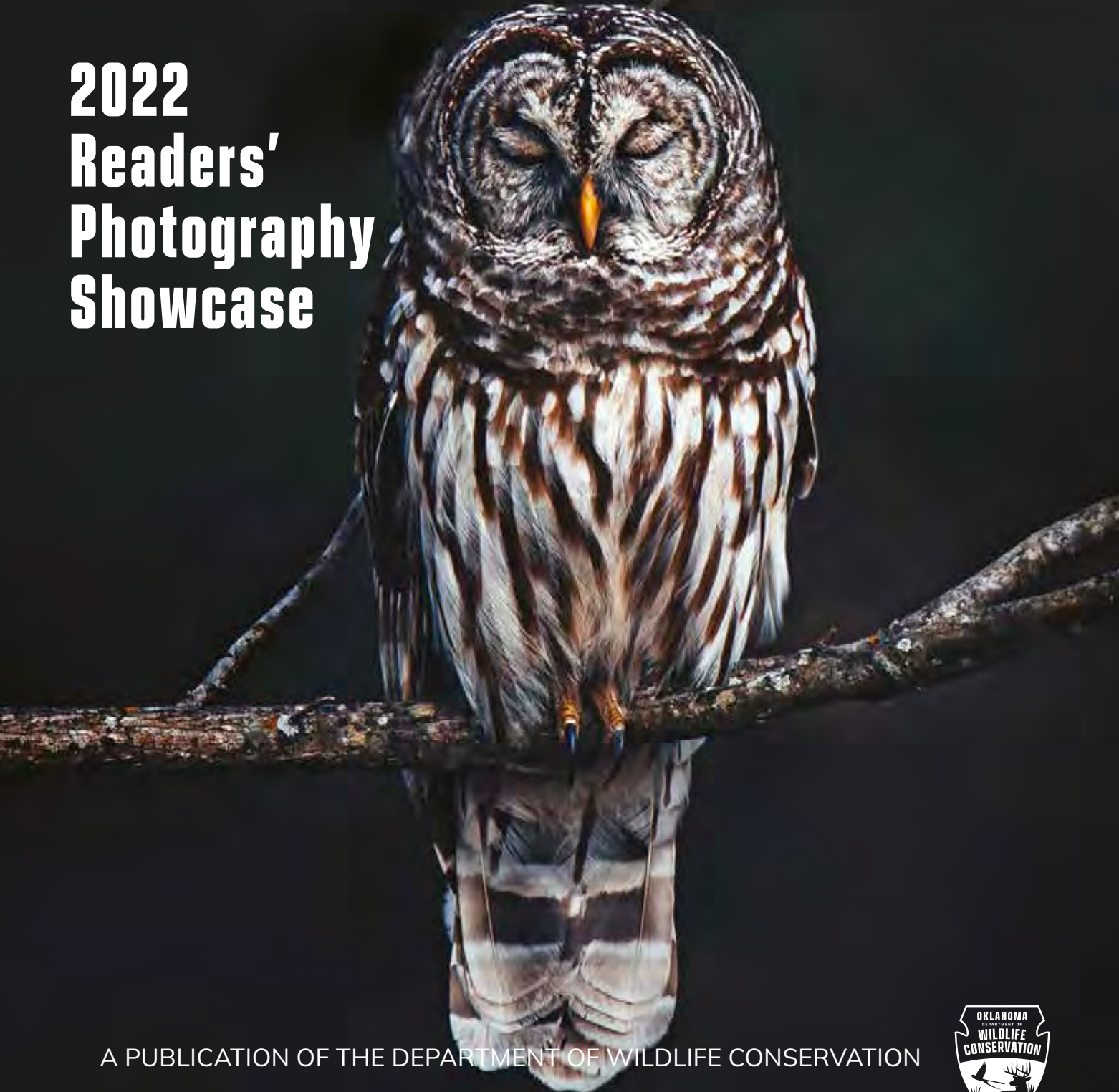


Outdoor Oklahoma

JULY / AUGUST 2022 — ONLY \$10 A YEAR

2022 Readers' Photography Showcase



A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION



PANORAMAS



Wade Free

R3 is the moniker for maintaining and growing a customer base, to maintain relevancy and accomplish goals. Recruit, Retain, Reactivate.

R3 is the foundation of success for any business. The challenge for conservation agencies is that our “products” are participation-based. Before customers contribute to ODWC’s conservation mission (buying licenses), we must continually recruit, retain, or reactivate them in outdoor activities.

Our “outdoor products” involve time, and a lot of it. Engaging people in a new interest or pastime when folks barely have enough time to get home from work, take care of the kids, and get to bed before midnight gets downright difficult. We have a lot of competition, and people are busy! If you have kids, it’s all you can do just to make it to all the ballgames!

It’s only for the last 10 years or so that conservation agencies really began to focus on R3 to address declines in hunting and fishing participation. When it comes to license sales (our life blood), agencies have historically operated like the department of motor vehicles. Everyone knows they need a driver license, right, so why do we need to market that? If folks want to hunt or fish, they know where to buy a license, right?

The need to hunt and fish isn’t in the same category as the need to drive a car, so we must hard-sell our product before we get someone interested in buying a license. Keeping folks in our license pool is a huge challenge.

With R3 campaigns, agencies have implemented human-dimension-based science, identified target customers, and developed focused strategies for the future. We now have roadmaps for success, and our customers are part of that.

One of the challenges becomes where to put our eggs. Certainly not all in one basket. Today, there is a big buzz over recruitment, diversity, inclusion, and new customers. While those are critical initiatives, at the end of the day we have a solid customer base that we best spend most of our time and resources on. Active hunters and anglers pay the bills.

Customer service keeps customers (retention), and we must provide opportunities to the already-engaged folks while trying to reach new customers (recruitment) as we move along. A mix

of both retention and recruitment efforts works into drawing lapsed customers (reactivation) back in the game.

At a recent conference, I heard about conservation freeloaders: those who reap the benefits of our hard work but don’t contribute a dime for conservation.

The presenter said he was a freeloader and asked why agencies don’t require them to do their part. They may be engaged but simply don’t contribute. He was a biker, hiker, photographer, and climber who used WMAs for free.

ODWC is a leader in the R3 campaign. My motto is “Replace yourself, plus one!” As locked-in hunters or anglers, it is our duty to share. Sharing with family is, in most cases, a no brainer, and surveys show most new recruits are introduced to the conservation arena by a family member. But what about outside of family tradition? Have you focused on non-family? That is the next level.

As someone who has introduced many newbies to outdoor sports, I can attest that seeing someone get “hooked” is more rewarding than anything we can personally achieve with a catch or harvest. When my boys were in high school, I spent many days mentoring them while encouraging their friends to tag along on duck, dove, quail, and deer hunts, and more fishing trips than I can count. At the time, they thought “we were just fishing.” But years later, these kids are now conservation mentors raising kids and influencing new customers!

When someone comes up to you years later and says, “I have dogs and a double-barrel gun because of you,” it confirms our labor pays off.

That is R3. To have a profound influence on someone’s outdoor future is a reward light-years beyond any Boone and Crockett deer, record bass, or anything one can personally accomplish. I challenge you to share your blessing at the next level. If you are not a hunter or angler and want to give it a try, your challenge is to reach out to those that are and inquire. Maybe you can be the “plus one!” ♡

Wade Free

Wade Free, Assistant Director of Operations

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10

Bobcat | Jacob Miller of Arnett



ON THE COVER:
Wake up!
Our annual
Readers'
Photography
Showcase
issue — always
among the
most popular
— is here!
Open your
eyes to the
images shared
by Outdoor

Oklahoma readers who have captured the amazing natural beauty that can be seen all around us. Kyle Underwood of Sallisaw took the remarkable image on our cover: "This is a barred owl I named Sally. I think it's a 'she' from her large size and big head. She hangs out near Sally Jones Lake at the Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge. This was Sally taking herself a morning nap."

See all the amazing winners in the 2022 Readers' Photography Showcase, starting on Page 10.






TABLE OF CONTENTS

OFF THE BEATEN PATH 2

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHY
SHOWCASE 2022 10

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT 46

OUTDOOR STORE 48

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OKLAHOMA



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

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

WILDLIFE COMMISSION WELCOMES MARK MABREY OF OKMULGEE



Mark Mabrey

Okmulgee banker Mark H. Mabrey, 39, begins serving an eight-year term July 2, 2022, representing District 2 on the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission, the eight-member board that oversees the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Gov. Kevin Stitt appointed Mabrey in May to succeed Commissioner Bruce Mabrey of Okmulgee, his father, whose service ended July 1, 2022, after 20 years as a Wildlife Conservation Commissioner.

Mabrey is SVP Market President Okmulgee at Mabrey Bank in Okmulgee. He also serves on the board of directors for Mabrey Bank in Bixby.

Mabrey is an active hunter and angler, having harvested his first wild turkey at age 8 and fished "for as long as I can remember."

"I'm just really looking forward to doing what's best for the sportsmen of Oklahoma. I've been really fortunate for the last 20 years ... watching my dad and having many discussions with him over different areas of wildlife conservation."

Mabrey said he's aware that many sportsmen and sportswomen lack opportunities or rely exclusively on public lands. "I think it's very important to continue as much public access as possible," he said.

Mabrey earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Oklahoma State University in 2006, and is a graduate of consumer lending, commercial lending and intermediate school of banking through the Oklahoma Bankers Association. He is a 2018 graduate of The Pacific Coast Banking School at the University of Washington.

He is a past-chairman and current board member for the Okmulgee County Family YMCA, the Friends of Deep Fork National Wildlife Refuge, and the Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce. He is or has been a board member for the Okmulgee Education Foundation, Okmulgee Main Street, Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce and the YMCA of Greater Tulsa.

Mabrey is a past-chairman of the Okmulgee County United Way annual campaign and believes community bankers must be active in the places they serve. He is a past chairman for the Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology PROUD fundraising campaign.

He was born in Tulsa in 1983 and grew up in Okmulgee where he currently makes his home. Mark and his wife, Krysten, have two children: Lakelyn, 7, and Baker, 3. ♡



WILDLIFE EXPO'S RETURN PLANNED FOR 2023

This year's Wildlife Expo has been canceled. The decision comes in part because the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation will be dedicating staff and resources as the host of a national wildlife conference in July.

It is the third consecutive year that ODWC has not held a Wildlife Expo, as the 2020 and 2021 events were skipped due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As much as I hate missing Expo three years in a row, we ultimately believe that we can come back in 2023 and have the best Expo ever. The break will give us an opportunity to make some improvements and knock it out of the park next year," said J.D. Strong, Director of the Wildlife Department.

From July 10-15, Oklahoma City will be the site for the annual Summer Meeting of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). This will be the 100th anniversary of that organization, and various special activities will be included during the meeting.

WAFWA's membership includes 24 states and Canadian provinces that encompass an area of nearly 3.7 million square miles of some of North America's most wild and scenic country, inhabited by more than 1,500 wildlife species. WAFWA's mission is to advance collaborative, proactive, science-based fish and wildlife conservation and management across the West. ♡

DON'T FORGET HUNTER EDUCATION BEFORE DOVE SEASON OPENER

Dove hunting season will be here before we realize it. So now is a great time to think about what should be done to prepare for some fast wing-shooting action!

One very important question is whether you or someone you know will require Hunter Education certification before the Sept. 1 dove season opener. Hunter education certification is required

before anyone who is 10 to 30 years old can get a regular hunting license.

Hunter education certification is available in two ways: an online course through www.wildlifedepartment.com, or a classroom course taught in-person at various times and locations statewide.


Oklahoma does not charge a fee for taking either the online course or the classroom course.

Those who want to attend an in-person hunter education class may search online for available classes and

register. Visit license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx? or scan the QR code and search for dates and locations.

All hunter education students are required to register using their GoOutdoorsOklahoma account, which they can create at the time they register.

Children 9 or younger may go through the hunter education course to learn about hunting safety, but they are not eligible to test for certification until they reach age 10. Also, anyone 31 and older is not required to have hunter education certification to purchase a regular hunting license.

But if you forget to become hunter education certified before hunting season opens, all is not lost! Anyone 30 or younger may get an apprentice-designated hunting license, which allows that person to hunt as long as a licensed hunter is present with the apprentice. 



OUTDOOR CALENDAR

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES, GO ONLINE TO LICENSE .
GOOUTDOORSOKLAHOMA.COM/Event/Events.aspx

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

JULY 2022

- 2** Oklahoma City Free Fishing Day, no city permit required.
- 3** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 4** Independence Day (state offices closed).
- 10** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 17** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 24** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 30** Hunter Education Class, Pauls Valley. Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx.
- 31** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- **ODWC Free Fishing Clinics** set in Guthrie, July 9; Jenks, July 12; Jenks, July 19; Moore, July 23; Jenks, July 26. Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx.
- **Ducks Unlimited** event info: www.ducks.org/Oklahoma/events.
- **Friends of NRA** events set in Stillwater, July 8; McAlester, July 9; Ardmore, July 23, Ada, July 28. Info: www.FriendsOfNRA.org.
- **National Wild Turkey Federation** event set in Edmond, July 1. Info: www.nwtf.org/events.

AUGUST 2022

- 1** Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission meeting, 9 a.m., Oklahoma City.
- 6** Oklahoma City Free Fishing Day, no city permit required.
- 7** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 13** Oklahoma Deer Hunting Conference and Expo by NWTF, Reed Center, Midwest City. Information, tickets: www.oknwtf.com or rick@nolanoutdoors.com.
- 14** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 21** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
- 28** "Outdoor Oklahoma" TV, 8 a.m., OETA.
Hunter Education Class, Dewey.
Register: license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Event/EventsHome.aspx.
- **Ducks Unlimited** events set in Sand Springs, Aug. 5; Earlsboro, Aug. 5; Wagoner, Aug. 6; Perry, Aug. 13; Broken Arrow, Aug. 13; Bartlesville, Aug. 20. Info: www.ducks.org/Oklahoma/events.
- **Friends of NRA** events set in Oklahoma City, Aug. 4; Idabel, Aug. 13. Info: www.FriendsOfNRA.org.
- **National Wild Turkey Federation** event set in Duncan, Aug. 1. Info: www.nwtf.org/events.

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

2021 CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

"HERITAGE LIVES THROUGH STORIES"

EDITOR'S NOTE: Each year, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and Oklahoma Station Chapter Safari Club International join to sponsor a creative writing competition for Oklahoma middle and high school students. A boy and a girl from two age divisions are selected winners. Students were required to write essays using the theme "Hunting: Sharing the Heritage" or "Archery: What I Like About Archery in the Schools and Bowhunting." Winners in the age 15-17 category receive a guided antelope hunt in the Texas Panhandle, and winners in the 11-14 age category receive a hunting trip with Rack Attack Outfitters of Fairview (or similar) and a scholarship to the Outdoor Texas Camp. In this issue, Outdoor Oklahoma honors high school category male winner Ty Cottrill, 16, a 10th-grader from Fairview High School.



HUNTING: SHARING THE HERITAGE

By Ty Cottrill

The definition of heritage is to pass down something that is either money, an object, or knowledge. Telling stories is heritage because you are giving experience and ideas about something to someone. You are not going to lie about it. When you talk about last night's trip, you do not make up a story about how massive that buck was. You tell the truth about how good it looked and how you want to kill it. It is an honest sport and is one of the great American pastimes.

I love to hunt, and I love the benefits and rewards that come from it. The trophies to showcase and

the meals that I get to eat make the struggle worth it. Be it a bow or gun, it is all thrilling. It is a rush to get up in the early morning with my dad without his coffee and in the freezing cold. I always

make my hunting trips interesting for my dad just because I can.

My favorite hunting story with my dad happened last year. It started a little later in the evening than we wanted due to the fact that I had fallen asleep. Thankfully, my dad has very effective techniques for waking me up, so we made it to the field pretty quickly after that. I wore all my best gear: my hat, boots, and camo jeans. I had also elected to wear my favorite coat because it has incredibly massive pockets. I had my usual hunting gear in those pockets such as my snacks, water, book, and knives.

We had to walk a good distance to get to the stand, and when we finally arrived, we were overlooking a field about 150 yards wide with a barbed-wire fence bordering it. Past that was a pair of train tracks with woods farther on. The stand we were using was tiny, cramped, and rather uncomfortable with two tiny seats and windows to shoot out of. It shook with our weight as we got settled in.

We waited for a few does to walk out like usual when a train rumbled by, spooking them off. Eventually they decided to come back out to graze. After a while, a burly old buck walked out with less than 10 minutes left of shooting light. I was jittery while looking at the buck and praying that it would stop walking. It seemed like after a lifetime, it finally reached the middle of the field and halted. I aimed at the front of its shoulder and waited. Bam! The scope slammed into my forehead, but I ignored it and yanked the bolt back to eject the shell. I pushed it back and was ready to fire again.

I aimed again and saw the buck practically flying away. It got caught in the fence slightly and was gone across the tracks into the woods. We searched around for blood, but could not find any. We kept searching. I was getting more furious, then out of the corner of my eye, I saw just a little bit of red in the darkness. I sprinted over to it and saw a small pile of gore and splatter. I shouted, and my dad hustled over. We followed the blood spots to the fence, climbed, and checked the tracks.

We left to go find the owner of the land that the deer had crossed onto. After about an hour, we came back with permission and delved into the woods. It was pitch black, but we kept walking. I went left, and Dad went right. I hated every second of it. It was dark and cold, and I kept stumbling. My foot caught a root, and I actually fell into the dry creek bed that my deer had died and fallen into. I laid there for a second before I looked into its eyes and almost had a heart attack.

I scrambled back and sat for a solid 30 seconds, praying before I found my voice to call out. I laid there waiting for my dad to fight his way through the jumble of undergrowth to me. I had my knife out because I did not know what else to do. When he finally reached me, we celebrated and drug it out. It was huge and old. We hauled it to the tracks and had to gut the buck there; it was just too heavy to pull across. After gutting, we pulled it into the truck. Hauling it up felt like a dream. I was so happy, and it is one of my fondest memories to this day. It may not be heritage, but I will pass it on anyway. 🍖

"I laid there for a second before I looked into its eyes and almost had a heart attack."



WELCOME TO THE DOCK!

ARE THE FISH BITING? YOU BET!

Step onto The Dock and take a gander at some remarkable catches made recently by Oklahoma anglers. Here's a few we thought you would enjoy! To see more or submit a photo of your catch, go to www.wildlifedepartment.com/fishing/the_dock.



NEW STATE RECORD!

Orlando Cheadle, golden shiner, 5.28 ounces, March 1, 2022, Grady County pond.



NEW STATE RECORD!

Rusty Dye, gizzard shad, 3 pounds 7 ounces, Kay County stream, April 20, 2022.



Kaden Hans, catfish, Tom Steed Reservoir, April 3, 2022.



Cody Hasty, crappie, Kaw Lake, April 24, 2022.



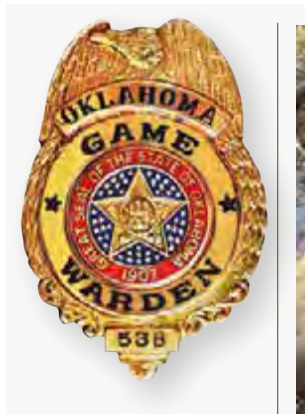
Joy Oiston, sunfish, Doc Hollis Lake, May 14, 2022.



Shirley McGuar, black bass, Payne County, April 9, 2022.

GAME WARDEN'S JOURNAL

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



Oklahoma Game Warden **Ben Radke**, based in Dewey County, is asking for the public's assistance in solving two cases of elk poaching. On March 18, Radke received a report of two dead bull elk. The first poaching occurred between Camargo and Leedey, along the South Canadian River near county roads 2090 and 740.

The heads and antlers of both bull elk had been removed. The carcasses consisted of only some bones and some hide, indicating the carcasses had been there for some time. The carcasses were about 100 yards apart. Evidence indicating both elk were poached during closed season was collected from the scene.

Radke then received a report of a third dead bull elk, northwest of Webb, near county roads 2160 and 750. This bull elk was known to frequent the property, as it was frequently seen on trail cameras in the area. Game Wardens went to the scene and gathered evidence.



The wanton disregard for these majestic animals and the wildlife laws protecting them is an egregious crime. Please call Radke at (580) 623-3255 with any information about these elk poaching cases so justice may be served. Reports may also be made anonymously to the **Operation Game Thief** hot line at (800) 522-8039. A reward up to \$500 is possible for information leading to an arrest and conviction. 🛡️

(Reports from the Oklahoma Game Wardens Facebook page.)

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

IT'S THE LAW: HOG (FERAL SWINE) NIGHT-SHOOTING EXEMPTION

Feral swine may be taken on private land year-round from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset using any method of take. A free night-shooting exemption is available online at wildlifedepartment.com, on the GoOutdoorsOklahoma mobile app, or from a Game Warden. It allows a landowner or his/her written designee to take feral swine at night on the registered property. Other shooters must carry a copy of the exemption and landowner's written permission. Other restrictions apply during big-game hunting seasons. **NOTE:** Effective Nov. 1, 2022, state law will allow landowners, ag lessees or their designated agent with written permission to control nuisance or damage by feral swine or coyotes during day or night, without an ODWC permit, to protect crops, livestock, feed, or seed, except during deer gun hunting seasons. 🛡️



OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA ADVENTURES: GET RAFFLE TICKETS BY AUG. 15

Would you like a chance to snag a world-record paddlefish? Get up close to some Oklahoma black bears? Set your sites on harvesting a cow elk?

These and other outdoor-related prizes are up for grabs during this year's **Outdoor Oklahoma Adventures** fund-raising raffles program. All raffle proceeds go directly to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to fund fish and wildlife conservation, and public hunting and fishing opportunities for everyone to enjoy.


Aug. 15, 2022, is the deadline to put your name into any or all of the seven drawings being held this year. The Outdoor Oklahoma Adventures range from hunting and fishing opportunities to wildlife viewing excursions, youth opportunities, and even collectibles!

Anyone can enter the drawings, whether or not you have a hunting or fishing license. Tickets within each raffle are \$10 each, or five tickets for \$30. There is also an Ultimate Bundle for \$50, which gets you one entry into all seven raffles. There is no limit to the number of tickets that you can buy.

Raffle tickets are on sale under the "Shop" tab through the Wildlife Department's license website at GoOutdoorsOklahoma.com.

The Outdoor Oklahoma Adventures for 2022 are:

- **Snagging for a World Record Paddlefish** with Reel Good Time Guide Service.
- Win a Complete Collector's Set of **Oklahoma Waterfowl Stamps**.
- Guided **Spring Turkey Hunt** With HiRoost Outfitters.
- Southwestern Oklahoma Private-land **Cow Elk Hunt**.
- Become a **Bear Biologist** for a Day.
- Win a **Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License**.
- Private-land **Youth Deer Hunt**.

See all the details of each Outdoor Oklahoma Adventure along with the rules at www.wildlifedepartment.com/outdoorok/adventures. 



GAME BAG

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS TO THE WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

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



Eric Suttles

Dear Wildlife Department,

Due to the outstanding kindness offered by an ODWC employee this weekend, I felt compelled to share my experience with you.

We have recently moved to a new area and were looking for a place to take my son for the youth turkey hunt. On Friday before the hunt, I took my son to Atoka Wildlife Management Area to scout for turkeys. Once we arrived, we encountered (ODWC Senior Biologist) **Eric Suttles**. He was extremely helpful and provided us with a nice overview of the area along with some helpful tips. On Saturday after our hunt, we again encountered Suttles. He was very interested in our experience and offered additional tips and suggestions to make our hunt successful.

I consider Suttles a fine asset to the ODWC and appreciate his willingness to share his expertise with the youths of Oklahoma. He contributed much to a great experience for my son and continued to foster in him a love for the great Oklahoma outdoors!

Brad and Zachary Wheeler



Kelly Adams

Dear Nels Rodefeld, Chief, Communication and Education Division,

The staff and I at Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge would like to thank **Kelly Adams** and **Sarah Southerland** from the C/E Division for their assistance with the Oklahoma Junior Duck Stamp Program. They have been instrumental in helping the refuge promote this program across the state and build partnerships with other organizations along the way. This partnership has greatly expanded the reach of the program and has reached more people than our refuge could alone. This program benefits both your agency and ours through a better understanding of waterfowl and wetlands, but the program also extends into the arts. Participants in our Junior Duck Stamp Program have also participated in the Oklahoma Duck Stamp competition.

I have been a refuge manager in Oklahoma for 22 years, and I can attest to the great partnership between our two agencies. We look forward to working with you and other ODWC employees on many future projects.

**Darrin Unruh, National Wildlife Refuge Manager,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**



Sarah Southerland

Dear Wildlife Department,

Has ODWC ever considered starting a share-lunker program like Texas? If not, why? Would such a program work to grow bigger bass in Oklahoma? Is it a cost issue? Texas calls it the Toyota Sharelunker Program, so I assume Texas Parks and Wildlife has a corporate sponsor to pay for it?

Ed Godfrey

Here is some background about what's been done to evaluate such a program and what ODWC does to enhance trophy genetics throughout Oklahoma. In 2008, ODWC hired an independent contractor to conduct a feasibility study for a "Share-a-Lunker"-style



Ken Cunningham

program. That study looked at the needed hatchery and equipment upgrades, personnel needs, and the associated operational costs. At that time, projected upgrade costs were \$3.8 million, annual operation costs were \$280,000, and it would require five additional staff members at the Durant State Fish Hatchery.

That program was determined to be cost-prohibitive at the time. That was especially the case when considering what ODWC was already doing to enhance bass genetics. ODWC was, and still is, operating a Florida Largemouth Bass Stocking Program. The goal of the program is to influence the genetics of our largemouth bass populations and to produce more bass over 8 pounds.

This stocking program began in the 1970s, and we currently stock on average 1.4 million Florida largemouth bass each year. Stockings are done on a rotation from a list of 45 eligible lakes that offer trophy potential.

Brood stock used in our breeding program have been obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife over the years. We currently contract with Auburn University to genetically test our brood stock to ensure they are pure Florida bass before spawning them. We also conduct surveys of stocked lakes to evaluate the genetics and growth of our bass populations. All of these efforts have led to the trophy bass successes that we've had at lakes including Arbuckle, Broken Bow, McGee Creek, and Cedar, just to name a few.

Ken Cunningham, Fisheries Division Chief, ODWC

CLARIFICATION: An article in the May/June 2022 issue about a change in harvest rules for black bass should have indicated that the new harvest rule will apply statewide unless otherwise listed in Special Area Regulations in the Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Regulations. The new rule will become effective in September 2022.

NEW REGULATIONS BOOK FOR 2022-23 ARRIVING IN MID-AUGUST



The 2022-23 edition of the **Oklahoma Fishing and Hunting Regulations** is scheduled to be available online in mid-August and in print shortly after.

The regulations book for everyone who hunts, fishes or traps in Oklahoma. Every hunter and angler should read and reference the current regulations for the following 12 months.

The free printed regulations will be available at license vendors and Wildlife Department offices across the state. The online version can be found at wildlifedepartment.com, and on the GoOutdoorsOklahoma mobile app for Apple or Android devices.

Some notable changes becoming effective this year include:

- A new daily limit effective Sept. 1 of six large-mouth and/or smallmouth bass of any length, with only one greater than 16 inches long. Also, a black bass fishing tournament exemption allows fish over 16 inches to be kept alive until weigh-in, after which the fish must be released.
- Hunting, fishing and combination licenses will now be valid for 365 days from date of purchase.
- Landowners may shoot nuisance coyotes and feral swine on agricultural land without a permit at night.
- Antlerless deer Zone 10 will be open for holiday antlerless deer gun season.

- Adjustment of license fees for nonresident youths.
- Allow the use of pneumatic airbows during any open hunting season in which rifles are a legal method of take.
- Close quail season Dec. 31 for nonresident hunters on western Oklahoma wildlife management areas.
- New bag limit of only one brown trout of 30 inches or longer in the Lower Mountain Fork River trout area.
- Open several western Oklahoma public lands to statewide trapping for the month of February.
- Reducing parcel size to 320 acres to qualify for private land youth bonus antlerless deer hunts.
- Close Selman Bat Cave property to open public access.
- Clarifying restrictions on number of days camping is allowed on wildlife management areas.

Hunters and anglers are reminded that the annual regulations publication is a summary of Oklahoma statutes contained in Titles 29 and 800 that pertain to fish and wildlife. The regulations publication is not a legal document, and anyone who hunts, fishes, traps or uses ODWC-owned or -managed lands is responsible for knowing and abiding by state statutes. 📖



BUFFLEHEAD PAINTING WINS ODWC SPECIAL ART AWARD FOR 2022

An acrylic painting titled "The Art of Wetland Conservation" by London Peterson won the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Special Award in this year's Sutton Award student art contest.

The Indianola Public Schools 12th-grader received a cash prize for the best depiction of an Oklahoma-related conservation subject. Her artwork depicts four buffleheads in flight.

Peterson's painting was also an honorable mention in ODWC's 2022-23 Oklahoma Waterfowl Stamp Design Competition.

Established in 2005 by the George Miksch Sutton Avian Research Center, the Sutton Award for

Excellence in Communicating Current Conservation Issues recognizes high school students who demonstrate the ability to communicate conservation topics in compelling ways. The show is free to enter and open to all Oklahoma high school students grades 9-12. The award is funded up to \$20,000, which is distributed to winning student participants and their instructors as determined by a selection committee. Sponsors include the Wildlife Department, NatureWorks, Nothing bundt Cakes, UCO College of Fine Arts and Design, Grant's Frames, Jenks Chamber of Commerce, Nouveau Atelier de Chocolat, and Hive.

The next Sutton Award student art contest will open for entries in September; artworks will be due in January. For more information and to view a gallery of this year's entries, go to <https://2022suttonaward.artcall.org/pages/web-gallery>. 📖





Northern raccoon | Josh Newton of Tahlequah



Nine-banded armadillo | Coy Woods Neal of Snyder



American goldfinch | Carolyn Ehlers of Tulsa

READERS' PHOTOGRAPHY SHOWCASE 2022

Outdoor Oklahoma's annual **Readers' Photography Showcase** issue is always among the most popular of this magazine's issues each year. There's no doubt why. Appearing on these pages are dozens of masterpieces that capture the essence of this state's great outdoors.

For this 2022 edition, nearly 250 talented people graciously shared 581 images with us during our 14-week entry period. All the entries are, by and large, very good photos. Some, however, are better than others, and a few can be considered the cream of the crop.

Of course, evaluating these images comes with plenty of subjectivity. But yet again, I find myself awestruck by the magnificent moments that have been forever frozen in time.

There are images that appeal on an emotional level: They convey a mood,

serve to encourage, or conjure deeper thought. There are images that are technically brilliant: The lighting is dramatic, or the composition is spot-on. Some photos are testament to a great deal of thought and planning, while others are simply the result of pure luck: someone was in the right place at the right moment to create a light-painting that will occur only once in all of time.

We get to experience the annual Readers' Photography Showcase because these talented creators choose to share their treasures with us. And each year, we emerge much richer than before.

Our sincere gratitude goes out to all who submitted entries, and our congratulations to those whose photos appear here. And now, on to the photos.

— Don P. Brown, Associate Editor



Greater roadrunner | Jacob Miller of Arnett



Damselflies | Kay Williams of Yukon



Black-tailed prairie dog | Michael Bryan of Bartlesville



American bison | Jenna Tow of Claremore



Coyote | David Strozdz of Edmond



Barred owl | Mark Robinson of Tulsa



A bald eagle descends on its perch along the Arkansas River in Sand Springs.

Bald eagle | Karen Perez of Cleveland



White-tailed deer | Susan Stewart of Tulsa

Caught this sleepy little tree frog in my backyard in Owasso.

Gray tree frog | Brenda Osbourne of Owasso





Veterans Lake at Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

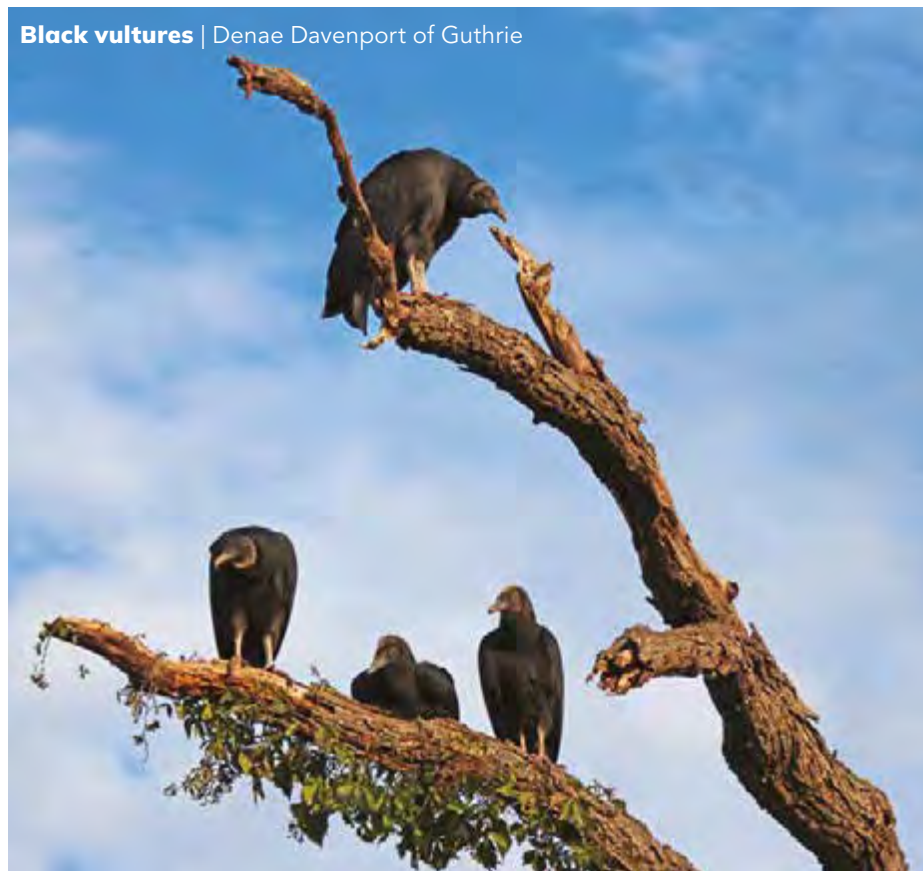
Ron Parker of Sulphur



American kestrel | Vijay Somalinga of Weatherford



Barn owl | Steve Metz of Tulsa



Black vultures | Denae Davenport of Guthrie



Alex McBride of Tahlequah



Eastern chipmunk | Kellie Carter of Newcastle



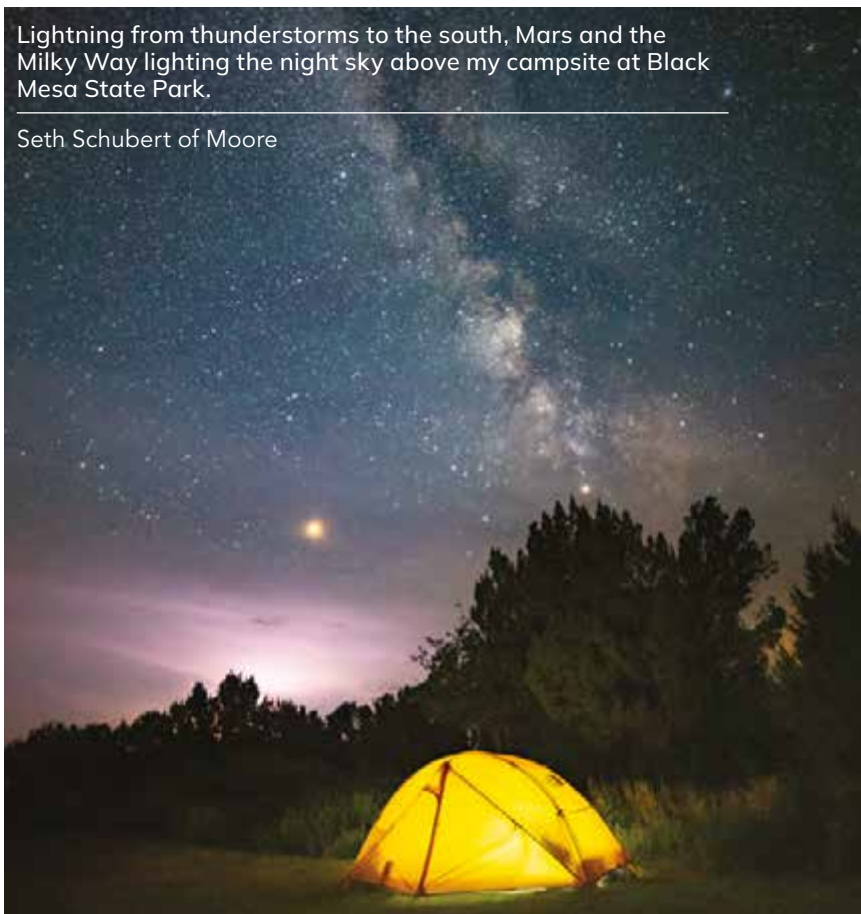
White-tailed deer | Ashley Faram of Oklahoma City



Blue jay | Kyle Underwood of Tahlequah

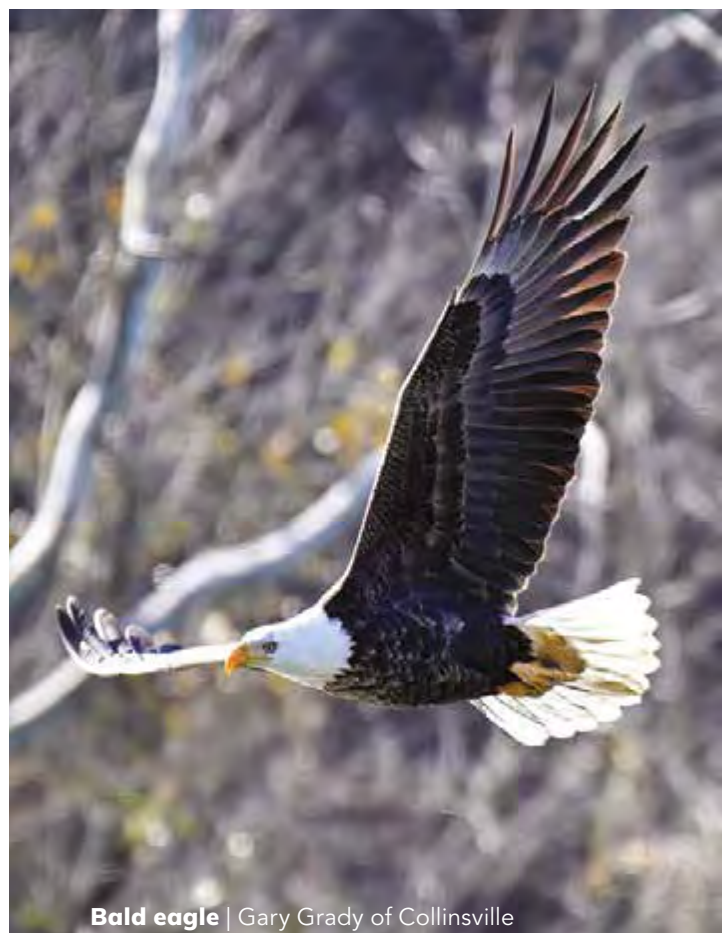
Lightning from thunderstorms to the south, Mars and the Milky Way lighting the night sky above my campsite at Black Mesa State Park.

Seth Schubert of Moore





Canada geese | Ben Benson of Durant

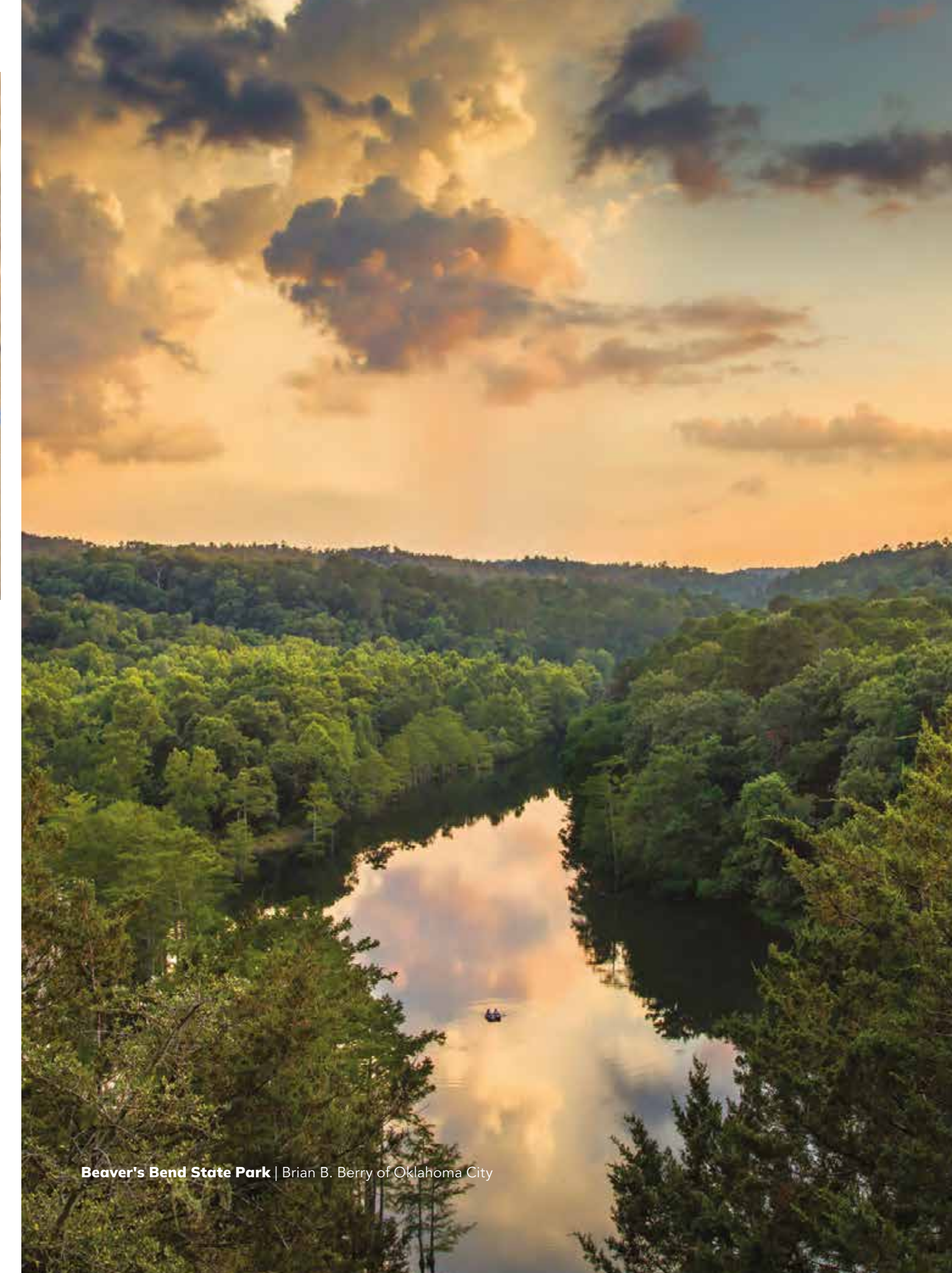


Bald eagle | Gary Grady of Collinsville



Juvenile Mississippi kite landing with a cicada it caught. It's a lot of fun watching them soar above and pounce on cicadas. The photo was taken from my back deck; lucky to have them nesting in the neighborhood.

Mississippi kite | Pratyaydipta Rudra of Stillwater



Beaver's Bend State Park | Brian B. Berry of Oklahoma City

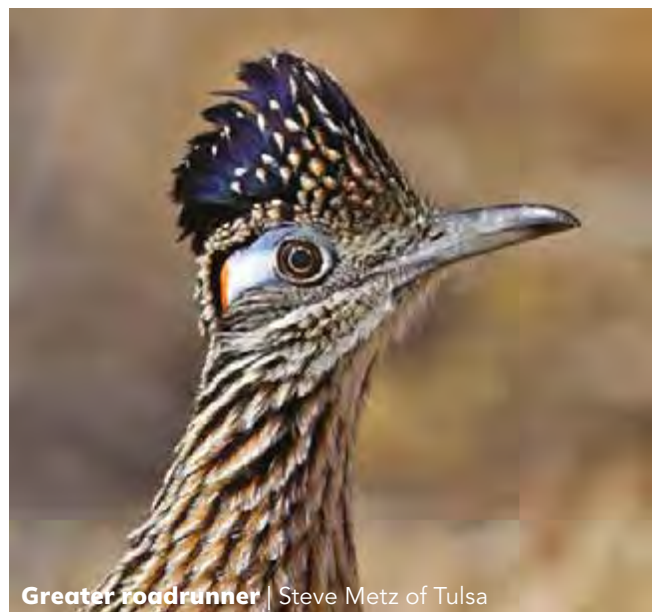


Prairie rattlesnake
near the Antelope
Hills in Roger Mills County.

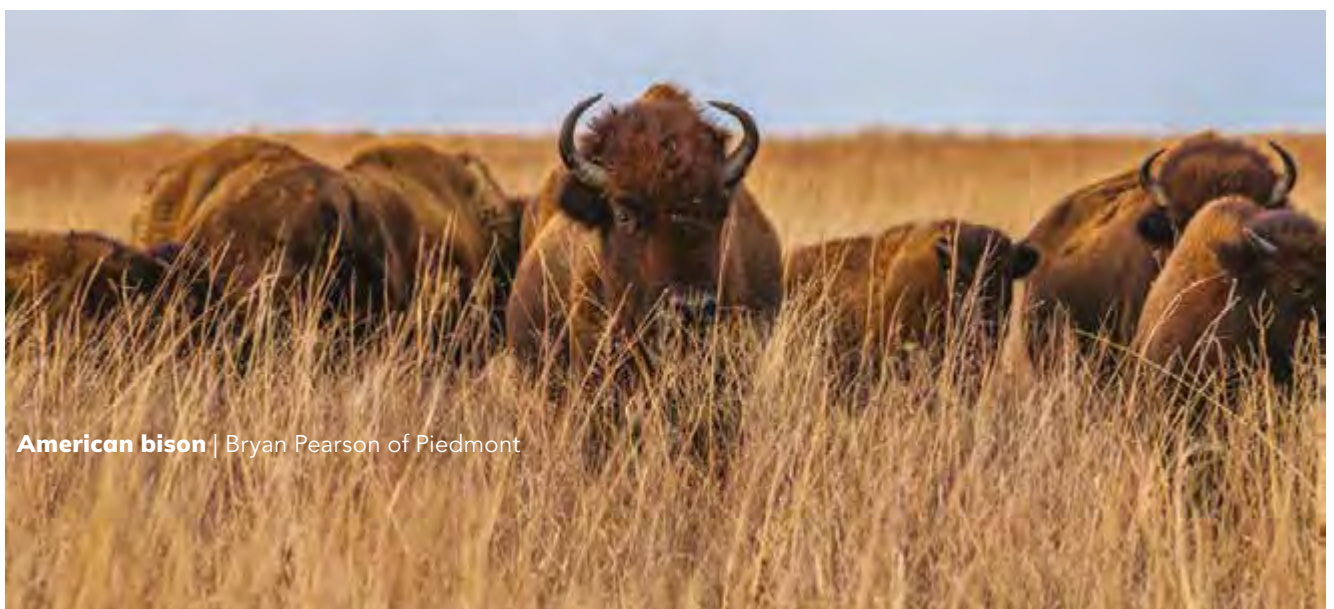
Prairie rattlesnake | Corey Rex Miller of Arnett



Texas horned lizard | Bill Carrell of Tulsa



Greater roadrunner | Steve Metz of Tulsa



American bison | Bryan Pearson of Piedmont



Keeping An Eye Out — mule deer at Black Mesa State Park.

Mule deer | Jim Norwood of Tulsa



Juvenile burrowing owl on a hot and windy day in southwestern Oklahoma.

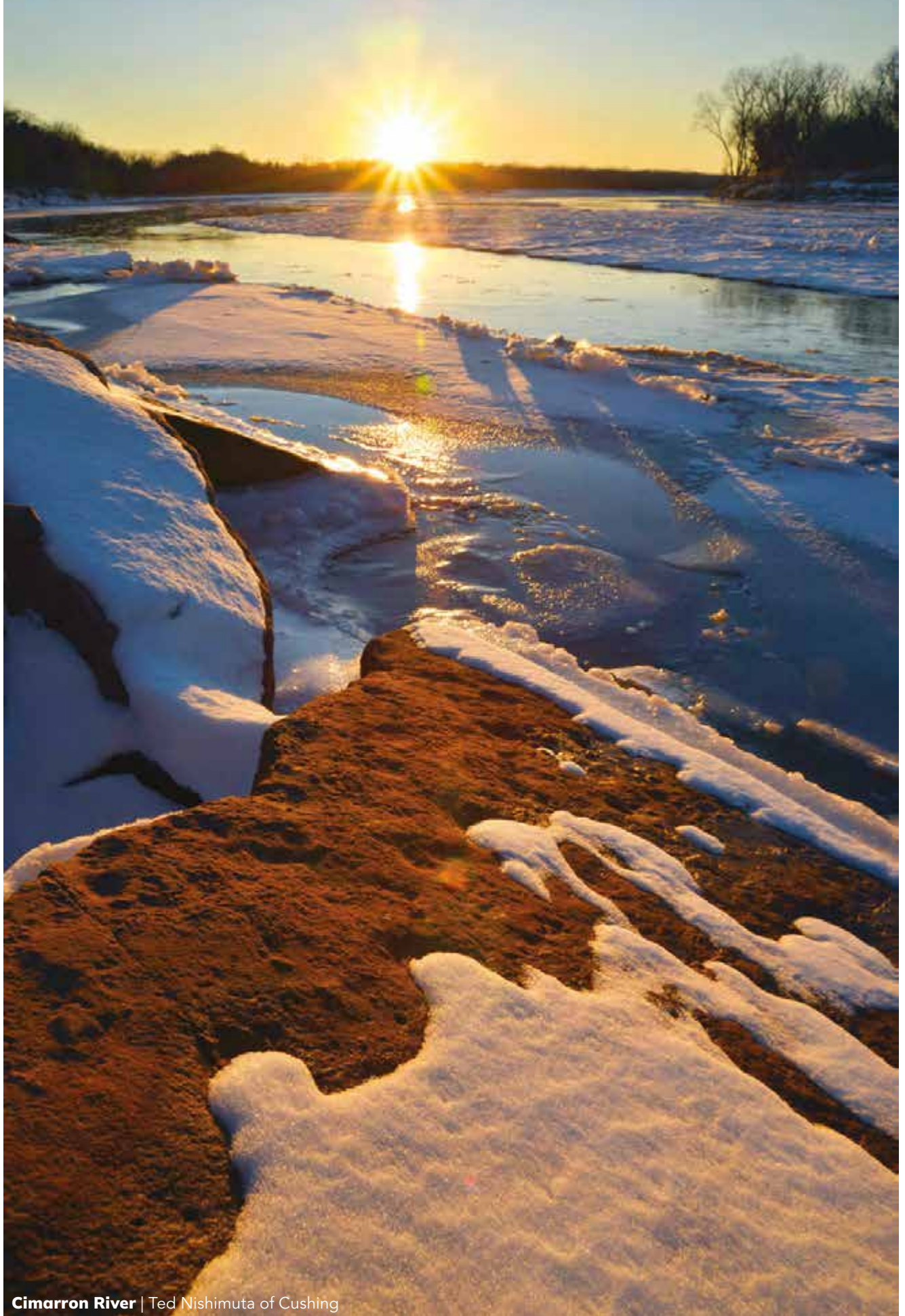
Burrowing owl | Mary E. Phillips of Lawton



Eastern collared lizard | Sheila Gillis of Chickasha



Oklahoma brown tarantula | Eldon Harris of Norman



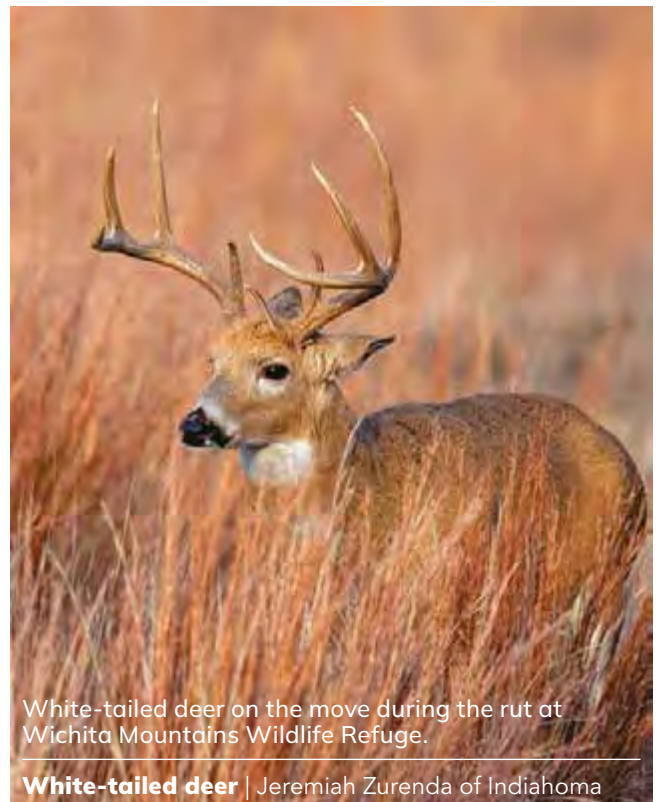
Cimarron River | Ted Nishimuta of Cushing



Cookson Wildlife Management Area | David Garrett of Park Hill



Morgan Nabors of Antlers



White-tailed deer on the move during the rut at Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

White-tailed deer | Jeremiah Zurenda of Indianoma



Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly | Kit Leong of Edmond



Cicadas | Seth Schubert of Moore



This *Paracantha culta*, a type of fruit fly, was hanging out on a thistle at Hickory Creek Wildlife Management Area. It caught my attention because of its unusual eyes.

Paracantha culta | Erin Banta of Marietta



Halloween pennant dragonfly | Cheryl Welch of Broken Arrow



Checkered white butterfly | Carolyn Ehlers of Tulsa



These are dogbane leaf beetles on a dogbane plant at Hickory Creek Wildlife Management Area. I usually look to photograph these beauties every summer when the dogbane appears.

Dogbane leaf beetles | Erin Banta of Marietta



Gulf fritillary butterfly | Scott Briggs of Stillwater



Hiker along the waters of the Mountain Fork River at Beaver's Bend State Park.

Stacy Freeny of Broken Bow



American bullfrog | Scott Smith of Newcastle



Mallard | Tim Rossiter of Oklahoma City



Red fox | Randy Sander of Broken Bow



This gator was at Red Slough Wildlife Management Area.

American alligator | Randy Sander of Broken Bow



Great blue heron | Robert Karges of Lexington



Hunting at Sandhills WMA | Justin Hulsey of Luther



Northern bobwhite quail | Randy Shackelford of Noble



Wild turkeys | Riley Motrych of Shawnee

American black bear | Desiree Branson Cline of Honobia



Eastern fox squirrel | Cheryl Welch of Broken Arrow

Elk | Sheila Gillis of Chickasha



Tony Perry of Fort Towson





Tapangia Richardson of Oklahoma City



A river otter carrying breakfast to eat on the bank, at Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

Northern river otter | Richard Taylor of Lawton

Snowy egret | Kim Bellman of Lawton



American avocets | Bill Carrell of Tulsa



Mallards | Don Barksdale of Fort Smith, Ark.



Great blue heron | Mark Robinson of Tulsa



Monarch butterfly | Carolyn Ehlers of Tulsa



Black-chinned hummingbird | Chase Moxley of Oklahoma City



Orange sulphur butterfly | Ryan Priddy of Tulsa



Loggerhead shrike | Coy Woods Neal of Snyder





Indigo bunting | Jeremiah Zurenda of Indianahoma



Western bluebird | Steve Metz of Tulsa



American Avocet | Chase Moxley of Oklahoma City

Canada geese | David Rios of Erick



Long-billed curlew | Steve Metz of Tulsa



Pileated woodpeckers | Steve Metz of Tulsa



Pronghorn fawn in Cimarron County.

Pronghorn | David Strozdz of Edmond



Northern harrier | Mark Robinson of Tulsa



Northern harrier guarding its pigeon kill in Comanche County.

Northern harrier | Richard Taylor of Lawton



Red-headed woodpecker | Mitch Moore of Welling



Northern raccoon | Randy Shackleford of Noble



Red-tailed hawk | Jeremiah Zurenda of Indianahoma



Blue jay feather | Monica Martinez of Tulsa



Redhead | Ashley Faram of Oklahoma City



Red foxes | Scott Gallagher of Afton

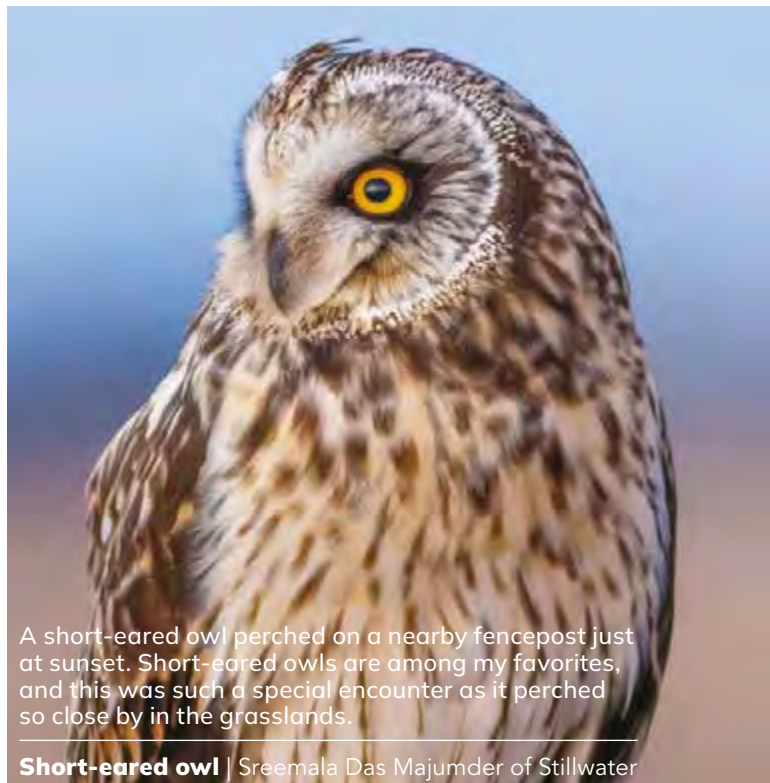


A leucistic bald eagle sparked quite a stir at Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge in February 2022.

Bald eagle | Bluto Smith of Newcastle



Red-bellied woodpecker | Sherman L Barr of Edmond



A short-eared owl perched on a nearby fencepost just at sunset. Short-eared owls are among my favorites, and this was such a special encounter as it perched so close by in the grasslands.

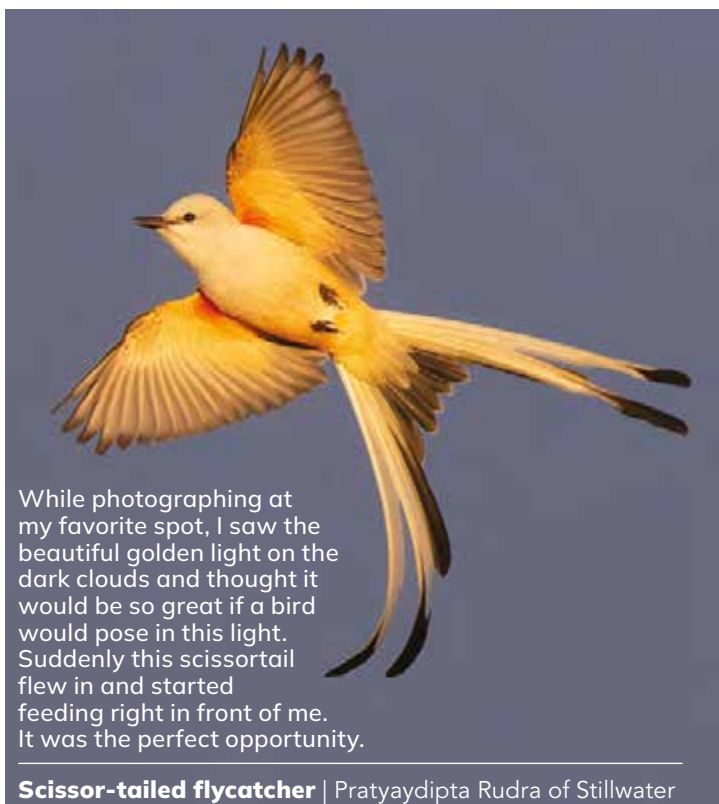
Short-eared owl | Sreemala Das Majumder of Stillwater



Tufted titmouse | Jerry Ehlers of Tulsa



Sharp-shinned hawk | Bob Chance of Tulsa



While photographing at my favorite spot, I saw the beautiful golden light on the dark clouds and thought it would be so great if a bird would pose in this light. Suddenly this scissortail flew in and started feeding right in front of me. It was the perfect opportunity.

Scissor-tailed flycatcher | Pratyaydipta Rudra of Stillwater



Painted bunting | Stacy Freeny of Broken Bow



Swallowtail butterfly
on a buttonbush
at Chickasaw National
Recreation Area near Sulphur.

Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly | Liz Tyner of Stillwater



Gray tree frog | John Wilson of Tulsa

A juvenile ruby-throated hummingbird resting on a petal between feeding sessions at Stillwater Botanical Garden.

Ruby-throated hummingbird | Sreemala Das Majumder of Stillwater





Green lynx spider | Vijay Somalinga of Weatherford



Common eastern bumble bee | Robert A. Dollarhide of Locust Grove



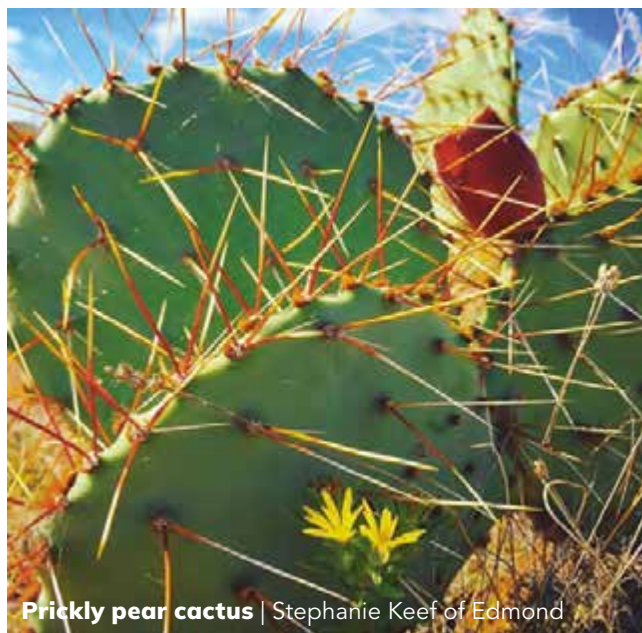
Black swallowtail caterpillar | Jerry Ehlers of Tulsa

American bison at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

American bison | Anitra Lavanhar of Tulsa



Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge | Sheila Gillis of Chickasha



Prickly pear cactus | Stephanie Keef of Edmond



White-tailed deer | Eldon Harris of Norman



Elk | Juanita Harris of Norman



Wild turkey | Justin Avery of McAlester



White-tailed deer | Mark Bright of Oklahoma City



White-tailed deer | Raygan Dodd of Madill



Northern river otters | Randy Sander of Broken Bow



Amy Drabek of Moore

Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation Update



J. Larry Nichols

The second-annual Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation Hall of Fame Induction Celebration and Banquet is set for Oct. 6, 2022, at the Omni Convention Center Hotel in Oklahoma City.

The event will honor J. Larry Nichols of Oklahoma City as this year's Conservation Hall of Fame inductee.

OWCF Executive Director Rick Grundman said, "This banquet and ceremony is a great opportunity to help further wildlife conservation in Oklahoma and to recognize Larry Nichols, a great advocate for the state's natural resources and the outdoors."


The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Hall of Fame recognizes conservation leaders in Oklahoma, one of the most ecologically diverse states in nation. Oklahoma is home to a wide variety of habitats for than 760 different species of wildlife.

Nichols, 79, is a co-founder and Chairman Emeritus of Devon Energy Corp. He served as a director from 1971 to 2016. In 1980, he became Devon's CEO, then chairman in 2000, then executive chairman in 2010.

Nichols served as law clerk to Chief Justice Earl Warren and Justice Tom Clark of the U.S. Supreme Court from 1967 to 1968. He then served as special assistant to Assistant Attorney General William Rehnquist in the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Nichols is vice chairman of the National Petroleum Council and serves on the board of the National Association of Manufacturers. He is a former chairman of the American Petroleum Institute. Nichols earned a bachelor's degree in geology from Princeton University and a law degree from the University of Michigan.

OWCF is working with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to bring more wildlife and wild spaces projects to Oklahoma in a more rapid manner. Since ODWC doesn't receive appropriated state tax dollars, donating to OWCF is one of the best ways to help positively impact Oklahoma wildlife and wild spaces. The annual Gala is the Foundation's primary fund-raising event of the year.

Sponsorships are available for the Hall of Fame event. For more information, go to www.OKwildlifefoundation.org, email Grundman at rgrundman@okwildlifefoundation.org, or call (918) 323-5566. 



THE OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION (OWCF) is the nonprofit organization formed to work exclusively alongside and provide added financial support to the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and its activities in managing the state's fish and wildlife resources and habitats. The Wildlife Department receives no general state tax appropriations; ODWC operates primarily with license sales and federal matching grants. OWCF provides supporters an outlet to show their passion for the outdoors by investing their time and money in projects that will make a difference for generations to come.

All donations are tax-deductible. For more information, go to www.OKwildlifefoundation.org or www.facebook.com/OKWildlifeFoundation.



The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation is now set up as a charitable organization through AmazonSmile. AmazonSmile is a program that donates 0.5 percent of your eligible purchases on Amazon to a charity of your choice. All you need to do is start your shopping at smile.amazon.com. The donation will be made at no extra cost to you, and you can choose from nearly a million public charitable organizations.

William Reagan, Board of Directors

William "Will" Reagan is originally from Beeville, Texas. But he found his home in Oklahoma, where he was the president (now retired) of Reagan Resources Inc., an oil and gas field services industry. He earned his bachelor's degree in wildlife science from Texas A&M University and furthered his education with his master's degree in wildlife science from Utah State University.

Reagan and his wife, Jane, have two children, Dustin Reagan and Kate Schuelke, and four grandchildren.

He began his journey with OWCF in July 2018. Reagan was prompted to serve as a Foundation member because it gave him the opportunity to apply his academics, career background, and experience in the outdoors to help realize the goals of OWCF and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Reagan is eager to help raise the funds necessary to implement ODWC's proposed projects and to increase opportunities for all Oklahomans to become aware of, participate in, and enjoy all aspects of the great Oklahoma outdoors.

He is also involved in the Oklahoma Youth Hunting Program, an organization of sportsmen and sportswomen who are dedicated to introducing 12-17 year old non-hunters to the sport of hunting and outdoor experiences.

His favorite outdoor experiences are his "72 years of fishing, hunting, camping, exploring, numerous species-specific and habitat research projects, and various vegetative and wildlife inventories." While he enjoys all of it, his favorite outdoor activities are fishing and birding.

Hunting and angling are a big influence on Reagan's life. He said both are "critical in the maintenance and enhancement of physical, mental, and emotional health and happiness."

And that helps explain why he is an advocate for the Foundation's mission: to partner with ODWC for development in programs and facilities that make it possible for all Oklahomans to enjoy the outdoors. 🐾



Will Reagan holds a paddlefish he snagged in eastern Oklahoma.



Will Reagan after a successful feral swine hunt.

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



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Show your support of the Wildlife Department's Land Acquisition Fund with these striking window decals. All proceeds are earmarked to help provide hunting and fishing access to the public. — \$10 each



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OUTDOOR OKLAHOMA CAPS

These sharp, colorful fabric caps feature the "Outdoor Oklahoma" logo. Available selections may vary from those shown here (subject to availability). — \$20



OKLAHOMA WATERFOWL HUNTING STAMP

Oklahoma "duck stamps" are always popular with collectors and hunters. While each year's stamp features a different handsome design sure to add appeal to any stamp collection, funds from stamp sales are used for many kinds of waterfowl management projects. Specify year when ordering. — \$10



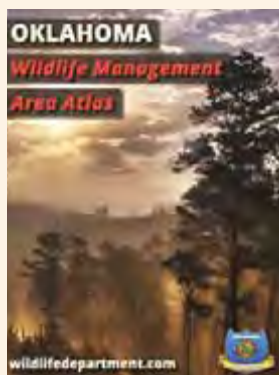
WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATES

Dress up your vehicle while showing your support of our great state's wildlife resources by getting a wildlife license plate. Nine Wildlife Conservation Plates are available to serve as your regular, rear-bumper license plate. The plates cost just \$40 (original or replacement) or \$36.55 (renewals) above your regular annual registration fee with proceeds going to Oklahoma's Wildlife Diversity Program. The forms are available at local tag agencies, or online at tinyurl.com/WildTags.



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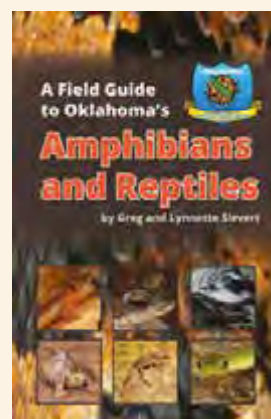
OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA ATLAS

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

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MELANIE EMERSON OF CHOCTAW



Great white egret in flight at Ten Acre Lake in Choctaw

Outdoor Oklahoma

