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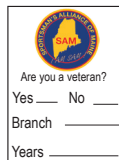
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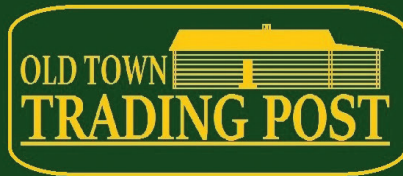
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The Northwoods Sporting Journal is the Northeast's most comprehensive and readable monthly outdoor publication. Published at the trailhead of Maine's sprawling North Woods, the Sporting Journal prides itself on being an independent voice for the region's outdoor community for more than 28 years. Some of our writers are seasoned and specialized outdoors people who will share their know-how and insights; some of our contributors are simply lifelong outdoor people with interesting stories to tell.

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Main Office Phone: (207) 732-4880

E-mail: info@sportingjournal.com Fax: (207)732-4970

Vol 32 Issue 4 is published monthly by Northwoods Publications,  
57 Old County Rd. North, W. Enfield, ME 04493  
Periodical Postage Paid at W. Enfield, ME. and additional mailing offices.  
The Northwoods Sporting Journal (ISSN#1548-193X) Postmaster:  
Send address changes to:  
Northwoods Sporting Journal, PO Box 195, W. Enfield, ME 04493

Northwoods Publishing Group  
Victor Morin - Susan Morin - Diane Reynolds - V. Paul Reynolds

Publishers - Victor Morin Jr. - V. Paul Reynolds  
Editor - V. Paul Reynolds  
Associate Editor - Donna Veino  
Graphic Arts Manager - Gayleen Cummings  
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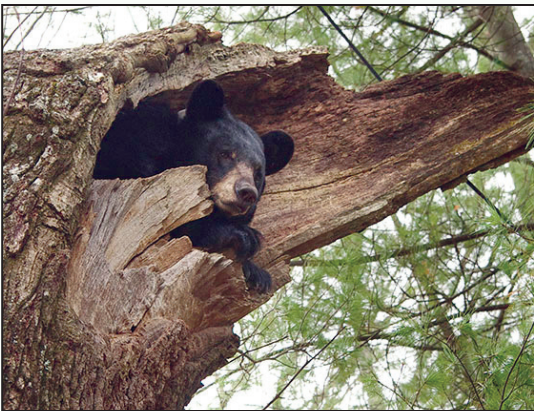
The Northwoods Sporting Journal invites submissions of photographs and articles about the Maine outdoors.

Manuscripts should be sent with a self-addressed envelope to:  
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The views and opinions expressed by our monthly columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of this publication.



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# The Friendly Grouse

By David Minton

Back during Thanksgiving week of November 2022, while deer hunting from a tree stand in my back woods, I noticed a ruffed grouse hanging around the base of the tree

cent to my stand and soon enough, he was eye level with me ten feet up. This went on for a couple of days until I finally was able to coax him to hop onto my lap. Well, so much for deer

me home from the stand at the end of the day. After a while, I wrote Paul Reynolds, the publisher of this magazine about my experience with this bird and he told me to write a story

little guy. He is a male. He lives in a 6 acre patch of woods on my 46 acres which I entirely selectively cut 13 years ago. This 6 acre area is now prime grouse habitat. It sits just

and started bringing him cut up organic grapes, cut up apples from my orchard and also parsley leaves, which he loves. It is amazing what he can pack away; 6 to 7 cut up grapes, a slice

**Buddy also makes different "cooing" vocalizations when I'm with him. When we first meet up, he'll make a quick coo-coo-coo sound, almost like a greeting. And he makes the exact same three cooing vocalization when I get up to leave. But only during those two times will he make that specific vocalization.**

my stand was attached to. I had seen him the day before as I was walking home out of the woods. He watched me from the ground and I gently tapped my knee and said, "Hey, Buddy, come on up". And guess what? He did. He hopped from branch to branch in the 20 foot tall pine that was adja-



The author with his grouse chum, "Buddy."

hunting. I was intrigued.

I would go to my stand in the morning and call Buddy. And within a few minutes he'd come running through the woods and hop up in the branches till he was again right next to me. This went on for about 2 weeks. If I went out for a late afternoon stand, the same thing would happen. He would also follow

and maybe he'd publish it in the magazine. I did and the article came out in the February 2023 issue and was titled, "The Gregarious Grouse".

I have hunted these birds for years up until I lost my last English Setters to old age. Now I know these birds do not have long lives. They are often prey for hawks, eagles, coyotes, fox and bobcat, all of which I have in my back woods and have caught on my trail cameras. But as I write this article, I can say that Buddy and I still get together several times a week (I am retired) and we meet throughout the seasons; fall, winter, spring and summer...90 degrees or 15 degrees. We are now 2 years and 3 months into our "relationship".

The following is what I have observed about this



off of a 4 acre field I put in when I did the cutting. The south section of the 6 acres is heavy with conifers and is where Buddy spends his winters when the snow gets deep. As spring arrives, he moves further up the southern slope into the alders and younger growth and there he spends the spring thru fall seasons. Oh, I'm sure he mills around as sometimes when I call him it takes 5 or more minutes for him to arrive. And on very rare occasions he doesn't show up. But usually he arrives within one minute. I believe he hears my ATV coming down through the field before I get off and start calling as I'm walking into the woods to our meeting area, which changes through the seasons.

I didn't feed him for the first couple of months. But I did some research

or two of apples also cut up into small bits and at least a dozen parsley leaves and then the stems themselves. And this he's done for over 2 years.

He has some interesting traits. Often while we're sitting in the woods, he'll pick up a leaf and toss it first over one shoulder and then pick up another and toss it over the other. This he'll do six to eight times in a row. Someone suggested he may be looking for insects or grubs but he doesn't look down at or scratch the earth after he picks up and tosses the leaves. He just picks up another until he finally stops. He's done this countless times.

He also seems to have a very developed sense of danger. One spring day after I fed him we were just (Grouse cont. pg 9)

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# Green Stickers: The Back Story

Over the past year or so, I've been hearing from many people in different corners of the state, and beyond, concerning misinformation, followed by clueless comments, about the green, "Hunt Safely," stickers which are

totally absurd, just plain ignorant, it's stupid, or it's disrespectful to me as a hunter"! But the best one I heard was, "What if you were using a fine shotgun? Would you want to put a sticker on the wood of a beautiful stock?" Which

time, brief history as a turkey hunting state.

It was also a difficult thing for many people to absorb, yet during this period, Wayne Macallum, the Director of Mass. Fish & Wildlife, was working hard to keep things calm while searching for information, advice, and

giving us a role that we'd never had before. To his credit, Wayne listened, as our first Regional Director, Gary Tanner, Gary Miller, and me, brought forward an idea which was later brought to the State Wildlife Board of Directors for more deliberation. And this Board listened

this series of meetings that the confusion slowly began to subside, with reasonable ideas surfacing during a period when turkey hunting in Massachusetts was still in its infancy stages, but in jeopardy of massive change. And in the end, what started as extremely hard, and at times conten-



**The origin of the how the "Hunt Safely" sticker in Massachusetts was spawned and later became a regulation during the early 1990s, all stemmed from the first reported death in Massachusetts during a turkey hunting season.**

required to be displayed on your firearm during turkey hunting season in Massachusetts. And just recently, at the Springfield Sportsmen's Show in Springfield, MA, I quickly learned that this little green sticker had become a hot topic among numerous Bay State turkey hunters, plus many out-of-state hunters, which led to this recent weekend of discourse and negative comments with people expressing uninformed opinions and ideas on the subject.

Many of these comments went way beyond the simple nonsense of someone not knowing what they're talking about. For example, "If anybody needs a sticker to hunt safely, they have no business being in the woods," or "requiring someone to put a green "Hunt Safely" sticker on their gun to hunt turkeys is one of the dumbest regulations on the books." There were also the usual amounts of "it's

made me scratch my head in astonishment and utter some inaudible words that I won't share in this space! And as the comments periodically continued throughout most of the weekend, it eventually led me to several social media pages with even more mundane rhetoric, even worse than what I was hearing at the show! It was then that I started to grasp the concept that, "people just don't understand the history of how this sticker came to be"! And I decided that day that a history lesson on this subject was in order.

The origin of the how the "Hunt Safely" sticker in Massachusetts was spawned and later became a regulation during the early 1990s, all stemmed from the first reported death in Massachusetts during a turkey hunting season. This brought sadness and great confusion to everyone involved as this was something no one had expected to experience in our, at the

solutions! In the weeks that followed this tragedy, and all the amplification that came after, it eventually led to enlisting the Massachusetts State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation to participate in those first discussions,

to our idea, which was to invite representatives from Edgefield, S.C. to come here, and explain a different approach to this issue as people whose experiences in these matters outweighed ours by decades.

And it was through

tious conversations, eventually became productive talks that spawned an idea that I believe, changed the course of turkey hunting history in the Bay State. And that idea was

(Stickers cont. pg 15)

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# Editorial

## Hunters Fund Deer-Yard Protection

When the Maine 130<sup>th</sup> State Legislature enacted a law to set up a fund to underwrite the cost of purchasing deer wintering areas by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W), not a lot was said about exactly where the money would come from. The law is called An Act to Preserve Deer Habitat. It is Public Law 409. According to MDIF&W, this deer management fund allocates \$1.2 million a year for deer yard acquisitions.

Currently, MDIF&W owns and manages about 10,000 acres of deer wintering areas in Maine.

Where does the money come from? Some of it is provided by the Land for Maine Future's Fund and from Pittman-Robertson, which is money generated by national excise taxes on hunting equipment. However, the brunt of these funds to acquire and manage deer wintering areas is generated, not by the state taxpayer, but by deer hunters themselves!

That's right. In fact, MDIF&W recently in a press release said "Thank you" to all deer hunters who support the deer management fund by simply purchasing antlerless deer hunting permits each year.

The Department writes: "Looking back

at the 2024 hunting seasons, we're thankful for deer hunters and their important role as wildlife conservationists. Since 2022, \$12 from each antlerless deer hunting permit is deposited into the Maine Deer Management Fund, with the \$2 agent fee covering administrative costs. These funds have helped acquire and manage over 10,000 acres of critical deer wintering habitat in Maine! "

Here are some of the recent deer-yard acquisitions by MDIF&W that were purchased for protection in perpetuity thanks to deer hunters who lay out \$12.00 for any any deer permit.

- Rangeley WMA — 708 Acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR) and Deer Management Funds

- Caribou Stream WMA — 1,105 acres, funded with PR, Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds

- Lexington Deer Wintering Area — 1,490 acres, funded with Pittman Robertson (PR), Land for Maine's Future (LMF) and Deer Management Funds

- Macwahoc Stream WMA — 6,326 acres, funded with PR, LMF, and Deer Management Funds

These protected deer yards also protect more than just deer, too. As the Department points out, "These lands provide habitat for a variety of species including a wide diversity of birds and waterfowl, wildlife including bobcat, fisher, marten and others; and several of these new WMAs also have waters that include brook trout, landlocked salmon and other species."

The Sportsman's Alliance of Maine (SAM) played a key, pivotal role in the creation and passage of the law that establishes deer -yard acquisitions and protection. When lobbying for the new law, SAM noted in its testimony that at one time deer wintering areas (DWAs) comprised about 10 percent of Maine forestland. Today that figure hovers between three and four percent!

In its press release thanking hunters, MDIF&W observed that hunters foremost ARE the wildlife conservationists. This is an accurate refrain and one underscored often by SAM as well. Regrettably this is a point either ignored or seldom acknowledged by our state's anti-hunting element.

VPR



## Letters



### Best Outdoor Magazine

#### To the Editor:

Good morning, I have

to write this...because your magazine deserves it.

Every couple last winters my family has gone up to Maine after Christmas

for a couple days. This always coincides with a stop at KTP, where I buy a copy of your magazine. Well, this Christmas I asked my kids for one gift, a subscription to NWSJ.

I'm 57 years old, I grew up cutting and chopping cords of wood every year for my family's two vermont castings stoves, and fishing and hunting extensively. Especially loved tying my own flies and selling them in my local Connecticut hardware store when I was 12. When not doing those things I was salivating over field

and stream, outdoor life, fin and feather, you understand...those were great mags, but I don't like how they've changed over the years...they're selling to the masses now, not to who I think is their core audience.

You guys are different, and good different. You're old school. You actually do not care what people think of what you're writing, and that reeks of important values like HONESTY, COMMON SENSE, PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, AND KNOWLEDGE. Your articles are SO good

that I refuse to read more than one at a time. no joke; I leave each issue open on my kitchen table, and read one article a day. Why? Because every single article is fantastic! I don't want to ruin the digestion of the last one by reading the next one too quickly...yes, you guys are that good.

So here it is, my first feedback; you have the best outdoor magazine I have ever read..and will continue to read it till I can't read.

Alexander Pflomm



The Great Horn Rimmed Owl



## Grouse

(Cont. from pg 6)

sitting there. All of a sudden he became very alert and what I would say was agitated. He stretched his body up, stretched his neck out and turned his head at an angle and looked to the sky. He also began cooing very loudly which signaled to me he sensed danger. We were in the woods with a decent canopy over us. I looked up and saw nothing. And I kept looking skyward.

Finally after half a minute a hawk flew over us and started circling. Did he see him before I did? Did he hear the hawk caw? I didn't and I had a better view from my chair than he did on the ground. I always meet with him in the woods as I don't want the hawks and other birds of prey that often circle the field to spot him. Sometimes he greets me on the edge of the field and I walk with him quickly into the woods and the cover. But that hawk was nowhere to be seen until a good half minute after Buddy went on alert. He has done this over a half a dozen times. Once it was an eagle circling and I heard its call. Another time two red tail hawks which I saw after Buddy went on alert mode. Instinct? I don't know but these birds are a couple of hundred feet in the sky.

Buddy also makes different "cooing" vocalizations when I'm with him. When we first meet up, he'll make a quick coo-coo-coo sound, almost like a greeting. And he makes the exact same three cooing vocalization when I get up to leave. But only during those two times will he make that specific vocalization. He makes

a different cooing sound when I am just sitting with him and/or feeding him. But when I stand to leave, that coo-coo-coo starts up. I don't speak grouse so I can't tell what the different vocalizations mean, but he uses them at different times. I realize it sounds as if I'm trying to anthropomorphize the little fella, but it is what it is.

In May 2023, after 6 months of visiting Buddy every 3 or so days I was going to France for over 2 weeks. I was concerned about him not being there when I got back. During the first 6 months it was rare for me to not pay him a visit every 2-4 days. But realizing that one can't live their life around a wild bird, though my wife says I do, off I went. Seventeen days later I returned and the first morning back I went down to our last meeting place. I called and lo and behold, within 15 seconds Buddy appeared. I can't tell you how happy and relieved I was that he was still around. And now as I sit here writing this, that was 21 months ago and we're still going on.

Another quirk of Buddy's is after he eats, he likes to hop onto a log or fallen tree branch that I usually put my chair in front of knowing his tendencies and likes. He'll sit there until he decides to hop onto the back of my chair or shoulder. This is constant. I don't know if he thinks I'm ignoring him when he's back there and as such eventually hops onto my chair or shoulder for attention. But then he'll peck at my ear flaps on my winter hat or my grey hairs under my summer hat. And he pulls out several hairs when he does that. Then he'll be staring at me standing on

my shoulder or arm with several of my hairs in his mouth.

And he has determination and perseverance! Just last month after a snowstorm, I went down to our winter meeting area in the conifers as I figured now there was enough snow on the ground to drive him there. I arrived and started calling as I was cleaning the snow off of the stump that I feed him on. He appeared within 10 seconds. He came out of a very dense patch of six to ten foot pines packed closely together. And he was waddling through the snow to get to me. After feeding him and hanging out, I decided that I was going to backtrack his trail to see just where he came from, thinking he was no more than 20 to 30 feet into the thicket where he roosted in a tree.

Well, I bushwhacked through the pines and kept going and going. After about 400-500 feet following his tracks back, I looked to my right and there he was following me. It's tough for the little fella walking in powdery snow even though his feet are somewhat built for such. Finally, I was just about in the area from where I first started to call him and where we have been meeting for the past several months. So, I realized I

simply had not waited long enough for him to arrive and figured he had moved south to his winter area. In reality, he followed me all the way down to his winter area. It had to be at a pretty good clip as he showed up within 10 seconds of my own arrival. He is a trooper to have the perseverance to hike all the way down to his wintering area and back that entire distance in powdery snow.

So, here we are now, 2 years and 3 months into our journey together. How much longer this will continue, God only knows. But I will say that as I'm walking through the woods calling to him, it brings a big smile to my face when I see him come walking out of the pines or alders in my direction. I always give him a big "hello, Buddy!"

"After Buddy finishes eating, we'll sit there, and he likes to be stroked. I have a three-foot smooth branch with a 30-degree curve for the last foot of its length. It conforms perfectly to the curvature of

his back, and he will sit one to two feet from me for over 30 seconds while he lets me stroke his back. I actually started doing this after the first week of our meeting. He seems to enjoy it, and I've been doing it ever since.

And,... this will sound weird, but I can get my face within inches of his, he'll start cooing and I will coo back at him. He stops cooing, looks at me and when I stop, he starts back up. We'll do this for a minute or more. And he looks me straight in the eye from inches away. I have no idea what either of us is saying, but he will stop when I start and begin again after I stop. Go figure.

I have all of the above on video. I had to increase my cloud storage as I probably have over 2,500 videos from the past 27 months. They are also saved to a 512 GB flash drive. So.... obsessed? Well, probably."



*David Minton lives in Warner, NH*

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Catherine Gordon



## "A Hiker's Life"

By Carey Kish,  
Mt. Desert Island, ME



The hiker-friendly town of Silver City lies at an elevation of nearly 6,000 feet just east of mile marker 158 on the Continental Divide Trail. Surrounded by the vast 2,700,000-acre Gila National Forest—one of the largest in the na-

Coyote Hills and the Pyramid Mountains, each separated by broad valleys. This area is on the northwestern fringe of the Chihuahuan Desert. At 200,000 square miles, it's the largest and hottest of the four major desert regions in western

**Wind is a four-letter word in these parts. You battle it day and night with seemingly little pause. Winds averaging 20 to 30 mph with gusts as high as 40 to 50 mph are challenging to hike through, never mind erecting a tent in the evening.**

tion—there's every amenity here a sweaty, thirsty, windburned thru-hiker could want for a much-needed rest day or two.

The 2,700-mile journey began at the Crazy Cook Monument in the "Bootheel," a desolate, dry and dusty corner of southwestern New Mexico. It was three-hour shuttle trip over rough roads to reach the start. After a few obligatory photos, I thrust my boot through the barbed-wire border fence to touch Mexican soil. Then I turned and took my first steps northward.

The first 84 miles of the CDT meander through the Big Hatchet and Little Hatchet Mountains, the

North America.

Along this stretch, the Continental Divide Trail Coalition maintains five water caches, and supplemented with ranch-land water tanks and windmills, staying hydrated is not an issue. This is cattle country, so there are numerous gates and stiles to negotiate, and the occasional barbed wire fence to climb over or crawl under.

Navigating the CDT is an interesting game. The best case is when there are signs and trail to follow. Sometimes there are signs but no trail, or trail but no signs, and every so often there's neither. You pick your way along as best you can, constantly study your

surroundings and refer to the Far Out GPS-based app when in doubt. I've been as far as a half-mile off trail.

From Lordsburg, my first resupply, it's 74 miles to Silver City. As the elevation increases, the landscape transitions from desert to woods of oak, juniper, pinyon pine and ponderosa pine. The trail enters the Gila National Forest and reaches high ground on 8,000-foot Jacks Peak and Burro Peak. Patches of snow lined the trail. Tree cover was welcome, but the wind persisted.

Wind is a four-letter word in these parts. You battle it day and night with seemingly little pause. Winds averaging 20 to 30 mph with gusts as high as 40 to 50 mph are challenging to hike through, never mind erecting a tent in the evening. Campsites are where you make them, and you pitch where you can find at least a modicum of protection.

South of Lordsburg I walked alone by day and camped by myself at night, reveling in the wildness and solitude. North of Lordsburg I began to meet more hikers and enjoyed several lunch breaks and campsites with their good company. We talked about food, of course, and the weather, which besides wind and sun, has dealt us rain, sleet, hail and snow flurries.

I've established a comfortable daily rhythm. My shortest day was the first, when I covered 14 miles. The biggest day was 21 miles into Lordsburg (the tractor beam of trail

# The Continental Divide Trail



towns is strong). I've been touched by trail angels and trail magic, and have in these early days experienced a distinct sense of community. Feeling great, no blisters and only 2,550 miles to go!

Carey Kish of Mount

Desert Island, ME is the author of *Beer Hiking New England*, *AMC's Best Day Hikes Along the Maine Coast*, and the *AMC Maine Mountain Guide*. Catch up with him (maybe) at [maine-outdoors@aol.com](mailto:maine-outdoors@aol.com), and on Facebook and Instagram.





# April Fishing Memories

There are a few dates on the calendar that Mainers, with a passion for the outdoors, look forward to. Some dates change over the years, and some stay the same. For example, the opening day of rifle deer season differs year by

the dates we mark on our calendars but also changed how we prepare for and experience the fishing season. Not to mention, 20 years ago, you'd be lucky to fish an ice-free pond on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Compared to last year, I knew some lakes were ice-

constantly reminded of my leaky waders or boots and the fact that I should have re-spoiled my reel with fresh monofilament.

Some memories I'll never shake. Even if they don't stack up or compare to ones where I've

landed big fish or shot a nice buck. When I think back to when I was very young, say 10 years old and younger, some of my most fond memories are of losing fish. Which still happens all too often today. We all know the pain of



The author as a youngster fishing with his Dad.

year, but April 1<sup>st</sup> is April 1<sup>st</sup>. No matter what day of the week it falls on. The traditional opening day of open water fishing season here in Maine has somewhat of a different aura in recent years.

April 1<sup>st</sup> simply doesn't mean as much to me now as it did back in the day. Besides the few exceptions, April 1<sup>st</sup> was the hard date for the end of ice fishing and the beginning of the open water season. That's now changed, particularly in the southern half of the state. Since the modification, I caught my best Maine brown trout on my fly rod on March 31<sup>st</sup>. I also caught my personal best lake trout through the ice on April 6<sup>th</sup>. This shift in the traditional fishing seasons has not only altered

free by March 10<sup>th</sup>!

Even if we didn't go fishing every April 1<sup>st</sup>, my mind had switched to spring once April Fool's Day arrived. Whether it was fishing right before dark at the local trout pond or skipping school to go fishing with my friends, we made it work, even though the conditions were probably less than ideal. I remember the excitement of the first few weeks of the open-water season, the anticipation of the first catch, and the disappointment of losing a fish. Early in the season, I spent too much money on new lures at the hardware store, combed the gas stations for trout worms, and if the weather cooperated, we searched for big night crawlers on damp, warm nights. I was

knowing the big one got away, so I'm sure you can empathize. I can't remember if it was opening day, but I know it was early in the season; my father took me trout fishing at one of his favorite ponds. I remember the exact spot where I had casted out a worm and hooked a nice trout. But it came off as I tried to flip the fish onto the rocks. My day was ruined. Another fish that still breaks my heart is a big pickerel I tragically lost one spring day while fishing the river with my father and brother Josh. My old man was around the bend with Josh when I hooked this giant. I remember seeing its big head shake as I pulled it to the surface, and in a flash, my line was cut by its pointy, razor-sharp

teeth. These seemingly insignificant stories stand out among the rest when I rack my brain for memories of April fishing.

When the season opened, my friends and I became obsessed with fishing in high school. We would skip school on opening day (sorry, Mom)

though we didn't always prioritize common sense and safety.

It seems like the anticipation was always better than the results, but such is life. As winter winds down, I eagerly anticipate the open water season and its adventures. Even though I know I'll

**Even if we didn't go fishing every April 1<sup>st</sup>, my mind had switched to spring once April Fool's Day arrived. Whether it was fishing right before dark at the local trout pond or skipping school to go fishing with my friends, we made it work, even though the conditions were probably less than ideal.**

and spend our afternoons watching the ice recede after our baseball practices. We would do our best to fish the small pieces of open water until, eventually, the pond was free of ice. I still marvel at how we managed to supply our gear for those adventures and how we didn't get stuck every time we ventured down one of those soft, muddy dirt roads. My friends and I managed to catch a lot of fish on those outings, even

end up cold, muddy, and wet, likely with an empty creel, the memories of the adventures, the close calls, and the occasional successful early-season trips remind me that perseverance is key. It's these experiences that make it all worth it.



Jake Scoville can be reached at [jacobysco@gmail.com](mailto:jacobysco@gmail.com) or on Instagram at [atjacobysco](https://www.instagram.com/atjacobysco)



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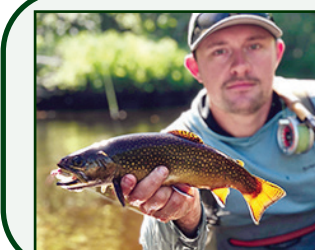


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**Angling,  
Antlers &  
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By Jake Scoville,  
Machiasport, ME



# Outdoor News - April 2025

*Edited by V. Paul Reynolds*

April is – depending upon whether you are an optimist or a pessimist – the month of the Seasonal Awakening or the month of the Big Mud. Even the pessimist can take heart that at least in April there is light at the end of the tunnel. For our hard-pressed deer population and other wild critters, April can be a make or break month. An early green up can make the difference for them between survival or death. Most outdoor folks take enjoyment in the slow but inexorable coming of spring – the budding, the smell of damp earth, and the formations of geese winging north.

Fishing can be slow, especially when winter ice still hugs the stream banks and the biting north wind discourages all but the heartiest boat anglers. There are some good things in Maine in April, though: turkey season is near and camps can be opened without bugs to deal with. So bring on April, and then we can embrace May with all of the real blessings of spring in Maine.

## Vermont Hunting Law Changes

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board is inviting public comment on proposed changes to Vermont's white-tailed deer, moose and turkey hunting regulations, as well as the rules for transporting wild game meat from out of state.

The proposed deer hunting changes, recommended by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's biologists, are the

most extensive of the four. They come five years after state biologists last updated Vermont's deer regulations. Deer is Vermont's most popular game species with about 60,000 resident hunters and 7,500 out-of-state hunters heading into the white-tail woods each fall, and just over a fifth successfully harvesting deer.

Several of the proposed changes aim to balance Vermont's deer herd to what available habitat can support by encouraging hunters to harvest more antlerless deer, primarily adult female deer called "does," in certain parts of the state.

"Deer hunting is incredibly important to many Vermonters' culture and sense of identity, and it is also absolutely essential for keeping deer numbers in line with what is sustainable for our habitats," said Interim Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife Andrea Shortsleeve. "The updates our biologists are proposing will help hunters continue to balance Vermont's deer herd with the available habitat as our forests get older, winters get warmer, and land use patterns change."

The main proposed changes to Vermont's deer hunting regulations would:

- Allow hunters who obtain antlerless permits to harvest antlerless deer during the regular November season. Currently, only antlered deer, primarily adult males called "bucks," can be harvested during the November season.

- Set the archery season as October 1 through December 15, including during the regular Novem-

ber season. Currently the archery season closes during the regular November season.

- Create special additional archery hunting zones with a September 15 opening date in select areas where deer numbers are high.

- Allow hunters to hold two antlerless permits from different Wildlife Management Units at the same time. Currently, hunters can only hold one antlerless permit.

- Allow hunters to harvest a second legal buck during the season if they have already harvested one buck with three or more points on one antler and one or more antlerless deer. Currently, hunters can only harvest one buck per year.

- Reinstate an antler point restriction in Wildlife Management Unit D1 where mature buck numbers are low.

- Return the state's youth deer hunting weekend to the Saturday and Sunday prior to the start of the regular November season.



"In a nutshell, there are some very specific parts of the state—like the Champlain Valley—where we need hunters to harvest more does," said Shortsleeve. "Doe numbers are

one of the main factors that determine the deer herd's ability to grow. In much of Vermont the herd is already pretty well balanced to the available habitat, but in some areas there are just too many deer. In those places, our forests are suffering as a result."

In addition to the proposed deer regulation changes the board also invites public comment on proposals from department biologists on the moose and turkey hunting seasons, and on transporting wild game meat from out of state into Vermont.

The proposed new moose regulations would increase the season from six to nine days and expand the use of firearms for a small number of hunters. The proposed new turkey regulations would expand the fall archery season to the start of October. Existing regulations on bringing wild game meat from deer and elk harvested out of state into Vermont are proposed to now apply to moose and other species in the deer family as well.

tions would come into effect between fall 2025 and 2026, if approved. The full proposed changes for all three hunting seasons and the game meat transport regulation can be read in their entirety on the board's website under the "Active Rulemaking" heading.

The department will accept public comment on all four proposed regulation changes through May 25, 2025, via email to [ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov). Additionally, public hearings will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the following dates and locations:

- March 17, Mt. Anthony Union High School, 301 Park St., Bennington, VT 05201

- March 18, Lakes Region High School, 317 Lakes Region Rd., Orleans, VT 05860

- March 20, Union 32 Middle & High School, 930 Gallison Hill Rd., Montpelier, VT 05602

- May 6, Winooski Middle & High School, 60 Normand St., Winooski, VT 05404

- A fifth public hearing in southern Vermont will be scheduled for early May and announced in the coming weeks on the board's website under the "Public Hearings" heading.

## Moosehead Lake Region Fishing Report

About six years ago, we started getting a few reports from different anglers that the salmon fishing in Harrington Lake was in poor shape. The reports were from some knowledgeable people, so (News cont. pg 13)

The proposed new deer and turkey hunting regulations and the game meat transport regulations would take effect in 2026, if approved. The proposed new moose hunting regula-



## News

(Cont. from pg 12)

we took a deep look at the situation. Harrington Lake has both a wild salmon and wild lake trout fishery. The salmon utilize the small tributaries and the outlet for spawning and nursery habitat. Over the years, ME IFW and Great Northern Paper Company fisheries staff had both surveyed these tributaries and the lake to evaluate salmon recruitment, so we had a little bit of historic data for comparisons.

We electrofished all of the tributaries and the outlet to see if recruitment was down. We also trapnetted the lake in the fall to capture adults during their pre-spawning movements. Unfortunately, we found the angler complaints to be very much warranted. We did not find any young salmon in the tributaries, and we took just a couple adults in the lake. We did find some young wild salmon in the outlet stream. It appears that there were some unintended consequences from the placement of stoplogs in the dam.

This was a requirement from the settlement process in the relicensing of the dams in the upper Penobscot drainage system back in the early 2000s. The stoplogs were intended to help wetland development in the lake, but they may have also hindered the passage of young salmon back into the lake from the outlet. Fortunately, when the dam was rebuilt in the 1980s, Great Northern Paper made space for a future fishway. ME IFW did not want a fishway at that time because there were perch downstream and not in Harrington Lake. Both

white perch and yellow perch have found their way into the lake more recently so that is no longer a concern.

We worked with the staff at Brookfield Renewable (the current owners of the dam) to remedy the situation. Brookfield engineered a fishway design for the dam and they installed the fishway components in the summer of 2024. We appreciate Brookfield's cooperation with this important project. We believe the new fishway will allow young salmon Kevin Bernier and Richard Dill from Brookfield Renewable with Steve Seebach and Jeff Bagley of ME IFW at the new fishway in Harrington Lake Dam – July 2024. that are still present downstream to pass up into the lake and rebuild that fishery over time. We hope to evaluate it in the next few years.

**Submitted by: Tim Obrey, Regional Fisheries Supervisor, Moosehead Lake Region**

### New Hampshire Wild Festival

Save the date! The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's popular outdoor festival, Discover WILD New Hampshire Day, is set for April 19, 2025. This free community event takes place from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the grounds of the Fish and Game Department at 11 Hazen Drive in Concord, NH.

Celebrating 36 years of connecting you to life outdoors, Discover WILD New Hampshire Day is a fun way for the whole family to explore New Hampshire's wildlife resources and outdoor traditions. Browse educational exhibits presented by environ-

mental and conservation organizations from across the state. See live animals, big fish, and trained falcons. Try your hand at archery, casting, fly-tying, and B-B gun shooting. Watch retriever dogs in action, get creative with hands-on craft activities, plus check out food truck alley—there is sure to be something for every taste!

Discover WILD New Hampshire Day is hosted by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and sponsored by the Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire, Fish and Game's nonprofit partner ([www.nhwildlifeheritage.org](http://www.nhwildlifeheritage.org)), with support from media sponsor Manchester Media Group.

Watch for more details about Discover WILD New Hampshire Day at [www.wildnh.com](http://www.wildnh.com)

### Avian Flu

With the recent confirmation of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in multiple wild birds in York and Cumberland Counties, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC), the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) are urging people to take precautions to limit the spread of HPAI and protect wild and domestic birds.

HPAI is a highly contagious virus that spreads easily among birds through direct contact with infected poultry, wild birds, contaminated equipment, and even on the clothing and shoes of caretakers. If contracted by a bird, the virus is known to cause decreased appetite, reduced egg production, or death. While no

cases have been detected in Maine's domestic flocks since March 2024, recent

like ducks and geese. These viruses can spread quickly to domestic poultry, like



detections in wild birds signal that the virus remains present. At this time, the Maine CDC considers the human health risk to the general public from avian influenza viruses to be low.

Recent HPAI Activity MDIFW has confirmed HPAI in four Canada geese, two red-tailed hawks, and a great horned owl in recent weeks. The birds were collected in the towns of Kennebunk, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick, South Portland and York. Additionally, four New England states reported HPAI cases in domesticated poultry in recent weeks. Avian flu viruses normally spread among wild water birds,

chickens, ducks, geese, and guinea hens. In response, officials raised the risk level and are strongly encouraging all flock owners to implement strict protective measures.

For more information on Avian Influenza, please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/living-with-wildlife/diseases/avian-influenza.html>

### Vermont Moose Permits

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has proposed issuing 180 moose hunting permits in Vermont's Wildlife Man-

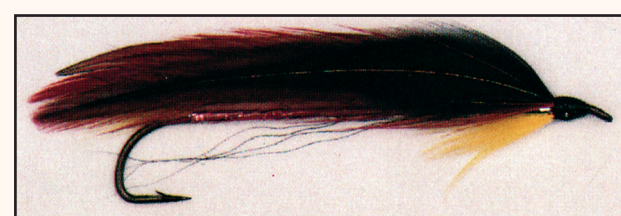
(News cont. pg 32)

## FLY PATTERN OF THE MONTH

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**Bolshevik**

**Tied by: Dick Stewart**

**Tail...Yellow hackle barbules**

**Body...Flat silver tinsel**

**Wing...Sparse black bucktail over which 2 red saddle hackles which are flanked by 2 red/brown badger hackles with a pronounced black center strip.**

**Throat...Yellow hackle barbules, beard style**

*All patterns reprinted from "Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon" by Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman.*





## Maine Tails

By Jonah Paris,  
Ellsworth, ME

In theory, charter fishing is a basic two-step process. Step one: Take your people fishing, tell some tales, and elicit a few laughs. Step two: Get your people safely back to the dock, ideally with a collection of photos and a cooler of fillets. Charter fishing is about adventure and helping people build memories alongside their friends and

River Runs Through It; perhaps the line between religion and fishing was blurred for this family too. Or maybe I had simply missed the first part of the conversation.

I soon learned that the father was the pastor of a small congregation in the hills of Tennessee. The family was vacationing on Peaks Island and enjoying

**Over the next minute, in my excitement, I spewed enough colorful language to impress even the saltiest of souls in the commercial fleet. I forgot who we had aboard with us and later apologized.**

family. Working with the general public, we never know who we will have aboard for the day. Just like at the Thanksgiving table, there are a few unspoken parameters for discussion. Even among good company, subjects that remain taboo on the boat are politics and religion.

"A praying man knows no fear," the man announced. I looked over from thawing a brick of frozen clams, slowly nodded, then quickly turned back to the bait. I thought of the opening line of Norman Maclean's classic, A

their first visit to Maine. They had booked the Teazer for a day of groundfishing in late September. The pastor's sons were bass and catfish enthusiasts, but when I inquired about fishing to the pastor, his wife giggled and mumbled something about not catching a fish in the bathtub. I smiled.

The morning was gray and overcast, and the seas were kicked up from a departing low pressure. We were left with a residual sloppy groundswell and 10 knots of easterly wind. As we steamed past the inner

islands of Casco Bay, the electronics indicated that the water had dropped to 56 degrees. Summer was long over.

We arrived at our first spot, a piece of structure quietly known for its fall whiting bite, and our group dropped their baits to the bottom. As I turned towards the stern, I caught a glimpse of something drifting by. A stick. Driftwood and other debris is common following big fall tides and easterly wind. But this

stick was swimming; it was making a wake. The Captain saw it now too. Over the rumble of the engine, he hollered. "That's a bluefin on its side! Tip of the pectoral fin." I yelled back. "No, not a tuna - swordfish! Tip of the dorsal. I'm positive."

The term "positive" might have been a stretch. My identification was based solely on years of drooling over glossy photos in Salt Water Sportsman, Sport Fishing Magazine, and other big game publications. Twenty years ago, I must have been the only eight-year-old in Maine getting Marlin Magazine delivered monthly to their family's mailbox. In fact, my experience with swordfish could be summed up

between the photos, the occasional splurge on fresh sword steaks from the local fish market, and overhearing faint whispers along the docks that someone saw one, somewhere, at some point; the whale watch boat spotted a swordfish finning, a harpoon boat to the west threw at one in the deep water, a tuna fisherman hooked one at Jeffreys, or Platts, or Fippennies. Portland's swordfish fleet, those who longlined the famed Grand Banks, had disappeared before I was born.

"Reel them up!" the captain announced. "We got to check this out."

The captain climbed up to the tower, and I followed behind. Our Tennessee crew gathered on the flybridge. The fish stayed up, and allowed the boat to approach. As the captain carefully drove alongside, we all looked down. From above, the fish appeared a dark purplish-blue, contrasting sharply with the gray water. There it was - a thick, wide caudal keel leading to the tail and the unmistakable broad bill.

"That's a 'f\*\*\*ing swordfish! I f\*\*\*ing knew it!" And that's where I began. Over the next minute, in my excitement, I spewed enough colorful language to impress even the saltiest of souls in the commercial fleet. I forgot who we had aboard with

us and later apologized. "Not a problem," the wife assured. They were very nice people.

I explained to our group that just this past summer, I had witnessed a breaching great white, spotted an elephant seal and a massive leatherback turtle in the same week, watched a free-jumping mako do a cartwheel well inside the confines of the Bay, and hand-fed a giant bluefin tuna. This swordfish was something else. We were not out to Georges Bank, the Northeast Canyons, or the Florida Straits; we were "right out front." Portland Head Light loomed on the horizon and the dock was less than 10 miles away. We were hardly beyond the boundary of State waters, drifting in less than 200 feet. This was momentous.

We approached the swordfish, estimated between 200 and 250 pounds, three more times before it dove deep - probably to resume its migration back to Caribbean waters. As we steamed off to our next spot, a vast pod of pilot whales, "blackfish" to many Mainers, surrounded the boat and kept pace at 12 knots. I glanced over at the pastor. Wide-eyed and smiling, he was focusing a camera at the scene unfolding ahead. I could not help but think that maybe the Gulf of Maine, and her great creatures, would make it into next week's sermon.



*A four-season outdoorsman, Jonah lives in Ellsworth, ME with his wife Ashley, and beagle, Aurora. Jonah can be reached at [jonaheparis@gmail.com](mailto:jonaheparis@gmail.com)*



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## Stickers

(Cont. from pg 7)

the “Hunt Safely” stickers campaign which we were hearing about for the very first time back then, and that other states had already implemented with remarkable success.

This sticker, which is still in use today, works to keep Massachusetts hunters aware, alert, and safe as a constant reminder to “Hunt Safely”! This little green sticker truly saved the day back then and kept us from sliding backward into an abyss that may have taken decades to recover from. Every time I look down and see that sticker, which by the way, goes on the back of the receiver where the stock and the receiver meet, I think about those

days, and will always be grateful for being allowed to help with a decision that would eventually alter the course of wild turkey hunting in Massachusetts. Wayne Macallum gave turkey hunters, and the NWTF, credibility and respect back then, by allowing us to participate at that level. He opened the door to our partnership through this one decision, while saving the lives of more turkey hunters, both in this state and beyond, than we may ever fully realize. And for this, we owe Wayne, and that entire Board of Directors, a huge thank you!

So, to the unaware, uneducated critics, get over it! Because the bottom line is this; the worst thing we can do as a hunting community is to ridicule the rules that are in place

to keep us safe. Safety is not something to be taken lightly when it comes to using firearms. If every turkey hunter that looks down at that sticker knows WHY it's there, then accidents and unethical shots can be avoided. Even if it's just a “little green sticker” helping us to remember that!



*Joe Judd is a lifelong hunter and sportsman. He is an outdoor writer, seminar speaker, member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, and a 2019 inductee into the N.E. Turkey Hunting Hall of Fame. Joe is also on the Quaker Boy Game Calls and Bass Pro Shops/Cabela's Pro-Staff. He can be reached at [jjontheridge@comcast.net](mailto:jjontheridge@comcast.net)*



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## The Adventures of Me and Joe

by Bob Cram,  
(Alias T.J. Coongate)  
Medway, ME

It was afternoon assembly at Mooseleuk high school and I was nervous. The new warden, Ransome Cooper, was addressing the student body about game and fish and the role of the game warden in the scheme of things. I was nervous because I could see Joe nearly bouncing in his seat, a look of grim determination on his face as though barely able to wait for the question and answer period.

Warden Cooper was tall and square, towering well over six feet and weighing a good 220 pounds. Blond hair topped a craggy, weather-beaten face. The warden talked in a quiet voice that still penetrated to the far corners of the room and his subject matter was dear to the hearts of teen-agers in the northern Maine backwoods hamlet of Mooseleuk.

Fishing, hunting, trapping, canoeing, all the activities that formed such an integral part of their lives. Most of the listeners were respectful, some looked uncertain, and a few displayed boredom and disdain. Only Joe looked like he wanted to get up

and throttle the warden, a ludicrous idea given the disparity in their sizes.

Finally the warden's talk ended and he asked for questions. Like a jack-in-the-box Joe popped up out of his seat. "Is it true, warden, that you arrested Francis Riffle yesterday?" Suppressed emotion caused his voice to quiver slightly.

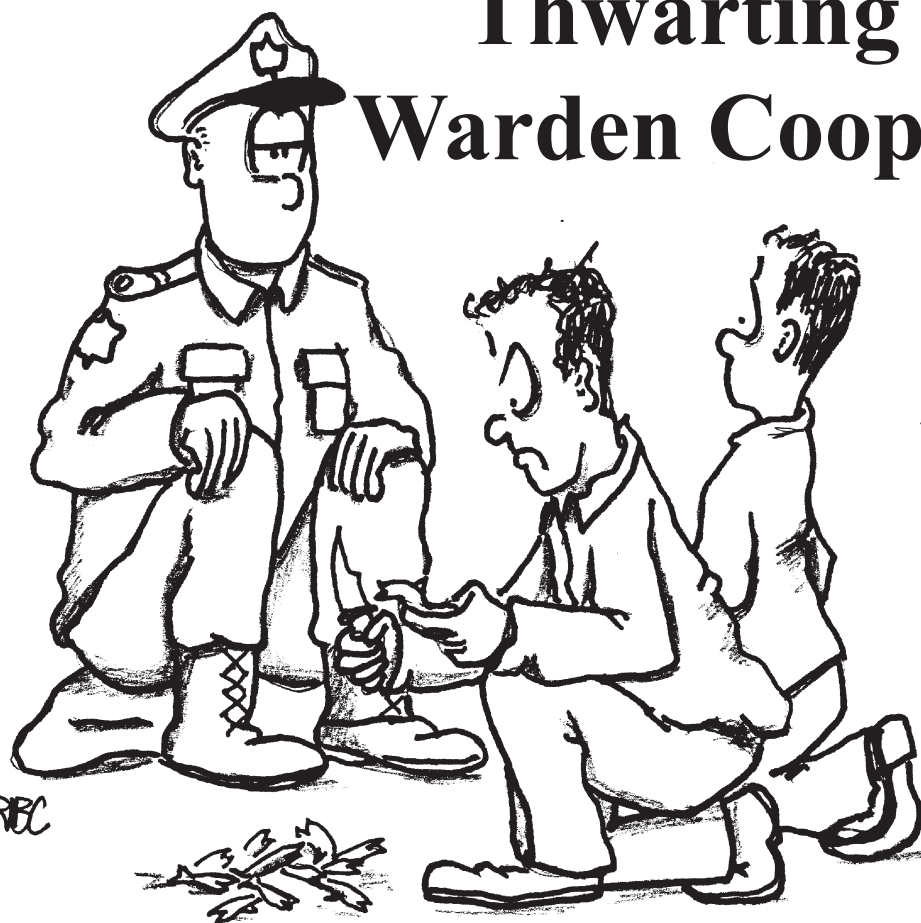
"I didn't arrest Mr. Riffle," the warden replied calmly. "I did, however, issue him a summons for possessing over the limit of trout."

Joe nodded, as though this confirmed his darkest suspicion. "And did you know, warden, that Mr. Riffle was laid off from the sawmill a month back an' still has to feed a fam'ly of six?"

Warden Cooper nodded agreeably. "I am aware of Mr. Riffle's need to support his family. Breaking the fish and game laws is not the way to do it."

"Did you ever think," an element of sarcasm crept into Joe's voice, "that Mr. Riffle might be a little too proud to accept charity?"

"Should breaking the law make a man feel



**Warden Cooper ignored the outburst. "Empty out those pack baskets, boys, and let's see what you got."**

proud?"

Joe's face flushed a violent scarlet. Without another word he wheeled and stalked out of the auditorium. At the same time, at least six other boys silently rose and followed him.

Later that afternoon several of us gathered outside the Emporium downtown.

"Ain't right," Luther Crow muttered. "Punishin' a man for tryin' ta feed his family."

"Guess it was just bad luck we got saddled with

that Cooper fer a warden," Jeeter Crop chimed in. "We'll have ta watch out from now on, jaywalkin' and spittin' on the sidewalk. Ol' Warden Cooper will prob'ly just be waitin' to pinch us."

"Heard he...uh... caught Slash Jacklight with a...uh...poached deer the other night, too," said Condon Fishbane.

"Well," I said hesitantly, "there's quite a difference between spitting on the sidewalk and poaching deer..." Four pairs of eyes glared at me suspiciously. "That is...uh..."

"We got to do somethin'," Joe said emphatically. "Somethin' ta teach that warden a lesson."

"Yeah, but what?" Luther asked. "I mean, what kin we do that won't get the whole bunch of us in trouble?"

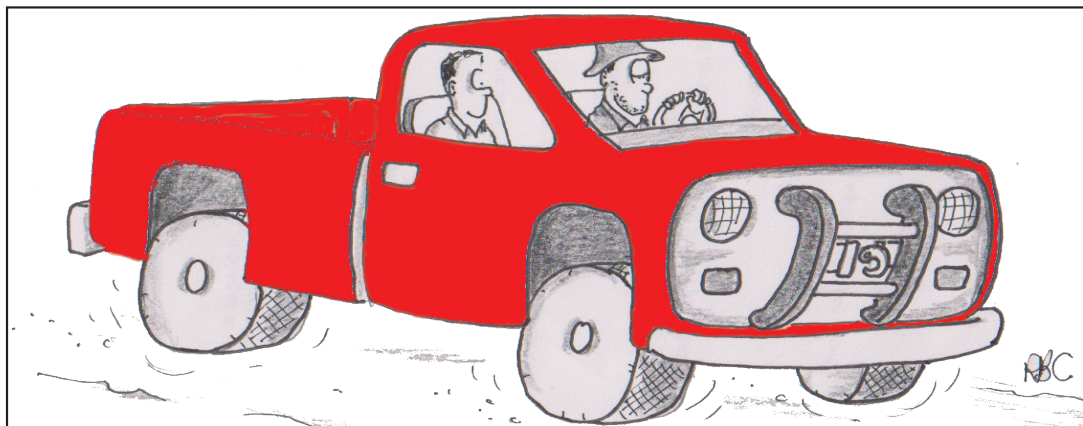
Joe looked thoughtful for a minute, then his eyes lit up. "I know! The smelts are runnin' good on the

West Branch of the Little Salt Pork. A good mess of smelts orta help out ol' Francis Riffle's family." He looked around the little group.

"Ain't no need of all of us takin' a chance." He glanced at me. "The two of us will go tomorrow night. We'll get a few gallons an' take 'um to the Riffle's place. Then we'll let word git around about what we done. That orta snap ol' Cooper's garter for him."

Everyone agreed that this was a great idea, but I wasn't so sure. As me and Joe walked home, I voiced my concerns. "Are you sure that this is the best way to help the Riffles?"

"Are you with me, or agin' me?" Joe asked angrily. "It's a pretty poor community don't stand by its neighbors in time of trouble." I had no answer to that, but I looked forward to the next night's smelt-ing trip with a great deal of (Me & Joe cont. pg 17)



If you just can't get enough of reading our Me & Joe Adventures, check out the All Outdoor section of our new Northwoods Sporting Journal website: [www.sportingjournal.com](http://www.sportingjournal.com) You'll find an ample supply of Me & Joe stories to keep you checking for a long time.



## Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 16)  
trepidation.

Late the next afternoon me and Joe were hiking through town with our pack baskets and smelt net, heading for the Little Salt Pork River when we noticed Francis Riffle on a ladder painting the side of the municipal building.

"Howdy Mr. Riffle," Joe called up as we stopped in the road.

Francis Riffle looked down at us and smiled. "Hi, boys. Goin' smeltin' I see."

Joe grinned and winked. "We sure are. I see you got yerself another job."

Mr. Riffle grinned sheepishly. "You might say that. At least we're eatin' better. Say, Joe, I heard you were upset about my getting pinched for too many fish. I don't want you boys to feel bad about that. It was my own fault and I'm paying for it."

"Don't you worry, Mr. Riffle. Thing's will get better, jest you wait an' see." Joe replied. With that, we headed off for the woods.

The smelts were running good that night. As other fishermen around us collected their limits and left, me and Joe sat by a streamside boulder, waiting for the hours to pass.

"We'll wait 'til everyone's gone, then sneak out through Abner's cutoff, instead of the reg'lar trail," Joe whispered.

Finally, near midnight, we were alone on the river's edge. The smelts were still running strong and it was only a matter of a few dips before we had at least three gallons of smelts.

"I still don't feel right about this," I muttered as we loaded the smelts into

our pack baskets.

"Just think how much help this'll be to the Riffle family," Joe grunted as he heaved his pack onto his back. "An'think of ol' Cooper's face when he hears about it." With a grin he set off over Abner's cutoff with me straggling along behind.

The cutoff crosses Trout Brook near the main road. We hopped across the rocks at the crossing and were nearly at the other side when the beam of a powerful flashlight caught us full in its glare. Warden Ransome Cooper stepped from the streamside brush and motioned for us to come ashore.

Joe was furious. "Well, you got us Warden," he fumed. "Must make you feel pretty big. We got these smelts for the Riffle fam'ly: you know, the ones you took the food out of the mouths of. But I don't s'pect that cuts any ice with the likes of you."

Warden Cooper ignored the outburst. "Empty out those pack baskets, boys, and let's see what you got."

As we displayed the multitude of smelts, the warden sat on a handy rock and tipped back his hat. "So you think this is the way to help the Riffles, by breaking the law?" he asked quietly.

"We didn't see no-one else doin' nothin'!" Joe said indignantly.

"Maybe you didn't look hard enough," the warden rejoined mildly.

"What do you mean?" my curiosity almost overcame my fear.

The warden just looked at us, consideringly. "You boys got knives?"

Joe blinked at the unexpected question. "Course we got knives," he an-

swered angrily. "Don't think we'd be out in the woods without knives, do yer?"

"Good. Get 'um out. You boys are going to clean some fish." My eyes widened, but I got out my old Schrade and set to work, Joe grumbling noisily by my side as he also set to work.

I had forgotten how long it took to clean a gallon of smelts, and there were more than three gallons in our haul. Time went by. My hands began to ache and my back got a crick in it from bending to wash the cleaned smelts in the stream. Joe kept a steady rhythm going but I could see he was getting tired of it too.

"Know how many legal fish in this stream?" the warden asked suddenly.

Joe straightened and rubbed his back. "How the heck should we know?"

The warden just shone his light at the water. "This is a fairly fertile trout stream," he looked upstream where rapids flowed into a deep pool. "It'll hold about 100 legal trout per mile, maybe a few more."

"Sounds like a lot," I said, continuing to clean the never-ending stream of fish.

"Sounds like it, but the legal limit is 8 fish. If you take 8 fish and Joe takes 8, and a dozen other fishermen take 8 apiece, how many legal trout are going to be left in that mile?"

Joe's scowl turned to a look of uncertainty. "Why, uh..."

"None. If you all took home your limits, that would be 112 trout. There wouldn't be any legal fish left in that mile of stream. Sure, other fish would move in from up or

downstream, but the whole stream would be depleted of fish over time. Thankfully, not every angler takes home his limit every day or there wouldn't be any fishing left."

"I hadn't thought of it like that..." Joe began.

"Now think of the fish hog," the warden interrupted. "He takes way more than his legal share, maybe twice as many, maybe more. If we let people like that go, it wouldn't be long before fishermen would be complaining: 'Gee, the fishing has really gone downhill at Trout Brook!' And they'd be right, and now you know why."

I could see the wheels turning in Joe's head, but he clung stubbornly to at least one of his prejudices. "Still, when a man needs to feed his family...an' the money he has to pay for a fine..."

"There are other ways to feed your family, Joe. I think Francis Riffle has learned that lesson. And as for the fine, there wasn't any. I talked to Judge Parker into giving him community service. That's why he's painting the municipal building. Now pick up

those smelts and let's head on out of here."

As we neared the main road, Joe said grudgingly: "I heard you nabbed Slash Jacklight with a deer. I guess I kin see that. Ain't very sportin' and he sure don't need the meat."

"And Francis Riffle's family was glad to get it." Warden Cooper smiled at our surprise. "We had to confiscate the meat, of course, and it's up to us to decide where it could best be used. I figured the Riffle family could do with some meat to tide them over until Francis starts his new job at the post office in two weeks."

At the edge of the road we turned to face the warden. "I guess I never thought much about what you've said warden," Joe said quietly. "Bad as I hate to admit it, it makes a lot of sense. I guess we're ready to go to take our medicine now."

Warden Cooper looked at us for a long moment, then glanced down at our reddened and scarred hands. "Maybe you've learned something at that. Jump in my truck. I'll give (Me & Joe cont. pg 19)

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I found Marty on page \_\_\_\_\_

**Dick Bernier**  
(Marty was found  
on pg 21)

Entries must be  
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this issue.



## Outdoor Sporting Library

by Jeremiah Wood,  
Ashland, ME



The wilds of Alaska can be a difficult place to survive. Many visit, few stay, and even fewer – the ones they call sourdoughs – make it their home. They say those who end up on the edge of civilization are

except the woods. He spent much of his time hunting for food, and before long began making long excursions to different places to find work.

Mining and commercial fishing were hard, dan-

in Juneau.

While out hunting one day, Hasselborg met up with a scientific expedition that was out collecting specimens for a museum back in the states. They had difficulty collecting any bears, and hired him on the spot. This marked the beginning of a years-long relationship with the

**He continued to guide for a while, but became more isolated and stubborn in his older years. but later in life swore off killing the creatures and began protecting the Mole River bears from hunters.**

either running from their past or seeking something better. For Allen Hasselborg, perhaps both were true.

Born in Pennsylvania in the post Civil War era, Hasselborg had a rough childhood. Money was always tight, family life was strained, and the boy didn't seem to fit in anywhere

gerous jobs that paid very little in those days. After various stints in the West, Hasselborg found himself in southeast Alaska, where he found a lifestyle of hunting and fishing that suited him well. He became an expert bear hunter, learning that he could receive a month's worth of wages for each brown bear hide sold

scientists, where he hunted and collected specimens of every species he could find in southeast Alaska.

Hasselborg eventually settled in a place called Mole Harbor, about 70 miles from Juneau, an isolated bay near the Mole River, which was filled with salmon and crawling with brown bears in



the summer. He guided hunters seeking bears with both rifles and cameras, including many of the most well known and influential

people of the day.

Hasselborg filed on a homestead in Mole Harbor, built a small house, cleared land and planted a huge garden, selling vegetables he could ship on passing boats to Juneau. He continued to guide for a while, but became more isolated and stubborn in his older years, but later in life swore off killing the creatures and began protecting the Mole River bears from hunters. He had killed perhaps more bears than anyone in Alaska, had been charged many times and mauled once, government even gave him jobs as a stream guard and deputy warden for the area.

The Bear Man, as he came to be known, was a peculiar person indeed, and attracted many visitors on passing tourist boats. He constantly fought with the government, even shooting at a Forest Service boat, only went to town about (Man cont. pg 19)



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Man

(Cont. from pg 18)

three times a year, refused to ride in a car or plane, and ruled Mole Harbor like a king. He was a well-read naturalist and a foremost expert on bears and their behavior.

Decades after Has-selborg’s death, the fading memory of the man and his

accomplishments was re-stored in a biography, “Bear Man of Admiralty Island” written by John Howe. The book is a detailed view of the man, his life, and much of the history that has made southeast Alaska such an incredible place.

*Jeremiah can be reached at jrodwood@gmail.com*



Don Howe, a member of the Mendon Fishing and Game Club, in Pittsford, Vermont, holding a 20 pound, 48 inch Northern Pike, caught at Lake Bomoseen.

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Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 17)

you a ride home.”

My eyes widened. “You mean, you’re not going to arrest us?”

“I figured you’ve done enough penance for one night,” he replied as

the engine started with a roar. “But I will have to confiscate those nice clean smelts. Don’t worry, I’ll see that they get used by someone who deserves them.” He winked broadly as the truck lurched onto the highway and turned toward town.

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## Aroostook Woods & Water

by Mike Maynard,  
Perham, ME

Evolution, by its very nature, is not a quick process. The resulting changes of this time-consuming ordeal can be hard to see, and even harder to quantify. The evolution of the fly caster is one such unquantifiable moment in

the end-result of which is that I now accept certain things about myself. I'll settle for accuracy, no matter how ungainly the attempt, and be happy about it. The Reverend Maclean (father of Norman) said of grace, "Grace comes by

self when it wasn't looking. Just as I reach the point in my life where the important things (fishing, hunting, lifting a glass of scotch) start getting harder to accomplish due to a myriad of physical apocalypses (age, too, is graceless), I learned a new skill

and a whole new world opened up for me. Single-hand Spey casting!

As it happens, single-hand Spey casting is not only practical, it's addic-

of the line manufacturers are now making integrated lines, so no more shooting heads attached to a mono running line, unless that is your preference. You now

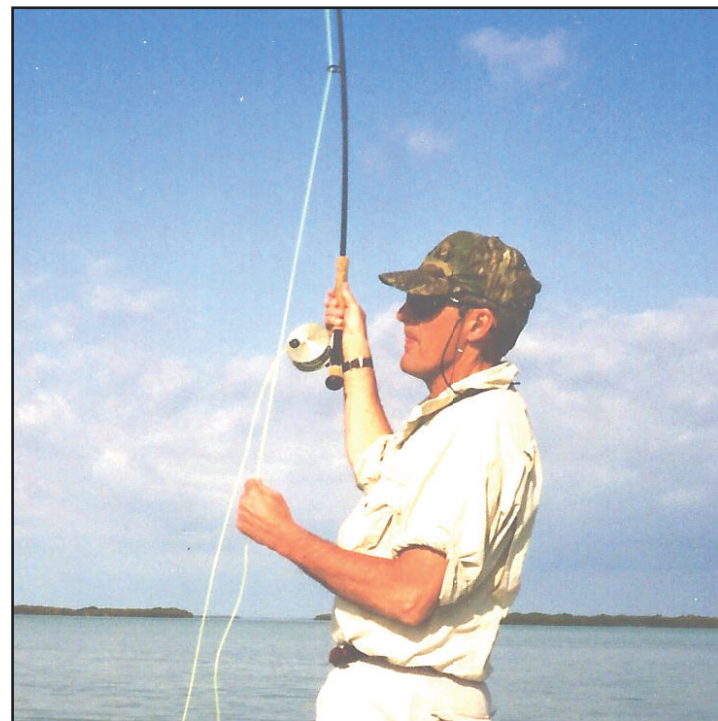
**Just as I reach the point in my life where the important things (fishing, hunting, lifting a glass of scotch) start getting harder to accomplish due to a myriad of physical apocalypses (age, too, is graceless), I learned a new skill to help ease my burden.**

time. But even after evolution has finished with you, there is still a link missing: grace. The recipe for grace was never baked-in to the equation; for that, we all still have a little work to do. For me, grace is all but unattainable. There was a time when my artless casting consumed me; but I am no longer chasing grace. I sat down with myself one day and had a righteous 'come-to-Jesus' meeting,

art and art does not come easy". Reverend Maclean was a wise man. Casting a fly is an art. It is a call to which many of us have responded, without having been called (me included). I am not completely graceless, I'm just not your classical caster; that is my cross to bear.

But then came the epiphany, and I managed to sneak up on grace and steal a little piece for my-

to help ease my burden. I know I've mentioned in a past issue that I picked up a Spey rod at some point; I thought it looked like fun, and it is. Turns out, it might also be a boon and a balm; a stream-side salvation. I started big; 12' 6" two-handed 6wt. Ross Reach. A typical Spey rod is a big water rod, and I figured the only place I would ever use it would be on the Aroostook. But then, as my thinking became a little more nuanced, I leaned into this new method of casting




tive as all get-out. If you have two bad shoulders, like me, and the thought of repetitive false casting all day long almost brings you to tears, here is a very attainable solution. Relax, I'm not trying to sell you anything; you don't need to buy a new \$1,000.00 Spey rod and reel. You already have all the necessary equipment! Your every-day trout rod is perfect for this. The only thing you will need to buy is the line; usually \$90-\$100.00. Several very reputable line manufacturers make short Skagit heads for single-hand rods. And when I say short lines, I mean like 15'-18' short. That's it, the entirety of your fly line is 18'. Normally, you would attach a slick mono running line to your shooting head, usually a 20-30lb. Chameleon, or Lazar line. Most

have an 18' head welded to an 80' small diameter fly line. It won't shoot quite as well as the mono rig will, but it will strip back far better, especially with cold, frozen hands, and it doesn't have the requisite memory coils that the mono does. Go as small as you want; you can put a 150-175g Skagit head on a 7' 6" 3wt. rod and shoot line from here to New Brunswick, all starting with a simple roll cast. It is the perfect small stream set-up where you have zero room for a traditional back-cast.

The best part is, it doesn't hurt to cast anymore. There is zero false casting needed. You already have the basic cast in your toolbox: the roll cast. Spey casting was birthed from the roll cast; perfect your roll cast and (Casting cont. pg 26)

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# Birch Bark Canoes Come To Moosehead

Last year, I spent a good bit of time preparing my old wood and canvas canoe for repairs, first stripping, sanding, and



**Penobscot Guide, Damon Galipeau.**

varnishing the interior of it. Then, once it was repaired, finishing it with three coats of paint, painstakingly fine sanded and wiped down with tack cloth in between each coat. Master Builder Jerry Stelmok did the repair work, replacing some rotted planks, a couple of broken ribs, the gunwales. I assisted him wherever I could, nailing tacks, rubbing the special filling compound he makes into the new canvas that he stretched into place over the hull. It was a labor of love, and I learned a whole lot by watching, listening, and doing besides. It is my go-to canoe, a 15-footer, built for these waters.

This year, it will be the summer of the birch bark canoe. For anyone interested, you might want to take a ride up, camp out, do some fishing, hang out for a few days in God's country. On Wednesday and Thursday, July 23-24, the owners of birch bark

canoes from around Maine, and some from Canada, will be gathering here on Moosehead Lake. Master Birch Bark Canoe Builder

Steve Cayard will be overseeing this flotilla of birch bark canoes. The afternoon of Day 1 is spent preparing for the float, inspecting the canoes, applying a special mixture of sap where needed, hobnobbing with like-minded craftsmen.

The action takes place in West Cove, at the Greenville Junction Wharf. Access is super easy, with a

flat, large open lawn, two boat landings, and a parking lot, so anyone can get there. Owners of birch bark canoes register through Steve. But anyone with an interest in this traditional canoe form can just show

**This year, it will be the summer of the birch bark canoe. For anyone interested, you might want to take a ride up, camp out, do some fishing, hang out for a few days in God's country. On Wednesday and Thursday, July 23-24, the owners of birch bark canoes from around Maine, and some from Canada, will be gathering here on Moosehead Lake.**

up and soak up what it's all about. This gathering of the canoes is all part of the annual Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail Festival that takes place here every July.

Before I began overseeing the fest, I had never paddled a birch bark canoe. Still old school, we always used the wood canvas canoes my husband built. Then on some trips with Penobscot guides, I had the chance to get into a birch bark. At first I was afraid it was going split or that I wasn't going to be able to

paddle it because they sit and control differently than a wood canvas.

The wood canvas canoes are heavy, and sturdy. We took our 20-footer, made wider than is typical

to suit Moosehead waters, and could pack it heavy, for extended trips on the West Branch. We loaded two large boxes, built to fit snugly in the center of the canoe. One box was for all manner of camp kitchen utensils, and one for food. Then we packed and lashed the rest of our gear up and around it. It was piled high! We packed for comfort. But on the water, these canoes are dandy, draw little water, sitting well and high, even loaded down.

The birch bark canoe

is altogether different. It is sturdier than you think. And, on the water, they sit light as a feather. They also are much easier to carry. They can turn on a dime. Where and how you sit,

paddle, and maneuver in the water are not the same. I am no expert, in either type of canoe. But every time I go out, I learn something new. The birch bark is also meant to travel light, so would not be loaded down like we did our canvas crate. Unlike a birch bark, we also made darn sure we didn't have to portage it far.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of seeing a birch bark canoe being built, under the tutelage of Steve Cayard. Steve, who  
(Canoes cont. pg 30)

## Kineo Currents



by **Suzanne AuClair,**  
**Rockwood, ME**



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## Women In The Woods

by Erin Merrill,  
Portland, ME

Everyone has a hunting buddy. Someone that they send their trail camera pictures to or who they plan hunting trips with. It's the person that you call to help drag out that big buck, assuming they are not right there in the woods with you. If you're lucky, you

will find someone who will help you and challenge you and go on some of the craziest adventures with you.

In 2021, when I was drawn for my moose permit, one of the very first texts that I received was from my friend Staci. All it said was, "I will help you

get your bear" because she knew that if I got drawn, the plan was to get my grand slam. She was determined to help me do it.

In the dark woods of western Maine at 12:30 a.m., Staci leaned over the stock of my gun and held a branch out of the way so

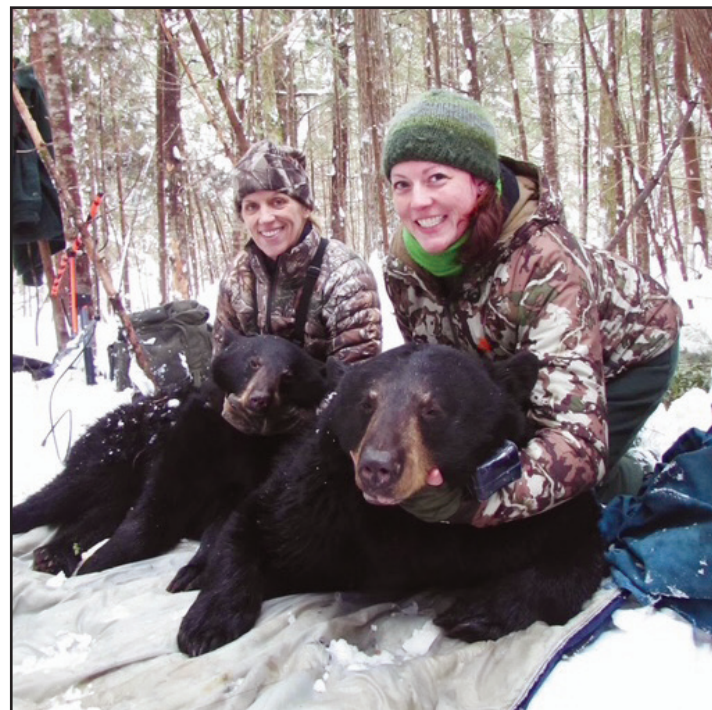
**In the dark woods of western Maine at 12:30 a.m., Staci leaned over the stock of my gun and held a branch out of the way so that I could shoot my bear and check the first box in my grand slam.**

that I could shoot my bear and check the first box in my grand slam.

There was a time when she and her husband took me turkey hunting. We had a flock coming at us with just enough of a knoll that we wouldn't tell which route they would take to come to us. I told Staci to put her back up against mine so that if the turkey jumped the fence behind me, she could shoot it. That was exactly what happened. She was so mad that I didn't get a turkey and she did, but she had the shot.

When I was newly pregnant with my daughter, we went fishing near her house. Neither of us are particularly fond of snakes, but I don't think we've ever paddled as fast as we did when we saw one of those water snakes swimming past us. I was trying not to

# Ode To Hunt Buds



The author (right) with her hunting bud, Staci Warren.

cast too far from the boat for fear that I would spook (or entice) a snake to swim by at us again. The fact that I caught a huge bass was just coincidence and the video that Staci took while we were landing this thing is comedic.

There have been multiple times that we went snow shoeing looking for deer sheds. It always ended with us getting distracted by a chunk of chaga or other animals or wanting to follow well worn deer trails to see where they went. We have spent hours in the truck hunting partridge in the north woods and I've helped her haul bait into multiple bait sites so that she could get a bear.

These are the kinds of hunting buddies that we all need. The people that are gonna push you while also calling you out on your mistakes. These are the ones that you share decades of hunting and fishing and

outdoor stories with. I'm pretty sure that if Staci was not my hunting buddy, I would not have done half of the outdoor things that I have done so far!

Whether it's road trips to meetings, traveling to haul bear bait, or getting our steps in playing out in the snow, Staci and I have had some incredible adventures. So in honor of Staci's birthday, here is to all of the great hunting partners out there! May the adventures never end.

*Erin is a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, Professional Outdoor Media Association and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. She writes a monthly column titled, "Hunt & Harvest" for the Maine Trust for Local News. You can read about Erin's adventures and contact her at [www.andas-trongcupofcoffee.com](http://www.andas-trongcupofcoffee.com)*

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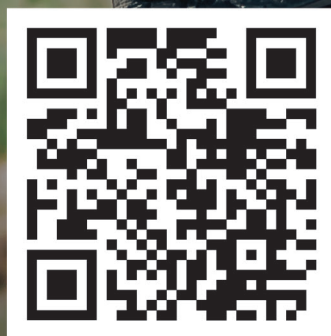
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## Northwoods Sketchbook

by Mark McCollough,  
Hampden, ME

Why does my breakfast omelet cost a small fortune? The culprit is bird influenza (flu), a highly pathogenic respiratory disease passed from wild birds to poultry flocks. Although birds (including chickens) do not always die from the virus, there is concern that

tected in Asia in the later 1990s. Outbreaks occurred in poultry and wild birds in the early 2000s. From 2013-2021 there were several small outbreaks of different subtypes of the virus, but none having great public health concern. But viruses mu-

**Avian flu also occurred in crows, ravens, and birds of prey (eagles, peregrine, snowy owl, and red-tailed hawk), that scavenge dead or weakened birds. In February, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife asked the public to report groups of dead birds in a localized area.**

the virus could mutate and jump to humans. This has already happened in a few instances. Poultry flocks are being culled by the tens of thousands to prevent the spread of the disease. There are fewer chickens laying eggs. The old economic law of supply (fewer eggs) and demand drives up prices.

How might bird flu affect wild birds, including grouse and turkeys? And how might bird flu affect you handling birds that could harbor this disease?

Strains of bird flu have been around for a few decades. Ancestors of this virus were first de-

tate, often to more virulent forms. Since 2020 there was a rapid global increase in a new, highly transmissible strain of bird flu; first in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Then in December 2021 it jumped the Atlantic and was detected in wild birds in Newfoundland.

Carried mostly by wild birds including ducks and geese, gulls, terns, seabirds, and shorebirds, this virulent strain spread rapidly across North America. While some birds acquire bird flu without appearing sick, other strains can cause severe disease and death of wild birds and infected poultry. In some

waterfowl species, nearly all individuals have had contact with the disease. Wild birds carry the disease wherever they migrate exposing poultry and other birds along the way.

The U.S. currently has an extensive surveillance and testing program for avian diseases. The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are the lead federal agencies for outbreak investigation and control in wild birds, and the USDA is the lead agency for such activities in domestic birds. The federal Centers for Disease Control coordinates with DOI, USDA, and with state health departments on appropriate public health measures and work with animal health professionals to minimize the public health risk posed by avian flu.

State wildlife agencies and the USDA Wildlife Services sampled birds and found that avian flu is widespread in New England. Thus far, 184 birds have tested positive in Maine, 161 in NH, 102 in VT, 480 in NY, 91 in CT, RI, and MA. Avian flu spreads quickly through direct, bird-to-bird contact and by feces, saliva and mucus. Most infected birds

# Bird Flu and You



are species that gather in flocks; ducks and geese, but also gulls and terns that nest at high densities on islands. Avian flu also occurred in crows, ravens, and birds of prey (eagles, peregrine, snowy owl, and red-tailed hawk), that scavenge dead or weakened birds. In February, Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife asked the public to report groups of dead birds in a localized area.

Some wild bird populations are being seriously affected. In the summer of 2022, tens of thousands of gannets, murre, and eiders died of bird flu in eastern Canada. That summer, hundreds of dead gulls were found on some Maine nesting islands. Maine Audubon reports that the Greater Portland Christmas Bird Count in mid-December, 2024 saw the lowest total

of both herring gulls and great black-backed gulls in the history of the count. In 2022, at least 16,000 gannets died in Scotland and Wales.

Songbirds are less likely to shed large amounts of virus, meaning they do not transmit the disease as easily. It is unlikely that birds congregated at feeders will contribute to the epidemic. Nevertheless, Audubon advises that people wear disposable gloves and wash their hands thoroughly after cleaning feeders and checking nest boxes.

The National Animal Health Laboratory Network reported that wild turkeys and ruffed grouse can acquire bird flu, but in 2021-22 the incidence was in just 5 to 6% of turkeys and grouse examined. In

(Flu cont. pg 26)



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# Leadership: The Critical Trait

Leadership is a term that most people automatically associate with their boss or someone within the workplace who holds rank. In the private sector these titles might be manager, CEO, or supervisor. A common misconception is that people like myself, who do not hold a promoted rank feel that leadership does not apply to us. Sometimes we think what does leadership have to do with me? I am at the bottom of the organizational structure chart so I don't need to think about that. Wrong.

Within the Warden Service, we try and hire people who exemplify strong leadership qualities and expect each of our Wardens to be leaders within their districts and communities. In a recent training I attended, the keynote speaker discussed how a business or organization is failing from the beginning if their employees are not empowered to believe they are leaders every day. He gave an analogy that has stuck with me since. He said there are three types of employees in every business. Squatters, renters and owners. An employee who is a squatter is someone who shows up to work and is only thinking about what they can take from the business that day. They have no vested interest in bettering themselves or the company and simply punch the clock with the intent of putting in the minimal amount of work while trying to take as much as long the way. My interest peaked as I thought to myself that I have met these types of workers. The

second group of employees are renters. They come to work and do what needs to be done that day. No extra, no less. They don't view the company as their own and they simply do what is asked, but are never ones to put in extra time or effort to help out around the "shop". And finally, employees who embody ownership principles. They view themselves as an integral part of the company and go above and beyond, not cutting any corner to make the company better as a whole. They feel that they have direct ownership in the success or failure of the company and are always willing to go above and beyond. When faced with a failed promotion or being passed over in favor of another employee, instead of feeling like victims, owners put their boots on tight, look themselves in the mirror and as "ok, where can I continue to get better so this doesn't happen again?" These three groups of employees are extremely applicable to outdoor users if you think about it!

Another important reason for the long-term success of any company to prioritize employees being leaders is so that vacuum is not created after a retirement and the "house of cards" comes crashing down due to no one being able to step into a leadership role. It needs to be practiced and perfected



before a promotion occurs so that employee has already built trust and a foundational baseline to be an effective leader.

**Within the Warden Service, we try and hire people who exemplify strong leadership qualities and expect each of our Wardens to be leaders within their districts and communities.**

I have seen throughout my time working for different companies and organizations that sometimes employees who hold no rank, are the best leaders in the organization. We probably have all experienced a person like this who is someone we trust, go to for advice and guidance within an organization, but does not hold authority that comes from a title. What do these employees usually have in common? People of high trust, work ethic, sound judgement and high empathy who consistently give sound advice for all situations. They are what can be called "servant

leaders", putting others needs high on their priority list and valuing each individual's input towards the shared mission.

It is impossible to cover the topic of leadership in the limited amount of words I have to do so. I want to quickly give a historical example for anyone wishing to further their reading on this topic. Joshua Lawrence Cham-

berlain, one of the greatest Mainer's to ever live is an incredible case study on leadership principles during his time as a Colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine Regiment throughout the American Civil War, but specifically his leadership during the defense of "Little Round Top" during the Battle of Gettysburg. Colonel Chamberlain embodied "servant leadership" to the fullest. Instead of riding on his horse while his men walked miles in the sweltering summer heat, Chamberlain walked with his men. Instead of sleeping in the warm comforts of his tent and drinking hot cof-

## Warden's Words

by Game Warden  
**Kale O'Leary,**  
Ashland, ME



fee each morning, he slept outside on the ground with his men and gave his coffee rations to the 20<sup>th</sup> Maine boys. When the fate of the Union hung in the balance along the left flank of the line on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1863, out of ammo and suffering heavy casualties, Chamberlain famously shouted "fix bayonets!" and made the infamous charge into the teeth of the 15<sup>th</sup> Alabama.

A lesser leader, or a man without the trust of his men surely would have seen his men retreat instead of running into danger. History is full of examples of incredible leaders, but this is a profound example of leadership embodied.

*Kale O'Leary has served as Maine Game Warden since 2016. He covers the Oxbow/Masardis district in central Aroostook County. He lives in Ashland, Maine.*



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## Flu

(Cont. from pg 24)

the 2015 bird flu outbreak, there were widespread, but small outbreaks among wild turkey flocks from in the Midwest and Western U.S. Last year, Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota found infection among wild turkey flocks. In April 2022, 41 Wild Turkeys were found dead in Wyoming adjacent to a property with confirmed bird flu in a backyard poultry flock. Thus far, there have been no significant mortality

events noted in wild turkeys in New England.

Turkey season will soon be opening. USDA advises hunters or anyone coming in contact with wild birds to take precautions, particularly to avoid transmission to domestic birds that you may have at home. Avoid contact with a sick or dead wild birds. Body fluids from infected birds may contain the infectious virus. Take precautions and wear disposable gloves while cleaning wild birds and wash hands with soap and water immediately afterward. Do not eat,

drink, or put anything in your mouth while cleaning or handling game. Cook game thoroughly reaching an internal temperature of 165° F to kill disease organisms and parasites.

So far, most human cases of bird flu have been mild, however there have been severe cases, including at least one death. Concern is that once the virus jumps to animals, including humans, that it will mutate into a severe disease. Bird flu has infected red and gray foxes, bobcats, opossums, and fishers that have likely eaten diseased birds.

It can infect dogs and cats.

Legions of migratory birds are moving north across the continent. Government public health and wildlife agencies will be monitoring bird populations to determine whether this serious outbreak of bird flu will continue in 2025.



*Mark McCollough is a retired wildlife biologist who lives in Hampden, Maine. He can be reached at markmccollough25@gmail.com*

## Casting

(Cont. from pg 20)

the rest will come easily. If you squint hard enough, you can actually see grace off in the distance now. Normally, if I'm casting from a sitting position in my canoe, or worse, from my kayak, I am forever driving my back cast into the water (remember, grace is hard). With a Skagit head I can make beautiful casts from a sitting position, and look damn good doing it. Seriously, If I can look like the second coming of Line Speed Jedi while I'm sitting in a float tube, anybody can. There are a couple of guys out there in the ether, Simon Gavesworth of Rio, and Ed Ward at OPST (Olympic Peninsula Skagit Tactics), who have put up some outstanding tutorials on getting started with single-hand Spey. Gavesworth is absolutely masterful, well worth the investment in time to watch everything he does. OPST also has some wonderful videos, especially of small rod Skagit casting (with a 7' 6" glass rod!).

If you're looking for something new, or perhaps simply a way to continue to fish into your encroaching old-fart years without the pain and humiliation of watching your casting abilities calcify before your very eyes, think about trying single-hand Spey. Your traditional over-hand cast may be an abomination before God these days, but now you can wow everybody with a beautiful 80' snake-roll cast.



*Mike Maynard can be reached at perhamtrout@gmail.com*





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# Who Is Stocking Ocean Alewives Illegally?

Four waters in Hancock County have mysteriously been stocked with anadromous (ocean) alewives in the past fifteen years. All of these lakes and ponds are in the Union River drainage. All are above Leonard's Lake Dam, and Graham Lake Dam, both of which are impassable to fish passage.

Currently for any alewives to make it over those dams they must be trapped at the lower most dam, then trucked to the waters higher up in the drainage. As many know, anadromous alewives travel from the ocean up rivers to access ponded freshwater to spawn. To initiate a spawning population of anadromous alewives all one has to do is place the fish in a ponded area at spawning time and they will reproduce. Their progeny will then hatch, stay two to three months in the ponded water, then migrate back to the ocean, where they will grow to maturity, and then return to their imprinted lake or pond to spawn. They are an easy species to help propagate themselves.

The first of the four waters found to have ocean alewives was Webb Pond in Eastbrook, in 2010. Some say that alewives started to ascend up Webb Brook from Graham Lake because after thirty years of stocking they finally found this tributary, liked the smell, and was intrigued enough to follow it to spawn.

Hummm..... This is an interesting explanation. Especially because there are many other tributaries

to Graham Lake that have more substantial flows that would have attracted them must sooner. Tribes like that outlet of Beech Hill Pond, the outlet of Floods Pond, and most certainly the West and East Branches of the Union River. There was never any evidence that they ever were found trying

falls below. This was certainly the work of an illegal stocking crew. Our in-lake landlocked salmon nets were full of that year's juvenile alewives, which meant that the adults were stocked sometime in the spring just prior to spawning.

At first blush, one

**The Webb Pond alewife discovery looks like illegal stocking to me. Some alewife advocates reported seeing alewives above Webb Pond, on one of its tributaries, banging their heads on the Scammon Pond Dam, that currently does not have a fishway. This appearance was never found to be true.**

to ascend these tributaries, but they somehow found Webb Brook, located in the northeast corner of Graham Lake, miles away from their southern stocking location. One would think that that they would have been more attracted to the main stem rivers where most of Graham Lake's flows come from. And if this was going to happen it would have occurred within the first ten years after the trapping and trucking process took place.

The Webb Pond alewife discovery looks like illegal stocking to me. Some alewife advocates reported seeing alewives above Webb Pond, on one of its tributaries, banging their heads on the Scammon Pond Dam, that currently does not have a fishway. This appearance was never found to be true.

Then in the fall of 2018 anadromous alewives were found in Beech Hill Pond. A water which has a dam without a fishway as well as an impassable

might think that these alewives were landlocked alewives, illegally stocked from the bait bucket. But on closer review we discovered that they were the progeny of ocean alewives. Backing up our findings was the fact after 2018 the alewives in Beech Hill Pond disappeared. This furthered our assertion that the 2018 discovery that the alewives in question were ocean alewives and that in the late fall they migrated out of the pond, down into Graham Lake, and then into the ocean. If they were landlocked alewives, they would have persisted in Beech Hill Pond and still be there to this day. After the 2018 discovery we have not found alewives in the pond since.

Also in 2018, ocean alewives were found in Great Pond, in the town of Great Pond Plantation. This is one of the headwater ponds of the West Branch of the Union River. This finding was discovered after a biologist from the US



## Everything Maine

by Greg Burr  
Addison, ME

Fish and Wildlife Service asked me if anadromous alewives would be a problem if they were stocked into Great Pond. This question was asked to me in the winter of 2018 and then the stocking happened that following spring without a permit.

introduction, these alewives disappeared after that fall, which would make sense, as the young alewives moved down over the dam with the fall rains



and headed to the ocean.

The question persists: Who did this illegal stocking of alewives?

*Greg Burr is a retired state fisheries biologist and avid outdoorsman.*

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## Snowmobile Trails

By Al Swett

Unfortunately, the rainy weather has destroyed much of our trail system. We were able to get out before the bad weather came. We made a trip to the North, which was very suc-

cessful. 215 miles later, we hit almost every lake east and west of Moosehead. What a great day! Five riders made it happen. Plenty of snow and some ice made the ride one of my best. The scenery in our State is second to none. Animals galore, blue sky, and cold weather make the state trail

man area, where the Border Riders Club is one of the best at making trails. Signage, well-made bridges, and an awesome clubhouse make this a true destination. They have many activities year-round to help with the cost of doing business.

located in Central Maine. This newly Purchased rail corridor was designed to get riders from Central Maine to the Maine North Woods, and it's working. This is a great rail stretching from Oakland to Embden. It travels along and

**One of the best rail trail systems in the State is located in Central Maine. This newly purchased rail corridor was designed to get riders from Central Maine to the Maine North Woods, and it's working. This is a great rail stretching from Oakland to Embden.**

cessful. 215 miles later, we hit almost every lake east and west of Moosehead. What a great day! Five riders made it happen. Plenty of snow and some ice made the ride one of my best. The scenery in our State is second to none. Animals galore, blue sky, and cold weather make the state trail

man area, where the Border Riders Club is one of the best at making trails. Signage, well-made bridges, and an awesome clubhouse make this a true destination. They have many activities year-round to help with the cost of doing business.

One of the best rail trail systems in the State is

over the Kennebec River. We gained a few railroad bridges to keep folks off the ice of nearby lakes and rivers. It was one of the best acquisitions the State has made. There will be park and rides located along the way. Smithfield, Norridgewock, and North Anson already have them in their



communities. Oakland's will be built this year.

On the safety side, we had unfortunate accidents and five fatalities. We have safety courses throughout the State, and I do safety presentations at schools

and clubs. Folks need to realize how quick these snowmobiles are and ride within their means of experience. Don't play catch-up; don't be embarrassed about how you ride. Take your time and learn your sled and your surroundings. I see lots of snowmobiles and trailers heading North and West. I want to see the same number of you and your friends returning as I did when I went to these destination points. Come back and enjoy our trails next week and next year.

Well, our season started late and, as of today, will end early. I'm glad I had the opportunity to write this column this season. It was fun, and I met Mr. Reynolds and Catherine Gordon in person at the WVOM radio studio a while back. They are wonderful people and highly respected in their fields.

I'm very proud of all the MSA clubs and how they build the best trails in the business.

*Be safe out there!*



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# Virtual Reality vs. Reality

In recent years, there's been a growing conversation around whether sport fishing is losing ground in the face of changing social trends, environmental concerns, and the digital age. Or, is it thriving as more people seek nature-based

shift in the way people spend their free time. Kids are increasingly drawn to the digital world, where virtual entertainment like gaming, social media, and streaming services occupy much of their attention. The immersive nature of

accommodations, it can be an expensive hobby. As more people feel the current economic pressures bearing down on them, sport fishing may become a luxury that fewer can afford, contributing to its decline in popularity. Not great news for lodges and guides.

On the more hopeful



## The Singing Maine Guide

by Randy Spencer,  
Grand Lake Stream, ME

escape stress, fishing provides a tranquil retreat from the anxieties inherent in modern living.

The rise of social media has provided a unique avenue for fishing enthusiasts to connect and share their experiences. Too,

certainly take advantage of these platforms to promote their businesses. On any given day during the season you'll find pictures and videos of the day's action on any number of social media sites.

For some, innova-

**The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has also reported that while the overall number of anglers is still significant, their demographic profile is aging, with fewer young people taking up the sport.**

side, there are compelling reasons to believe that sport fishing is actually gaining traction, especially as more people become interested in reconnecting with nature. Despite the digital age's overwhelming influence, outdoor activities in general have been experiencing something of a renaissance, and yes, this even includes sport fishing. One factor is the growing emphasis on activities that do not harm the environment. Many fishing communities and organizations are pushing for responsible fishing techniques, which has led to more environmentally conscious participation. With growing awareness of how to protect aquatic habitats, sport fishing has become not only an enjoyable activity but also one that promotes stewardship of natural resources.

Fishing's appeal as a low-cost and (sometimes) low-tech activity has made it an easy way for individuals and families to spend time outdoors without the need for specialized skills or equipment. As more people look for ways to

digital platforms have opened doors for education, making it easier for newcomers to learn the basics of fishing, including choosing equipment and practicing conservation efforts. Guides and lodges

tions in fishing technology have made the sport more exciting and accessible. From high-tech rods to fish finders and even underwater drones, advancements in gear have enhanced (Reality cont. pg 30)



**Suzie Pauchey with a Spanish Mackerel caught in the Florida Keys.**  
(Photo by V. Paul Reynolds)

experiences?

One perspective suggests that sport fishing is, in fact, losing popularity. Data from organizations like the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) shows a steady decline in the number of sport fishing participants over the past few decades. According to their surveys, fishing participation among younger generations is lower than it was in past decades. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has also reported that while the overall number of anglers is still significant, their demographic profile is aging, with fewer young people taking up the sport. Guides have noticed this trend for years.

Several factors can explain the decline. First and foremost, there's a

digital spaces means that outdoor activities, like fishing (sad to say), are often viewed as less exciting or convenient. Unlike video games, fishing demands time, patience, and physical effort—attributes that many young people may not associate with recreation now.

Another significant concern is the environmental state of water bodies, though this may be less of a concern in Maine than in some other states. Many of the world's oceans and lakes have seen declining fish populations due to habitat degradation, climate change, and illegal fishing practices.

Furthermore, the costs of sport fishing can be prohibitive for some individuals. Between equipment, licenses, travel, and



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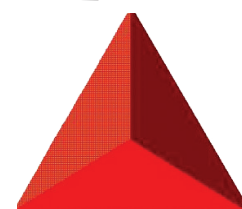
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## Canoes

(Cont. from pg 21)

is self-taught, with many decades of experience behind him now, is one of the rare people who really understands this form. He spends a lot of time now passing on that knowledge. So if you get the chance to come up, you won't be disappointed. You'll be seeing the best of the best, doing

what he does best.



*Suzanne AuClair is an avid outdoorswoman. She lives near Rockwood and has been writing about the Moosehead Lake Region for the past 30 years. She produced Maine's reference anthology, "The Origin, Formation, and History of Maine's Inland Fisheries Division."*

## Reality

(Cont. from pg 29)

the fishing experience for them. They can also help ensure that anglers are more likely to have a successful outing, reducing some of the frustration that once made the sport a challenging hobby for newcomers. Furthermore, these technologies often

promote sustainable fishing by helping people track fish populations and reduce the impact of overfishing.

So, is sport fishing losing or gaining popularity? While it's true that some indicators suggest a decline in participation—particularly among younger generations—other signs point to a resurgence, especially among those seeking more sustainable,

eco-conscious activities. Ultimately, whether sport fishing is losing or gaining popularity may depend on how one defines the sport's success. If success is measured purely by participation numbers, it's clear that sport fishing faces challenges. But if success is measured by how it adapts to new trends and continues to attract new generations of anglers, then sport fishing might just be entering an era of renewed appreciation.



*Randy Spencer is a working guide and author. All of his award-winning books are available on Amazon; all of his original music is on all major streaming sites. Reach Randy at randy31@earthlink.net or www.randyspencer.com*

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# Artifacts on the Trail



Wagon ruins in the woods, Midcoast Maine.

A ride through the woods brings you on a journey of wonder and excitement, peace and tranquility, and an abundance of sights to see. Whether in the middle of winter on foot, snowmobile, snowshoe, or cross country skis, or in the warmer months on foot, 4-wheeler, or bike, a mixture of beauty, history, and perhaps an overall eerie feeling fills your body as you enter a dark path cloaked by a thick canopy of forest. Along the trail there's potential for spotting artifacts rusting in the woods, abandoned from years of work prior, marking their last resting spot and preserving the last time the machinery was used.

A fuller picture begins to develop, envisioning the olden days seeing modern day ruins on the side of the trail, imagining this equipment being used daily for farm work, from harrowing and tilling to hauling and transporting. On a recent snowmobile ride, I took pictures of some abandoned farm equipment alongside a trail that runs by a local farm that is

still active today. I can just picture the four wheels of a hay wagon intact, now stripped of the wooden components that have since decomposed. Trees and brush now grow where the driver's seat may have been. I imagine parts that might have accompanied the wagon, such as pulleys, chains, and hooks have since been repurposed and reused elsewhere on the farm.

Agricultural clearing in the late 1830s shaped much of the landscape in southern and central Maine that we know today. Clearing forests and removing rocks to make way for vast tracts of farmland and rich loosened soil to plant crops and establish fields for

grazing herds. Stone walls were constructed, creating holds for livestock, later to be enhanced with barbed wire, and eventually, an electric fence.

"Dumps" near where farm workers were working, can still be found today, where glass jars that might have been filled with lunch, alcohol bottles for a nip on cold days, and even medicine bottles that might have served as first aid on the job were left behind in a small pile before they moved on to the next site. In later years, old fuel and oil cans might also be present, after being used to fill or grease equipment.

There could be any number of reasons why farming equipment was



## "The Trail Rider"

by Dan Wilson,  
Bowdoinham, ME

left behind alongside the trail. Whether it be from the evolution of farming equipment, moving from horse and steer-led tools to combustion powered machinery or left behind to be readily accessible and used as salvage for parts down the road. These relics of the past may also

again, and the land took on a whole new shape. "Pasture Pines," also known as Eastern White Pines, pop up and fill what used to be lush green fields or tilled soil for growing crops, alongside alders, junipers, and other tree growth. The land is still segmented with rock walls, now serv-

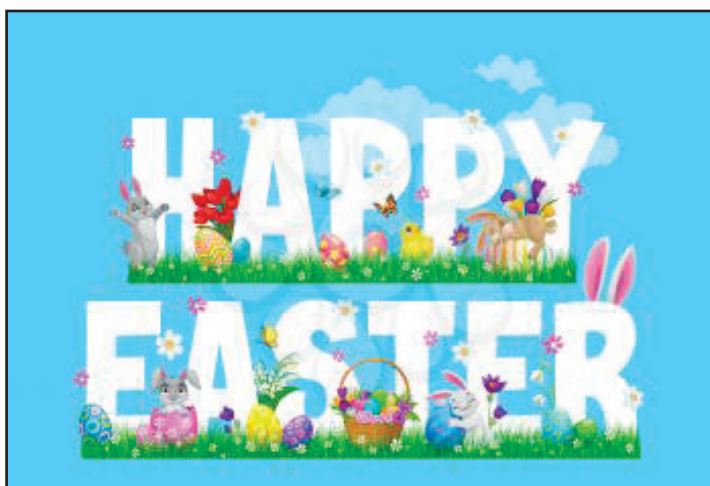
**Trees and brush now grow where the driver's seat may have been. I imagine parts that might have accompanied the wagon, such as pulleys, chains, and hooks have since been repurposed and reused elsewhere on the farm.**

have been left behind for financial reasons, being costly or difficult to dispose of in a fast growing time of industrialization. In addition to farming equipment, I've also seen cars, cooking stoves/ranges, and refrigerators cast aside in the woods.

By the mid 20th century, agricultural fields started to become forest

ing more as beauty in the woods and marking property lines, and artifacts from the past hold strong, serving as a part of history, reminding us of days gone by and a different era, right outside our door.

*Daniel Wilson works in healthcare and enjoys time outside in nature with his family.*



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## Tales Of A Maine Woodsman

by Joel F. Tripp  
Limington, ME

Aunt Janet was my father's older sister. Janet was a nurse at Maine Medical for over 40 years. To say that Janet was strong-willed would be putting it mildly. Janet grew up in a hunting family. I have no stories of her hunting while

was carrying her 30-30. When they got to Mill Brook, the bridge was out but someone had laid a tree across. Janet was to continue up the road to the Brown's cemetery. Ralph hunted up Mill Brook to the dam at the outlet of

**"Did you hear a shot?" "Yep." And then she couldn't help it and grinned from ear to ear.**

at home but right after World War II was over; she married Ralph Grant and when Ralph went hunting so did Janet. Ralph was partial to the Brown's Pond area of Sebago so they usually frequented that locality. They would ease up Back Nippin Road as far as the Rambler would go and find a place to park.

As they walked up Back Nippin Road Janet

Brown's Pond then turned west to meet up with Janet at the cemetery.

They explored the cemetery and the foundations. Janet found a place to sit while Ralph made a loop towards Hogfat Hill.

Ralph, "I will meet you here at noon. If you get cold, head back to the car and I will meet you there."

Janet found that while she was moving she was warm, but sitting, her feet were frozen. Janet, not one to be indecisive, headed for the car. It was an hour to noon when she got to the car so she let it run with the heater on to thaw her feet. After half an hour she was warm and decided she didn't want Ralph to find her in the car so she got out and moved down the road

a few dozen yards.

As Janet told the story to me, the trees were mostly hemlock and they reached over the road and formed a tunnel. As she stood there a flock of chickadees flitted through nearly landing on her as she made "dee, dee, dee" sounds. When she turned to look back up the tunnel towards the car there was a doe, standing broadside looking at the car. Janet slowly lifted the 30-30 to her shoulder, looked through the receiver sight, found the crease behind the front leg and "Bang!" The deer ran up the road and toppled into the bushes just out of sight.

She walked up and found the doe. Perfect heart shot. The adrenaline hit now and her feet were not

cold. She waited hours (20 minutes) for Ralph to show up.

Ralph, "Did you hear a shot?"

"Yep." And then she couldn't help it and grinned from ear to ear.

"Did you shoot?"

"Yep."

"Did you hit it?"

"Yep."

"Where is it?"

Pointing with her rifle, "right there."

Ralph had been a Naval Aviator so his stock of vocabulary was extensive. He let loose with a string of happy expletives that would peel paint off an outhouse.

They dragged the deer a sum total of six feet into the road, dressed it, then backed the Rambler up and

loaded it into the trunk.

That afternoon was Thanksgiving back at the farm in Saco. Janet couldn't wait to tell the story of shooting a deer right next to the car. Much teasing went back and forth and Janet held her own. Ralph and Janet continued to hunt together until the kids came along, then Ralph hunted alone.

Whenever Ralph or anyone else came home empty-handed Janet would admonish them, "you should have stayed next to the car."



*Joel F. Tripp is a Master Blacksmith and Maine Woodsman who prefers to not hunt within sight of the truck. For more information go to; [trippsend.com](http://trippsend.com)*

that was approved by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board in 2024 and 2023.

The proposal was given initial approval by the Fish and Wildlife Board at its February 19 meeting and is now available for public comment.

The goal of the department's 2025 moose harvest recommendation

is to improve the health of moose in WMU-E by reducing the number of moose and thereby reducing the abundance and impact of winter ticks.

"Moose are abundant in WMU-E with significantly higher population density than in any other part of the state," said Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish and

Wildlife's moose project leader. "The higher moose density supports high numbers of winter ticks which negatively impact moose health and survival."

Ongoing monitoring of moose health in WMU-E shows the population continues to be negatively impacted by winter ticks. (News cont. pg 66)



## Aunt Janet

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## News

(Cont. from pg 13)

agement Unit (WMU) E in the northeastern corner of the state in a continued effort to reduce the impact of winter ticks on moose in that area. No permits are recommended for the rest of the state. This is the same permit allocation



# The Latest in Ammo

At the time of this writing, the show season is in full swing. The focus of this column will be some of the new ammo offerings. Let's start with some interesting new waterfowl offerings and finish with a handgun round to protect yourself from Yogi and Boo Boo.

Hevi-Shot has a new load they have named the Hevi-Hitter. Shot shells utilizing blended material shot are not new, but this offering has 80% steel with 20% tungsten shot all in the same size pellets. The Hevi-Hitter will be available in 12,16,20 and 28 gauge shot sizes of BB, 2,3 and 4 shot. The price tag on this specialized waterfowl load is in the \$50 neighborhood per box.

Remington ammo is offering an economical choice in its new Duck Club Steel Shot. It's an all steel waterfowl load available in 12 and 20 gauge 3" magnum offering. The available shot sizes are BB, 2,3 and 4. It has a reasonable \$25 per box price tag.

Federal ammo has a nostalgic upland game load. It's called the Federal Upland Paper Copper. This load, as the name suggests, has a traditional paper hull for a touch of the past, but copper plated shot for state of the art performance. These shot shells are available in 12 or 20 gauge 2 3/4 inch shot sizes of 4,5, and 6. I do not have the information on the price yet.

Remington ammo also has a new entry into the upland game. The name of the new load is Remington Premier Royal Flush. These offer an impressive payload at an economical

price. They feature 1 1/4 oz. of shot while producing an impressive 1550 fps. velocity. They are available in 12,16 and 20 gauge in 2 3/4 inch or 3 inch with shot sizes of 4,5 or 6. The price tag is \$25 per box which in today's market is considered economical.

These are some of the unique innovations in shot gun ammo for both waterfowl and upland game. There were also many new

is designed as personal defense loads relying heavily on expansion to disable human attacks.

There are some handgun projectiles that are marketed as "hunting rounds". These are generally bullet styles that are modeled after hunting rifle bullets. Examples of this are Hornady Lever Evolution rounds or Remington Cor-Lockt projectiles in handgun calibers. Us-

**Federal ammo has a nostalgic upland game load. It's called the Federal Upland Paper Copper. This load, as the name suggests, has a traditional paper hull for a touch of the past, but copper plated shot for state of the art performance.**

rifle ammo offerings. As usual the tactical calibers were front and center with new calibers and bullet styles. As in also the current norm in the industry, much of the innovation is focused on velocity and bullet expansion or in some cases bullet vaporization. I cannot really get very enthusiastic about some of the performance traits currently being chased and touted. There was a handgun load that did at least catch my eye. Most handgun ammo

ally, the performance of these offerings tend to be disappointing in the field. These new rounds have a more specific purpose. They are called Hornady Back Country Defense. The focus is for outdoorsmen and women who carry a handgun for defense against back woods hazards like, but not limited to things like: bears, wolves, wounded game, or back woods bandits. These rounds feature a protected point that locks the point

## Guns & Ammo: A Guide's Perspective



by Tom Kelly,  
Orient, ME



to the core. It is designed for maximum penetration with zero deflection. This design is to guarantee deep penetration to reach the vital organs of the attacking animal without deflection by heavy bones. I always prefer penetration over expansion when shooting a bear. The vitals are pro-

mag., 10 mm auto, .454 Casull, .460 S&W and .500 S&W magnum.

Please remember to start your ammo shopping well in advance of your need to shoot and remember to bring a new shooter or kid along.....



*Tom is a Registered Maine Guide. He is the owner/operator of Shamrock Outfitters in Orient Maine with his wife Ellie. He is a retired police officer as well as a retired manager from two major firearms manufacturers. He is an NRA Certified Instructor as well as a Hunter Safety Instructor in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts. You can reach Tom at Shamrock Outfitters (207) 694-2473. Please visit our Facebook Page: Shamrock Outfitters and Properties and come visit us on East Grand Lake.*

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## The Gun Cabinet

by John Floyd,  
Webster Plantation, ME



# Memorable Misses – Bucks

In this installment of my three part series ‘Memorable Misses – Bears, Bucks and Ducks’ I am going to tell you about what *almost* became one of the greatest hunting stories I *could* have told for years here on Tucker Ridge. It is

game hunting experience.

The landscape was quite different from the outskirts of Indianapolis where they call home. Great communication leading up to the hunt ensured that my rookie hunters were well equipped and

**“See a buck or a bear?” I asked. Dan was just as excited when he answered. “Two bucks. A six-pointer and a huge 8-pointer! The six came in from the right on Ethan’s side and the eight came in from the left. They were only 25 yards away!”**

about two newly-minted hunters, a father and a son bonding experience, two big bucks and the shots that never happened.

Dan Sigmon and his 14 year-old son Ethan arrived at deer camp full of anticipation. It was their first trip to the big woods of northeast Maine. It was also their very first big

prepared with quality rifles, good boots and warm hunting clothing for the terrain and habitat they would be operating in.

I also felt keen anticipation. I desperately wanted to get this father and son team a crack at a nice Maine buck. Helping clients achieve their ‘firsts’ is the most rewarding part of being a guide.

Because of the need for them to hunt together, I set Dan and Ethan up in ground blind in a little meadow carved out of a large tract of dense spruce and fir. The ridge sloped away from them on their left. On their right, a

large stand of white cedar provided a favorite food source for local whitetails. It was a classic funnel between bedding and feeding routes.

On Monday morning all was quiet. Dan and Ethan were settling into the feel of hunting and the behaviors we discussed such

ered his father through the door and with big eyes told me, “Don’t we have a story for you!”

“See a buck or a bear?” I asked. Dan was just as excited when he answered. “Two bucks. A six-pointer and a huge 8-pointer! The six came in from the right on Ethan’s

into the clearing in search of the hot doe.

The buck was on Ethan’s side of the blind. Dan asked if he could see him. Ethan could. The only problem was that he was shaking so much he couldn’t raise his rifle. This wasn’t buck fever – it was buck epilepsy. Dan

couldn’t safely target the buck with Ethan in the line of fire.

Within seconds, Dan heard crashing in the wood line coming towards the clearing from the left – his side. A huge eight-point buck stepped into the clearing also seeking the doe. Before Dan could refocus and had a chance to shoulder his

rifle, the big buck turned back and disappeared into cover.

While I didn’t get the camp tale I hoped for, it was still a great story that will be told for years. Dan and Ethan headed back to Indiana without a deer, but we will always remember their first hunting memories as great ones.



*John is a Registered Maine Guide, an NRA Certified Instructor and is the owner of Tucker Ridge Outdoors in Webster Plantation, Maine. He is also an active member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association. Reach him at [john@tuckerridge.me](mailto:john@tuckerridge.me) or on Facebook @tuckerridgeoutdoors*



**Dan got a shot at redemption and his first deer a few months later on an Alabama rifle hunt.**

as unnecessary movement, noise and scent control. By the end of legal light Tuesday they had the hang of it.

Wednesday morning lightning struck – metaphorically. I was finishing up in the dining hall after clearing down breakfast service when Dan and Ethan pulled into the doorway just before 8 a.m. It was too early for them to be back at camp.

The young man ush-

side and the eight came in from the left. They were only 25 yards away!”

My heart leapt into my throat. Two bucks! At the same time! What a memory this will be for them I thought. Father and son, rookie hunters, were both taking their first bucks – together. Amazing! I could barely contain myself. I was elated for them.

As Dan and Ethan told their story my elation quickly turned to disbelief. By the end of the story, all of us were laughing uncontrollably. This is why.

At first light Dan used a doe in estrus bleat call to compliment the scent wick we deployed on Monday. Very quickly and to their surprise, the big-bodied six-pointer whitetail busted

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# The Trapper's Shack

The trapper's shack, in the beginning, was just that. I first beheld it in the spring of 1968. Friends Ron Hastie, Dana Young and I used it in 1968 as our "base camp" for a week during the construction of Ron's camp. The leaning shack was about 12' X 14". It was weathered old boards covered with tar paper. The paper had been partially torn off, apparently by a bear as indicated by the claw marks. Crude double bunks made from peeled spruce logs were at the far end. Before we "moved in", the place had to be sanitized of mice droppings and nests, and the straw mattresses aired out.

My wife's father, Ken Davis of Milo, was given the shack by its owner to settle an old debt. Ken used it as a hunting camp in the early 1950s.

The shack held a fascination for me, not only for the family connections, but for its character, remote location and proximity to the shore of Sebobeis Lake. There was really no legal "deed" for this abandoned structure. My research showed that the land was owned by the state, and managed by the bureau of public lands. Wanting to fix

up the shack, I first needed to secure right to the land on which it sat.

At first the state refused to negotiate a lease arrangement, indicating that state policy on shoreland was to remove these old buildings in the name of wildness and some kind of "purity." I persisted, as I have been known to do. Af-



**The trappers shack.**

ter two refusals, I went to the top gun at public lands. I pleaded, arguing that the camp had been handed down by family, that it had immense sentimental value. The state finally relented and negotiated a lease to the land on which the shack sat.

Diane and I were both smitten with the romance of it all – our own remote getaway and a cozy little cabin right on the shoreline. We went to work improving the shack with paint, roofing and cedar shingled siding. Between the 1970s and 1980s I built

a new outhouse and a small outbuilding for tools and outdoor gear. We added a fireplace and an outside picnic table. During this same "improvement period" we added a new gas fridge and propane range, as well as two small wood stoves.

An aside: Every move we made to improve was

tened it "Joshua Road."

Other memories surface when I visit the shack. During the bear hunting period in our lives, Diane and I found many hours of inner peace and solitude

**Other memories surface when I visit the shack. During the bear hunting period in our lives, Diane and I found many hours of inner peace and solitude there, enjoying afternoon vigils over bear baits and wonderful meals that always included homemade blackberry pie.**

doubly complicated by the fact that our only access to the shack was by a walking path or boat. We did a lot of hard portaging back and forth of materials and appliances.

Sometime later sons Scotty and Josh, and I, added a wonderful screened in porch to the front.

With Josh's and Scotty's help and piece of rented heavy equipment, we did transform the old walking path into a good ATV road. And we chris-

there, enjoying afternoon vigils over bear baits and wonderful meals that always included homemade blackberry pie.

A couple of times during my middle years, when the weather was right in late September, I flew solo to the lake in a rented Cessna floatplane for a quick overnight at the shack. I cooked lamb chops over the hot coals of an outside fire and watched the red sun do its thing over Ebeemee Mountain.

Yes, the trapper's shack is our "Palace in the Popple" and like so many other remote Maine getaways, it is the centerpiece of wonderful outdoor memories and should con-

tinue to be so for so many others in our family for years to come.

*The author is editor of the Northwoods Sporting Journal. He is also a Maine Guide and host of a weekly radio program "Maine Outdoors" heard Sundays at 7 p.m. on The Voice of Maine News-Talk Network. He has authored three books. Online purchase information is available at [www.sportingjournal.com](http://www.sportingjournal.com), Outdoor Book.*



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## View From The River

by Laurie Chandler  
Bremen, ME

When you wake in early darkness with the tent flapping and the wind moaning in the trees, you know. It's going to be a rough day out on the water.

Conditions for last summer's Rangeley Oquossoc Adventure Rendezvous (ROAR) were going to be challenging. This exciting new canoe race was part of the High Peaks Paddlefest, hosted by Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT) and sponsored by many generous businesses and organizations, including the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust, Rangeley Adventure

launch.

Saturday morning, under glowering skies, racers gathered at Rangeley Town Park for a mandatory paddlers' meeting. After reviewing the course route, NFCT Executive Director and race organizer Karrie Thomas encouraged participants to look out for and help one another.

The philosophy would be safety first. Numerous safety boats would be stationed along the route for guidance and assistance if needed. Cut-off times had been established at two checkpoints to ensure that

and I were responsible for shuttling the bags—containing racers' dry clothing and other necessities—to the day's finish line. We would also have the much-appreciated task of serving

wind and waves and heard the racers' stories, I believe that anyone out there that day was a winner. The fastest time of the day was 3:50:32 (C4 Stock - Team Florida: Clyde Yarnell, Mark McAndrew, Scott Edwards, and Paula Lunt). The fastest solo boat finished in 4:01:28 (Solo Recreation - Daniel Cahalane), and the fastest tandem in 4:08:43 (C2 Stock - Bone Eagles: Brian Stitt & Anne Flower-Stitt). Despite the weather and challenges, racers at the finish line compared notes and celebrated their accomplishments.

The weather on Day two was even worse, with strong winds and thunderstorms in the forecast. The difficult decision was made to cancel Sunday's segment. Racers gathered at Rangeley Adventure Company on Pond Street for music and food provided by Rangeley Kiwanis, who put the proceeds back into the community. Local vendors added to the festival atmosphere, punctuating the weekend with a celebration.

Hopefully, sun and gentle breezes will grace the second High Peaks

Paddlefest, to be held the weekend of June 20-22, 2025. Race organizers plan a similar schedule and race route, with room for one hundred boats. A relay team option will also be offered.

"NFCT has embraced paddling races as an exciting way to bring people together on the water in the incredible communities along the trail," Thomas shares. "While we are thrilled to have serious racers on the starting line, our goal is to foster camaraderie and showcase the stunning landscape of the Rangeley Region. Our hope is that people will come for the race, and return for the community."

Registration will begin on Friday evening at The Rangeley Inn. There, all boats will be checked for aquatic invasives by an inspector from the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust. Thankfully, there are currently no known aquatic invasive plants in the Rangeley Lakes region.

In addition to the race, the weekend will include equipment demos, paddling clinics, food, music, and children's activities on (Race cont. pg 42)



**Hopefully, sun and gentle breezes will grace the second High Peaks Paddlefest, to be held the weekend of June 20-22, 2025. Race organizers plan a similar schedule and race route, with room for one hundred boats.**

Co., and The Rangeley Inn.

The two-day route, out on Saturday and back on Sunday, would total forty miles. Racers would cross the north side of Rangeley Lake, carry through Oquossoc onto Mooselookmeguntic Lake, portage again at Upper Dam, and head north on Upper Richardson Lake to the Mill Brook public boat

all racers were off the water before dark. Racers who failed to make a cut-off on the first day would still be allowed to participate on the second day.

I listened from the bed of my F150, which was piled with a motley assortment of dry bags and backpacks. Today I would be volunteering, not racing. My friend Katina Daanen

snacks, beverages, and the shivering racers' ultimate favorite, hot chicken broth.

The forty-four vessels were poised to go. They launched in waves, category by category, from one C-4 Stock four-person canoe to a couple of stand-up paddleboards and everything in between. Only twenty-seven would finish the day.

"The conditions definitely made the course challenging," according to Thomas. "Boats with self-bailing mechanisms couldn't make enough forward headway to engage the feature and had to go to shore periodically to empty their boats. Many experienced racers reported paddling as hard as they ever had to overcome the headwinds."

Having seen the wild

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# Silas Wzokhilain, Early Maine Guide



SILAS.

In the fall of 1881 Lucius Hubbard took a canoe trip through Northern Maine, publishing his experiences in a book called, *Woods and Lakes of Maine*. He included many hand-drawn pictures as well as an index, which included a small and invaluable dictionary of Wabenaki place-names. He later published *A Guide to Moosehead Lake and Northern Maine*, which went through over 15 editions, being continually updated. Trained as a geologist, Hubbard removed to Michigan, where he was appointed that State's first State Geologist. On his trip in the Maine woods, he had a guide, Silas, who he described in detail.

"Silas, an Abnaki of the St. Francis tribe, was thirty years old, and had spent the greater part of his early life as a hunter and trapper in the Canadian forests. His father, P. P. Wzokhilain, had been educated at Hanover, New Hampshire, and had published several books in the Indian

language. The son, in order to escape a compulsory education, enlisted during the late civil war, at the age of fourteen, as a private in a Michigan regiment. Three times rejected on account of his youth; he was finally accepted on the declaration of a recruiting officer that he was eighteen years old. During his service he distinguished himself for neatness, bravery, and an incorruptible discharge of duty. On a call by the general of his division for the best man in the regiment, he was detailed to take a bounty-jumper from Indianapolis to Baltimore. Being offered a commission as first lieutenant, he had to decline it because he could neither read nor write. At the end of the war, he was mustered out of the service as color-guard, a slight mark of honor forced upon him by his superiors, and one from which his want of learning did not bar him.

Short of stature, with broad shoulders, thick neck, and solid frame, Silas was a marvel of strength and as agile as a cat. The writer has seen him take up and carry on his shoulder a log, under which two ordinary men would stagger. Neatness and cleanliness

were two of his greatest virtues, in which many a high-born white man might have deemed it an honor to be his peer. For eight years or more he had lived at Old Town, Maine, and had acquired the reputation of being the quickest and most daring log-driver on the Penobscot, and his services were always in demand and brought the highest wages. For five years he had served the writer as guide in the Maine woods, and a more devoted and thoughtful servant and friend would be hard to find. Entering into the spirit of exploration which prompted the writer's forest tours, he often devised ways to overcome obstacles, and pushed forward where others would have faltered or turned back.

His only weakness was that curse of the white man, strong drink, a few swallows of which were enough to set his brain on fire and make him quarrelsome and vindictive, characteristics which at other times seemed to form no part of his nature. Poor fellow! He came to an untimely end in

Death was instantaneous. Farewell, Silas! May thy life in the happy hunting-grounds be peaceful! May atonement for mortal weaknesses be tempered and sweetened by memories of kind deeds to others here below, of duties faithfully performed, of an unswerving honesty of

**Short of stature, with broad shoulders, thick neck, and solid frame, Silas was a marvel of strength and as agile as a cat. The writer has seen him take up and carry on his shoulder a log, under which two ordinary men would stagger.**

the spring of 1882, while at work in the woods of Northern New Hampshire. He fell on his head from a lodged spruce-tree, up whose slanting trunk he had climbed to cut away the interlocking branches.

purpose, and an unflinching integrity."

*Steve is an avid hiker, paddler, and historian, having collected over 40,000 Maine Woods articles to date.*

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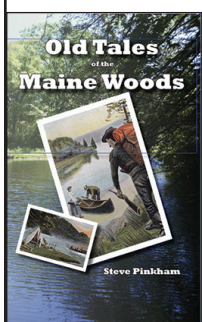
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## The Buck Hunter

by Hal Blood,  
Moose River, ME



As I write this column in mid-February, the winter snows have finally arrived in the north country. February always seems to be the snow now month after the bitter cold of January. There's enough snow now to slow up the deer from moving around much, but

while I was looking for moose antlers in the middle of nowhere on my snowmobile, a doe and her lamb were just wandering along a logging road in snow up to their chest. There wasn't a deer yard anywhere near and I always wondered if they made it through that

**I have found where bucks have stayed on a softwood knob for the entire winter. They will use the same bed and just wander around and feed, sometimes never going more than fifty yards from their bed.**

they've had an easy winter so far, and the days are getting longer as we edge ever closer to spring. I've always been amazed at how resourceful deer are about dealing with winter. I have found where bucks have stayed on a softwood knob for the entire winter. They will use the same bed and just wander around and feed, sometimes never going more than fifty yards from their bed. I have also found where a buck hangs around in a moose yard so they can walk where the moose have broken out the trails. I remember one time

winter.

If you're not able to get out and do some spring scouting, you will be soon. Sometimes I stumble onto a buck "hotspot" while tracking a buck or just heading out of the woods, at the end of a long day. These are the places I think during the winter and when spring rolls around, I make plans to do some scouting in those areas. When I hunt on bare ground, I call it still hunting/ scouting. When I find good buck sign, I might spend hours piecing together that entire area. I'll look for the travel cor-

ridors that lead to and from any signpost rub or annual scrapes. I call it connecting the dots. The travel corridors that bucks use are usually I the transition where the softwood and hardwood meets. Bucks just like to use this cover in their day-to-day travels. That's why you are more

phone. My phone has now become my camera, GPS, and with OnX my topo map. You can set OnX to display in topo map mode, satellite imagery, or Hybrid, which is the topo contour lines overlayed on the satellite imagery. I like the hybrid setting the most as I can what the terrain looks



likely to find buck sign in the transition zones. Deer also use the lay of the land or contours to travel. I call this the path of least resistance. That's why I've always looked at a topo maps to find the places like saddles through ridges, flats on the side of steep ridges, or high ground between swamps or bogs.

Nowadays, I have embraced some of the modern technology. We went from topo maps to GPS and now I use the OnX app on my

like and I can plan my route ahead of time. Of course, I never set my route in stone but rather follow where the buck sign takes me. I mark all the good buck sign I find, so when I get back into the area, I can get to it fast. You can study maps or your OnX on the computer or phone, but there is no substitute for putting your boots on the ground to scout. OnX has been a big time saver for me. With satellite imagery, you can see the difference between the hardwoods and softwoods. Hardwoods will be a light green color. The softwoods will be dark green. You'll be able to see where the transition zones are but do not show you how thick the woods are or what stage the cuts are in. Scouting is the only way you can find that out. If you are interested in getting the OnX app we have a 20% discount code

at: [bigwoodsbucks.com](http://bigwoodsbucks.com)

Get your scouting in as soon as the snow melts and before the new leaves of the year start to pop out and lower the visibility in the woods. it's also cooler then and the bugs haven't begun to hatch. It's the perfect time and everything in the woods looks pretty much the same as it did in the fall. The scrapes may be blown in with leaves some, but they will be obvious from the overhanging limbs of which there may be some broken off ones on the ground. The rubs will be faded a little in color, especially the brown ash ones and signposts. In the fall they will be a bright rusty orange color that stands out in the woods. By spring they will have become somewhat duller as the sun has faded them. You'll have to look a little harder to find them in the spring, but the time spent will be well worth it. Spring scouting is important if you don't have a lot of time to hunt during the season. Some of you may take a week's vacation to hunt every year and others may only get weekends and holidays to hunt. If you find a few good places to hunt in the spring, you'll be able to maximize your hunting time by knowing you're in buck country. So, get out there and scout and you'll be glad you did.

Good luck on the trail!



*Hal is a Master Maine Guide and author. He lives in Moose River Maine with his wife Deb. He can be contacted at: [hal@bigwoodsbucks.com](mailto:hal@bigwoodsbucks.com)*

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# Wolf Attacks and Coyote Bounties

by Gerry Lavigne

Wolves for Maine? Think Again.

The following is an excerpt from the Armed Citizen column of the December 2024 issue of The American Rifleman, published by the NRA.

was 8-10 yards away, fired once and killed it. The wolf that had been behind the teens then circled around and dragged off the carcass. The teens immediately reported the incident to the Department of Natural Resources. Another hunter

agement plan. The antis are fond of telling us no people have been attacked by wolves in modern times. That this wolf pack appeared to be sizing these teens up for a possible meal is not surprising. Predators like wolves learn to fear human hunters and trappers. But when protected, this fear may diminish, leading wolves to begin targeting people as potential prey. These waterfowl hunters were fortunate to have been armed when approached by this pack.

## Utah's Coyote Bounty

About a month ago, my boss, David Trahan, sent me a news announcement about an ongoing bounty program on coyotes in the state of Utah. Wait. What? A coyote bounty in this day and age? Didn't those western biologists get the same memo I got 55 years ago while in college? Why, the brightest professors in our ivory towers here in the East drilled into our heads that bounties are bad public policy, financially wasteful, and they just plain fail to accomplish their stated intent – reduction of predator populations. I had to look into this. So, I downloaded the Utah Department of Natural Resources (UDNR) Predator Control Program's 2024 Report. Interesting stuff!

Turns out, Utah's legislature authorized this Predator Control Program along with a funding source in 2012. The program has been in continuous operation since 2013. During the past 12 years, UDNR



## SAM News

by David Trahan,  
"Executive Director"

has paid a \$50 bounty to hunters and trappers for each coyote taken in the agency's target areas. Target areas are management districts which contain core fawning habitat for mule deer. As is the case with Maine's whitetails, coyotes prey heavily on newborn mule deer fawns in late spring and early summer.

To minimize fraud,

coyotes killed in the mule deer target areas while protecting livestock. In 2024, Utah Agric reported 3,830 coyotes removed. Hence, the total known removal of coyotes in 2024 from Utah's core mule deer management districts was 8,551. Since 2017, the number of coyotes bountied has been declining. To address whether this is due

**The oldest teen, a 19-year-old, got his gun ready and, when a wolf continued to approach and was 8-10 yards away, fired once and killed it. The wolf that had been behind the teens then circled around and dragged off the carcass.**



**Gray wolf killed by Jack Golini on a guided hunt in Ontario in 2015. Not your average Maine coyote! (Photo by D. Willette.)**

"Three teenagers set up a hunting blind and decoys early in the morning on September 21 in St. Germaine, Wis. As dawn broke, one of the teens thought he saw a deer coming near, but the animal turned out to be a wolf. That wolf was still about 40 yards away, but the teens quickly spotted another one close behind them, and they realized they were surrounded by a pack. The oldest teen, a 19-year-old, got his gun ready and, when a wolf continued to approach and

who'd been positioned in the area confirmed he'd seen at least nine wolves surrounding the teens. (wjfw.com, Rhinelander, Wis., 9/24/24)."

Chilling. Gray wolves migrated into Wisconsin from Minnesota sometime in the 1970s. During most of this time, they have been protected from hunting and trapping, primarily due to repeated lawsuits by animal rights zealots, whenever the Wisconsin DNR attempted to establish a federally approved man-

UDNR requires hunters and trappers to record the GPS location of each kill using an app provided by the Department. To collect the bounty, they must also submit the coyote's scalp (with ears intact) and lower jaw. In 2024, 3,045 coyotes were submitted for the bounty payment. An additional 1,676 coyotes had been killed in the mule deer target areas, as reported in the annual furbearer harvest survey. Utah DNR also works collaboratively with its state Agriculture counterpart to compile data on

to lower coyote populations, or flagging hunter interest, the Utah legislature doubled the coyote bounty to \$100 beginning in 2025. Seem like a lot? Read on. Studies are underway to evaluate the efficacy of this coyote removal program.

Not to be outdone by those westerners, Maine has also had a legislatively mandated "Predation Management Program" (coyote removal program) aimed at protecting deer in key wintering areas in the northern 2/3 of the state. (Bounties cont. pg 42)

## Coastal



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## Basics Of Survival

by Joe Frazier,  
Bangor, ME

There have never been any fatal black bear attacks in Maine, and only one injury to a human by a bear in over 25 years.

That being said, the average black bear can weigh 400 pounds, has 2 ½ inch teeth, 800 psi bite strength, swipe force of 550 pounds, paws 6 inches across, can climb trees, and run at you 38 feet per second. That is the length of two full size SUVs. In

plain why bear spray is a better option.

There have been cases where hunters have shot a bear 15 or 20 times and it still kept attacking. For you to even consider a handgun for bear defense it would have to be large caliber and you would have to be very familiar with it. Not just a .44 that you haven't fired in months and are strapping on "just in case". A rifle or shotgun you probably

**Also, according to case studies, you have at best a 50% chance of surviving an attack using a gun. Using bear spray your chance of survival is over 90%.**

ONE second.

If you scare one, or if a female thinks you are a threat to its young, you could be in for a VERY bad day. If you are in bear territory you should make noise, talk, have a bear bell on your gear, the usual things to let them know you are there. Worst case is one comes charging out of the woods at you, and your child is 3 feet in front of you. You will have at most 2 full seconds to react.

I am not anti-gun by any stretch, but let me ex-

would not be able to fire more than once or twice and they are hard to use in close quarters. Also, according to case studies, you have at best a 50% chance of surviving an attack using a gun. Using bear spray your chance of survival is over 90%.

Bear spray is basically pepper spray but much stronger than regular self defense spray. The formula is much stronger and the can holds several times the amount.

Bear spray comes as

an aerosol a little larger than a Coke can. The range is about 30 feet. When you use it you are not really trying to spray the bear. You want to spray it so it forms a cloud in front of the bear so it gets into the nose, mouth, and eyes. You want the bear to change what it is doing and get yourself

You should carry the spray in a holster either on your hip or on your chest. Consider how your pack and gear rides and be sure you can deploy the spray with all your gear on.

When you buy your spray, you can get a practice can as well. Practice cans spray the same, have

take it out of the holder. The handle is designed so you will grab it so it is pointed forward to spray. Hold your arm fully extended, your hand should be about half way between your hip and shoulder for height. You want it to spray slightly down so it doesn't go over the bear's face. The spray comes out in a mist, not a stream. You want to create a cloud between you and the bear. Try to be aware of wind direction so you don't spray yourself. Most cans have enough spray and propellant for 2 or 3 good sprays. Once you use it, replace the can even if you don't use it all.

Bear spray is effective against moose, large cats, pretty much any animal.

If a bear is actively attacking you or someone you are trying to help, you could spray it directly. Bear spray is NOT for use against humans even though it is not lethal. It would be much safer to use than a gun in close proximity. (Spray cont. pg 41)



space to escape.

Because the spray is an aerosol you should never store it in a hot car, especially in direct sunlight. You do NOT want this going off in your car.

Cold will also affect it. If the can is cold it will not have nearly as much pressure so not as much range.

the same safety, and deploy the same. They just don't have pepper in the spray.

If you don't have a practice can of spray, watch videos and read about the safety on your brand of spray. I would not advise taking the safety off an actual can unless you are outside.

To use your spray,

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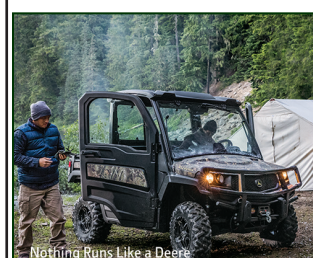
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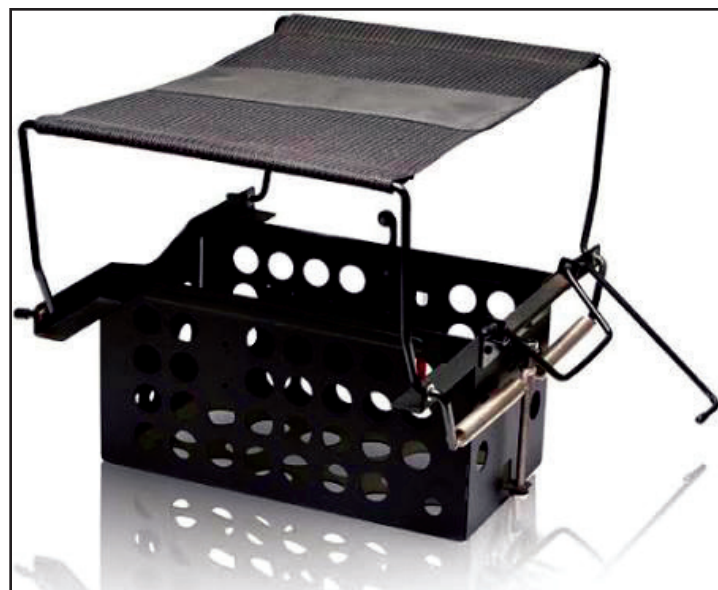


# About Bird Launchers

Bird launchers have been used for many years. The first one I ever owned required a long string attached which, when pulled,

since the bird had to launch itself. The concept was that once the bird felt it was no longer restrained, it would fly. One drawback was that

I still have that little cage on a string, however, over the past 15 years, bird launchers have become much more sophisticated. They are now electronic which allows the handler/trainer to launch the bird from a distance. But let's back up a bit. What's the true purpose of a bird launcher and what are the



would raise the cage and allow the bird to fly. It might be a misnomer to call that contraption a launcher

my young dog at that time quickly identified the string on the ground and followed the string to the cage.

## Spray

(Cont. from pg 40)

ity to another person. If you hit a bystander with bear spray it is survivable, not so much with a gun. If you or someone else gets exposed to the bear spray, it is an immediate trip to the emergency room.

The spray is capsaicin oil; so it is oil based, not water. You can buy wipes online designed for decontamination if you get

sprayed. You want to start with your eyes, then face, then the rest of you.

If you don't have wipes, baby shampoo and water mixed fairly strong is your next option. You can use it in your eyes and use A LOT of water. Several small batches is better so you don't wash the oil back onto your skin.

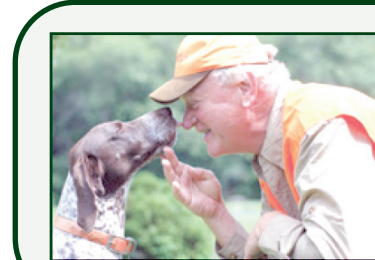
Dish soap and water will work on your skin. If that is all you have, use plain water on your eyes. Tip your head back and

pour the water from your nose toward your eyes so it washes away from your face.

If you have no other options, whole milk or yogurt will help get the oil off your skin.

As with any tool, do your research. Learn how to use bear spray properly and how to deal with accidents.

*Joe is a husband, father, author, and Marine. Joeefrazier193@gmail.com*



## On Point

by Paul Fuller, Durham, N.H.

cate well with your dog? All important points when training a dog. And, that's any type of training including basic obedience.

A bird launcher helps you control the range of

mix birds from one use to the next use. Don't put quail in one time and chukar in the next time. Be consistent with your birds. The scent will remain pure. And, a very important rule

**A bird launcher helps you control the range of your dog, it helps teach stop to flush, helps teach honoring point, prevents the dog from catching the bird, teaches not to get too close to the bird. All positive points when training a young bird dog.**

your dog, it helps teach stop to flush, helps teach honoring point, prevents the dog from catching the bird, teaches not to get too close to the bird. All positive points when training a young bird dog.

There are a few negative points and things to avoid. Due to the containment of the bird, a launcher can prevent a good scent cone. To counter this, I've often put a second bird along the side of the launcher. And, for puppy training, if the air is perfectly still, I've put a small quiet battery operated fan about one foot from the bird. The fan guarantees a good scent cone for the pup.

Another rule is to not

is to never launch when the puppy has his face near the launcher. You could permanently make the pup afraid of birds.

Don't use a launcher to teach point. Pointing a bird is genetic. And, the best teacher is a bird...not a human or a launcher. And, even a better teacher is a wild bird. Not a pen-raised bird.

The launcher is a great tool for helping to teach a bird dog. Use it wisely and you'll be happy with the result.

Dogtra and D.T. Systems are two popular launcher brands. Both available at Lion Country Supply or Gun Dog Supply.

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## Race

(Cont. from pg 36)

Haley Pond, organized by outfitter Rangeley Adventure Company (formerly Ecopelagicon).

The Rangeley region has a wide variety of opportunities beyond paddling and a rich history of fostering outdoor recreation. At the heart of the story are the bountiful waterways and larger-than-life guides, fishermen (and women), authors, and artists who called the Rangeley Lakes home—among them Carrie Stevens, Cornelia Fly Rod Crosby, Herb Welch, Louise Dickinson Rich, and Shang Wheeler. Learn more by visiting Oquossoc's Outdoor Heritage Museum. Perhaps I'll see you there in June!

*Laurie Apgar Chandler is the author of Through Woods & Waters,*

*which provides an adventurous look at Maine's Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, and Upwards, the story of her 2015 solo self-propelled thru-paddle of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. To learn more or purchase the books, please visit [www.laurieachandler.com](http://www.laurieachandler.com)*

## Bounties

(Cont. from pg 39)

This program has been ongoing for the past 13 years. Using a removal model first proposed by SAM in 2010, the DIFW hires hunters and trappers to begin removing coyotes from the vicinity of several key deer wintering areas in mid-fall, and they follow through into winter. When Maine's coyote removal program was first established, the DIFW insisted on paying its control agents by the hour to avoid

the stigma of having this effort considered a dreaded bounty. Over the past 13 years, coyote removals under DIFW's program averaged 257, at a cost of about \$200 per coyote. I should note that at the time DIFW's coyote removal program was being formulated in 2011, SAM argued strongly for a set payment price per coyote killed – DIFW opted for the hourly pay route, setting the stage for abuse of the system.

Maine does have two privately funded coyote bounties located in Aroostook County and Downeast. Since 2010, the Aroostook County Conservation Association (ACCA) centered in Presque Isle, and the Penobscot County Wildlife Conservation Association (PCWCA) centered in Springfield have provided a monetary incentive for hunters and trappers to remove coyotes in those parts

of Maine, primarily during winter. Participation fees, donations from local businesses, and raffles provide a funding base for these private bounties. Combined, these two coyote contests have accounted for 272 coyotes removed annually since 2010, slightly exceeding annual coyote removals under DIFW's program. The payout per coyote bountied by ACCA and PCWCA averages \$20 to \$25, nearly 1/10<sup>th</sup> the cost of the state program.

The Utah bounty and Maine's state and private coyote control efforts have one commonality. Each targets coyote removals

when and where they are needed to improve deer survival. Call it a coyote bounty, or a contest, or hide it under the pseudonym of a "Predation Management Program". We are all striving for the same result: a better deer resource that can be enjoyed by the public. Is it ethical to reduce the abundance of one species (coyote) to benefit one more valued by the public (deer)? You're darned right it is! That is the essence of wildlife management.

*Gerry Lavigne, a former deer research biologist for Maine, is a wildlife consultant for SAM.*

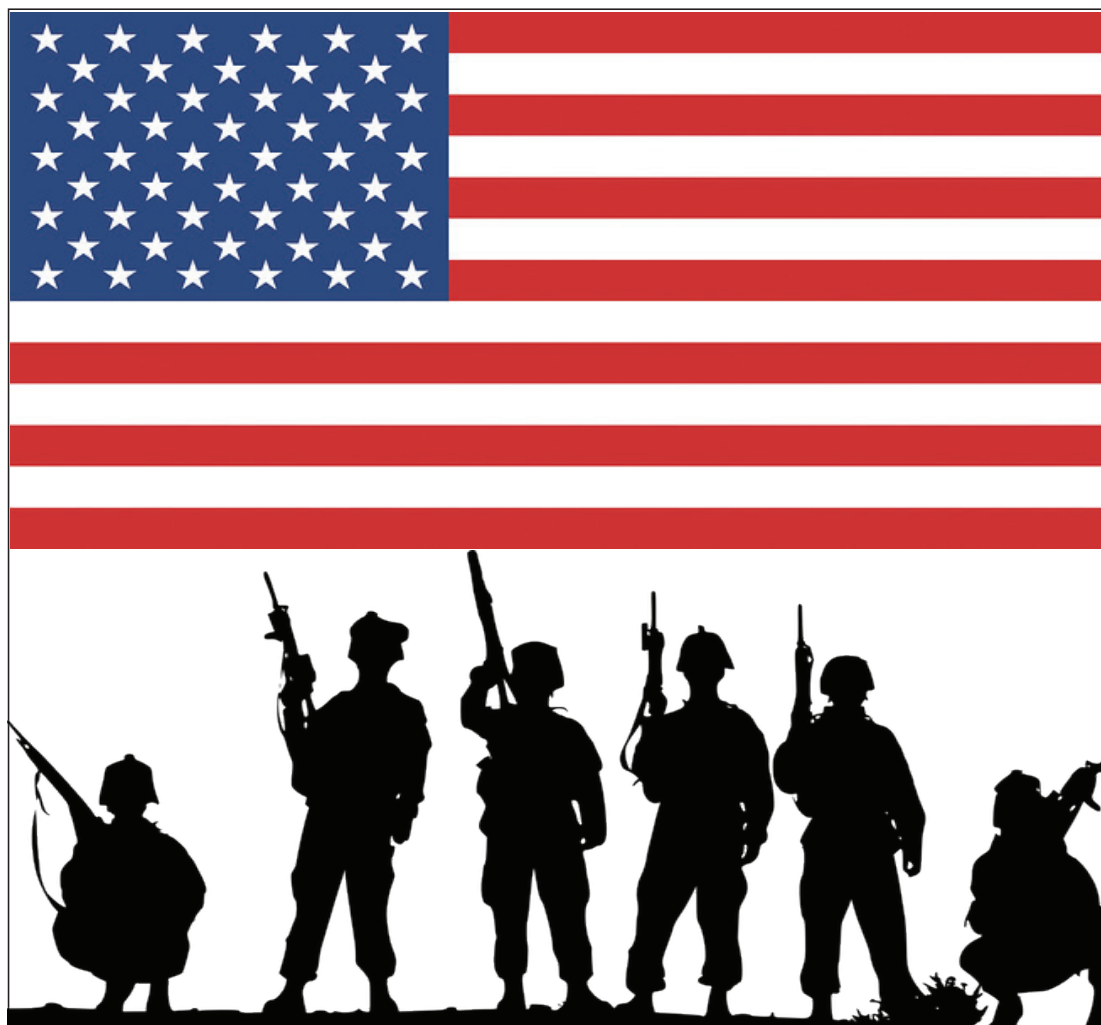
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*In these troubled and divisive times for our country, we at the Northwoods Sporting Journal remain proud to be Americans. We still stand for the National Anthem and thank our lucky stars that we live in the land of the free.*

*And we still salute our military men and women, who have served and continue to serve their country, here at home and in faraway lands. To them we owe our gratitude and appreciation for what they do, and for safeguarding our American way of life, which we value deeply.*



# BRING THEM ALONG!

*Maine has a proud history of local fish and game clubs that continue to serve sportsman and their communities. With your membership and support, these organizations are the best hope for perpetuating and promoting our hunting and fishing legacies for younger generations to come. The Northwoods Sporting Journal, along with those sponsors listed below, urge you to become part of this important state network by joining a fish and game club near you, and bring them along.....*



**If you have a youngster who needs guidance in learning to hunt or fish, contact a Maine Fish and Gun Club in your area. They can help!**

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Arnold Trail Sportsmen's Association – New Sweden  
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## Green Mountain Report

by Bradley Carleton,  
Charlotte, VT



# Opening Day in Vermont

As the snow of a powerfully normal winter begins to retreat and the ice flows break up in the majestic Green Mountain river systems, our thoughts turn toward one of Vermont's High Holy Days of the Outdoors; the Second Saturday of April, known to all Vermonters as Opening

brawny-shouldered trout.

We wade in cautiously, as the flows are still quite high and the water is just a few degrees warmer than last month's ice fishing environs. This is where our methods digress. You have given me a lot of jocular grief as a purist fly-fisherman for using my

tungsten sinker clamped onto my six-pound fluorocarbon line and watch it drift toward the upstream side of a strong riffle. Moments later, I can hear your raucous laugh, muted by the rushing water as it carries upstream to me. I look downstream toward you and see you standing, knee-deep in the rushing froth, leaning back as your fancy hand-turned seven-weight nine-foot rod bows

**We wade in cautiously, as the flows are still quite high and the water is just a few degrees warmer than last month's ice fishing environs. This is where our methods digress. You have given me a lot of jocular grief as a purist fly-fisherman for using my spinning rod until I start seeing hatches.**

Day of Trout Season. But be careful where you step there, my friend. Together we descend the steep slope of an overpass where big holdover browns and steelhead compete for the early forage of mountain run-off. It's muddy and slippery, and the gravel that washed over the bank is as loose as quicksand. The odds are against us, but a winter's worth of hope buoys our dreams of hooking into a

spinning rod until I start seeing hatches. Although we agree on almost everything else, you enjoy chastising me as you throw a salmon-egg colored "fly" with a bright orange and white indicator that follows the current downstream to the deeply undercut bank of the river's turn. I watch, shake my head, and laugh at your folly. I toss a head-hooked pinhead minnow with a small

down to the pool. You look back at me and, without saying a word, your grin is more than I can bear. Once again, nature offers me a lesson I have yet to master. Humility.

The VT F&W Board is inviting public comment on proposed changes to Vermont's white-tailed deer, moose, and turkey hunting regulations, as well as the rules for transporting wild game meat from out of state. The proposed deer hunting changes, recommended by the VT F&W Department's biologists, are the most extensive of the four. They come five years after state biologists last updated Vermont's deer regulations. Deer are Vermont's most popular game species with about 60,000 resident hunters and 7,500 out-of-state hunters, and just over a fifth successfully harvesting deer. Several of the proposed changes aim to balance Vermont's deer herd to what available habitat can support by encouraging hunters to harvest more



**Vermont Sales Representative for the Northwoods Sporting Journal, Tom Schmidt, wets a line on opening day.**  
(Photo by Bradley Carleton)

antlerless deer, primarily does in certain parts of the state. "Deer hunting is incredibly important to many Vermonters' culture and sense of identity, and it is also absolutely essential for keeping deer numbers in line with what is sustainable for our habitats," said Interim Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife Andrea Shortsleeve. "The updates our biologists are proposing will help hunters continue to balance Vermont's deer herd with the available habitat as our forests get older, winters get warmer, and land use patterns change."

The main proposed changes to Vermont's deer hunting regulations would 1). Allow hunters who obtain antlerless permits to harvest antlerless deer during the regular November rifle season. Currently, only antlered deer can be harvested during the No-

vember season. 2). Set the archery season as October 1 through December 15, including during the regular November season. Currently, the archery season closes during the regular November season. 3). Create special additional archery hunting zones with a September 15 opening date in select areas where deer numbers are high. 4.) Allow hunters to hold two antlerless permits from different Wildlife Management Units at the same time. Currently, hunters can only hold one antlerless permit. 5.) Allow hunters to harvest a second legal buck during the season if they have already harvested one buck with three or more points on one antler and one or more antlerless deer. Currently, hunters can only harvest one buck per year. 6.) Reinstate an antler point restriction in Wild- (Vermont cont. pg 55)

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# Pickarel Passion

They say first impressions are lasting. Not so, though, with fish. Take the chain pickerel. By rights I should loathe and fear this voracious, torpedo-like predator. But that's not the case. In fact, I love'em! Let me explain.

I met my first pickerel

I screamed, and so Dad elected to tow Jaws back to camp.

Time passed. I learned to love fishing for just about every fish Maine had to offer, save pickerel. Then I started taking my 4-year-old boy ice fishing. To keep him interested after the hot

ator -- it would seem -- did not intend for man to feast on these bone-laden fishes. Those wispy, long bones have discouraged many a fish eater who decided that getting throat-speared by a sneaky fish bone was too big a price to pay for a mouthful of sweet meat. Nevertheless, through trial and error and with the help of some preparation tips from my Medford guide



as a 4-year-old angler, and we didn't get off to a good start. My father introduced me to this toothy fish one overcast July afternoon at George's Pond near Franklin. To entertain me, while he was casting a plug for bass, Dad dropped my line on the bottom with a small yellow perch attached. Long story short: the Mother of All Chain Pickerel became impaled on my hook. We decided to keep the fish 'cause it was cheap groceries, and Dad had been recently put out of work. But when he attempted to boat this invader from the weeds,

dogs were gone, I began somewhat reluctantly to focus on pickerel. It worked. Scotty took to it. Together we raced from flag to flag. In fact, the fast action began to grow on us both and my childhood pickerel aversion quickly faded.

I know of no better way to get kids hooked on fishing than to expose them to an action-packed pickerel pond on a sunny day in late February or early March.

The eating challenge remained, though. In our family, one never catches or kills anything that isn't consumed. And yet the Cre-

Doug Russell, we eventually adopted and fine-tuned a surefire way to cook and eat pickerel free of bone-choking anxiety.

Here's what you do:

1. Take a sharp fillet knife and carefully slice off both fillets from the pickerel leaving the skin attached to the meat.

2. Scrape off the brunt of the larger scales (but don't work too hard at this).

3. Turn the fillet over on a cutting board, meat side up. Using a razor-sharp fillet knife, start at one end of the fillet and draw the blade across the flesh until it reaches the underlying skin. Continue to make vertical cuts across

## Cracker Barrel by Homer Spit



the fillet. Space the cuts about one-half inch apart. Then turn the fillet and make a series of horizontal slices similarly spaced. What you are doing, in effect, is criss-crossing the cuts and making a cube-steak of pickerel meat with the skin still attached and uncut.

layer of cooking oil (olive oil is best) and cook until both sides are golden brown.

7. Remove and drain well on paper towels. Serve hot.

Lot of work? Yep. But don't take shortcuts. The cubing, the milk-soaking, and the frying in hot oil

**I know of no better way to get kids hooked on fishing than to expose them to an action-packed pickerel pond on a sunny day in late February or early March.**

4. Place the cubed fillets in a refrigerator dish and pour over them a cup or so of evaporated milk. Let this set for an hour or so.

5. Remove fillets from dish and roll in your favorite fish batter (a mixture of well-peppered flour and corn meal will do fine).

6. Place the battered fillets flesh down in a skillet coated with a generous

all serve to minimize the bones and liberate all of that sweet, succulent fish flesh. And it is some good! In fact, prepared this way, a winter-caught chain pickerel will give any pan-fried trout or salmon a run for its money.



*Homer Spit lives on a lake in Maine. He likes to keep a low profile.*

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## Muzzleloading Afield

by Al Raychard,  
Lyman, ME

In June, 1972 I graduated from high school. A couple weeks prior of that day I had applied and got a job at a local manufacturing plant and was scheduled to start in mid-July following their annual two-week summer shutdown. That left me about a month of unattached, completely

Since getting my drivers license that old beater had become my freedom machine and had taken to me just about anywhere of the main roads thanks to four slightly oversized tires that gave it some added clearance. Prior to my departure, I took out the back seat which opened up a

**I was free, young, northern Maine lay ahead and I had places to explore trout to catch.**

free of obligation freedom before reality set in. I decided to spend the time wisely. It was June, typically a good time to fish for trout so packed up my car and headed north.

At the time I was the proud owner of a 1966 Ford Fairlane that I had picked up cheap doing summer jobs. I don't recall now what it had for an engine, all I knew was it didn't burn oil, ran well and got pretty good gas mileage, but at around 40 cents a gallon who cared?

good-sized cargo area for my sleeping bag, some camping equipment and fishing gear, tools and anything else I thought I might need while still providing enough sleeping room on nights too wet to sleep in my pup tent. Looking back on it now, with my Old Town canoe strapped on the roof, I must have looked like Jed Clampett driving up the Maine Turnpike but I didn't care. I was free, young, northern Maine lay ahead and I had places to explore trout to



(Water Color by V. Paul Reynolds)

catch.

Little did I know that month I had in 1972 would prove one of the best times of my life!

The interesting thing is I really didn't have any plan or specific destinations in mind. I just went. For some reason I found myself driving along Route 201 passing through Solon, Bingham, Moscow and followed the snake-like route along the Kennebec to

Caratunk. By the time I got to West Forks and crossed the river there I was in need of a break so I stopped in and bought a Moxie at a local general store. It was the first time I met Ed and Marie Webb. During a brief conversation, I was to learn that Ed had grown up in the area, was a guide and after some coaxing he suggested some fishing areas in Parlin Pond, Johnson Mountain and Misery Townships. Getting into that country back then was a slow, rough, bumpy and in some cases alder-stream trek, but the old Fairlane was more than up to the task and the fishing was worth it. I spent a week in that country, not leaving until I ran out of canned beans, coffee and other needed supplies. Today, most of the waters I fished back then are part of the 8,000-acre Cold Stream Forest Project to be forever protected.

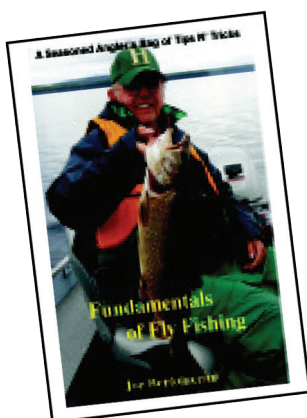
Later on I ventured across Route 201. I visited Grace Pond for the first time and the old set of cabins there, a spot that would become a favorite of mine and where I would kill my first Maine bear on the side of Coburn Mountain a few years later. I remember beating the Fairlane into Spencer Lake in hopes of exploring the old WWII

prisoner of war camp. I never did find it, but by some miracle I did make it into Rock and Iron Ponds. Back then the Old Spencer Road past Fish Pond was a hellish trek to say the least. Today I understand it's much easier.

In the years that followed I revisited some of these areas again, as well as some ponds north and slightly east of Jackman that are now on tribal land, and just to the east in Hammond Township. There are also countless other ponds and streams across Maine that provided fond memories and some great fishing, but it's been years, decades since I've been back to most of them. Somewhere, somehow along the way time flew by and life and other wants and hopes and adventures and responsibilities got in the way. But this year, as April brings the promise of a new spring and weeks of prime fishing time down the road, I hope to change that oversight and hit some of these waters of long ago. To see what has changed in these 50 or so years. I may not like what I find, and the old Fairlane is long gone, but I think the F-150 will make it. Hopefully, so do I. It's time.

*Al Raychard and his wife Diane live on 43+/- acres in Lyman, Maine that offers good deer and turkey hunting opportunities they both enjoy. If the property had a trout stream the property would be pure heaven. Al Can be reach at [alraychard@sacoriver.net](mailto:alraychard@sacoriver.net)*

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# Russell Pond

Books are my source of inspiration; one that sent me off on several adventures was "In beyond Katahdin" by William Girvan. This is a story of his hitch hiking to Baxter Park and visiting the area around Russell Pond and in particular, Davis Pond. It is a 7.5 mile hike to Russell and then another 5 miles to Davis. The trip requires an overnight at Russell then on to Davis. Davis Pond is so remote that when there you are alone, there is only one shelter. I was inspired and had to go.

Over the years I have made four trips to Russell Pond. I did two with my wife, Jean, and my brother and sister in law, one with my cousins' husband and one solo. One of the things that folks just can't seem to comprehend is preparation. Before I went, I parked my work vehicle over a mile from my camp and then walked back and forth for two months to get ready. Others didn't and they struggled; they made it, but the hike was not fun. I also did not really understand the concept of weight. A

whole bunch of things that do not weigh much in total weigh quite a bit. First trip we had way to much weight; jars of peanut butter and jelly for example. Next trip if food wasn't freeze dried it didn't go. The one exception was a small bottle of Bacardi for vespers in the evening.

When I took my cous-

without feeling a spiritual rush. I feel a connection with the Indigenous folks for whom the mountain has deep spiritual meaning. The trail to Russell Pond begins at the Roaring Brook campsite. At the very head of the trail is a large boulder with a brass plaque inscribed with Governor Baxter's famous statement, "Katahdin

**Others didn't and they struggled; they made it, but the hike was not fun. I also did not really understand the concept of weight. A whole bunch of things that do not weigh much in total weigh quite a bit.**

ins' husband, we stayed overnight in Millinocket so that we did not have to leave home at zero dark thirty. I had Tom empty his back pack on the bed and asked him to make two piles. One of the things he could not live without and one of the things he wanted to have. We left the second pile in the car. The lighter the load is the better. It is best for the pack to weigh in at less than thirty pounds.

I don't come in close contact with Katahdin

stands above the surrounding plane unique in grandeur and glory. The works of man are short lived. Monuments decay, buildings crumble and wealth vanishes, but Katahdin in its massive grandeur will forever remain the mountain of the people of Maine. Throughout the ages it will stand as an inspiration to the men and women of this State." I always began a trip up these trails to Russell Pond or Chimney Pond, by putting my hand on that plaque and offering



## From Craig Pond

by Bob Mercer,  
Bucksport, ME

a moment of gratitude for Governor Baxter and his tremendous insight.

Reading that plaque tends to set my mind in a place where it can feel and accept the spiritual nature of Baxter State Park. The hike to Russell is a little over seven miles. It is relatively flat so it is not very difficult, if one prepares for it. The key to the trip is absorbing the feeling of the ambiance as you go. Listen for the birds, which are different than at home. Feel the coolness of the woods. Pay attention to the various smells, be they swampy, pine, cedar, etc. Listen to the quiet. The trick is to become part of the environment and not just in it.

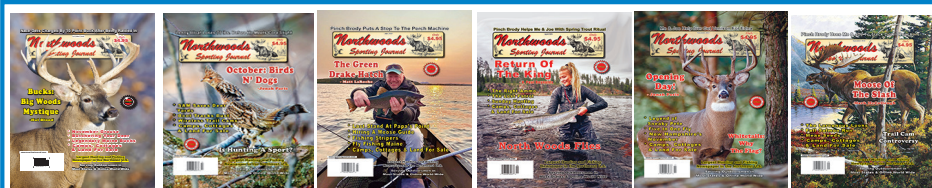
My most interesting trip was the one I did solo. I tried and tried to get someone to go, but none were interested, so I got my hackles up and said, "So be it", and went alone. I was nervous to start, but the further I ventured along, the more comfortable it became. I had a lot of time

to think and meditate on myself and what I believed in. There was nobody else to interrupt my thoughts. I could spend time fishing and pondering. It was a very introspective time. I feel like I grew from it, as I really spent time with myself and learned a good bit about me. The bottom line is I could do what I wanted, when I wanted. On the other side of that, was the fact that it was always my turn to do what needed to be done.

If you have never been to Russell Pond, I recommend it. If you have never done a solo trip I really recommend that.



*Bob writes from the shores of Craig Pond where he and his wife Jean have raised three children and ten grand children. Bob is a former registered Maine Guide and avid out of doors man. Bob can be reached at [Craigponder@myfairpoint.net](mailto:Craigponder@myfairpoint.net)*



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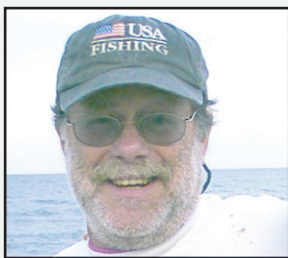
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## Vermont Ramblings

by Dennis Jensen  
Vermont

In times past, I have written about how common it is for outdoor writers and those who should know better to lecture us about the “mistakes” we often make when out there hunting the spring turkey season.

Since we are just about a month away from

ing hearing and visual abilities that serve them well.

Here’s something all turkey hunters must know: The brain of a turkey is about the size of a walnut. But turkeys are driven by instinct and that instinct serves them very well.

In my early years, I would take to the woods in

**The final point I wish to make is that gobblers going into the third spring of their lives become difficult to kill. And there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to older birds.**

opening day, I thought I would offer my take on all of this nonsense.

One big complaint, heard year after year, are the so-called “experts” warning us about how calling during pre-season scouting will make toms “call-shy” by the time the season opens. I don’t recall if any of these “experts” ever explained why that is. Turkeys are not smart. But wild turkeys have astound-

total camouflage and call to as many toms as I could locate. They would come in, look around and then leave. It was not a case of, “Oh, that guy Jensen is out here, again, talking turkey.” Of course, I made it a point not to be noticed. I was never seen. And I killed a bunch of birds in the places where I did my pre-season scouting and calling. No call-shy birds, at least not for me.

I no longer call to birds pre-season because, after more than 35 years of turkey hunting, I have more than a few locations where I can find birds, year after year. Oh, I still get into the woods before the opener but only because I simply love the sound of a gobbler, sounding off, especially up close.

One spring morning, a few years back, I had two toms gobbling on top of one another, about 100 yards off. I could not see them as they gobbled. I was seated just beyond a big log, with only my camouflaged head exposed. They could not see me and I could not move because it was too open in front of me.

Suddenly, the toms stopped calling. What the heck? This is something that had occurred more than once while turkey hunting. The only thing that I assumed had happened was, with all the gobbling, some predator, perhaps a coyote or a bobcat, heard the commotion and moved in for the kill.

The turkeys spotted that predator and fled. Just a theory but any other explanation makes no sense.

Then there is the argu-

on [this morning](#), I learned an important lesson: the art of cutting. Off to my right, I heard the sound – a turkey? – that I had never



ment made by the “experts” who will tell you that you must not call too loudly. Yes, this is certainly true as a bird is closing in on your location. The closer he gets, the logic goes, the softer you should call. Then, of course, when you first spot the bird, stop calling. He needs to spot that “hen” and if you continue to call and he cannot see the love of his morning, that bird is probably gone.

Calling to loud? One morning, many years ago, I was scouting with my old hunting pal, Jim Lynch. Jim was hidden in a pile of brush, calling. Occasionally, a tom up on the hill behind him, would gobble back. I too was calling and,

heard before. This was a very loud, piercing call. *(Here is the sound that you can easily make with a box call. Take the handle and strike it repeatedly on the box, at a slight angle, and strike the box with vigor.)*

Anyway, this bird was cutting and then, in a moment, she appeared, cutting loud and crazy. And every time she sounded off, three toms, up on the hill, behind Jim, would gobble, on top of each other. This went on and on. My guess is that the hen was sitting on a nest of eggs, or laying eggs, and was aggravated by the fact that another hen (my yelping) had invaded her space. Hens, by their nature, do (Experts cont. pg 64)

# Vermont



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# Fishing: Keeping It Simple

Open water fishing is about to heat up this month. Like many others, for months I have been anxiously awaiting April 12, the opening of trout season.

memories.

I wonder if we need all that expensive tackle we seem to covet for fishing. Do we really catch more fish because of it?

For many years I

reached my early teens I just had to get a “real” outfit. My self esteem would not allow me to be seen with the ugly old metal rod. For some time I had visited the Western Auto Store weekly to look at the wonderful new reels. Mac

Johnson. It was a good investment and I used it for a decade with considerable success.

I also managed to purchase an inexpensive fiberglass rod to go with it. I was proud to own new

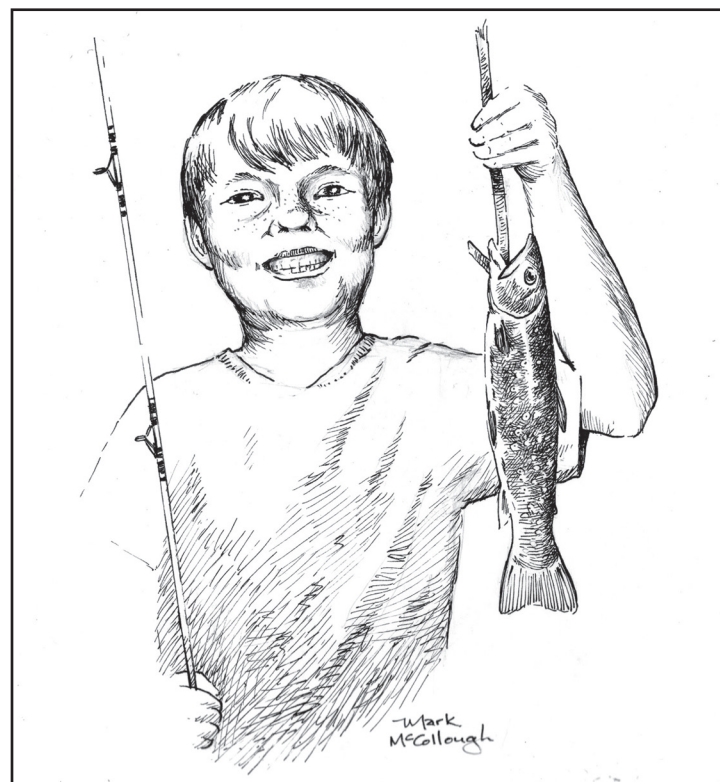
**I wonder if we need all that expensive tackle we seem to covet for fishing. Do we really catch more fish because of it?**

McCann and Joe Kiely never seemed to mind that I didn't buy anything.

I had my heart set on an open faced Mitchell, at that time the ultimate in reels. Every cent I could make mowing lawns and haying was saved with the Mitchell in mind. Impatient as most youngsters are, I couldn't wait and settled for a much cheaper

equipment and took much better care of it than I had my old hand me down rod and reel.

Bait consisted of mud worms and was carried in Prince Albert Tobacco cans. Our waders were the same black high top sneakers that we wore every day until winter came and we switched to rubber boots. No creels were needed.



(Illustration by Mark McCollough)

As I turn 79 this spring, I often think back to my youth and how much fun I had fishing with Dad and my friends.

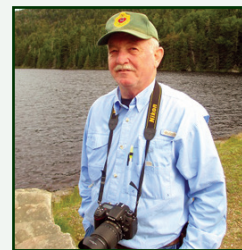
I have also been thinking about how we pursue the sport. Many of the anglers I have seen in the past few years looked as if they were walking advertisements for Orvis or L.L. Bean. Why, the outfits they were wearing and the rods and reels they carried would cost as much as a good used car.

Thus, it was a real pleasure to see a couple of young boys walking along Bradford's Main Street with old banged up spinning rods over their shoulders and a stringer of nice trout in hand. The sight brought back fond

fished with a heavy, metal telescoping rod and a single action reel loaded with old fly line. That was during my preteen years more than a half century ago and I caught a lot of brook trout. The rod was rugged as was necessary to stand up to the beatings it received. Young boys are known to possess many qualities, but gentleness and caution are not among them.

A bicycle was my common mode of travel and the rod would be tied across the handle bars. For some trips my classmate Francis Stockman and I would use a Ford 9N tractor if it was not needed on the farm. In either case, the rods took considerable abuse.

About the time I



## Outdoors In Vermont

by Gary W. Moore,  
Bradford, VT

Fish were carried on a forked stick. Those were the days of the six inch limit for trout in Vermont so every rod had a notch cut, or a piece of tape, at the appropriate point to keep us legal.

I now own many expensive reels and the latest in rods. My closets hold spinning, bait casting and fly fishing equipment of many varieties. I fish a lot less and I don't think I catch as many fish when I do get out. One thing is certain, I had just as much (Simple cont. pg 51)

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## Maple Country Outdoors

by Ben Wilcox,  
Essex, VT

Another winter has passed, time to focus on fly fishing! April can be a tough month on the trout stream, but there is one pattern in particular that will up your odds of success from late fall through early spring. The mighty egg, a naturally occurring, high calorie trout food, that stands out and draws fishes

Throwing an egg under an indicator and hoping the distance from bobber to fly is the same as the water depth is not going to be very effective. Most of the time the fly will be suspended above the river bottom and drifting at the speed of the surface current and not the natural eggs. Lethargic trout just are very unlikely

**The most important part of fishing eggs is the drift. Eggs are located on the river bottom, bouncing and rolling along the substrate SLOWLY. Your egg fly must do the same if you are to have success.**

attention. When presented properly, this fly will be the most consistent pattern in your fly box at a time when trout are still quite lethargic from cold water temps. I'll explain how to fish these flies as well as the colors I prefer.

My eyes were opened to the egg this past March at the US Fly Fishing National Championships, I was forced to commit at least half of my time to fishing eggs due to cold winter weather. Eggs were accounting for a majority of the fish caught, and for some competitors, eggs were the only fly they fished. I had to become an egg fisherman fast, a fly I'd fished sparsely on my home waters.

The most important part of fishing eggs is the drift. Eggs are located on the river bottom, bouncing and rolling along the substrate SLOWLY. Your egg fly must do the same if you are to have success.

to eat this type of presentation. Your best tactic will be to euro nymph the egg with a direct connection from leader to fly.

I found out the hard way that just because you have an egg tied onto a euro leader, does not mean it will look correct to the fish. The strike zone and mid column drifts that work so well for much of the season when bugs and trout are active will not be as effective. The absolute key is slowing down the drift. I discovered this could be done in two ways and some days fish preferred one drift over another. The first is to slow roll the egg along the river bottom by ever so slowly leading the flies. This works much better when you can see the egg in shallower or clear water.

The second is to invert your drift so that as the fly drifts past you, your rod tip is upstream of the fly and the leader is imparting almost no drag on the egg

whatsoever, allowing the egg to bounce along the bottom naturally. You are then looking for a subtle tightening of your leader above the water to indicate a trout has eaten the egg.

competition, my teammate and I fished the same egg leap frogging each other up the river. I caught around 45 to his 5 or 6. When we got back and compared the eggs, which looked identi-

time of year, but could usually get one below the falls. With an egg I caught 3 in the pocket water and 2 at the falls. I repeated this success over and over throughout the month of



**My teammate Christian Gallagher with a nice rainbow trout that ate an Egg Pattern during winter in North Carolina.**

For some readers this may be too far "into the weeds" to understand but if you can simply slow your drift as much as possible you will have more success.

Egg color is another important factor. I found that that fluorescent orange, yellow, and salmon pink are three must have colors. Some like white, pink, blue, and reddish orange as well. I prefer to stick to three so that I am not spending half my time rotating colors. On some days you'll find that it matters a lot, and they will be keyed into one color. I also like the material to have UV glow when you put it under a UV light. One day, while practicing for the

cal, my material had a UV glow under a light, while his did not.

Lastly, weight is required to get the egg to the bottom. I prefer to tie eggs with copper or pink tungsten beads in a few different weights depending on depth and river flow. Another option is an unweighted egg behind some split shot or a heavy nymph. Either way, that fly needs to attain depth quickly.

Coming back from nationals last year I was excited to try eggs on my home trout. I picked a small stream with pocket water leading up to a water fall. Never had I caught a fish in the pocket water at that

April, and cannot wait to get out and "egg up" more wild trout in 2025.



*Ben Wilcox is owner of Maple Country Anglers, located in Northwest Vermont. He was a member of the USA Fly Fishing Team from 2020-2024. He is a registered Maine Guide and graduate of the University of Maine. He also owns a large Maple Sugaring Business, Amber Ridge Maple. These occupations allow him to be in the woods or water nearly every day of the year. He can be reached at [maple-countryanglers@gmail.com](mailto:maple-countryanglers@gmail.com) or on instagram @benwilcox\_maplecountr-anglers*



# Spring Trolling: Best Waters

*Editor's note: Maine's late, well-known outdoor writer Bud Leavitt left us his legacy between the pages of his only book, Twelve Months in Maine. In this monthly feature, we reprint selected excerpts from his book courtesy of Bangor Publishing Company.*

One day at West Grand Lake, Elliot and I were fishing the cove opposite the late Carter White's camp in The Narrows at Grand Lake Stream. Elliot picked up his fly rod and made one cast, exactly one cast. A landlock skittered across the water's surface like a pickerel after a surface plug and for the next two hours that Sunday morning, we had the damndest fly fishing imaginable.

Another time, Elliot and I ran into a similar situation at Ambejejus, north of Millinocket. This time,

as I recall, I made the first cast strictly an exploratory effort. Bang! I dare not admit how many salmon we hooked and landed on that

between Old Town and Bangor. It has not. There is a whole lot of fishing out there, but I am the first to admit you need to work a

salmon and trout, but I submit the following as still being excellent providers of angling excitement once

Square Lake, Long and Eagle, Kennebago, Rangeley, Cobbosseecontee, Magalloway, Schoodic, Sebec, Moosehead, Moose River, Duck Lake, West Lake, Naticous Lake, East Grand Lake, Sebang, West Grand Lake, Dead River, Belgrade Lakes, Middle Range Pond, Clearwater Pond, Wilson Pond, Cold Stream Pond, Allagash, First and Third Debsconeag, Chesunkcook, Chamberlain, First and Second Buttermilk, Lobster Lake, Beech Hill, Branch Pond, Tunk Lake, Gardners' and a thousand or more trout and salmon waters.

Summer fishing for landlocks and trout demands patience and more than the usual amount of expertise and skill.



Illustration "Salman Chop" (By V. Paul Reynolds)

occasion.

Don't be lulled into believing that the "old days" lake fishing has gone the way of the trolley cars

bit harder to find where it's at these days.

I would not attempt a list of the "best" lakes and ponds for landlocked

the calendar displays April 1 and Official Spring:

Red River, Fish River,

## Simple

(Cont. from pg 49)

fun with the old telescoping pole loaded with used fly line. Sometimes we unnecessarily complicate our lives.

### F&W Board Approves 180 Moose Permits

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has proposed issuing 180 moose hunting permits in Wildlife Management Unit E in the northeastern corner of the state. No permits are recommended for any other area in the state.

The Fish and Wildlife Board gave initial approval at its February meeting and the proposal made available for public comment. This is the same number and location as was approved in 2024 and 2023.

The goal of the department's 2025 moose harvest recommendation is to improve the health of moose in WMU-E by reducing the number of moose and thereby reducing the abundance and impact of winter ticks.

As many as 90,000 winter ticks have been found on one moose. More than half of moose calves have died in some winters

due to blood loss caused by the winter ticks.

By the time you read this, I suspect the proposal will have received final approval after the Board takes public comment.

Syndicated columnist Gary W. Moore is a life long resident of Vermont and a former Commissioner of Fish and Game. His latest book, *Four Seasons in Vermont*, is available at many bookstores and sporting goods shops or from him directly. He may be reached by e-mail at gwmoore1946@icloud.com or at Box 454, Bradford, VT 05033.



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By Ralph (Bud) Leavitt

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## New Hampshire Outdoors

by Peter St. James,  
Warner, N.H.



Spring officially arrived on March 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:01 a.m., but now that April's here, Spring can really begin. And what better way to kick off April than with the opening of Landlocked Salmon for another year. The season runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup> on all waters except Pleasant Lake in New London. Because that lake is managed as a trout fishery, fishing is not permitted until the opening of trout season which falls on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday in April. This

year that's April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Lake trout can also be taken beginning on April 1<sup>st</sup> on all designated Lake Trout and/or Salmon waters. (fish can be taken by ice fishing only January 1 – March 31)

If you're into smelting, from March 15 through April 30, smelt may be taken by means of a dip net not over 18 inches in diameter, between the hours of sunset and 12 midnight. Only the following waters are open to the taking of freshwater smelt by dip net: Manning Lake/Guinea Pond, Gilmanton - Pea Porridge Pond, Madison - Rust Pond, Wolfeboro - Suncook Lake, Barnstead - Sunset Lake/Places Pond, Alton/Gilmanton - Webster Lake, Franklin - Bearcamp River (From Tamworth/Ossipee town line to Ossipee Lake) and the Mascoma River (From Canaan/Enfield town line to Mascoma Lake). The daily bag limit for smelt is 2 quarts liquid

measure of whole (head and tail intact) freshwater smelt in the 24-hour period between 12 noon one day and 12 noon the following day. Persons taking freshwater smelt must at all times keep their individual take in separate, unbreakable containers marked

to front and center this month, hunting also shares the stage for a few days. The process of updating the 10-year Big Game Management Plan (BGMP) for New Hampshire is underway. In December 2025 the existing plan, which has been in place since Janu-

in Keene from 06:00 PM - 08:30 PM. On April 16<sup>th</sup>, the plan can be seen and commented on in Conway area at the Tin Mountain Conservation Center, Great Room from 6:00PM-8:30PM. (Tin Mountain Conservation Center is located at 1245 Bald Hill Road, Albany, NH). The final public presentation will be on April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Fish and Game facilities in Lancaster from 6:00PM-8:30PM. If you can't make any of the public presentations but would like to weigh in on the plan, the end date for public input is April 25<sup>th</sup>. For more information, go to : wildlife.nh.gov

Turkey season for the "big kids" starts next month on May 1<sup>st</sup>, but the younger hunters take to the woods before that. The Youth Turkey-Hunting Weekend is April 26<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>. The youngsters can take one turkey — statewide and another turkey only from WMUs H1, H2, I1, J2, K, L or M. The combined limit is for the weekend is 1 or 2 (male or bearded) turkeys.

When it was snowy and cold a month or two back, we kept saying, "Can't wait 'til April gets here". Well, it's here. Get outside!



Peter St. James is a member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association and Outdoor Writers Association of America. You can reach him at : outsideinsides603@gmail.com

# Come Spring

**The daily bag limit for smelt is 2 quarts liquid measure of whole (head and tail intact) freshwater smelt in the 24-hour period between 12 noon one day and 12 noon the following day.**

with their name.

A few years back I was smelting on a brook in New Hampshire one night. I had about half my bucket filled and was looking to add a few more before I left. Just then, the largest sucker I had ever seen swam downstream between my legs. When my flashlight caught sight of that it nearly yanked me right out of the brook. Of course my buddy thought it was hilarious.

While fishing moves

ary of 2016, expires. The new plan will set population goals and objectives for moose, deer, bear, and turkey for 2026 through 2035. The first of four public sessions to get public input about the proposed plan will be on Wednesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, from 06:00 PM - 08:30 PM at Fish and Game Headquarters, 11 Hazen Drive, Concord. The following day, Thursday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, the public road show heads to Keene High School, Room 620

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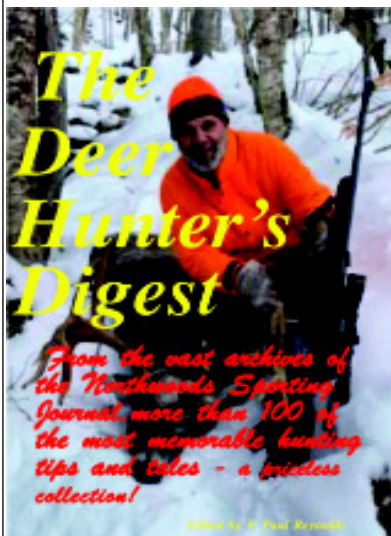
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# Of Rills and Runs

Over the last few years, I find myself gravitating toward those little streams where wild trout seem to thrive. You will not find the names of these runnels familiar. Nor will they be found in your favorite fly-fishing magazine. Photos of fish caught on their waters will not appear

of finger-long brookies, fish as frisky as fawns, or brown trout, growing fat on summer beetles and black ants, each fitting snugly in a moist palm, or it could be a ten-inch rainbow, the exception to the six-inch rule, rushing toward a tangle of submerged branches, just as likely splashing through

third to cast delicate dry flies should the fish be rising. Then there are the reels to match each rod, with spare spools enabling me to switch from floating to sinking lines and back again.

All of this is fine and well, but when fishing a smaller stream, I need



on Facebook or Instagram. There are no fly shops or destination lodges nearby.

It may be a rivulet, unrestrained, falling with utter abandon off the side of a mountain or a dark and moody rill found a half-mile off a logging road, the limbs of spruce and balsam spreading from one bank to the other. Perhaps it's a brook bubbling through a glade of rhododendron, maybe a narrow ribbon winding leisurely through fields of tall grass sprinkled with wildflowers.

Such streams do not contain the large fish found in tailwater fisheries or rivers running wide and deep. To be sure, on most afternoons, I might find myself in the company

the surface and ending with a pirouette to make Sophia Lucia nod with approval.

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against playing tag with large fish. Once or twice each season, I'll check into a well-known fishing lodge to spend a few days trying to outwit twenty-inch browns, fussy fish with epicurean palates, and like any angler, I find the tug of a large rainbow addicting.

There is my wading stick and oversized net, chest waders and a pack stuffed with boxes and boxes and more boxes of fly patterns in every conceivable size, color, and shape. There will be a fly rod for nymphing, another to swing streamers, and a

only slip on wading boots over my pair of well-worn hipers. The pack buckled to my waist is sufficient to carry forceps, clippers, an extra leader and a spool of tippet material. After I add a chamois sleeve to clean the slime off my dry flies and a plastic container of crystals to keep them afloat, there is enough room for a sandwich and perhaps an apple or brownie for desert.

In a shirt pocket, there'll be a pair of cheaters I'm compelled to use to knot even a five-x tippet to the eye of a #12 hook. A single pill box fits snugly inside the other breast pocket. Hooked into a patch of rippled foam glued to the inside of the



## Against The Current

by Bob Romano,  
Rangeley, ME

tin container are a few gold-ribbed hare's ear wet flies in different sizes beside three or four elk-hair caddis, and if it's summer, a couple of ant imitations, along with a number of pheasant-tail dry flies ranging in sizes from #12 to #18, my go-to pattern when fishing small streams.

sage, the author examines why such a seemingly audacious pattern such as the Royal Coachman takes fish. He explains that for a fly pattern to be effective it must "be designed for both humans and trout because we see different parts of it." An apt description of a pheasant-tail dry fly.

**"We take delight in things; we take delight in being loosed from things. Between these two delights, we must dance our lives." – Philip Harnden, *Journeys of Simplicity*.**

I've often wondered why this fly, whether bouncing between the branches of a fallen conifer or slipping beside the shoulder of an exposed boulder, has consistently appealed to trout found in smaller water.

As a young man, I read Datus Proper's *What the Trout Said*. Published in 1981, this thought-provoking work contains the late diplomat/angler's insights into fly patterns. One of the author's greatest influences was Vincent Marinaro, who wrote the book's forward, and with whom the author had fished as a young man. Only recently, did I pick up *Running Water*, a book of reminiscences penned by Proper in 2001. In one pas-

This pattern floats well on its parachute wing, which is a big plus for the angler while providing a low profile, which appeals to the fish. The mottled pheasant-tail body combined with its mahogany wing resembles many mayflies while the post fashioned of calf tail or Antron allows the angler to track the fly's progress as it bounces over riffles or glides across a placid pool. In small-stream waters, where trout cannot be selective, there are few patterns that can compete with the effectiveness of this utilitarian fly.

To compliment my pared-downed kit, is a fly rod, seven-foot long, con-

(Runs cont. pg 55)



**RETURN TO RANGELEY – by Robert J. Romano, Jr.**  
Bob Romano's newest novel is once again set among vast lakes, unrestrained rivers, backwoods ponds, and little rills found only by following a logging road into the heart of western Maine. If you enjoyed his other books, you'll agree this one is also a keeper.

For orders placed before 4/1/25, free shipping and a free notecard featuring artwork by the author's daughter, Emily Rose Romano. To purchase an autographed copy, make your check in the amount of \$25.00 payable to West River Media and send to Andora and Romano, 15 Essex Rd., Suite 406, Paramus N.J. 07652. For more information email Bob at magalloway@mac.com.



## The Bird Perch

by Karen Holmes,  
Cooper, ME



When I lived in Massachusetts, I always enjoyed doing programs and walks about birds and birding. I guess I came across as an informed person because I received many requests to solve mysterious bird identifications. I

Mexico. It has a distinctive shape with long legs, neck and curved beak. I called my friend Katherine "Betty" Anderson to come down and verify this weird sighting and she did.

It turned out to have escaped from a falconer.

**While I now live in Maine, I still get requests to identify birds and it is lots of fun. In the fall many species have changed from their breeding plumage or are just young birds just out of the nest. These especially often look very different from their parents.**

became a sort of a detective.

One day I went down to a field in Middleboro, MA to try to identify a strange hawk-like bird. I was amazed when I saw it because it was a Crested Caracara. This member of the Falcon family of birds feeds on carrion and is native to southern Texas and

Another day I answered a knock at my door in Lakeville, MA and a woman handed me a strange bird she found dead on the shoreline of a pond there. Right away I knew it was some sort of alcid. These oceanic species come to land only to nest. I brought the bird to my friend Betty because she was the direc-

tor of the Manomet Mass Bird Observatory and either she or someone there could identify it. All of us were amazed to identify it as a Marbled Murrelet, only found along the Pacific Ocean coastlines of North America and Alaska. How and why it ended up where it was found could only be guessed at. Another time I responded to a phone call to rescue a

# The Bird Detective

Clinic and I took it there. Sadly the bird had to be euthanized because it was suffering from lead poisoning. It must have looked down from a height and thought the smooth look-

me. In April I will fine tune my bird identification skills by observing migrating hawks flying over my hawk watch site in Cooper, ME. I already have established for Maine Audubon that



ing light colored road was a waterway.

Another time I was asked to identify a strange robin-like bird. It was a beautiful part albino or leucistic American Robin. While I now live in Maine, I still get requests to identify birds and it is lots of fun. In the fall many species have changed from their breeding plumage or are just young birds just out of the nest. These especially often look very different from their parents. I have identified a juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk and Cooper's Hawk, a Black-throated Green Warbler, an Indigo Bunting and others from photos people emailed to

Golden Eagles fly over in the spring. I am hoping someone this summer asks me to identify a nesting pair in the area.

*Karen Holmes finds that solving nature mysteries is a welcome pastime. She has had to identify tracks of various mammals. She hopes she will prove some day that cougars exist in DownEast Maine. She has quite a library of guides to help her identify birds, butterflies, dragonflies, snakes, turtles, salamanders, frogs and toads found nearby. She has sent in these identifications and helped create records for state and national organizations.*

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See page 47



# Martin Massicotte Wins His 11th Can-Am 250!

Martin Massicotte bib #5 of Saint-Tite, Quebec makes history and wins the 250 Can-Am Crown International Sled Dog Races

**Massicotte stated his spirits and morale were raised with the great trail conditions as he left Syl-Ver Checkpoint to the Allagash Checkpoint and from there he continued 52 miles to the Lonesome Pine Trails Finish Line in Fort Kent, Maine.**

in Fort Kent Maine with a time of 31:08:49. Massicotte has a perfect race record this season winning



four of four races, this 250 Can-Am win is now his 11th first place finish in Fort Kent since 1998. Massicotte holds the record for the most 250 Can-Am wins, 11! Racing began Saturday, March 1st with heavy snows as Massicotte

left the Main Street Start at 10:10 AM – deep snow made the course difficult Saturday while winds challenged mushers with snowdrifts on Sunday. Monday was a bluebird day and the course was hard-packed and fast – Massicotte stat-

ed his spirits and morale were raised with the great trail conditions as he left Syl-Ver Checkpoint to the Allagash Checkpoint and from there he continued 52 miles to the Lonesome Pine Trails Finish Line in Fort Kent, Maine.

*The Can-Am has three races a 30 mile race, a 100 mile race, a 250 mile race*

- The winner of the 30 mile race #16 Michael Bernier

- The winner of the 100 mile race was: Bib #13 Florence Shaw

- The winner of the 250 mile race was: Martin Massicotte of Saint-Tite, Quebec

This is Martin's 11 Can-Am 250 race win. The most in race history. Martin's dog Franklin was give the K-9 Preacher Award in memory of a Maine State Police Dog shot in Portage, Maine on [February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2025](#).

More than 1,000 spectators came to Fort Kent on [Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup>](#) during a 7" snow storm. \$52,000 was the purse.

## Runs

(Cont. from pg 53)

structed of honey-colored cane by the Pennsylvania artist and rod maker, Tom Whittle.

There are the trout, of course, those Spartans of the stream, draped in colors only God could have imagined, fish that, after all these years, continue to take my breath away. If my luck holds, I will hold more than one in my moist palm. But there is more. For I'm accompanied by birdsong while casting my bits of feather and wool. A chipmunk chatters from high up a tree, a kingfisher complains from a low hanging limb.

As the afternoon progresses, a great-blue heron swings out of the shad-

ows, a mink slinks silently through the exposed roots of an arborvitae, a muskrat weaves against the current, a clump of reeds clutched in its jaws.

There is time to linger beside a small stream. Seated on a lichen-stained boulder or moss-covered log, I may look down at a toad no bigger than the button on my shirt, watch a redstart flit from one bank to another.

In the end, I suppose it is a sense of intimacy not found on larger rivers that draws me back to these rills and runs. For along the banks of these hidden waters an angler can experience a type of "beautiful aloneness." A feeling rarely found in the hustle and bustle of modern life.



## Vermont

(Cont. from pg 44)

life Management Unit D1 where mature buck numbers are low. 7.) Return the state's youth deer hunting weekend to the Saturday and Sunday prior to the start of the regular November season. "In a nutshell, there are some very specific parts of the state—like the Champlain Valley—where we need hunters to harvest more does," said Short-

sleeve. "Doe numbers are one of the main factors that determine the deer herd's ability to grow. In much of Vermont, the herd is already pretty well balanced to the available habitat, but in some areas, there are just too many deer. In those places, our forests are suffering as a result." In addition to the proposed deer regulation changes the board also invites public comment on proposals from department biologists

on the moose and turkey hunting seasons, and on transporting wild game meat from out of state into Vermont.



*Bradley Carleton is the founder and Director of Sacred Hunter.org which teaches the public respect and empathy through hunting, fishing, and foraging. More of Bradley's writing can be seen at <https://sacredhunter.substack.com>*

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# April Question Of The Month

## What Are Three Common Fly Fishing Mistakes?

By Ben Wilcox

In 10 years of owning my guide service, I've had the privilege of guiding thousands of wonderful anglers of all ability levels. Many anglers come to me specifically to help them up their game, often in Euro nymphing, another

skill level.

The first mistake I want to cover is in the approach. I could write articles for days just on different aspects of approach, but the most common issue is that anglers of all abilities will forever want to

standing on the other side of the river, would I want to cast to this side? The answer is often yes. The same thing happens on a lake, the people in boats all want to cast to the bank and the people on the bank all want to cast to the middle of the lake!

Second is poor line control. Poor line control is responsible for more missed and lost fish than maybe anything else and

strike detection, hook setting and fighting the fish. Long story short if you cannot manage your fly line, you cannot successfully fly fish. It is as important as fly casting.

With an emphasis on line control in the back of your mind, and your approach spooking fewer fish, the last issue is accuracy. Rivers and lakes are dynamic environments and being able to put the fly in

that advanced fly casters vary greatly when it comes to accuracy. By scanning the pupil of each caster it was determined that those who were able to focus most consistently on the target were more accurate. That sounds obvious, but the study showed even elite casters eyes often tend to look at the fly, the line, or an overall area near the target, instead of staying locked on to it.

**Poor line control is responsible for more missed and lost fish than maybe anything else and is one of the harder things to master. While beginners struggle mightily, experienced anglers brief loss of line control cost them opportunities at fish very often.**



(Photo by V. Paul Reynolds)

solid portion hire me because they are new to the area and have not quite figured out trout fishing in the northeast, some want to be shown around new rivers and explore new areas, and then there are a portion who are simply on vacation and want to give fly fishing a try. Three common mistakes anglers of all ability levels struggle with are approach, line control, and accuracy, regardless of

cast to the other side of the river. The grass is always greener on the other side right, or in this case the trout are always on the far bank? It seems like this attitude is baked into the human DNA. I encounter very very few anglers who don't fall into this trap. If I let my clients, 90% of them will walk right through the inside seam or stand in the pocket that once held fish in order to cast the good looking water on the far bank. The result is trout swimming for their lives, thus, often spooking the next trout. Suddenly the whole pool or run is on edge before a cast is even made, making them a little tougher, tho not at all impossible to catch. Try looking at the water and asking yourself, if I was

is one of the harder things to master. While beginners struggle mightily, experienced anglers brief loss of line control cost them opportunities at fish very often. What do I mean by line control? The act of managing slack, tension, leader positioning, and fly line both when casting and retrieving line. Common issues are inability to manage fly line when casting, failing to properly transfer fly line from line hand to rod hand, too much slack on the water, mending, and poor stripping of fly line during the retrieve or while fighting fish. Every one of these issues requires concentration and good mechanics. Practice until muscle memory takes over. Poor line control effects the most important aspects of fly fishing; presentation,

front of fish is paramount. I often start on a bigger pool, or wide riffle with clients. In these situations landing your fly within 10' of where the cast is aimed is often ok. We then will move into tighter pockets, riffles and runs where suddenly hitting a 1-2' pocket is required. Suddenly casters don't look like rockstars when they realize they cannot hit what they are aiming at. Still water offers similar challenges. Simply because an angler is casting in a big piece of water does not mean that there are no targets. We all know fish relate to structure. The ability to land a fly within 1' of a submerged rock or inside the v of a downed tree will result in more opportunities. It is important to focus your eyes on your target. Studies have shown

If anglers can work to mitigate these three mistakes, the result will undoubtedly be more fish to net, and more rewarding days on the water. Good luck out there!



Ben Wilcox is owner of Maple Country Anglers, located in Northwest Vermont. He was a member of the USA Fly Fishing Team from 2020-2024. He is a registered Maine Guide and graduate of the University of Maine. He also owns a large Maple Sugaring Business, Amber Ridge Maple. These occupations allow him to be in the woods or water nearly every day of the year. He can be reached at [maple-countryanglers@gmail.com](mailto:maple-countryanglers@gmail.com) or on instagram @ [benwilcox\\_maplecountryan anglers](https://www.instagram.com/benwilcox_maplecountryan anglers)

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(See pg 47)



# Bizz Baits Perfect Match

There's a younger generation of Bass-Anglers developing an array of new presentations within the concepts of Finesse Techniques. Take for example Canada's Jeff Gustafson's Bassmaster Elite-Series February 2021 victory on the Tennessee River. Gustafson utilized a soft-plastic minnow bait rigged on a jighead. Cold 40-degree plus water temperatures, coupled with the diminutive size and action of his minnow presentation enticed big smallmouths as he drifted one-two feet off the bottom. Monitoring his 2-D Forward Facing Sonar, Gustafson called the technique Drifting a Damiki Rig.

Just how effective was this technique? Gustafson repeated his winning technique once again on the Tennessee River in March of 2023, winning the Bassmaster Classic! This time the minnow and jighead technique was also known as Mopping. ([www.Bizz-Baits.com](http://www.Bizz-Baits.com))

Fast forward to 2025 and the original Damiki Rig technique has evolved into what is now known as; Mopping, Strolling, Hover Strolling, Mid-Strolling, or Scrubbing? However, what has remained a constant within the technique is the utilization of a jighead paired with a soft plastic minnow, while monitoring Forward Facing Sonar! And the continuation of spinning rods and reels spooled with light fluoro-

carbon leader lines tied to bright color braided line detecting the most subtle bites. Tackle manufactures reacted to this Feeding Frenzy of techniques developing new style soft plastic baits, as jighead molds overheated tweaking new jighead's with very minute differences.

One tackle manufacture who didn't rush into producing Damiki tech-

**Just how effective was this technique? Gustafson repeated his winning technique once again on the Tennessee River in March of 2023, winning the Bassmaster Classic!**

nique style products during the frenzy was Bizz Baits owner Brian Sousa along with team members, Jeris Bush, Tyler Lawwill, and Louis Monetti. Sousa and his team decided to research the various techniques on the water with Forward Facing Sonars. Logging detailed results under a variety of water/weather conditions. The team spent over one-year testing prototype minnow style Bizz Bait soft plastics specifically engineered for Forward Facing Sonar before deciding on going to production with the Bizz Baits Minner.

Brian Sousa and his Team may have accomplished designing the perfect FFS soft plastic Minner, however he wasn't completely satisfied with the performance of their jighead! "The design of our jighead looks fantastic, the BKK Custom Super Slick hooks sizes 2/0 and 4/0 per-

formed flawlessly, the large jighead eyes mimicked natural shad attracting bass to inhale our combination Minner and jighead. Yet we had one very common situation that kept happening time and time again... Tying directly to the hook eye required adjusting the knot. While performing a loop knot under cold or windy condition wasn't easy. Plus, the outstanding

side to side rolling action of our Minner and jighead with a light line loop-knot didn't seem feasible."

It would take Brian Sousa and his Bizz Baits Team one more year to become completely satisfied with the performance of their newly engineered Ring Roller jighead and Minner soft plastic combination.

"After many hours of modifications, we de-

## Best Bassin'

by Bill Decoteau,  
Hampden, MA



veloped a 'Solid-Ring' attachment for the line-tie. The results were astonishing! We now had the 'Perfect Match' for our new soft plastic Minner, with its ultra-realistic minnow profile." (No more loop knots, anglers may tie their favorite knot directly to the 'Ring'!)

The Bizz Baits Team

Bizz Baits Ring Roller Jighead's are available in three weight sizes, 1/8, 3/16, 1/4 oz. with either a 2/0 or 4/0 custom super-slick coated BKK hook with optimized hook angle for superior hook-ups. Three

Natural Baitfish color patterns; Natural Shad, Tennessee Shad, Un-Painted. All Ring Roller Jighead's come in 3/PK priced at \$7.99/PK

According to Bizz Baits Jeris Bush, "The Minner has an ultra-realistic baitfish profile with a natural body roll action, is salt/scent infused and available in 3.5 & 4.5-inch sizes." Seven natural forage colors; Bait Fish, Sexy Shad, Pearl Magic, Natural Shad, Red Pro Blue, Tennessee Shad, Green Pumpkin. Minner 3.5"/7 PK or 4.5"/5 PK are priced at \$5.99/PK.



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## Cookin' With New England's WildCheff

by Denny Corriveau,  
Kennebunkport, ME



April is always an interesting time of the year. We start the month with practical jokes on April Fool's Day.

April also ushers in Opening Day for trout fishing, and open water, as well as getting us hunting enthusiasts amped up for spring turkey season.

Easter is near and dear to my heart, from a spiritual sense, and for the variety of foods that I serve at my table.

Regardless of the direction you decide on, there are many ways to adjust your menu during this season.

One of my signature

**One of my signature recipes that I created years ago is a fish cake that I have prepared for family, friends, and clients. It has also been featured in magazines and on television.**

In addition, this time of year is when we transition away from those stick-to-your-bones winter foods and start moving to lighter options for enjoying our wild food.

Although I grill year-round, many start to fire up the grill, which is a great way to enjoy your fish and game.

Soups are a great option, and don't forget that maple rules the day every spring here in New England.

recipes that I created years ago is a fish cake that I have prepared for family, friends, and clients. It has also been featured in magazines and on television. Over the years I have experimented with a variety of fin fish and shellfish, and the recipe translates well. From trout, salmon, walleye and steelhead to striped bass, haddock, hake, halibut and lobster – this recipe won't disappoint.

Side dishes that can support these fishcakes

range from coleslaw and fries, mashed potatoes, to grilled veggies, sweet pea puree, coconut rice and fruit salsa, or they can be served over a pesto and topped with something like a horseradish crema.

Another way these can be enjoyed is as an appetizer by making them smaller. You can then make a side sauce like a zucchini relish tartar, lemon aioli, or dill crema where you

infuse garlic and dill into plain yogurt to create a sauce that you can dollop over the cakes when you serve them.

These cakes can also be versatile enough to enjoy as a fish burger where you top it with the suggested sauces, lettuce and tomato.

Dust off that fishing pole, take a kid or your other half fishing, and show them how natural resources can be enjoyed full circle by bringing your fish to the table and a delicious way.

### WildCheff Fish Cakes with Lemon Horseradish Crema

#### Ingredients

1 lb. of fresh white fish filets  
2 T of lemon olive oil  
1 large egg, lightly beaten.  
1/4 C of thinly sliced scallions  
2 T of Cain's mayonnaise  
1 T of fresh lemon juice  
1 T of Dijon mustard  
1/4 C of 4C gluten free breadcrumbs

1 Tsp. of WildCheff Herb Lover's Blend seasoning (thyme, chives, parsley, turmeric, etc.)

2-3 Tsp. of WildCheff Lemon Lover's seasoning (onion and garlic, lemon and orange peel, etc.)

2 Tsp. of WildCheff Cajun Blend seasoning  
Salt and pepper, to taste

#### Directions

The first step is to poach your fish.

that it binds the mixture.

Form the mixture into cakes and coat the exterior of the cakes with breadcrumbs. Place them on a sheet pan over wax paper and refrigerate for 10-15 minutes.

To prepare, heat a cast iron skillet over medium-to-medium high heat and a small amount of olive oil and one or two tablespoons of butter. Gently place fish cakes into the hot pan and



In a large skillet, add enough water and white wine (Riesling) so it will cover fish, when it is added to pan. Bring liquid to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. (You do not want the liquid to boil with fish in it)

Gently add fish to pan and poach for approximately 5 minutes, turning once. (you will see the fish change color).

Remove fish from skillet with slotted spoon or fish spatula and place filets into a large strainer so any excess liquid drains off in the sink. Let the fish cool to room temp.

Break up your poached fish with your hands into a large mixing bowl. Add other ingredients and gently fold with a spatula until everything is evenly mixed. Make sure that you have enough breadcrumbs so

cook for 5 minutes, or until golden brown on bottom. Carefully flip cakes and cook for another 3-5 minutes, or until golden brown on both sides.

Serve with lemon horseradish sauce and coleslaw.

### Lemon Horseradish Crema

1 small container of plain yogurt  
1-2 T of prepared horseradish  
1 T of lemon juice  
1 Tsp. of fresh chopped parsley  
Combine together.

*WildCheff - Denny Corriveau is Award-Winning Native American Game Chef. He is a Wild Game Evangelist and a nationally recognized trendsetter and pioneer for preparing wild game.*



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# Fly Away

These are desperate times. At this writing, the impending spring season is trying to shake off old man winter—although the grip of the cold season is, for the moment, unrelenting. The days are longer, and the tell-tale trickling of water under the frozen snowbanks tells us that once again, the streams and brooks will run unimpeded by ice and very soon, the lakes will throw open their sashes to the cobalt-blue sky of spring.

And I have done nothing.

While I haven't exactly given up on ice fishing, I gave away my ice auger to the Penobscot County Conservation Association years ago to help with their kids' fishing program, and all my best intentions to get another one have been preempted by other priorities. Frankly, I've gotten to an age where my idea of an engrossing winter activity increasingly includes a roaring fire and something to take the edge off at the end of a long day. You would think that would leave plenty of time for tying flies.

Years back, as chronicled in this space, I regaled you with the stories of my early attempts at fly-tying. My success was limited to imitating hapless bugs that had come to grief on someone's windshield. When I took the Penobscot Fly Fishers fly-tying classes one winter, though, my trespass on the art was converted to a journeyman's deftness. I learned to tie dry flies, streamers, nymphs, poppers and emergers; and as one who traded in

callouses for neckties long ago, having an activity that gave me reason to use my dexterity was exhilarating and just the distraction from the surging mountains of daily paperwork I needed.

There's something about sitting in a quiet place, tying one Royal Coachman after another, making them progressively smaller until you really need a magnifying glass to tie them, and the thread is as fragile as gossamer. Tie a few of those, and you can walk through a sportsman's show with a certain swagger that will earn you a few nods of respect.

I've had occasion to gift a few flies to my fishing acquaintances from time to time. It's hard to describe the charge I get when they regale me with the stories of their success, like the fishing guide I gave some Angels of Death to and he showed me pictures of a thirty-inch rainbow trout he caught somewhere in Montana on one of them, or the four-pound brown trout the brother of a friend of mine caught with one of the Czech nymphs I tied a few years ago. Of course, nothing can fully and accurately describe the thrill I get when I connect with a fish on a fly I've tied myself. While I still have quite

a supply, the dwindling snowpack reminds me in a whisper: you were going to start tying again after Christmas. Everything is still packed away in the closet of my home office.

Maine-originated streamer flies are a particular favorite of mine to tie—not only are they wicked effective (I'm looking at you, Grey Ghost Tandem)

**There's something about sitting in a quiet place, tying one Royal Coachman after another, making them progressively smaller until you really need a magnifying glass to tie them, and the thread is as fragile as gossamer.**

but alluringly attractive (there's just something about the muted tones of a Nine-Seven that just keep you looking at it). Those types of streamers—even though I don't do a ton of trolling for early-season land-locked salmon—not only are absolute killers, but they also make lovely presentation gifts.

One year we hosted a national Secretary of State conference in Maine, and my responsibility was to come up with a suitable gift for the secretaries visiting from around the country. Historically, you try to find something that promotes your state and its enterprises. We had a budget for it (privately raised, no taxpayer dollars involved), but I thought that rather than



## Marsh Island Chronicles

by Matthew Dunlap,  
Old Town, ME

spend money on maple syrup or blueberry pancake mix that I would tie a bunch of streamer flies and get inexpensive pre-matted frames for them.

The staff was skeptical.

Until, of course, they saw them. I tied a bunch

of that.

My plan is to soldier bravely on, and fish with what I have. When I run out, I will be rueful and consumed with regret for not tying vigorously all winter.

And then I will go to the Old Town Trading

Post and buy some flies. After all, these are desperate times.

*Matt Dunlap is a sportsman from Old Town and is a periodic co-host on Maine Outdoors, heard statewide every Sunday night at 7:00 pm on WVOM 103.9 FM, WVQM 101.3 FM, and WRKD 95.1 FM in Rockland.*

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## Maine Outdoor Adventure

by Rich Yvon,  
Bradford, ME

As I walked into The Collins Center for the Arts on this Maine winter day, the main attraction was a docu-film called "A Journey to Remember". I began to check out the welcoming tables, displays, and videos. I quickly started feeling of how sobering and heartfelt this day was to become. Meeting the Gold Star families, and learning of their fallen heroes,

based, 501(c)3 service organization and have a very special way of paying tribute to the fallen service members from Maine who have died in the line of duty since September 11, 2001. They ensure that Maine Heroes are NOT Forgotten, by carrying their memorial stones on tribute hikes and carrying their stories for a lifetime.

Their mission is simply

**Their mission is simply this... to honor our state's post-9/11 fallen service members and through education, fellowship, and physical activity-provide assurance to their families that these sacrifices will never be forgotten.**

seemed very surreal to me. It was shocking how many families and volunteers had shown up, carrying so much loss from losing their loved ones. This film is a story about our Maine's fallen heroes, their families, the on-going, perpetual mission to remember, and honor their memory.

The Summit Project is a Living Memorial supported by an ever-growing family of thousands of dedicated and patriotic individuals who all have personally invested in the mission. They are a nationally recognized, Maine-

ply this... to honor our state's post-9/11 fallen service members and through education, fellowship, and physical activity-provide assurance to their families that these sacrifices will never be forgotten. To help get their message out to the masses, TSP has put together a docu-film, called "A Journey to Remember". This film is currently being premiered in venues across Maine, and tells the story of three Gold Star families. These Maine families among others, have experienced the loss of a loved one, while in the service of

our country.

The stones are labeled with the branch, soldier's initial birth year and year of passing for each fallen hero. The volunteer hikers learn from the families through time about their loved ones who served and died. After the hike the volunteer hiker writes a letter to the family describing their experience and feelings during and after the hike. This exchange of physical and emotional experience plays an important role for both family and volun-

is excellent for all of us, because it gives awareness and appreciation for the sacrifice not only of our brave, but from the families who have supported these brave men and women. Our freedom is not free. If it was not for our military, we would surely not be living in the greatest country in the world as we know

driving forward The Summit Projects mission.)

- Volunteer work in the forefront

- Behind the scenes, and of course, Hikers!

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it today. Thank you for their service, and ultimate sacrifice. God Bless our heroes, and God Bless the United States of America.

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- (The Summit Project is a 100% unpaid, all-volunteer run program. Donations are used to support their signature events and operational costs while

ter: <https://thesummitproject.org/tsp-hiker-and-volunteer-registry/>

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*Rich is a full time Registered Master Maine Master Guide. He owns and operates Twin Maple Outdoors guide service and sporting lodge located in Bradford, Maine.*



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# The Wonder of It All

Evening fades around me. The Kennebec absorbs the sunset's pinks and purples, slate-grays; it darkens by slow gradients. I drop anchor rather than paddle back up to the top of the run. The current, slow and heavy here, creases around the canoe's bow. There's a rock up there atop a life jacket to keep weight disbursed. On anchor and alone I am careful, precise with my movements; it's June but I don't want to go swimming. Every once in a while, a trout rises ahead of me. My hands smell like the trout and salmon I've caught and released back to the river. My fly rod is rigged and ready but I just watch and wait. I'm not staying late for the fish.

A few minutes later, the night's first stars show above the tree line. An owl calls out from the dark forest. Another fish rises—I hear the slight sip of it, dead ahead. I take a few breaths and close my eyes and listen to the river and the emerging night sounds. A bat flutters past. Mosquitoes land on my exposed forearms. I slap at them; I can feel but no longer see the blood, my own, smeared on my palm and in my arm hairs. I lean and wash my hand in the river, cup a handful and wash my forearm clean. I wonder what life would have been

like before indoor plumbing, without the privilege of a warm shower. The first few inches of river are warm but I know the water down below would be much different, would shock the breath from me. I remember hearing on the radio that all the water on Earth has been here, a constant, despite its changing forms, and that no one is sure exactly where it originated.

I don't believe in God

my head at my own stupidity. I look up and feel small. I look up and feel the quick pulse of my life.

Another fish rises. I can't help myself. I lift my rod and cast into the darkness. I feel loose line resting on my toes. I can't see my dry fly but my eyes have adjusted to the night. I hear the take and lift my fly rod and connect. In the net the trout looks stunned and I try to imagine its view, picking off mayflies

**It occurs to me that I have no pliers on board. In an instant I grab the size 14 dry fly hook and yank it out of my finger. There's a moment of nothingness and then stinging pain, droplets of blood, my blood, making strange abstract art on the bottom of my canoe.**

but it's hard not to wonder as the Milky Way starts to show off above me, another kind of river, a winding current of light, and soon this river—the Kennebec—mirrors all those pinpricks and swirls of light.

It takes a while to find the comet, but once I do its obviousness makes me shiver. Some remnant from the early universe, billions of years old. The comet is a dull smear, the tail extending behind for who-knows-how-far. I try to take a picture with my crummy cell phone. The capture is just a black box, no comet. I put my phone back in my dry bag, shake

against the backdrop of the universe. What a place to eat dinner. I pull the fly gently from the corner of its mouth and the trout slides back through the river's dark skin. I wash my hands again, then click on my headlamp to find the fly and dry it off in case another fish rises. I grope around and find my leader and lean forward in my seat. My foot captures loose line and the leader slides faster and then the fly's barb slips through the

soft skin of my left pointer finger. Slides in all the way, to the curve of the hook.

It occurs to me that I have no pliers on board. In an instant I grab the size 14 dry fly hook and yank it out of my finger. There's a moment of nothingness and then stinging pain, droplets of blood, my blood, mak-

ing strange abstract art on the bottom of my canoe. I find the fly and wash it and store it in the cork at the base of my fly rod. I reel up the loose line and stow the rod against the gunwale. Submerged in the river, my finger feels better, the pain dissipates. I switch my light off.

When I look up, the comet is right where I'd left it. It rushes by at 90,000 miles per hour but appears static, motionless. I pull anchor. I drag the canoe

up the steep embankment and secure it in the bed of my truck.

On the ride home, I pull off into a farmer's cornfield to get one more look at the comet. There it is, just above the tree line, as if following me.

Farther down the road, just after a sweeping bend, a doe leaps from the ditch and stops in my lane. I slow the truck with plenty of room between us. Her eyes shine in the reflection of headlights, our nights intersecting briefly. Then she leaps into the woods on the other side of the road. I accelerate, going a mere 45 miles per hour through the dark of night on my way home from the river.



*Ryan Brod is a Maine Guide, adjunct professor, and writer who learned to fly fish with his Dad on the Kennebec River. You can find his first book, the essay collection Tributaries: Essays from Woods and Waters, online or at your local bookstore.*



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Portland, ME

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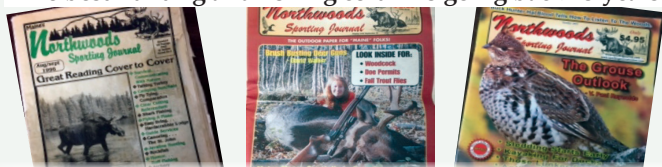
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## THE BACK SHELF

From the files of the Northwoods Sporting Journal  
The best hunting and fishing columns going back 25 years!



By their very nature backshelf articles, resurrected from our archives, may contain information or facts that have been altered or changed by the passage of time.

By Mark McCollough

The Indians called it mousomodai, meaning literally ‘Moose bottle.’ You may refer to it as the bell. In 1909 Ernest Thompson Seton in *Lives of Game Mammals* wrote, “A marked peculiarity in the Moose, male and female, is the bell on the throat. I have examined many of these in the newly killed specimens, and in the living animal: and could find nothing in them but a long dewlap of skin with appropriate blood vessels. Sometimes it is round; sometimes flat, lying along the way; sometimes flat the cross way of the animal’s throat; sometimes simple; sometimes forked; sometimes hanging from the jaw, and sometimes from a long blade-like dewlap, but always without discernable scent glands. I have squeezed and worked them with my hands on the living Moose, and have been un-

able to discover any smell or signs of exudation; or indeed, any specialization that would afford a hint of their purpose. No one yet has given any satisfactory explanation of this curious dangler.”

This fall, lucky Maine moose hunters will have a golden opportunity to fondle this curious dangler; although preferably not one from a living moose. The dewlap or bell is an unorthodox feature of the moose anatomy, yet no one seems to understand just what it is for.

In the 1800s, naturalists postulated this flap of hair and skin swaying under a moose’s chin either spread scent, kept a moose’s throat warm while lying in snow, or was just there for good looks. Some believed it once had a function that was lost long ago, but it is still hangs there as a vestigial organ, much the same as our appendix.

More recent theories abound. Female moose may assess a bull’s virility by the size of his pendulous bell. A bigger bell is allegedly better. Another theory is that during the rut, a bull rubs the cow’s flanks with his chin; a behavior called chinning. While engaged in this form of affection some

record belongs to a female moose. Ordinarily, a good-sized bell is 8 to 10 inches long; 14 inches would be exceptional even for a bull. But in 1897, a Manitoba Indian brought a cow moose to a taxidermist shop in Winnipeg with a bell that was a whopping 38 inches long. Does your bell hang

“Tim” Timmermann, was the first to delve into the science of dewlaps and wrote an entire master’s thesis on the subject. He carefully dissected dewlaps and found them heavily vascularized with blood vessels and full of sebaceous (sweat) glands, but no scent glands. Since then

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believe the dewlap transfers the bull’s musky scent to the female. Perhaps the highly vascularized moose bell is there to cool the moose during the hot summer months. Yet another speculation is that the size and shape of the dewlap and antlers is an indicator of dominance at the moose single’s bar.

Most of these theories don’t explain why cows also have a dewlap. In fact, the longest dewlap on

low, does it wobble to and fro...? At the insistence of the hunter, the taxidermist mounted the incomparable bell on a bull moose’s head.

Dewlaps come and dewlaps go. They are present on bulls and cows in utero. They grow as both sexes mature, and frequently sport a “tail,” which has a propensity to freeze and drop off from frost-bite during the second to fourth winter of a moose’s life. For unknown reasons, woodland moose lose the tails on their dewlaps more frequently than their northern taiga brethren. Cow moose retain their tails more than bulls. Moose bells reach peak size when a bull is in his prime (4 to 6 years). With age the part of the dewlap closest to the neck broadens while the pendulous length shortens. They allegedly shrink with old age. Seton wrote of old dewlaps, “...it no longer answers any useful purchase.” If you don’t use it, you lose it.

In 1979, Lakehead University wildlife student,

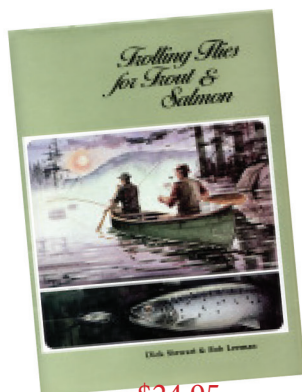
a handful of scientists have pondered the mysteries of the bell, dissected dewlaps to unravel their riddles, and observed moose using their pendulous protuberances. Two competing hypotheses have emerged. First, bull moose lather their bells with slobber and urine to impress females during the rut. This is somewhat like hunters basting themselves with Old Spice before returning to their wives from hunting camp. Cow moose roll in a bull’s wallow and rub against his bell, which may stimulate ovulation. Theory number two is that the bell evolved as a secondary sex characteristic that conveys information on sex and age to other moose, especially during the winter when the antlers are not present.

Bull caribou and elk sport manes possibly for the same purpose.

To test the first hypothesis, scientists studied wallowing behavior of moose in Denali National

(Dewlaps cont. pg 65)

At long last, revived from the archives of the once-authoritative books on New England streamer flies and how to use them: ***Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon***, by Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman.



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*Trolling Flies for Trout and Salmon* was first published in 1982 and again in 1992. There were 350 signed Limited Edition hardcover copies and several thousand hard and soft cover copies sold out with the two printings. Many fly tyers view this book as an up-to-date version of new and available streamer fly patterns and crave to have it in their library. Used copies have been selling on AmazonBooks.com for the last few years with a price tag up to \$300.00 for each copy! There are 125 pages with 32 color plates of more than 90 classic streamer flies and tying recipes from a Winnepesaukee Smelt to a Barney Google and a Rangeley Centennial. Leeman and Stewart also share with readers many tips and tactics for trolling streamer flies for trout and salmon throughout New England.

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# Lake Trout Study: Good News!

*By Tim Obrey*

It's exciting when we get a chance to really move the needle to improve our understanding of the fisheries in the Region. The development of our fish weir in 2008 and associated radio telemetry/tagging studies gave us an opportunity to gather post-spawning survival, homing, movement, relative abundance, and frequency of spawning information on our wild brook trout and salmon in places like Socatean Stream and the Roach River. It has been an incredibly useful tool.

In 2008, when we liberalized the lake trout regulations on Moosehead Lake, we had no idea how long it would take to see a change in the population. We weren't even sure if it would work. But within three years we had successfully removed many of the surplus fish and we witnessed a vast improvement in all of our coldwater gamefish species. The creel survey data collected pre and post purge has given us better insights into the abundance of lake trout and their impacts on the forage base.

The discovery of the shore-spawning brook trout in 2017 led to some important studies and conservation measures that have helped to protect these behemoth trout that are roaming Maine's largest lake. Smelts are the primary source of food for our lake trout and salmon, and it has become abundantly clear that lake trout drive this bus. Time after time, lake trout have demonstrated the ability to greatly reduce the forage base when they are over-abundant.

A man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a dark blue and white striped shirt and a dark cap, is kneeling on a snowy surface. He is holding a large, golden-brown walleye fish with both hands. The fish has its mouth open, showing its teeth. The background is a clear blue sky and a flat, snowy landscape.

Our goal is not to eliminate lake trout. No, far from it. They are native to Moosehead Lake, and we want the best fishery we can produce. Sometimes that necessitates thinning the herd to maintain good growth for all our coldwater game species. It would be most beneficial if we

tance from the Natural Resource Education Center at Moosehead (NREC), we designed and purchased special trapnets that can fish in deeper water and are not attached to the shoreline. Two of these nets are tied off on either end of a large lead net that resembles an eight-foot-tall

**We weren't even sure if it would work. But within three years we had successfully removed many of the surplus fish and we witnessed a vast improvement in all of our coldwater gamefish species.**

could estimate the population of lake trout in the lake from time to time. Estimating population size is possible in smaller waters using mark and recapture techniques with trapnets, but it's a whole different ballgame in a 75,000-acre lake with a deep-dwelling species like lake trout. This past fall we embarked on a new pilot study on lake trout that has the potential to be another landmark study for our lake.

With financial assis-

tennis net.. This arrangement is set adjacent to a lake trout spawning shoal in six to eight feet of water. We made a test run on Sebec Lake in the fall of 2023 with some good success. This past fall we took our nets out to a known lake trout spawning shoal on Moosehead Lake. This was a small shoal, and the substrate was smaller rocks which was very good for netting and for lake trout spawning. We caught 201 mature lake trout in just 16

days of netting. It was impressive with fish up to 31 inches. We implanted PIT (Passive Integrated Transmitter) tags, small internal tags coded with individual numbers, into these lake trout. We can read the tag numbers in live or dead fish with a handheld tag reader. We hope to see some of these fish on the ice this coming

and hire staff for this study. That will give us the ability to sample three different shoals in the fall of 2025 and vastly increase the sample size of marked fish in the lake. We hope to see enough tagged fish during the following winter creel survey to estimate the population of mature lake trout in the lake. Understanding population density will help us evaluate exploitation and carrying capacity of the lake trout population which is so important to the successful management of all our gamefish species in the lake.

*Fisheries Supervisor  
Tim Obrey implants a PIT  
tag into the cheek of a ma-  
ture lake trout on Mooseh-  
ead Lake.*

*Seasonal assistant Kent Raymond and Fisheries Supervisor Tim Obrey release a nice lake trout back into Moosehead Lake.*

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## Experts

(Cont. from pg 48)

not want a competing hen around her nesting site. All of this, of course, is conjecture on my part but I think the explanation makes sense.

And you should know that, over the years, when yelping or purring or clucking do not work, that cutting call had managed to put a tag on the legs of more than a few long beards.

In the woods, early on, just after daylight, I will begin calling softly,

mostly because there could be a tom nearby. If I get no response, I up the volume. But I make it a point to stay put because, as any veteran turkey hunter will attest, sometimes as wary old gobbler or a tom that is well aware that a dominant gobbler has taken up residence in the area, will come in without making a sound. This is why I always make every attempt to get comfortable in my location and to do everything that I can to stay motionless.

The final point I wish to make is that gobblers going into the third spring of their lives become difficult

to kill. And there are no hard and fast rules when it comes to older birds. Here is a great example. Before 2021, I had shot a bunch of gobblers that weighed in over 20 pounds. But I never killed a bird in the 21-pound range. One morning, in Pawlet, I was nestled up against a rocky outcropping when I heard several toms, out about 150 yards, gobbling on top of each other and closing in. Okay, here goes. They came out into the small field, four of them and I could plainly make out two jake birds. I had a hen decoy out and they stopped

and stood around like a bunch of unsure teenagers maybe 30 yards away. I have no problem with killing a jake bird but my rule is to hold off on shooting one until **May 15**. I was enjoying the show until I could see that, for some reason (again, my guess is that a bad-ass, dominant tom was somewhere in the area), they turned and began to wonder off. That's when I could see that, one of those toms, sported a good, long beard. I simply did not see that beard, could not see that beard, earlier. Anyway, I raised the shotgun, fired and the

bird hit the field, flopping.

And, get this: That tom, weighed in at a local sporting goods shop, was the biggest bird checked in that May. He weighed just over 22 pounds, my biggest gobbler ever.

Like I said, you never know what is going to happen in the spring turkey woods. Just don't let anyone tell you that there are any hard and fast rules when it comes to spring gobblers.



*Dennis Jensen is a freelance writer who lives in Castleton, Vermont.*



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## Dewlaps

(Cont. from pg 62)

Park. Bulls make wallows, pee in them, and roll in the testosterone-laden perfume. Female moose frequented and rolled in wallows made by rutting bulls. Rutting cows and bulls touch noses and rubbed rumps far more frequently than other regions of the body, including the bell. Chinning was a relatively rare behavior. Hypothesis one was rejected. The bell did not seem to play a unique role in dispersing the pungent stench of a rutting bull.

To test the hypothesis that the size and shape of the bell communicates social status and sex, researchers observed moose and classified their bells according to 8 different "Timmermann bell classes." (All wildlife graduate students dream of becoming this famous.) They recorded the size and shape of dewlaps of bulls and cows during

antagonistic encounters, especially during the rut. Small-antlered bulls had long, skinny dewlaps with tails. Large-antlered bulls had large, pendulous bells with no tails. However, bell size and shape had no bearing on the outcomes of spats between bulls or cows. Although the shape of the bell may be a way for moose to gauge each other's age (tail or no tail on the bell), it seems unlikely that nature would select for a characteristic that was susceptible to frostbite. Therefore, the jury remains out on hypothesis number two. Perhaps some aspiring wildlife biologist will rise to fame and unlock the mystery of the dangling dewlap.



*Mark McCollough has been on many moose hunts with friends from Hampden, Maine. The tail of his dewlap froze and fell off years ago. He can be reached at ellmcc25@yahoo.com*

## Best Shot!



**Peter Blood, Hal Blood's cousin, enjoying the Northwoods Sporting Journal at his Florida condo,**

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(See pg 47)



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## News

(Cont. from pg 32)

Birth rates are low, and many calves do not survive their first winter.

“Research has shown that lower moose densities support relatively few winter ticks that do not impact moose populations,” said Fortin. “Reducing moose density decreases the number of available hosts which in turn decreases the number of winter ticks on the landscape.”

ber. This is expected to result in a harvest of about 86 moose, or about 10 percent of the moose population in WMU-E.

“This permit recommendation represents a continued attempt to address winter tick impacts on moose in WMU-E,” added Fortin. “Given the poor health of the moose population in that area and a clearly identified cause, we need to take action to address this issue. Without intervention to reduce the

including lead moose biologist Nick Fortin and Research Manager Dr. Katherine Gieder, brought incredible scientific expertise to this recommendation,” said Interim Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Andrea Shortsleeve. “The proposal our board vetted and approved was informed by years of field research and sophisticated statistical analyses that have been featured in peer reviewed publications alongside results from sister efforts in Maine and New Hampshire.”

The 2025 Moose Harvest Recommendation and information about the moose study are available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s website. From the Home page, click on Hunt and then Moose.

Comments may be provided until March 31 by emailing [ANR.FWPPublicComment@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.FWPPublicComment@vermont.gov).

### New Hampshire Hikers Rescued

At approximately 6:42 p.m. on Thursday, February 20, 2025 the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department received a call for two hikers in waist deep snow needing assistance. The hikers called for help while making a 7-mile loop on Mount Moosilauke and were on the Snapper Trail. Without snowshoes or headlamps they were having trouble navigating the trail and their cell phones had low batteries. During the initial call with a Conservation Officer, the hikers’ cell phone batteries died and all contact was lost.

Conservation Officers responded to Mount Moosilauke and began a rescue mission for the

hikers. At approximately 7:45 p.m. another 911 call was received. The hikers located a battery charger in their pack and were able to charge a cell phone and a light. They had also made it to a more packed out hiking trail and were trying to self-rescue.

Conservation Officers located the pair near the Ravine Lodge at 8:38 p.m. The hikers were identified as Adrian Colon, 17, and Andrew Lucier, 18, both of Auburn, Massachusetts. The pair started their hike at 1:00 p.m. and had warm gear for winter hiking but failed to bring snowshoes or headlamps which would have prevented the rescue call.

New Hampshire Fish and Game would like to remind hikers to prepare themselves before venturing out into the wilderness, including packing the ten essential items: map, compass, warm clothing, extra food and water, headlamp, fire starter, first aid kit, whistle, rain/wind jackets and pants, and a knife. Snow, ice, and winter temperatures require additional gear for your outings. For more information, please visit [www.hikeSafe.com](http://www.hikeSafe.com)

### Massachusetts Woman Dies In Snowmobile Crash

A 53-year-old Massachusetts woman was killed in a snowmobile crash in Piscataquis County Feb 28.

At approximately 1:30 p.m. Stefanie Cappello, age 53 of Southborough, MA, was traveling northbound on snowmobile trail ITS85/86 with a group of nine snowmobiles, heading towards Millinocket. In an area of the trail that turned to the left, Cappello was unable to navigate the

turn and went off the right side of the trail, striking a tree after she was ejected from the snowmobile. Cappello was riding eighth in the line of nine snowmobiles.

Cappello was declared deceased at the scene by Northern Light CA Dean Ambulance of Greenville. The initial crash investigation by the Maine Warden Service indicates operator inexperience as a factor in the crash. The crash remains under investigation.

The Maine Warden Service was assisted by the Maine Forest Service and Greenville Fire and Rescue.

### Mass Fish Stocking Soon

Get ready, anglers—trout stocking season is just around the corner! This spring, MassWildlife will stock hundreds of thousands of beautiful brook, brown, rainbow, and tiger trout into 458 lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams in 264 Massachusetts cities and towns. Stocking in set to begin the second week of March in the south-east; other regions of the state will begin as soon as weather conditions allow. Visit [Mass.gov/trout](http://Mass.gov/trout) to get daily stocking updates and find a fishing spot near you.

MassWildlife raises trout that are both fun to catch and delicious to eat at its five hatcheries in Sandwich, Palmer, Belchertown, Sunderland, and Montague. Whether you’re a seasoned angler or new to the sport, now is the perfect time to grab your gear and license, find a stocked waterbody near you, and experience the thrill of reeling in a fresh catch.

This year’s fish are (News cont. pg 67)



The department would issue 80 either-sex moose hunting permits and 100 antlerless moose permits in WMU-E for the moose seasons this Octo-

ber. This is expected to result in a harvest of about 86 moose, or about 10 percent of the moose population in WMU-E.

“Department staff,

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8 year old Mackenzie Vieira wanted me to send you a picture of a brook trout she pulled through the ice a few weeks ago on a pond in Maine. It was just under 20". She lives in North Yarmouth. Her parents are Matt and Amanda Vieira.



Parker Day of Parsonfield caught this handsome rainbow while ice fishing his favorite pond. The lunker hit a night crawler! The fish was 24 inches long and weighed almost 5 lbs.

## News

(Cont. from pg 66)

bigger and better than ever. While the quantity of stocked trout (measured in total pounds) has remained about the same for the last decade, MassWildlife has been steadily producing larger trout by adjusting hatchery growing techniques. Just ten years ago, less than 60% of stocked trout were over 12 inches—now, over 80% measure over a foot!

Don't forget your 2025 freshwater fishing license—buy online at [MassFishHunt](https://www.mass.gov/licenses) or by visiting a [license vendor location](#).



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# To Become a Writer

By Dennis Jensen

Time marches on or so they say, but March, oh March, just seems to drag on like a gut-hooked shark 200 feet down.

Okay, so maybe that wasn't the best illustration one could make, but let's get serious: they pay me by the word, not for any lame attempt at brilliance. Still, I try to wax eloquent from time to time.

I read somewhere long ago that, for some people, writing came to them quite easily. Then there are those who want to be writers of substance but, in the end, they simply do not have the stuff. I fall somewhere in the middle of all that but, to be honest, I had to work like hell to be the writer that I am today.

When I was a freshman at a junior college, I was determined to succeed in class despite my educational past. Two years later, I was admitted into a really good college and, as far as I know, I was the first in my family's history to ever graduate from college.

No parent ever asked me if I did my homework;

they didn't even care if I failed and dropped out of high school. (Of six kids, only two of us graduated high school, a sad statistic.) As a consequence, I graduated in the bottom fifth of my senior class, probably even lower than that.

Funny thing, though. I apparently had some born-

to Vietnam).

"The good news, however, is that you scored high enough to train as a helicopter pilot." (I was shocked, actually. Think about it. My guess is it is a hell of a lot harder to fly a helicopter than to become a second lieutenant.) The captain went on to tell

any guidance for success at home, the lack of any real role models, I had something going for me. How that happened, I have no idea.

I WOULD BECOME A WRITER! Imagine that. Do you think that my high school classmates would be surprised with the evo-

lution of that class-clown, Dennis? Well, at my 10-year high school reunion, after they learned that I went on to become a writer and the night editor at a 60,000-circulation daily newspaper, my classmates presented me with a prize that they thought was appropriate: A large rear-view mirror, that said, "Hey take a good look at what you have become."

Anyway, the whole point of this column is to say that we can never really know about the potential anyone might have for intellectual growth. I think I was just one of the lucky ones: I got the chance to go

to college, despite my poor grades and thanks to the GI Bill and I fell in love with journalism in college. As far as writing goes, I have taught several courses at the college in my home town, in Castleton, and have been asked, a number of times, how one can become a better writer. And my answer is always the same: Write, write, write and write some more. Read as much as you can, especially those writers, like Twain and Hemingway who have the genius we wish we all could have, to write both simply and yet with such awesome power. Pick up George Orwell's short piece, I believe it is called "On Writing." For that matter, read all of Orwell's stuff.

Finally, don't give up on your dreams of becoming a good writer. It is also a good idea, if you have not been successful in getting your stuff published, to find a writing mentor.

Write on!

*Dennis Jensen is a freelance writer from Vermont.*

**No parent ever asked me if I did my homework; they didn't even care if I failed and dropped out of high school. (Of six kids, only two of us graduated high school, a sad statistic.)**

in-the-brain intelligence because, after being drafted into the Army in 1966 and after I finished basic training and airborne training and a series of tests the army gives everyone, a captain called me into his office with what he considered good news and bad news. First the bad news: "Private Jensen, our tests reveal that you did not score high enough for OCS (Officer Candidate School)."

Yeah, I'm thinking, like I want to be an officer. All I wanted was to get the two-years done and to survive (I knew I was headed

me that there would be a 48-week training period followed by three years of required service. He was talking four more years of service.

Did you know that, according to data provided by the Army, about 1,000 helicopters were shot down during the Vietnam War? At that time, I had 18 months left in service and that would mean one tour, one year, in Nam.

"Thank you, sir," I told him. "But no thank you."

The point here is that, clearly, despite the poverty of my youth, the lack of

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So get crackin'...



## Happy Easter





# Improving Wildlife Habitat

Would you like to improve your property for wildlife? Whether you own two acres or a township, there are several things you can do that will benefit wildlife on your little piece of the world. I have found

of wildlife habitat practices through the Natural Resource Conservation Service. Another helpful source written especially for small landowners is the Habitats bulletin #7137 that is published by the

tax program for landowners that want to keep their property producing trees for the long-term.

I have been implementing wildlife friendly practices on my woodlot over the last 15 years. I undertake a few conservation practices each year. The cumulative result of these improvements has been a definite increase in wildlife using the woodlot. Some



## The Maine Woods

**Matt LaRoche,  
Shirley, ME**

vested, took a sharp stick and made a shallow hole in the ground, then I stuck an acorn in the hole and closed the hole by kicking some soil over the acorn with my boot. Some of those oak trees are now at shoulder height. However, the deer seem to like browsing on

working in my woodlot is one of my favorite activities. It is very rewarding to improve my little piece of Earth and make it better for the next generation of people and wildlife. Did I mention that I also get our yearly supply of firewood while removing dead

**I look at my time on this planet we call home and our proprietorship of property as more of a caretaker role than of a way to extract resources. Planting a tree or creating a bedding area is a long-term investment that can benefit both wildlife and people.**

of the conservation practices I have accomplished include: planting trees and shrubs, establishing a one-acre wildlife opening, thinning for forest health and construction of brush piles.

The most intensive management practice I have undertaken has been the removal of beech trees with beech bark disease, control of beech sprouts and the planting of nut producing trees to take the place of the dying beech. Red oak has been the primary tree planted with a few chestnut, mountain ash, elderberry and choke-cherry bushes.

When I first started planting oak trees—I simply walked through an area that I had recently har-

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I have found that

and dying beech and other hardwood trees?

A quote from Alexander Smith, 1863, "A man does not plant a tree for himself; he plants it for posterity."



*Matt LaRoche is a retired Superintendent of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway. Owner of Maine Woods Guide Service and an avid outdoorsman. He can be reached at 207-695-2877 or at: [matt.la-roche2877@gmail.com](mailto:matt.la-roche2877@gmail.com) See: [www.mainewoodsguide.com](http://www.mainewoodsguide.com)*



Photo courtesy of North Carolina Wildlife Commission.

that undertaking wildlife habitat improvement projects to be fun to do and very rewarding as a landowner.

I look at my time on this planet we call home and our proprietorship of property as more of a caretaker role than of a way to extract resources. Planting a tree or creating a bedding area is a long-term investment that can benefit both wildlife and people.

If you would like to learn how you can make your backyard or woodlot more wildlife friendly, a good place to start is at your county Soil and Water Conservation District. If you own ten acres or more there are cost share programs available to assist with the implementation

University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

The Maine Forest Service (MFS) will provide a complimentary site visit to your woodlot, help connect you with a consulting forester and other helpful resources to assist you in managing your woodlot. The MFS forester can also advise you on the tree growth tax law, which is a very beneficial property



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# Early to Warm Hot-Spots

By Babe Winkleman

Ever drive down the road in late winter/early spring and notice how one side of the road had a lot less snow or ice than the other? If you are an early season angler, this should be a big clue to where to begin the search for many of your favorite species shortly after ice-out. The road side with the less cold ground cover will invariably be on the north side of the road; the side that is absorbing the warming

rays of the spring sun for the longest periods of time during the day. This can often be a major clue to where to begin the search for species such as bass, pike muskies and panfish (be aware some states have seasons for various species). We know the north side of the lake will receive the most sunlight, but what are some other factors that will cause warmer water that will draw the baitfish,

stimulate insect hatches, and draw the fish we seek? Areas that are partially sheltered from the colder water of the main lake also are favorite spots to check. Long extensive channel systems, shorter channels that are T or L-shaped and harbors, are my favorite places to check. And make sure you go as far back into them as possible, as long as a little depth holds up, Enough depth can be as little as 2-3 feet. Another

plus to these spots is that they will usually have a softer bottom. Soft bottoms are dark, and dark absorbs heat. It also stimulates early season bug hatches, which attracts fish. While the logic through the years has been don't waste your time fishing mornings in early spring, there are exceptions. My basic rule of thumb to go out early or not, is the night temperatures prior to the morning.

If the night lows don't get below the water temperatures where I plan to fish, a good morning bite is possible. If the night gets too cold, then a little time is needed of the shallows to warm up. The colder it gets at night the later the bite will be. Sometimes the best action won't be until 1-2 pm after a cold night. The fish should be packed in these areas. All you've got to do is catch them.





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