



Baby opossums climb inside their mama's pouch to hide after she was caught in a live catch trap near Almena. Mama and babies went on their way after this picture was taken.

— Telegram photo by Susie Marble

# Operation Game Thief can help stop poaching

Operation Game Thief is a Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks program which allows citizens to turn in poachers. You can call us toll-free within Kansas at 1-877-426-3843. You do not have to reveal your name or testify in court.

## Why Call In?

There are never enough Conservation Officers to cover the entire state of Kansas all day every day — so, wildlife needs your eyes and ears to report known or suspected violations. Poaching is a serious and costly crime. Every time a poacher illegally takes wildlife, they take something from each of us. Legitimate sportsmen lose the chance of legally harvesting those game and fish. Landowners, businesses and taxpayers lose revenues generated by hunting and fishing. All of us lose part of a valuable natural resource — our wildlife.

## Is Poaching Really A Problem in Kansas?

Yes. No one knows exactly how much wildlife is taken by poachers, but some studies estimate poachers may kill almost as many animals and fish as legal hunters take during legal seasons. Poachers don't take only game animals, they kill threatened, endangered and nongame wildlife species as well. Even if the loss to poachers is half the number in the estimates, the problem is serious

## Who are the Poachers?

The ethical fabric that should bind sportsmen to conservation has been torn by society's decreasing connection with the land. Poachers are not poor people trying to feed their families. Putting food on the table is one of the least common motives for poaching. Poachers are more likely to kill for profit, for the thrill of killing, or to rebel against wildlife laws. Poachers find a ready market in the U.S. and around the world with collectors who are willing to pay outrageous sums for trophies and rare wildlife. Greedy trophy and commercial poachers think that game laws only matter if they get caught. They kill with no regard for the wildlife or anyone but themselves. Poachers are criminals and should be dealt with as criminals.

## What to Look For

When reporting a violation, please note as many facts as possible. You will be asked a variety of questions and the more information you can provide, the quicker the violator can be caught, and the case successfully prosecuted.

What happened? What type of violation was it? When and where did it happen? Give the date, time and location, number of shots, etc.

- Give as much information as possible about the suspect or suspects- name, address, telephone, physical description (age, weight, height, hair color, eyes, clothing and any other pertinent information).

- Were firearms involved in the violation? Was the firearm visible or is it concealed in some way? Describe the number and type of weapons.

- Describe the suspect's vehicle - make, year, color, style. License number and any other distinguishing feature like rusted spots or mismatched paint and dents?

- What animals or fish were involved, how many, and where are they now?

- Do you know about any other physical evidence - like hides, entrails, guns, cartridge cases, knives and such?

- Has the illegal game or evidence been moved or will it be moved soon? How is it being transported, and where is it being stored?

- Were there other witnesses? Give their names and any other information about the violation, suspect or violations that you may have noted.

Remember, try to get the information to us as soon as possible. Any delay may mean we might not catch the bad guys!

DO NOT use this number or form for general information requests. General wildlife and park information may be obtained by phoning the department's Information Section, (620) 672-5911, or contact one of the regional offices.

If you're an active outdoorsman or woman, or just concerned about conservation in your area, get to know your local conservation officers. They protect the resource in your area.

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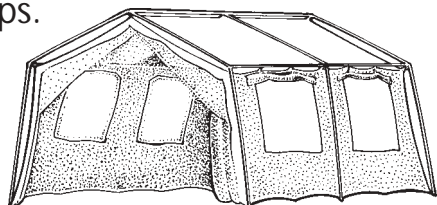


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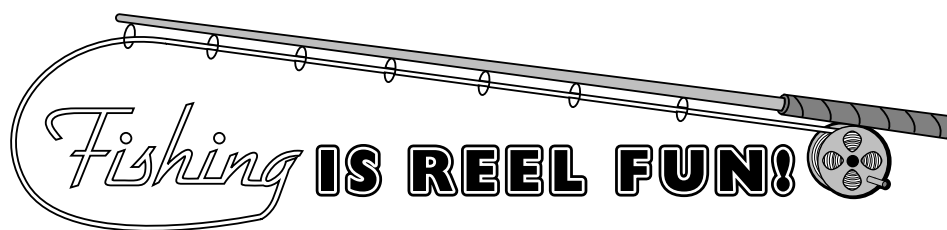
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