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*Email with story ideas!*  
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## A MAJOR IN... FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

Fisheries and wildlife professionals are responsible for the conservation, protection, regulation, and management of our nation's fish and wildlife resources. Their management strategies must provide for both consumptive (hunting, fishing) and non-consumptive uses (bird watching, non-game species enhancement, threatened and endangered species protection, and others).

Students who successfully fulfill the requirements in the fisheries and wildlife major are prepared to enter postgraduate programs as well as competitively enter the work force. The curriculum reflects minimal civil service requirements of the federal government for wildlife and fisheries biologists and incorporates most course requirements for certification in professional societies. With judicious use of electives, graduates can also meet requirements for positions as zoologists and refuge managers. Further, the breadth of the curriculum prepares graduates to address complex environmental issues and to interact professionally with a multitude of natural resources disciplines to develop solutions to problems. Typical careers for graduates of this major include fisheries biologist or wildlife biologist with private consulting firms and utility companies, zoos, as well as with governmental resource management agencies at the local, state, or federal level.

## Dr. Ed Peters announces his retirement

For the last 30 years, Dr. Ed Peters has taught courses at UNL. After this fall, that comes to an end, and his new focus will be on his retirement cabin in Wisconsin.

Dr. Peters has taught courses in Fisheries Science, Ichthyology, Fisheries Biology and Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Systems. Dr. Peters remarks, "In all of my courses I try to engage students in field and laboratory work that makes their reading and classroom study real and personal."

Dr. Peters received a bache-

lor's degree in conservation and biology from Wisconsin State University at Stevens Point and a master's degree and Ph.D. in zoology from BYU. Think he's a well-rounded person? Well, he taught zoology, botany, ecology and evolution courses at Mount Mercy College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa before coming to the University of Nebraska in 1975.

Dr. Peters has tirelessly served as coordinator of the Fisheries and Wildlife major, as well as the advisor to the Wildlife Club. UNL students will miss Dr. Peters! We wish him the best.



**Dr. Edward Peters and an invasive bighead carp captured during a Fisheries Science class laboratory.**



**2004 FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE STUDENT FOCUS**

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## Boundary Waters canoe trip tests students in Minnesota's wilderness

**By Aasta McColely**  
*Senior Fisheries and Wildlife student*

The BWCA trip was one of the best classes I have ever taken. The class was a way for students from their first year to their last year in college to learn about a pristine ecosystem unlike anything we have experienced in Nebraska. The greatest part of the class was that it was taught in the field, so all examples could be seen first hand, not cited in a book.

I was able to learn to canoe, fish, hike, identify a variety of wildlife and plants, and start a fire. I am sure everyone was able to take away some memory or skill from this trip that is unique to them and will be remembered for a long time to come.

I had the most amazing experience on the BWCA trip. I signed up for the class to gain



*In May of 2004, the School of Natural Resources reintroduced the Boundary Waters Wilderness Trip—a tradition that started with Howard Wieggers in the 1970's. Eighteen students and three faculty participated in the 9-day experience in 2004. A graduating senior, Aasta McColely (pictured here) shares her thoughts on the experience.*

knowledge in the field and to take an interesting plant class, but I left the trip with an incredible sense of accomplishment with myself and a greater appreciation of nature in all its forms.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Drs. Hygnstrom and Powell are planning the next BWCA Wilderness trip for the Spring of 2005. See them for details on the trip's costs, dates, and planned adventures!

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## CWD project provides research opportunities for undergraduates at UNL

By Scott Hygnstrom  
UNL Wildlife Professor

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) has become a major concern for wildlife agencies throughout North America. The disease is caused by a protein-like particle, called a prion, that results in a deterioration of the brain and ultimate death of infected deer and elk. Prions also cause scrapie in sheep and the notorious mad cow disease. CWD was first recognized in Colorado in

the 1970s, then later in Wyoming and Nebraska, and more recently in several states across the country. Fortunately, as far as we know, humans cannot contract CWD.

Little is known about the ecology and transmission of CWD. Recently, we initiated a research project in eastern and western Nebraska that will provide some answers to the mysteries of CWD. For the next three years, three graduate students will as-

sist me in evaluating the movements, population dynamics, social behavior, and habitat selection of mule deer and white-tailed deer in the Missouri and North Platte River valleys.

The crew will be capturing and radio-collaring up to 100 deer per year and monitoring their locations daily. We are always looking for able-bodied students to assist in capturing deer. Please see Scott Hygnstrom if you are interested.

## Former student reflects on benefits of Wildlife Club

By Matthew Dollison

*Fisheries and Wildlife alum ('03)*

I became a Fisheries and Wildlife major so that I could do something I would enjoy, rather than making a ton of money at something I didn't. In my first semester at UNL, I was urged to join the wildlife club, to improve my wildlife knowledge and meet motivated people in my major. From my interaction with the club members and with the guidance of then club advisor Dr. Ron Case, I learned that the key to getting a job in our field was gaining experience while in school.

Participating in the Wildlife Club eventually led to club president; it helped me meet and

work summer jobs with professionals in my field. Additionally, including my wildlife club involvement on my resume shows my enthusiasm for wildlife.

Summer experience working for the UNL Fisheries lab, the Lower Platte North NRD, and the NGPC coupled with my schooling and wildlife club participation helped me land my first biologist job right after graduation—a one-year private lands wildlife biologist for the NGPC in the Sandhills. This led to a private lands wildlife biologist position for NGPC in Lincoln, and then led to my current job as a Wildlife Biologist II for the Kentucky Dept. of F&W Resources. I help private landowners manage their land for wildlife with the help of gov-

ernment programs. I also act as a liaison between my state organization and the USDA.

Things have kind of fallen like dominos to get me where I am today, but the first domino fell when I joined the wildlife club.



*F&W alum Matt Dollison works with a landowner near Cadiz, KY as part of his job with Kentucky DFWR.*

## Wildlife club has big plans for 2004

By Kent Fricke, Club President  
*Junior, Fisheries and Wildlife*

If the beginning of the fall semester is any indication of the upcoming year for the UNL Wildlife Club, it could be shaping up to be a very fun and exciting school year. There have already been exciting field trips to Spring Creek Prairie, Holmes Lake, and recently to Turner Lake near Ashland, where the club was able to take part in electrofishing activities. In addition, there was a very successful barbecue at Branched Oak Lake and a canoe trip down the Niobrara River (see photo at right).

We plan on having several speakers talk to club members

about job and volunteer opportunities, current conservation issues, and other wildlife-related topics.

Looking farther into the future, we are looking into becoming affiliated with The Wildlife Society. This connection will allow Club members to become members of The Wildlife Society and have the opportunity to receive members-only benefits that are associated with the organization. We also plan to attend a Student Wildlife Conclave this spring for the third consecutive year. The past two

trips to Laramie, WY and Lubbock, TX allowed members to interact with students and professors from universities across the nation and enjoy themselves at a different university campus.

For more information, email: [wildlifeclub@yahoo.com](mailto:wildlifeclub@yahoo.com).



## Student research: Cunningham studies birds in Rainwater Basin wetlands

The project included a number of aspects associated with avian research: mist netting, bird banding, nest searching and monitoring, radio telemetry, artificial nest predation, and blood collecting for the testing of West Nile disease in birds. The main focus of my project however, was parasitism of songbird nests by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Perching sites that female Cowbirds use to find nests were mechanically removed from two of the wetlands in order to see if

this had any effect in the Cowbird's ability to parasitize these nests. I recorded the rate of parasitism and survival of the eggs from these wetlands, in addition to two other control wetlands. I will be comparing these data with previous year to determine if there are any changes due to the removal of the perching sites. If I find that there are no changes in the rate of parasitism, I predict that I will find a shift in location of the parasitized nests.



By Zach Cunningham

*Senior, Fisheries and Wildlife*

This summer was the second field season of my UCARE project working on song birds in the RainWater Basin of Nebraska.