back and lined up the sites just as the buck saw me. I released the arrow and the deer jumped into the air and ran off. I sat there and began to cry, thinking I had missed or worse, wounded the deer.

After about twenty minutes, I looked up and there stood Sergeant Savage; he said "Come on, let's go track down your deer." We went to the spot where the deer was standing when I shot and I saw blood on the ground and my excitement was almost unbearable. As we walked, he showed me how to follow a blood trail and we tracked down the deer I shot only a short time before. I could see drops of blood on the ground, some larger than others and then after no more than ten minutes we found my buck, I had made a perfect kill shot. As I knelt over my first deer, it all came together for me; then I heard Dillan from behind me say, "well now the work starts." I had been so engrossed in the deer and finding my arrow, that I didn't realize he had walked up behind me.

That night we took the back straps and prepared them for my family. I have never enjoyed eating something as much as I did that deer that I killed, cleaned and cooked myself. Sergeant Savage is my high school teacher and hunter education instructor, but now he is more than that, he is a person who took the time to share a world with me that I never knew existed. This is not a world filled with a lot of people who just want to kill animals; this is a world of family and friendship, which is handed down generation to generation. I have learned how important it is, that this heritage be passed down, not only from generation to generation, but from friend to friend and even from stranger to stranger. If not for the archery program at my school, I would have never experienced all of this. I will never forget Sergeant Savage or his sons Dillan and Kenneth, who will forever live in my memories through the stories they shared with me during the hunt. --x



**Kaitlyn McCormick**  
**11th Grade**  
**Age 16**  
**Broken Arrow High School**

**Hunting: Sharing the Heritage**



For my family the best place for parents to spend time with daughters reflecting, communicating, handing down values, providing guidance, and building memories is the deer woods. Since the time I was young, father/daughter hunting trips have played a very important role in my life and have helped shape who I am today. Each year my father, sister and I look forward to deer season not only for the hunting, but also for the time we get to spend together without the interruption of electronics or busy schedules where lasting bonds and memories to last a lifetime are created.

Hunting is a legacy that was passed down from my "pop" (grandfather) to my dad. Although my dad always wanted a son to continue the family tradition with, he was blessed with two daughters. Dad was resigned that he would probably have to hunt alone after Pop's death, but was thrilled when my older sister began to hunt with him. At the age of seven I chose to go along and sit in the woods with my dad. I was in awe of the beauty of nature and immediately knew I shared the same passion as my dad and sister. As the youngest member of my hunting family I know I have a lot to live up to, but there is no greater feeling than the pride I see in my dad when I shoot a deer. The hugs and high fives are shared by all three of us, however that moment when he wraps his arm around my shoulder, looks me in the eye and says, "Good shot, girl! That's awesome!" I know that hunting with his daughters means more to my dad than claiming the biggest of bucks.

Hunting with my dad and sister has played a big part in developing my character, given me passion, and fostered a relationship with my dad and sister that will forever be a part of me. My sister and I both learned self-reliance through hunting by finding ways to stay warm and being aware of surroundings in order to not get lost. We learned to appreciate nature, but most importantly are the values that we learned such as generosity when each year we donate a processed deer to a food bank; responsibility through using a firearm; patience as I sit for hours in the woods waiting quietly; courage when I took my nervous first steps into the woods; gratitude for the land and the gifts it provides; and self-control as I wait for the perfect shot, sometimes foregoing a shot for something bigger and better. According to Dr. Don T. Jacobs, author of Teaching Virtues, "hunting is the ideal way to teach universal virtues." I am blessed to be raised in a family where hunting has been passed from generation to generation and these values cultivated through the years. The lessons I have gained through hunting will continue to positively have an effect on me for life. --x



**Brianna Sawyer**  
**9th Grade**  
**Age 14**  
**Boone-Apache Public**  
**Schools**

**Hunting: Sharing the Heritage**

My heart is racing with submerged excitement as my dad says, “Shhh, be quiet.” Then, I see them; the string of turkeys is walking so close I could

have tossed a rock and hit one. My dad and I count over eighty turkeys on the roost after hunting that evening, making this hunting trip quite memorable and an amazing experience. Although I was only five, I still remember that hunt vividly.

I began hunting with my dad when I was three years old. I remember sitting next to a tree and pretending to play the quiet game so I didn’t make noise. At that age I didn’t care if we even brought anything home. I loved getting all dressed up in my camouflage and spending time in the woods with my dad. Not much has changed over the years. Hunting with dad is still one of my favorite pastimes and opportunities to learn more from him and continue the family tradition. Sharing the hunting heritage isn’t something I do only with my dad; many people encourage me and provide the hunting knowledge I have today. Their help they have bestowed over the years deserves recognition to educate others about the hunting heritage and how to continue passing it down through the generations.

Different family members play important roles in my hunting experiences and heritage. My grandfather provides a plethora of family hunting heritage. He lets me borrow his guns contributing many stories and histories for each individual gun I use. It’s interesting knowing how family items pass down through the generations, and their histories give a sense of connection to the previous generations and their hunting experiences. Along with my grandfather, my Uncle Allen also impacts my hunting heritage. Uncle Allen is the one who took me turkey hunting for the first time. My father has also been extremely influential to my overall hunting experiences and heritage. It’s amazing to have such people to help continue the family’s hunting heritage and share incredible experiences and lessons.

Although my family plays quite an important role in my heritage and knowledge, other people have contributed as well. My dad’s boss, Mark Conklin, often takes me hunting when my dad is not able to or is already taking my brother hunting. Family heritage is important, but having the opportunity to learn from others is just as important to developing one’s own individual hunting skills as well. I can’t forget to mention my teacher who taught me how to shoot a shotgun this year so I would be able to go dove hunting. I learn so much from the wonderful people that take the time to share their hunting knowledge along with their own stories about hunting.

Hanging onto one’s hunting heritage is important not only to help develop hunting skills and family heirlooms, but also to help maintain a family history throughout the generations. One’s hunting heritage is not only derived from family, but also through experiences and knowledge passed between comrades. --x



**Triston Hasty-Grant**  
**8th Grade**  
**Age 13**  
**Owasso 8th Grade Center**

**The Feel**

Have you ever felt silence? Have you ever heard tranquility? You might think those are in reverse of each other. That’s the feeling I get when I am bow hunting. That’s what it’s like when you are one-hundred percent in sync with nature.

Hunting in my family is tradition. The land has been passed down through the generations since before the Great Depression, and will be passed down for many generations to come. My father and grandfather are extremely knowledgeable and skilled hunters. They have taught me to never take more from the land than we can give back.

When I go to the farm, I feel an enormous amount of pride and self-worth. I feel that I am part of something bigger than myself. Although, I get another feeling when I head off into the woods. I sense that I am miniscule among the ancient oaks and all the stories they have to tell. I feel out-manned by my quarry, whose ability to survive is far superior to mine; whom can see with binocular vision, hear minute sound, sense any movement, and bound more gracefully and agile than I could ever hope. These are the challenges I must overcome.

I wake up early, clothing myself in my layers of warmth. As I walk into the trees I can feel their grandeur. I hike to my tree stand and sit as still and quiet as humanly possible. Then, I see it... I see the sunrise, that’s when I get that feeling of absolute tranquility. It can, at times, be hard to contemplate that this is the land that so many of my ancestors before me walked and witnessed the same magnificent sight. Nevertheless, I still sit motionless and quiet. Then I hear something walking behind me. I turn as slowly as I can. Just out of the corner of my eye, I see the monarch of the woods — the male whitetail deer. He is an extraordinary animal, probably a one-hundred-and-forty-five inch deer. He is forty-three yards away, ten yards too far. I stand as discretely as I can. Then comes the question, do I sling an arrow just a little further than I normally would? Or stick to my morals and let him come in range? I stick to my morals, even though my heart is racing and my emotions want desperately to harvest this animal.

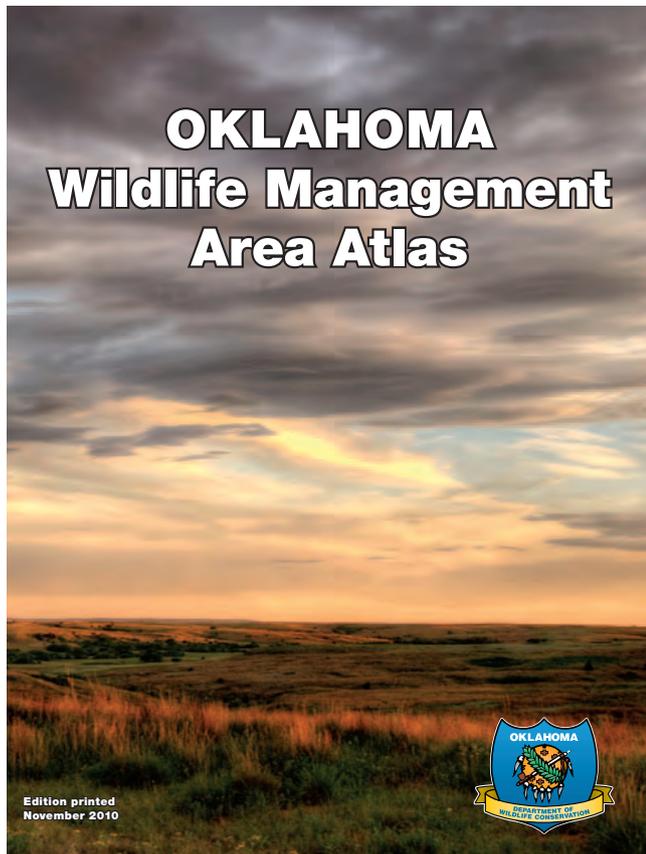
At the end of the hunt, even though I didn’t harvest the animal, I left with pride. I knew I stuck to my family tradition of being an ethical hunter. At the end of the day that’s what it boils down to — your family, your tradition, your heritage, and sticking to your morals. That’s the feeling I strive for overall, to know I did what I needed to do the way it needed to be done. --x

# Wildlife Management Area Atlas Owners Alert: New WMA Map Available Now

In the last issue we provided the thousands of Oklahoma sportsmen who already own the “Oklahoma Wildlife Management Area Atlas” with a new WMA map to go along with their atlas. It featured the newly acquired Crosstimbers WMA, and with this issue comes another new map to go with the 100 page atlas.

On the opposite page you will find yet another new addition to the atlas, featuring one of the newest wildlife management areas in the state — Grady County WMA. Purchasers of the atlas are given a free one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine, in which the Wildlife Department publishes maps of new WMAs acquired after the atlas was printed.

Use the camera on your smart phone and the QR code on this page to access more information about Grady County WMA, or log on to [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).



Discover more about Grady County WMA by scanning the QR code with your smart phone.

## Maps of other new WMAs will be published in future issues

Many Oklahoma sportsmen remember the original printed version from years ago and wish they could get their hands on one. But now the all-new version offers better maps, better information and a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine.

Back by popular demand, the page-by-page guide to Oklahoma’s public lands features topographical maps of almost every wildlife management area in the state.

Each alphabetically listed color map depicts an Oklahoma WMA, using symbols to show roads, parking areas, designated campsites, food plots, rivers, ponds, wetland development units, non-ambulatory zones, boat ramps, area entrances, shooting ranges, county boundaries and more. Additionally, acreage and contact information for each area is listed on the same page as the map. If a hunter is interested in visiting a WMA, the atlas provides all the tools needed to understand the area, its topography and its boundaries, and a detailed set of driving directions to each WMA is listed in the back of the atlas. Additionally, index pages show where each featured WMA is located in the state, and a glossary of terms helps sportsmen distinguish differences between land usage terms such as “wildlife management area” (WMA), “game management area” (GMA), “national recreation area” (NRA), “wetland development unit” (WDU), “waterfowl refuge portion” (WRP) and others.

The new atlases are available at the Wildlife Department headquarters in Oklahoma City (1801 N. Lincoln Blvd) and the Department’s Jenks office (300 S. Aquarium Dr). Copies can also be ordered by phone at (405) 521-3856, and order forms can be downloaded from [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) and mailed in with a check. To order by mail, send a check or money order for \$25 along with an “Outdoor Store” order form from the back of this issue or from [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 53465 Oklahoma City, OK 73152 (specify address to which atlas should be mailed and, if different, the address to which the subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine should be credited).

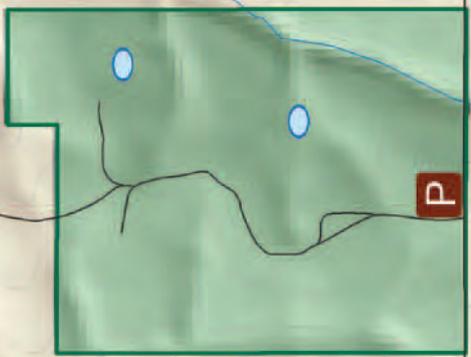
*“I wanted to make sure that you got my many thanks. I’m a disabled vet, and the atlas really comes in handy. I had one back after I got back from Viet Nam, but somehow it walked off. You know there’s people all over the world that wish they had this hunting and fishing. I was raised down in S.E. Oklahoma. Been around the world twice. There is no place better to live than Oklahoma. Thank you again” - Ronnie Phipps.*

# Grady County WMA

## Map Legend

- E** WMA Entrance
- HO** Headquarters
- P** Parking
- ▲** Camping

-  Safety Zone: Areas surrounding residences or headquarters. No hunting allowed.
-  Closed Road: Closed to motor vehicle access year-round.
-  Open Road: Open to motor vehicle access year-round.



4.5 miles to  
Rush Springs

E1540 Rd

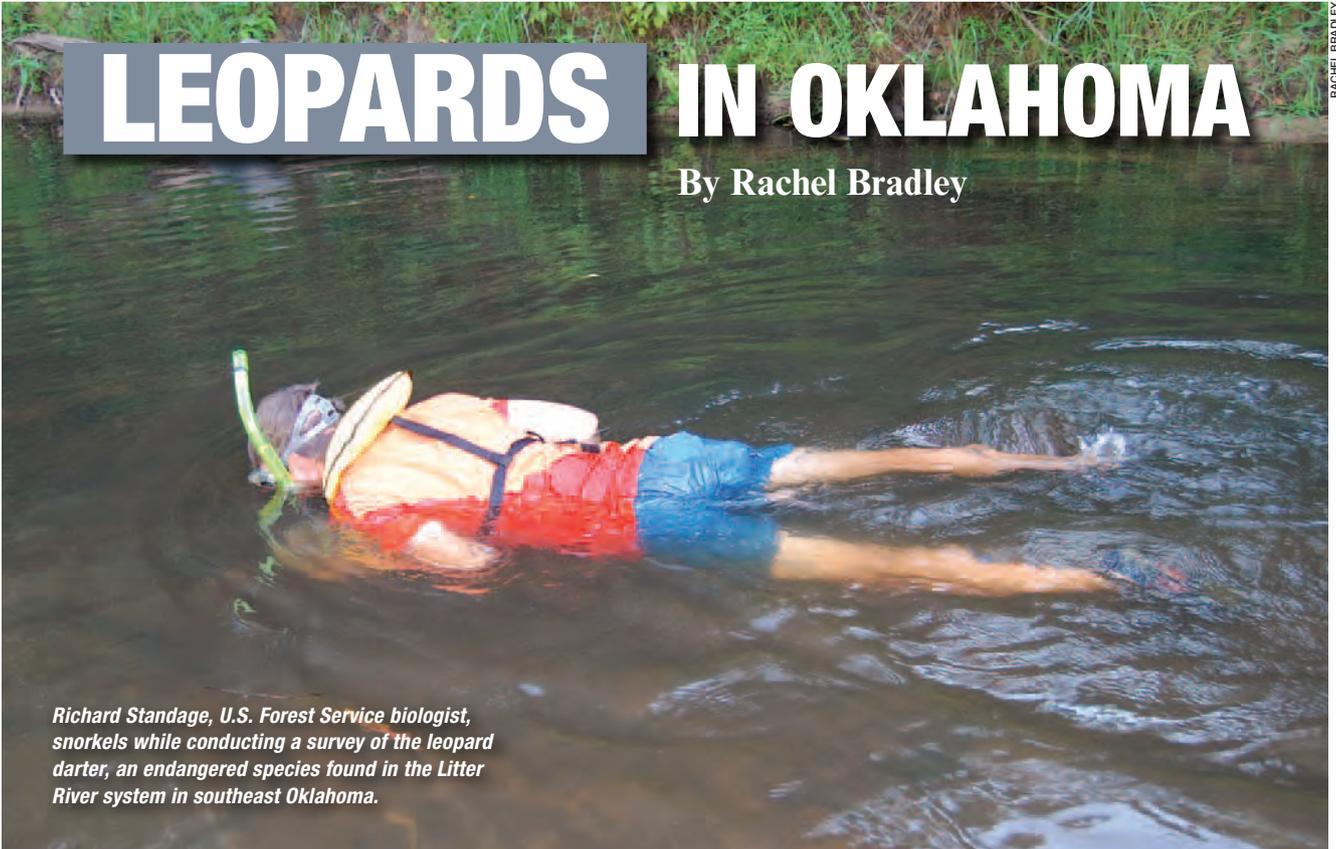
E1530 Rd



# LEOPARDS IN OKLAHOMA

By Rachel Bradley

RACHEL BRADLEY



*Richard Standage, U.S. Forest Service biologist, snorkels while conducting a survey of the leopard darter, an endangered species found in the Litter River system in southeast Oklahoma.*

Did you know there are leopards in Oklahoma? That's right, Oklahoma has leopards. This particular species is only found in the southeast corner of Oklahoma near Broken Bow and in southwest Arkansas. However, these leopards do not inhabit the wooded hills one would expect. Oklahoma's leopard species is found in the Little River water system, a tributary of the Red River.

The leopard darter, listed as a federally threatened fish in 1978, can be identified by the round black spots that line the midside and upper side of its body. Thus having the appearance similar to a leopard's coat.

The leopard darter was originally listed as threatened due to the dams that were being placed in southeast Oklahoma and southwest Arkansas.

"This is a rare species. Surveys began in 1992 annually and by 1998 permanent surveys began in which we annually monitor a few of the same exact sites yearly," according to Richard Standage, U.S. Forest Service fisheries and aquatic threatened and endangered biologist on Ouachita National Forest.

Leopard darter surveys are typically more labor intensive than most other fish surveys. These counts are based on a catch (or sighting) per unit effort by the minute, which allows



*The leopard darter is marked with round black spots that inspire the fish's name. The leopard darter was listed as a federally threatened fish in 1978.*

WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM

for comparison between sites and years.

"Surveys show the population has been the third lowest since 1998, until last year showed the third highest," Standage said.

To conduct leopard darter surveys, biologists snorkel for this two inch fish.

"This method is better for the fishes because it is less stressful than using a seine and pulling them out of the water," said Buck Ray, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife

Conservation environmental biologist. "It's exciting because we get to see their behaviors in their natural habitat. This darter tends to swim more gracefully between rocks rather than dart like others in the darter family."

These are curious fish. They find you from the side of rocks, look at you for a moment, and then swim away," Standage said.

Together, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service conduct leopard darter research to protect the ideal habitat for the threatened species. Their efforts include reducing sedimentation from logging companies, creating box culverts to maintain natural water flow for fish to swim upstream, and various other means to maintain the rare population. --x

## SERVE A CROWD WITH CATFISH CHOWDER

By Keith Sutton

When dinner guests show up unexpectedly, a big pot of this rich, satisfying catfish chowder can be whipped up in no time. If you don't have catfish, substitute crappie, bass, bream or another favorite fish. Serve with Fresh Spinach Salad, and you're sure to get rave reviews from all who partake.



### Company's Coming Catfish Chowder

1/2 cup chopped onion  
2 tablespoons melted butter  
1 pound catfish fillets, cut in bite-size pieces  
2 cups diced potatoes  
1 cup boiling water  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon white pepper  
3 cups half-and-half or whole milk  
Fresh dill

In a large cooking pot, sauté the onion in butter until soft and translucent. Add the fish, potatoes, water, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer 15 to 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in half-and-half or milk; heat thoroughly, but do not boil. Sprinkle with chopped dill. Serve piping hot. Yield: 10 to 12 servings.

### Fresh Spinach Salad

1 pound fresh baby spinach, washed and chilled  
1/4 cup chopped green onions  
1/4 cup chopped green pepper  
8 slices bacon  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
Garlic salt to taste  
2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped

Mix spinach, green onion and green pepper in salad bowl. Fry bacon until crisp and set aside. Mix remaining ingredients except eggs, stir into bacon drippings and pour over salad greens. Crumble bacon on top of the salad, and sprinkle with chopped eggs. Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

—Keith Sutton is a freelancer outdoor writer and photographer from Alexander, Arkansas. His delicious recipes have been featured in more than a dozen game and fish cookbooks, including *Duck Gumbo to Barbecued Coon: A Southern Game Cookbook*, written and self-published by Keith and his wife Theresa. At his cooking seminars, participants learn great ways to prepare nature's bounty and get to sample his cooking. Look inside issues of *Outdoor Oklahoma* all year long to find great wild game recipes from Keith in "Wild Eats." If you'd like to share your own Oklahoma wild game recipe for consideration in a future issue, send it along to [mbergin@odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:mbergin@odwc.state.ok.us)



# LANDING A TROUT IN OKLAHOMA

By Michael Bergin, associate editor

When you think of fishing in Oklahoma, you may conjure up thoughts black bass, big catfish or even a sunfish caught on a worm in the heat of the summer. But you also have access to outstanding trout fishing right here in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation operates two year-round trout fisheries — at the Lower Mountain Fork River and the Lower Illinois River — but also operates seasonal fisheries at Lake Pawhuska, Robbers Cave, Blue River, Lake Watonga and Quartz Mountain, the season is open from Nov. 1 through March 31 each year.

Rainbow trout usually are stocked about every two weeks at most of the state's trout areas during designated trout seasons, while the Lower Illinois and Lower Mountain Fork rivers are occasionally stocked with brown trout. Stocking schedules can be viewed online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

Trout are an introduced species to Oklahoma, and fishing for them can be as challenging or as easy as anglers want it to be. Fly fisherman can catch fish on flies they've tied themselves, but young anglers can sit on the bank with a jar of salmon eggs and have just as much fun, and a lot of success.

Anglers can use [WildlifeDepartment.com](http://WildlifeDepartment.com) not only to view the state stocking schedules, but also for access to a number of useful tips and additional information for making the most of trout fishing in Oklahoma.

*A trout angler at the Blue River — one of several trout fishing locations available across the state — shows off his catch of rainbow trout.*

## Wildlife Department Seeks Fix for Water Shortages

Officials with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation say they continue to seek a lasting solution to water shortage issues at the Lower Illinois River.

Trout stockings resumed at the Lower Illinois this fall after a temporary discontinuation had been in effect because of water shortages that caused two significant fish kills at river in 2011 this year. Rainfalls have improved water levels, but officials say the biggest water shortage concerns at the fishery have not been resolved.

Barry Bolton, chief of fisheries for the Wildlife Department, has addressed why water shortages pose an ongoing problem to the fishery at the Lower Illinois River, and at the top of the list of concerns is a need for reallocation of water from Tenkiller Reservoir for the fishery. Currently all of the water storage in the lake is allocated to other users. The fishery had for years been fed by leakage in the dam that provided as much as 75 cubic feet of water per second. The leak has been repaired, leaving the Wildlife Department with access to only two hours of water or less per day for managing 7.75 miles of trout fish-

ery. Any other water comes from sporadic releases from water storage holders.

“There are anglers who count on the river for good fishing, and there are businesses in the region that count on anglers going to the Lower Illinois River to fish,” Bolton said. “Water shortages combined with insufficient flow reduces oxygen levels to a point where trout and native species cannot survive, which means anglers don’t have fish to catch. And that means fewer customers for local businesses.”

Though water levels at the river are up now, Bolton said the fishery will likely face similar shortages again if water is not reallocated to support the fishery. Until then, he said possible short-term resolutions include more frequent releases of oxygenated water through hydropower generation, and taking steps to ensure water releases meet state water quality standards. Agreements also could be pursued that would create a temporary seasonal pool plan that provides minimum releases to maintain the fishery. Additionally, the Wildlife Department can temporarily “borrow” some water allocated to Sequoyah Fuels, who holds small percentage of storage in the lake, but that water will not always be available for fishery use.

Though there are short-term fixes, Bolton said it is a long-term solution that is needed most, such as congressional legislation to reallocate water storage for the fishery at no cost to the state. A similar problem at the Lower Mountain Fork River trout fishery below Broken Bow Lake was resolved through federal action that resulted in the allocation of water to the fishery.

Established in 1965 as mitigation for the construction of Tenkiller Dam, the Illinois River trout fishery has become a recreational and economic staple for the region. While finding a solution to water shortages in the river poses unique challenges, Bolton said the Wildlife Department is committed to the survival of the fishery and will continue to work tirelessly to ensure quality fishing for those who depend on the fishery for recreation and business.

## Partnership Brings Trout Fishing to Metro

Fly fishing fanciers know the excitement of catching a trout from a mountain stream, but even metro residents surrounded by buildings and highways can enjoy trout fishing with simple equipment and a short drive to Dolese Park in Oklahoma City.

A unique trout fishing season at Dolese Youth Park Pond, located north of NW 50th and a half block west of Meridian Ave, is the result of a partnership between the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department and BancFirst, whose generous donation makes the season possible.

The two-month trout season runs Jan. 1 through Feb. 28 and features several stockings of rainbow trout as part of the state’s Close to Home fishing program.

The “Close to Home” fishing program provides fishing areas that are often just a short drive away from even the most urban locations, saving families time and gas money. In addition, it allows parents and children to fish together after school or on a busy weekend. The Dolese trout season also offers anglers a chance to catch a unique fish that they don’t catch at other times of the year when water temperatures are warmer.

According to Bob Martin, fisheries biologist for the Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation Department, successful trout anglers at Dolese should keep several colors of powerbaits as well as an assortment of other trout baits in their tackle box, as the best baits to use often change throughout the day. Anglers should have success using 4- to 6-pound test line equipped with a slip sinker and small hook. Along with powerbaits, choice baits include corn, small worms, small minnows, small spinners, jigs and spoons.

There is a daily limit of six trout per person during the Dolese Park Pond trout season. In addition, angling is permitted from the bank only, and each angler may only use one rod and reel while fishing for trout. Trout caught and placed on a stringer or otherwise held in possession cannot be released. Regulations for other species that may be caught at Dolese are available in the current “Oklahoma Fishing Guide” or online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

Those fishing for trout at Dolese must purchase an annual state fishing license, unless exempt. In addition, an Oklahoma City Fishing Permit is required for anglers ages 16-61 unless exempt.

For more information about trout fishing at Dolese and other Close to Home fishing opportunities, contact the city’s H.B. Parsons Fish Hatchery at (405) 755-4014, or visit the Lakes and Fishing page of the city’s website at [okc.gov](http://okc.gov). Dolese Youth Park and the H.B. Parsons Fish Hatchery are operated by the City of Oklahoma City’s Parks and Recreation Department.



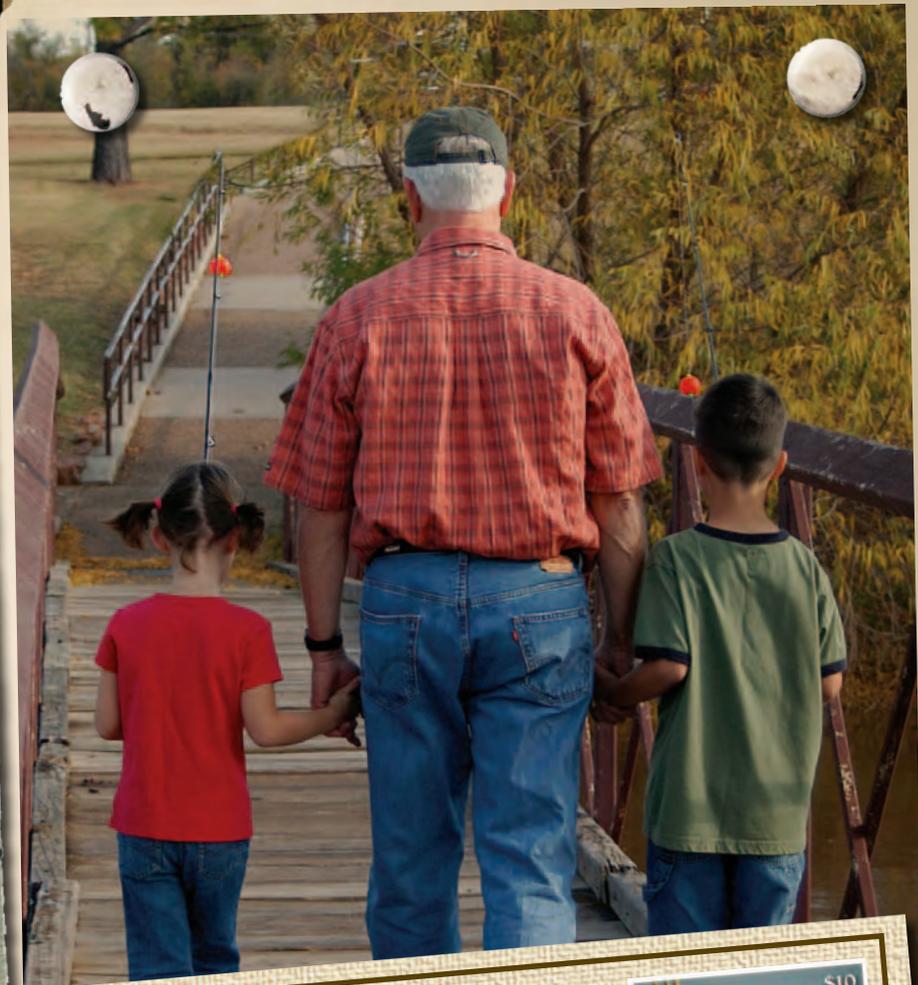
*A flyfisherman at the Lower Illinois River, where water shortage issues remain a concern for officials with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.*

# Help Conserve Our Wildlife and Wild Places for the Next Generation

With your one-time purchase of a \$25 Lifetime Senior Citizen Fishing and Hunting License, you help conserve fish, wildlife, and natural places for the future.

- Funding for conservation of Oklahoma's wildlife is determined by the number of fishing and hunting licenses sold.
- You are now qualified for a lifetime senior citizen fishing and hunting license.
- Your one-time \$25 purchase generates over \$250 of federal funds over the next decade for conservation in Oklahoma...while you enjoy fishing and hunting for the rest of your life!

Questions?  
Call (405) 521-3852



If you have questions, call  
(405) 521-3852

*Thank you for your continued support  
of Oklahoma's Wildlife Heritage.*

*Richard J. Hatch*  
Director  
Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

# Senior Citizen Fishing & Hunting Licenses



## Eligibility

Any resident of Oklahoma who reaches 64 years of age shall be eligible for the senior citizen lifetime license during the calendar year in which said person turns 65 years of age. Any resident of Oklahoma born before January 1, 1923 is exempt from purchasing a hunting and/or fishing license and receives the benefits of the senior citizen lifetime license.

Only persons who are residents of Oklahoma and have been so for at least 6 months immediately prior to the date of purchase may obtain a senior citizen license. Documentation proving residency must be presented for approval. All senior citizen licenses are non-transferable.

## Benefits

A lifetime license holder, whether it be combination, hunting, or fishing, will not lose the benefits of the license by a change of address, even if he or she ceases to be an Oklahoma resident by moving out of the state. If you move, you should report your new address to our office.

### Senior Citizen Combination Fishing & Hunting License

As the owner of a senior citizen combination license, you may hunt and fish in the State of Oklahoma for as long as you live, subject to the rules set forth for the separate hunting and fishing licenses described below.

### Senior Citizen Fishing License

As the owner of a senior citizen fishing license, you may fish in the waters of this state, as set forth in the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation fishing regulations, for as long as you live. The senior citizen fishing license does not exempt you from having to obtain a paddlefish permit when fishing for paddlefish (available at no charge from license dealers or [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com)).

### Senior Citizen Hunting License

As the owner of a senior citizen hunting license, you may hunt any legal game, as set forth in the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation hunting regulations, for as long as you live.

Lifetime hunting license holders are exempt from purchasing:

- Annual hunting license
- Oklahoma waterfowl stamp
- Fur and Trapping license
- Deer, Elk, Antelope, and Turkey licenses
- Controlled hunt permits

Check stations will issue any necessary tags when animals are checked in. Bobcats require a federal tag which may be obtained from Oklahoma game wardens, Department biologists, Department field offices, or specially designated stations at no charge.

The lifetime hunting license does not exempt the holder from purchasing a **bear license**, **federal permits**, or **federal fees** that may be required (such as a federal duck stamp or federal controlled hunt user fee).



**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION**

Street Address  
**1801 N. Lincoln**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73105**  
**(405) 521-3851**

Mailing address  
**P.O. Box 53465**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73152**

For Office Use Only
License # _____
Date Issued _____

**SENIOR CITIZEN LICENSE APPLICATION**

*Attn: Lifetime licenses are available only by mail or in person at ODWC headquarters in Oklahoma City. An Oklahoma Driver's License or ID is required for proof of residency. Individuals possessing a valid out-of-state driver's license are considered nonresidents and do not qualify for resident licenses. **Application must be accompanied by a photocopy of Oklahoma Driver's License or State-Issued ID Card, or approved and signed by a License Dealer or authorized Wildlife Department employee before submitting to headquarters for processing.***

- Combination Fishing & Hunting \$25.00**      **Fishing Only \$15.00**      **Hunting Only \$15.00**  
★ *Best Value & Biggest Benefit* ★  
for Conservation

**PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  

Last Name
First Name
Middle Initial

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_, Oklahoma    ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_    DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  

REQUIRED
REQUIRED

OKLAHOMA DRIVER'S LICENSE # \_\_\_\_\_    Expiration Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  

REQUIRED

HOME PHONE NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_    DAY PHONE NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Height \_\_\_\_ ft \_\_\_\_ in    Weight \_\_\_\_\_    Color of Eyes \_\_\_\_    Color of Hair \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I will be 65 years old or older during the calendar year, and I have been a bona fide resident of Oklahoma for the six months immediately preceding the date of this application.



**To verify residency, please provide one of the following:**

**1) Include a copy of your Oklahoma Driver's License or State-Identification Card.**

**-OR-**

**2) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature & ID# of License Dealer or Dept. Employee / Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Applicant / Date**

\*\*\*\*\*  
 Please check the method of payment:     VISA     MASTERCARD     MONEY ORDER     CHECK

To charge this purchase to your VISA or MasterCard, complete the following information:

Card holder's name and address (please print legibly)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Account Number** \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Expiration Date** \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Card holder's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA OUTLOOK

**Upcoming issue of *Outdoor Oklahoma* will include features you don't want to miss**

## **Next Issue to Feature Annual Anglers' Guide**

Springtime will be here before you know it, and with it comes exciting angling action. That's also when we bring you *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine's annual Anglers' Guide, which will be available in your next issue (March/April 2012).

Before you go fishing, make sure you look over this informative tool that brings you a range of inside fishing information for Oklahoma.

The Anglers' Guide provides electrofishing results, stocking information and the best destinations for many popular species. It also describes the most popular fish species available in Oklahoma and how to catch them.

The featured article is put together based on information provided by Wildlife Department fisheries biologists who know most of the ins and outs of Oklahoma fishing.



*Youth or adult alike, fishing is serious business in Oklahoma, which is why Outdoor Oklahoma magazine's next issue feature the annual Anglers' Guide is one you won't want to miss.*

## **Outdoor Oklahoma readers' photos wanted for Readers Photography Showcase**

*Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine is currently accepting submission for its annual "Readers' Photography Showcase" issue, which features the digital images of outdoor enthusiasts all over the state.

Submissions will accepted through March 31, and selected photographers will have their work featured in the July/August 2012 issue of *Outdoor Oklahoma*. The special summer issue gives both professional and amateur photographers the chance to have their digital photos displayed in a magazine nationally

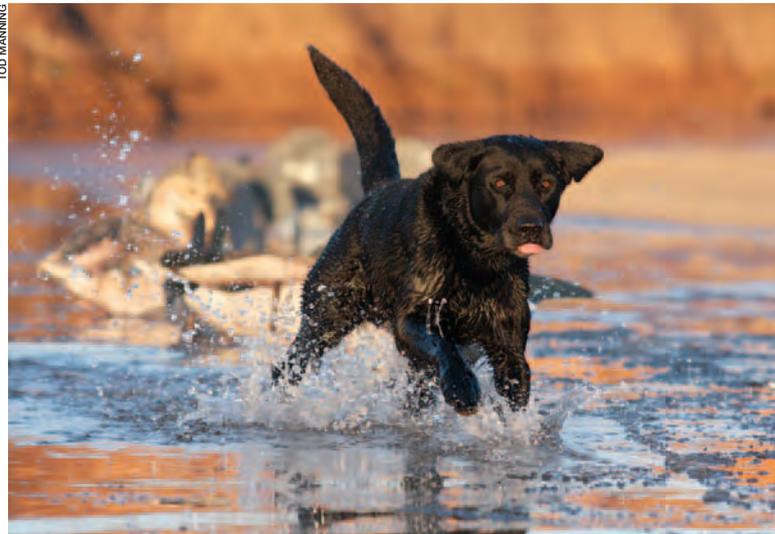
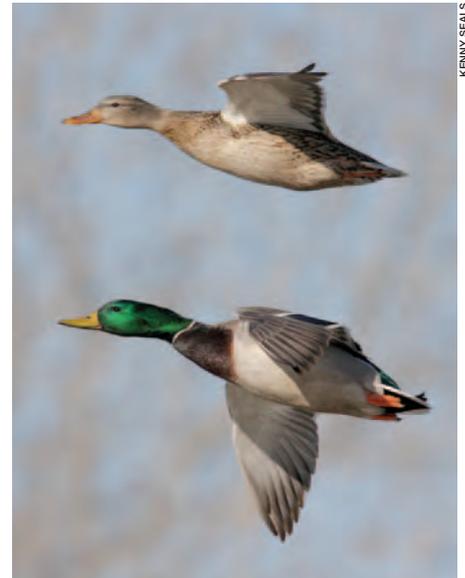
recognized for its photography

Participants may submit up to five digital images. Each one must include a description of the photo, including the location taken, name and hometown of photographer, names and hometowns of subjects and what it took to get just the right shot. Photos should be in sharp focus, and images should be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). The canvas size should be about eight inches by 11 inches. All submissions must be digital, and slides and print images will not be accepted. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation reserves one-time publication rights for images selected for the Readers Photography Showcase, and images remain the property of the photographer. CDs and other file storage devices mailed to the Wildlife Department as part of submissions to the contest are not returned.

Photography is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, and the editors look forward to the hundreds of submissions received every year.

Hopeful photographers can mail their submission on disk to: *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine, Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation, P.O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Readers may also e-mail their entries to [photoshowcase@odwc.state.ok.us](mailto:photoshowcase@odwc.state.ok.us).

*Previously selected photos for the Readers' Photography Showcase issue show that Oklahomans know how to enjoy the outdoors.*



# Shinnery

By Jena Donnell, Quail Habitat Biologist



# Oak

When you think of oak trees, images of massive branches, tree houses, and tire swings may come to mind. A three-foot oak tree is nothing to write home about, until you realize its presence in the western part of the state is a real plus for some of Oklahoma's wildlife species. On the surface, the towering oaks of the east may appear more impressive than shin oak (*Quercus harvardii*), but a different story lies just below the ground. Shinnery is a clonal species, with an immense underground stem and root system that sends hundreds of shoots above the surface. In fact, up to 90 percent of an individual plants' mass is underground. The bulk of the remarkable root system runs parallel to the ground — just two to three feet below the surface — making this plant especially vulnerable to plowing and root grubbing.

The low-growing habit makes shinnery an important wildlife plant, providing both food and cover. White-tailed deer, lesser prairie chickens, and bobwhite quail forage on nourishing leaves, and seasonally abundant buds, catkins, and acorns. (Crude protein averages seven percent in the leaves and 15 to 20 percent in the buds.) Eleven species of rodents and at least six species of snakes are commonly found in shinnery and over 142 species of birds have been recorded in Oklahoma's shinnery communities. Many of these bird species forage on the insects hidden in the leaf litter. These insects are especially important during the breeding season when hens increase protein intake for egg development.

Shinnery also provides a critical wildlife habitat component — cover. Deer often bed in motts and game birds use shinnery to escape from aerial predators. For many game species, including bobwhite quail, woody cover is most beneficial when the dense canopy is three to four feet tall, the surface layer is relatively open, and individual thickets or "coverts" are in close proximity to each other. This arrangement protects birds from overhead predators, allows them to watch for ground predators while resting and digesting food, and increases the amount of space they can travel while searching for food.

Shinnery oak — the shortest of Oklahoma's oaks — is a member of the white oak section and rarely exceeds four feet in height. Biologists believe uncharacteristically tall shinnery is the result of hybridization with post oak (*Quercus stellata*), and call hybrid thickets "motts". In purist form, this shrub is only one to two feet tall, or

Members of the oak family have long been promoted as important wildlife trees — and 27 separate oak species can be found in Oklahoma! Each of these species can be sorted into two categories or "sections" — red or white oaks. Sections can easily be distinguished by two characteristics. In red oaks, leaf veins extend past the edge of the leaf, and acorns mature on the previous year's growth. In white oaks, the leaf vein does not extend beyond the edge of the leaf, and acorns mature on the current year's growth.

"shin" high. (Though the name aptly describes this shrub, "shin" is actually derived from the Louisiana French word *chêne*, meaning "oak".) Shinnery is most commonly identified by its short-statured growth form. It can be distinguished from other western shrubs by its rough gray bark and deciduous leaves that have shallow lobes or indentations on the margin. When still on the shrub, half of the



DR. RANDY ROSSIERE



STEVE WEBBER

fruit, or acorn, is covered with a husk or "cap". Buds begin to swell in late March, and shinnery flowers in April and May.

This beneficial shrub once covered over 750,000 acres in Oklahoma. Through the years, that number has dropped nearly 10 percent due to mechanical and chemical brush clearing for row cropping and grazing purposes. Because this shrub requires deep sand, shinnery has always been restricted to the looser soils of western Oklahoma. Though most shinnery is found on private lands, it is managed on a few public lands, including Packsaddle Wildlife Management Area.

Prescribed fire is the most common management tool for reducing shinnery height. Under proper conditions, a fire can result in a one to two year decrease in canopy, leading to a positive response of grasses and forbs. Even so, fire can stimulate oak resprout in the growing season after the burn. Dividing rangeland in three to four burn units allows for a variety of shrub heights and densities. This method ensures habitat requirements are met for both game and non-game species and increases usable space. Though effective, mechanical and chemical means of control are much more expensive and permanent — making predator avoidance more challenging and potentially reducing foraging opportunities.

Wildlife populations may not be limited by shinnery occurrence, but they are certainly attracted to the low-growing shrub with nutritious forage. With seasonally abundant foods — buds and catkins in spring and acorns in the fall — and protection from predators and weather, shinnery is a wildlife plant for all seasons. --X

To visit with Jena Donnell about habitat on your property, call her at (405) 684-1929.

# THE LESSER PRAIRIE CHICKEN INITIATIVE

The Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative is a program that is made available to landowners of Oklahoma through cooperative efforts between the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC). Efforts funded through the initiative are hoped to restore and increase the amount of suitable habitat for the lesser prairie chicken, and simultaneously, benefit farmers and ranchers who are interested in the program.

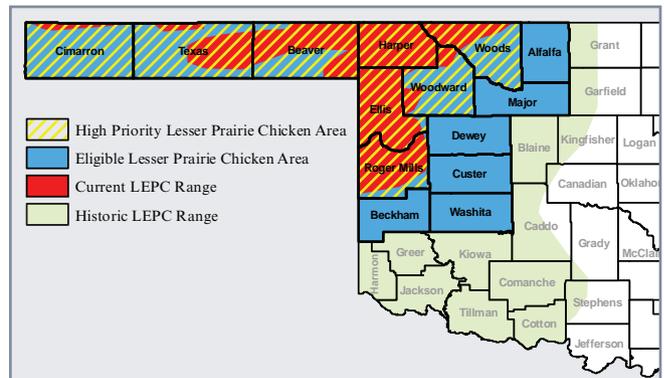
The initiative will provide assistance to help with the cost of selected practices and will be implemented through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary program offered through the NRCS to help landowners address certain resource concerns on native rangeland. Counties offering signups through the initiative include the following: Alfalfa, Beaver, Beckham, Cimarron, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Harper, Major, Roger Mills, Texas, Washita, Woods, and Woodward.

Brush management, prescribed grazing, upland wildlife habitat management, range planting, prescribed burning, fire-breaks, and watering facilities are some of the practices that will be administered through this program and are eligible for cost-share assistance.

Although the lesser prairie chicken is the primary focus of this program, farmers and ranchers benefit in that, "What's good for the chicken is good for the cow," which is a common phrase used to highlight the fact that management strategies used to benefit lesser prairie chickens will benefit diverse species.

Lesser prairie chickens thrive in areas with a patchy grazing pattern and grazing at a low to moderate rate allows some of last year's grasses to be carried into the following year providing prairie chickens with suitable amounts of cover for nesting structure. Grazing in this manner will yield a higher amount of quality grasses, increase the odds of making it through a drought, and require ranchers to use less supplemental feeding.

To become a part of this initiative, submit an application at a local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office. If you are unsure your land would qualify as an initiative candidate, a technical assistance visit can be arranged to appraise the land by calling Chase Phillips with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation at (580) 571-5820. --X



*What's good for the chicken is good for the cow. Submit your Lesser Prairie Chicken Initiative Program application to your nearest Natural Resource Conservation Service today.*

# WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT NOW PROVIDING FREE UPLAND BIRD RESEARCH UPDATES BY E-MAIL



KELLY ADAMS

The Wildlife Department is now providing periodic updates on upland game bird research and conservation through a free e-mail report called Upland Update. The updates are available free by signing up on the Wildlife Department's website, [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com). Currently, more than 500 subscribers are receiving the updates.

At the end of 2011, biologists with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation sent about 70 bobwhite quail to research facilities for extensive studies and sampled and banded an additional 168 quail that hunters may harvest on state wildlife management areas before the quail season ends Feb. 15.



JENA DONNELL

**Doug Schoeling, upland game bird biologist for the Wildlife Department, prepares to take a blood sample from a quail before releasing it back onto an Oklahoma wildlife management area.**

the gradual decline of the bobwhite quail across its range.

According to Alan Peoples, chief of Wildlife for the Wildlife Department, biologists trapped 241 quail during the first OID trapping phase. There were 168 quail banded and released, and hunters are asked to report banded quail to the Wildlife Department if they harvest one. About 70 samples were sent

to universities in Texas, where researchers are investigating the incidence of disease, parasitism, pesticides, toxins and contaminants in sampled quail.

"We're waiting for researchers to give us information on things like West Nile Virus, avian influenza, aflatoxins — all of the various components they are looking at," said Alan Peoples, chief of Wildlife for the Wildlife Department.

Peoples said researchers have observed threats to quail in some regions that are not prevalent in others, such as the eye worm that has been affecting birds in Texas but not Oklahoma. Eye worms occur when a small nematode, or parasitic worm, imbeds in the ocular cavity of quail, impairing vision and hindering survival.

"We did not observe any of our quail with eye worms," Peoples said. "It's very common in the rolling plains of Texas."

Of the 241 birds trapped in Oklahoma, over 40 percent were adults. However, Peoples said in a normal year of hunting, most of the birds seen by hunters are young of the year birds,



JENA DONNELL

**A banded quail that was sampled and released by biologists with the Wildlife Department.**

or those that were born in the spring. About 80 percent of the harvested quail in an average year will be young of the year birds as well, with the remaining 20 percent comprised of adult birds.

Since young birds make up the large majority of the quail seen and harvested by hunters, reproductive success is critical. According to Peoples, extended drought conditions and record heat during the summer was detrimental for both quail nesting success and recruitment. In addition to the

impact of heat on nesting sites, a lack of green vegetation led to reduced numbers of insects that young quail depend on for food in the first months of their life.

“Fifty-five percent of our samples were young of the year birds, so that’s optimistic,” Peoples said.

In addition to working with trapped birds, Peoples said the Wildlife Department is involved in a genetic research study through the Caesar Kleburg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M-Kingsville. The Department will provide samples for the study that will aid in research efforts.



**Jena Donnell, quail habitat biologist for the Wildlife Department, releases a wild quail that was trapped on an Oklahoma wildlife management area and sampled as part of Operation Idiopathic Decline, a multi-party research initiative studying quail diseases.**

The Wildlife Department also is contracting with Oklahoma State University to conduct quail research over the next six years on Oklahoma’s Packsaddle and Beaver River wildlife management areas. Research facilities will be constructed on the WMAs, and researchers will be collecting extensive information that could lead to improvements in quail populations and habitat management.

“We’re going to focus primarily on reproduction and brood survival,” Peoples said.

The Department also continues to closely monitor the lesser prairie chicken in northwest Oklahoma and has plans to work with OSU and the Sutton Avian Research Center on researching reproduction and brood survival. Although additional surveys have found new prairie chicken leks, or breeding grounds, some survey routes are still too difficult to study accurately using current survey methods. Peoples said the Department will be refining its methods to better saturate survey routes and will intensify survey efforts through participation in the lesser prairie chicken interstate working group’s five-state coordinated survey, other aerial surveys, and the use of cutting edge satellite radio and traditional telemetry tracking.

## HUNTER EDUCATION LEADS OKLAHOMANS TOWARD A LIFETIME OF THE OUTDOORS



If you want to become a hunter, the Wildlife Department’s hunter education program is a great starting point.

The program covers a variety of topics including firearms safety, wildlife identification, wildlife conservation and management, survival, archery, muzzleloading and hunter responsibility. It is available as a standard eight-hour course, an Internet home study course, and a workbook home study course.

The Wildlife Department certified 17,631 hunters last year alone, making it the eighth highest ranked state in the nation in

the percentage of hunters certified per capita.

Most Oklahomans must complete the Department’s hunter education class in order to hunt big game without supervision. Exemptions from hunter education certification include anyone 31 years of age or older, anyone honorably discharged from or currently on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, and members of the National Guard. Additionally, hunters age eight to 30 are eligible to purchase an apprentice-designated hunting license that allows them to hunt under the

supervision of a qualifying adult mentor.

“We hold hundreds of hunter education classes across the entire state every year, and we try to serve our constituents and their busy schedules by holding as many as 20 of those classes during the weekends just prior to deer gun season,” said Lance Meek, hunter education coordinator for the Wildlife Department. “Those last minute classes account for as much as 15 percent of the total number of hunters certified each year.”

Changes to hunter education requirements in recent years have made hunting more convenient for sportsmen. In 2008, the class length requirement was reduced from 10 to eight hours, and Oklahoma residents who are exempt from hunter education requirements but who want to hunt in another state where certification is required can take a proficiency exam without taking the eight-hour class. Additionally, the

Department saves money and makes the course more relevant to students by producing its own state-specific hunter education manual.

Meek said the future of the program includes an online course option that will allow students to complete their course through the Wildlife Department’s website and immediately print their certification card. Meek also is working with other education specialists at the Wildlife Department to encourage school educators to teach the hunter education course in the classroom along with other Department programs such as the Oklahoma National Archery in the Schools and Explore Bowhunting programs.

To learn more about hunter education in Oklahoma, or to view a schedule of hunter education classes statewide, log on to <http://www.wildlifedepartment.com/education/huntered.htm>.



*The Explore Bowhunting program compliments the highly successful Oklahoma National Archery in Schools Program being conducted in hundreds of Oklahoma schools, where students are building self-confidence and learning precision skills.*

# Explore Bowhunting Program Capitalizes on Success of Archery In Schools

**By Rich Fuller, Sr. Information & Education Specialist, and Explore Bowhunting Program Coordinator**



*A deer target stuffed with simulated organs made from a range of food products can teach youth about a range of topics, from wildlife anatomy to marksmanship.*

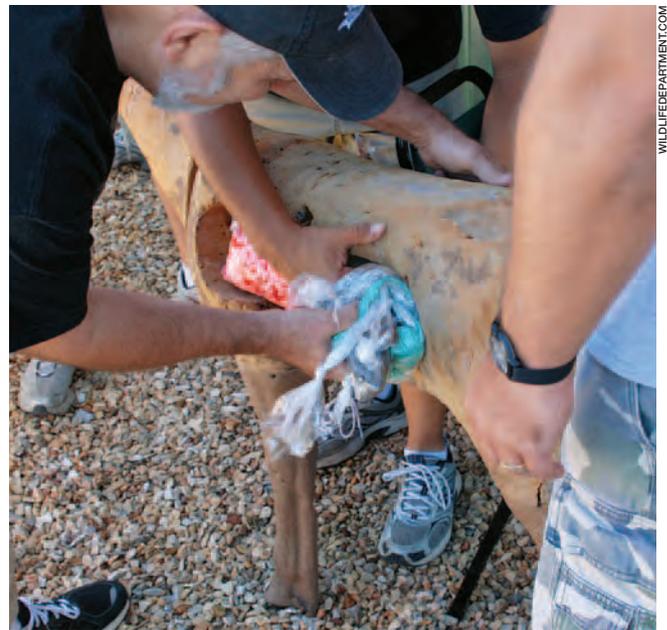
“Let me take the shot!”

“No! Please, please let me shoot it first!”

Such are the sounds heard at a recent visit to Locust Grove High School football field with physical education teacher, Ladney Keener. Keener is one of Oklahoma’s first teachers trained in Explore Bowhunting a new educational program being sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Among the 22 different lessons within the Explore Bowhunting curriculum, certainly one of the most popular is the “Shot Placement” activity.

As part of the activity, students are given common food items such as pudding, corn kernels, whipped cream and food coloring to construct the simulated internal organs of a whitetail deer. After the heart, lungs, liver and intestines are formed with different sized Ziplock bags, the “organs” are placed inside the hollowed-out cavity of one of Keener’s 3-D archery deer targets. After the simulated deer is built, students take turns shooting at the target and then examining their arrows to determine how effective the shot was. According to Keener, the exercise mimics real-life bowhunting scenarios.

“By the time they get the deer organs made and placed inside the fake deer body, they pretty much can’t wait to shoot it with real arrows to see what happens,” said Keener. “Of course, the activity is designed to teach how to make an ethical and effective shot on an animal, but it also teaches them something about physical anatomy. After the



*Teachers undergoing certification training to teach the Wildlife Department’s Explore Bowhunting program learn to create simulated deer organs using food items like pudding, corn, whipped cream and food coloring stuffed into plastic bags and placed inside a 3-D archery deer target.*

shot, we have each student inspect their arrow and, based upon the material left on it, make an educated guess as to what organs were hit.”

Based upon that, Keener has his students make a judgment as to how long a hunter should wait before he or she should begin tracking the animal.

“Believe it or not, it’s remarkable how closely this can sim-



Teachers create a simulated body cavity for a deer archery target that will be used to hone youth's archery skills and ability to interact with the natural world.

ulate an actual hunting situation,” said Keener, an accomplished bowhunter since childhood.

Beginning in 2010, the Explore Bowhunting curriculum was developed by the Archery Trade Association (ATA) to teach students aged 11-17 how to interact with the natural world by developing basic skills used to bowhunt. Several of the activities focus on getting close to animals. According to the professional educators who developed the curriculum, the program not only teaches students how to interact with nature using ageless hunting skills, but it also teaches an appreciation of what is around them and enhances their encounters with the outdoors.

According to Colin Berg, education supervisor for the Wildlife Department, the Explore Bowhunting program compliments the highly successful National Archery In Schools Program being conducted in hundreds of Oklahoma schools.

“With literally hundreds of Oklahoma schools now participating in the Archery in the Schools program, including several that have been participating for a number of years now, the Explore Bowhunting Program has come along at just the right time,” said Berg. “We know through student surveys that a large ma-

majority of kids who participate in the Archery in the Schools program are interested in learning about bowhunting, and that’s where Explore Bowhunting fits the niche. It’s a great ‘next-step’ for kids to learn not only about the archery skills used in hunting, but it also teaches them about wildlife, their habits and habitats and conservation of our natural resources.” Berg said.

In addition to the Shot Placement activity, the Explore Bowhunting curriculum covers such topics as how to use calls to lure animals into range, how to estimate the distance to a target, how to field dress game animals, how to shoot a bow from different positions and understanding animal ecology — specifically the whitetail deer.

By attending a one-day training workshop, teachers not only receive the curriculum but also student handbooks as well as training materials such as deer anatomy charts and DVDs. Additionally, each school system receives a resource trunk that has a large collection of visual aids. Within each trunk there are three different types of bows (compound, crossbow and



Several Oklahoma teachers are also getting trained in the Department's Fishing in the Schools program — an offshoot of the Department's Aquatic Resources Education Program started in the late 1980s to teach youth fishing skills.

recurve), game calls, camouflage clothing, a shooting release, broadhead samples, deer lures and scents, a trail camera, arrows, and much more. According to Berg, the donation of 50 kits to Oklahoma by the ATA has been a huge factor in the program's early success.

"If you were to go out and purchase all of the gear in each kit, it would likely cost around \$2,000, so with 50 kits, the ATA has made an incredibly generous \$100,000 donation to the Department which has got the program up and running in a great way," Berg said. "We are extremely thankful to the ATA and its members for making these kits available; and we truly believe that this program is going to promote interest in bowhunting."

According to Berg, one of the primary reasons for the ATA's assistance and designation of Oklahoma as one of the first Explore Bowhunting pilot states is due to the Wildlife Department's plan for comprehensive outdoor education training of Oklahoma teachers. Beginning in 2009, many teachers who had previously gone through an Archery in the Schools training were given the opportunity to become certified to teach Oklahoma's hunter education program.

Then in 2010 some of those same teachers were invited to attend Explore Bowhunting training. The training opportunities haven't stopped there, however. Several of those same teachers are now getting trained in yet another of the Wildlife Department's education programs, the Fishing in the Schools program. Fishing in Schools is an offshoot of the Department's Aquatic Resources Education Program started in the late 1980s to teach youth fishing skills.



*One reason Oklahoma has been designated one of the first Explore Bowhunting pilot states is due to the Wildlife Department's plan for comprehensive outdoor education training of Oklahoma teachers. Beginning in 2009, many teachers who had previously gone through training to teach the Oklahoma National Archery in the Schools were given the opportunity to become certified to teach Oklahoma's hunter education program.*

"Of course all of the Department's educational programs are voluntary, but through our equipment grants and other incentives, we have a growing number of teachers who want to become trained in all of our education programs, which is fantastic," said Berg. "And we know that's one of the big reasons why we've gotten assistance from national organizations such as the ATA. They see that many Oklahoma teachers are conducting an entire outdoor education program for their students, and they want to be a part of that success and energy."

For additional information about all of the ODWC's education programs, log onto [wildlifedepartment.com/out\\_ed.htm](http://wildlifedepartment.com/out_ed.htm). 🌿



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# Score a Memory with the Controlled Hunts Program

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**ANY OKLAHOMA SPORTSMAN WILL TELL** you that our state offers some truly first class hunting, whether that be on private property or on one of the Wildlife Department's wildlife management areas. And many have even been lucky enough to draw out for one or more of the most sought after hunts in Oklahoma through the Wildlife Department's controlled hunts program. But then again, luck isn't the only factor in getting drawn for one of these unique hunts.

A total of 121,547 hunters applied for one of the 6,210 individual hunt permits available in 2011, many of which will apply again when the 2012 Controlled Hunts applications

are made available later this year. And while it may seem obvious, "putting your name in the hat" by submitting an online application is the most important step you can take to get drawn for a hunt. Controlled Hunts applications usually become available online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) in March, and the deadline for completing an application is May 15. The application process is easy, and the program will not accept applications unless they are done correctly, so you have the assurance that your application was successful and that your name is in the drawing.

Aside from making sure to apply, the large number of hunters hoping to draw a hunt can do

a few things to increase their chances of being drawn for what could be the hunt of a lifetime.

Winners of the Controlled Hunts are randomly selected through a computerized process that draws applications from the pool of those that applied, but the good thing is that you can apply for several hunts and increase your chances of being selected for a hunt. Additionally, if you are not drawn for a hunt category for which you applied, you gain a preference point toward future years' drawings. Not only that, but some hunt categories allow you to apply with a group of other hunters.

In the pages that follow, you'll gain some



*A bull elk pictured at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.*

insight into how the Controlled Hunts program works, insight that may just give you the edge you need to get drawn for a hunt that you won't forget.

Oklahoma is rich in outdoor opportunities, and the Wildlife Department's Controlled Hunts are just one more way you might be able to add to a successful year afield. Don't miss this chance to take part in a hunt you won't forget, and make sure and gather a few friends to apply with you. We all know that when it comes to hunting, the only thing better than being in the woods is being there with friends and family. – Michael Bergin, associate editor

### **How Does It Work?**

Controlled hunts are held in locations where unrestricted hunting would pose safety concerns or where over-harvest might occur. Hunters "put their name in a hat," so to speak, and names are drawn through a random computer drawing for a range of hunting opportunities across the state for deer, elk, antelope and turkeys.

Several of the controlled hunt choices are highly sought after and often have many times more applicants than available permits. To date, thousands of hunters have enjoyed unique adventures through the Controlled Hunts program, including youth as

well as persons with disabilities.

Getting drawn for a hunt through the Controlled Hunts program is a matter of odds, and if you stay at it year after year, it's likely you'll get at least one chance to enjoy a unique controlled hunt offered through the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Participation is easy. You start by submitting a simple, easy-to-complete application online, and in doing so, you get a chance to be drawn for one of the hunts for which you applied. Choices include such opportunities as bull-elk hunting on the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge, antelope hunting in



northwest Oklahoma or even deer hunting at one of many Wildlife Management Areas across the state, often with exclusive privileges not offered at other times of the year.

Even though getting drawn is a matter of odds, you can still increase your chances of getting drawn by doing a little research first. And we have done all the hard work for you. All you have to do is study the data in this issue and determine which

hunts you want to apply for based on the information provided. And yes, there are ways to sway the odds in your direction.

Preference points, for example, are accumulated each year that you apply, and every time you apply and don't get drawn, it's like getting your name put in the hat an extra time during the next year's drawing. Therefore, your odds of being drawn cannot help but improve if you apply again the next around. By continually submit-

ting an application, you can build your chances far more than those who don't apply at all because they feel the odds are too hard to beat. Additionally, some hunt categories allow you to apply with a group of other hunters, so that your friends' names are as good as your own when it comes to getting drawn.

### Helpful Tips

One of the best things you can do to increase your chances of getting drawn is to make sure you apply each and every year like clockwork. Once again, your odds of drawing a controlled hunt will improve with each year that you apply because each preference point you earn acts like an extra application the next time you apply. In other words, if you have been putting in for the controlled hunt of your dreams for five years straight without getting drawn, you will be five times more likely than a first-time applicant to be selected in that category next year. Those who say they have stopped applying because they never get drawn are actually giving you an advantage, as long as you just keep on applying. Your

chances only get better each year that you apply and they don't.

Although hunters with more preference points have greater chances of being drawn for one of Oklahoma's Controlled Hunts, the system still doesn't guarantee that those with the most points will be drawn for a hunt – only that their odds improve. First-time applicants with no preference points can and do get drawn over those with many points.

In some categories, hunters may apply

in groups of up to four people. For group applications, the preference points of each hunter in the group will be averaged. If four hunters put in together — one with no points, one with two points, and the other two with three points each — the group's preference points will be two, which is the average of all four hunters on the application. If not drawn in that category, each applicant in the hunt group will be given a single preference point.

Once you are selected for a hunt category, all preference points that you have built up for a given category are lost once you are selected for that hunt, so make sure you can attend the hunt dates that year before applying to avoid losing the advantageous preference points you earned over the years. You can begin building preference points with the next year's application again, but it would be disappointing to apply year after year only to be selected on a year you cannot attend the hunt.

Regardless of whether or not you've been drawn, it's important to keep applying, if for no other reason than to gain preference points.

There are several other good tips to consider as well.

Selecting hunts that happen on key dates of the regular statewide seasons, such as the opening weekend of muzzleloader or gun season, can increase your odds of being drawn.

Hunts that are considered by some to be less desirable, such as antlerless deer hunts, may be just the right choice for a meat hunter looking to up his chances at getting to hunt at a premier location.

By designating additional choices, you increase your overall odds of being selected for at least one of the choices, so make the most selections a category allows (five in the deer category, for example), rather than just three, two or only one.

Rather than looking at the number of permits available for each hunt, it could be in your favor to consider the ratio of permits to applicants before making a decision on which hunts you think will give you the best chance.

For those locations that offer multiple hunts in the same category, the second or third hunts (the later hunts) are often easier to draw than the first hunts offered at that location.

You cannot submit more than one application form per category. Previously, when applications were completed through a booklet system, this would have resulted in disqualification. Now that applications are completed and submitted online, you will

receive confirmation that your application was processed correctly. This system will help you avoid mistakes, so make sure you receive confirmation of a successful application.

## Things You Need to Know

Opportunities offered through the controlled hunts program include, among others, hunting elk at the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge or pronghorn antelope in Cimarron and Texas Counties. And though elk and antelope hunts can be more difficult to draw, controlled hunts applicants also have a shot at a number of exclusive deer and turkey hunts held at prime hunting locations all across the state.

The Controlled Hunts application process usually begins in late March, when you will be able to log on to the Wildlife Department's website at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) to download, complete and submit an application. We here at *Outdoor Oklahoma* and the Wildlife Department encourage you to participate in the application process. It's done completely online, and it's both easy and fast. You get immediate confirmation when your application is processed, so you can't submit your application incorrectly. There are no hassles and no regrets that you didn't track down a hard copy application before the deadline.

Winners of controlled hunts are randomly selected through a computerized process that draws applications from the pool of those that applied, but the good thing is that you can apply for several hunts and increase your chances of being selected for a hunt.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Controlled Hunts program?

Awarded to applicants selected in a random drawing, controlled hunts are held in situations where unrestricted hunting would pose safety concerns or where over harvest might occur. Several of the controlled hunt choices are highly sought after and often have many times more applicants than available permits.

### Who can apply?

Any resident or nonresident who possesses a valid hunting license or who is otherwise exempt may apply for controlled hunts. A full listing of valid hunting licenses is available online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com). Applicants must purchase the license prior to applying for controlled hunts. Applicants who are eligible for, and possess, apprentice-designated hunting licenses may also apply

(although some hunts require hunter education certification by the date of the hunt.)

### What does it cost?

All applicants (including lifetime license holders) must pay a \$5 application fee to enter controlled hunts. This fee is paid only once per person per year regardless of the number of categories entered. You may pay the application fee with a Visa or MasterCard debit or credit card.

If drawn, additional license and user fees may apply.

### Why not have a true preference point system for the controlled hunts?

There are too many hunters applying for too few hunts for this kind of system to work.

### If I put in for controlled hunts long enough, am I guaranteed to be drawn?

No, but your odds get better and better each year.

### If I put in with a group of four for a hunt, how are our preference points calculated?

Example: One person has one preference point, one has two, one has three and one has four. This equals 10 points total. The points are averaged to two and one half and then rounded off to three points. The group is assigned three preference points.

### Can I keep accumulating points indefinitely?

Yes, until you are drawn or do not put in for a given category for five years.

### If I can't make my hunt, do I get my preference points back?

No, once selected, your points in that category go back to zero.

### Can I apply with a group of friends for a hunt?

Yes, but be sure all of your information is correct or your group could be disqualified.

### What if I have an address change after I apply?

Contact our License Section at (405) 521-3852.

### If I am a nonresident hunter, can I apply for a controlled hunt?

Yes! Visit [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) for more information.



*Controlled deer hunts are available for both antlered and antlerless deer at destinations across the state.*

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# Deer Hunts

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Deer Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Atoka WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	3001	2,059	75	27	55
Camp Gruber Cantonment	Either-Sex	Archery	10/29/11	10/30/11	3010	737	40	18	42
Candy Creek WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/22/11	10/30/11	3020	159	8	19	44
Candy Creek WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/19/11	12/04/11	3021	236	8	29	58
Canton WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/19/11	11/20/11	3030	1,103	75	14	36
Cherokee GMA	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	11/05/11	11/05/11	3041	146	75	1	2
Cherokee GMA	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	11/06/11	11/06/11	3043	78	75	1	3
Cherokee GMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/13/11	11/13/11	3047	135	75	1	4
Cherokee GMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/12/11	11/12/11	3045	190	75	2	6
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/06/11	11/06/11	3042	810	50	16	40
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/13/11	11/13/11	3046	908	50	18	43
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/05/11	11/05/11	3040	1,339	50	26	53
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/12/11	11/12/11	3044	1,349	50	26	54
Cookson WMA	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/30/11	10/30/11	3062	36	40	1	1
Cookson WMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/06/11	11/06/11	3065	68	40	1	5
Cookson WMA	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/29/11	10/29/11	3061	81	40	2	7
Cookson WMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/05/11	11/05/11	3064	139	40	3	12
Cookson WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/29/11	10/30/11	3060	876	20	43	69
Cookson WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	3063	1,405	20	70	72
Deep Fork NWR	(2) Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	12/07/11	12/08/11	3081	227	60	3	13
Deep Fork NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Muzzleloader	10/28/11	10/30/11	3080	995	50	19	45
Four Canyon Preserve	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/22/11	10/23/11	3090	42	4	10	27
Four Canyon Preserve	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/18/11	11/19/11	3092	43	4	10	28
Four Canyon Preserve	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/22/11	10/23/11	3091	264	2	132	79
Four Canyon Preserve	Either-Sex	Gun	11/18/11	11/19/11	3093	319	2	159	80
Ft. Cobb WMA and SP	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/19/11	10/21/11	3100	290	40	7	25
Ft. Gibson WRP	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/19/11	10/19/11	3111	221	50	4	16
Ft. Gibson WRP	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	11/02/11	11/02/11	3112	209	50	4	17
Ft. Gibson WRP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/18/11	10/18/11	3110	671	50	13	35
Ft. Gibson WRP	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/03/11	11/03/11	3113	1,084	50	21	49
Grady County WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/22/11	10/30/11	3120	219	8	27	56
Grady County WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/19/11	11/27/11	3121	255	8	31	62
Hugo Lake COE	(2) Antlerless Only	Gun	01/06/12	01/08/12	3130	161	15	10	29
James Collins WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/19/11	11/20/11	3140	1,225	50	24	52
Lexington WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/16/11	11/16/11	3152	401	135	2	8
Lexington WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/17/11	11/17/11	3153	323	135	2	9
Lexington WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/13/11	11/13/11	3151	447	135	3	14
Lexington WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/12/11	11/12/11	3150	854	135	6	20
Little River NWR	Either-Sex	Gun	11/11/11	11/13/11	3161	483	30	16	41
Little River NWR	Either-Sex	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	3160	682	30	22	50
McAlester AAP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/14/11	10/16/11	3171	1,851	275	6	21
McAlester AAP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/21/11	10/23/11	3172	2,063	275	7	26
McAlester AAP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/28/11	10/30/11	3173	3,166	275	11	33
McAlester AAP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	11/11/11	11/13/11	3175	4,121	275	14	37
McAlester AAP	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	11/04/11	11/06/11	3174	4,155	275	15	39
McAlester AAP Physically Challenged	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/07/11	10/09/11	3170	226	100	2	10
McCurtain Co. WA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/04/11	11/06/11	3190	309	16	19	46
McGee Creek WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/29/11	10/30/11	3200	1,063	100	10	30
McGee Creek WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	3201	1,449	75	19	47
Okmulgee GMA	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/19/11	11/20/11	3210	747	70	10	31
Okmulgee GMA	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	12/03/11	12/04/11	3211	700	70	10	32

Continued on page 36

Total applicants (includes first, second, third, fourth and fifth choice preferences): **68,366**

Total permits available: **4,611**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 15**

### Deer Hunts for Persons With Disabilities

Total applicants (includes first, second and third choice preferences): **271**

Total permits available: **135**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 2**

### Youth Deer Hunts

Total applicants (includes first, second and third choice preferences): **3,842**

Total permits available: **891**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 4**

Deer Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Osage-Western Wall WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/11/11	11/12/11	3220	811	15	54	71
Pushmataha WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	11/04/11	11/06/11	3230	2,075	75	27	57
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/25/11	11/27/11	3248	754	36	20	48
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	12/02/11	12/04/11	3250	812	36	22	51
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/14/11	10/17/11	3241	357	12	29	59
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Muzzleloader	10/21/11	10/23/11	3242	669	22	30	61
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Archery	10/14/11	10/16/11	3240	508	16	31	63
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Muzzleloader	10/21/11	10/24/11	3243	503	12	41	66
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	12/02/11	12/05/11	3251	509	12	42	68
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/25/11	11/28/11	3249	532	12	44	70
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	3244	1,586	22	72	73
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/11/11	11/13/11	3246	1,633	22	74	74
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/11/11	11/14/11	3247	1,189	12	99	76
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/04/11	11/07/11	3245	1,225	12	102	77
Sandy Sanders WMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	3272	63	25	2	11
Sandy Sanders WMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/22/11	10/23/11	3270	787	25	31	64
Sandy Sanders WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	3271	1,158	10	115	78
Sequoyah NWR	(2) Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	11/30/11	12/01/11	3282	242	60	4	18
Sequoyah NWR	(2) Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/26/11	10/27/11	3280	360	60	6	22
Sequoyah NWR	(2) Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	11/16/11	11/17/11	3281	365	60	6	23
Sequoyah NWR	(2) Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	12/14/11	12/15/11	3283	386	60	6	24
Spavinaw GMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/12/11	11/13/11	3291	240	60	4	19
Spavinaw GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/12/11	11/13/11	3290	1,648	40	41	67
Tishomingo NWR	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Muzzleloader	12/08/11	12/09/11	3300	709	20	35	65
Walnut Creek SP Area 2	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Muzzleloader	01/06/12	01/08/12	3310	443	5	88	75
Washita NWR	Antlerless Only	Gun	10/19/11	10/20/11	3320	288	25	11	34
Waurika WMA & COE Public	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader	10/11/11	10/13/11	3331	83	25	3	15
Waurika WMA & COE Public	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/11/11	10/13/11	3330	444	15	29	60
Wichita Mts. NWR	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/08/11	11/10/11	3341	447	30	14	38
Wichita Mts. NWR	Antlered Only	Gun	11/08/11	11/10/11	3340	6,421	20	321	81

Youth Deer Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Atoka WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/29/11	10/30/11	5001	193	50	3	8
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/08/11	10/09/11	5010	213	50	4	17
Cookson WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/22/11	10/23/11	5020	163	50	3	9
Deep Fork NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Muzzleloader	10/07/11	10/09/11	5030	90	25	3	10
Ft. Cobb WMA and SP	Antlerless Only	Muzzleloader / Shotgun	10/15/11	10/16/11	5040	40	50	1	1
Ft. Gibson WRP	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	12/10/11	12/10/11	5050	141	25	5	19
Hugo WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/07/11	10/09/11	5060	80	25	3	11
James Collins WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/21/11	10/23/11	5070	172	50	3	12
James Collins WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/28/11	10/30/11	5071	177	50	3	13
Keystone COE	Either-Sex	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	5080	48	7	6	24
McAlester AAP	Antlerless Only	Shotgun	11/25/11	11/27/11	5090	62	25	2	3
Okmulgee GMA	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/12/11	11/13/11	5111	91	24	3	14
Okmulgee GMA	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	5110	131	24	5	20
Osage-Western Wall WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	5120	81	15	5	21
Pine Creek WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/11/11	11/13/11	5130	40	12	3	15
Pushmataha WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/28/11	10/30/11	5141	145	50	2	4
Pushmataha WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/21/11	10/23/11	5140	173	50	3	16
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	10/21/11	10/23/11	5150	114	6	19	32
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/11/11	11/13/11	5152	134	6	22	33

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LARRY D. BROWN

## Deer Hunt Hints

- Steer clear of the most popular hunts, such as the Wichita Mountains buck gun hunt, the Sandy Sanders buck gun hunt and Salt Plains NWR hunts that allow either sex hunting. If you avoid these, your odds go up for getting drawn.

- Controlled hunts held during the regular muzzleloader and gun seasons, especially those held during the opening weekends, often offer better odds of getting drawn than those held outside the regular statewide season dates since many would-be applicants already have their hunting plans in place for those dates.

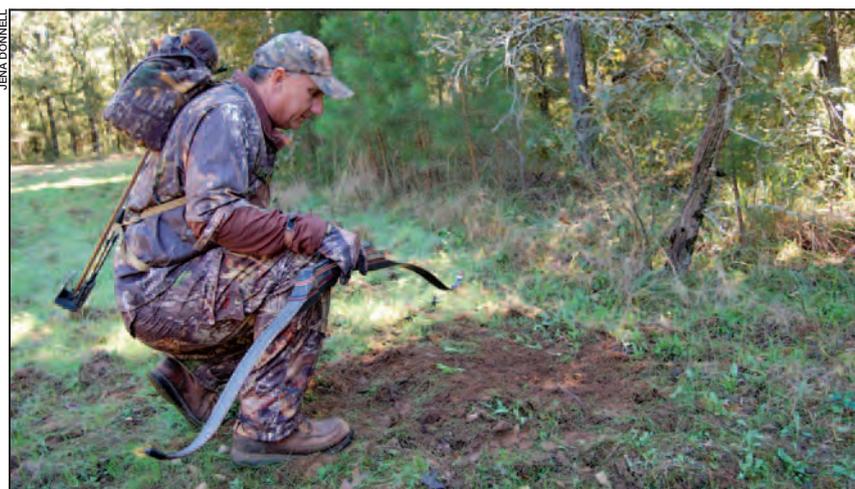
- Antlerless-only hunts traditionally see fewer applicants compared to buck-only or either-sex hunts.

- Areas in the northeast like Cherokee, Cookson Hills, Gruber and Spavinaw WMAs typically have higher numbers of applicants. Consider applying for hunts in others parts of the state.

- Archery hunts are historically easier to draw on average than muzzleloader or gun hunts.

Youth Deer Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	5151	140	6	23	34
Sequoyah NWR	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Muzzleloader	10/13/11	10/15/11	5160	201	30	6	25
Sequoyah Resort Park	Antlerless Only	Gun	12/03/11	12/04/11	5170	87	15	5	22
Spavinaw GMA	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	5182	19	20	1	2
Spavinaw GMA	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	10/29/11	10/30/11	5180	94	40	2	5
Spavinaw GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	5181	164	40	4	18
Tenkiller COE	Either-Sex	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	5190	63	10	6	26
Texoma COE	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Rifle	10/14/11	10/16/11	5200	57	6	9	29
Texoma COE	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Rifle	11/11/11	11/13/11	5201	66	6	11	31
Tishomingo NWR	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Rifle	10/20/11	10/21/11	5210	109	20	5	23
USDA Grazinglands R.L.	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Rifle	12/09/11	12/10/11	5221	168	24	7	27
USDA Grazinglands R.L.	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Rifle	11/04/11	11/05/11	5220	196	24	8	28
Walnut Creek SP Area 2	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Muzzleloader	12/09/11	12/11/11	5230	62	6	10	30
Washita NWR Youth Exemption	Antlerless Only	Gun	10/14/11	10/15/11	5240	67	25	2	6
Washita NWR Youth Exemption	Antlerless Only	Gun	11/04/11	11/05/11	5260	61	25	2	7

Deer Hunts for Persons with Disabilities	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Cherokee GMA	Either-Sex	Gun	10/01/11	10/02/11	4001	38	40	1	1
Cookson WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/12/11	11/13/11	4010	47	30	1	2
Deep Fork NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Muzzleloader	10/28/11	10/30/11	4020	17	5	3	7
Hugo Lake COE	(2) See Code P	Rifle	12/09/11	12/11/11	4030	25	16	1	3
Oologah Lake COE	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	4040	35	8	4	11
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	12/02/11	12/04/11	4054	2	2	1	4
Salt Plains NWR	(2) Only 1 Antlered	Muzzleloader	10/21/11	10/23/11	4050	7	2	3	8
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/25/11	11/27/11	4053	6	2	3	9
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/04/11	11/06/11	4051	10	2	5	12
Salt Plains NWR	(2) See Code K	Gun	11/11/11	11/13/11	4052	12	2	6	13
Sequoyah Resort Park	Either-Sex	Muzzleloader	12/10/11	12/11/11	4070	38	10	3	10
Tishomingo NWR	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Gun	11/09/11	11/10/11	4080	23	10	2	6
Waurika Lake COE	(2) 1st Antlerless, 2nd E-S	Gun	10/19/11	10/21/11	4090	11	6	1	5



Scouting is key to the success of a hunter in bringing home game. Finding sign such as tracks, rubs, scrapes or even heavily used trails and feeding areas help hunters locate areas where they may have the best chance of seeing game. But before any of that takes place, hunters need a place to hunt. Enter the Wildlife Department's controlled hunts program, which provides sportsmen with exclusive hunts in locations where unrestricted hunting would pose safety concerns or where over-harvest might occur. Often hunters win the "hunt of a lifetime" by harvesting a trophy animal or by hunting a unique area with close friends.

# A Moment Meant for Sydney

**SYDNEY ELLIS TOOK THIS 146-LB.** eight-point buck one Friday evening in 2011 at the Pushmataha Wildlife Management Area, just three days after her 10th birthday. You might say that moment (6:20 p.m. to be specific) was meant for Sydney, because her name was drawn for a youth hunt on the area through the Wildlife Department's controlled hunts program.

Her name was drawn because the time was taken to apply.

"We were hunting from a ground blind on the WMA that we had just setup around 2:30 p.m. that afternoon," said her father, Chuck Ellis. "We picked the location based on deer sign in the area, much of which was identified by Sydney."

Sydney harvested her buck with a .243 rifle.

"This is her first buck," Ellis said "She took her first doe just the weekend before during the fall youth rifle season. She took her first turkey in the spring of 2010."

Ellis said Sydney loves the outdoors. The controlled hunts program works out great for people like Sydney and her father because it gives them a chance to head to the woods as a family.

"We have a great time together in the outdoors regardless of whether either one of us takes an animal," Ellis said. "Just enjoying the time together and spending it in the outdoors is what it is all about. This is what defines a successful hunt for us."

The controlled hunts program offers several youth deer and turkey hunts on wildlife management areas across the state, giving

hunters exclusive opportunities and helping to maximize their chance to see and harvest wildlife.

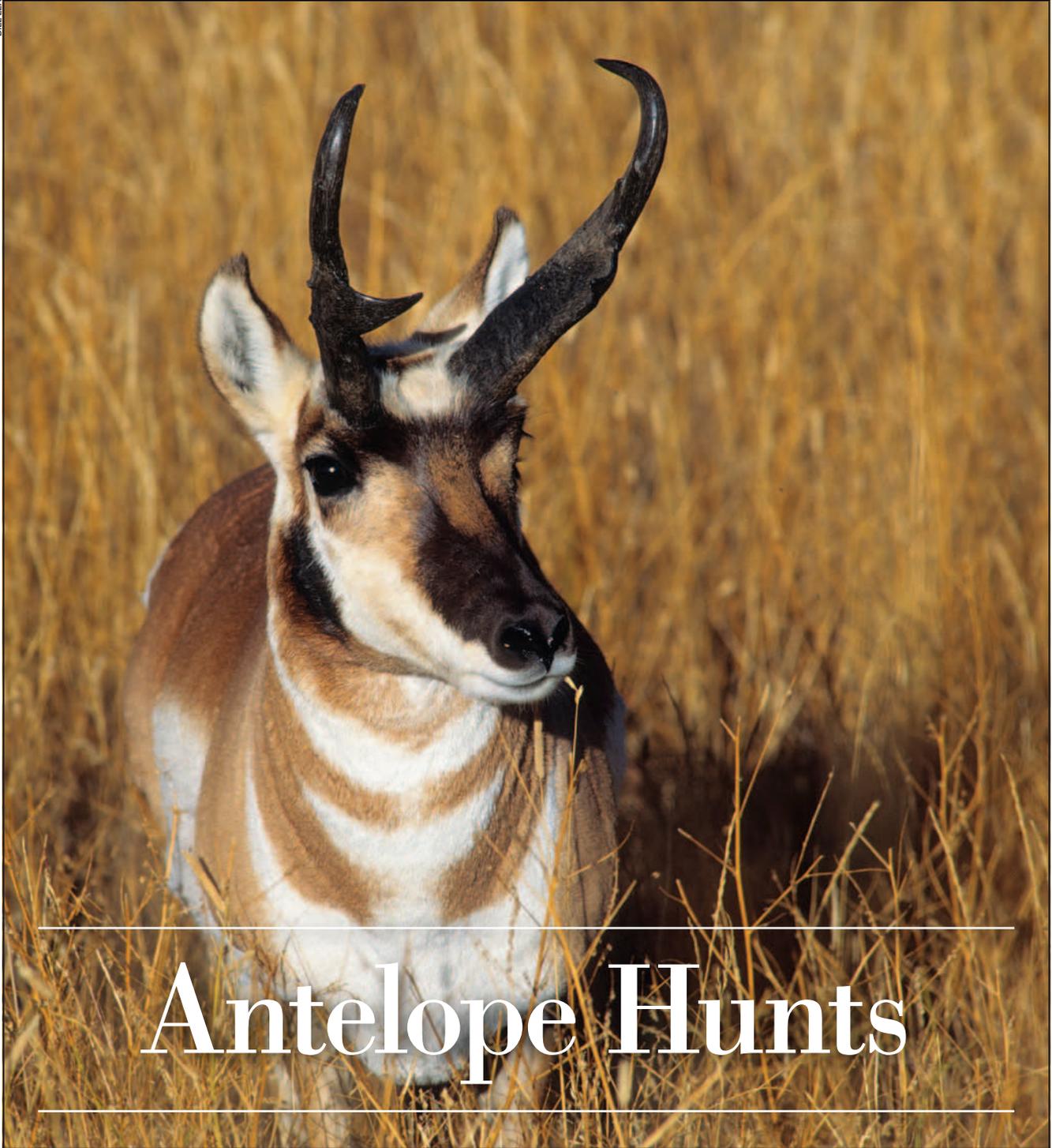
As a parent, Ellis has seen the program work first-hand.

"I encourage all other hunters out there with children to take advantage of the youth controlled hunt opportunities that the state Wildlife Department offers," he said.

Ellis also offers a special thanks to Jack Waymire, southeast region senior biologist at Pushmataha WMA, and Wildlife Department personnel for helping make Sydney's hunt a success, providing "great leadership and support as well as some good hot dogs and cookies for the kids." 🌿



PHOTO COURTESY CHUCK ELLIS



# Antelope Hunts

Total applicants (includes first and second choice preferences): **8,556**

Total permits available: **315**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 27**

## Antelope Hunt Hints

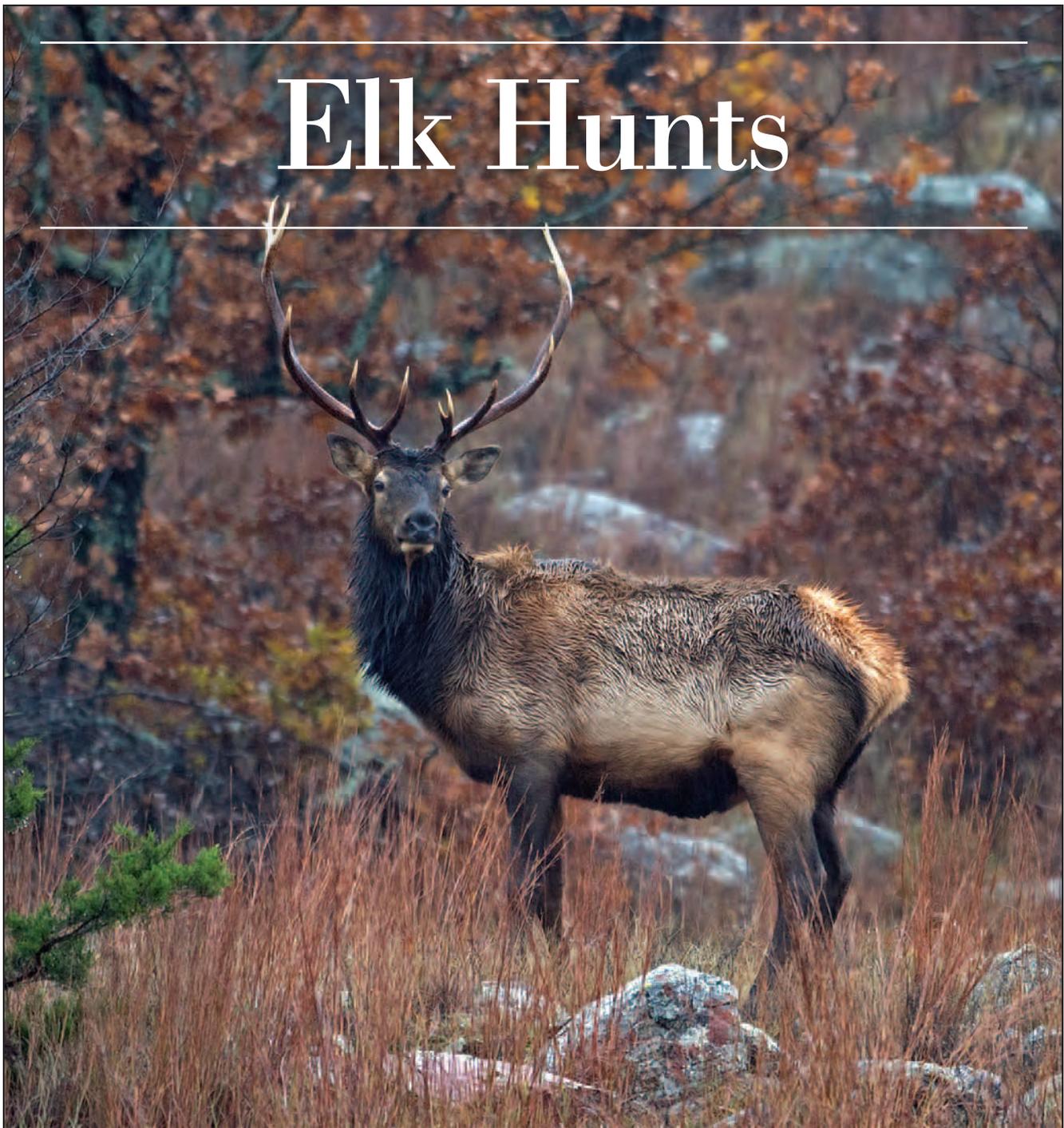
- The best odds are obtained when you put in for both the buck and doe hunt.

Antelope Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Cimarron County	Doe	Gun	09/12/11	09/21/11	2002	876	175	5	2
Cimarron County	Either-Sex	Gun	09/08/11	09/11/11	2001	3,985	50	79	3
Texas County	Doe	Gun	09/12/11	09/21/11	2011	304	75	4	1
Texas County	Either-Sex	Gun	09/08/11	09/11/11	2010	3,391	15	226	4



Sportsmen can help increase public hunting and fishing lands by ordering the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's 2012 pronghorn antelope habitat donor patch or donor hat, available now in the Wildlife Department's Outdoor Store in the back of this issue.

# Elk Hunts



## Elk Hunts

Total applicants (includes first, second and third choice preferences): **28,024**

Total permits available: **82**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 342**

## Elk Hunt Hints

- Cow hunts offer much better odds of being selected than bull hunts.

Elk Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Cookson WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	11/05/11	11/06/11	1001	7,287	1	7,287	4
Pushmataha WMA	Either-Sex	Gun	09/10/11	09/11/11	1010	7,034	1	7,034	3
Wichita Mts. NWR	Cow	Gun	12/13/11	12/15/11	1021	2,552	56	45	1
Wichita Mts. NWR	Bull	Gun	12/13/11	12/15/11	1020	11,151	24	464	2

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# Turkey Hunts

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## Spring Turkey Hunts

Total applicants (includes first, second and third choice preferences): **12,488**

Total permits available: **176**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 71**

## Spring Turkey Hunt Hints

- The hunts at the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant have some of the highest application rates and are some of the hardest spring turkey hunts to draw.

- In areas that offer two hunts, the hunts offered later in the season are usually easier to draw.

## Youth Turkey Hunts

Total applicants (includes first, second and third choice preferences): **1150**

Total permits available: **62**

Overall odds of getting drawn for any one specific permit: **1 in 19**

## Youth Turkey Hunt Hints

- Hunts with low permit numbers may be harder to draw than other hunts, even though more youngsters applied for the other areas.

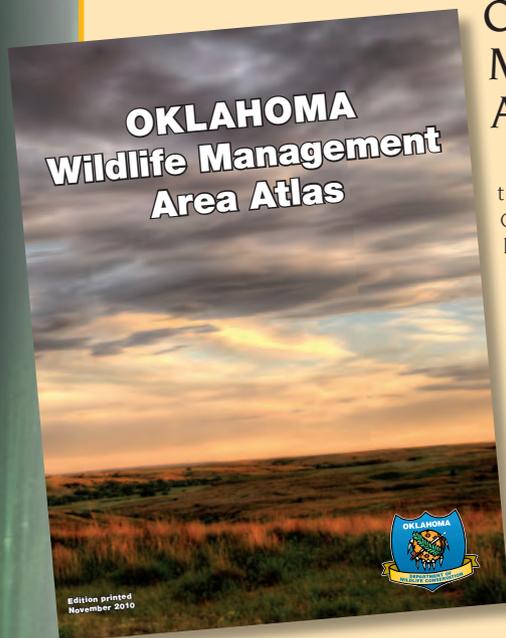


Spring Turkey Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Cherokee GMA	Tom	Gun	04/13/12	04/15/12	6001	1,421	25	56	3
Deep Fork NWR	Tom	Gun	04/20/12	04/22/12	6010	499	5	99	6
Four Canyon Preserve	Tom	Gun	04/18/12	04/19/12	6021	352	4	88	4
Four Canyon Preserve	Tom	Gun	04/06/12	04/07/12	6020	510	4	127	8
Ft. Gibson WRP	Tom	Gun	04/12/12	04/12/12	6030	784	5	156	10
Little River NWR	Tom	Gun	04/27/12	04/29/12	6040	594	20	29	1
McAlester AAP	Tom	Gun	04/27/12	04/29/12	6052	1,836	20	91	5
McAlester AAP	Tom	Gun	04/20/12	04/22/12	6051	2,318	20	115	7
McAlester AAP	Tom	Gun	04/13/12	04/15/12	6050	2,599	20	129	9
McCurtain Co. WA	Tom	Gun	04/20/12	04/22/12	6060	640	16	40	2

Youth Turkey Hunts	Type	Hunt Type	Begin Date	End Date	Hunt No.	No. of Applications	Permits	Draw Ratio	Rank
Cherokee GMA	Tom	Gun	04/06/12	04/08/12	7001	328	25	13	2
Deep Fork NWR	Tom	Gun	04/13/12	04/15/12	7010	296	7	42	1
Ft. Gibson WRP	Tom	Gun	04/06/12	04/08/12	7020	311	5	62	3

# The Outdoor Store

## FEATURED PRODUCT



### Oklahoma Wildlife Management Area Atlas

Back by popular demand, this page-by-page guide to Oklahoma's public hunting land features topographical maps of almost every wildlife management area in the state.

At almost 100 pages, the spiral-bound atlas depicts special features on each WMA such as roads, parking areas, designated campsites, food plots, ponds, wetland development units, non-ambulatory zones and more. Sportsmen can find acreage and contact information for each area as well driving directions.

When you purchase an atlas, you also receive a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. If you already receive the magazine, you can donate the subscription to a friend free of charge, or the Wildlife Department can donate it to a school or library. Item No. OS-13 — \$25



### Habitat Donor Caps

Top-quality, American-made caps display the Habitat Donor Patch of your choice, which designates you as a contributor to the Department's Land Acquisition Fund. Wearing this hat means you care about future generations and the great hunting and fishing tradition. Specify hat style. Item OS-6 — \$18



### Outdoor Oklahoma Caps

These sharp, colorful, fabric caps feature the "Outdoor Oklahoma" logo. One size fits all. Available color selections may vary. Item OS-11 — \$18



### Oklahoma Waterfowl Hunting Stamp

Oklahoma "duck stamps" are always popular with collectors and hunters, although for different reasons. 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. Please specify when ordering. (2010 stamp is shown). Item OS-7 — \$10



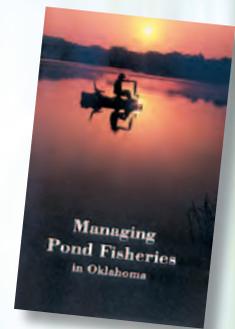
### Habitat Donor Patches

Colorful, collectible, embroidered cloth patches feature a new game or fish species each year, from 1986 to the 2011 patch emblazoned with a northern pintail. All proceeds are earmarked for the Department's Land Acquisition Fund, which is used to provide public hunting and fishing access. Specify designs when ordering. Item OS-5 — \$10 each



### Cy Curtis Awards Program Deer Record Book

Is your name in the record book? Want to find out where the big ones have been hiding? This up-to-date book contains the hall of fame of trophy deer harvested in Oklahoma since 1972. Item OS-12 — \$10



### Managing Pond Fisheries in Oklahoma

Whether you own a pond or just like to fish in ponds, you'll want to own this booklet. This 44-page publication includes full-color photos and text on pond construction, placement of structure, controlling vegetation, proper levels of fish harvest and much more! Item OS-9 — \$3

**GIVE THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING ALL YEAR LONG!**

### Outdoor Oklahoma Magazine

Start enjoying a full year (six big issues) of hunting, fishing, natural history, camping and much more when you subscribe to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. Subscribe for yourself, or a friend. Item OS-10 1 yr.—\$10, 2 yr.—\$18, 3 yr.—\$25

## ORDER FORM

Item	Description	Price (Includes s/h)	Quantity	Subtotal
OS-5	Habitat Donor Patches (Circle Choice) 1986-Quail & Bass    1991-Squirrel    1996-Bobcat    2001-Antelope 1987-Deer    1992-Dove    1997-Crappie    2002-Pheasant 1988-Turkey    1993-Elk    1998-Canvasback    2004-Mallard Duck 1989-Raccoon    1994-Bass    1999-Deer    2005-Striped Bass 1990-Wood Duck    1995-Quail    2000-Brown Trout    2006-Scaled Quail 2007-Rainbow Trout or Bobwhite Quail    2008-Canada Goose    2009-Mule Deer 2010-Paddlefish    2011-Northern Pintail    2012-Pronghorn Antelope	\$10 each		
OS-6	Habitat Donor Caps (Circle Year and Color Choice) 2011 Choices: Camo Khaki Orange Camo	\$18		
OS-7	2010 Waterfowl Hunting Stamp	\$10		
OS-9	Managing Pond Fisheries in Oklahoma	\$3		
OS-10	Outdoor Oklahoma Magazine	1-Year Subscription \$10 2-Year Subscription \$18 3-Year Subscription \$25		
OS-11	Outdoor Oklahoma Caps (Circle Color Choice) Forest Green Khaki Camo	\$18		
OS-12	Cy Curtis Awards Program Deer Record Book	\$10		
OS-13	Oklahoma Wildlife Management Area Atlas	\$25		

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

All prices include postage and handling. Make checks payable to ODWC, fill out form, clip and mail to ODWC, P. O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Please allow three to four weeks for delivery.

# The Outdoor Store

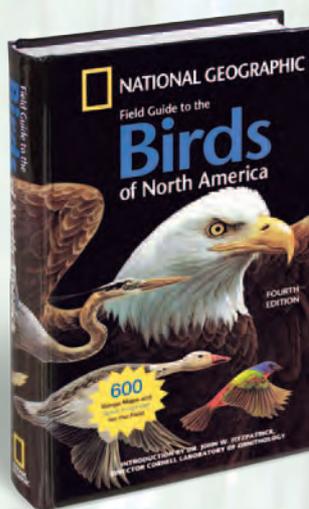
WILDLIFE DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Proceeds from items on these two pages will be used to benefit the 900 Oklahoma species that are not pursued by hunters or anglers.



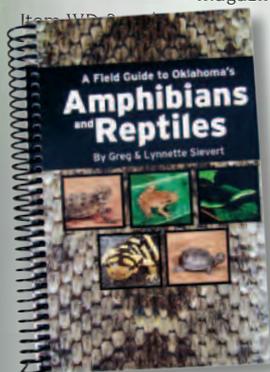
## Butterflies of Oklahoma, Kansas and North Texas Book

Butterfly guide book introduces readers to 100 butterfly species found in the Southern Great Plains. This complete (282-page) and compact (5"x7") user-friendly guide includes identification, rearing tips, viewing hotspots and useful butterfly gardening and photography how-tos. Fits easily in daypacks, car consoles or glove compartments! Your purchase of this book includes a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine.



## Field Guide to the Birds of North America

Can you name that little brown bird sitting on your window sill? How about the bright yellow one that's down by the lake? This book is brimming with color illustrations, 600 range maps and descriptions to help you sort out the hundreds of bird species found in Oklahoma. Your purchase of this book includes a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. Item WD-9 — \$25



## A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles

If you've ever tried to figure out the difference between an Eastern River Cooter and a Red-eared Slider, this is the book for you. It has more than 200 pages of maps, descriptions and other information to help you with all of your amphibian and reptile identification needs. Color pictures and easy to use spiral binding make this a must-have field guide. Your purchase of this book includes a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. Item WD-4 — \$25

## ORDER FORM

Item	Description	Price (Includes s/h)	Quantity	Subtotal
WD-1	Landscaping for Wildlife Book	\$25		
WD-2	Butterflies of Oklahoma, Kansas and North Texas Book	\$25		
WD-3	Pocket Guide to Prairie Birds	\$2		
WD-4	A Field Guide to Oklahoma's Amphibians and Reptiles	\$25		
WD-5	The Bat House Builder's Handbook	\$7.50		
WD-8	Attracting Birds	\$2		
WD-9	Field Guide to the Birds of North America	\$25		
WD-11	Wildlife Diversity Posters Oklahoma's Rain Forest Connection	\$2		
WD-13	Wildlife Conservation Plates Application Form	FREE	X	
	Your Donation to the Wildlife Diversity Program			

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

All prices include postage and handling. All books will ship book rate; please allow 5-10 days for delivery. Make checks payable to ODWC, fill out form, clip and mail to: ODWC, P. O. Box 53465, Oklahoma City, OK 73152. Please allow three to four weeks for delivery.

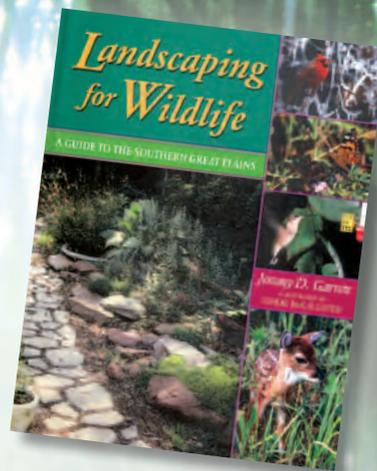


### Wildlife License Plates

Dress up your vehicle while showing your support of our great state's wildlife resources by getting a wildlife license plate. Five Wildlife Conservation Plates are available to serve as your regular, rear-bumper license plate. The plates cost just \$38 (original or replacement) or \$36.50 (renewals) above your regular annual registration fee with proceeds going to Oklahoma's Wildlife Diversity Program. For a free application form, check Item WD-13. Forms are also available at your local tag agency.

### Landscaping for Wildlife

Landscaping for Wildlife: A Guide to the Southern Great Plains brings your property to life. Find everything you need to know about attracting birds, butterflies, turtles and other wildlife in this full-color, 224-page landscaping guidebook. You'll find useful instructions for meeting water needs, feeding preferences and nesting requirements for wildlife found in the Southern Great Plains, with specific emphasis on Oklahoma species. Enjoy the detailed diagrams and plant listings that accompany book photographs and illustrations in addition to woodworking diagrams and lists of plant and seed companies. This book was compiled with the most up-to-date "wildscaping" information available. Your purchase of this book includes a one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine. Item WD-1 — \$25



### The Bat House Builder's Handbook

Once bats were popular only during Halloween, but these nocturnal mammals are now enjoying their place in the conservation limelight. This 34-page book provides plans for building bat houses, discusses research on species that use bat houses and just about everything else a bat fan should know. Item WD-5 — \$7.50



### Pocket Guide to Prairie Birds

If you ever travel through Oklahoma, this is the guidebook for you. A brand new edition, this 92-page book includes many more species along with identification tips, habitat, feeding and conservation status. Be sure to use the checklist located in the back when you have seen each bird! Item WD-3 — \$2



### Attracting Birds

Whether you're an avid birdwatcher or just enjoy seeing birds at the backyard feeder, this 20-page booklet is for you. Packed with information, this guide details types of feeders, seeds, winter foods, watering and more. Item WD-8 — \$2



### Donate to the Wildlife Diversity Program

Your tax deductible donation to the Wildlife Department's Wildlife Diversity Program can help wildlife for years to come. Just indicate the amount you wish to donate in the "subtotal" column on the order form on this page.

# Watchable Wildlife

## THE DARK-EYED JUNCO

BY KELLY ADAMS

During the winter in Oklahoma, it is not unusual to find dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*) at backyard bird feeders or on the ground beneath them. In fact, they are an excellent indicator that winter has arrived.

These small birds prefer cold climates and retreat north as spring arrives. Some populations of juncos can be found in the northeast United States and Rocky Mountains year-round. Dark-eyed juncos are one of the most abundant forest birds in North America and they are also one of the most variable species with several subspecies. The bird has a round head, fairly long tail, stout bill and crisp markings. The junco's color pattern differs with different regions, but in Oklahoma juncos have a slate gray head and

### *Dark-eyed juncos are one of the most abundant forest birds in North America*

chest with a white belly and pale bill. The outer tail feathers are white and can be seen during flight.

Juncos inhabit a variety of habitats. In the spring and summer they can be found in the coniferous and deciduous forests of North America. In the winter, juncos can be found anywhere from parks to backyards and roadsides. Juncos are usually solitary but during cold winter months they will form small flocks. They may also form mixed flocks with other small, seed-eating birds like chickadees and nuthatches. Within the flock, a strong hierarchy is present and centered around one dominant male. At feeders, this hierarchy may lead to aggressive behavior and flashing of the tail feathers.

Dark-eyed juncos are ground foragers and hop rather than walk. Like many other species of birds, they are primarily seed eaters although they do eat insects during their breeding season. They mainly forage for food on the ground but sometimes they fly

very low in underbrush collecting food from twigs and leaves. At feeders they favor millet, but will also eat milo, thistle and finely cracked corn.

In the summer breeding months, males are very territorial. They claim their territory by singing from the top of the tallest tree in a two to three-acre area. Juncos are monogamous and only have one mate per breeding season. Males will fan or flick open their wings and tail, hop up and down, and pick up pieces of nesting materials to lure a mate. Usually males with the most white in their tail are a female's first choice. Juncos don't reuse their nests, so every year females build a new one. Nesting material like twigs and moss are weaved together while the female's body gives the nest its shape.

It can take a female three to seven days to build a nest but the male often helps by bringing material.

Like many other bird species, dark-eyed juncos play an important role in maintaining a balanced ecosystem. As seed and insect eaters, they help disperse seeds and help control insect populations. Watching these birds at backyard feeders is an enjoyable pastime. Birding is easy to learn, inexpensive, and fun for all ages. Dark-eyed juncos are one of the most common visitors to backyard feeders so there is an excellent chance of spotting them. They favor yards with older, mature trees and low shrubbery. Platform or ground feeders are preferred but they will also eat fallen seeds from hanging feeders.

Every winter the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation encourages people to participate in the annual Winter Bird Feeder Survey. The survey lets bird enthusiasts contribute to bird conservation while enjoying their favorite pastime. Learn more about participating at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) or [okwinterbirds.com](http://okwinterbirds.com). 🌿

—Kelly Adams is an information technician for the Wildlife Department





# Outdoor Oklahoma

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