Outdoor Oklahoma
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011 – ONLY $10 A YEAR
2012 Calendar Issue
Also in this Issue:
2012 Winter Bird Survey
One Woman's Hunt of a Lifetime

RUSSELL GRAVES

As a new year begins, several hunting seasons are still open, so now is the time to make the most of them.

January 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
New Year's Day 1	2	3	4	Winter Bird Feeder Survey begins and runs through Sunday. Log on to okwinterbirds.com for more information. 5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Contact Oklahoma Forestry Services in early January about ordering "Wildlife Tree Packages" for landowners. Order online at forestry.ok.gov or call (800) 517-3673 or (405) 522-6158 to request an order form.		Sign-up for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's WHIP Program.	Participate in a winter eagle watch. Call (405) 521-3856.

JONTIE ALDRICH

Building fish structure to sink in your pond is a great way to concentrate fish to improve habitat and angling success. Spider blocks (shown) can be made simply with cinder blocks, rubber tubing and quick-mix concrete, and cut cedar trees also work well.

JANUARY HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Collect deer harvest data as required by the DMAP program.
- Strip disk to encourage native food resources.
- Prepare ground for tree/shrub plantings for wildlife cover.
- Replace nesting materials in Canada goose nesting structures.
- Evaluate and record food resources for wildlife.
- Mow to remove brush encroachment as needed.
- Half cut trees for loafing cover as needed for small game species.
- Renew annual hunting licenses.

JANUARY POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Buy annual fishing license if needed.
- Purchase the "Managing Pond Fisheries in Oklahoma" booklet by calling (405) 521-3856.
- Check pond overflow pipe to make sure it is not stopped up.
- Install a fish barrier on the spillway during winter to prevent fish escaping or entering the pond during high flows.
- Cut and sink cedar trees as brush fish attractors so they are ready for spring fishing season.
- Consider a winter drawdown to control excessive aquatic vegetation.

DENVER BRYAN

The trumpeter swan is one of many waterfowl species seen in Oklahoma each year.

February 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Contact Oklahoma Forestry Services about ordering Wildlife Tree Packages" for landowners. Order online at forestry.ok.gov or call (800) 517-3673 or (405) 522-6158 to request an order form.	Turkey flocks begin to break up for breeding season.	Whitetail deer are shedding their antlers.	1	Groundhog Day 2	3	4
5	6	○ 7	8	9	10	11
12	13	Valentine's Day ◐ 14	15	16	17	18
19	President's Day 20	● 21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	◐ 29	Find out more about wildscaping your yard from the Wildlife Diversity Program. (405) 424-0099	Request a Bluebird Nestbox Summary Form from the Wildlife Diversity Program. (405) 424-0099	

JOHN HENDRIX

Prepare and set out bluebird houses now and enjoy watching bluebirds raise their young this spring. Try building a bluebird box with the kids.

FEBRUARY HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Strip disk to encourage native food resources.
- Monitor turkey flocks.
- Plant trees and shrubs as needed for wildlife cover.
- Clean out nesting structures/boxes.
- Set out your bluebird nest boxes.
- Conduct prescribed burns as needed.
- Mow to remove brush encroachment as needed.
- Half cut trees for loafing cover as needed for small game species.
- Request a Bluebird Nestbox Summary Form from the Wildlife Diversity Program at (405) 521-3856.

FEBRUARY POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- If turtles are a nuisance in your pond, build turtle traps and install them in the spring.
- Remove trees from pond dam and spillway. Check spillway for erosion and repair if needed.
- Seek the advice of the Natural Resources Conservation Service on design and construction of new ponds or the renovation of old ponds and check if there is financial assistance available.

TIM CARR

A number of bald eagles live in Oklahoma year-round, and even more fly in to winter here every year.

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

March 2012

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	○ 8	9	10
Daylight Savings Time Begins 11	12	13	◐ 14	15	16	St. Patrick's Day 17
18	19	Spring Begins 20	21	● 22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	◑ 30	Youth spring turkey season opens statewide (except in Southeast region) and runs through April 1. 31

COLIN BERG

Start feeding catfish when water temperatures hit 65°F, only feed what they will clean up in 15 to 30 minutes. Let a youngster catch a bunch of them, too!

MARCH HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Prepare ground for summer food plots.
- Plant native grasses, forbs or legumes.
- Monitor/fluctuate water levels in wetland areas.
- Plan a grazing management system.
- Clean, repair, and store prescribed fire equipment.
- Continue to monitor bluebird boxes and purple martin houses—remove starlings and house sparrows.
- Check bat houses for warping - Caulk or replace.
- Plant trees now through April.

MARCH POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Start filamentous algae control with Cutrine Plus if needed.
- On muddy ponds, put out a small row of hay bales above your pond to trap and limit sediments from entering your pond during early spring rains.

TES RANDLE JOLLY

April means turkey season, when toms strut and gobble and hunters' minds are filled with excitement and the hope of a successful hunt.

April 2012

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	Turkey season opens statewide except in the Southeast region and runs through May 6. Consult the "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for more information. ○ 6	7
Easter Sunday 8	9	10	11	12	◐ 13	14
15	Tax Day 16	17	18	19	20	Youth spring turkey season opens in Southeast region and runs through April 22. ● 21
22	Turkey season opens in Southeast region and runs through May 6. See "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for more information. 23	24	25	26	27	28
◐ 29	30	Nesting period for turkeys and geese begins. Incubation period for turkeys and Canada geese is 28 days.	Prairie chicken booming continues. Hens begin nesting in tall native grasses, laying 12-14 eggs. Incubation period is 24 days.	Hummingbird survey begins. To get a form, call (405) 424-0099.		

JONTIE ALDRICH

Taking a young hunter on a turkey hunt during the youth spring turkey season or regular spring turkey season is sure to ignite an interest in the outdoors and hunting.

APRIL HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Plant native grasses, forbs or legumes.
- Apply for the Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP)—(405) 521-2739.
- Disk wetland areas to promote moist soil plants as needed.
- Prepare and plant summer food plots if needed.
- Put up hummingbird feeders. Request a Hummingbird Survey from the Wildlife Diversity Program at (405) 521-3856.

APRIL POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Inspect the dam and spillway for washes and fill them with suitable material and compact it thoroughly.
- If aquatic vegetation is a problem, initiate a control program; either chemical or biological (grass carp).
- Start harvesting undersized bass and bluegill and keep records (continue all season).
- Apply Cutrine Plus for algae control beginning in April.

TIM CARR

During the spring, bobwhite quail form pairs and begin nesting.

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

May 2012

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Control weed competition around new trees.		1	2	3	4	○ 5
6	7	8	9	10	11	◑ 12
Mother's Day 13	14	Squirrel season begins. 15	16	17	18	19
● 20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	Memorial Day ◑ 28	29	30	31		

BEN DAVIS

Remember to apply for the Wildlife Department's controlled hunts program online at wildlifedepartment.com.

MAY HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Monitor/fluctuate water levels in wetland areas.
- Monitor tree and shrub plantings.
- Monitor livestock grazing program to provide nesting cover for next spring if needed.
- Prepare ground and plant summer food plot if needed.

MAY POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Add one round bale of hay per every 1-3 acres of water for slow release of nutrients in new ponds.
- Inspect dams and dikes for leaks, seeps or animal burrows and repair as necessary.
- Inspect and clean out spillway, overflow tubes or pipes and remove any debris or blockages.
- Apply for free fish from ODWC for new or reclaimed ponds.
- Document fishing success (numbers and lengths/weights) for every trip to provide data to biologists when asking for management recommendations.

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

The stark contrast of a red-winged blackbird catches the attention of even the most non-observant among us, reminding us of the diverse natural world around us.

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

June 2012

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Provide water for young, new trees.	Ducks and geese molt their primary feathers and will be flightless for 30-45 days.				1	Free Fishing Day 2
Free Fishing Day 3	○ 4	5	6	7	8	9
10	◐ 11	12	13	Flag Day 14	15	16
Father's Day 17	18	● 19	Summer Begins 20	21	22	23
24	25	◑ 26	27	28	29	30

JON TIE ALDRICH

Document fishing success this month by keeping records on what species is being caught, fish sizes and catch numbers. Of course, a few youngsters along with some poles and worms are all you need to conduct this type of fish survey.

JUNE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Monitor/fluctuate water levels in wetland areas.
- Leave some unharvested winter crops next to field edges.
- Before mowing, walk out hay meadows to reduce wildlife mortality, and consider leaving unmowed strips.
- Monitor livestock grazing program to provide nesting cover for next spring.
- Clean your hummingbird feeders weekly.
- Identify and spot spray sericea lespedeza, an invasive plant.
- Spot spray salt ceder to restore riparian areas.

JUNE POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- If your pond is lacking aquatic vegetation (less than 20 percent), June is the month to harvest and transplant aquatic vegetation.
- If aquatic vegetation exceeds 20 percent of your pond, seek technical assistance on plant identification and recommended treatment method.
- Mow the protective plant cover on the dam and spillway frequently. This prevents the growth of woody plants and encourages good root growth on grasses.

TIM CARR

The splendor of a painted bunting is an incredible sight, and now is a good time of year to spot one in Oklahoma.

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July 2012

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	○ 3	Independence Day 4	5	6	7
8	9	◐ 10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	● 18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	◑ 26	27	28
29	30	31	Provide water for young, new trees.	Selman bat watches begin this month. Pre-registration required. For more information, call (405) 424-0099.		

JUSTIN MARSCHALL

Even the simple pleasures of studying a caterpillar can bring a smile to a youngster's face. This month, enjoy your property by playing outside with the kids. Have a campout, go fishing, look for reptiles and amphibians, and enjoy the outdoors.

JULY HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Monitor grazing program to provide nesting cover.
- Prepare ground for winter food plots.
- Complete wetland dike repair.
- Before mowing, walk out hay meadows to reduce wildlife mortality, and consider leaving unmowed strips around field borders.
- Perform growing season prescribed burns for controlling brush and encouraging diverse habitat response.
- Spot spray salt cedars to restore riparian areas.

JULY POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Check for fish at the surface of the pond at daylight or early morning. This could be the early sign of low dissolved oxygen that results in a fish kill. Contact local ODWC office for assistance.
- Keep records on types and numbers of fish harvested by anglers. This information is helpful when considering fisheries management plans.
- Seed Japanese millet along mud flats for ducks.

CHRIS LUKHAUP

Spending long summer days at the creek while wading and catching "crawdads" is something many Oklahomans have enjoyed. Most probably don't realize, however, that there are at least 28 different species of crayfish that call Oklahoma home, including the virile crayfish (pictured).

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

August 2012

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Provide water for young, new trees.			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM

As hunting season approaches, now is a good time to log on to wildlifedepartment.com to view hunter education course schedules and plan on attending one near you.

AUGUST HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Monitor grazing program to provide nesting cover for next spring.
- Deer spotlight count survey should be conducted as required for the DMAP program.
- Prepare ground for winter food plots.
- Complete wetland dike repair.
- Before mowing, walk out hay meadows to reduce wildlife mortality, and consider leaving unmowed strips around field borders.

AUGUST POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Check sunfish and largemouth for black and yellow grub problems. If a problem exists, stock 3-4 inch redear sunfish for snail control.
- Check for fish at the surface of the pond at daylight or early morning. This could be the early sign of low dissolved oxygen that results in a fish kill.
- Conduct pond renovation (rotenone) if necessary.
- Consider supplemental aeration in August if visibility from green algae is less than 18 inches.
- Stock fingerling catfish and bluegill.
- Cut back or suspend supplemental feeding of catfish during the “dog days of summer” to reduce the chances of oxygen depletion.

RUSSELL GRAVES

Teach a child about hunting this month by taking them dove hunting. They'll never forget it.

August

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

September 2012

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Evaluate tree planting needs and start planting site preparations. Orders can be placed with Oklahoma Forestry Services for trees that benefit wildlife. Log on to forestry.ok.gov for more information.				Dove season begins. Consult "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" or wildlifedepartment.com for details.		Free Hunting Day 1
Free Hunting Day 2	Labor Day 3	4	5	6	7	◑ 8
9	10	11	12	13	14	● 15
16	17	18	19	20	21	◑ 22
Autumn Begins 23	24	25	26	27	Wildlife Expo 28	Wildlife Expo ○ 29
Wildlife Expo 30						

DARRIN HILL

Attend the eighth annual Oklahoma Wildlife Expo this month at the Lazy E Arena just north of Oklahoma City, and bring the entire family along. Kids and adults alike can shoot shotguns and archery equipment, catch a fish, float in a kayak, ride a mountain bike and more. Plus, it's free!

SEPTEMBER HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Prepare ground and plant winter food plots if needed.
- Conduct soil tests on food plot sites.
- Complete deer spotlight survey as required for the DMAP program.
- Begin to flood wetland areas.

SEPTEMBER POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Start fall drawdown if crowded bluegill conditions exist or summer vegetation problems occur.
- If feeding catfish, discontinue feeding when water temperatures fall below 65°F.

TIM CARR

The wood duck is one of Oklahoma's most colorful waterfowl species, and as their name suggests can often be spotted in wooded creeks, ponds and swamps.

October 2012

September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look into ordering trees that benefit wildlife from Oklahoma Forestry Services. Log on to forestry.ok.gov for more information.	Deer archery, fall turkey archery, bear archery, and rabbit seasons open. Consult "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for details. 1	2	3	4	5	6
7	Columbus Day 8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	Youth deer gun season opens and runs through Oct. 21. Consult the current "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for details. 19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	Deer muzzleloader season opens. Consult "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for details. 27
28	29	30	Halloween 31			

COLIN BERG

Youth deer gun season gives young hunters the first shot at harvesting a buck or a doe with a rifle, and landowners interested in getting youth interested in the outdoors shouldn't miss the opportunity to let a youth enjoy this season on their property.

OCTOBER HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Flood green tree reservoirs only after the first frost.
- Begin to flood wetland areas.
- Construct brush piles for winter cover as needed.
- Begin planning for prescribed burn program.
- Plant wildflower seeds this month.
- Prepare your bird feeders for wintertime feeding.
- Collect deer harvest data as required by the DMAP program.
- Evaluate forage resources and plan dormant season grazing program.

OCTOBER POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- To help clear a pond of muddy water, spread two bales of good hay per surface acre, every two weeks. No more than four applications per year and not during hot summer months.

TIM CARR

The whitetail deer is Oklahoma's most celebrated and most readily-available big game animal. With generous opportunities and harvest limits, landowners can hunt deer while also having plenty of chances to invite friends and family to their property for a hunt.

November 2012

October

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look into ordering trees that benefit wildlife from Oklahoma Forestry Services. Log on to forestry.ok.gov for more information.	Contact ODWC's Wildlife Diversity Program for a list of areas to watch bald eagles. Log on to wildlifedepartment.com for more information.	Deer rut activity peaks in November.		1	2	3
Daylight Savings Time Ends 4	5	Election Day 6	7	8	9	Quail season opens. Consult "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" or wildlifedepartment.com for details. 10
Veteran's Day 11	12	13	14	15	16	Deer gun season opens. Consult "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" or wildlifedepartment.com for details. 17
18	19	20	21	Thanksgiving 22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	Hummingbird summary forms due.

BEN DAVIS

Teach a youth to hunt on your property this fall. November offers many hunting opportunities ranging from deer, turkey, and several small game, upland bird and waterfowl seasons. Consult the current "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for details.

NOVEMBER HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Flood green tree reservoirs only after the first frost.
- Collect deer harvest data as required by the DMAP program.
- Construct brush piles for winter cover as needed.
- Evaluate areas needing prescribed fire treatment.
- Evaluate forage resources and plan dormant season phase of grazing.
- Order tree/shrub seedlings for spring planting as needed.
- Take down hummingbird feeders.

NOVEMBER POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Make repairs to fixed fishing docks and boat ramp areas during drawdown.
- Retrieve turtle traps and repair any damages.
- Trap beaver.
- Fence desirable fishing ponds to restrict livestock and build alternate livestock watering source below dams.
- Harvest crappie from farm ponds to ensure more balanced populations.

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

Clever and distinguished in appearance, the red fox may be one of Oklahoma's most elusive and stunning mammals.

November

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December 2012

January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Look into ordering trees that benefit wildlife from Oklahoma Forestry Services. Log on to forestry.ok.gov for more information.						Pheasant and furbearer seasons open. Consult wildlifedepartment.com or the "Oklahoma Hunting Guide" for details. 1
2	3	4	5	◐ 6	7	8
9	10	11	12	● 13	14	15
16	17	18	◑ 19	20	Winter Begins 21	22
23	Christmas Eve 24	Christmas Day 25 Participate in your local Christmas bird count.	26	27	○ 28	29
30	New Year's Eve 31					

WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM

Like any other fall and winter month, there is something to hunt in Oklahoma, and there is always a youth who would like to go along for the hunt.

DECEMBER HABITAT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- Flood green tree reservoirs only after the first frost.
- Begin to flood wetland areas.
- Construct brush piles for winter cover as needed.
- Begin planning for prescribed burn program.
- Plant wildflower seeds this month.
- Prepare your bird feeders for wintertime feeding.
- Collect deer harvest data as required by the DMAP program.
- Evaluate forage resources and plan dormant season grazing program.

DECEMBER POND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- To help clear a pond of muddy water, spread two bales of good hay per surface acre, every two weeks. No more than four applications per year and not during hot summer months.

Osage County Ranch Recognized for Conservation Efforts

When a large-tract landowner like Bluestem Ranch in Osage County gets serious about conservation, the effects can be positive not only for the ranch property, but also on surrounding lands. And the benefits are even more far-reaching when landowners and managers share their conservation heritage with their communities.

The 43,000-acre Bluestem Ranch in Osage County recently received the Wildlife Department's Oklahoma Landowner of the Year Award for its conservation efforts. Bluestem Ranch is a working ranch that concentrates primarily on bison production, but it has adopted certain non-traditional ranching practices that benefit wildlife.

Bluestem Ranch has done both, and quail are a major beneficiary of the operation's conservation measures. By limiting its use of herbicides, Bluestem Ranch has restored brushy native prairie beneficial to quail and has maintained a high diversity of wildlife food sources. Other non-traditional ranching practices include efforts such as patch-burn-graze efforts, eliminating fencing and increasing pasture size.

Comprised of about 43,000 acres of cross timbers and tall grass prairie, Bluestem Ranch is a working ranch that concentrates primarily on bison production, but because of its wildlife conservation practices, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation presented the ranch with its 2011 Landowner of the year Award.

The bobwhite quail isn't the only species to benefit from conservation at Bluestem Ranch. The ranch also has established waterfowl habitat by building a wetland area and seeding shorelines for waterfowl food production. Four ponds on the ranch have been constructed and stocked with fish and two previously existing ponds have been reclaimed and stocked with fish as well. Additionally, the ranch has established food plots, participated in the Wildlife Department's Deer Management Assistance Program and has held youth deer hunts and supported youth trapping activity on the property.

More than 100 youth have participated in the two-and-a-half-day deer hunts held on the area, where a bison burger lunch is provided to participants. The ranch also donates bison meat to the Wildlife Department's Taste of the Wild booth at the Oklahoma Wildlife Expo, where thousands of Oklahomans can sample wild game while enjoying a range of hands-on outdoor learning opportunities. The Expo is held the last weekend of September at the Lazy E Arena just north of Oklahoma City. Admission is free.

Bluestem Ranch is owned by media mogul and well-known conservationist Ted Turner, while ranch manager John Hurd and his staff oversee management and day-to-day operations.

New Association to Help Simplify Prescribed Burning for Landowners

A new association has been formed to provide landowners and state prescribed burn associations with an organization that can assist them with liability insurance, finding funding for equipment and training, and a voice for prescribed burning throughout the state.

The Oklahoma Prescribed Burn Association (OPBA) was formed through a three-year Conoco-Phillips challenge grant from the Playa Lakes Joint Venture through the High Plains Resource and Conservation District. Ron Voth is the executive director of this first of its kind organization to assist landowners with all aspects of prescribed burning.

Prescribed burning is a useful and important habitat management tool employed to remove accumulated litter, encourage new vegetative growth and to control excessive invasion of brush and woody cover. Native rangelands that are burned periodically have a wider diversity of plants that are beneficial to wildlife than unburned prairies. Wildlife such as quail benefit from burns because they increase mobility by removing ground level clutter, attract greater density and diversity of insects used by quail chicks as food and increase the ability of birds to feed on those insects.

The primary goal of the OPBA is to become the umbrella organization for landowners and local prescribed burn associations to receive reasonably priced liability insurance for conducting prescribed burns. Through the OPBA, the insurance will be available to burn association members at an affordable rate. The insurance covers escaped fires, suppression costs, injury to people assisting with the burn, and problems caused by smoke. A five-member board of directors has been formed to assist with the development of this organization. Members include Alva Gregory, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; Darrel Dominick, Oklahoma Conservation Commission; Paul Clark, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Karsen Davis, Roger Mills Prescribed Burn Association; and John Weir, NREM, Oklahoma State University.

There will be a minimal annual fee, and a charge for each burn the landowner would like to have insured. There will be some requirements for each burn, which are currently being developed by the association and the insurance company.

The OPBA recently conducted a survey of landowners throughout the state to get information on the number of landowners that would be interested in joining a prescribed burn association and if they are interested in the liability insurance. According to Ron Voth, director of OPBA, the survey response shows overwhelming support and interest, and he said the OPBA expects to be up and running in 2012. For more information, contact Voth at (405) 615-3130, or John Weir (Natural Resource Ecology and Management, OSU) at john.weir@okstate.edu.

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Operation Game Thief: (800) 522-8039

Panoramas

Looking back on a year of successful hunting and fishing, I can see that our favorite outdoor pursuits just keep getting better and better in Oklahoma, with opportunities expanding regularly in our great state. And with the rest of the year still to go, we still have some of the best hunting to look forward to as we move into November and December.

Hunting opportunities for deer, turkey, waterfowl, pheasant, quail, rabbit, squirrel and predator hunting are still to come before this hunting season wraps up, and then it's on to daydreaming about spring turkey hunting and fishing.

Oklahomans enjoyed their third black bear season and another open antelope archery season this year, and deer hunters have already harvested a number of deer during archery and muzzleloader seasons.

We've also made it easier for people to break into the sport of hunting by getting an apprentice designated hunting license between the ages of eight and 30, whereas last year you had to be between the ages of 10 and 35. Additionally, the age required to be an accompanying hunter for someone with an apprentice license or someone hunting during a youth season has been lowered from 21 down to 18. And we've improved safety by requiring that any hunter under 10 years old, whether or not they've completed a hunter education course, be accompanied by an adult hunter.

These are all things that contribute to making hunting and fishing better. And as we approach the climax of our seasons before winding down for another year, I hope you'll get out there and enjoy all of the opportunities available to you. Take a youngster squirrel hunting, hunt birds with a trusty dog, and hunt the opening day of deer gun season, when more people head to the woods than any other day of the year.

While I hope to encourage you to get out there and hunt this year, I also want to say thanks to all of you, the sportsmen and wildlife enthusiasts of the state, for your participation in conservation this past year. You undoubtedly have many great stories to look back on in 2011 as well as much to look ahead to as we approach yet another deer gun season as well as a new year. I want to remind you to prep up for the upcoming deer gun season and other remaining hunting opportunities, and make sure you share your interest in the outdoors with someone else. Get out and enjoy the hunting seasons with friends, and then enjoy the bounty of your harvest with those who surround you.

After that, renew your hunting and fishing licenses for 2012 and be ready to do it all over again!

Sincerely,

Nels C. Rodefeld

Nels Rodefeld,
Editor

BILL ADAMS

Outdoor Oklahoma

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Off the Beaten Path

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

STOP TRAFFIC WITH A NEW WILDLIFE PLATE

Oklahomans are enthusiastic about wildlife, even showcasing their love of the outdoors with a specialty license plate from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. And now drivers will have even more wildlife specialty plates to choose from with the introduction of plates featuring the Texas horned lizard, mallard duck, and striped bass.

Even while recent reports from the Oklahoma Tax Commission show a decrease in the sale of the state's 241 specific specialty tags, wildlife plates still lead the way as the most popular specialty tags sold during the 2011 fiscal year, excluding physically disabled or university tags. The best part, according to Rachel Bradley with the Wildlife Department, is that funds from the plates are used by the Department to help fund much needed wildlife conservation projects.

"Few realize the Department does not receive tax appropriations, so we truly rely on wildlife enthusiasts to help us support Oklahoma's wildlife and are grateful for all of their contributions," said Bradley, who is the wildlife diversity information specialist for the Wildlife Department. "The funds generated by the Wildlife Department's specialty plates are essential for keeping Oklahoma's wildlife and wild places healthy."

The three new plates join six other wildlife plates currently available at local tag agencies featuring the whitetail deer, scissor-tailed flycatcher, largemouth bass, bobwhite quail, wild turkey, and rainbow trout. Order a pre-numbered or personalized tag for $38.

A large portion of proceeds that go to the Wildlife Department are designated for the agency's Wildlife Diversity Fund, which supports conservation of Oklahoma's wildlife that are not hunted or fished through promotion of education, research, habitat conservation and other various means to maintain healthy populations.

To order a new wildlife conservation license plate, visit a local tag agency or the Oklahoma Tax Commission's website at tax.ok.gov for an application form.

Three new wildlife specialty license plates featuring the Texas horned lizard, mallard duck, and striped bass are available to drivers in addition to plates featuring the whitetail deer, scissor-tailed flycatcher, largemouth bass, bobwhite quail, wild turkey, and rainbow trout. Order a pre-numbered or personalized tag for $38 by visiting a local tag agency or the Oklahoma Tax Commission's website at tax.ok.gov for an application form.

SEVENTH ANNUAL WILDLIFE EXPO PROVES APPEALING TO RECORD CROWDS

MICHAEL BERGIN

Emma Reynolds of Edmond was one of many youth whose name was drawn to win a free handcrafted bow from the Oklahoma Bowhunting Council at the seventh annual Oklahoma Wildlife Expo. Wildlife Department director Richard Hatcher is shown signing the bow for Emma just moments after she was drawn as a winner.

The popular Oklahoma Wildlife Expo held each year by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation 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.

The 2012 Expo is already slated for Sept. 29-30, 2012 at the Lazy E Arena, just north of Oklahoma City. To learn more about the Wildlife Expo, log on to wildlifedepartment.com.

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

Oklahoma's third black bear archery season opened Oct. 1 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.

"When we planned the regulations for the season, we took into account the possibility of exceeding the harvest quota," Hemphill said.

According to Hemphill, the harvest of 32 bears last year and 31 this year are great signs that "we are doing things right in Oklahoma, since the presence of bears in an environment is considered an indicator of good habitat."

The season's harvest includes four bears that were harvested by teenage girls, one of which weighed 450 pounds field-dressed and was harvested by 16-year-old Kaylin Russell of Eagletown, whose father, Joe, killed the first bear in the state's first black bear hunting season in 2009. Kelsey Weaver of Poteau, who last year at age 17 became the first female hunter in Oklahoma to kill a black bear, also harvested a bear this year.

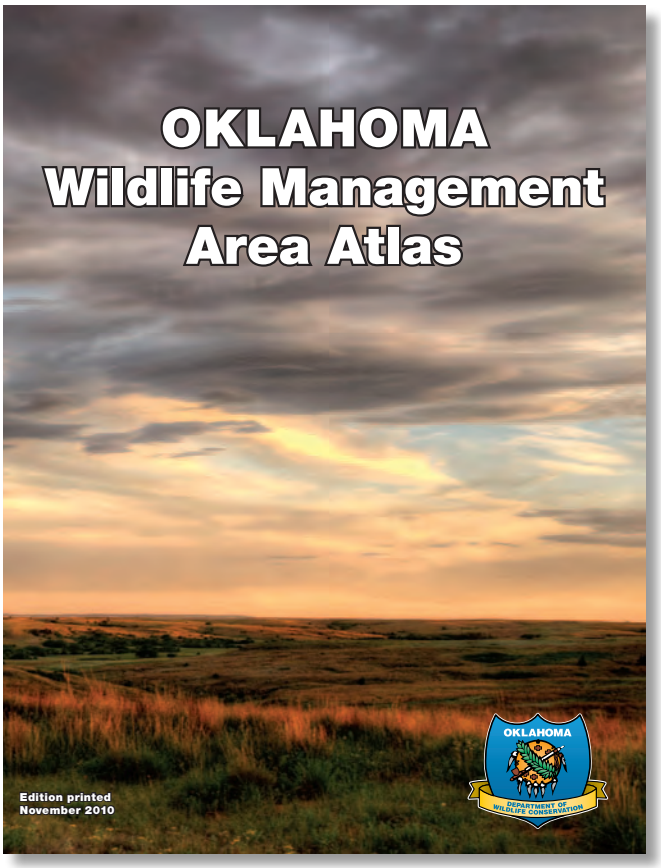
Two of the bears had been previously been tagged as nuisance bears. State wildlife officials trap, tag and relocate bears that come up to trailers, cabins and homes in search of food. A total of 18 male bears and 13 female bears were harvested, including 15 from LeFlore Co., 11 from Pushmataha Co., four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

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

Thousands of Oklahoma sportsmen have already discovered the new "Oklahoma Wildlife Management Area Atlas" from the Wildlife Department and are using the 100-page book to explore Oklahoma's public hunting land. On the opposite page you will find a new addition to the atlas, featuring one of the newest wildlife management areas in the state — Cross Timbers WMA. Purchasers of the of 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 the Cross Timbers WMA, or visit wildlifedepartment.com.

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



Discover more about Cross Timbers WMA by scanning the QR code with your smart phone.

Give the WMA Atlas to the sportsmen in your life this Christmas

A WMA Atlas makes a great gift, as 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.

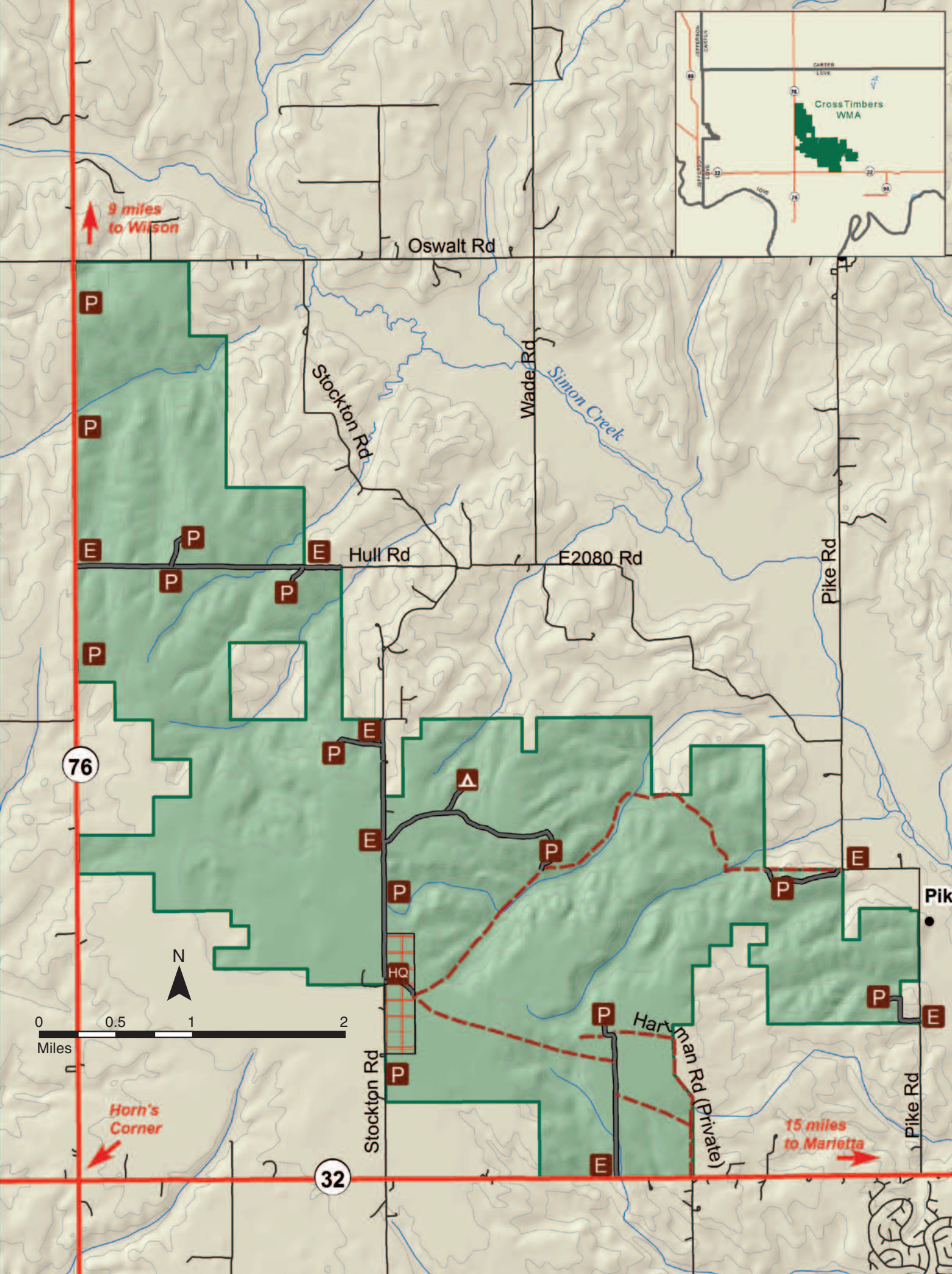
Each alphabetically listed color map depicts an Oklahoma WMA, using symbols to show roads, parking areas, designated campsites, food plots, rivers, ponds, wetland development units, non-ambulatory zones, boat ramps, area entrances, shooting ranges, county boundaries and more. Additionally, acreage and 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 "Oklahoma Wildlife Management Area Atlas" can be purchased for $25, which includes a free one-year subscription to *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine, the official magazine of the Wildlife Department.

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 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 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).

Map Legend

- **E** WMA Entrance
- **HQ** 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.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Trophy Buck Puts Spotlight on Female Hunters

Theresa Hendrix harvested a buck during the 2010 deer gun season that had a special distinction: it was the largest typical buck ever harvested in Oklahoma by a female hunter per the Cy Curtis records program, grossing just over 180 inches and netting 170 6/8.

Theresa's story is just one of many memories being made in the field by women these days. In October, four teenage girls harvested black bears during Oklahoma's third black bear archery season, one of which field dressed well over 400 lbs. The four young women accounted for 13 percent of the 2011 black bear harvest.

Additionally, as reported in a previous issue of *Outdoor Oklahoma* magazine, Oklahoma hunting license sales to women has seen increases in recent years, and programs designed to introduce women to the outdoors have been busy helping women build outdoor recreation skills.

As you'll read in Theresa's story, told here in her own words, some of today's female hunters are discovering their interest in hunting after years of missing out on a hobby they didn't know they would enjoy, until someone introduced them to it.

—Michael Bergin, associate editor

I had never been hunting until I met my husband, John, when I was 23 years old. I don't think I would have ever started to hunt if it wasn't for him. Although I grew up living in the country and being outside, hunting just wasn't part of my family's tradition.

John seemed to think hunting was a really fun thing to do so I agreed to go with him. We went on a bow hunt and since there were two of us we ended up hunting from what John said was actually a rifle stand. I am pretty sure we didn't see any deer and I remember thinking, "This is the most boring thing I've ever done in my life!"

John and I continued seeing each other and he finally convinced me to give muzzleloader shooting a try. On my first hunt I didn't have any hunting clothes, so I ended up wearing his dad's hunting clothes and my tennis shoes. As we were leaving town for our morning hunt, the thermometer read 11 degrees! John told me several times that if I got cold to let him know and we would go back to camp. I'm not sure how long we sat in the stand or whether we saw any deer but I did get cold!

I'd finally had enough so we got down out of the tree. As John had taught me, I went ahead and put a cap on my gun before we headed to camp. It was a good thing because I took a couple steps when four does ran directly away from us. John quickly said, "Get ready!" About 100 yards away, all four does stopped and looked at us. He said, "You better shoot!" I told him I was

Theresa Hendrix harvested this Oklahoma buck in 2010 that grossed just over 180 inches and netted 170 6/8, making it the largest typical buck ever harvested in Oklahoma by a female hunter per the Cy Curtis records program.

JOHN HENDRIX

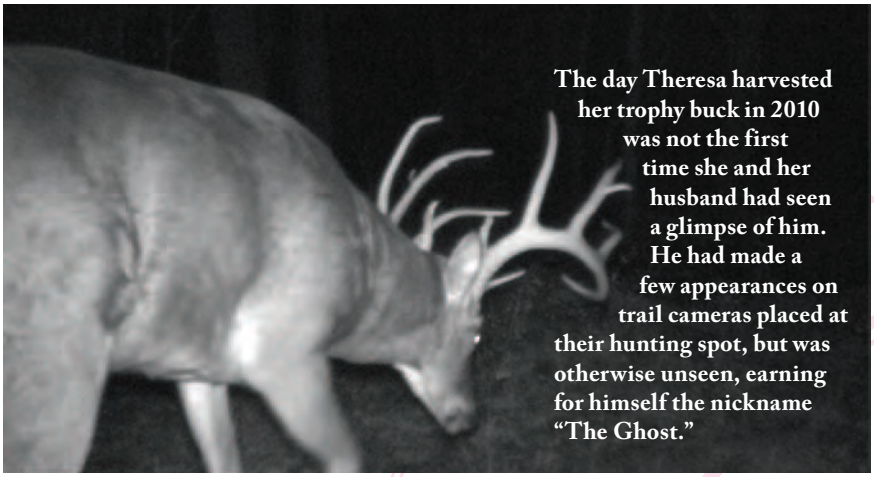


PHOTO COURTESY THERESA HENDRIX

The day Theresa harvested her trophy buck in 2010 was not the first time she and her husband had seen a glimpse of him. He had made a few appearances on trail cameras placed at their hunting spot, but was otherwise unseen, earning for himself the nickname "The Ghost."

going to shoot the second one from the left. Not sure why I chose that deer, but I did.

All I remember was the kick of the gun and lots of smoke. We weren't sure if I had gotten one but I'm pretty positive John thought I had missed. We went to where the deer were last standing where low-and-behold there was my doe! I was impressed with myself and, from that moment, was hooked on hunting. I have had a lot of fun learning to hunt since that first muzzleloader hunt.

Two years later, John and I married and moved to the panhandle of Oklahoma for his job. We found a whole new way of hunting by moving from northeastern Oklahoma to the Panhandle. It was different for sure, but helped me hone my hunting skills.

I had never bow hunted but I figured it was time I tried. John set up his dad's old bow for me and then found a spot for me to sit behind a sage brush bush overlooking a trail. That's right, a sage bush. Nothing like putting a beginner at a total disadvantage against a whitetail's keen nose and sight. However, sure enough, a short time later, a couple of does came by. I drew back and let the arrow fly! The doe ran about 100 yards and lay down. I couldn't believe it. I had harvested my first deer with a bow.

As with many hunters, John and I have spent countless hours shooting, scouting and dreaming of hunting. We have invested many hours in improving our techniques and skills.

Wounding a deer and not finding it is the worst thing ever

All these hours led to one fateful day in a stand this past season. We had recently moved to a new town much farther from our usual hunting spots, so I had not been able to hunt. In the previous years, I had missed very few hunting days so I was feeling depressed about the lack of hunting I had been able to get out and enjoy.

John had been able to go quite a bit, but it was finally my turn to get away. I had hunted only a half-day of that rifle season so far and had one more day to hunt. I always try to "mix things up" when I'm hunting and do the unusual. I decided — with John's encouragement — to go sit in a bowstand even though it was rifle season. I just thought doing something different might pan out. And, in the back of my mind, I remembered John telling me about seeing what he thought was a 180-inch deer from this same stand the week after muzzleloader. We also had trail camera photographs of a deer we had named "The Ghost" due to his only appearing at night and the photos having a slightly blurred image of his rack making it difficult to determine for sure how big he really was.

I got in the treestand about 3 p.m. It's a particularly beautiful spot with an open meadow to my left. To my right, it was all wooded except the small trail I walked on to get to the treestand. I could see down the trail about 100 yards.

I had been sitting for about 20 minutes when I heard what I thought could be a buck chasing a doe. It was somewhere in front of me and it seemed to be getting closer. Soon, I could see some does with a small buck following them. They were about 75 yards away, moving away from me through the timber. It got my blood pumping a little bit and had me hoping for more action.

Just a minute or two later, I could hear a deer trotting down the same trail toward my right. I thought that little buck had circled back and was looking for more does. But, to my amazement, I saw a larger buck walking down a trail about 60 yards away. This looked like a nice deer, and I would try to take him.

Slowly I slipped into a sitting position on the floor of my treestand so I could use the seat for a rest. The buck came into the trail

opening and stopped. I put the cross hairs slightly behind his shoulder and pull the trigger. As I saw him run off, I realized the rack was quite a bit larger than I had previously thought! Could this be the deer that John had seen? Could he be "The Ghost?"

I lost sight of him after he had moved about 100 yards. My heart sank because, quite frankly, I thought he had kept running. I kept replaying in my mind how I must not have made a good shot, and I could not believe I had just wounded a nice deer. I was down on myself.

John was home with the kids nearly 60 miles away, but I had 20 years of hunting experience and had harvested numerous deer, so I knew I needed to wait to go searching for the buck.

I could hardly take it. I was worried, and when I first arrived to the location where the buck had stood when I took the shot, I didn't see any blood or hair. I called John to let him know what had taken place and he called a couple of friends to see if they could get there to help me look for the deer before dark. Neither was available, so now onto Plan B.

Wounding a deer and not finding it is the worst thing ever. I didn't even want to consider that, but it was in the back of mind. Plan B called for John to drop the kids off at my mother's and then to head my way. It took him a couple of hours, which meant it was just about dark when he arrived.

As we have done before, he had me go to the tree I was sitting in and point him to the exact spot where the deer was standing when the shot took place. This is always a good method to use, because when you climb down out of that tree, it is easy to miss the exact spot by several yards if you are by yourself.

I pointed John in the right direction. He found what appeared to be fresh tracks heading down the trail and within a few yards he found blood.

Soon we discovered a good blood trail. I took the lead as we eased cautiously along the blood trail, scanning now in the dark woods for the sight of a white belly. It seemed a long ways but it was only about 60 or 70 yards when I could see him!

This was the largest buck I've ever taken — a deer of a lifetime for sure. The Ghost was all and more than we ever thought he was. John was so proud, and I was glad he had encouraged me to sit in that particular spot.

I didn't hunt until I was 23 years old, but now I can't imagine not hunting. Although I'm tremendously proud of the deer I harvested, I can't wait to take my daughter, Mackenzie, on her first deer hunt this fall. Hopefully, she will get a chance to harvest her first deer, and in a few more years, I hope to be with my son, Easton, when he harvests his first deer. He is just three, but it won't be long. He is always saying, "I wanna get a big buck like you, Momma."

Hunting is now a family tradition for me, and passing on the tradition of hunting to my kids is as important to me as harvesting a trophy buck. However, I've got to be honest when I say right now I'm pretty proud to say that I've taken the largest deer in the family! It just goes to show that all the years you dream about that big one walking down the trail can really happen — even when you only have a day-and-half to hunt.

JOHN HENDRIX

Theresa's daughter MacKenzie is following in her mother's footsteps with her harvest of this buck during the 2011 Youth Deer Gun Season. MacKenzie also took a doe during the youth season.

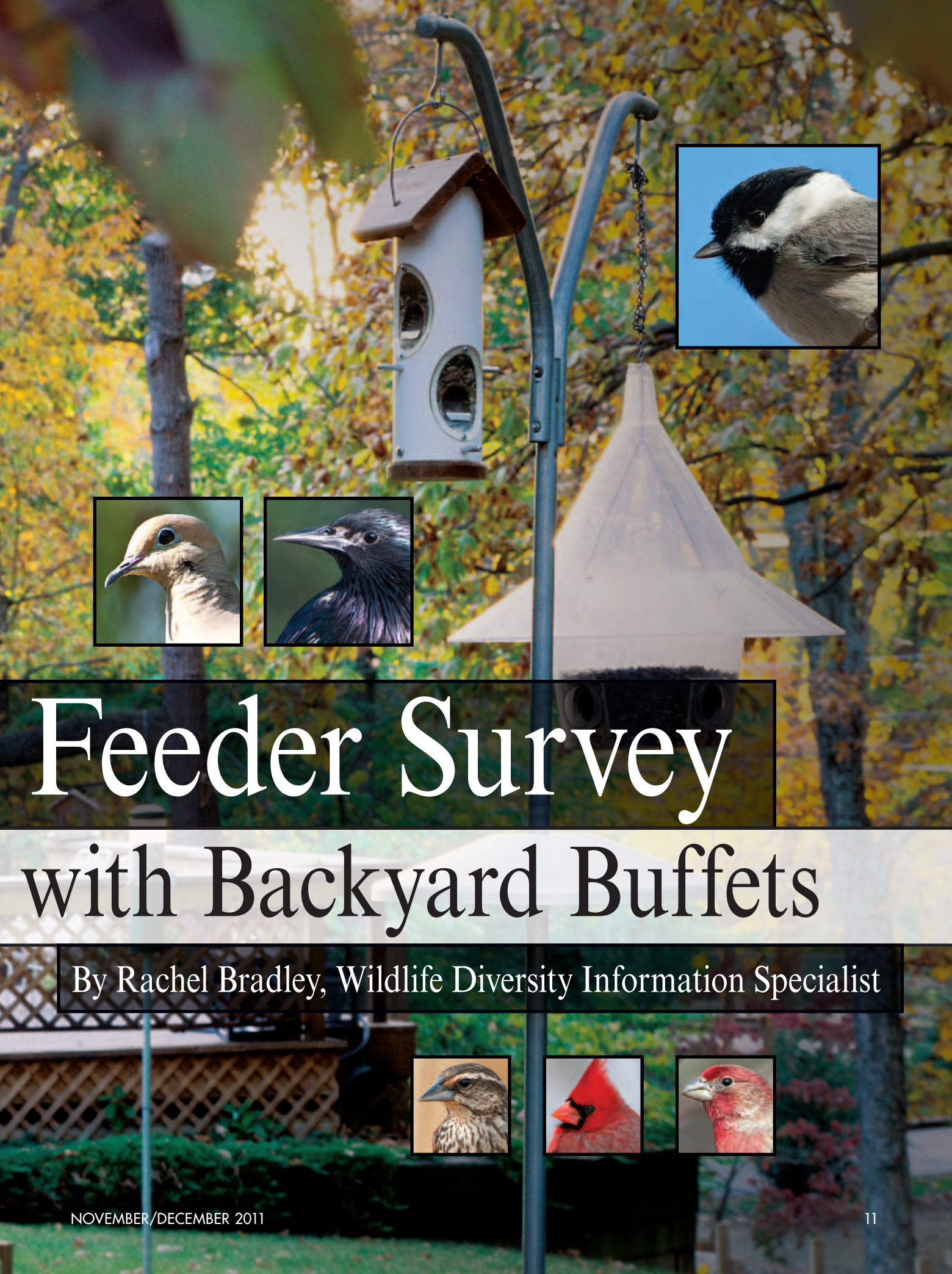
JOHN HENDRIX

Hendrix is no one-hit-wonder of a hunter. Here she's pictured with a buck she harvested during a previous hunting season.

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

2012 Winter Bird

Benefitting Birds



Feeder Survey with Backyard Buffets

By Rachel Bradley, Wildlife Diversity Information Specialist

BILL ADAMS

BILL ADAMS

BILL ADAMS

The American goldfinch was the most spotted bird in last year's Winter Bird Feeder Survey, at 3,879 sightings.

Upper Right: House finches are seen year-round in Oklahoma, often nesting in floral hanging baskets during the spring and feeding at winter bird feeders in the colder months. Males have an attractive red plumage on their face, neck and breast.

Right: A dark-eyed junco dines on seeds. Juncos were the second-most common bird documented during last year's Winter Bird Feeder Survey, with 2,773 counted.

Oklahoma's relatively mild winters attract a rich, diverse culture of birds each winter that benefits from birders' help as birds seek out winter habitat.

You can help by becoming a citizen scientist and participating in the Wildlife Department's 2012 Winter Bird Feeder Survey January 5 through 8. The Winter Bird Feeder Survey allows bird enthusiasts the opportunity to contribute to bird conservation while enjoying a pastime that brings them closer to nature and nature closer to them. Experienced birders may even experience the thrill of checking a bird off of their "life list" of birds they hope to spot.

Birding is easy to learn, fairly inexpensive, and fun for all ages, especially if you do it in your own backyard, where you can enjoy it every day.

To conduct the Winter Bird Feeder Survey, simply watch a backyard bird feeder for any two days during the survey period. Count birds at least four times a day, and record the highest number of each species that you count feeding at one time during the day. For example, if you see five dark-eyed juncos at 8 a.m. and a few hours later you see seven, then record "seven" dark-eyed juncos. This ensures you do not count the same bird twice.

Survey forms and complete instructions for completing and returning your survey results are available online at okwinterbirds.com. Be sure to download the form, save it to your computer (you must complete this step for proper return), fill it out as thoroughly as possible, and return it as an e-mail attachment.

iPad 9:42 AM

Birding on the Go

Smartphone Apps for Birders

Do you wish you could identify birds by their sound? There's an app for that! Smartphone applications are now allowing people to enjoy bird watching on the go.

To enhance your bird identification skills, we suggest trying out the following apps:

iBird Explorer Pro: This interactive field guide consists of 924 species found in North America. Search birds by song, conservation status, flight pattern, genus, species, color, size, shape, bill shape or length, and more with color illustrations in perching and flight views. Access the range map if you think you see an unusual species. Available for iPhone and Android

BirdCountr: Leave the pen and paper at home and keep records of bird sightings all over North America by plumage and GPS location, then catalog by family on your phone. Available for iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad

BirdsEye: This application hosts a map of 25,000 birding hotspots, keeps record of your life list, and notes about the species in North America. Available for iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad

Wildlife Department

iBird PRO

BirdCountr

BirdsEye

Type of Bird	Food Preference
Blue Jay	Sunflower seed, safflower, cracked corn, peanuts, suet, bread, peanut butter, lard mixes, seed mixes
House Finch	Mixed seed, peanuts, fruit, suet, niger, sunflower, safflower, thistle
Goldfinch- all species	Thistle/niger, sunflower seed, hulled sunflower, millet, fruit, suet, peanuts
Wren- all species	Suet, suet mix, peanut butter, bread, apples
Flicker- all species	Suet, peanut butter, sunflower seeds, fruit, meat, bread
Pine Siskin	Nuts, rolled oats, thistle, mixed seeds, sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, millet, suet
Purple Finch	Sunflower seeds, thistle
Blackbird- all species	Bread, cracked corn, mixed seeds, sunflower seeds, sunflower chips, millet, suet
Robins & Bluebirds	Apples, sunflower seed, bread, grapes, suet, mealworms, berries, raisins, nut meal, seed mixes
Evening Grosbeak	Sunflower seeds, grapes, orange halves
Northern Bobwhite	Sunflower seeds, seed mixes
Brown-headed Cowbird	Bread, cracked corn, sunflower seeds, seed mixes
Cardinal	Cracked corn, nuts, sunflower seeds, safflower, millet, peanuts, apple, bread
Starling	Millet, milo, safflower
Crow	Bread, scraps, corn, suet
Grackle- all species	Sunflower seeds, bread, scraps
Tufted Titmouse	Sunflower seeds, suet, bread, safflower, peanuts, peanut kernel
Carolina Chickadee	Peanut kernel, sunflower seeds, suet, bread, safflower
Nuthatch- all species	Suet, suet mix, sunflower seeds, nuts, cracked corn, bread
Brown Creeper	Suet, suet mix, sunflower seeds, nuts, cracked corn, bread
Mockingbird	Halved apples, fruit, bread, suet, sunflower seeds, nuts
Cedar Waxwing	Berries, raisins, sliced apple, canned peas, currants, grapes
Sparrow- all species	Sunflower seeds, seed mixes, bread, thistle, millet
Dove- all species	Cracked corn, sunflower seeds, milo, bread, thistle, nuts
Woodpecker- all species	Insects, fruit, sunflower seeds, suet, nuts, sugar water
Junco- all species	Millet, sunflower seeds, cracked corn, peanuts, bread, nut meats, thistle, suet
Towhee- all species	Millet, sunflower seeds, peanuts, grapes, cracked corn, suet
Brown Thrasher	Orange halves, cracked corn

Birding is easy to learn, fairly inexpensive, and fun for all ages, especially if you do it in your own backyard, where you can enjoy it every day.

Habitat, be it natural or created, is the key to attracting diverse species to your backyard, and providing a good food source is the best place to start.

If you give birds a buffet, be sure to include black-oil sunflower seeds. The high protein and oil content allow birds to store more body fat to keep warm. Suet is a good source of fat and protein as well, made commonly from lard and peanut butter. Nijer (thistle) and safflower also are preferred seeds. Safflower is generally more expensive but is less attractive to non-native birds like house sparrows.

The least preferred food — but often the least expensive — are some of the seeds found in store-bought mixtures. These are often less nutritious and low in protein or oil and include seeds such as oats, wheat and milo. The birds that eat these seeds are ground-feeding species, so these should not be placed in hanging or pole-mounted feeders. Try making your own mix of preferred foods and even throw in some leftover apples, oranges, or other fresh or frozen fruits. This will also discourage house sparrows from visiting your feeders and harassing other birds.

Recommended feeders are low platform (for ground use), hanging/tube, and hopper feeders. Nijer seed may best be offered in a unique, mesh feeder made specifically to prevent the small seeds from falling out. Unique feeders are available for offering suet as well. Chickadees, titmice and finches prefer to eat higher off the ground, but cardinals, juncos, harris sparrows and mourning doves tend to eat at ground level. To cater to a variety of birds, hang three feeders at various heights near your viewing area, with one being near the ground.

Providing a good water source for drinking and bathing also will attract birds, because water sources may be difficult to come by in the winter months. The cleaner a bird's feathers, the better they keep warm and fly. Be sure to change the water frequently to keep it clean and from freezing. Bird bath heaters also are an easy way to prevent freezing water.

Place bird feeders and bird baths at least 10 feet from the cover of trees. Evergreens can act as a good cover if they are a few feet away from the food source.

BILL ADAMS

BILL ADAMS

Often the male member of a bird species is more colorful than the female, as demonstrated by the Red-winged blackbird (male left, female right).

Bottom Right: Though not native, the European Starling was one of the top 10 birds seen at feeders during last years Winter Bird Feeder Survey. Since non-native birds compete with native species, biologists can use results from the survey to help constituents focus their feeding efforts on birds that are native to the state.

Miracle Meal Recipe

Flour
Yellow cornmeal
Lard (not shortening)
A log
A drill
Peanut butter
Raisins (optional)

This tasty treat is sure to entice birds that eat fruit and insects. Check out the Wildlife Department's Winter Bird Feeder Survey website at okwinterbirds.com for more details on what to feed birds in your own yard.

1. Mix one part flour to three parts cornmeal and two parts lard
2. Add peanut butter (optional)
3. Add raisins (optional)
4. Roll mixture into firm balls
5. Drill 1.5" holes into the log
6. Stuff the holes with the miracle meal mixture
7. Suspend the log from a tree limb
8. Watch for birds

BILL ADAMS

Feeding areas and water need to be kept clean. Clean high-activity feeders at least once a month in the winter to decrease the chance of disease, bacteria, and mold. Bird baths, houses, and feeders and the areas immediately around them are common places for birds to contract and spread disease. Keep them clean!

Here are a few extra tips to remember as you participate in the 2012 Winter Bird Feeder Survey.

Fly-bys do not count! Birds counted toward the survey should be those utilizing your bird feeders.

Please note if you see a bird that is not listed on the survey or an unusual sighting.

Top 10 Birds Seen	
American goldfinch	3,879
Dark-eyed junco	2,773
Red-winged blackbird	1,748
Northern cardinal	1,693
House sparrow	1,397
European starling	949
Mourning dove	905
House finch	813
Carolina chickadee	651
Blue jay	542

We enjoy hearing about interesting sightings and seeing photos.

The results of your survey will help the Wildlife Department better manage Oklahoma's feathered friends year round.

2011 Results

This year's results accounted for 21,476 of Oklahoma's winter birds. Results vary annually due to weather conditions, food availability, geographical differences around Oklahoma and various species around the feeders.

Each year, there are somewhat unusual sightings at bird feeders, which may be the cause of any of the aforementioned conditions. Some of the unusual birds spotted during the 2011 survey were the wild turkey, golden-crowned kinglet, ruby-crowned kinglet, orange-crowned warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, and chipping sparrow.

Birds that were viewed in yards but not actually using a bird feeder include the red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, cedar waxwing, greater roadrunner, American robin, merlin, brown thrasher, and Eastern bluebird.

A bird bath with clean water is attractive to winter birds, especially if you keep it from freezing over by changing it frequently during freezing temperatures or by employing an electric bird bath water heater (pictured).

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

OK Winter Birds: A birder's favorite website

Boost your winter bird know-how as you search photographs, range maps, diet and behavior notes for 52 winter birds commonly found at Oklahoma bird feeders and on the Winter Bird Feeder Survey at OKwinterbirds.com.

OKwinterbirds.com is managed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and is designed to assist new backyard bird watchers and 2012 Winter Bird Feeder Survey participants. Even experienced birders will discover helpful tips to better identify and attract beautiful winter birds to their feeders. Check it out this winter.

Other Helpful Birding Links

National Audubon Society
audubon.org

Oklahoma City Audubon Society
okc-audubon.org

Tulsa Audubon Society
tulsaaudubon.org

Oklahoma Ornithological Society
okbirds.org

Birds of Oklahoma
birdsofOklahoma.net

Sutton Avian Research Center
suttoncenter.org

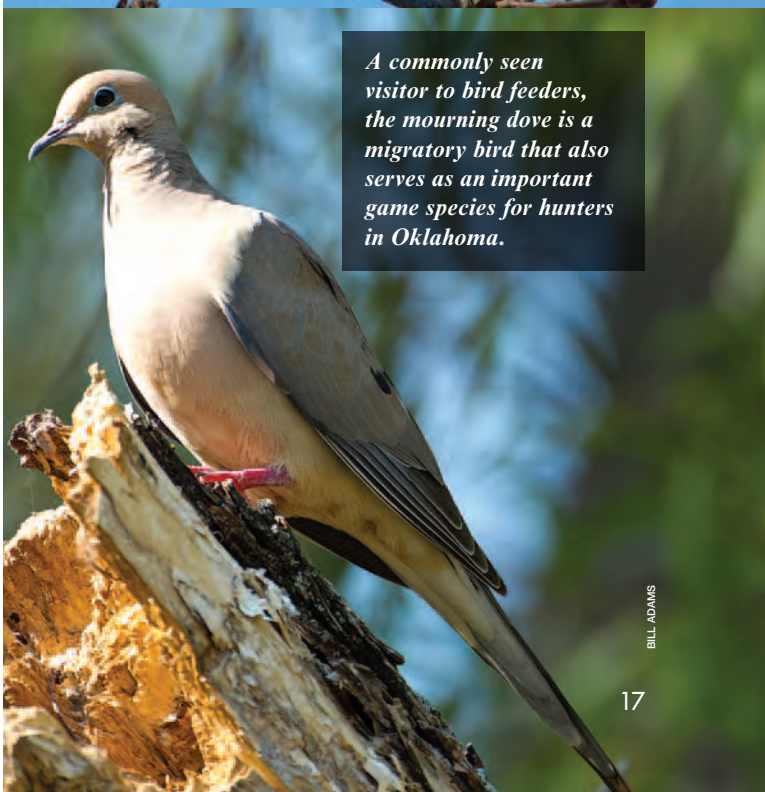
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
rmbo.org

BILL ADAMS

The northern cardinal is a celebrated favorite that Oklahomans see throughout the winter. Their brilliant colors contrasting against a gray winter are a welcome sight during a gray winter. With 1,693 sightings from birders in last year's survey, the northern cardinal was the fourth most numerous bird noted in the survey data.

BILL ADAMS

There is a good chance that a Carolina chickadee will come to your yard this winter if you provide an arrangement of attractants in your yard, particularly seeds.

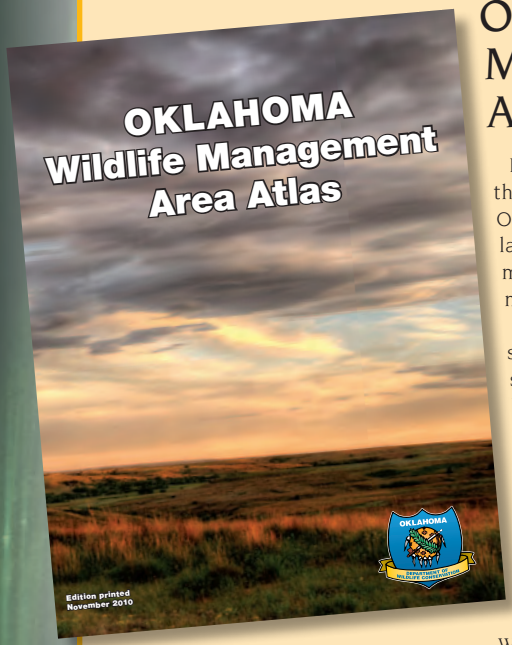


BILL ADAMS

A commonly seen visitor to bird feeders, the mourning dove is a migratory bird that also serves as an important game species for hunters in Oklahoma.

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

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

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

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, 2003-Wild Turkey 1989-Raccoon, 1994-Bass, 1999-Deer, 2004-Mallard Duck 1990-Wood Duck, 1995-Quail, 2000-Brown Trout, 2005-Striped Bass 2007-Rainbow Trout or Bobwhite Quail, 2008-Canada Goose, 2006-Scaled Quail, 2009-Mule Deer 2010-Paddlefish, 2011-Northern Pintail	$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 2-Year Subscription 3-Year Subscription	$10 $18 $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		
		Total Amount Enclosed		

Name _____

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.

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

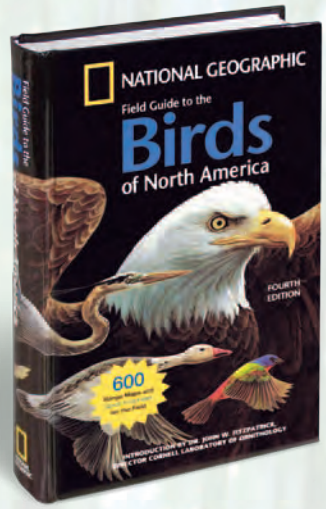
The Outdoor Store

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.

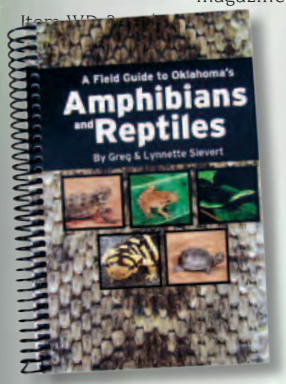
Butterflies of Oklahoma, Kansas and North Texas Book

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			
			Total Amount Enclosed	

Name _____

Address _____ Phone Number _____

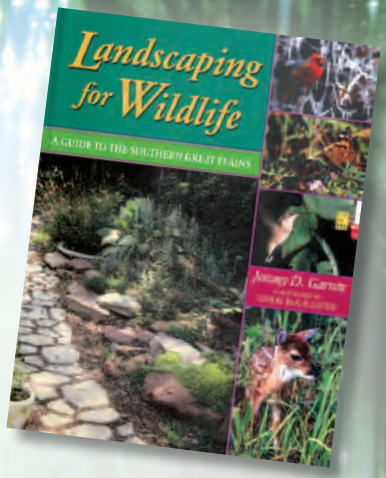
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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.

OKLAHOMA'S

Watchable Wildlife

The Coyote

BY KELLY ADAMS

Native American folklore often tells the story of Coyote. He plays many roles but is best known as the trickster. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are extremely adaptable and thrive in a wide range of habitats from mountains to deserts. In fact, they are among the most adaptable mammals in North America. Even as humans modify their habitat, they still are able to exploit necessary resources. They can be found as far north as Alaska and as far south as Central America. The coyote's deceptive manor along with its intelligence has made it the survivor it is today and that it has been for thousands of years.

It is easy to see that coyotes are canines, like domestic dogs and wolves. When coyotes run, they hold their tails down, unlike wolves, which run with their tails straight out. Coyote fur can vary considerably. Depending on the region, coyotes may be brown, red, or grayish. They have long, triangular ears and a narrow snout.

Coyotes can be found as far north as Alaska and as far south as Central America.

Coyotes do most of their hunting at night and their diet can vary. They are opportunistic and eat whatever is available to them but they prefer fresh kills. Mammals are a major portion of their diet, although sometimes they will eat snakes and birds. In the fall and winter months, coyotes are known to eat fruits and berries along with other vegetation. Coyotes are incredible hunters. When hunting small prey like mice, a coyote will stand extremely still and wait for the mouse to come in pouncing range. Other times they will stalk prey. Working in a pack creates an advantage for coyotes when preying on larger mammals such as deer, or when defending food resources, territory, and themselves. When hunting larger prey, they work in teams and take turns chasing the animal until it tires, making it easier to kill.

Coyotes live in a variety of social arrangements. Some live alone, others in mated pairs, and others in packs, which may consist of one mated pair, their new young, and offspring from the previous season that have not yet left their parents. Generally coyotes living in unexploited areas form packs. In the spring and early summer, females typically have a litter of about six puppies. The puppies are born helpless and blind. After 10 days the puppies can open their eyes and after about four to six weeks they emerge from their den. Coyotes only use dens to give birth and nurse their young. The den serves only as a temporary nursery. Dens often have more than one opening and are hard to find. Coyotes are very careful about not leading anyone or anything to their dens. Coyotes have not one, but several dens which they use. This not only protects their pups from predators, but moving the pups also protects them from the fleas and other parasites that build up in the den. Coyotes will aggressively defend their puppies if threatened. After the female nurses the puppies for four to six weeks, both the male and female co-parent the puppies by feeding them regurgitated food.

Coyotes are the most vocal mammals in North America. In fact, their name comes from the Aztec word, "coyoti," which means "barking dog." Because coyotes are more active at night, vocal communication is more important than visual communication. Coyotes communicate using a variety of sounds including barks, yips and howls. Coyotes use howls to let other members of the pack know their location. They use short barks to warn others of danger nearby. When a pack of coyotes welcomes a new member into the pack, they "yip."

The coyote is often viewed as a nuisance, but they are highly intelligent and play an important role in the natural ecosystem. They are, however, remarkably adaptable and therefore management of the species through hunting and trapping is beneficial. In Oklahoma, coyotes are open to hunting year-round with no daily limit or season limit. For full season details, log on to wildlifedepartment.com or consult the current "Oklahoma Hunting Guide."

—Kelly Adams is an information technician for the Wildlife Department

DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI

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