

**Kansas
State Report
May 10, 2024**

**Christopher Kennedy, Secretary
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
1020 S Kansas Ave, Suite 200
Topeka, KS 66612**

KDWP reviewing proposed status changes for three Threatened species

In 2023, KDWP began review of the existing Threatened and Endangered species lists - a process that occurs every 5 years. The review process starts with a call for petitions for species status changes, which are then reviewed by the Threatened and Endangered Species Task Committee. Six petitions were submitted during this review period, 3 of which (Shoal Chub, Broad-headed Skink, and Northern Map Turtle) were found to contain substantial evidence that warranted further review. All 3 substantial petitions proposed the movement of Threatened species to the Species In Need of Conservation list, largely based on improved survey methods and/or increased efforts that led to increases in documented records of the species in Kansas. Species and taxonomic experts were then solicited for their evaluation of the species' status in the state. Five public informational meetings were held to gather additional information from the public. The Task Committee is now formulating status recommendations to the KDWP Secretary. Several more steps are required to complete the 5-year review, including targeted and public notices of potential changes, but the process will conclude with a vote at the KDWP Commission to change the lists (regulations) of Species In Need of Conservation, Threatened Species, and Endangered Species and publishing in the Kansas Register, likely in late 2024.

Recovery program updates:

SHA/CCAA Amendment

An amendment to KDWP's Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreement and Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances was submitted in 2023 and published in the Federal Register on 2/1/2024. The proposed amendment seeks to add six additional species to the existing list of 15 already covered by the agreement. Additional species include the Snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), Ouachita Kidneyshell (*Ptychobranhus occidentalis*), Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*), Sturgeon Chub (*Macrhybopsis gelida*), and the Sicklefin Chub (*Macrhybopsis meeki*). The goal of the Aquatic Species Recovery Program is to reestablish populations of native species back into habitats where they used to occur but have since disappeared. Species reintroductions and monitoring surveys are made possible through voluntary agreements between private, non-federal landowners and KDWP.

Neosho Mucket Reintroduction

In September of 2023, KDWP staff conducted the first species reintroduction stocking under the Kansas Aquatic Species Recovery Program. This stocking was made possible by signing the first two landowner agreements outlined in the agency's Programmatic SHA/CCAA agreement.

Approximately 1400 federally endangered Neosho Muckets (*Lampsilis refinesqueana*) from the Neosho National Fish Hatchery were released on a mussel bed in the Neosho River. Additional stocking and monitoring at the release site is planned for 2024.

Alligator Snapping Turtle Release

In May of 2024, KDWP staff will conduct a reintroduction of Alligator Snapping Turtles under the agency's Programmatic SHA/CCAA agreement. Alligator Snapping Turtles are part of a multi-state recovery program with prior releases throughout its historic range in Oklahoma. Forty individuals are slated for release in 2024 with a release of an additional 60 individuals in 2025. Releases will

take place within the Neosho and possibly Verdigris River drainages, eventually linking reintroduced populations to reintroduced population in Northern Oklahoma. The turtles released in 2024 will all be outfitted with telemetry transmitters and monitored for two years after release by Missouri State University.

Public Lands:

Access

The Department was successful in purchasing an additional 320 acres of public land that will be open to hunting and other recreational access opportunities. Additionally, KDWP received 220 of land for public hunting from a donation by Ducks Unlimited. There are no other current land acquisitions the department is pursuing. The department is continuing to receive pushback from Kanas Farm Bureau, Kansas Livestock Association, and some legislators regarding land acquisitions. Efforts continue to increase opportunity with current lands available.

Special Hunts

Special Hunts continue to be a strong program. Fall 2023-Spring 2024 = 366 Total hunts offered, 724 total permits, Hunts occurred on 30 WMAs, 4 State Parks, 3 State Fishing Lakes, 2 Private Lands, 6 County properties, 2 National Wildlife Refuges and 1 Corps of Engineers Lake.

Wildland fire assistance

Previous years flooding of Reservoir systems and recent droughts have led to increased fire danger and volatility. Standing dead timber from 2019 floods mixed with large quantities of light ladder fuels, then compounded with a dry late winter and early spring, led to explosive wildfires. Local volunteer fire districts, neighboring landowners, Kansas Forese Service, Kansas Department of Emergency Management, and Kansas Wildlife and Parks joint actions minimized damages in extreme fire danger areas. Continued efforts will be coordinated to diminish fire danger in the Reservoir flood plains on both private and public areas.

Law Enforcement:

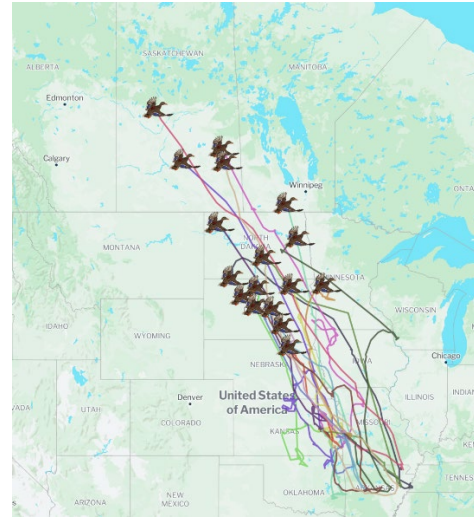
Law enforcement personnel within the Law Enforcement, Public Lands, and Parks Division moved to the Kansas Police and Fire Retirement System in 2023. This move to an enhanced law enforcement retirement system allows officers to retire at age 50 with 25 years of service and enjoy enhanced benefits upon retirement. In 2023, the division received new patrol rifles - the Sig Sauer M400 with an SL Series suppressor was selected. The officers received transition training in March 2023. The Department ordered 17 Special Service Vehicles from RAM, which still offers a government discount, resulting in significant savings for the agency. Thirteen were assigned to the Law Enforcement Division and 4 to Public Lands Division. KDWP continued implementing a new Records Management System. Data file migration to SmartCOP began in 2023 with test users to evaluate the new system. SmartCOP enables digital ticketing, boat inspections, violator reports meeting NIBRs compliancy rules, and many additional features. The final implementation is planned for mid-2024.

Wildlife Division:

Fall & Wintering Ecology of mallards in Southeast Kansas

In collaboration, KDWP, University of Nebraska- Lincoln, and USGS Northern Prairie Science Center are examining ecology of mallards migrating and wintering in Southeast Kansas with focus on factors influencing diel and seasonal habitat use, habitat selection, behavioral patterns, energy expenditure, determining natal origins, and understanding local and regional movements. In the first

of three field seasons, 728 mallards were captured, and leg banded as well as 54 adult hens outfitted with GPS transmitters. GPS mallards largely stayed within Kansas until the second week of January when sub-zero temperatures pushed most marked mallards to Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, and Arkansas. Prior to this cold snap, 73% of GPS locations were within the Southeast zone yet only 29% of locations were within it after the cold snap through Valentine's Day. As of April 1st, mallards are completing their spring migration to the nesting areas – GPS mallards are currently in Nebraska, South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. GPS mallards will continue to be tracked throughout the spring, summer, and upcoming fall and winter. We will continue to capture, leg-band, and deploy GPS devices on mallards during the fall and winter of 2024 and 2025.



Fisheries:

Stocking Programs

The four state fish hatcheries produced a total of 92,434,151 fish from varying sources were propagated and stocked in Kansas. This includes fish trades with other state agencies.

Native Freshwater Mussel Stockings

The department finished the construction the Kansas Aquatic Biodiversity Center in 2018. It has taken several years to implement processes for several species of freshwater mussels. We currently are propagating and reintroducing six different species of conservation concern in Kansas. In 2023, 7,000 Fatmuckets were stocked into the Marmaton River in eastern Kansas near Fort Scott, Kansas. Many more species and numbers have been stocked in 2024 and programs are ramping up for more.

Fisheries Research

We continue to perform growth analysis on Blue Catfish populations in the state. We also used genetic parentage evaluation to determine stocking contribution of various sizes (fry, fingerling, intermediate) of Walleye into three study impoundments in western Kansas. Basically, we took genetic fingerprints of all male and female parents that contributed to each hatchery product. We then sampled the age-0 fish in these impoundments in the fall, extracted genetic fin clips, and evaluated their origin. The majority of age-0 contribution came from fry stockings as opposed to fingerlings, intermediates, and wild/natural production. We will continue this project in 2024.

Education:

**Becoming an Outdoors-Woman
Pathways to Participation**



The Kansas Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program has gained national attention lately, thanks to the recent addition of a new “Pathways” program. BOW pathways seek to identify related classes within the 25+ course offerings and present them in a progressive framework for more holistic overview of topics like paddling, fishing, hunting, shooting, and outdoor cooking. While many outdoor dabblers still select classes à la carte to sample topics across a variety of disciplines, offering structured pathways instead provides more definitive steps for participants seeking independent participation, or the confidence and in-depth knowledge necessary to share information post-BOW. Additionally, KDWP has moved to a women-teaching-women format for its BOW program and has combatted barriers to finding qualified female instructors by implementing an instructor pathway. Centered around the idea that one doesn’t have to be an “expert” to share knowledge with others the program is rooted in empowerment and peer mentorship. Interested program graduates are invited to apply to return to the program as assistant instructors. An unanticipated but welcome result, the Instructor Pathway has also funneled prospective staff to the agency! KDWP has hired at least one pathway participant who is now a full-time employee specializing in education and outreach in one of the most diverse and populous areas of the state. While KDWP does not yet have enough data to extrapolate the impact of pathway involvement on license buying or long-term patterns in participation or make inference about the program’s secondary reach or “ripple effect” KDWP looks forward to continued program monitoring and evaluation.

<i>PADDLING PATHWAY</i>
Kayaking Trailer Backing and Maintenance Stream Ecology Paddleboarding

<i>SHOOTING SPORTS PATHWAY</i>
Intro to Archery Intro to Shotguns Intro to Handguns Intro to Rifles

<i>FISHING PATHWAY</i>
Stream Ecology Intro to Fishing Intro to Flyfishing Flat Water Kayaking

<i>CAMPING PATHWAY</i>
Camping Dutch Oven Cooking Wilderness First Aid Backpacking and Orienteering Basics

<i>HUNTING PATHWAY</i>
Turkey Talk Turkey Hunt Cooking with Wild Game Nose-to-Tail Cooking

<i>FOODIE PATHWAY</i>
Foraging Dutch Oven Cooking Cooking with Wild Game Nose-to-Tail Cooking

<i>INSTRUCTOR PATHWAY</i>
Participant Assistant Instructor BOW Instructor BOW MiniBOW instructor

Licensing:

In April 2023 we accepted nonresident deer applications and received 32,149 applicants. Our quota for this draw in 2023 was 21,989. Total revenue generated for this draw is approximately \$13,000,000. In April 2024 we received 32,975, which is an increase of 826 permit applications. Our quota for this draw in 2024 is 21,815, which is down 174 permits from 2023. With some fee increases for 2024 we have a total revenue of approximately \$15,000,000 for this year’s nonresident deer draw.

The fall turkey season of 2023 was suspended due to declining populations on a state and regional level. In Spring 2024 KDWP implemented a spring turkey draw for nonresident hunters. We had over 11,800 applicants for this draw and 9,700 permits allocated.

Fee increases were implemented on January 1st, 2024.

License/Permit Type	2023 Fee	2024 Fee
NR Hunting License	\$95.00	\$125.00

NR: spring turkey permit	\$60.00	\$75.00
NR: turkey permit application fee	N/A	\$10.00
NR: combination 2-deer permit	\$415.00	\$450.00
NR Fishing License	\$50.00	\$75.00
NR calendar day fishing license	\$7.50	\$10.00
NR combo hunting and fishing license	\$135.00	\$190.00
Special hunt-on-your-own-land deer permit	\$85.00	\$40.00



Year To Date Stats


191,597
 Transactions


299,423
 Products Sold


10,260
 Boat Registrations


153,688
 Customers


30,908
 New Customers


33,053
 Lifetime License Customer

Weekly Stats

Week of 4/28/2024 to 5/5/2024

\$431,686 System Revenue	332 New Customers	16,679 Products Sold	309 Brandt Service Desk Phone Calls
849 Vessel Registrations	1,286 Hard Cards	\$2,568 Donations Received	3,443 Mobile Customers

