

K-State wildlife expert shares tips on keeping the groundhogs off property

K-State Research and Extension

No matter the name – and it goes by many – the groundhog can be a real nuisance for farmers and home gardeners.

“The main conflict that people have with groundhogs eating things tends to be in vegetable gardens, because they like to eat many plants that humans plant and consume,” said Drew Ricketts, a wildlife specialist at Kansas State University.

Ricketts notes that groundhogs are herbivores, meaning their diet consists of mainly plant material that can be digested easily. Their preferred fare are broadleaf plants, especially leafy greens, but will also eat root vegetables, such as carrots.

“They do get into agricultural fields and can do a lot of damage,” Ricketts said. “They tend to do the most damage in hay meadows. In town, they

may dig up homeowner’s gardens, or under sheds, sidewalks, or foundations.”

Groundhogs – which have also been called a ground pig, whistle pig, thickwood badger, marmot, monax, moonack, red monk, land beaver and...yes...even a woodchuck – also will dig burrows underneath wood and rock piles, fences and sheds.

“They’re also really good at climbing,” Ricketts said.

Cage traps work well for capturing groundhogs. Ricketts suggests “a raccoon-size cage trap” with a 10 X 10 inch door opening, and at least 24 inches long.

“Place the cage trap fairly close to the burrow entrance, and work the trap back and forth on the surface of the soil so that it is stable, with no gaps underneath the trap,” Ricketts said. “If the trap wobbles when they start to go in, they’re probably going to back out.”

Covering the trap with a tarp improves trapping effectiveness, and overripe fruit, especially bananas, works well as bait.

If building a fence to keep groundhogs out of an area, Ricketts suggests one with 2 X 4 inch or smaller rectangles in a woven or welded wire material.

“You need to bury about a foot of fence, then add a one foot apron making an ‘L’ that is buried in the soil,” Ricketts said. “The fence should sit two to four feet above the ground, with a hot wire on top to prevent the groundhog from climbing over the top.”

Ricketts said groundhogs are considered ‘hunnable non-game’ in Kansas, so a hunting license is required to hunt or trap them. Landowners should always check local laws and regulations before shooting or trapping groundhogs and other wildlife.

Groundhogs, though, aren’t all bad, Ricketts said.

“They’re a native herbivore that’s supposed to be out there eating vegetation, and naturally disturbing the soil,” he said. “The digging activity they do is actually good for soil health. It’s not necessarily good for a farmer who might drop a wheel into their hole, but it is something that is a natural process that is good.”

Groundhogs, Ricketts added, also have liver function and chemistry that is the most similar to that in humans among mammals used for research.

“They’re actually the main model for research on how to treat people for liver cancer, hepatitis and other diseases,” he said.

More information on managing wildlife in Kansas is available online from K-State Research and Extension.

KC’s Ameri’kana festival will move on after Trump revoked funding for arts

Kansas News Service

Creating space for healing and connection in Kansas City’s historic northeast is too critical to abandon, said Enrique Chi, whose nonprofit — and a music and arts festival — faces federal funding cuts targeting heritage-related initiatives. The National Endowment for the Arts recently rescinded \$85,000 in funding for Art as Mentorship and its Celebrate Ameri’kana Music and Arts Festival. Both the nonprofit and event work to amplify young musicians from underrepresented communities.

Set for noon to 8 p.m. on July 26 at Concourse Park in the Northeast, the free festival is expected to continue this summer as planned — with Chi and other organizers leaning on years of growth and community support.

“It makes sense to keep investing in this,” said Chi, founder of Art as Mentorship and the lead singer of the Latin Grammy-nominated indie rock band Making Movies. “We’ve just got to focus on celebrating and keeping the joy and the focus on having a great time, not the things that we can’t control.”

The Celebrate Ameri’kana event had been allotted \$20,000 of the \$85,000 in NEA funding. To make up for the loss, \$12,000 in matching

funds has already been raised and community partners have come together to help, Chi said.

“We’re being creative,” he said. “You’ve got to be grateful for the community saying, ‘You know what? This is important. Let’s keep lifting this up.’”

Now in its fourth year, Celebrate Ameri’kana showcases the myriad backgrounds, cultures, languages and sounds that have shaped American music, bringing Grammy-winning artists to Kansas City to perform at the free festival alongside youth performers from the organization’s year-round mentorship programs. More than a festival, Chi noted, Celebrate Ameri’kana is a reminder of the power of music and exploring the question: What makes American music? And who gets to tell the story?

“We misspelled the word ‘Americana’ in the way you phonetically pronounce it in Spanish,” said Chi, who is from Panama. “Not to represent just Spanish-speaking people in the United States, but all the contributions that emerge from the United States and the Americas.”

“Even the arts and culture the United States fundamentally takes pride in has a global story,” he added. “It’s impossible to tell that story correctly without speaking to this broader picture

of community. Something like New Orleans jazz — which influenced Kansas City jazz — is academically known and celebrated as being a big mix of Caribbean cultures clashing into each other in New Orleans.”

Musical healing

Headlined by sets from Making Movies, Salvation Choir and Grammy-winning artist La Lulu, the festival is expected to feature activities for kids, a vendor fair with local artists and makers, and food trucks.

“The goal is just to continue making a joyful expression and bringing community together, healing the isolation and the disenfranchisement of different communities — healing them in a way that music can do and bringing folks together through art and cultural experiences,” Chi said.

For the first time, young artists from Art as Mentorship will also perform a special set celebrating songs co-created by Kansas City artists, such as “Disturbia” (Rhianna), “16 Carriages” (Beyoncé) and “Tightrope” (Janelle Monáe).

“There’s all these songs in pop culture that somebody from Kansas City had a part in,” Chi

said. “So I want to start creating that sense of pride and place for the young artists who are like, ‘Oh, I know making a life of music is tough,’ which it is. And it’s tough in Kansas City to do it. But if you don’t know it’s possible, if you have not heard stories of other people doing it, then you don’t believe it.”

Chi also hopes the festival shines a spotlight on the historic Northeast — a neighborhood that’s home to more than 55 languages and the Art as Mentorship organization. Through the course of Kansas City’s history, the neighborhood has been a first stop for new Americans, as well as welcoming newcomers from across the North and South American continents. About half of the festival-goers come from outside the neighborhood, Chi said, offering a chance to see a part of the city that’s misunderstood.

“There’s beautiful infrastructure, but there are still some wrinkles in this neighborhood’s fabric,” he said. “There’s a lot of poverty if you go a few blocks away and that comes with some systemic issues, like gun violence. So there are some founded reasons for why people have an opinion on this neighborhood.”

OBITUARIES

Jennifer Lyhn Kingslien

Jennifer Kingslien, 49 of Manhattan, Kansas, passed away on June 28, 2025 at the Good Shepherd Hospice House in Manhattan, Kansas. Celebration of life will be held at 11:00 A.M., Thursday, July 3, 2025, with a visitation prior at 10:00 A.M., at Yorgensen-Meloan-Londeen Funeral Home, 1616 Poyntz Ave, Manhattan, KS 66502. Online condolences at ymlfuneralhome.com

POLICE

ARRESTS

■ Kade Wesley Schulze, 30, of Clay Center, for possession of opiate, opium, narcotic or certain stimulant, flee or attempt to elude law enforcement officers by reckless driving, use/possession with intent to use drug

paraphernalia. Held on a \$12,000 bond.

■ Debra Marie Devenuto, 64, no address listed, for municipal/county violation. Held on a \$750 bond.

■ Vanessa Shauntell Louise Anderson, 25, of Grandview, MO, for failure to appear. Arrested by Johnson County Sheriff’s Office.

How to pick bulbs and fixtures for wildlife-friendly outdoor lighting

Kansas News Service

Humans have inadvertently filled their towns and cities with outdoor lighting that generates a lot more light pollution.

This costs communities their starry nighttime views. It also wastes electricity and hurts pollinators and other creatures.

But experts say good design is the solution. Outdoor lighting can work well for humans without spoiling night skies nearly so much as has become common today.

Take the cabins at Thousand Hills State Park near Kirksville, Missouri. Until recently, globe-shaped fixtures with bright white bulbs lit up each door.

That shape and color can backfire on people’s night vision, making it harder for their eyes to adjust and making shadows outside the cabins appear darker.

Park staff removed the globes and installed new fixtures that lie flush with the cabin awnings and contain amber bulbs. That’s because effective outdoor fixtures light up the surfaces people need to see — in this case,

the door and the ground just outside the cabin — without shining light directly into people’s eyes the way a globe does. Also, amber is a less jarring color for our eyes at night and it is less disruptive to wildlife.

Thousand Hills State Park is the twelfth Urban Night Sky Place in the world, certified by DarkSky International.

Homeowners who would like to use less energy and help the local wildlife can take a page out of the DarkSky movement’s book.

This graphic created by the Mont-Mégantic International Dark Sky Reserve shows a typical, problematic outdoor light on the left and then progressively makes it better with the series of changes shown to the right. Those changes include:

■ Installing a shield that directs the light downward

■ Switching to an amber or orange bulb

■ Using a bulb that is no brighter than necessary for the specific outdoor space

■ Turning off the light when it’s not needed (or installing a timer or motion sensor so this is turned off when people aren’t around.)

WEATHER

Local forecast

Sunny, with a high near 92. South wind 5 to 10 mph. Wednesday Night Mostly clear, with a low around 70. South wind around 5 mph.

Weather history

High temp 84°
Record high 110° (1933)
Low temp 63°
Record low 46° (1924)
Precipitation 0.08"
Month to date 0.08"
Year to date 18.19"

Tuttle Creek

Elevation 1,081.93ft
Outflow 200 cfs
Water temp 77°F

Sundown/Sunup

Tonight 8:56 p.m.
Tomorrow 6:05 a.m.

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COMMUNITY JOURNALISM MATTERS

Print Schedule for the Week of Independence Day

MONDAY
June 30th

TUESDAY
July 1st

WEDNESDAY
July 2nd

NO PAPER

IN PRINT & ONLINE

IN PRINT & ONLINE

THURSDAY
July 3rd

FRIDAY
July 4th

SATURDAY
July 5th

IN PRINT & ONLINE

NO PRINT EDITION

IN PRINT & ONLINE

The Mercury offices will be closed on Friday, July 4th, in observance of the holiday

Type of Ad	Publishing Day	Advertising Deadline
• Display	Tues, July 1	3 p.m., Fri, June 27
	Wed, July 2	3 p.m., Mon, June 30
	Thur, July 3	3 p.m., Tue, July 1
	Sat, July 5	3 p.m., Wed, July 2
• Classified Readers	Tues, July 1	10 a.m., Mon, June 30
	Wed, July 2	10 a.m., Tue, July 1
	Thur, July 3	10 a.m., Wed, July 2
	Sat, July 5	10 a.m., Thur, July 3
• Classified	Tues, July 1	10 a.m., Mon, June 30
	Wed, July 2	10 a.m., Tue, July 1
	Thur, July 3	10 a.m., Wed, July 2
	Sat, July 5	10 a.m., Thur, July 3
• Legals	Tues, July 1	10 a.m., Mon, June 30
	Wed, July 2	10 a.m., Tue, July 1
	Thur, July 3	10 a.m., Wed, July 2
	Sat, July 5	10 a.m., Thur, July 3

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