

# WILDLIFE EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Department of Wildlife & Parks  
Wildlife Education Coordinator, Joyce Harmon Deppenbusch

WINTER 90



## KANSAS WILDLIFE HERITAGE MONTH

April 22, 1990 is the 20th anniversary of EARTH DAY. In recognition of this, Kansans will be celebrating Kansas Wildlife Heritage Month in April of this year. The theme for this year's celebration is : "Earth-Our Only Habitat". The idea is to make sure that people remember wildlife during all the special events associated with Earth Day. After all--we and wildlife are in this together. Kansas wildlife are tied to all the things we do to the Earth--either good or bad. Wildlife are the front line indicators of an unhealthy environment. Often through their succumbing to contaminants, they warn us of impending disaster. The fate of endangered species and increased rates of extinction raises concerns that perhaps we are changing our Earth a little too much even for our own benefit. Think Earth Day! And think **WILDLIFE** when you do think Earth Day! Here are some ideas on ways to relate wildlife to Earth Day activities:

Sponsor wildlife plantings on school grounds as part of the statewide tree planting effort. (Contact State and Extension Forestry and the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for information).

Include wildlife themes in Environmental Fairs for Earth Day celebrations.

Sponsor recycling education events that discuss wildlife habitat conservation benefits.

Start an "Adopt-a-resource" program for your favorite stream or public area.

Develop backyard wildlife habitats and seek special certification through the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Have some special activities for Earth Day 20 on April 22 and through the week of April 22-29 which is the National Celebration of the Outdoors.

**Just A Reminder:** The Wildlife Reference Center has a variety of learning kits, films, filmstrips, and other audio-visual materials for your use. Call Maxine at 672-5911 ext. 183 or send your requests by mail to Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, Rt 2, Box 54A, Pratt, KS 67124. Give her at least two or three weeks advanced notice. Of special interest for winter use are : LK-16 O.B.I.S. packet of Wintertime activities, FS-20E The Changing Seasons - Winter filmstrip, FS-32 Animal Tracks and Signs filmstrip, SS-26 Animal Tracks and Signs slide series, LK-26 Replitrack learning kit, 3-9 Invite Birds to Your Home book, 3-15 My Recipes Are For The Birds book, 14-2 The Reasons For Seasons activity book, 14-3 The Curious Naturalist activity book.

Please check with your librarian's copy of the Wildlife Reference Center catalog for further descriptions of these items and other items in the Wildlife Reference Center. Or, write to us and request a copy of the catalog.

The K-12 Wildlife education curriculum has been sent to every Kansas public and private school. Please check with the building librarian and/or principal for your set of the materials if you are unfamiliar with them.

The current list of endangered and threatened species in Kansas includes:

#### ENDANGERED

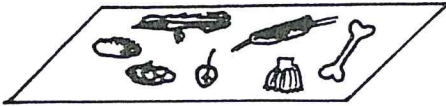
Bald eagle	Black-capped vireo
Eskimo curlew	Least tern
Peregrine falcon	Whooping crane
Black-footed ferret	Gray myotis
Flat floater	Slender walker
Arkansas river shiner	Pallid sturgeon
Sicklefin chub	Speckled chub
Cave salamander	Graybelly salamander
Grotto salamander	

#### THREATENED

Broadhead skink	Checkered garter snake
Eastern hognose snake	Kansas glossy snake
New Mexico blind snake	Northern redbelly snake
Texas longnose snake	Texas night snake
Western earth snake	Piping plover
Snowy plover	White-faced ibis
Eastern spotted skunk	Scott riffle beetle
Arkansas darter	Chestnut lamprey
Flathead chub	Hornyhead chub
Neosho madtom	Redspot chub
Silverband shiner	Central newt
Dark-sided salamander	Eastern narrowmouth toad
Green frog	Northern crawfish frog
Northern spring peeper	Strecker's chorus frog
Western green toad	

\*\*\*\*\*

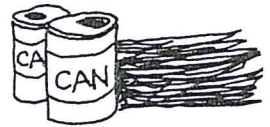
### ACTIVITY IDEAS



-Have a "touch and see" table in your classroom with tree bark, rocks, bones, shells, etc. that your students can explore in their free time. Add items that the children bring in. If you don't have room for a table, have a "touch and feel" box of appropriate size. Cut an opening for hand and arm and place objects inside that students may identify by touch only.

-Mark off a 40- to 50-foot trail and place 10 to 15 man-made objects along it. The children walk silently along the trail trying to spot (but not pick up) as many of the objects as they can. When they reach the end of the trail, they whisper the number of objects they saw to you. If they missed any, see if they can find them on a second try. End with a discussion of natural and man-made things, and living and non-living things. What examples of each did they see.

-People use natural resources at a fast rate. Recommend to your students that they recycle and conserve natural resources as much as possible. Organize a paper or aluminum recycling project for your school or district.



-Have your students list all things that they need to live. How does this list compare with that of wildlife? Which items overlap as needs of humans and wildlife? Can the children revise their list and do without some things? Stress food, water, and cover as the essentials for wildlife and humans. Try to differentiate between what we need to survive and which items are for a "better" standard of living.

-When students are playing or running on the playground, have them pick up litter. Their ticket to get back inside is two pieces of litter.

-Play porcupine tag. The porcupine is "it" and can move easily while the other players are required to hold one leg and hop. They can be tagged by the porcupine if they let go of their leg. If caught, they become the porcupine.



-Play "Prairie Rattlers." The group forms a circle around two blindfolded members, making a "snake pit." The blindfolded players are the prairie rattlers. Their rattlers are tin cans with stones in them. One snake is the pursuer, who has 5 shakes of the rattle to find and touch the pursued. The pursued must respond immediately after each shake from the pursuer. The pursued can shake as often as he/she dares. The players forming the snake pit keep track of the rattles and cheer. The snake pit may change in size and shape to add variety.

-Take a blind trust walk. Students work with partners, each having a chance to be blindfolded. While "blind" they are **carefully** led to explore surrounding areas using their other senses. The leader may have the blindfolded person experience touching a feather or tree bark, smelling the soil, listening to the wind, etc. A group can be led together by having participants hang onto a rope throughout the course. Conclude the activity by seeing if the participants can retrace their steps when the blindfolds are removed.



-Divide the class into small groups for a game of leap frog. Discuss how frogs move. Expand the game to include other animals. Have students act out the movements of other wildlife and let the other students guess what they are pretending to be.

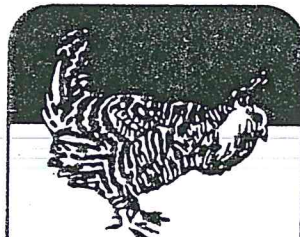
-Divide the class into groups of approximately 5. Give each group an animal name. The group combines to form the animal. The rest of the class tries to guess what it is.

-Play "Nesting Red-Winged Blackbirds." Players are in groups of 3, except for one person who is the caller. Two of the group hold hands and form a cattail nest. The third player is a red-winged blackbird who stands inside the nest. When the caller says, "Blackbirds find a new nest," the birds change locations and the caller tries to find a home. The un-nested bird becomes the new caller. After a while, let the nests and the bird players change roles.



\*\*\*\*\*

**K-12 Wildlife Education Curriculum** with teacher's guides and student activities. These **nonconsumable** materials have been sent to every Kansas public and private building. If they have been lost or misplaced in your building, contact us for replacements. Please make a thorough search of your building before requesting replacements. Copies are now available for each classroom, not just one set per building.



wildlife  
education  
service

KANSAS WILDLIFE AND PARKS