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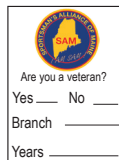
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Ice Fishing Hot Spots!

Editor's note: This ice fishing report was prepared by state fisheries biologists and technicians listed below who oversee fisheries management throughout the state. The Sporting Journal is indebted to these dedicated men and women who oversee and manage Maine's fabled and valuable sport fishery. Tight lines and check the ice before you venture forth!

Sebago A



Nick Kalejs

Where to Fish: As we transition to the ice fishing season, many anglers start by targeting waters

that typically freeze early. This often means smaller ponds, many of which have trout stocking programs. Otter Ponds #2 and #4 (Standish), Chaffin Pond (Windham), and Knight Pond (South Berwick) all receive multiple stockings of brook trout in the fall, with the bonus that all of these ponds are open to harvest in December. Once January rolls around and larger waters typically have better ice, many of our lakes offer the chance to catch multiple trout species in one trip. Try Bryant Pond (Woodstock) for brook trout, splake, and landlocked salmon or Upper and Middle Range Ponds (Poland) for brook trout, rainbow trout, brown trout, and lake trout.

- Nick Kalejs

Belgrades B



- Jason Seiders

Small Brook Trout

Ponds: These smaller trout ponds are well-stocked with brook trout, and can offer a great fishing opportunity whether you're on the ice or casting from shore. Several of these ponds are stocked with brook trout of multiple sizes; with fish ranging from 8-18+ inches.

- Ross Pond (Bristol)
- Tolman Pond (Rockport)
- Levenseller Pond (Searsmont)
- Pinkham Pond (Alna)
- Charles Pond (Georgetown)
- Knight Pond (Northport) – *Brand new stocking*

MAINE REGION MAP



program!

- Bartlett Pond (Livermore)
- Dutton Pond (Knox)

Messalonskee Stream (Oakland, Waterville): If the weather isn't cooperating and we're still lacking ice, central Maine anglers should give Messalonskee Stream a try. It's open to year-round fishing, gets well stocked, and we see occasional larger fish drop down from Messalonskee Lake. You're

likely to catch various sizes of brook trout, splake, and brown trout. We've heard of some really nice brown trout caught in Messo Stream the last few years!

January Fishing Report Upper and Lower

Narrows (Winthrop): If you're looking for a chance to catch some nice salmon and trout and not travel far from Augusta, you should try Upper and Lower Narrows (Hotspots cont. pg 6)

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Cover Photo:
Nice lake trout caught and released by Jesse Cummings.

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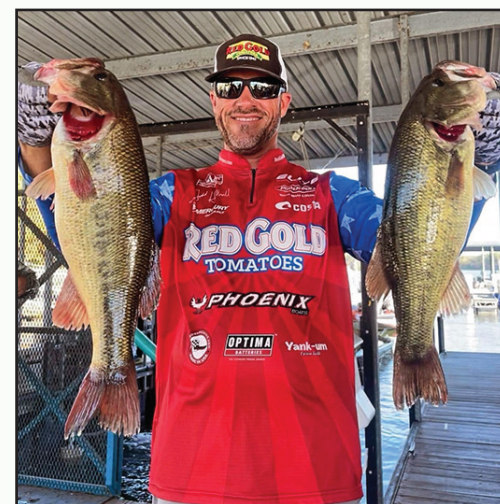
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The views and opinions expressed by our monthly columnists do not necessarily reflect the views of this publication.



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The Best Week of the Year

Another week at deer camp. In Maine, and anywhere in the country where there are deer hunters, there are the fabled deer camps. A poet, whose name escapes me, likened these remote, sometimes tar paper shacks, to “palaces in the popple.”

A few weeks ago for the 55th time, a deer hunting

What they all have in common is deer hunting, outhouses, lots of food and drink, card games and a fellowship that enriches itself with each passing deer season.

crew calling themselves “The Skulkers of Seboeis,” made their annual pilgrimage to deer camp. These camps are each unique, with their own primitive architecture and history. What they all have in common is deer hunting, outhouses, lots of food and drink, card games and a fellowship that enriches itself with each passing deer season. A few have women members, but deer camps, despite this era of gender enlightenment, are still peopled only by bearded bipeds.

The Skulkers of Seboeis deer camp was born one autumn in the late 1960s. Most founders of this eclectic mix of characters have either moved on to the Ultimate Hunting Camp or are too old to make the trip or tromp through the deer woods. Again this year, I was the

sole founder at deer camp, feeling like the last of the Mohicans, thankfully able to make it to camp and take part in the annual hunt.

Despite a week of serious hunting by our crew, the game pole remained deerless by week’s end. Oh, we saw deer and plenty of sign, scrapes and rubs, but

unfettered access: no “No Hunting” signs, few other hunters and a chance to encounter moose, coyotes and other wild critters.

If you hunt, as I have, the same wilderness haunt over a period that exceeds a half a century, you witness the cycles that typify Maine woodlands, most of which



A few weeks ago for the 55th time, a deer hunting crew calling themselves “The Skulkers of Seboeis,” made their annual pilgrimage to deer camp. These camps are each unique, with their own primitive architecture and history.

not a shot was taken. The combination of extremely dry, noisy conditions, and a full week of unrelenting high winds, often gusting to 25 mph, made for difficult stalking conditions. Typically, we saw the south ends of deer escaping into the north wind, or spotted them crossing the logging road repeatedly in front of our pickups as we headed back to camp at dusk.

No matter. A week with wonderful friends and relatives at our deer camp is always the highlight of the year for most of us, deer or no deer. Where we hunt is Big Woods with

are dictated by logging practices. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the area we hunt was loaded with deer. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the loggers came and just about lev-

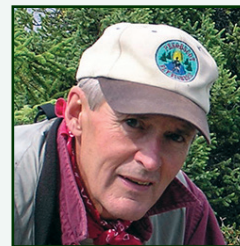
eled the hardwood ridges with expansive clear cuts. Most appalling were massive cuts of old-growth cedar that wound up in rotting piles in logging yards, when the cedar market and prices suddenly went south. With no forage base or wintering area left, the deer numbers diminished markedly. Today, a quarter of a century later, the deer are making a discernible comeback in this country. This is no doubt attributable to milder winters and outright protection; or at least restrictive, responsible logging practices on large tracts of woodlands owned and managed by the Maine Bureau of Public Lands (BPL). (The BPL tracts are adjacent to larger tracts of privately owned woodlands and were acquired about a decade ago).

What does the future hold for the deer populations in the lands where we hunt?

It is hard to say. Where we hunt, the cutting cycle is obviously swinging into high gear again. In one year’s time, our area has seen renewed cuts in the re-

Outdoors In Maine

by V. Paul Reynolds,
Ellsworth, ME



growth of what were clear cuts of the early 1970s, as well as a new network of major logging roads, where the tree stands and boot prints of the Skulkers of Seboeis once appeared.

The beat goes on.

An afterthought: A national survey of American deer-hunting camps revealed that the average life span of a deer camp is about 20 years, or one generation. The Skulkers of Seboeis, celebrating 55 years of existence, are welcoming third generation members! May this group continue to beat the odds, and keep the Maine deer-hunting legacy alive for decades 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, Outdoor Books.

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Catherine Gordon

Hotspots

(Cont. from pg 3)

rows. In addition to being well-stocked with brook trout, you have a chance to catch some beautiful lake trout and landlocked salmon. We surveyed the salmon population here this fall and they look great with several fish over 20 inches and 4+ pounds! If you're looking for panfish, the white perch are huge and gorgeous here.

Wassookeag Lake (Dexter): Wassookeag Lake continues to grow really nice landlocked salmon, and it has a robust population of wild lake trout. There are good numbers of salmon between 17-20 inches, and the occasional 20+ incher. It's always possible to catch a big lake trout here as well as the occasional cusk. Our staff will be conducting a winter survey on Wassookeag this winter, so you'll likely see us out there. We are a bit concerned with the number of black crappie that we've encountered on Wassookeag, and the potential negative impacts this invasive species could have on the salmon and trout fishery. Several that we've collected had stomachs full of smelt, which may be causing additional competition for important

forage for salmon and lake trout. If you happen to fish Wassookeag, please feel free to keep any black crappie that you catch. We're trying to collect a robust sample of these fish to better understand their age, growth, and food habits. If you're willing to part with those fish, we'll take them to our lab for further analysis.

Some quick tips to make a successful ice fishing trip:

If you're fishing for brook trout, stay shallow and use small bait!

Try to fish low-light times (early morning or late afternoon).

Dress in layers and be prepared for changing conditions.

- Jason Seiders
Grand Lake C



Jake Scoville

January

I know January has not been ideal for ice anglers in the Downeast region for the past few seasons. But we are going to be positive and have good vibes going into the new

year. Once the calendar flips to 2025, let's cross our fingers that there will be fishable ice throughout the region and state.

Where to Fish: If you are itching to catch lake trout through the ice this January (I know I am!), choosing a lake in the interior part of the Downeast Region is a safer bet for the early part of January. Although access can be tricky, West Musquash Lake in Talmadge has been producing reasonable catch rates and fat lake trout for anglers who make the trip. The lake's salmon population is thriving, so setting some salmon traps would be advisable.

Over in Hancock County, recent trapnetting efforts have confirmed that the lake trout population at Hopkins Pond in Clifton is thriving. The relatively small water has a healthy population of lakies, averaging 18 to 25 inches. Respectable-sized fish that will be around for anglers to catch. Also, don't forget about setting a trap for brook trout in Hopkins Pond! Most trout caught in the winter are 12-15 inches.

Fishing tip: If targeting lake trout, don't be afraid to move around to find the fish. If you have any sonar (flasher or even live scope), bouncing around to different depths and locations can be effective if the lakies are not

actively moving as much as we'd like, and you can tell right away if fish are "on the screen."

-Jake Scoville

Rangeley D



Dylan Whitaker

Wilson Pond in Wilton and Webb Lake in Weld are local favorites, both waters are open to ice fishing January 1st – April 30th. Wilson Pond is stocked annually with brook trout and salmon and supports a wild lake trout population. Webb Lake is stocked with brook trout, salmon, and brown trout.

Fisheries biologists are currently studying the brook trout populations in both lakes using Floy tags. These small fluorescent tags are inserted behind the dorsal fin, each tag has a unique identification number that allows biologists to track individual fish through angler reports. If you catch a tagged fish, we encourage you to take a photo of the tag ID# and report your catch online. Each tag provides a web address for easy reporting. Please note that Floy tags are not GPS-enabled or transmitters, so the data collected relies entirely on public participation. All

information is confidential and used solely to support fish population management, which helps enhance the fishing experience for everyone.

If Wilson and Webb aren't near you there are plenty of other great ice fishing opportunities in the region. Try Hancock Pond in Embden, it supports healthy populations of salmon, lake trout, and brook trout. Access to the pond is easy from the state boat launch off the Embden Pond Rd. The road to the boat launch is gated during the winter and mud season but can be traveled by foot or snowmobile.

-Dylan Whitaker
Moosehead E



Stephen Seeback

Where to fish: The past few years we have seen a slow start to the season on our large hard-water fisheries that open on January 1st. Not due to the lack of fish, but the lack of ice! Last year was the first time in my 24 years of conducting winter creel census on Moosehead Lake that I did not venture north of the back side of Mt. Kineo due to bad ice conditions. It was also the first time during my tenure the snowmobile trail that transverses the ice from the Rockwood parking lot over to Mt. Kineo, then to the Birches Resort, so to divert snowmobile traffic north of the inlet of the Moose River in Rockwood, was not marked due to poor ice. The ice conditions seen (Hotspots cont. pg 14)

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Ice Fishing Preparation

Traveling northbound along I-95, somewhere above Mattamiscontis Township, a large silhouette appeared on the shoulder. The rounded form, protruding from a low snow bank, seemed strikingly out of place. The coffee suddenly turned in my stomach. In a wave of panic, I tapped my brakes.

getting the most out of each fishing trip has become a top priority. A successful trip begins with preparation.

Grub

Good food, cooked hot, fresh, and shared in the company of friends and family can be the most memorable part of any

venison steaks, burgers, and sausages for ice fishing. A favorite block of cheese, like sharp cheddar, smoked Gouda, or Gruyere is essential. Sometimes, I bring eggs on the ice for breakfast or lunch, either whole in a hard-sided cooler or pre-cracked in a container. Apples, oranges, and carrots travel well

for snacks, as do crackers and chocolate. And always pack a hearty supply of donuts to pair with coffee; we can indulge in a few after our last trap is set. Next to the sounders and split-shots in your tackle box, stash a spare steel can punch, bottle opener, and lighter. These tools can save the

day. Don't forget a thermos of hot apple cider, the stove and propane cylinders, and your cast iron skillet.

Gear

When traps are quickly gathered up at the end of the day, numb hands, frozen spools, and waning daylight can leave gear disorganized. You didn't bother tying on a new hook after the last flag of the afternoon was a gut-hooked fish. Another trap somehow acquired several overhand knots in the waxed main line, and a third trap suffered a shredded leader from a king-sized pickerel. All were slid into the



Maine Tails

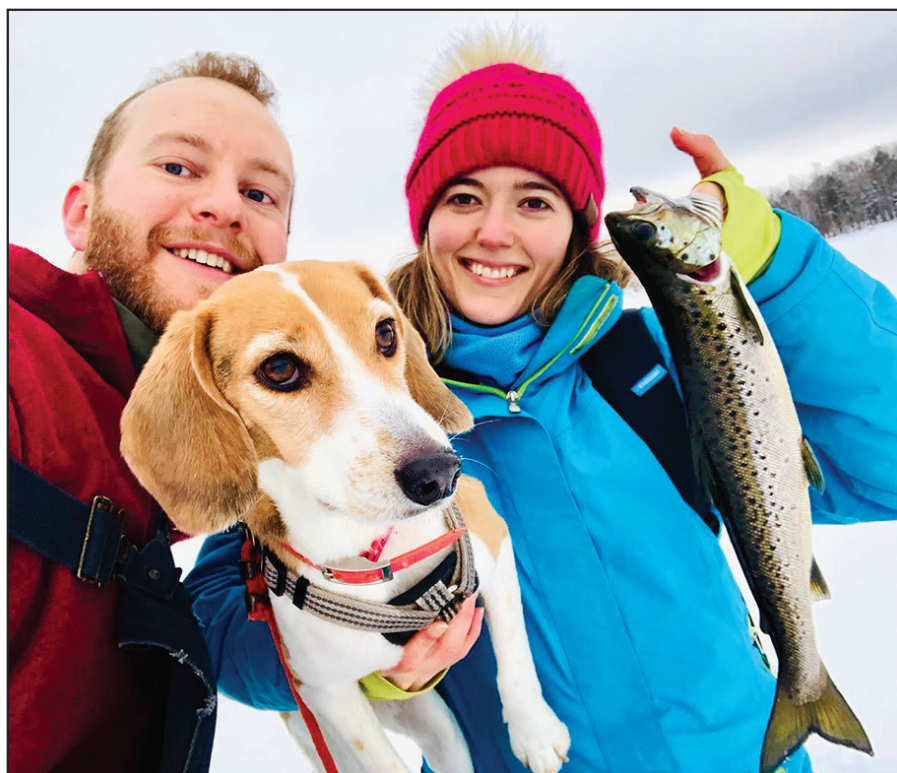
By Jonah Paris,
Scarborough, ME

pack basket and loaded into the truck. Give your gear attention before the next outing. An angler can be more diligent at their workbench, sprawled out on the floor, or seated at the kitchen table than fidgeting between flags with frozen fingers. Time at the lake is valuable.

Melt off any ice and examine the main lines for fraying or knots, then rewrap spools tightly and evenly. When targeting

Claw hooks of yesteryear clipped to a shiny brass snap swivel have probably accounted for more landed fish in Maine than anything else. However, there is more efficient and stealthier technology out there. For trout, salmon, and togue, Owner Mosquito and Gamakatsu Baitholder hooks in sizes 6, 8, and 10 are excellent choices. Match hook size to bait size and target species. From panfish to togue, Seaguar Red

Good food, cooked hot, fresh, and shared in the company of friends and family can be the most memorable part of any outdoor adventure. We remember “who brought what” more readily than “who caught what.”



A successful day on the ice begins with preparation.
(Photo courtesy of Jonah Paris.)

Encountering overturned cars on remote stretches of icy highway is a wintertime reality in the North Country. Instead, a large moose, interrupted from a road salt snack, turned and lifted its head.

The remainder of the drive to the lake, fortunately, was uneventful and the interstate moose proved to be a good omen for the day. The bait bucket remained upright, the auger started up, and flags flew. By noon, both Ashley and I landed our limit of beautiful salmon, and released several others. With poor ice conditions shortening the season in recent years,

outdoor adventure. We remember “who brought what” more readily than “who caught what.” A quick session in the kitchen the night before an ice fishing trip is a wise investment in both time and enjoyment. A sweet onion or two is a staple, as guaranteed in my pack basket as the skimmer and fillet knife. Religiously, I slice up onions, mushrooms, jalapeños, and bell peppers into a container. I also bring along a can of potatoes. And of course, one can't properly sauté veggies without butter, so I pack a stick.

A successful deer season will yield plenty of

gamefish, I begin every trip with fresh leaders and re-tied hooks. This is especially important when using shy gear, 6 to 10 lb. test fluorocarbon. Leaders chafed against the sides of an ice hole or stressed with thrashing fish are weakened. Similarly, a hastily crimped split-shot will kink a leader. Hooks must be sticky sharp. Regarding terminal tackle, I attempt to control all possible factors so that I can remain confident in my gear. If I do lose a fish, that is fine - so long as it's not due to a pulled knot or a dull hook. And even so, cussing and fishing are activities that have been paired together for as long as humans have been pursuing finned quarry.

Hooks and leaders are a matter of personal preference. The snelled Eagle

Label fluorocarbon has been hard to beat for leader material. Prior to hooking baits, always give fluoro leaders a firm stretch to remove memory and test knots.

Even after extensive preparation on the angler's end, we can't forget that the fish still have to do their part; that exciting uncertainty is often the very reason we go fishing. Be safe, don't forget onions and butter, and bring the dog along. We'll see you out there!



A four-season outdoorsman, Jonah lives in Ellsworth, ME with his wife, Ashley, and beagle, Aurora. Jonah can be reached at jonaheparis@gmail.com

Editorial

Excess Deer: The Solution

Put simply, there are just too many deer per square mile on the island of Mt. Desert. The deer have become a nuisance. Too many deer has led to a high incidence of car-deer crashes, over browsing of flower beds and vegetable gardens, as well as a spike in Lyme disease from deer ticks.

Recently, the Southwest Harbor select board met to decide what to do.

A number of years ago, I attended what can best be described as an upscale wedding in a fashionable, affluent Connecticut suburb. At the reception dinner, I got seated between two well-coiffured ladies who had no idea that I was a hard-core Maine deer hunter. Somehow the discussion got around to their state's problem with an excess of white-tailed deer.

"I just don't know what we can do," one lady exclaimed. "They are so beautiful but they are eating all of our flowers and shrubs."

"Yes, and they carry ticks that are infected with Lyme Disease, a problem that is getting worse around here," the other lady said.

Each of them recounted that they knew of friends or neighbors who had contracted Lyme Disease. I mostly listened. These women then allowed that there was a solution: some sort of a scientifically-controlled contraceptive inoculation of Connecticut's deer herd by

wildlife biologists.

I jumped into the fray. "That can be awfully impractical, expensive and unreliable I have heard," I offered. "Why not simply reduce your deer numbers by having a hunt?" I queried.

"What?" they exclaimed in unison. "Kill them?" Their facial expressions told the story. Raised eyebrows, big eyes and chins skyward. Suddenly, I was the proverbial skunk at the lawn party.

The conversation went downhill from there. Logic would not penetrate or persuade, and I was persona non grata at that table for the remainder of the dinner.

Hopefully, the Southwest Harbor municipal leadership has more common sense than the suburban housewives whose ire I raised at that Connecticut wedding. Back in Maine, according to the news reports, the island select board took no action on its deer problem. It voted to "continue exploring the options."

Mt. Desert Island is not the first Maine island to confront deer over populations. Monhegan Island in 1998 hired a professional sharpshooter to reduce its deer herd at considerable expense. There, today, we are told, Lyme Disease is practically unheard of.

A while back the town of Islesboro voted to hold a firearms deer hunt, reportedly the first

in its history. Thanks to an excess of deer (60 per square mile) island residents at that time saw a drastic spike in ticks that carry Lyme disease. The goal was to reduce the deer density on the island from 60 per square mile to 10 per square mile.

What the Connecticut housewives and other ill-informed folks and anti-hunting rusticators failed to grasp was the fact that recreational hunting of deer is a recognized and effective wildlife management population-control tool: it is THE American conservation model. Predation, by humans as well as four-legged predators, is part of the natural order of things. Hunting deer, or any wild animal, is an integral component of effective, modern wildlife management.

Interestingly, deer hunting has not been allowed on the Mt. Desert island since the 1930s! If the Southwest Harbor leaders really want to begin addressing the deer issue, step one would be a phased in hunting season, at the very least by qualified and vetted bow hunters. This has been done successfully in other parts of Maine. Conversations with Maine state wildlife biologists and the Maine Bowhunter's Association (MBA) would be a good starting point.

- VPR



Letters



To the Editor:

After reading V. Paul's recent story about his group spending 55 years at their hunting camp, I couldn't resist sharing a similar story. Our experience began in 1969, when several friends at Houlton High School became old enough to acquire hunting and driver's licenses. Many worked in family businesses or in county potato fields providing resources to obtain their own vehicles. We all grew up in hunting families with many owning camps in remote areas of northern Maine, so, having our own transportation made them accessible to us.

It was a different time

when hunting was more popular, and guns were not seen as a threat. We frequently hunted before school and proudly displayed our firearms in the back windows of our pickup trucks and other vehicles in the school parking lot, only to be ready to hunt again after the school day ended. Weekends found us together spending time hunting from "Camp."

The tradition of spending time at hunting



Front Row, L to R: Rick Goodwin (guest), Dave Gordon, Ron Reardon, John Randall, Brian Stewart, Joe Skehan, Mac Dow, Dave Longstaff, Al Cowperthwaite, Dave Harbison
Back Row: John Skehan, Kent Good, Jodi Lowe (guest)

camp has remained an important part of our relationship for over five decades.

A few decades ago, hunting moved to the secondary

purpose with just getting together taking a higher priority and morphed into visiting the "Hobbs Center of Performing Arts."

The camp we visited in Mattawamkeag for over 50 years was built about 1905 by David Gordon's grandfather, Ellsworth Hobbs. About a dozen years ago, that camp was overtaken by local rodents and other

varmints, so we abandoned that facility, taking annual hunting trips to camps in Haynesville and Southern Aroostook. We also

have annual fishing trips in the spring and frequently spend time in the Maine woods together, including a canoe trip down the Allagash in 2021.

Like V. Paul, his family and friends, we also have enjoyed a long relationship at "Camp."

**Al Cowperthwaite
Houlton**

Editor's note: *Al wrote articles for the journal for about 25 years before retiring. He retired in 2021 after serving as the executive director of North Maine Woods for 40 years.*

The 19 Camp

Deer hunting, trout fishing, canoe trips, campfires, ghost stories, and camp meals were all things I never got to experience with my great-grandfather, Myron Johnson Jr, at the

a relatively remote part of Downeast Maine. Diving into his connection with the area and the camp has led to many stories and mysteries I may never solve while simultaneously helping

area nearly 20 miles away as a crow flew from their home in Machias. At this time, the lack of deer in Washington County apparently drove the hunters into seemingly obscure portions of the county. In 1929, just reaching their fabled hunting ground was an all-day adventure. The hunting must have been exceptional if they had put that much work into getting into this location. His father likely told Myron to watch a well-used deer crossing on

venison was essential for some families during this time, and even though Myron was likely filled with anxiety, he didn't waiver. Eventually, the hunting party gave up and let him keep the deer. Myron was undoubtedly stubborn, persistent, and adamant that day, qualities that also made him a formidable hunter. The crossing on

Angling, Antlers & Artifacts

By Jake Scoville,
Machiasport, ME



just a stone's throw from Johnsons Crossing, within walking distance. Myron must have had a soft spot for the area and knew he wanted one of the camps that eventually would come up for sale. For nearly 30 years, he spent countless weekends up to 19.

Unlike when he was 14, deer hunting wasn't what Myron dedicated

The 19 Camp was one of his favorite places. "19" refers to the Township where the camp was located and the name of the road on which it was accessed. Still today, it is a relatively remote part of Downeast Maine.

the rugged two-track logging road. Being patient and stubborn, manifesting a whitetail would cross, presumably for hours on end. Sure enough, a nice buck eventually appeared, allowing Myron to kill his first deer.

Apparently, as he was waiting for help, a party of older hunters came upon him and his harvest. The men tried to convince Myron that this deer had been shot by a member of the hunting party, not Myron. The party attempted to dupe and bully a young Myron into giving up his first buck. Why? Procuring

the two-track where Myron shot his first deer became known as "Johnsons Crossing" on, you guessed it, the 19 Road. This establishes Myron's relationship between the area and the camp, which Myron would acquire some 40 years later.

In the late 1960s/ early 1970s, Myron bought a small one-room camp on the banks of a small stream adjacent to the 19 Road. A small patch of alders kept it hidden from passers-by. It must be more than a coincidence or a happenstance that this camp was

himself to at camp; it was trout fishing. Every spring, Myron would fish the trout streams, often bringing home a creel of trout that would boggle the mind of the modern angler. We have pictures to prove it. Whether bushwacking into a small stream or floating a canoe down a stretch of water, Myron came to enjoy his trout fishing at the 19 Camp. His specialty was knowing when to get into a spot and what time to fish specific holes during the spring and summer.

(Camp cont. pg 15)



"The author's Great-Grandfather, Myron, posing with the days catch in front of the 19 Camp."

(Photo courtesy of Jake Scoville)

"19 Camp". In the August 2024 issue of the NWSJ, I introduced Myron, known as "Duke." The 19 Camp was one of his favorite places. "19" refers to the Township where the camp was located and the name of the road on which it was accessed. Still today, it is

explain why Myron loved the camp and region. Thus, I have a deep attachment to a place I never spent much time at.

It was November 1929 in rural Washington County. At only 14, Myron and his father (Myron Sr.) hunted deer in a secluded

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"A Hiker's Life"

By Carey Kish,
Mt. Desert Island, ME



The Maine Mountain Guide, published by the Appalachian Mountain Club, is the only comprehensive hiking guide to the mountain trails of Maine. Considered by countless hikers and backpackers to be an indispensable planning resource and an essential trail companion, the latest edition is the 12th since the book first appeared in print in 1961.

As the guide's editor, author and primary field researcher, this hiker has put in countless miles on the ground and hundreds of hours on the laptop. When you read that this latest version has seen every trail description and each statistic reviewed and updated, well, you can count on that. And when you sort through the acknowledgements, you'll know I had some great help.

Nearly 100 new trails on 30 "new" mountains

plus six new in-text maps have been added. The six full-color topographic pull-out maps have also been revised and expanded. The guide now features a bonanza of hiking from Aroostook to Acadia and Lovell to Lubec on 330 mountains and 700+ trails totaling over 1,600 trail miles. Total elevation gain? A heckuva lot.

The highest summit described is, of course, 5,267-foot Baxter Peak on. The lowest mountain is all 130 feet of Mowes Mountain in Lubec; you'll climb just 90 feet to get there, the least elevation gain. The highest elevation gain of a single mountain trail is the Hunt Trail on Katahdin, which rises 4,168 feet over its 5.4 miles from Katahdin Stream Campground to Baxter Peak.

The most spectacular trail? Hands down it's the Knife Edge, the airy

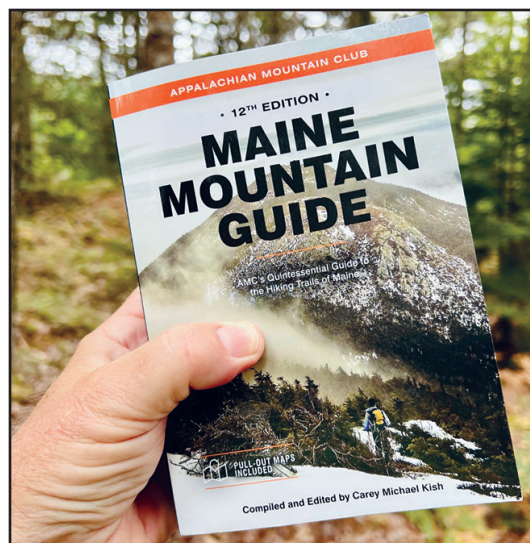
1.1-mile route along the famously narrow, serrated ridgeline ranging from Pamola to Baxter Peak. The wildest hike has to be on Little Spencer Mountain (3,064 feet) in the boondocks northeast of

an outstanding 27.3-mile circuit. The shortest trail is 0.3 miles to the granite dome of Jockey Cap in Fryeburg.

The most remote hike is Allagash Mountain in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, which requires 60 miles of travel over

downtown Augusta.

Three trails can only be accessed by water. Round Pond Mountain trailhead is a 2.5-mile paddle down the Allagash River and across Round Pond. Lobster Mountain requires paddling 3 miles on Lobster Stream and Lobster Lake to the start of the hike. Down East in Whiting, it's a 1.3-mile



Moosehead Lake, where the steep RAM Trail gains nearly 1,900 feet over 1.1 miles by way of two strenuous chimneys that must be scaled using fixed ropes.

The longest trail is the Hills to Sea Trail stretching 47.8 miles from Unity to Belfast. The rugged Grafton Loop Trail in the Mahoosuc Range includes sections of the AT along its 35.9 miles. In the 100-Mile Wilderness, the new Great Circle Trail route makes

gravel logging roads. It's worth it, though, as the 360-degree panorama from the fire tower atop the 1,770-foot peak may well be the finest in the entire state. Runner-ups to that honor also include Mount Kineo, Moxie Bald's North Peak and Number Five Mountain. The most urban hike is Howard Hill in

paddle on the Orange River to the short but sweet Estey Mountain Trail.

The trails on Maine's public and private lands—some 4,431,000 acres or 21.4% of the state's land area—exist due to the generosity of landowners and the stewardship of many dedicated organizations and hard working individuals. Please walk softly, respect nature and give thanks.



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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 maineoutdoors@aol.com, on Facebook, and on Instagram @careykish

Fly Tying Apprenticeships

I know I've mentioned this before but it's one of those topics I like to circle back to because of the importance of it. I receive a lot of questions about this each year.

Here in New Hampshire the Council on Arts has a Traditional Arts Grant. This grant supports artists in many venues.



Blacksmiths, basket makers, coopers and fly tyers to name just a few. I'm lucky to have been involved in it for almost 10 years now.

Having begun as an apprentice and now as a juried Master Artist I've been lucky to experience the entire gambit. Often questions about this type of program come up first with its benefits and a little history will be needed first.

The House of Hardy was one of the largest fly tying companies in the world for a long time. Based in England they produced many Salmon flies over the years. Operating from 1883-1996 where the majority of the flies produced were all "tied in hand". What does that mean? No vises were used to hold the hooks. Most of these tyers used minimal tools. Just some scissors and a bodkin or needle and fly tying wax.

Today most people's minds go right to the vise and how tying in hand must have been a slow process.

It may have been a little slower than using tools and a vise but most of these tyers were able to move right along tying very complex patterns.

The House of Hardy tyers all apprenticed to learn their craft. Some stayed working for Hardy for long stretches others went off to other fly shops

in surrounding areas. I've got fly tying friends from across the pond that will share the apprenticeships were very valuable.

When HMH came out with a vise designed to meet the needs of production tyers there were still tyers cranking out patterns by hand. In the US we took to vises quickly. Many fly shops were rooted in offering classes and supporting students with materials and hooks.

It wasn't unusual to walk in to a fly shop and run into a historic fly tyer. I remember going into Hunters Angling looking for a dry fly cape only to have Dick Talleur sit me down and show me how to tie the Dorato Hare's Ear. I went in looking for materials to tie an Adams. He quickly explained that they were both excellent patterns but the one he showed me was more effective in NH.

I was mentored/apprenticed and for a fly tyer it's a deep connection with the fly patterns history,

tying methods and the fly tyer. In the TAG I was an apprentice first and worked with a Master Tyer for about 80 hours covering streamer fly patterns of NH and then classic Atlantic salmon flies. Each in person meeting was 2-3 hours long.

A year after that the NH Arts Council asked me to apply to become a master artist. Which I did and was awarded that and the ability to take on an

Currently I have an apprentice who is able to come for face-to-face fly tying weekly. We developed a curriculum and went through a lengthy application process. Not everyone who applies receives the grant.

apprentice. My first apprentice happened during COVID and we did everything via ZOOM. It was challenging but because I knew my student fairly well, we could navigate most of the issues that came up from not being in the same room.

Currently I have an apprentice who is able to come for face-to-face fly tying weekly. We developed a curriculum and went through a lengthy application process. Not everyone who applies receives the grant. It's a small stipend that can assist the Master Tyer and Apprentice in purchasing materials needed for the flies being tied.

Our curriculum is on NH casting streamers and the fly tyers, dries and wets and Canadian Salmon patterns. It is a bold curriculum but doable. My current apprentice has said dozens of times how great it is to have someone to correct, offer a tip or an alternative way to overcome a tying challenge. More importantly to have that person



Slipstream

by Scott Biron,
New London, NH

across the table from you.

I have taught all my life, college, public school and been an athletic coach so instruction is in my blood. I look forward to working with my apprentice and when I instruct some of the fly tying classes at fly shops or in the HMH Bar Flies Series.

Some of the grants allow people to apprentice

that the great fly tyers are happy to share anything that might help fellow tyers. Fly tying is for life long learners. Face to face instruction beats YouTube any day of the week.

Scott Biron learned to tie flies and fly fish back in the 1960s in the North County of New Hampshire. He is a regular contributor

from boarding states others are only for NH residents. There are not many Master Tyers so when someone is interested in possibly applying I share the basics with them. Then we sit down to map out a curriculum to see if it will fit with the grant's guidelines.

It's a very unique way of keeping the tradition and its methods alive. Many tyers will not share secret patterns. It's my opinion

to the American Fly Fisher and Atlantic Salmon Federation Journals. Scott is a Master Artist in the NH Traditional Arts Program and instructs fly tying both nationally and internationally. He is on the Ambassador Pro Team for HMH Vises, The American Museum of Fly Fishing and Partridge of Redditch. Ewing has come out with a signature series line of feathers under Scott's name.

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Outdoor News - February 2025

Edited by V. Paul Reynolds

February. Not a bad month for outdoor types. If you look closely, you'll notice longer days. Cabin fever sufferers take heart. There are sportsman shows and ice fishing derbies that make a relatively short winter month go even faster. On late afternoons toward the end of February, when the sun's rays begin to hold promise and the wind stays down, it can be downright pleasant near those ice fishing holes.

If you're shopping for winter diversions beyond the bunny hunts or tying bench, don't forget to check out the many sportsman shows, ice fishing derbies and bait dealers whose ads appear this month in the Sportin' Journal.

As we said in this space last year at this time, the best part of the month is the perennial promise that helps Mainers endure the abbreviated days and prolonged nights: the coming of March, then the April

thing, and then spring!

Man Rescued from Icy Pond

The Maine Warden Service is urging everyone to check the ice before venturing out onto any frozen waterbody, as earlier today a tragedy was averted as a Game Warden and ice fisherman teamed up to rescue a man who had fallen through the ice and could not get out.

At approximately 11:00 a.m. today, Game Warden Cody York was checking Miles Pelletier of Industry, an ice fisherman who was fishing on Clearwater Pond in Industry when both the game warden and the angler could hear a man's voice yelling for help from across the pond.

Warden York scanned the shoreline where he

heard the voice, but did not see anything unusual. As a precaution, Warden York and Pelletier decided to drive to Moes Cove Road where they heard the yelling.



Upon getting to the cove, they saw that David Beaudoin, age 68 of Industry, had broken through the ice about fifteen feet from shore, and he was in over his head. The warden and angler were able to get a rope to the man, and drag him out of the water and safely to shore.

Beaudoin was extremely hypothermic and unable to move or speak after being in the water for an extended period of time. Warden York and Pelletier took Beaudoin into the warden truck to warm him up until the Farmington/Industry EMS ambulance arrived. Beaudoin was taken to Northern Light Franklin Memorial Hospital. Warden York followed up with the family later that day, and Beaudoin was doing well, as he was eating and fully alert.

Game wardens remind everyone to check the

ice before venturing onto any frozen waterbody. For more information on ice safety, please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/programs-resources/outdoor-safety/ice-safety-tips.html>

Bluefin Bonanza

The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza tuna tournament continued their mission of supporting education and community with a recent contribution to the Foundation for Maine's Community Colleges (FMCC).

At the Southern Maine Community College campus, CBBB secretary Jane Humphrey presented two checks to FMCC president John Fitzsimmons. One for

Maine Community College.

"The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza plays a critical role for students attending Maine's seven community colleges by providing 16 scholarships to students studying in occupational programs who face financial challenges. We are incredibly grateful to Bob and Jane Humphrey, along with their dedicated team of volunteers, for their unwavering commitment to organizing a top-tier tuna tournament in Maine that benefits our students and community," said Fitzsimmons. An additional check for \$5,000 was presented to FMCC to fulfill the Bluefin Bonanza's endowment, which now stands at \$50,000 and will ensure additional scholarships in perpetuity.

"These scholarships are an important part of our



Photo 1619: L. to R. John Fitzsimmons, FMCC President; Jane Humphrey, CBBB Secretary; Carrie Ridgway, FMCC Director of Development and Operations.

\$16,000 will be awarded as \$1,000 scholarships to 14 students, 2 from each of Maine's 7 community colleges enrolled in trades and marine sciences programs, and an additional \$1,000 scholarship for two students, one each from Southern Maine Community College and Central

overall mission of building stronger communities through education," said Bluefin Bonanza president Bob Humphrey. "Many of the businesses that support our annual event are in dire need of skilled trades workers. Our scholarship program provides the dual (News cont. pg 15)

FLY PATTERN OF THE MONTH

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Allies Favorite

Tied by: H. W. Folkins

Tail...Flat silver tinsel

Body...Red Floss

Rib...Flat silver tinsel

Throat...White bucktail, Next to and length of hook. Then shorter bunch of orange hackle barbules, then small bunch of black hackle barbules, both beard style.

Wing...5 to 6 strands of peacock herl over which are 2 orange saddle hackles flanked by 2 black saddle hackles.

Cheeks...Jungle cock

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

Gray Areas of Maine Hunting Laws



The Singing Maine Guide

by Randy Spencer,
Grand Lake Stream, ME

At home in Massachusetts last December, Mark Banetta, 71, took his lifetime Maine hunting license out of his wallet and admired it. He then picked up the phone and reserved a motel room close to his planned Maine hunting destination, and

65 and over and hunters who have special disability permits to hunt with a crossbow may hunt deer with a crossbow during the muzzleloader season.”

Voila! This was espe-

said to the young hunter, “I see, but...where did you get this?” The hunter replied, “I downloaded it as a PDF file from the Department’s website.” He flipped through to “New Laws” under “Archery Information” and showed Mark the

experience in Maine is emblematic of a pesky gray area that can crop up in any year with almost any regulation pertaining to hunting or fishing. In this case, the crossbow regulation changed during 2024, but there was already a

negate the ones they’re holding in their hands.

My Department source referred to these pesky “gray areas,” as a known issue within the Department. Being aware of them, wardens approach them with patience and

Full of anticipation on his way into the area he intended to hunt, he encountered a young muzzleloader hunter, who, upon seeing Mark’s crossbow said, “Excuse me sir, but did you know you’re not allowed to use that crossbow during the muzzleloader season?”

following two paragraphs:

“NEW LAW: Changes to the bowhunting license and crossbow permit occurred in 2024. A bowhunting license is now an archery license. A crossbow permit is no longer required as hunting with a bow and arrow AND crossbow are included with an archery license.

“NEW LAW: Use of crossbows in expanded archery areas during the expanded archery season is now permissible for any hunter who has an archery license and expanded archery permit(s). Crossbow use is NO longer permissible during the muzzleloader season.”

With a heart-sinking feeling, Mark blew out a long sigh. “Jees!” he finally said. “They’re different! Two law books that both have 2024 on the cover, and they’re different!”

“I know,” said the young hunter. “I don’t trust the printed one anymore. And that’s if you can even find one!”

Mark’s unpleasant

2024 law book out stating a contradictory regulation.

A Department source who’d worked 13 years in the field as a game warden told me over the phone that one of the problems is the number of hard copies of law books currently printed. Twenty years ago there were upwards of 200,000 available in town halls throughout the state. Today, there are scarcely more than 20,000, and they quickly disappear. During that period, the world swung fully into cyber space.

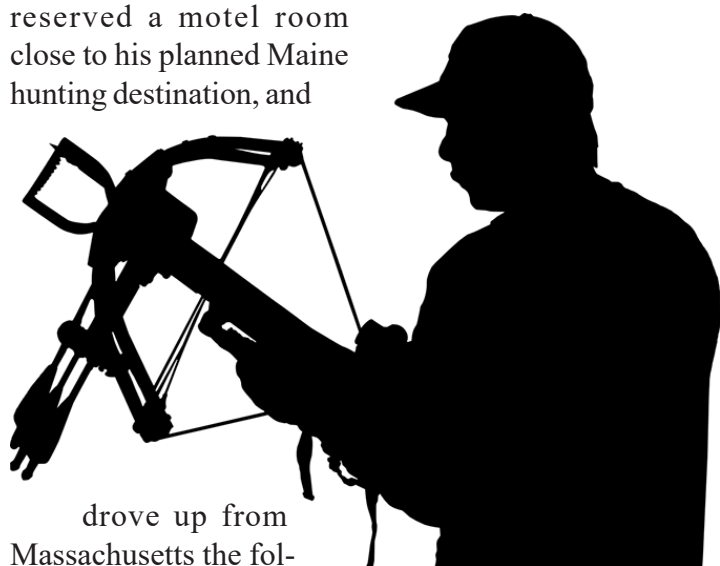
Maine has the oldest population on average of any state in the U.S. Many of our older outdoors men and women are, like Mark Banetta, not cyber savvy. They use writing pads, post-it notes and land line phones, and if they do have a cellphone, it’s of the flip variety. When they need a law book, they pick one up at the town hall. And they won’t be downloading a PDF file from a computer any time soon in order to check for New Laws that

understanding. A case like Mark’s, he said, would not be pressed or prosecuted without some other exacerbating circumstances such as deliberate and intentional breaking of the law. He did possess, after all, a Maine Hunting Laws manual with 2024 emblazoned on the cover, and in it, he’d read that licensed hunters his age could use crossbow during the muzzleloader season. He even carried it with him while hunting!

Mark’s story demonstrates that the Department may need an innovative means of alerting its older sporting population to changes in laws after those laws have already been published.



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



drove up from Massachusetts the following day. Mark, newly retired, had hunted and fished in Maine throughout his long career as a firefighter in Quincy, and now was looking forward to spending more time enjoying Maine’s woods and waters.

On a fishing trip to Moosehead the previous spring, he’d stopped into a town hall and picked up a copy of Maine Hunting Laws 2023-2024. Mark was especially interested in the regulations on crossbow, since one of his first acts as a retired person was to take the required course in crossbow safety and training. In the law book under “Crossbow Information” on page 17, Mark located the heading:

“Hunters 65 and Over and Hunters Who Have Special Disability Permits to Hunt with a Crossbow.”

Under that heading, Mark read, “Only hunters

cially valuable information for Mark as he was anxious to test his recently acquired skills. He brought the law book along with him on his trip north, and reviewed it once more the night before his first day in the Maine woods.

Full of anticipation on his way into the area he intended to hunt, he encountered a young muzzleloader hunter, who, upon seeing Mark’s crossbow said, “Excuse me sir, but did you know you’re not allowed to use that crossbow during the muzzleloader season?” Mark smiled, and pulled the law book out of his pack. He opened it to page 17, and showed it to the muzzleloader hunter.

Also smiling, the muzzleloader hunter pulled a paper-clipped printout from an inside pocket of his hunting coat. On it, Mark read, “Maine Hunting Laws 2024-2025,” and

Hotspots

(Cont. from pg 6)

the last few years should be of concern to those anglers enjoying the improvements in the fishery we have experienced the last decade on Moosehead Lake. Bad ice conditions reduce the winter use and in turn results in a lower harvest rate of lake trout during the winter. To compound these recent shortened seasons due to bad ice conditions, during the 2024 ice fishing season we estimated that anglers released 70% or 4,100 small lake trout less than 18 inches that they caught. Based on decades of creel census surveys and harvest estimates, we need anglers to harvest 3,000- 4,000 of these lake trout less than 18-inches during the ice fishing season so we can continue, at a minimum, to see stable growth rates on our landlocked salmon and brook trout and to maintain an adequate forage base (a.k.a. smelt) that will maintain this growth. Even with a 5-fish daily bag limit on lake trout under 18-inches, anglers only harvested an estimated 1,800 fish under 18-inches during the 2024 ice fishing season on Moosehead Lake. The bottom line is Moosehead Lake needs help from the "Angling Public". If anglers want

to continue to see quality landlocked salmon and those monster brook trout, then anglers need to harvest more lake trout from Moosehead Lake!

Fishing tips: The hardwater season is the best time for anglers to help



achieve this request by Regional Fisheries Biologists to harvest more lake trout from Moosehead Lake. The average winter lake trout harvest on Moosehead Lake is roughly 72% of the total annual harvest. Lake trout are most susceptible to angler harvest during the ice fishing season. The novice hardwater angler can have relatively good success at catching lake trout on Moosehead Lake. With easy public access points located around the lake at Greenville Junction, Rockwood Landing, and Lily Bay State Park anglers have secure starting points to start their hardwater journey on Moosehead Lake.

- Stephen Seebach

Penobscot F



Kevin Dunham

Maine's weather in the month of December can often wreak havoc on the psyche of ice anglers. While convention calls for dreams of a white Christmas, ice anglers wish nothing more than a full month of bone-chilling, teeth-chattering temperatures. For them, a thick layer of solid ice formed in December equates to a safe, traditional January 1 opening day of ice fishing season. Although we've had relatively mild winter weather so far this season, colder temperatures are certain to arrive soon.

There are a few smaller waters in the Penobscot Region that historically freeze over with sufficient ice early in the season, though caution is urged, and are also open to ice fishing in December. Brave anglers might want to try Wiley Pond in Patten. This 32-acre pond was stocked in November with fall-yearling brook trout averaging 13" in length as well as some retired brood stock brook trout averaging 18". Hay Lake in T6 R8 WELS got a fall stocking of brook trout as well as landlocked salmon and is a good early season destination. A couple other waters to target in December (if conditions allow) and early January are Middle Oxhead Pond in T40 MD which is also stocked with fall yearling brook trout, and the perennial Bangor-area early season favorite,

Perch (Mud) Pond in Old Town. Much like Wiley Pond, Perch Pond is also stocked with both fall yearling brook trout and some larger retired brood stock brook trout. Anxious anglers won't need to wait until January 1 as all the above-mentioned ponds are open to ice fishing in December, however, keep in mind all have a two trout bag limit to help spread the catch to as many anglers as possible. In 2023 we removed all Special Regulations on Little Round Pond in Lincoln and changed it to General Law. Little Round was formerly open to only children under 16 during the ice fishing season, but since the regulation change in 2023 the pond is now open to any licensed angler and 5 lines may be used and a 5 trout bag limit observed.

For those thinking about more traditional ice fishing starting January 1st, you should look to Deering Lake for early season salmon and brook trout fishing. Cold Stream Pond in Enfield is another good early season water with lake trout, brook trout and landlocked salmon all present. East Musquash Lake (Topsfield) and Duck Lake (T4 ND) both provide quality landlocked salmon and brook trout fishing.

- Kevin Dunham



Frank Frost

Fish River G

December weather in Northern Maine has been warm so far but enough cold, calm nights have produced some ice on smaller,

shallower waters. However, a mid-December rain storm with near 50 degree temperatures may wipe out any progress we've made on having our lakes and ponds ice over. Very few rule changes will be in effect for northern Maine this coming winter. Rule changes will be available soon in the new rulebook.

December waters to fish: Scapan Lake, Masardis etc.; splake, brook trout, landlocked salmon but this fishery is mostly splake; this is an excellent water to fish for smelt during early season Trafton Lake, Limestone; brook trout; this water was recently open to ice fishing and has both wild and stocked trout

Arnold Brook Lake, Presque Isle; brook trout; this water is popular for ice fishing with easy access Umcolcus Lake, T7R5 WELS; brook trout; this water is more remote and has both wild and stocked trout

Tips: For early season brook trout, focus on shallow (2-4 ft), rocky areas with either worms/crawlers or live fish as bait (if rules allow)

January waters to fish where there is normally safe ice by January 1st:

Portage Lake, Portage; brook trout, landlocked salmon, smelt and several species of warmwater fish

Drews Lake, Linneus; brown trout, splake and several species of warmwater fish

Cross Lake, T17R5; brook trout, salmon, smelt and several species of warmwater fish

- Frank Frost

Coastal



wiscassetsspeedway.com

News

(Cont. from pg 12)

benefit of giving students an opportunity to earn a better living and putting more qualified individuals into the local work force."

The Casco Bay Bluefin Bonanza is a 501 (c) (3) is an independent, non-profit organization committed to the purpose of raising and expending funds in support of educational scholarships to deserving individuals, giving charitable donations to those in need and building a better community. For more information, visit: www.bluefinbonanza.org or email bluefinbonanza@gmail.com

Ice Fishing Derbies

1. The Long Lake Ice Fishing Derby in the County January 25 & 26. It is Maine's largest derby that includes nine other lakes in the County. This derby boasts \$70,000 worth of cash and prizes. There is also a big social night with a live band on the Friday night before the derby officially kicks off at 12:01 a.m. on January 25th. For more information, check out the derby website at www.longlakeice-fishing-derby.com.

2. The China Lake Four Seasons Club will host another huge derby February 16th at China Lake. This is the 6th annual. According to the president of the China Lake Club, Tom Rumpf, there will be over \$10,000.00 in door prizes and over \$2,000.00 in fishing prizes. There is also a

cash prize for the lunger of the day and a special white perch category for children 15 and under. Whether you fish or not, a \$5.00 entry ticket makes you eligible for door prizes. For more derby info check out their website at: ChinaLakeIce-FishingDerby.com.

3. The Schoodic Lake Ice Fishing Derby is always a popular event and takes place as usual on President's Weekend Feb 15 and 16, which is also Maine's free fishing weekend when fishing licenses are not required. According to derby spokesman Don Richards, there will lots of prizes for a number of different categories of fish.

4. The Moosehead Lake Togue Derby takes place again this year January 31 to Feb. 2. For a number of years there has been a liberal catch limit of togue on the big lake



Catherine Gordon with a lunger pike from Pushaw Pond.
(Photo by Kevin Gordon)

in an effort to reduce the togue population, which competes with landlocked salmon for forage. Weight of the fish will determine winners. First prize for the heaviest togue is \$1500. For more info check out Moosehead Lake Annual Togue Derby or contact

(News cont. pg 19)

Camp

(Cont. from pg 9)

His fishing adventures almost led him to solve one of the world's biggest aviation mysteries inadvertently. Myron may have stumbled upon the "White Bird." The White Bird was a plane that disappeared while attempting to complete the first nonstop transatlantic flight. But that's a story I'll keep quiet for now.

Myron's early years were hectic and rugged. Trapping for a living, building ships during war-time, and manning a fire tower no doubt took a toll on his body. By the time he was in his 50s and 60s, he had slowed down. Rocking in his chair on the porch of the 19 camp was a nightly occurrence while he waited for dinner to finish. The 19 Camp has now unfortunately changed ownership, but when I find myself driving by her, I can't help

but slow down and envision Myron rocking in his chair on the porch. As for the 19 Road, it's now well established, and Johnsons' Crossing looks nothing as it did in 1929. Nevertheless, I still point it out to anyone in the truck with me as we cross it, and I always will.



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



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The Adventures of Me and Joe

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

"So, you wanna go ice fishing?" I asked Joe. We were sitting in the Five N' Diner on main street in Mooseleuk having morning coffee and couple of Helen Plaque's famous 'not-so-plain' donuts. Across the room Herbert Rumor headed in our direction, weaving between the tables while trying not to spill his coffee or drop his donut."

Joe swallowed noisily. "Know where I'd really like to go fishin'? Tumpline Pond. I got a hankerin' for one of them big brook trout in Tumpline. You git one 3-pounder, with that orange, almost red meat, an' you got some of the finest eatin' there is."

Herb Rumor arrived just as Joe finished speaking. He slumped into a chair without being invited, slopping coffee onto the table as he did so.

"Tumpline Pond? I should smile." He rubbed at the spilled coffee absently with the sleeve of his shirt. "Knowed men who'd wait all fall fer the freeze-up just fer the chance of pullin' a trout or two outa Tumpline."

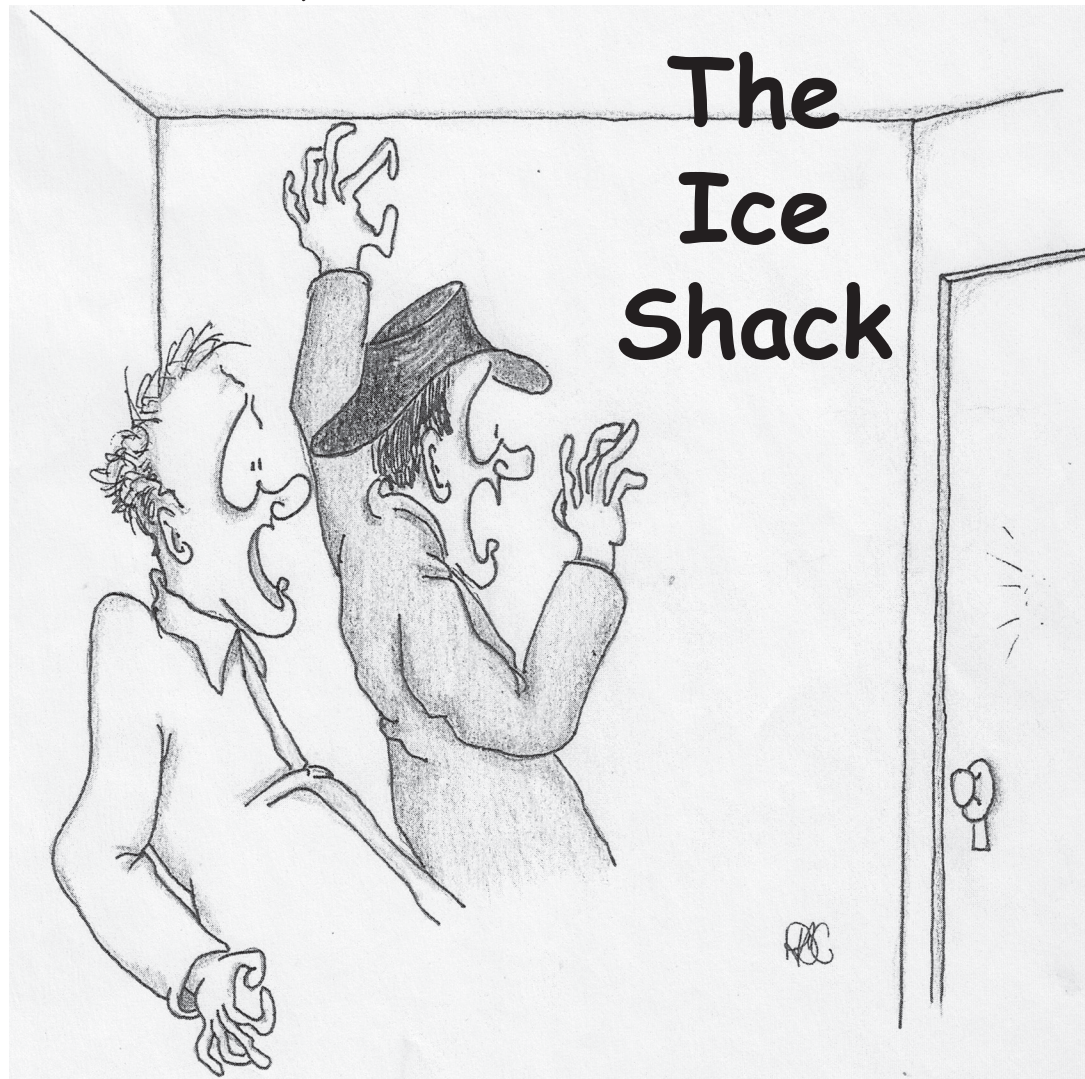
"My trouble is," Joe continued, "the longer the winter lasts and the more the northwest wind blows, the less I want to stand out on the ice and fish fer hours at a time." He looked at me. "I guess we could move our shack over from The Lake Where The Woman Drowned, but it'd mean a lot of work. It's a long haul into Tumpline."

Herb gulped coffee. "You could always use Jonas Haunt's shack," he said thoughtfully. "Don't look like he'll be usin' it again."

Joe sat upright. "I thought they hauled Jona's shack out of there."

"Nope. She's sittin' up inside the treeline near the point. They jist hauled it there after Jonas drowned. Warden Brody been keepin' an eye on it 'til somebody decides what to do with it."

Me and Joe looked at each other. Jonas Haunt kept his cozy little ice fishing shack on Tumpline Pond from when the ice formed in the early winter until the end of legal fishing time on March 31 each year. Jonas was an old friend, a semi-hermit who lived in a well-built cabin



I tried to push myself through the solid wall. My legs gave way and I began to slide down toward the floor. The keening from my throat grew louder. From the corner of my eye I could see Joe pressing himself into the corner, his hands pawing at the wall, trying to claw his way through the unyielding plywood.

a mile outside town. He made what little money he needed by trapping, weaving ash pack baskets, and crafting finely made, hand-forged hunting knives that were much in demand by locals and visitors alike. Jonas had little to do with anybody.

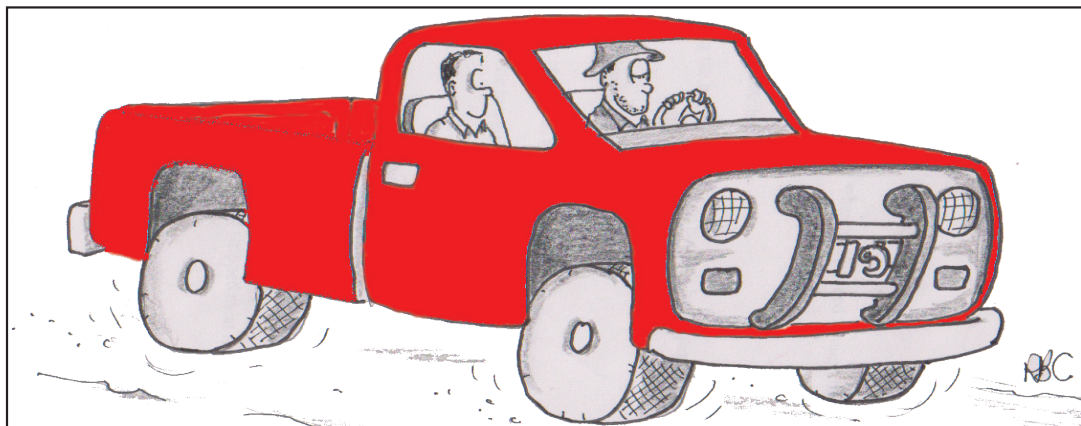
But if you were his friend, you were his friend for life and Jonas was extremely generous with the few people he counted as friends. Many were the times when we had used Jonas's shack, either with him, or by ourselves when he was off running his trapline.

Then, in the middle of the previous winter, had come the news that Jonas had drowned. Unlike many shacks, where anglers fished through holes drilled under the floor of the structure, Jonas's shack had an oblong hole three feet long by two feet wide in the floor. A corresponding hole was chain-sawed through the ice below the opening. This allowed a

single angler to drop two or even three lines through the floor and also made landing big fish easier, since there was plenty of room to dip a landing net through the opening.

The downside of such a setup, of course, was that a fisherman had to be especially careful not to stumble and fall through the opening. Jonas was known to take a nip or two on occasion and that's what everyone figured happened on that fateful day in February of last year.

By the time anyone realized that Jonas was missing, several days had passed. Warden Pinch Brody went to the shack and found the oil lamp still (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 You'll find an ample supply of Me & Joe stories to keep you checking for a long time.

Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 16)

lit inside and coals in the wood heater. Jonas's red parka still hung from a hook on the wall, and the floor was still wet from the effects of what must have been a big splash. Tellingly, a half-full pint of Absalom's Hair whiskey lay on the floor near the hole.

"They dragged the pond last spring, didn't they?" I asked.

"Yep. But they dint find hide ner hair of ol' Jonas." Herb took a big gulp of coffee, then choked and coughed, his face turning beet red. "Hot!" He croaked.

"Tumpline Pond empties into the upper Little Salt Pork River," Joe said thoughtfully. "She's a long, slow channel. A body could be washed well downstream in the spring run-offs."

"I figger he got caught up on bottom and the eels et 'im," Herb nodded sagely. Joe looked uncomfortable.

"I don't exactly feel right 'bout usin' Jonas's shack. Seems kind of sacry-lijus somehow."

"I don't think Jonas would mind."

I looked up to see the big, square form of Warden Pinch Brody standing by the table. I hadn't even heard him come in.

"Fact is, I kind of think ol' Jonas would like it... somebody usin' his shack to catch a trout or two." He looked out the front window at the few pedestrians passing on the street. "Kind of hard picturin' Jonas gone. But if you're careless out there in the woods, the wrong kinda mistake can be deadly."

"I'm surprised they didn't have some kind of

memorial service for Jonas," I said.

Brody shrugged his big shoulders. "Didn't have no fam'ly left here, jist a few distant cousins up in Nova Scotia. His sister moved to Florida a few yers back. They had a fallin' out years ago, so they wasn't close."

I looked over at Joe. He still looked troubled, so I glanced at Brody.

"You really think it'd be all right to use Jonas's ice shack?"

"Yeah, I do. Sittin' like it is, it'll just rot eventually. Somebody oughta use it and you two were as close to Jonas as anybody."

"What do you say, Joe," I said, "You want to do some trout fishing in Jona's shack? I think maybe he'd like that."

"Yeah, let's go do it." But I noted that a hint of uneasiness remained in his glance.

That same afternoon we arrived on Tumpline Pond, each carrying a pack basket loaded with fishing gear and other equipment. Jonas Haunt's shack sat on packed snow on a shelf at the edge of the woods a foot or so above the ice of the pond.

We walked around the little structure slowly. It was made of thin plywood over peeled spruce pole studs, square, about six feet on a side. A small window was centered in each of three walls, with the door set just off-center on the other. A pair of heavy skis ran along the bottom, keeping the structure up off the snow and making it easily mobile.

"Looks solid," Joe said slowly. "Well, let's see if we kin git it out onto the ice."

It took a few minutes of effort with a pry

made from dead spruce pole, but we finally broke the skis free of the frozen snow. Then we pushed and tugged it over the edge of the shoreline and out onto the pond. Wind and sun had swept the ice free of most of its snow cover and the shack pushed easily on the slick, wind-scoured surface. We dragged the shack about 50 yards offshore to where Joe knew the bottom dropped down to a 40-foot deep-hole.

I looked over at Joe as he stared at the shack. "You want to cut an oblong hole through the ice for fishing? Like Jonas had?"

Joe shook his head violently. "No! Let's jist cut a couple of reg'ler holes and push the shack over them." He reached out a tentative hand, grasped the latch of the door. It stuck for a moment, but finally came free. He pulled it open. I peered in over his shoulder.

The inside of the little building was just as Jonas left it. Fishing tackle, a small landing net, an ice skimmer, and assorted other gear hung from nails in the walls. A battered old Jiffy ice auger stood upright in one corner. Against the center of the back wall stood a small, sheet metal wood heater. Behind the heater, a square of tin was nailed to the wall as a deflector plate, its surface covered with aluminum foil to reflect the heat of the stove. Beside the door, Jonas's old red L.L. Bean hunting jacket hung from a peg and next to it, on a small shelf, stood a half full bottle of Absalom's Hair whiskey.

"Well," Joe said solemnly, "let's git at it."

It took us about an hour to get all set up. With the ice auger finally running, we cut the two holes

and set the shack over them. Then we cut holes at all four corners and tied ropes to three-foot sections of poplar poles, which we shoved down underwater and hooked across the holes under the ice. The other ends of the ropes we tied to eyebolts in the upper corners of the shack to keep the structure from moving in a high wind.

Jonas had a roll of heavy mill paper standing against one wall of the shack. We cut strips of the paper and tacked them around the outside of the shack, between the floor and the ice, to form a barrier against wind and driven snow. Later we'd bank snow against the paper for insulation. Finally, we sat inside on Jonas's little folding chairs, lines down through the hole in the floor and with the little stove cranking out heat. Outside, twilight had come, with just the hint of the dying sun showing through the trees on the western shore of the pond.

Joe sat with his jigging pole in hand, working a Swedish Pimple just off bottom. He had a solemn,

almost morose look on his face. I tried to cheer him up.

"I know it's strange being in the shack after Jonas drowned, but I like to remember the good times. I think Jonas would want us to enjoy ourselves and not get caught up in thinking about him not being around anymore."

Joe nodded slowly.

"Remember when the three of us were here and you hooked that big pickerel right under the ice just when we were going to leave?"

He grinned suddenly. "Yeah. Thought I had the granddaddy of all brook trout. I kept tellin' you to be careful with the net so's we wouldn't lose him. When that big pickerel came through the hole Jonas's mouth dropped to his chest. Then he started gigglin'. I thought he was gonna choke to death laughin'."

After that it wasn't so bad. We swapped stories about good times fishing in the shack and about Jonas and his peculiar ways. Joe had always had a hard time with death and losing (Me & Joe cont. pg 21)

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I found Marty on page _____

Gregory
Gordon
(Marty was found
on pg 70)

Entries must be
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this issue.

Outdoor Sporting Library

by Jeremiah Wood,
Ashland, ME



Growing up, Richard Nelson didn't know where his place was in life. A smart kid but a poor student, he couldn't seem to muster up the interest or desire to do well in school.

a third element – the people – that would eventually define his career and the legacy he left us through his work.

In the fall of 1964 Nelson, an anthropology

Nelson left Wainwright a changed man, with a purpose and motivation that would guide his path in the coming decades. He would study cultures and the adaptations that allowed them to survive harsh environments.

The one place he constantly gravitated to was the outdoors. There was something about nature, the animals and the land that made him come alive.

A love for the natural environment and the ability to write prolifically, and do it well, were two of Richard's strengths. But it was

student at the time, landed in Wainwright, a barren coastal village in northwest Alaska, with a directive to study the Eskimo hunters and their strategies of survival. It was a time of great cultural change in the area.

The arrival of airplanes provided a link to the outside world that

would dramatically alter the Eskimo way of life. Soon there would be snowmobiles, electricity, phones, television and junk food. But in the year Rich-

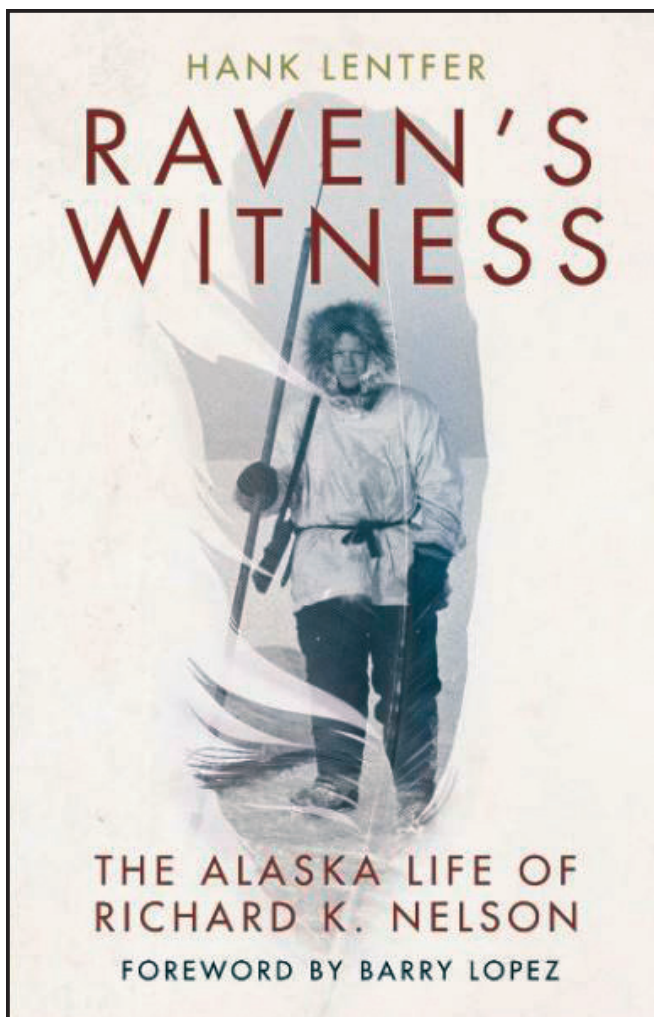
ard spent there, sled dogs were the mode of travel and hunting seals on thin ice and caribou in the tundra still dominated the culture.

Nelson left Wainwright a changed man, with a purpose and motivation that would guide his path in the coming decades. He would study cultures and the adaptations that allowed them to survive harsh environments. His next stint was with the Gwich'in hunters and trappers in the interior Alaska village of Chalkyitsik, and then with the Koyukon Indians in the Koyukuk River village of Huslia.

These experiences resulted in volumes of written documents, some University degrees, and two important books: "Hunters of the Northern Ice" and "Hunters of the Northern Forest", which documented hunting and survival techniques. A third book, "Make Prayers to the Raven" examined the unique Athabascan view of animals, spirituality and the environment.

Although they make important contributions to history and society, most anthropologists don't make much money. For years, Richard struggled to find a way to make a living doing what he loved. He often returned to writing, and after moving to the southeast Alaska village of Sitka and finding his ideal home, he poured his life's work into a new book, "The Island Within". It became a huge nationwide success, and provided the funds to continue his lifestyle, but it also burned Richard out on writing. He continued to journal daily, but vowed he would never write another (Witness cont. pg 19)

Raven's Witness



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News

(Cont. from pg 15)

Tim O'Brey at tcobrey@gmail.com.

5. The Pushaw Lake 4th Annual Ice Fishing Derby is Feb.1-2. This is sponsored by the Pushaw Lake Snowmobile Club. There are some monster Pike in this lake, which can be a thrill to catch.

6. There is also an ice fishing derby at Great Pond January 25th.

There are a number of other ice fishing derbies being held throughout out the state. To find a derby near you there is an online listing at Untamedmainer.com.

Vermont Lunker Option

Anglers have some new opportunities to chase hefty thirteen- and fourteen-inch brook and rainbow trout at four ponds in southern Vermont this winter, thanks to a pilot late season stocking program from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

"This past fall we stocked just over 1,500 trophy trout between Knapp Ponds #1 and #2 in Cavendish, and Lakes Paran and Shaftsbury in Bennington," said Fisheries Biologist Lael Will. "Our goal is to give anglers a new window from peak foliage right through the winter to go after some really nice fish in waters where winter trout fishing was not an opportunity before."

The newly stocked trophy trout, raised at the department's Bennington and Roxbury Fish Culture Stations, are part of a two-year pilot program to study whether fall stocking encourages anglers to

get out on waters where fall and winter trout fishing was previously closed or marginal. Starting this month, department fish biologists will be surveying anglers at the Knapp Ponds and Lakes Paran and Shaftsbury to learn about their experiences.



"We have had very enthusiastic feedback from anglers about our recent move to a January 1st opener for winter trout harvest," said Will. "We are excited to get out this month and hopefully hear from people taking advantage of these new trophy trout fishing opportunities."

To help anglers make the most of these opportunities, anyone interested in learning the basics of ice fishing for trout is invited to take part a workshop from the department's "Let's Go Fishing Program" at (News cont. pg 22)

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Witness

(Cont. from pg 18)

book.

Sharing the natural world with others became the highlight of Richard's later career, as he started the popular Alaska radio show "Encounters". In it he traveled to places throughout the state to document different sounds in nature and explain to listeners their significance. Through this work he became good friends with Hank Lenter, a biologist and fellow nature enthusiast who was also a gifted writer. Hank realized the value of

Richard's volumes of journals spanning decades, and urged him to write a book about his life. Richard was done writing and nearing the end of his journey as he battled a terminal illness. He gave Hank his blessing, and the result was the 2019 book, "Raven's Witness: The Alaska Life of Richard K. Nelson". It's a beautifully written biography that captures the ups and downs of a wide ranging, tumultuous journey, and the value of sharing it with others through writing.

Jeremiah can be reached at jrodwood@gmail.com

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Aroostook Woods & Water

by Mike Maynard,
Perham, ME

February! Yeah, I know; I don't like it any better than you do. January, I can sometimes get up for that. It's a beginning, right? Beginnings are always something to look forward to. But that little shot of self-deception only lasts about as long

of the year. Typically, by mid-month we realize that we really didn't mean any those things we promised ourselves, and immediately go back to being fat, lazy, and in denial.

But then, along comes February. February is the red-headed step-child of

the answer here? Do we suddenly have an epiphany and drag a treadmill into the living room (...I might have done that)? Do we also put an exercise bike on the porch, so after our morning treadmill run we can pedal existentially to Caribou and back (I'm just sayin')? Do we start to eat better in the hope of losing 20 pounds so we

approved diet anyway. Yup, it is as bad as you think it is. And Doc, you're right about the grape leaves; you can stuff them.

(Warning: Old fart moment ahead) Remember the days when you'd strap

up there all night with a bottle of something brown, preferably a single malt, and watch the stars twinkle like diamonds in the cold, brittle air. I can still do it, ...they tell me I'm just not supposed to. And jumping

Typically, by mid-month we realize that we really didn't mean any those things we promised ourselves, and immediately go back to being fat, lazy, and in denial.

as it takes to watch all 156 Twilight Zone episodes at New Year's; about three days. After that, the drudgery of another long, cold, Aroostook County winter sets in. If you did it right, all the firewood got split and stacked away before bird season rolled around. January is reserved for all the metaphorical 'come to Jesus' meetings we traditionally have with ourselves at the beginning

of the year that everybody wants to beat like a drum. February injects nothing but carbohydrates and bacon grease into our veins. You (not me) sit on the couch too long, your second bagel of the morning drooling butter down your chin. You do this every year, which begs the question: What is wrong with you?!

Sounds like a character flaw to me. What's

can once again go running off after a 200 pound buck through three feet of snow all day? In January I started the paleo diet because of my hunter/gatherer nature, and the 12 year-old in me, likes the idea of being a 21st century caveman. My doctor said, "What are you, stupid?" He wants me on some gawd-awful thing called the Mediterranean diet. I don't like stuffed grape leaves any more than the next caveman, but I looked up this medically-



Sunrise at Anticosti Island.
(Photo by V. Paul Reynolds)

on the snow shoes and head out into the great unknown, with nothing but a thermos of coffee and a couple of PB&J sandwiches for comfort? I do, and I miss them. I remember waiting until there was about four feet of snow on the roof of Bob's camp, and then we'd snow shoe in and shovel it off. Afterwards, we'd sit

off the roof down into that snow pile on the lake is right out, apparently. Doctors..., sheesh. I get their point, sort of. Now I almost break a hip just climbing the ladder to get up there.

Sadly, the shoveling chores seem to have been handed off to the kids. Oh, we still have our bottle, or two, but now we sit inside by the fire while we listen to the boys do what we used to. Same with ice fishing. When we were young men, we'd go running all over the lake chasing flags and skimming the ice out of the holes. We'd stay out on the lake in all weather, we didn't care. Now? Now we sit at the table by the big window, playing poker, and stoking the fire. When we look out the window and see a flag all we do is holler, "Flag!" and a pile of kids goes flying out the door to wrassle what they are sure will be a 10 pound salmon. If there aren't any

(Resolution cont. pg 35)

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Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 17)

friends and I was careful to avoid mention of the fact that just a year ago, Jonas had fallen through this same hole in the floor of this same shack, to drown beneath the ice of this same pond.

It was now full dark, and a stiff northwest wind blew outside, rattling snow across the ice and moaning about the eaves of the shack. I was just telling Joe about the last time I'd been in Jonas's cabin, when he held up a hand for silence. He lifted the jiggling pole cautiously with his right hand.

"Somethin's toyin' with it. I don't know jist what..." Suddenly, he gave a jerk and the end of the short jiggling pole curved down toward the hole in the floor.

Carefully, Joe gave out line. Then, when the run stopped, he cranked the small reel, gaining line grudgingly, only to lose it in the next run.

"Maybe it's a pick-erel," I said softly.

Joe snorted, then he began to chuckle.

"Maybe it is. But I don't think so, not the way it's still fightin'."

For a few minutes the play went back and forth, but finally Joe gave a flip of the rod and a 3-pound trout tumbled up through the hole and began flopping around the floor of the shack. Quickly, Joe snacked Jonas's old 'priest', the ornately carved killing stick that hung on a wall nail, and administered the last rites with a sharp rap over the trout's head.

We both sat there for a moment, admiring the myriad of colors on the big trout's flanks. Suddenly,

Joe's head snapped up.

"What was that?"

"It felt like somebody stumbled over one of the tie-down lines."

"I didn't feel anything." I looked at Joe and for just a moment, I saw the haunted look reappear in his eyes. Then it was gone.

"Prob'ly jist my imagination."

Outside, the wind rose again, and the shack creaked as the cold breeze ferreted out hidden coves in the eaves and along the walls. A thought came creeping unbidden into my mind.

Years before, we'd both had a bad experience in an ice shack much like this one. Back then it had seemed like we were being haunted by an evil Indian spirit, an absurd notion unless you'd been there yourself (see *Me & Joe: The Windigo*). After scaring ourselves silly, it had turned out that the "haunting" had been the work of an Indian acquaintance who used the idea of the evil India spirit to trick us out of a fat brook trout. I looked down at the trout of the floor of Jonas's shack. I didn't think there was any Native American trickster outside on this occasion.

Joe deftly dressed the trout and put it in the cooler on top of a bed of ice. Then we sat back down to resume fishing. I glanced at the small window in the north wall.

"Looks like it's started to snow."

Fine granules of white swirled in a mesmerizing pattern outside the Plexiglas square. The rising wind began driving it against the walls with a ticking sound. Joe cleared his throat.

"You remember that

deal with the Windigo?"

"Yeah, I was just thinking of that."

"Night jist about like this one." He laughed nervously. "Don't think it was snowin', though."

"No," I said lamely. "No, I don't think it was snowing."

"Funny how things kind of seem different in a little room out on the ice at night, miles from any hel... uh... from town."

"Yeah...it's real easy to get worked up over the smallest things."

"But, you know..." Joe stared down at the oblong hole in the floor. "You can't git away from the fact that Jonas died here...that he fell through that hole right there an' drowned. I guess that's what makes me a little edgy tonight."

Outside, something heavy slid down the north wall and landed on the ice. Both of us shot to our feet. Joe's eyes were huge in the dim light from the kerosene lamp. We listened tensely for a further sound, but the only noise was the hissing of the wind and the sandpaper brush of the snow against the walls. Suddenly, I gave a nervous laugh.

"It's the ice auger! We left the ice auger leaning against the side of the shack. That wind just tumbled it sideways and it landed on the ice."

Joe rubbed a hand down his suddenly ashen face. "Yeah..." he said slowly. "Only thing is... we left the auger leanin' against the *south* wall."

A flicker of movement caught my eye outside the north window.

"Didjouseethat?! Didjouseethat?!" Joe croaked.

"I...I think it was the snow swirling..."

"It was a face! It was a white face...all wrinkled an' pale an'...an'...soakin' wet!"

"Well...maybe it looked a little like a face, but I think..."

Joe grabbed my arm and stared into my eyes.

"It looked jist like Jonas!" he cried.

From outside came a twang, as something encountered the corner tie-down rope. I wondered why the sound hadn't seemed obvious when it happened before. Then came a brushing noise against the wall near the door. Joe still clutched my arm as, together, we backed slowly away from the door.

When the knock came, we both lifted a foot off the floor. The knock was loud and booming, echoing from the walls in the small shack three times. *Thump! Pause thump! Pause thump!*

By now both our backs were against the opposite wall of the shack. It didn't seem far enough. I could hear a faint, high-pitched keening sound and it took it a few moments for me to realize that the sound came from my own throat.

The door latch rattled, loud in the sudden stillness. It rattled again, and I remembered that the latch often stuck. Maybe, I thought hopefully, it would stay stuck. But it didn't. The metal clasp finally gave way, and the door gusted open to slam against the outside wall of the shack.

Framed in the open doorway stood a ghostly figure. To my absolute horror, I saw that it looked just like Jonas Haunt. But a Jonas vastly different from the one I remembered. The apparition was completely white. From the matted hairline and bushy

eyebrows rivulets of icy water ran down the lined cheeks and dripped from the hooked nose. Slowly, ever so slowly, a spectral hand rose to reach towards us.

I tried to push myself through the solid wall. My legs gave way and I began to slide down toward the floor. The keening from my throat grew louder. From the corner of my eye I could see Joe pressing himself into the corner, his hands pawing at the wall, trying to claw his way through the unyielding plywood.

The spectral hand paused for just a second, then swerved unerringly to the shelf beside the door. It closed firmly on the bottle of Absalom's Hair and the other hand reached over and pulled the cork from the neck. Quickly, the bottle rose to the ghost's lips and the apparition drank thirstily to the extent of four bobs of its Adam's apple.

I said up straight. Did ghosts drink?

"Gorry diamonds! I needed that!" the ghost croaked. Even with the residue of the terror still in me, I recognized the gravely voice.

"Jonas?"

The ghost glanced at me, a grizzled eyebrow raised. "Who the hell you think it is...Santy Claus?" He reached behind him and pulled the door firmly closed. Then, with his left hand, he began to beat the coating of fine snow from his clothing. The white film that had covered him drifted down to the floor of the shack. The other arm, hand still holding the bottle, lifted, and he used the sleeve to wipe the melted (Me & Joe cont. pg 26)

News

(Cont. from pg 19)

Knapp Pond #2 Saturday, January 11, from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. Registration on the department's website is required to attend.

Vermont Deer Harvest

The final number of deer taken in Vermont's 2024 hunting seasons will not be available for a few more weeks, but the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says the final tally will be a little over 17,200 deer. Those deer will provide approximately 3.4 million servings of local, nutritious venison.

The buck harvest will be a little over 9,200, which will be down from 2023 (9,848) and the previous 3-year average of 9,533.

The final antlerless deer harvest will be around 8,000, which will be up from the previous 3-year average of 7,188.

"Season totals were mixed in 2024," said Nick Fortin, the department's deer project leader. "The harvest during the November regular season was down about 10 percent from 2023, and this accounted for all of the decline in the total buck harvest. Harvests during every other season were up compared to 2023."

The primary goal of Vermont's deer management strategy is to keep the deer herd stable, healthy and in balance with available habitat. "Maintaining an appropriate number of deer on the landscape ensures deer and the habitats that support them remain in good condition and produc-

tive," said Fortin.

The 2024 White-tailed Deer Harvest Report with final numbers will be on Fish and Wildlife's website in early March. Beginning in late March, the department will be holding informational hearings to share biological information and to listen to any information people wish to share.

The New Hampshire



Fish and Game Department stocks trout during the fall to bolster the winter ice fishery, resulting in some exciting fishing action this winter.

Winter anglers chasing trout can find lists of waterbodies that are open to the taking of these fish year round on the Fish and Game website:

- For lakes and ponds, visit www.wildlife.nh.gov/fishing-new-hampshire/trout-fishing-new-hampshire/nh-lakes-and-ponds-

stocked-trout-and-open-year.

- For rivers and streams, see www.wildlife.nh.gov/fishing-new-hampshire/trout-fishing-new-hampshire/nh-rivers-and-streams-stocked-trout-and-open-year.

- Rules for waterbodies with special regulations are listed in the NH Freshwater Fishing Digest, which is available from license agents or on the Fish and Game website at www.eregulations.com/newhampshire/fishing/freshwater.

- The following is a list of New Hampshire lakes and ponds that were stocked with trout during the fall of 2024 and are open to ice fishing: Akers Pond in Errol, Beaver Pond in Woodstock, Bow Lake in Strafford, Cedar Pond in Milan, Big Diamond Pond in Stewartstown (opens January 1, 2025), Higher Ground Pond in Wentworth, Highland Lake in Andover, Hildreth Pond in Warren, Little Dan Hole Pond in Ossipee, Manning Lake in Gilmanton, Martin Meadow Pond in Lancaster, Mascoma Lake

in Enfield, Mirror Lake in Woodstock, Newfound Lake in Bristol, Oguntz Lake in Lyman, Pearl Lake in Lisbon, Perch Pond in Lisbon, Pleasant Lake in Deerfield, Streeter Pond in Sugar Hill, Sunapee Lake in Newbury, Tewksbury Pond in Grafton, Webster Lake in Franklin, White Lake in Tamworth, and Winnisquam Lake in Laco-nia. Please note that there are additional New Hampshire waterbodies open for year-round fishing in addition to those on this list.


"The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's hatcheries stock post-spawn brook and brown trout into selected waterbodies that do not have a closed season before winter," said Fish and Game's Inland Fisheries Program Supervisor John Magee. "These fish can range from 2 to 3 pounds each. Numbers, dates, and stocking locations vary annually. I would encourage anglers of all skill levels to take advantage of this season's stocked opportunities throughout New Hampshire when weather conditions are favorable and once the ice is safe."

"The Granite State's rivers and streams opened to fishing on January 1, and there are some quality fish to be caught in some of the tailwater fisheries such as the Newfound River," said Magee. "When water levels are drawn down on larger lakes for the fall, prize-sized fish often drop down below dams, creating opportunities for savvy winter anglers. This winter's free fishing day is January 18, so why not try your luck through the ice this year."

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Cell: 207-227-9271 or email Brian.Bernosky@outlook.com



The Strange Encounter!

The following article is the strangest encounter with a wild animal that I have ever had in my life. People often ask me if I have ever had any “close calls” with bears when

during September of 2024 as I walked a large piece of property looking for some reported illegal activity in the town Ashland.

As I walked along the old grown-in trail, I looked

growth and within a split second caught a glimpse of a black object running directly at me. It was a bear. Not a big bear, but a bear nonetheless and I don’t care who you are...that evokes some unique feelings. I took a couple steps backwards as my brain began processing what was occurring. The bear within seconds burst through the poplar and red dogwood whips that were growing densely along the edges of the old trail. I got a full look at the bear from head to toe at what I would judge as 6 to 8 steps. I instinctively clapped my hands three or four times while simultane-



Warden's Words
by Game Warden
Kale O'Leary,
Ashland, ME

ears and eyes staring in my direction. I put my phone back in my coat pocket, laughed to myself about the unique interaction that just occurred, and began walking back toward my truck another mile or two away through the woods.

I had taken maybe 10 or 15 steps, when a new noise caught my attention. I stopped and listened. It was a faint scratching noise. I looked back towards the pine tree and was shocked to see the young bear scaling his way back down towards the ground. I kept

shake hands. Looking back it is funny to think about the very distinct thoughts that next fired through my brain. 1.) Just like the “Grizzly Man”, the last photo on my phone when they find me is going to be the bear that attacked me. 2.) yearling bears of this size have recently been kicked out by their mothers and our on their own for the first time. He likely doesn’t know what is predator or prey and that puts me in a very bad spot. 3.) Lastly, but certainly not least. I know that unlike a Grizzly,

I took a couple steps backwards as my brain began processing what was occurring. The bear within seconds burst through the poplar and red dogwood whips that were growing densely along the edges of the old trail. I got a full look at the bear from head to toe at what I would judge as 6 to 8 steps. I instinctively clapped my hands three or four times while simultaneously stating “go bear, get, go!” in an authoritative voice.



The bear that charged the author, not once, but twice! (Photo by Kale O'Leary)

talking with them as Game Warden. I have always told people the same lines, “they are more scared of you, then you are of them” and that I have never encountered or covered an unprovoked bear attack in my career. It just doesn’t happen in Maine, despite a healthy bear population. Bears so infrequently encounter humans, at least where I work, that sightings alone are uncommon. I learned a few things in this encounter and some knowledge that I previously knew about black bears helped me in walking away with only a story and not a scar or two. Here is the tale, which occurred

around, admiring the tall stands of spruce and fir. It appeared as though this property had not been cut in several decades. The light rain “pitter-pattered” softly on the shell hood of my raincoat. I hate walking with a hood on in the woods. I took my hood off and a noise immediately drew my attention as I wheeled around to my left. It was clearly the thuds of a running animal as its paws hit on the dry understory soil. At first, I couldn’t tell if the sound was getting louder or quieter. It had to be running away I thought, animals don’t run towards people. I began scanning the dark softwood under-

ously stating “go bear, get, go!” in an authoritative voice. The bear, who upon coming face to face with me, paused momentarily before jolting off in the same direction that he came charging in from. He ran 20 or 30 yards before scaling up a large white pine that ironically had old cedar rungs nailed into it where someone had erected a treestand many years ago. I dug my phone out of my rain jacket, still amazed at a “cool” interaction with one of Maine’s big game animals that is so rarely seen, let alone close enough to look directly into his eyes. I snapped a photo of the bear as he hung onto the bark of the pine with his large

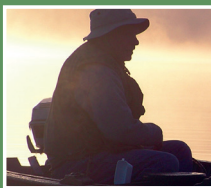
watching as he got back to the ground and almost instantly took off on a dead run...in my direction! I think it took a second or two to now process the predicament I was in. I was not dealing with a spooked bear who was frightened by my presence in his woods and attempting to flee to safety. It appeared he either wanted a meal or a fight, because bears don’t

you don’t play dead with a black bear and have to fight back. My adrenaline skyrocketed on this second encounter, unlike the first, because coming to grips with potentially wrestling with this bear was not ideal. The bear charged out on the trail again. This time even closer then the first time. I will never forget his warm breath creating (Encounter cont. pg 30)



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From all reports, the legendary Maine Guide, like so many of our institutions, is undergoing profound change. The Maine Guide of yore was simply a woods-savvy individual who had hunted and fished enough to know how to show others the way for a few bucks a day. The early Maine Guides never took a test. Most of them got their licenses after a Maine

plans to guide for a living. So? It does take some smarts and commitment to pass the test, and anyone who makes the grade has a reason to be proud of his or her accomplishment.

It does strike me, though, that there is a conspicuous and glaring gap in the curriculum of most of the new training programs for aspiring Maine Guides. These new Maine Guide's,

and I'll meet you at about noon on the north end of the hummock."

Speaking of a Maine Guide's lexicon, any guide worth his salt will always use, not only the Maine pronunciation, but also know the subtle distinctions in the definitions of unique geological locales. Here are some must-know woods places that all Maine Guides should be familiar with:

Swale: A swale is a slight depression that runs

heathland is a dwarf-shrub habitat found on mainly infertile acidic soils, characterised by open, low growing woody vegetation, often dominated by plants of the Ericaceae. It is similar to moorland, but is generally warmer and drier.

Bog: So what the heck is a bog anyway? Is it a lake? A swamp? A

topography that comprises the fabled Maine north woods.

To this end, accomplished Maine Guide Randy Spencer has made a valuable contribution in a chapter on this subject in his delightful new book *Where Cool Waters Flow*. Here are some that are guaranteed to salt the vo-

Speaking of a Maine Guide's lexicon, any guide worth his salt will always use, not only the Maine pronunciation, but also know the subtle distinctions in the definitions of unique geological locales.

Game Warden decided, from a short chat, that an applicant was fit to be a Maine Guide. Today, more and more of our Registered Maine Guides get their guide's license by taking formal instruction and then passing a series of written and oral tests administered by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

Now this is not altogether bad and is in keeping with the times. Veteran guides have been known to scoff while making the observation that many of these new "school-taught" guides just wanted to get a guide's patch for their wool jackets and have no

especially those who grew up in Newark or White Plains, all mispronounce a critical word used by all Maine Guides. The word is "heath." Regardless of what Webster may say, all Maine woodsman and seasoned Maine Guides pronounce this word "hayth," not "heeth" as far too many newly licensed Maine Guides seem to be doing.

If you are a newly licensed Maine Guide, you would be advised to practice the proper Maine pronunciation of this word until it becomes a natural part of your guide lexicon. Say again," Joe, you work your way slowly around the south side of that "hayth"

along the contour of the land. That is to say, it is level all along its length. It can be deep or shallow, or even hidden (a ditch filled with gravel and capped with topsoil), and the dirt from digging the swale is usually used to make a berm on the downhill side. A common sized swale is two or three feet wide. Of course, you can make them any size you want. An important distinction is that a swale is not a drain. It is a water collection device. The cheapest way to store water is in the soil. And of course, by stopping the run-off, it prevents erosion as well.

Heath: A heath or



marsh? A farm? Or just a funny sounding word we made up? Actually, a bog is an area of soft, marshy ground, usually near wetlands, where cranberries love to grow. During the harvest, water is pumped in and out so it gets really wet. Which explains why we like to wear waders. It's also what makes the cranberry such a unique fruit.

Logan: Swamp or a bog

Hummock: A knoll or tract of land higher than a surrounding marshy area.

Of course, these are just the rudimentary usages that newly licensed guides should master. Most truly dedicated and conscientious Maine Guides never stop expanding their lexicon when it comes to naming and describing the infinite and disparate

cabulary of the most experienced and venerated Registered Maine Guide.

Swallett: A place in the woods where a small, gurgling brook suddenly disappears and runs underground.

Chiminage: A fee charged for using the Maine woods.

Gnarr: A bulbous, sinewy area on a tree.


Zuckle: A stump that is cut close to the ground.

Grike: An opening in a fence that will allow a person but not an animal to get through.

Eyot: Pronounced "ite", this is a small island located in a river or lake.



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

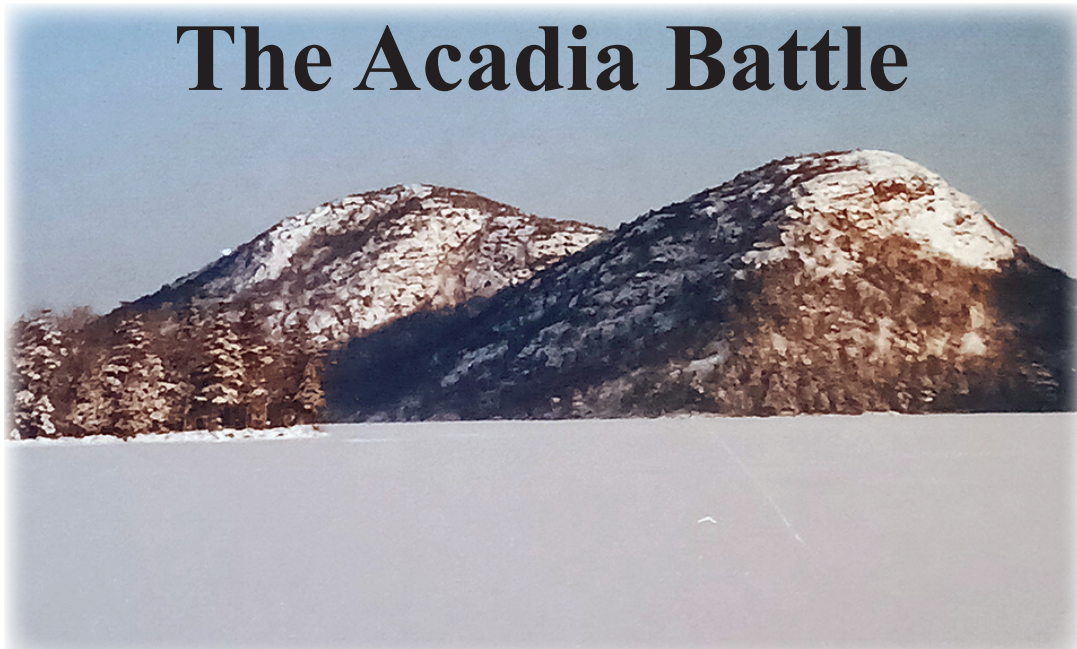


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Bridgton, Maine

The Acadia Battle



I do not hold contempt for people who have a different opinion than I do, but my ire does get raised when people take action to hurt others mentally, physically, or to take opportunities away from Maine people to change our traditions and culture.

Back in the day, officials from Acadia National Park were trying to do just that by arguing to convince IFW management biologists to stop stocking state waters within the Park and manage for the few wild fish that remained there. From the outside this seemed like a reasonable ask, but we that knew those waters well understood that having a handful of wild brook trout in waters that were hundreds of acres in size would not result in fisheries for the people of our state and those that choose to travel to our wonderful area to fish.

Understand that the Park officials that we were dealing with were not fisheries experts but environmental idealists pushing a National Park policy. However, we saw these people as a threat to our way of life. They did not want to hear a motor, see a wake, look at snowmobile, or ATV, on any of the

lakes within the Park. Their view was to have visitors observe the tranquil waters of the lakes and ponds with only the quiet stroke of a paddler, or the shush of a cross-country skier, to be heard.

Our positions were diametrically opposed. Consequently, our meetings with them were contentious. At one point they told us that stocking the lakes and ponds was nothing more than a commercial aquaculture operation using waters within the Park as impoundments for making money for the state and the local businesses. Our reply was “you mean like the Park constructing roads and paths through the wilderness, up mountains and around the lakes and ponds, and then charging visitors user fees?” Needless to say, the look we got back from that question was one of quiet disdain.

Another true reality was that if we stopped stocking the lakes and ponds on Mount Desert Island that left the residents without local recreational fishing, people would stock the waters on their own with invasive species that would be irreversible and ruin the cold-water lakes forever. When we told the

Park officials this, they looked at us like we had two heads. Clearly, they were not aware of the repercussions that would follow by taking away the people’s fisheries.

Finally, we said to the Park officials that as it



Everything Maine

by Greg Burr
Addison, ME

IFW bosses in Augusta with a proposal to have the Park gain concurrent jurisdiction over the waters on Mount Desert Island. Thankfully, this attempt to gain management control went nowhere.

One day not too long ago after their attempt to move their policies forward failed, they called me and said, “Greg, we can stop you from stocking the waters within the Park.” I said, “How are you going to do that?” They said, “We own the public access sites where your hatchery trucks

that did not make sense on these waters. He said “Well because there are people in Washington, who have never been here and that will never visit here, that will get a warm fuzzy feeling from getting our policies followed. Oh, I said. “We Mainers could care less about that!”

This is some of the nonsense that we had to deal with as fisheries managers. Like I have said before, it is all right to ask the question, it is another to push forward idealistic proposals that are not balanced

Another true reality was that if we stopped stocking the lakes and ponds on Mount Desert Island that left the residents without local recreational fishing, people would stock the waters on their own with invasive species that would be irreversible and ruin the cold-water lakes forever.

pertains to the state waters within the Park on Mount Desert Island that their policy was flawed. And that if the waters could be managed for sustainable wild populations of fish, we would already be doing so to maintain fisheries for the people, and to protect native species. However, they persisted in their plight to stop us from stocking brook trout, lake trout, and landlocked salmon for the people of Maine. They went over our heads to our

pull up to stock these waters and we have the right to stop those trucks!” I said “You are right, you can. Go ahead.” They said “Great! So, you concede to stop stocking these waters down here?” I said “No, we have planes, we’ll stock them from the air!” They said “Oh. Never mind.”

A number of years later after the brouhaha had quieted down, I asked one of the Park officials why it was so important for them to push their policies

or even grounded in reality. As they say, common sense is not that common. We as Mainers have to keep ever vigilant against environmental proposals that are extreme. Stay tuned!

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



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Me & Joe

(Cont. from pg 21)

snow from his face.

Slowly, me and Joe pushed ourselves up and away from the wall. I could see the anger building in Joe's face.

"Yer supposed to be dead!" he growled.

"Nossir. I ain't never been." Jonas said, indignantly. "I admit, I ain't as pert as I might be, but that's because I slipped an' fell out there on the ice tryin' to see who was in my shack."

"Jonas!" I said impatiently. "Everyone thought

you were dead."

"Dead? Why?"

"Because you disappeared, you idjit!" Joe said in exasperation. "The shack was here with your jacket left on the wall and half-full bottle of whiskey here, with the fishing hole open. Everybody figgered you'd fell through the hole an' drowned! Nobody ever saw you agin!"

"Jonas," I said softly. "Where you been?"

"Been down with my sister, Marinda, in Floridy, a' 'course."

"But we heard you didn't get along with your

sister."

"Oh, that," he waved a deprecating hand. "That was 'cause she married that no-account Harold Graft an' moved to Floridy years ago. I tolt her he was no good, but she didn't listen. Then, last winter, he was crossin' a street down there in Floridy an' got runned over by a garbage truck. Done my heart good. Marinda, she called me all upset on my cell phone right here in this shack... you remember I got me one o' them new fangle cell phones? Well, I left right then to head on down. For-

got that bottle o' whiskey. An' that coat? That's the one I always use to go out an' check the ice traps I set outside. It's always in the shack."

Jonas settled onto one of the small chairs. Me and Joe picked up our seats from where they had tumbled in our haste, and slowly sat back down. Jonas filled us in on his complete year with his sister in Florida.

"I went fishin' in the ocean all the time. You know they got fish in there bigger than me?"

Joe nodded. "So I

heard. You know, Jonas, you even fooled Warden Brody, an' he's a hard man to put somethin' over on. I think it was the whiskey bottle. Pinch didn't think you'd ever go off an' leave a bottle o' whiskey behind."

Jonas looked down at the bottle in his hand and shook his head with a wry grin. "Ol' Pinch allus thought I drank too much. Allus on me about it."

At that moment another brisk knock sounded on the door. Both me and Joe jerked and I felt the hair stand up on my neck. We grinned at each other in embarrassment. Someone was trying to open the door, but once again the latch was stuck. Jonas went over and fiddled with it, muttering something about a crowded neighborhood.

The door suddenly sprang open. The big figure of Warden Pinch Brody loomed in the doorway.

"Thought I'd check an' see how you guys were..." He stopped suddenly, apparently recognizing the figure facing him. For a moment he stared in disbelief. Then we saw him blanch to the hairline. He lifted a shaking hand to point, his sagging mouth trying to form words. Then, his bulging eyes turned slowly upward until only the white showed. Like a tree with its roots cut, he toppled straight backwards onto the ice, his head bouncing once on the hard surface.

Jonas stared at the limp figure of the warden, then glanced down at the bottle still clutched in his right hand.

"Oh, hell," he said meekly. "Here we go again..."





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The Gun Dog's Nose

In these modern times, early training on pen-raised birds is very common. With advancing civiliza-

well. In fact, a dog relies on her sense of smell to interpret her world, in much the same way as people depend

the bird move. When it does, these are the teaching moments for the dog. All professional trainers



tion, training on wild birds is simply not feasible for most dog owners. There is, however, great benefits to training your pup on wild birds. Let's discuss both wild and pen-raised birds.

First, however, let's discuss scent. Isn't that the number one ingredient for our dogs? A pen-raised bird may not have the pure scent of a wild bird. They both have a uropygial gland that secretes a thick complex oil which eventually vaporizes and, along with bacteria, creates bird scent. However, that pen-raised bird has matured in a pen along with dozens of other birds. That environment will create scent not consistent with a wild bird.

Let's also remember that a dog's scenting ability is simply amazing. Let's look at this quote: A dog's nose not only dominates her face, but her brain as

on their sight. Although this contrasting world view may be hard to imagine, know that your dog interprets as much information as you do. However, she does much of this by smelling an object or animal, not by staring at it. (Stanley Coren, Sarah Hodgson, Understanding A Dog's Sense of Smell).

Recognizing the power of the canine nose, it's possible that our dogs can differentiate between the scent of a pen-raised bird and a wild bird. However, does that really matter? If the dog recognizes the scent as being something that should be pointed, who cares?

Well, here is a big difference and it's not scent. It's how the bird reacts to pressure from the dog. The pen-raised bird may simply sit still. The instincts of a wild bird will often make

will tell you that a dog can only learn to handle wild birds by working the dog on wild birds.

The beloved ruffed grouse is a perfect example of a bird that needs repeated exposure to a bird dog before the dog understands how to handle that bird. It's often said that a dog that comes onto a ruffed grouse while running hard and then stopping at the first scent will pin most grouse. That may be true, however, for a close working dog,

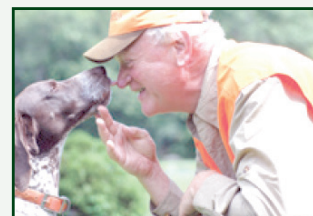
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On Point

by Paul Fuller,
Durham, N.H.

that doesn't happen often.

That means the bird has run before the dog establishes a point. Now the work begins. The dog must carefully follow ground

raised birds, but the polish and savviness comes from exposure to wild birds.

Your author's conclusion: Pen-raised birds can be a good starting point

Recognizing the power of the canine nose, it's possible that our dogs can differentiate between the scent of a pen-raised bird and a wild bird. However, does that really matter?

scent. If done with caution, the bird will eventually be pinned and pointed. This entire process can only be learned from a wild bird.

A few years ago, I wrote down a sentence from an article in Gun Dog Magazine. My apologies to the author, however, I did not make note of the author's name. Here's the sentence. Basic training starts with pigeons and pen-

but only wild birds will give you that much desired bird dog.

Paul Fuller, along with his wife, Susan, produce the Bird Dogs Afield YouTube show. Over 200 films on bird dog training and upland hunting. Go to www.youtube.com/birddogsafield. Contact: paul@birddogsafield.com

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Young Blood

by Jake Guay,
Phillips, ME

Bones: you gotta have 'em. Unless you're a dead animal. Because then, someone else is liable to use them for food, or, maybe a fun taxidermy project, like the one I want-

on the way, I figured now would be an excellent time to teach you, dear reader, how to make a turkey call from turkey wingbones. You'll need to order one or two things online, too, so

Next up is extracting the bones. You'll need the humerus (connected to the shoulder), ulna, and radius (the two bones connected to the humerus). After you get those, try to clean them as much as possible and cut them all at the widest point so you can fit them together with relative ease.

ed to focus on today. Bones have been used for all kinds of stuff, from sewing needles to arrowheads to even soup enhancers. Personally, I prefer to use them as functional art pieces. With spring turkey season

keep that in mind.

The most exotic thing is a bottle of 40-volume Clear Developer, a strong peroxide that will whiten the bones (and burn your fingers if you're not careful). A gallon is a good idea

since it's useful for future projects, too. You'll also need clear dish soap if you don't already have some, and JB Weld or another strong adhesive or resin.

random wing that's been kicking around in your barn or shed and use that, too, as long as the three biggest bones are still mostly intact. Next up is extracting

get those, try to clean them as much as possible and cut them all at the widest point so you can fit them together with relative ease.

Now for the fun part.



Step one is to acquire the actual turkey wing, which is easy to get if you hunt turkeys anyway. Alternatively, you can take a

the bones. You'll need the humerus (connected to the shoulder), ulna, and radius (the two bones connected to the humerus). After you

Fill up your pot with water, just enough to submerge the bones, and a generous amount of dish soap, and then start boiling. Once it's ready, add the bones. The hot water is going to infiltrate the porous bones, and the added soap will remove the smelly oils from them as well, making it easier to clean them. Boil until the marrow and leftover flesh appear to have loosened up, then remove the bones and clean them thoroughly.

(Calls cont. pg 29)



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Calls

(Cont. from pg 28)

Make sure to get all the marrow out! You'll use the 40 Volume Developer during the last 30 minutes, to whiten the bones and make them look nice. Use around ten or 15 percent of the current solution's volume, and check on the wingbones until they're at a satisfying level of shine. After you've dried everything and made it aesthetically pleasing, you'll be ready to assemble the call. Start by hollowing out the insides with a screwdriver to improve sound quality. Next, fit the smallest bone into the narrow end of the medium bone, and then fit the largest bone onto the other end. The result should look like a long, thin trumpet. Now, you get to shape the bones. This involves a lot of sandpaper.

Once you've shaped them to fit into each other as snugly as possible, you'll want to use some JB-Weld or an alternate kind of epoxy or thick glue and permanently bind your turkey-trumpet into one majestic art piece. You'll need to do more sanding on the joints to make the call look less rough around the edges but once that's done, it's gonna look spiffy. Once you've made it look nice, make sure it works. Shape the mouthpiece (the smallest end) so it's comfortable to use. To use the call, you have to kiss into it, the way you might if calling a dog or cat over to you. If you can draw it out and start to mimic the cadence made by a hen you'll be all set; many hens sound like horrible hunters, so these calls are a step up from that, no matter what. Of course, you can make them sound

indistinguishable from the real thing, with practice. Just don't beat yourself up if it doesn't sound right on the first try. From here, the possibilities are endless. You can paint the call, wrap the joints, or decorate it with scrimshaw designs. Some people even use henna for more intricate patterns. These calls make excellent gifts for fellow hunters, they work excellently once you get the hang of them, and they're beautiful, functional pieces of art. Give it a try this month in preparation for spring turkey season! Good luck, and happy crafting!

Jacob Guay is a homeschooled teen who loves creation as much as he loves to write. Curious readers can learn more by emailing him at jag-uay26@gmail.com

Camille Deschene Hunts for a Buck

The journey began in October when Camille hunted with his bow and arrow during archery season. No bucks.

The November firearms season began with the Hunters

Breakfast. He went to his hunting spot. He saw does and lambs. He saw a spikehorn and he let him go.

The second week he saw a spikehorn and a crotch horn sparing...he could hear the antlers

clicking. Later, he saw a doe and two lambs, they got spooked and took off; then Camille saw what worried them...a coyote. The deer got away safely. He saw a mink and kept seeing the doe and 2 lambs every day, usually around 10 am.

One day the two lambs were sniffing the air, getting spooked again.

Around 2 pm he saw a 5 pointer going by his stand, crossing a woods road about 20 yards away. It was November 21. One shot with his 35 Remington Thompson Contender pistol and the deer was dead. He dressed him out and then dragged him out on his jetsled. He dragged it as it got dark, and he was glad to have his headlamp, as it was 5:30 pm when he got to his truck.

He went to the tagging station and saw his friend Ronnie Tedford. Camille's cell phone needed repair and Ronnie let Camille use his phone to call his wife Nancy, who was relieved to hear he was alright, as she had friends out looking for him since he was usually home way before dark. He came home so tired but very happy.

Nancy C. Deschene



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Encounter

(Cont. from pg 23)

a mist in the damp September air and looking him straight in the eyes as we sized each other up. I began walking backwards slowly, standing as tall as I could with my arms high in the air as I yelled "WHOA BEAR! GET! GET OUT OF HERE!" this time in an unintended high pitch. This bear never "popped" his jaws or displayed any of the tell-tale signs of a bear that

was warning me to go the other way. He began walking slowly, step for step as I back peddled, never breaking his gaze from my torso. He slung his head low and was breathing very heavily as I not only could see the steam coming from his nostrils, but could see his sides expanding as he took each breath. You may be wondering why I didn't unholster my sidearm and potentially dispatch the bear in self-defense at this time? Well, that would be because in my infinite wis-

dom, I was not in uniform, which can be heavy and cumbersome when walking long distances in thick woods. I had no firearms or weapons of any kind other than a pocket knife.

I reached down at one point and as I stepped across a large hardwood stick that appeared to be a sufficient tool in case the bear did charge. All the while the bear continued walking me down, step for step, step for step. I picked up the stick and it immediately broke in half

as it was dry rotted and wet. "Hand to hand combat it is" I remember thinking. I knew I was bigger than this bear, as it maybe weighed 100-120 pounds, but it is no laughing matter to think of how I was going to try and wrestle with this thing.

Finally, after what felt like an eternity, but was maybe only 5 minutes and 100 feet of back peddling slowly, the bear stopped walking with me. He had fetched up in thick pocket of alders and I began gaining some distance as I

began walking faster and faster until finally, and I am not ashamed to admit this, I turned and began sprinting full speed towards my truck. I ran for several hundred yards before stopping to catch my breath and to see if my pursuer was pursuing. I never saw the bear again during the remainder of my walk out of the woods.

People have asked me, after I share this story, if I am fearful now of walking in the woods or will always carry a pistol with me. Call it Darwinism perhaps, but this encounter has not changed my view on feeling completely safe and comfortable when walking in the woods. This was a rare, chance encounter with a young bear who was learning the ropes and had no idea what I was. A similar encounter will likely never happen again in my life and the chances of being attacked by black bear in Maine are smaller than being struck by lightning.

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

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By The Numbers

It's 3:30 in the morning for goodness' sake! Two fledgling merlins have already started their incessant begging for food. They voiced a noisy greeting immediately when we pulled

the answers. Wildlife biologists in Saskatchewan and Alaska used home security cameras to document food provisioning of young merlins. The parents bring 4 to 15 birds daily to feed the

This got me thinking about some other outstanding numbers illuminated by recent wildlife science:

Bald eagles fishing daily at the lake are patient anglers. They eat 5 to 10 percent of their weight daily in fish and waterfowl. An average Maine eagle weighs 10 pounds and requires about a pound of

Mom and Dad merlin are efficient predators, but just how many birds does it take to raise a pair of little falcons anyway?

fish a day. That could be a fair-sized bass, shad, or a couple alewives (about 300-500 fish a year). Wildlife biologists (again using video cameras) determined that eagles deliver another 2-3 fish a day to the nest to feed growing chicks and a similar number for 6 to 8 weeks to feed the young after they leave the nest. That adds up to about 325 fish to satiate a family of bald eagles during the summer. Bald eagle numbers in Maine have increase dramatically from about 70 pairs when I was a grad student in the 1980s to well over 1500 pairs today.

A large green darner dragonfly patrols by the dock every five minutes. With a rattle of wings he whisks a black fly or mosquito buzzing above our heads. A dragonfly eats 30 to 100 mosquito-sized insects daily. He will live as a "mosquito hawk" for about two months before the fall frosts (or a merlin) gets him. This candy apple-green and cerulean terror could eat 1800 to 6,000 mosquitoes and black flies this summer. Consider that he lived as a voracious



Northwoods Sketchbook

by Mark McCollough,
Hampden, ME



into the campyard a few days ago. Now, I have a fondness for raptors, but the *kee-kee-kee-kee* from the pine tops all day long is mind-altering. The chicks came from a nest near our cabin and will spend the next six weeks in the trees above the camp screaming for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and between meal snacks. Mom and Dad merlin are efficient predators, but just how many birds does it take to raise a pair of little falcons anyway?

Some innovative wildlife science provided

growing chicks. Think medium-sized birds like warblers, finches, sparrows, and the occasional robin. The young and foolish of these species are just leaving the nest and make easy pickings for the merlins, just when they need food for their youngsters. Killing an average of 9 birds a day, about 450 birds must be procured to raise a brood of merlins. An adult merlin consumes about 900 birds in a year. They are agile, energetic killers and make a dent in the local songbird population!

top-predator at the bottom of the pond for a year before he emerged as an adult. During his adolescence he ate about 7,300 insect larvae (40 daily). He likely even munched a few tadpoles. No one knows their populations,

which likely vary on the productivity of the pond, predation and competition with other dragonflies, and water quality. My best guess is that our dragonfly patrols an area of about 75 yards, which means today there could be 200 males and female darners winging about this small lake. Collectively, they may eat 10,000 mosquitoes on this

July day. There is a lot of insect munching among the 158 species of dragonflies and damselflies in Maine.

Bats are not nearly as abundant as they once were, but a few are fluttering around the lake this evening. White-nosed syndrome, a fungus brought to New England from Europe, killed over 90% of once-common bats; the little brown, tricolored, and northern long-eared bat. An estimated 7 million bats have expired since 2006. Camps around northern lakes like this one once supported colonies of bats. Now just a few linger. Those winging past our canoe tonight are likely big brown, hoary, or eastern red bats. Nonetheless, bats (like the dragonflies) (Numbers cont. Pg 32)

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Tales Of A Maine Woodsmen

by Joel F. Tripp
Limington, ME

February 2nd, Groundhog's Day, Candlemas. Midwinter is the day halfway from the winter solstice to the spring equinox.

Growing up on the farm Groundhog's Day was an important event that marked the halfway point of winter. Whether or not Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow or not had no bearing on our winter plans. Midwinter was a day to take stock.

Survey the firewood pile, you should have burned half or less. If you are going to run short there is still time to rob from next year's wood to finish out the winter. Measure the hay in the barn, bales make this much easier. If you do not have enough hay to feed the stock on hand there is still enough cold weather to do some butchering.

Head down cellar. Sort the squash; good to keep, cook now, cook for the pigs or chickens, toss on the manure pile. Same thing with the potatoes. Go all the way to the bottom of the bin. One bad potato can spoil the whole bunch. Check every onion hanging from the floor joists. You will know when you find a bad one. Count the canning jars and sort the freezers.

Now that you have a handle on the winter you can turn to more important matters. Ice fishing, cutting firewood, rabbit hunting, pruning the apple trees. The midwinter need not be bleak if you have taken control of your situation and planned ahead. Midwinter can be a time of fun and enjoyment in the outdoors if you work with Mother Nature and not against her.

My father always took a week off in February when my brother and I had school vacation. We would

spend the week down back in the woodlot cutting next years firewood. It seemed like we always cut wood on the back line saving the close wood for a bad year. 50 years later I am still waiting for that bad year. My brother and I would get a fire started while my father started dropping trees. As my father started buck-

homemade trailer to haul the wood into the barn. From October to May we lugged arm load after arm load of wood from the barn to the house to keep the old farm warm.

The seasons were marked by events; the first fire in the stove, first frost, snow, planting, haying. These events were antici-

**In the bleak midwinter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard as iron
Water like a stone
Snow had fallen
Snow on snow on snow
In the bleak midwinter
Long, long ago**

ing the trees into stove-wood lengths my brother and I would limb with axes then start splitting with the maul. Each day we would have stacks of wood cut and split and piled between trees. We cooked lunch over the fire and went right back to work before we had a chance to cool off too much.

The next summer when the ground was dry, we used the Farmall and a

pated yet varied from year to year depending on the weather. February second was a day you could hang your hat on, it didn't move and this was a chance to measure your progress from year to year. Some times you were ahead some times not.

Nowadays I am fortunate to have grown children who have stepped up to carry the bulk of the load. They grow the broiler

chickens and I help with processing. They plant the gardens and I help with harvest. Firewood I still have my hand in. I can't seem to let go after all these years still and am anxious about getting the winter wood in. The old farmhouse needs six and a half cord to stay warm each winter and on February second we still have nearly five cord inside and dry.

Time to head into the house and put some wood in the stove. There is a venison stew simmering, cheese from the big wheel at Jordan's store in Sebago, homemade pickles and cornbread. After supper I will get down my favorite book, "The Fields of Home" by Ralph Moody. Let the frosty wind moan. I am content.



Joel Tripp is a Maine Woodsman and Master Blacksmith who was raised to stay three years ahead with the firewood and have enough food in the cellar to last all year. For more information go to; trippsend.com

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Numbers

(Cont from pg 31)

consume a lot of insects – mosquitoes, mayflies, stoneflies, and moths. A single big brown bat can eat up to 1,200 mosquito-sized insects per hour, or around 6,000 to 8,000 insects each night.

All this is to say that it takes a healthy ecosystem to raise a merlin, green darter dragonfly, or big brown bat. Without "bugs" there would be no trout, herons, eagles, or green frogs. After plants, inver-

tebrates are the foundation of life gathered round this northern pond. Invertebrates are truly "the little things that run the world." A 27-year study from Germany made headlines in 2020 and documented a 75 percent decline in flying insects – butterflies, bees, moths, flies, beetles, and the list goes on. This has implications to nearly all life around this pond. Ninety-six percent of North American birds feed insects to their young. Caterpillars are the most important food for at least 310 North

American bird species.

The camp across the lake has an electric bug zapper and black light. A study in Delaware showed that insects that bite humans comprised less than one-half percent of the insects killed in these traps. They can kill thousands of insects in a single night. Ironically, legions of predatory and beneficial insects are electrocuted including many aquatic insects. The camp owners sit on their camp porch satisfied by the sizzle of a stonefly. They thought it was a mosquito.

Numbers swim in my head as I turn into my sleeping bag early this evening. The merlins had their last snack just before sunset. They are silent (for now) and nod off to sleep with a crop filled with purple finch or blue jay. Mother merlin is exhausted as too am I.



Mark McCollough lives in Hampden, Maine and spent a noisy week on Loon Lake near Rangely last July. He can be contacted at markmccollough25@gmail.com

New Shotguns 2024

Last year was a good year for new shotgun offerings. We saw some traditional choices as well as tried and true designs with some new unique features. Browning is now offering the iconic A5 in 20 gauge. It has the familiar square humpback profile that houses the inertia style action. The new A5 comes with a beautiful dark Turkish walnut stock and a blued metal finish. This gun reliably cycles the full range of shells from 2 3/4" field loads to heavy 3" magnum loads. The gun comes with stock shims and has the Browning Invector DS choke system. The excellent inflex recoil pad. The sticker price on this beauty is \$1979.

A new trend in Wing shooting, especially water fowling, is the use of a red

dot optic. I am a big fan of red dot optics on hunting handguns and big bore rifles. Hunters are starting to discover that they can be very effective on a shotgun for more than just turkeys. To that end, Mossberg has offered the Model 940 Pro, red dot optic ready. It also comes with a filler plate for those choosing not to use optics. It is a 3" chambered gas gun. It has a tang

A new trend in Wing shooting, especially water fowling, is the use of a red dot optic. I am a big fan of red dot optics on hunting handguns and big bore rifles. Hunters are starting to discover that they can be very effective on a shotgun for more than just turkeys.

mounted safety and over-size controls for ease of operation with gloves. The barrel is 28" and comes with extended chokes and has a camo and cerakote finish. The suggested retail

on this model is \$1246. Shotgunners are a very traditional group of shooters. A tradition that has been underserved in recent years in shotguns has been the side-by-side double barrel.

In 2024, TriStar offered a side-by-side available in 12 and 20 gauge. The TriStar Phoenix side-by-side. It features 28" blued barrels. It comes with 5 interchangeable choke

tubes. The beautiful glass finished walnut stock and forend is complimented by a color case frame in an overall beautiful and graceful package. It is available in 12 gauge weighing 7

Guns & Ammo: A Guide's Perspective



by Tom Kelly,
Orient, ME



pounds and the 20-gauge weighing 6 1/2 pounds. It has a single selective trigger. It also features extractors and a pistol grip. The price tag is a \$795 suggested retail. These three new or improved models represent a cross section of the new shotgun models

a bit. I look forward to seeing the results. As hunters and shooters, we should also stretch our wings a bit. Share your passion with a kid or a new hunter. The great Fred Bear once said, "If you are not working to grow the sport of hunting, you are working against it."



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.



Rob Kilcollins bagged this huge buck on November 8th in a potato field in Fort Fairfield. It weighed 261 pounds dressed!

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The Gun Cabinet

by John Floyd,
Webster Plantation, ME



Just because the whitetail and moose seasons have long passed us by, it doesn't mean we can't hear the call of the wild and feel a yearning for the Maine woods. So what's an outdoorsman to do when the need to breathe that crisp, fresh air and find that very special solitude that

the harvest, are what makes a hunt.

Do your preparation and scouting as you would pursue game, noting tracks, overlapping habitats and any areas of special interest. Leave your gun in the cabinet and enjoy a slow walk in the woods, following tracks to your harvest.

An added bonus to hunting sheds is the ability to get family members not normally involved in hunting, a chance to spend time together, strengthen bonds and rediscover the wonders the Maine woods provide us.

only the Maine woods can provide?

I hunt horns. Literally.

Antler shed hunting is a great way to spend time afield long after the tree stands have come down and the ground blinds have been packed away, waiting for the spring gobbler season. Everything we love about big game hunting applies equally to shed hunting. The preparation, scouting, tracking and hopefully,

An added bonus to hunting sheds is the ability to get family members not normally involved in hunting, a chance to spend time together, strengthen bonds and rediscover the wonders the Maine woods provide us.

When to hunt sheds

The best time to hunt for antler sheds is after the rut, or mating season, and after the ground is snow covered.

Deer and moose both need to recover after the exertion of the rut and conserve energy in the winter months. Shedding antlers allows much needed calcium to be absorbed by the recovering buck or bull, not travelling northward to keep feeding those racks.

Dwindling levels of testosterone cause the base of antlers, called the 'pedicle', to dissolve. Eventually, the antler falls off. Typically, the key window for shed dropping is late November through January.

Where to find them

If you've been out scouting and tracking dur-

Perhaps one of the most overlooked locations to find sheds are in bedding areas. These spots are the hardest to find for non-hunters and only slightly easier for the seasoned outdoorsman. They are secluded for a reason.

Bucks and bulls need to feel secure when they let their guard down, so

deer or moose move into or out of a wood line; the branches of trees can pull at antlers, dislodging them. Fences and other obstacles that deer have to jump over can cause loose antlers to accede to gravity.

With so many ways to hunt for sheds, it's a sure fire way to keep you connected to nature when



Antler tines will be very visible when contrasted against a blanket of snow.

ing the big game hunting seasons, you'll have a pretty good idea of where the travel corridors and feeding areas are. If you are not a big game hunter, fret not.

Simply identifying obstacles that can catch an antler as the animal moves through an area will get you started. Bedding areas, along fence lines, edges of fields and funnels are all great spots to find sheds.

bedding areas typically are well off the beaten path. Look for big blow downs that provide concealment, especially on high ground.

As the snow begins to pile up, bedding areas will become easier to find. The depression made in the snow and the tracks leading in and out will be highly visible. Keep in mind that buck tracks are squarer than doe tracks, with very pronounced dew claw imprints.

Look for antlers where

the pace of your hunting season slows, but your desire doesn't.

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 or on Facebook @tuckerridgeoutdoors

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The Bird Decline

An article in Science magazine in 2019 stated that North America had a stunning 92% loss of wild birds between 1970 and 2016. This was 3 billion birds in less than fifty years. If you participated in bird surveys over many years like I have, this was not news. I am just glad I counted bird populations before this sad situation happened.

I have memories like when I walked to the edge of a field before dawn and as far as my eyes could see were resting woodcocks. I encountered six different species of owls on an early morning. I hope some young birders will have similar



experiences. My Northern Woodlands latest issue had an article about Evening Grosbeaks. It stated that this species is “the fastest - declining landbird in North America”. Evening Grosbeaks used to range from the Pacific Northwest to western Canada. In the 1800s’ they spread eastward in irruptions. By the

1920s’ they were common winter visitors in New England. But their numbers have dwindled since the 1950s’.

Resolution

(Cont. from pg 20)

kids there, maybe we just play poker all day and actually only ‘think’ about drilling holes. I think that’s happened once or twice now. No, I don’t like getting older, who does? The Patriots weren’t playing past the first weekend in January, the Bruins ... ha!. At least I have Red Sox spring training to look forward to this month; it may be the highlight of the season. April 1st at GLS looks like a million miles away at this point; too far to put any hope in that basket yet. If there’s a bright spot to this snowless beginning of the year, it might be that the deer still have the run of the place. Hopefully the bucks can put a little

weight back on after a hard rut. Other than that, we don’t need another winter like last winter. Virtually no snow to speak of, not like we’re used to anyway. The economy up here relies on mother nature, and she took last winter off. Hopefully she won’t do it again, but so far she hasn’t shown up. Wench...

Age may just be a number, but that number comes attached with its own brand of suffering. I’m positive there’s a way to reverse these trends, I’m sure of it, and when I’m done with this second sausage, egg, and cheese cholesterol bomb, I’m going to get right on it. Man, I hate February.

Mike Maynard can be reached at perhamtrout@gmail.com

A group of scientists and volunteers created the FiRN (Finch Research Network). In Northern Maine for the past two years they have seen them at their feeders. They have banded some with a certain sequence of; on the left leg, 3 red-colored bands over a metal USGS band and on the right leg 3 yellow-colored bands over the metal USGS band. Tracking such birds may help to find out

to help recovery.

Both groups feel that irruptions are not good indicators if things are improving. But in 2020 and 2021 sightings did increase all over the United States and some were even seen in Florida. Populations from southern Quebec and the Gaspe’ Peninsula seem

My Northern Woodlands latest issue had an article about Evening Grosbeaks. It stated that this species is “the fastest - declining landbird in North America”.

why the population has plummeted and why there has been a range retraction. So few are seen in the southern United States. In 2021 another group formed R2R (Road to Recovery) and it chose the Evening Grosbeak as one of four study birds whose numbers have diminished. Their goal is to identify the principal factors causing decline and then to develop a strategy

to be growing. During the summer of 2024 there were nests and young birds seen in northern Maine. The boreal forests of the northern woods have always been used as nesting areas. Last winter I had flocks of over 50 Evening Grosbeaks at my feeders. The males bright yellow, black and white plumage are such a colorful contrast to the drabness of winter. I

hope to see them again this winter and try to find any banded birds. I also saw nesting Evening Grosbeaks in Cooper woodlands.

Spruce budworm populations seem to be increasing again in northern Maine and could provide a feast of caterpillars in 2025. This helps raise re-

production numbers. But will spraying with pesticides and biological agents in northern border states and Canada against spruce budworm moths do harm to these birds too? Will climate change perhaps cause populations of Evening Grosbeaks to recede further north and diminish the numbers of balsam fir and spruce trees they use to nest in?

The Bird Perch

by Karen Holmes, Cooper, ME



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View From The River

by Laurie Chandler
Bremen, ME

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) has begun a new community science project to search for invasive zebra mussels in Maine lakes and ponds. If you are concerned about the health of the state's waters and ecosystems, this opportunity may be perfect for you.

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) were introduced into the Great

particularly harmful in two crucial ways. First, like our native mussel species, they are filter feeders, only far more effective. They remove and store vital quantities of nutrients from phytoplankton that provide the foundation for our native ecosystems. When zooplankton and small fish are deprived of these nutrients, it negatively impacts fish and wildlife at every level of the food web. Sec-

Zebra mussels are particularly harmful in two crucial ways. First, like our native mussel species, they are filter feeders, only far more effective. They remove and store vital quantities of nutrients from phytoplankton that provide the foundation for our native ecosystems.

Lakes from Europe in the 1980s, arriving as microscopic larvae in cargo ship ballast water. In the fall of 2022, zebra mussels were discovered in Québec's Lac Témiscouata, part of the St. John watershed. From Lac Témiscouata, the Madawaska River flows into the St. John River at Edmundston, New Brunswick, where adult mussels have been found growing on a hydroelectric dam very near the Maine border.

Zebra mussels are

ondly, zebra mussels attach to solid surfaces—docks, boats, water treatment and power plant intake pipes, plants, and even native mussels—causing significant economic and environmental damage.

Maine has ten species of native freshwater mussels. Most are solid colored, in shades of brown or black. In contrast, zebra mussels are tan yellow, with distinctive wavy brown stripes. Only $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, they

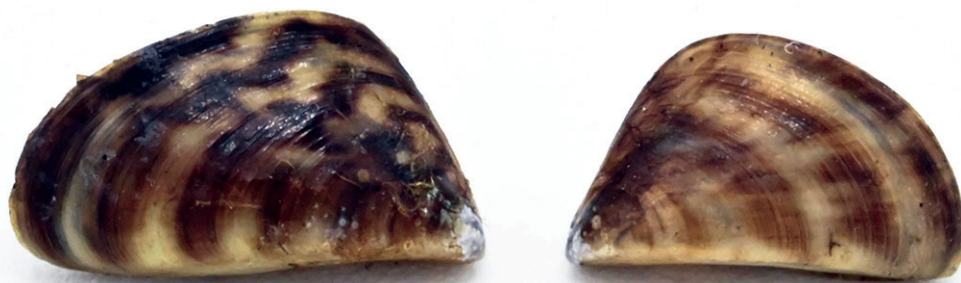
are also smaller than most native mussels.

Although learning to

identify adult mussels is important, the greatest danger is invisible to the naked eye. All mussels—even the ones I first met, swimming in my grandmother's garlicky marinara sauce—begin life as eggs. An adult female zebra mussel can produce one million eggs in a breeding season. Zebra mussel eggs hatch into microscopic free-swimming larvae that can float around for up to a month before attaching to a surface.

For boaters, this makes good Clean/Drain/Dry hygiene vitally important. Under Maine law, boaters must drain all water from watercraft and open or empty devices such as drain plugs, bailers, live wells, and ballast tanks, without allowing drained water into any inland waters of the state. According to MDIFW guidelines, "allowing watercraft and gear to dry thoroughly between water bodies is one of the

Fighting Invasive Zebra Mussels



Adult invasive zebra mussels threaten Maine waters.
(Photo credit: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife)

most effective ways to prevent the spread of these microscopic zebra mussel larvae. This drying should occur for multiple days (2-5 days) when possible."

Scientists are monitoring the movement of zebra mussels through the collection of eDNA—environmental DNA shed from organisms and found freely floating in the water. Through a growing community science project, interested individuals can also help in the fight.

Under MDIFW leadership, volunteers on high priority, high risk waters will be provided with monitoring devices called settling plates. These settling plates will be deployed from docks or other structures from May through October and monitored every two to three weeks for the presence of adult zebra mussels. Volunteers on other waters are encouraged to participate as well by constructing or purchasing their own settling plates.

What constitutes a high priority, high risk waterbody?

MDIFW Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator Dakota Stankowski explained, "We'll be prioritiz-

ing high risk waters in the counties closest to or in the St. John River watershed. However, because zebra mussels can be transported overland on watercraft or trailers to anywhere pretty easily, we'll also be including statewide high risk waters."

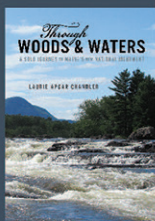
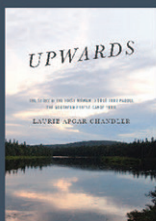
MDIFW priority and risk levels also consider the presence of critical fish and wildlife populations and water chemistry. Zebra mussels only flourish in waters with high calcium levels and alkalinity. Thankfully, a 2018 Department of Environment Protection study of about 900 Maine lakes and ponds found that only approximately ten percent of these waterbodies were suitable for zebra mussel survival.

For more information on zebra mussels and the community science project, visit <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/fisheries/aquatic-invasive-species/zebra-mussels.html>. An updated list of high priority, high risk lakes and ponds will soon be available.

Any discovery of adult zebra mussels should be immediately reported by email to AIS.IFW@maine.gov. (Mussels cont. pg 37)

INSPIRING SOLO CANOE ADVENTURES

BY MAINE AUTHOR LAURIE APGAR CHANDLER



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laurieachandler.com

A True Bear Story

This bear incident, which occurred over two centuries ago in Gilead, Maine, was written down by George Whitefield Chapman, and published in 1867 in his book, *Brief History of Gilead, and Prose and Poetic Writings*.

One evening in October, 1809, my wife and I, and a lady who was stopping with us at that time, and our two babies, were returning home from an evening visit to one of our neighbors. Both ladies with one of the babies were mounted on one horse, and I with the other child walking by their side.

As we neared a cornfield which laid by the roadside, my dog bounded over the fence as though helped by a propelling power. A minute after, an old bear with two cubs, came rushing over the fence, and crossed our path a few yards in front of us, aiming for the forest, which was

bounded by our pathway. The cubs to escape the dog, scrambled up a tree.

The bear, enraged at the insult, turned upon the dog with great fury, and he

and baby prostrate on the ground.

The bear, at a nearer approach to me, stood erect with a threatening growl, as much as to say, I am ready



to escape her grasp, ran immediately to me for shelter. At this sight the horse took fright and faced square about, leaving the ladies

for a fight. I stood with my eyes fixed upon her, and she soon left without doing injury to any of us.

Billing's Bear Story

Capt. Charles A. J. Farrar, an entrepreneur from Jamaica Plain, Mass., first ran a steamboat service on the Richardson Lakes, published illustrated guides to both the Rangeley Lake

Region and Moosehead and Northern Maine, and published a short-lived magazine called *The Sporting Tourist*. This bear story is taken from Farrar's *Illustrated Guide Book to Moosehead Lake and Vicinity*, 1880, p. 45.

"One day in the fall of 1878, while Billings, the guide, and a gentleman from Bangor were driving over this part of the road, they were surprised by seeing a large black bear come out of the woods on their right and cross the road a few rods in front of them. Their rifles lay in the bottom of the wagon, but the bear crossed so quick, they did not try to use them. The first bear had scarcely reached the woods on the left of the road, when out stalked a second from the right hand. He shuffled across the road so fast that the colonel had scarcely time to say, 'There's another bear, Billings,' before the animal was out of sight.

As he disappeared, both men made a dive for their rifles, and while they

Old Tales from the Maine Woods

by Steve Pinkham
Quincy, MA



were getting ready to use them, out from the same piece of woods came a third bear, which stalked solemnly across the road, stopping in the middle of it to take a look at the team. This was too much for Billings, who jumped up on his feet, exclaiming, 'My God, Colonel, the woods are full of bears!' And cocking his rifle, let drive at bruin over the head of the horse. The bear was not hit, however; but they stopped the horse and took to the woods, but did not get another glimpse of those 'bears.'

About a week after this incident, Billings set a couple of iron traps in vicinity, but was not successful in catching a bear, and he concluded that the three he had seen were looking for a good place in which to den during the winter, and had kept on traveling for some distance."



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

Mussels

(Cont. from pg 37)

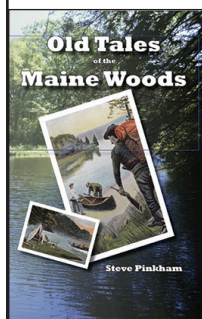
gov. Note the exact location and include photographs if possible. Even better would be to collect samples and carefully store them in a watertight container or bag to prevent their spread to any other waters.



Laurie Apgar Chan-

andler 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

Old Tales of the Maine Woods



Steve Pinkham

Maine Woods Historian, Author and Storyteller

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(See page 47)



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The Buck Hunter

by Hal Blood,
Moose River, ME



Winter is in full swing, but telling deer stories keeps us hunters warm and cozy. Last month, I wrote about the first two weeks of my deer season, and this month, I'll finish up the season. When the third week rolled around, there was still no tracking snow to be found. What little was in the high country, had pretty much melted away. The rut starts about

ing to get out of the woods before dark one day. It was a fairly flat area in the softwoods, with a low ridge in the middle of it. There were more rubs and scrapes in that area than I had seen in a long time. I knew the chances of seeing a buck there were fairly high.

As dawn was creeping in over the valley, we were making the mile walk to that softwood ridge in

both crotch horns. The next one was a doe. I knew there was another deer, so I looked back to the right where the other deer had come from, and saw a big buck with antlers to match, bound into a blowdown and stop. Rylan had his gun up, but I couldn't see the buck. I whispered that the buck should cross the opening too. Just then, the buck bounded into the opening quartering away and then disappeared without Rylan taking a shot. Well, that was about a week's worth

and a stiff wind to go with it. It was nearing noon and we hadn't found a good track yet, when just as we crested a low ridge a buck was bounding toward us. I could see that he had a nice rack, but I knew he wasn't an older 200-pound class buck. As he jumped up the knoll that we were on I grunted and he stopped at about twenty yards. I could see one side of his

week and I film and if you see a buck you don't want to shoot, I'll shoot him! How could I say no to that offer. That Monday, we found a decent buck track right off. It wasn't the one I was looking for, but it was fairly fresh so I told Rylan to take it and if we found a bigger one we would switch. As it turned out, we never crossed a bigger one, but we ended

He was headed towards the Canadian border, and I hoped I could catch him before he got there, but we didn't. This was one time that waiting a half hour may have cost me the buck.

the 15th of November in the north country, so this was the week that the bucks would be ramming around day and night. Rylan, like me, has a hard time sitting so still hunting was on the agenda. We rambled around various places and bumped into some deer, but none that we could identify as a buck. Rylan didn't even apply for a doe permit, so finding a good buck was on the agenda. One of the mornings, I told Rylan we were going to hunt our way into a spot that I had found while hunting with Billy the previous week. I found the spot while hurry-

hopes of crossing paths with a rutting buck. Rylan was in the lead, easing his way through the green growth. It was quiet walking with no wind as we made our way along. Rylan was pointing out rubs and scrapes as he slowly eased along. We came to an old cart road that I recognized from the week before. Right then, we spotted two big scrapes under some low hanging spruce limbs. Just as we went to look at the scrapes, tails started waving about 50 yards in front of us. The first two deer that jumped through the hardwood opening were

of excitement in a couple of minutes! We tried setting up and calling without any luck, so continued with our still hunt, hoping we might bump into them again, but we never did.

Week three wrapped up on Saturday with a camera man following me. We finally had some new snow on the ground, so it was time to get back into tracking mode. We made a big swing around a mountain trying to find a big track. I knew it would be tough as the snow was still coming down at daylight. It was a perfect tracking day, with the new snow



antlers and it was a couple of inches outside of his ear, but his points were short. I already knew when I first saw him that I wasn't going to shoot him, but it was fun to watch him bound off be on his way. Scott got the buck on film, and you can view it on the Big Woods Bucks FaceBook page.

I had told Rylan that Papa needed to hunt and film Thanksgiving week, so he was going to hunt with his other grandfather. But, that night at dinner Scott showed him the footage of the buck I let go. He came to me and said he had an idea. He said how about I go with you next

up seeing the buck twice and Rylan almost got a shot. We found two of the monster tracks that I was looking for. The first one we found at one o'clock just as snow started to fall. I hurried to work it out and since he was with a doe, I didn't think that they were far away. Within a half hour as I ducked under a spruce limb, the buck jumped out from under another spruce ten yards from me. That was quite a sight, but the one jump was all I saw of him. We tracked him for a couple hours before it was time to turn back toward the truck. Later that week, (Buck cont. pg 39)

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The Splendid Splinter

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.

My long-time friend and fishing colleague, Ted Williams, the last man in baseball to hit .400, prob-

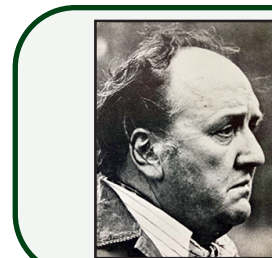
ably says it best when he talks about salmon angling.

"There's something about it that gets you. It isn't the catching of fish, getting the strikes. It's the anticipation. That's the part that excites me about fishing. You're always saying that this is the one, the cast that gets the big one. The fly comes down the riffle, you give it a jiggle and wait for that big one to come up and strike. The real excite-

ment is in the anticipation every time you zip that line into the water."

Ted Williams' colorful words describing the sport of fishing is why I celebrate the season of spring instead of merely observe it.

It is pretty well agreed that there is no thrill in freshwater fishing to compare with the one when an Atlantic or landlocked salmon first grabs the fly



Leavitt's Legacy

By Ralph (Bud) Leavitt

or bait and takes off.

There is a boil on the surface of the water, the glimpse of a dorsal fin and tail, the sudden heavy pressure that bends the rod tip far over, and the accompanying shriek of the reel as the line runs out.

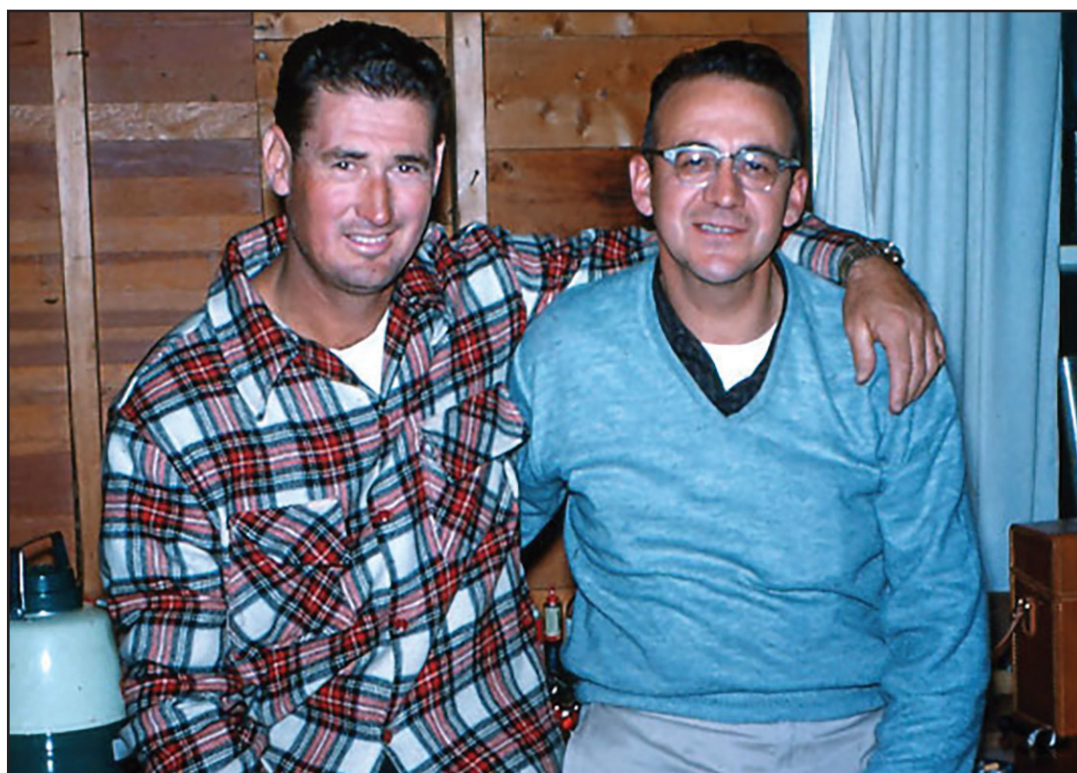
It doesn't seem to matter how many salmon

I doubt that there is another fish with as much power, pound for pound, as the Atlantic salmon. Maine is the only state in the continental U.S. of A. that has a seasonal run of these beauties. Anticipating that event is another reason it seems to take spring so long to arrive in this part of

Ted Williams' colorful words describing the sport of fishing is why I celebrate the season of spring instead of merely observe it.

you've hooked. The thrill is always there and it will bring you back – seeking more of this magic – spring after spring and summer after summer.

the world. There are other great game fish to catch in Maine and I'm not the only one "champing at the bit" to go after them.



Ted Williams (left) and the Sporting Journal editor's father, Harvard Reynolds, during a salmon fishing trip on the Miramichi River in New Brunswick, circa late 1950s.

Buck

(Cont. from pg 38)

we found where another monster had crossed the road in new snow. The track was less than an hour old, so we jumped right on it. The buck was just feeding along and wandering down skid trail. I had a feeling that I was going to kill that buck when we came to his bed with a running track. Thinking

we had jumped the buck, I waited my half hour. Then I checked my OnX app and realized we were only one hundred yards from the road. It dawned on me that the buck had heard us pull up in the truck and that's why he left his bed. I confirmed that thought when he only took a few bounds and started wandering up the skid trails again. He was headed towards the Canadian border, and I hoped I could catch him before he got there, but we

didn't. This was one time that waiting a half hour may have cost me the buck. Oh well, I still play those odds as it has worked more often than not. Next month, I'll write about my exploits with my smoke pole.

Until then: Good Luck on the Trail!



Hal is a Master Maine Guide and Author. He lives in Moose River Maine with his wife Deb. Hal can be contacted at: hal@bigwoodsbucks.com

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Snowmobile Trails

By Al Swett

Well, many of the snow storms have been taking a right turn into the Atlantic. And that's not good for Maine businesses that rely on snow to survive. That worries me a lot. We're part of the puzzle that keeps them alive throughout the year. Their dedication and support to our sport is second

points in North America to ride. Our volunteers work daily widening, clearing brush, cleaning up downed trees, wash outs, reroutes, signage, fulfilling land-owners requesting reroutes or no trail on their property. This turns out to be very hard to do in some situations, and the list goes on.

Most of these volun-

Question 4 on this fall's ballot was designed to give our trail system a jump start. This bond will help out everyone who plays outdoors in Maine. Motorized and non motorized came together in solidarity.

to none. We thank them for all they do.

Many areas have snow and some clubs have groomed many of their trail systems. Our MSA clubs do an incredible job year round making our trails one of the best destination

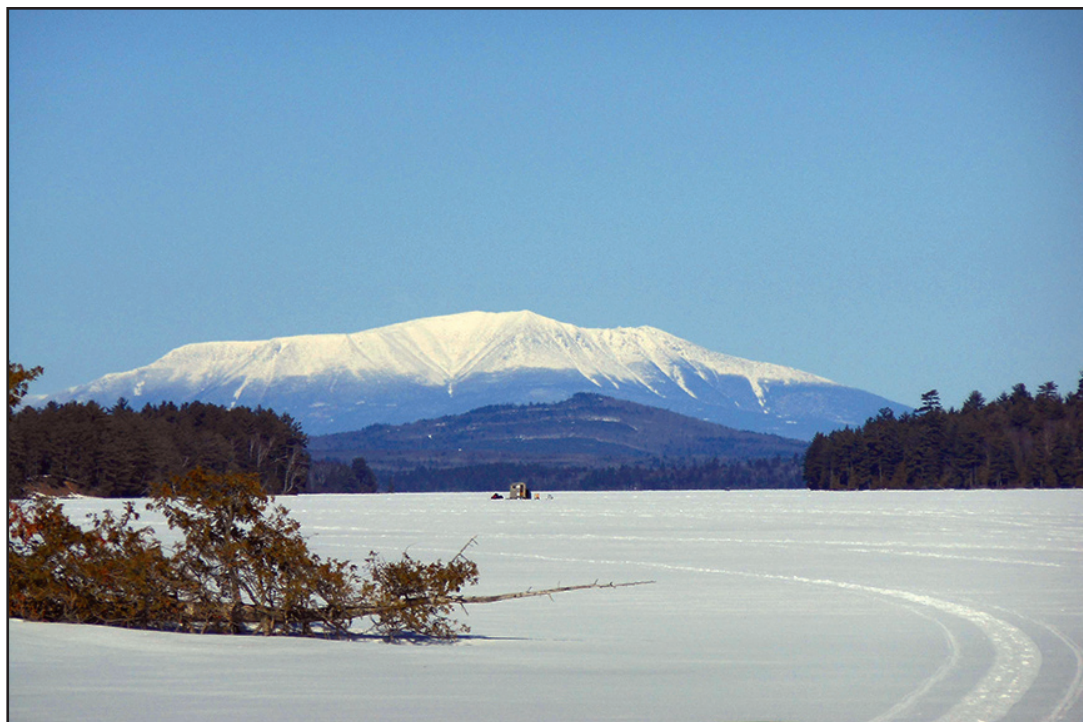
teers are getting up there in age and need young folks to help out. Some clubs do weekly trail work and most on weekends. Grooming is usually done at night. This allows the trail to set up over night and ready for the next day. Many of our

clubs have breakfast, lunch and cook outs to help raise money for their fuel and expenses. Also, our Super Raffle is a money maker for the clubs. We raffle off snowmobiles and trailers along with many gift certificates are included.

washed out by the floods of 2024.

Safety is always a priority. We do safety updates by speaking to middle and high school students throughout the State. On the trail, safety inspections are usually held on an ITS

Lots of events put on by our clubs for this month, check out our website or Facebook page for dates and times. www.mainesnowmobileassociation.com Please join a club and make time to help them out. You'll like the fellowship



"On a clear day you can see forever."

This is Maine's highest mountain Katahdin, as seen from Seboeis Lake in February. (Photo by V. Paul Reynolds)

Question 4 on this fall's ballot was designed to give our trail system a jump start. This bond will help out everyone who plays outdoors in Maine. Motorized and non motorized came together in solidarity. It will help out our trails where many of them were

or highly traveled snowmobile trail. We check out your sleds for any defects like headlight/tail brake lights, carbides on the skis, any broken parts and a Game Warden is there to that check to see if your registered or not. Most riders welcome it.

that will develop. I'm very proud of these folks. State-wide they make it happen.

Be safe out there!



Al Swett is director of operations for the Maine Snowmobile Association.

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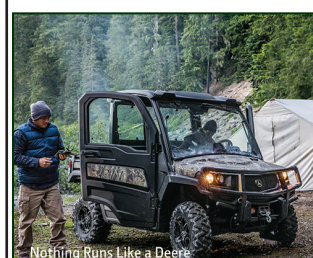
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Muzzleloader Vs. Rifle Scopes

A scope, is a scope, is a scope, right? Well, not really. Although all scopes in theory operate the same way with the same basic components, may even look the same and may be interchangeable in some cases. For example, putting a rifle scope on a muzzle-

loader is the best choice scopes since the early 1980s when in-lines first hit and revolutionized the muzzleloading hunting scene. In that time I have come to the conclusion there are several reasons why a scope specifically designed for a muzzle-

loader is the best choice old adage that goes something like, "A tool specifically designed for a task is better than one that is not." I believe it holds true here. I suppose you can put it like this. You can cut down a giant oak with a hatchet, but it's best done with an axe, or better yet a chainsaw.



loader or vice versa, there are certain differences and factors worth keeping in mind when considering or making a scope purchase for a muzzleloader.

I have hunted with

over a standard rifle scope. This does not mean to say that you cannot or should not use a rifle scope on a muzzleloader. You can. I have and I assume others do as well, but there's an

That may be stretching it a bit but you should get the meaning.

Other elements come into play, but eye relief is one thing to keep in mind. Rifle scopes typically allow



Muzzleloading Afield

by Al Raychard,
Lyman, ME

a 2-to-3-inch eye relief depending upon the scope and shooter, but muzzleloader scopes are specifically designed to allow a greater eye relief of about 4 inches or more due to the heavier recoil.

Parallax is another thing. (Parallax is the difference in the apparent position of an object when viewed from two different lines of sight.). Because they are often used for longer shots, rifle scopes have factory settings to correct parallax at 100-yards. Rifle scopes with variable or high magnification parallax can be adjusted out to 220 or even 400 yards. But unlike rifles muzzleloaders are not typically used for long range shooting so most muzzleloader scopes are set to correct parallax at 50 yards making them a better choice for typical muzzleloader range.

Then there is magnification. Magnification on rifle scopes can range from 3x to more than 20x, and most are variable. Some muzzleloader scopes also offer variable options, in

fact many do but the ones I have and most of the ones I have seen go only to 9x or so. The reason for that is a muzzleloader's typically short or limited shooting range and because parallax is not greatly affected.

Again, none of this means you can put a scope designed for a rifle on a muzzleloader. If you have one laying around, don't want to make the investment or otherwise have no other choice give it a go. Just be aware of its limitations, be prepared to make some adjustments. It might not last over time and overall it may not be the best way to go.



Al Raychard and his wife Diane live on 43 +/- acres in Lyman, Maine that offers good deer and turkeys hunting opportunities they both enjoy. If the property had a year round trout stream it would be pure paradise. Al can be reached at alraychard@sacriver.net

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From Craig Pond

by Bob Mercer,
Bucksport, ME

There has been a lot of talk lately about the use of technology in the outdoors. I would suspect that most of the feelings against technology come from people that have a few miles on them. My guess is, the more miles traveled, the more distaste for all this gadgetry.

My dad was a tough fisherman. This means fishing deep and slow; lead lines, big spoons and heavy rods to handle all the rigging. It took him a long time to get the gist of fishing our little Craig Pond. The bottom is grass covered so one could not bounce the lure

across the bottom. He had to learn through the experience of trial and error, how to fish our pond. Where four colors was best, where four colors "grassed-up" and one had to raise up to three colors, as the bottom changed. I remember he really like Haymook Lake, "it was all sand bottoms and you could bounce your

The question becomes: is getting the deer the most important part or is out witting the deer with your own work, knowledge of woods lore and out smarting the animal the most important part?

rigging from one end to the other with no problems".

Today, folks show up with their boat all rigged

with a down rigger and a fish finder and all they have to do is raise and lower the bait to the depth the fish. This type of fishing is all technology and very little trial and error. This type of fishing may be more effective, but is it more satisfying than figuring it all out on your own?

The same thoughts hold true for hunting. The real deer hunters I knew began hunting in August.

when things were hard and the meat was very important, hunters expanded the method of driving. In our area there is a very big bog heath with several islands in it, where the deer loved to hide out. The only real exit at one end went through a narrow passage between two ledges. When the wind was right, hunters would set the meadow on fire, as the deer left through that narrow cleft a sharp

trail they are on and which direction they are going. Hunters can identify individual animals. After a period of time the deer is "patterned," their habits are quite well documented. The hunter then sets up in a likely spot based on time of day of usual traffic and waits. Obviously, it is not all that simple, but that is the basic idea. To some a deer in the freezer is a deer in the freezer...

The question becomes: is getting the deer the most important part or is out witting the deer with your own work, knowledge of woods lore and out smarting the animal the most important part?

Thinking about these things a fair amount, I have come to some conclusions. I know we can now change channels on the TV without having to get up and go over to the set and turn the knob. Even so, I am not enthralled with all this technology. Just because a computer can do it, doesn't mean that it needs to be done. Look at all the gadgets and gizmos in cars; how much is really necessary. I spent years learning to back up and park using the mirrors. I don't need a camera.

Bottom line, I have come to realize that I am an analog man forced into and stuck in a digital world.

Bob writes from the shores of Craig Pond where he and his wife raised three kids and 10 grandkids. He is an avid outdoorsman and a former Registered Maine Guide. He can be reached at craigponder@myfairpoint.net

They spent hours and hours out in the woods locating deer trails and following them from one end to the other. They found where the deer laid down, where they fed, where the bucks scraped and rubbed. Hunters not only learned about the animal, they learned about the woods. They found the most likely places to hunt and had to get their deer by their own wits. Yes, they did take short cuts, they did drive deer. Oops! They didn't drive, that was not legal they "made a little push". Things went so far that during the depression,

shooter or two would shoot as many as they could. This is how they fed a whole neighborhood.

Today the standard operating procedure is to go into the woods and set out a number of trail cameras. The new ones are all satellite connected so that the operator can be notified as a deer passes in real time. A person can sit in his recliner and be notified when an animal passes a particular camera. At the minimum, they know the date and time of every animal that triggers the camera. Which



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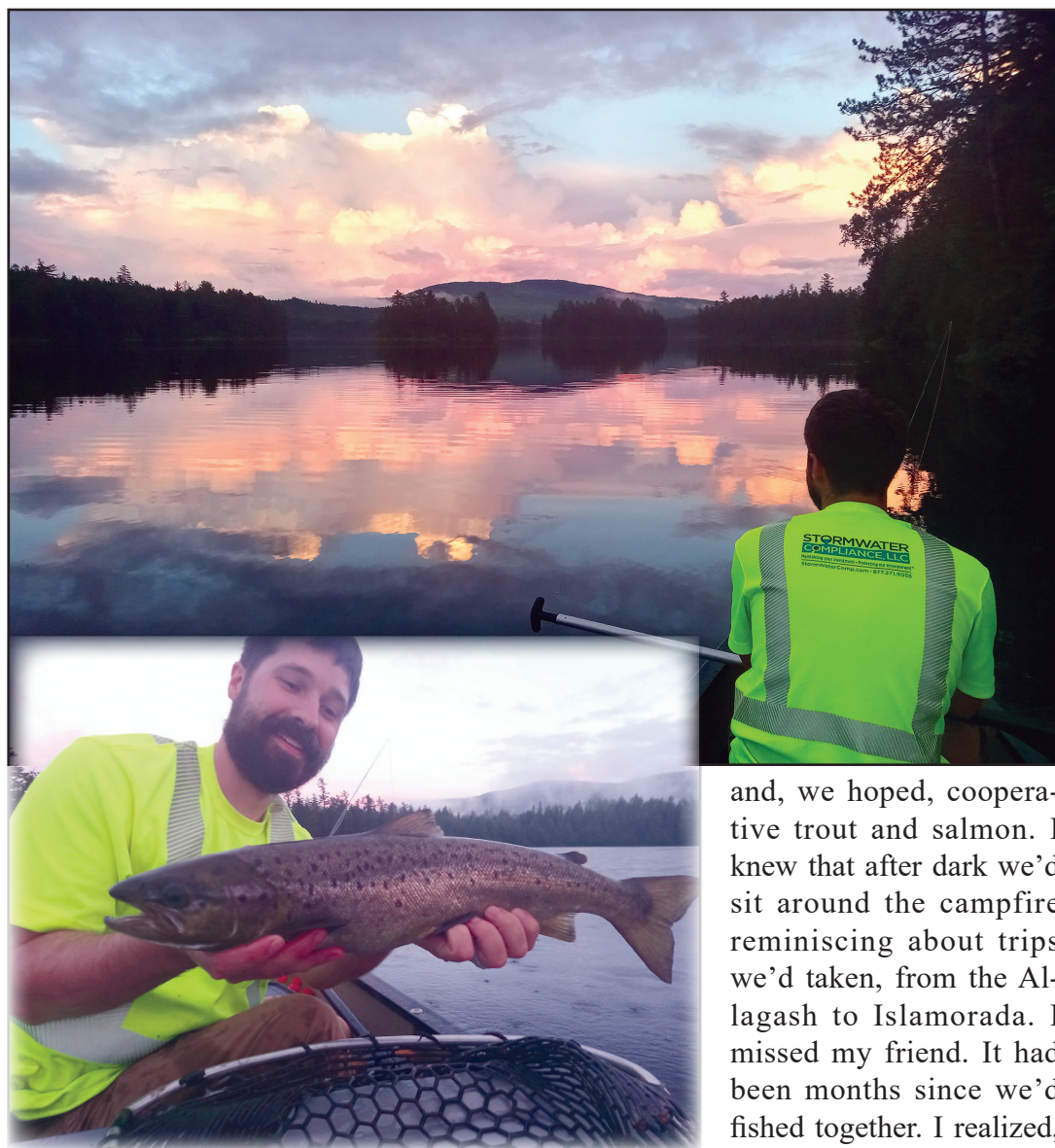
Winter Daydreams

Back in college, a friend once said, “It’s never good to wish away time.” She was right. Yet here I am, mid-winter, daydreaming of spring--wishing I could sneak off for an evening on the river, which I realize is right now encased in ice. I find myself day-

It was mid- June, one of those wet springs in which it seemed to rain every day. I reserved an island on Upper Pierce Pond, in Somerset County, a place I’d returned to nearly every summer since I was 12. Parker would drive up after work to meet me and

undeveloped pine forest beyond. No cell service, no other anglers on the pond. As I fixed my tent, then hung the tarp over the picnic table, I imagined Parker’s arrival, heartened to know we’d have this time together, without distraction, just our fly rods

Evening light on rain clouds and a rare moment of dry weather.



Parker holds his fly-caught salmon (released) on Upper Pierce Pond.

dreaming about fly-fishing, and a particular trip several years back with another friend, a dear one, one I don’t often see anymore.

This was before Parker got married, before he became a father to twin girls. He worked long hours and I worked odd jobs between teaching semesters.

stay one night. He hoped to get out early, be on the road by 4:30, which would get him to the unimproved boat launch around 7p.m.

I had set up camp with excitement the previous morning. The small island had a sandy beach facing southeast, towards the pond’s largest basin, with

and, we hoped, cooperative trout and salmon. I knew that after dark we’d sit around the campfire reminiscing about trips we’d taken, from the Allagash to Islamorada. I missed my friend. It had been months since we’d fished together. I realized, with some sadness, that we fished together less and less each season.

By the time I got the tarp set above the picnic table, rain clouds moved in. For the next hour it rained so hard that water pooled in the tarp. I stood on the table to clear the pools before the sagging tarp collapsed. I didn’t bother with the canoe. I watched it fill with rainwater. No



**Scenes
From
The Wild**
by Ryan Brod
Portland, ME

lightning, no thunder--just sheets of rain, so heavy that droplets appeared to rise from the pond’s surface, rather than fall from the dark clouds above. When the rain finally slowed, I bailed the canoe, mindful not to stand in the shallows too long given the resident leeches that quivered past like thin black ribbons. I checked my tent, which was, mercifully, still dry. I

He arrived around 7:30 p.m., and I paddled over and helped him carry his belongings from his truck to the canoe. He was late because hard rain had washed out part of the entrance road, and he had to navigate the washout. We loaded the canoe and pushed off, Parker in the front seat still in his reflective work vest. Clouds settled on the tops of the

I knew that after dark we’d sit around the campfire reminiscing about trips we’d taken, from the Allagash to Islamorada. I missed my friend. It had been months since we’d fished together.

rigged my 5-weight fly rod with a homemade Elk Hair Caddis, hopeful that the weather would break long enough to fish. I watched the last of the raindrops dimpling the surface as light faded.

I slept in, made breakfast on the Coleman stove. By mid-day the wind dropped and I paddled over to a stream mouth, anchored and scouted the area for evening. Every once in a while a small, dull-brown caddis fly would zig-zag across the surface. A salmon would dart after it, missing the caddis, trying again until it had secured the meal. I landed a small trout on a caddis imitation, then returned to camp, read a while, napped, made an early dinner, and got back on the water around six, fishing close enough to the launch that I’d hear Parker’s truck on the gravel entrance road.

hills and mist lifted from the pond.

I gave Parker my 5-weight with the Elk Hair Caddis, just in case, and we paddled swiftly towards our island so he could offload his gear. He told me about work and I told him about the trout I’d caught and the rainstorm--“You’re lucky you missed all that rain,” I told him.

A few hundred yards before the island I saw a fish rise off our port bow.

“Grab that 5-weight,” I said, and Parker gently set his paddle down. I back-paddled to slow us and the fish rose again, left to right, covering ground the way salmon do when they cruise the surface looking for bugs. Parker stripped out fly line and the fish rose again, closer. I reminded him to give the fish a big lead and he did, landing a 50-foot cast dead ahead.

(Dreams cont. pg 51)

Green Mountain Report

by Bradley Carleton,
Charlotte, VT



As I walk onto the ice in the dawn, the horizon is changing from a dark blue to a heavenly purple and I know that, as with all darkness, we will again see the blessing and warmth of the light. A tear rolls down my cheek as I walk toward our intended spot far out

cember just days away from the New Year. For those who didn't know Gray, he was a tireless promoter of hunting, fishing, and all outdoor sports in Vermont. He started Vermont Outdoor Guide's Association (VOGA.org) and worked to promote

As I drill my holes into the ice of our lakes and ponds this month, if I am facing away from you, into the wind, and sitting quietly, please respect that the tear rolling down my face and freezing on my chin is in his honor.

in the bay. As it cools on my face, I think of my dear friend, Gray Stevens, and pray aloud to the sunrise. "Gray, I know that where you are, the sun is shining on you and the soft light of winter brightens your grizzled face as you greet the dawn with your deep-chested laugh."

Gray Stevens, a legendary leader, and ambassador of all traditional sports left us this past De-

cember just days away from the New Year. For those who didn't know Gray, he was a tireless promoter of hunting, fishing, and all outdoor sports in Vermont. He started Vermont Outdoor Guide's Association (VOGA.org) and worked to promote

that we spoke as one. He was a founder of Vermont Outdoor Woman and the concept of "Doe Camp" which introduced women to the outdoor adventures of hunting, shooting, fishing, wilderness survival. Most importantly, he inspired women to find their own voice and to stand confidently among the "old boy network" as equals.

As I drill my holes into the ice of our lakes and ponds this month, if I am facing away from you, into the wind, and sitting quietly, please respect that the tear rolling down my face and freezing on my chin is in his honor. If you choose to engage with me, pull up a seat and sit quietly beside me. and don't say a word. Just sit with me, quietly, while I pray that Gray is watching us from the Big Pond in the Sky.

If Gray were still with us, he would want you to join the crowd that is a part of the annual "Free Ice Fishing Day." This year it is Saturday, January 25. Free Ice Fishing Day is a day when anyone, resident,

or nonresident, may fish legal Vermont waters without a fishing license. In addition to the Free Ice Fishing Day, which is statewide, on the same day, is the Free Ice Fishing Festival. If you come to the Ice Fishing Festival you can learn ice

and fish. Stations Include: Hole Drilling Demos, Tip-up Techniques, Jigging Techniques, Ice Safety, Fish Identification and Regulations Explained, Knot-tying Know-How, and Tackle Craft. Plus, enjoy a fish fry and co-



fishing basics, from tip-ups to filleting fish. VT F&W staff will help everyone to enjoy a winter day of ice fishing with friends. Once again, Tom's Bait and Tackle is generously donating all bait for the day. The Festival will be held at Silver Lake State Park, 20 State Park Beach Rd, Barnard, VT, from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The schedule for the day is as follows:

11:00 am - Registration Opens (Pre-register online (recommended)) or register at the event

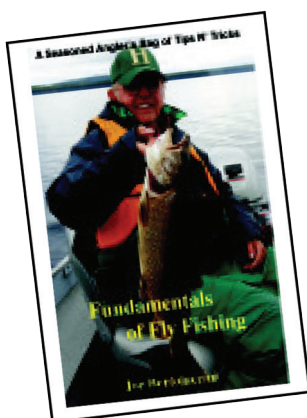
11:00 am to 3:00 pm - Fun Family Activities

F&W staff and Let's Go Fishing volunteers will help new ice anglers learn the basics of winter ice fishing through a variety of educational stations. After completing the stations, participants will have the opportunity to borrow a rod

coa (bring your own mug if you can)! Bring your own ice-fishing equipment or you can borrow staff equipment. Be sure to dress warmly (in layers is the best) and wear winter boots. Yaktraxs or ice cleats are also a great idea for traction. For more information, contact Corey Hart (Corey.Hart@vermont.gov) by email or call 802-505-5562.

Now, let's pay homage to one of the more overlooked hunting opportunities in our great state. Cottontail and snowshoe hare. There is little winter activity more pleasing than snowshoeing into the brambles and pines in pursuit of rabbits. Cottontail rabbits are primarily found in the Southwestern Foothills and Champlain Valley. They favor the varied (Tear cont. pg 57)

HOT OFF THE PRESS!



Fundamentals of Fly Fishing A Seasoned Angler's Bag of Tips N' Tricks. by Joe Bertolaccini

"Bertolaccini's Fundamentals of Fly Fishing is full of great information and guidance, and not just for the new fly fisher. From rods to flies and knots to castin. Joe covers it all in detail" -George Smith, Maine author, outdoorsman and outdoor columnist

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The Talisman

Many hunters have funny rituals that they probably don't talk about openly with many people; you know, those little superstitions and rabbits' feet-like devices they carry with them because they believe such things bring them luck. Many years ago, when the Maine State Museum was housed in the first floor of the capitol building, a favorite attraction was a chair made of deer antlers and upholstered with a buck pelt that was well-worn, and had once been housed at the offices of the Inland Fisheries and Game commissioner; the tradition was that if you sat in the chair, you would bag a buck for sure.

Of course, luck is a big part of hunting. It's the big intangible; you put the hours in at the range, you take good care of your gear, you scout promising places to hunt, and then all you need is... a little luck.

In conversations with my hunting friends, practically all of them have some device or another that they are certain gives them a leg up. I have heard about lucky pants, lucky hats, lucky compasses and lucky

knives. This is not limited to hunting, of course. A teammate of mine on the University of Maine cross-country team always raced in what he considered a lucky pair of socks; they were the socks he had worn in his high school state championship mile race, which he won in the amazing time of 4:15.2. I'm not sure they were so lucky; he never ran a faster time, but still wore them every race. He never knew when they

don't know if it works or not," he laughed. "But I shoot a lot of deer."

Then, there's the inverse of lucky talismans; there are the bad signs, too. For me, if I'm heading to where I'm going to hunt and a deer crosses the road in front of me, I may as well go home. I've never seen a deer in the field on a day when that's happened. One fellow told me that every year the local fire department would hold a bake

A fellow I used to deer hunt with would, the night before opening day, pick out a piece of charcoal from his wood stove and use it to draw a picture, cave-art style, of a buck. He would fold the drawing up with his hunting license and put it in his wallet.

would produce gold again, I suppose.

Hunters, though, follow such rituals more closely than most other folks. A fellow I used to deer hunt with would, the night before opening day, pick out a piece of charcoal from his wood stove and use it to draw a picture, cave-art style, of a buck. He would fold the drawing up with his hunting license and put it in his wallet. I asked him when he showed me one if it worked. "I

sale to benefit the town library the week before deer season, and the only years he didn't tag a buck were the years he failed to buy a pie at the sale. Others swear that you can't shoot a buck if you have any of the previous years' venison still in your freezer.

For good luck, some people step outside on their way to go hunting, pause, look to the sky, and say out loud "Today is my lucky day!" Others always carry a quarter with that



Marsh Island Chronicles

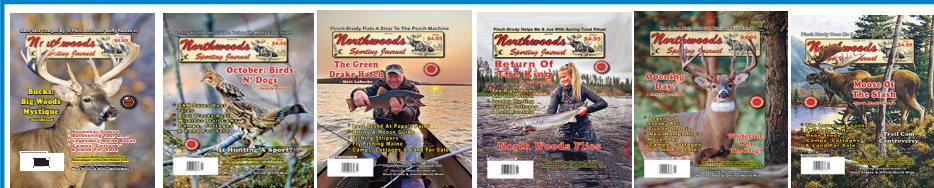
by Matthew Dunlap,
Old Town, ME

year's date on it; others, a tooth from the last deer they shot. Another outdoor writer I spoke with on the topic swears that when he gets a new shotgun, smudging a bit of blood from the first bird he shoots with it changes the way the gun carries almost to the point of making the gun an ex-

do that seem to feel luckier than the years I don't, although my statistics don't indicate it's been a decisive factor for me.

For some, it's the literal rabbit's foot, which has a truly strange origin; according to legend, in order to be an effective good-luck amulet, the rabbit in question has to have been taken either in a cemetery or by someone with an unusual trait such as being cross-eyed. Like love potions, black cats, and magic charms, the effectiveness of such devices seems to lie only in the eye of the beholder. If someone thinks it works, though, I guess for them it beats taking all that time to scout the edge of a cornfield.

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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Vermont Ramblings

by Dennis Jensen
Vermont

So, by now, those deer rifles have been cleaned and put away until next fall, the turkey gun is fast asleep in the gun cabinet and, since this is the nearly-dead month of February, what do you do?

Well, if you are an ice fisherman and the weather has been like one of those

At press time it was too early to tell but, with the very cold temperatures we have been seeing, the ice fishing season could be a good one.

Meanwhile, things have been so bad that all of the major ice fishing tournaments, including my favorite, the Lake Bo-

While I did have a good decade of ice fishing after I retired in 2010, my deep freeze fishing went south with my good friend Jim Lynch.

old-time Februarys, you have more than enough to do. But over here in Vermont, we have witnessed two straight years of little or no ice fishing.

moseen Ice Fishing Derby, were called off for the past two years.

After retirement, I shopped around to see what kind of volunteer work I

could get into and, over the past decade worked for two different groups, one that serves to house and bring ex-prisoners back into society and the other at the local senior center.

Today, I am a proud member of the Castleton Lions Club, a group of selfless people who serve my town and several others by screening seniors for certain ailments, providing eye testing and eyeglasses for those in need, offering a number of scholarships to high school seniors, holding a kids' fishing derby each spring and awarding scholarships to kids in need who want to attend the Vermont Fish and Wildlife's summer camp programs.

In years past, I watched the dedication

of the Lions, particularly during their annual fishing derby, held each February. So, earlier this year I joined the Lions and have found the experience very rewarding.

While I did have a good decade of ice fishing after I retired in 2010, my deep freeze fishing went south with my good friend Jim Lynch. A bad shoulder made working an ice auger all but impossible and Jim made up for it. Truth is, after Jim left for Florida, my desire to catch fish through the ice has diminished.

So, here we are in February. And with time on our hands, how do we stay out of trouble? Write more, that's for sure. And read more. The deer seasons cut into both pastimes and now

there are no more excuses. Maybe it is time to get back to that novel I started, what, six years ago? Well, maybe not. See? More indecision. It's like some kind of February blues. Yeah, that's what it is. It's way too cold today to take that walk. That two-mile walk up and back on the dirt road where I live.

Out the kitchen window, from where I work today, the birds are really hammering the feeder. And the squirrels. The gray squirrels, not the reds. Oh, and by the way. I haven't seen a red squirrel at the feeder or in the woods, for that fact, for more than a year. That is strange. I can only come up with one explanation and here it is: The fisher, a carnivorous mammal belonging to the otter family, is a splendid predator and red squirrels make up a good part of its diet.

Forgive me if I have passed along this story in a previous column but it is worth repeating: My brother Tom, hunting out of his deer camp maybe 15 years ago, told of how he watched a fisher chase a red squirrel up a cedar tree, fall from that tree by some 15 feet, then climb back up into that tree. Moments later, that fisher came back down the tree with a red squirrel in its mouth,

Okay, so we rambled a bit in this piece. But check out the name of this column and it is clear that I have every right to ramble. Stay tuned.

Dennis Jensen is a freelance writer from Vermont.

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(See pg 47)



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February, then March...

Mid winter it may be, but there is no need to stay by the fire. There are many ways for the hunter of angler to enjoy being outside in pursuit of fish or game.

Take rabbit hunting for example.

Let me make it clear, I know we are not hunting rabbits in northern Vermont, but that is what we all say. Actually we are hunting hare, snowshoe hare to be precise. However, I have never heard anyone say they were going

Near the Canadian border in Norton and Holland is the Bill Sladyk WMA. It is a place you want to be sure you have a good compass and a map as it can be easy to get turned around.

On the south side of Route 105 connecting Island Pond and Bloomfield are Wenlock and West Mountain WMAs. That is where I have hunted snowshoe hare more than any in other area of the state. That may just be because I am

out of the house this time of year. Ice fishing which is at its height in February with nearly all water ice covered with the exception of the main body of Lake Champlain which does not freeze every year and sections of our rivers.

Catch and release is gaining in popularity as people realize that a stringer of fish is not the only way to enjoy fishing. The fun is in the catching and, if you don't intend to eat the fish, releasing it

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

**Anne Bradstreet
(1612-1672)**

hare hunting or that they had hare hounds.

Many hunters, myself included, enjoy brisk February days snowshoeing in the woods or swamps with a shotgun. Snowshoe hare are the favorite game sought by many and the season remains open through March 9. Listening to a good hound pursuing a bunny through a swamp is a real joy.

Snowshoe hare can be found in much of Vermont but my favorite places to hunt are in the Northeast Kingdom counties of Essex, Orleans and Caledonia. That is an area of big woods with very little posting and much public land.

Several Fish and Wildlife Management Areas in the Kingdom are prime snowshoe habitat as is the Nulhegan Basin of the Conte National Wildlife Refuge.

intimately familiar with the two areas.

Still further south is the Victory Basin WMA in the town of Victory. It is bisected by the Moose River and includes some thick cover as well as open hardwoods.

To the west in Caledonia County is Steam Mill Brook WMA which is at a higher elevation but easily accessible by road.

On the north side of Route 105, across from Wenlock WMA, is the Nulhegan Basin of the Conte National Wildlife Refuge. It too is a good bet for those after snowshoe hare.

A day spent on snowshoes in pursuit of snowshoe hare is a good way to get some exercise and fresh air and some good eating if you are quick and accurate with your shotgun.

A meal of fresh fish is what gets many of us

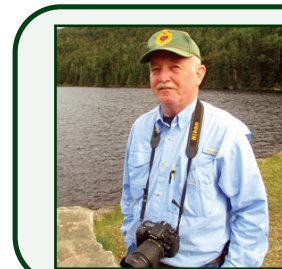
makes sense.

Many of the popular species of fish have minimum legal lengths. The usual reason for minimum length requirements is to allow the fish to reach a size and age at which it is able to spawn at least once before being killed.

Unfortunately, many of the fish that are released die because the person doing the releasing didn't know how.

I hope you will give some thought to the following provided by retired Vermont Fish & Wildlife biologist Len Gerardi.

"Pull your fish in slowly, especially if you are bringing it up from deep water, can feel that it is a small fish, or plan to release it regardless of size. When a fish is brought up quickly from the depths, its air bladder may inflate due to pressure changes.



Outdoors In Vermont

by Gary W. Moore,
Bradford, VT

A "bloated" fish may have difficulty swimming away.

"Leave the fish in the water as much as possible and avoid handling it with dry hands or mittens. Allowing a fish to flop around in the snow or to freeze-dry in an icy wind will seriously lower its chances for survival. When you look at the fish in the hole and feel it is so close to the minimum size requirement that you need to measure it, why not just let it go without measuring and wait for a bigger one.

"When releasing a fish it usually is best to leave the hook in it. Use a fingernail clipper or some other cutting tool to cut the leader as close to the hook as possible. If a fish is hooked superficially (in the jaw or mouth), you may be able to remove the hook gently without seriously injuring the fish, using wet hands or needle nose pliers while the fish remains in the water. If the fish you are going to release is hooked "deep" (in the throat or stomach), cut the fish free, rather than trying to recover your hook. You can not extract a hook from a fish's gills, throat or stomach, with or without tools, without injuring it unnecessarily and probably fatally. Hooks are inexpensive, and certainly not as valuable as the chance of catching the same fish later, at a bigger size! Also, avoid using corrosion-resistant stainless steel or gold hooks. It is remarkable how rapidly a fish's stomach juices will dissolve a normal bronzed

hook."



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. copyright 2025 Gary W. Moore

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Maple Country Outdoors

by Ben Wilcox,
Essex, VT

My life consists of three seasons, sugaring, fishing, and hunting. While they do overlap, my brain seems only capable of focusing on one at a time. It is therefore sad, but also a big relief, when hunting season ends and I can focus on my actual job of making maple syrup again.

new 50 kw backup generator, and did some work in the sugarhouse to streamline our cleaning process. This, along with packing, delivering and selling our maple products, keeps us quite busy.

Once deer hunting season wraps up in mid December its go time. We at-

time the weather can bump up above freezing and we need to be available to run vacuum pumps and collect sap. We try to take advantage of lower snow levels in early winter to make tapping easier and faster. We also try to get in on the January thaw and make a bit of syrup.

It is really nice to get at least one small boil in to make sure all of our equipment is in working

We try to take advantage of lower snow levels in early winter to make tapping easier and faster. We also try to get in on the January thaw and make a bit of syrup.

Work in the sugarwoods never stops, but we are "in season" from December to May. We begin by working like crazy to finish up any projects by mid December. This off season we removed 4500 taps worth of sap lines and re installed new, replaced an additional 3000 drops lines, re-surfaced our driveway, repaired some woods roads, managed a timber harvest, installed 500 new taps, installed a

tack the woods going over every line in our 30,000 tap sugarbush. Throughout the year trees fall, wires break, lines get chewed by animals, and fittings crack. We usually budget 2 weeks to get the woods ready to tap. Tapping begins between December 26 and the first week of January. This year we will be ready to start tapping right after Christmas. After the first taps are in, the season has officially arrived. At any

order after sitting idle for 9 months. Its a guarantee that something will not work, sometimes its an oil burner, reverse osmosis pump, vacuum pump among other things, or all three on a bad start up. Getting those major issues taken care of when we have a small amount of sap saves a lot of stress when the sap is running well.

By the end of the month we are usually close to finishing tapping, and the crew is are getting really really sick of it. Everyone is starting to get sore and run down from all the

Sugaring Begins



The sugarwoods during an early season sap run.

hard work. My neck and shoulder have generally locked up from lifting a drill over my head 500 times a day for weeks on end. Everyone will be dealing with multiple physical issues but still show up everyday. It takes a tough individual to make it through a tapping season. Dealing with winter weather and snow, while walking the side of a mountain all day carrying about 35 pounds of gear for a 4-6 weeks every day will separate the weak minded. Often new people can't handle it and disappear after the first few days. Thankfully I've got a good crew. My dad is 71 and still taps every day. He is the toughest guy I know. It always reminds me that

you can't tell how tough a person is by the way they look or speak, because my dad neither looks nor talks tough, but will outwork anyone. By the way, he shot a beautiful wide 8 point on the last weekend of rifle season this year in our sugarwoods.

Some years January only amounts to a few barrels of syrup, others it is considerably more. It all depends on how many taps we have in when it warms up and for how long the run is. Early January runs usually see pretty good sap flow because the trees haven't frozen solid yet. When the sap runs we shift gears from tapping and focus on maintaining vacuum throughout the giant network of tubing. This is a full time job in itself that is never ending until the season is over. We are often working hours after dark in the woods fixing vacuum leaks during early season runs. On these days its common for each person to walk 8-12+ miles through deep mountain snow, often on snowshoes.

February is maybe the most unpredictable month of sugaring. We have finished tapping and hope to recover a little before the (Sugaring cont. pg 51)

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Dreams

(Cont. from pg 45)

The Elk Hair Caddis looked bulky compared to the naturals, but the salmon didn't mind. A big snout appeared, his fly vanished, and Parker lifted his rod tip. The salmon leapt and ran towards the basin.

"That didn't take long," Parker joked. He'd been there less than 20 minutes.

He fought the salmon well and I netted. Parker dipped his hands then held the salmon for a quick photo: purple-black gill plate, large black spots, shimmer of chrome below its lateral line. Three pounds of muscle, too pretty to keep, we agreed, too valuable to remove from this pond. Parker revived the salmon and it swam off.

Rain returned that night, but not before we'd built a fire and stood around it talking about the salmon. In the background, loons called into the dark. Their calls were plaintive and echoed across the water. We retired to our respective tents and woke before the sun to search again for rising fish.

Those are the details I remember most. I'll see Parker again soon, and I'll hang out with his twin girls, who are growing quickly, I'm told. When I see him, I'll remind him of our Pierce Pond trip, of the salmon he caught so quickly. We'll eat venison backstrap from this year's buck and look back at photos of the sky above Pierce

Pond and the salmon he caught. We'll make a plan to get back up there someday. And when I leave, we'll be another moment closer to spring.

Ryan Brod is a Maine Guide and author of Tributaries: Essays from Woods and Waters, which you can find online or at your local bookstore.

Sugaring

(Cont. from pg 50)

season starts. It never really works out that way, and when the weather cannot be reliably predicted past 5 days, I definitely can't take a vacation! Repairs and woods work continually pop up that we discover from the previous sap runs. In the past we have made

from a few barrels to over 1/3 of a crop in February. Next month I'll take you through March and April in the sugarwoods.

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 maplecountrysugaring@gmail.com, or on instagram @benwilcox_maplecountrysugaring.



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SEE PAGE 47



North Maine Woods

by Bill Greaves

North Maine Woods; Winter Accommodations

February is a prime month for ice fishing in the North Maine Woods. I have been traveling into the Allagash Waterway watershed with a group of friends for the past few years fishing a number of the waters open to ice fishing.

We stay at various sporting camps to take advantage of the creature

Chesuncook Lake and Millinocket Lake also offer a chance to catch landlocked salmon.

Ross Lake Camps located on Ross Lake in T9R15 are open during the winter months and Ross Lake is a large lake that offers great fishing for native brook trout, lake trout, whitefish and cusk.

the winter. Libby's also has gasoline and meals for snowmobilers. It is now on a maintained snowsled trail from Shin Pond and Patten. Millimagasset Lake is not far away which offers fishing for large lake trout.

On Chesuncook Lake the Chesuncook House provides lodging for both sledders and ice fishermen

Nugent's Camps located on Chamberlain Lake. Nugent's has plenty of accommodations to host many people interested in sledding or fishing lakes in proximity to Chamberlain Lake. There are snowsled

website located at www.northmainewoods.org Watch for logging trucks as only active haul roads are plowed in the winter. Please use your MURS radio to monitor truck traffic on narrow, single lane

Libby's Camps on Millinocket Lake located in T8R9 are also open in the winter. Libby's also has gasoline and meals for snowmobilers. It is now on a maintained snowsled trail from Shin Pond and Patten.

comforts that the camps have to offer. Several camps in the North Maine Woods region are open to ice fishermen or snowmobilers. I will do my best to list them for you working from north to south. Contact information for each camp and maybe some others, can be found on the North Maine Woods website as listed below. All camps offer fishing for native brook trout, lake trout, white fish and cusk.

Macannamac Camps on Haymock Lake is also open for winter and they offer maintained trails to Chamberlain Lake and other lakes in the Allagash Lake system. They also offer remote camps at Spider Lake which is open to ice fishing with trails to Big Pleasant Lake, Churchill Lake and Clear Lake.

Libby's Camps on Millinocket Lake located in T8R9 are also open in

with trails to other lakes in the region.

Just west of Chesuncook Lake is Loon Lodge, which accommodates ice fishermen who are attracted to fishing Caucomgomoc Lake, Round Pond and also popular Allagash Lake which is only open to ice fishing during the month of February.

One of the more popular winter destinations in the North Maine Woods is



trails from their camps to Eagle and Churchill Lakes and also through the woods to Allagash Lake and Chesuncook Lake.

Pittston Farm on the northeast of Seboomook Lake is open for fishermen but their more frequent visitors are snowmobilers that follow the snowsled trail around Moosehead Lake. Raymond's Store at Northeast Carry is also on that trail providing fuel and meals for sledders or Moosehead Lake ice fishermen.

And here are a few pointers related to traveling in the North Maine Woods road system in the winter. Just because a logging road is a main travel route in the summer does not mean it will be plowed in winter months. We maintain a list of plowed roads on our

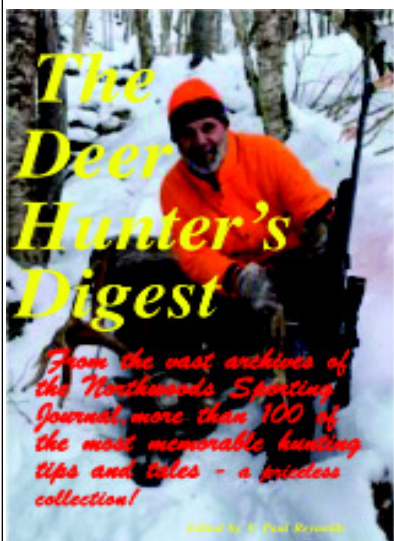
roads.

If parking, please use parking areas established by sporting camp operators if you are staying with them, use the parking lot provided by AWW staff at Chamberlain Lake or plan to shovel a place to get off the main road. And remember that riding snowmobiles on plowed roads is illegal, even on weekends. Lastly, be sure to tell someone where you are going before you leave home. If you have any questions regarding any of the suggestions in this month's column please send them along to me. I generally respond to email several times each week.



Bill Greaves is Executive Director of North Maine Woods, Inc.

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Morning Chores

It's still dark as I dress, the sun reticent to rise on such a cold, gray morning. Trudging down the stairs and into the living room, I find the woodstove still warm. I've tucked a bright yellow, long-sleeve tee-shirt into my jeans. The jeans, a pair purchased from L.L. Bean the year before our college-age daughter was born, are lined with flannel. Stained and frayed, they still keep me warm on a February morning like this one.

The dogs drag themselves from their dreams. Finnegan, the younger of our two black Labradors, noses my leg, tail wagging his hindquarters, thoughts of food on his mind. About as old as a Lab can expect to live, Winslow Homer opens one eye, swishes his tail once, then snuggles back down on the couch. The white hair lining the old dog's muzzle reminds me of the stunted trees at the top of Bosebuck Mountain after a November snow shower. Trudging into the kitchen, I fill their bowls, add a bit of warm water, and then lower them to the

hardwood floor.

After they've eaten, the dogs mill around my legs as I zip gaiters around my boots. After sliding a hooded sweatshirt over my head, I grab my work



gloves and cap from a rack by the side of the door. An oil stain above the cap's bill surrounds letters that spell out Oquossoc Marine. The stain reminds me of a pond where largemouth bass come willingly to any bushy fly cast toward its submerged logs. Down on one knee, I sweep ash from the woodstove into a bucket.

Outside, night has reluctantly receded, leaving only its brightest stars.

The sun, although yet to rise, has turned the sky above the blue spruce line crimson. My knees nearly buckle when Finnegan bumps me from behind. The young dog's legs slide out in all directions on the slippery walk. Mags takes a tentative step onto the icy slate and looks up as if to say, "I'm getting too old for this."

The birds are awake,

Outside, night has reluctantly receded, leaving only its brightest stars. The sun, although yet to rise, has turned the sky above the blue spruce line crimson. My knees nearly buckle when Finnegan bumps me from behind.

stirring from their night-time roosts. Goldfinches chatter from the branches of a nearby dogwood. A tiny wren complains from among the shriveled leaves of a rhododendron. Farther back, in the woodlot, a crow caws once, twice, three times before another takes up the refrain.

Snow remains around the base of the trees. I dump the ash behind the shed that huddles beside a lean-to where billets are stacked. The air is still, and the ash settles without blowing back in my face. Inside the shed, I grab a metal bucket hanging from a nail and fill it with sunflower hearts scooped from a plastic bin. With the dogs following at my heels, I fill the various feeders hanging from cedar posts around our property. Afterward, I replace the water in a heated bird-bath. Adding a suet cake to the metal cage nailed to a maple tree, I hear an eric cry coming from the lower field.

I trudge toward the line of spruce trees separating a number of gar-



Against The Current

by Bob Romano,
Rangeley, ME

dens from the lower field we've allowed to go fallow. When the dogs tramp into the brambles beyond the spruce, I spy a splash of red, and then catch the black-and-white wings of the pileated woodpecker as the large bird flies from the branches of a pin oak in the middle of the field.

the yard. I hang the bucket back on the nail and carry an armload of wood from the adjacent lean-to into the house.

It takes four trips to fill the metal frame beside the woodstove. Arranging cardboard and crumpled newspaper under four or five sticks of kindling, I

A wild grape vine, thick as rope, twists around the trunk of the oak that has grown tall above the unkempt landscape. The grape's fruit is withered, its leaves gone. Virginia creeper has followed the grape's ascent, spreading upward through the oak's canopy. This fall the leaves of the clinging vine had turned brilliant scarlet before slipping soundlessly through the limbs of the sturdy tree. Wild roses and barberries spread through the field. Their prickly branches are somber and gray. They droop toward the ground.

By the time I trudge back to the shed, chickadees are flying back and forth. Their undulating flight patterns crisscross

strike a match. The smell of sulfur lingers as the teepee of combustible material begins to glow. It takes a minute or two for the fire to take hold, but when it does, I add a few larger logs and close the doors of the stove.

With the warmth from the cast iron beginning to spread through the room, I remove the gaiters and boots. While I change into my regular jeans, the dogs settle themselves by the stove. Slipping into moccasins, I pad into the library and turn on the laptop. Outside the window, a female cardinal takes refuge in a red cedar. Her mate soon follows, the male's scarlet-and-black plumage in brilliant contrast to those of the female's more muted

(Chores cont. pg 57)



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.

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Defining Your Harvest

When you take that deer steak, roast, stew meat, burger out of the freezer and transform it into what you and others enjoy, do people turn their nose up at it - if it wasn't a good enough deer?

People have no idea what it was, nor do they question how big it was,

worry about how others think about what they harvest. Statements such as "Not the biggest" or "It's not a trophy, but I settled for it" have become commonplace.

Part of the pattern of this type of thinking is driven by hunting shows and other factions that in-

when you understand that you are able to provide for yourself and your family.

It is the essence of going to God's grocery store and partaking in a tradition that allows you to decide what matters to you.

Many of us desire to attain personal goals. We all dream of the trophy buck, and in fact, I have harvested them, as well as many skilled hunters

Cookin' With New England's WildCheff

by Denny Corriveau,
Kennebunkport, ME



el to where deer live – just for the hopeful opportunity of putting venison in your freezer.

Over the past four decades, I have harvested a variety of deer from button buck, different sized bucks, does and trophy bucks, with no preconceptions.

sounds. It is your time to enjoy experiences that are meaningful to you.

Each time you successfully harvest a deer, quality venison is at your table, and it will be enjoyed in whatever manner pleases you. And there is never any hesitation by you and

Hunting is a personal thing where you commune with nature and your Creator. You enter the woods to seek out an animal in nature that brings purity to your table. Untainted, no concern for how it was raised - and it brings pure nourishment to your soul.

that I know. I always go into every season with that goal in mind (we seek the big one), but we are ultimately presented with the "moment of truth" (when a deer surfaces in front of you) and you have a choice to make; your peers are not standing next to you to help make that decision for you – it's just you and nature.

No matter what you choose to do, it boils down to what matters to you. You accept that choice, you make that choice, and you learn to have peace with that choice. No apologies, no regret, but personal gratification that you paid your dues to get up in the dark, go out in the cold while others are warm in their beds, and enter the woods to trav-

While we all seek the buck of a lifetime, I have always felt that whatever the Creator destined for us in that particular year is presented to us, and it is our internal prodding that allows us the choice to take what is presented or pass on it with hopes of what you personally desire.

No apologies, no concern for what others think as it is your decision and yours only.

I encourage you to free yourself up from hunting preconceptions. Ignore the noise and allow the time you spend in nature to decompress you from the stresses of everyday life. Learn to enjoy and appreciate every moment as you take in the sights and

others to consume it with appreciation for what it is.

Tea Braised Rabbit Ingredients

- 2 wild rabbits, quartered
- 4 Earl Grey tea bags
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 orange, juiced
- 1/3 C of molasses
- 1 1/2 T of local honey
- 3 T of olive oil
- WildCheff Tuscan Blend seasoning
- WildCheff Sagemary Sea Salt
- WildCheff Chef's Grind Pepper
- 1 sweet onion, peeled and diced
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 4-6 garlic cloves, minced

Directions

In a Dutch oven bring (Harvest cont. pg 65)



or if it was a trophy. It generally never comes up in conversation while you prepare and eat that deer meat. Most never discuss criteria for determining whether your venison is worthy of the plate they consume; they are just happy that they can consume venison.

Individuals who worry about what it is, or whether they will catch flack for harvesting something others deemed as inadequate need to re-examine their mindset toward hunting.

It baffles me and "old school" hunters that deer hunting has arrived at a point where individuals

fluence people into believing that unless it's a trophy, it's not worth considering. This thinking teaches a lack of respect for hunting in general, and the animals we seek.

Hunting is a personal thing where you commune with nature and your Creator. You enter the woods to seek out an animal in nature that brings purity to your table. Untainted, no concern for how it was raised - and it brings pure nourishment to your soul. You internalize the meaning of hunting every time you go into nature as a hunter/gatherer. There is a deep sense of satisfaction



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February Question Of The Month

Can Guns Bring Back Memories?

By Randy Randall

The old man said, “The boy should have a gun of his own; one he doesn’t have to borrow when its bird season.” The younger man agreed, “I think he’s ready, Dad.” The old man continued, “Maybe we should buy him a shotgun? How about next Saturday? I’d like it to be from me.” The boy and his father pulled up in front of

said, “just so long as they’ve got a nice little 20 gauge double for junior here,” and he waved a thumb at his grandson sitting in the back seat. The old man twisted around a little and addressed the teenager. “What do you think?” he asked. “You’ve shot most of my guns, which ones did you like the best? You shot your first

in the aisles examining jackets and boots and outboard motors and sleeping bags. The fishing department was out back and the guns were upstairs. The man said, “Up these stairs

shotguns. Good used ones. You got anything?” The young man thought for a second and said, “All our old guns are over here,” and he led the way to a long aisle bordered on both

his guide had carried a .303 Enfield. All around him were old firearms and there beside the Enfield was an M-1 Garand.

The old man’s hand reached out impulsively for the old M-1. He lifted it from the rack and held it across his chest. The stock was well worn and showed many dings and scratches. The bluing was worn off parts of the barrel and the breech but his muscles knew the heft of that weapon. He knew it weighed exactly 9.5 pounds without the bayonet and sling. He knew it held eight .30 caliber rounds and that the bullet traveled at 2800 feet per second. The barrel length was 24 inches, sir! “Four grooves, right hand twist, sir! Trigger pull seven and half pounds, sir!” He knew that this gun could kill a man at over 400 yards. He knew all this, not in his head but in his hands and his shoulder. The old man grasped the Garand by the front hand guard and let the barrel slide through his fingers until the butt of the rifle gently touched the floor beside his right foot. He stiffened a little and straightened his back. He said under his breath, “order - arms.” He felt the comfortable assurance of that old weapon resting against his thigh.

The memories began to flood back into his consciousness. He began to recite the orders he thought were long forgotten. Softly he whispered to himself, (Memories cont. pg 57)

As he shuffled along he became aware of all the old firearms lined up in rows in the gun racks. He recognized some of them. There was a 30-40 Krag. He hadn’t seen one of those since Uncle Nathan had one back in the twenties.

the old man’s house at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning. The father said, “Get in the back so your grandfather can sit up front.” The old man pulled open the car door, looked inside and said, “Where you been? I thought you’d got lost. Morning’s most over.” He tossed his cane inside and slammed the car door as he heaved himself onto the seat. The young man laughed. “Not too early Dad, the sporting goods store won’t be open for another hour.” The old man scowled. “New fangled big box places. What do they think anyway? People got nothing else to do but wait around for them to open their doors? Don’t seem like they want our business.” “Oh they’ll be fine, Dad. You wait. This place has more guns then most of us see in a lifetime.”

“Well,” the old man

bird with that old Brown- ing.” “Yeah, that’s right Gramps. I liked the Brown- ing a lot.” The old man turned and faced forward again. “Yes I know. That’s a good gun. It’ll be yours someday, when I ain’t here no more, but for now you should have one all your own. I once owned a nice little Fox double. Wonder if they still make them?” The boy leaned forward in his seat. He said, “Maybe they got one that’s bored full and modified? Be a great little gun for birds.” The old man nodded, “Yeah,” he said “That’s kind of what I was thinking too.”

The giant sporting goods store was the size of an airplane hanger. Every kind of outdoor clothing or gadget was on display somewhere. Tents hung from the rafters and kayaks and canoes hung on the walls. People milled about



The late Dave O'Connor, long time columnist for Northwoods Sporting Journal.

Dad. The gun department is up top.” The old man held onto the stair railing as the three made their way up to the gun emporium. At the entrance at the top of the stairs a young man with a buzzed off haircut, an earring in one ear and wearing the store’s logo maroon tee shirt, met the men and said, “Good morning. Something I can help you fellows with?”

The old man stopped to catch his breath. He glanced at the young clerk and said, “Yes, we’d like to see some double barrel

sides by hundreds of guns leaning in racks. “I think we might have a few down here,” he said and he hurried toward the end of the aisle. The man and boy followed but the old man took it slow. As he shuffled along he became aware of all the old firearms lined up in rows in the gun racks. He recognized some of them. There was a 30-40 Krag. He hadn’t seen one of those since Uncle Nathan had one back in the twenties. And here was an old Enfield. When he had gone moose hunting in Canada

Memories

(Cont. from pg 56)

“port - arms,” and he lifted the rifle smartly up across his chest. He held it there, solidly, with only a slight tremble in his hands. He knew by touch the trigger housing group, the barrel and receiver group, and the stock group. He knew those parts as if his life depended on them. At one time it did. “Right shoulder - arms,” he intoned and he deftly set the rifle on his right shoulder. “Present - arms,” he said a little louder and he quickly let the gun slide off his shoulder into his hands. He held it poker straight in front of his eyes with the barrel aimed straight up at the ceiling. He didn’t blink but stared straight ahead.

Inside his balding head he began to see sights and hear sounds he thought he’d never experience again - like the flash of enemy gunfire, the sound of clanking tanks and rumbling trucks, the whine of incoming ordnance, the blare of sirens and the cries of wounded men in a ditch. The old man closed his eyes in remembrance. He could still feel the fear

and hear the sounds of battle. He took a breath and regained his composure. “Inspection - arms,” he said aloud and without thinking he ported the weapon and his left hand automatically shoved the bolt back. It locked open with an audible click. The old man tipped his head and looked quickly into the empty chamber.

He remembered how the ammunition came in clips of eight and how you shoved a loaded clip down into the magazine. “Port - arms,” he said quite out loud now, and he depressed the follower and let the bolt slam home not forgetting to pull his thumb out of the way. It had been eons, but he had not forgotten. His index finger automatically sought out the safety on the front of the trigger guard. “Left shoulder - arms,” he now repeated to himself, and he set the weapon on his left shoulder. “Port - arms,” he said again and he briefly held the gun to his chest. He could feel the warm wood of the stock swell under his hand. He remembered his battle sight adjustments, one click up for 200 yards. His voice spoke again, “order - arms”

and once again he let the weapon slip quietly down by his side. “Parade - rest,” the old man said to himself, and he tilted the barrel of the rifle forward as he sidestepped with his left foot. If his buddies had been there he would have ordered “stack - arms,” but they weren’t. All gone. Gone on ahead of him. Some never came home.

All it took was holding that old gun and it all came back. All the years since seemed to fade away. It seemed like only yesterday he was tramping through Italy with Patton in the lead. They fought their way up into France and they pushed on into Germany. Slogging through mud, sleeping in the rain, eating cold meat out of a can; struggling to keep the rifle clean and the action free. He knew his life depended on that rifle; what Patton had called the greatest battle instrument ever devised, and now here it was standing in the rack in the back of the sporting goods store among the “old” guns.

The old man’s hands

were shaking now as he set the M-1 gently back on the rack. The grandson had come back and saw the wetness in the old man’s eyes. “Grandpa,” he said, there’s a Fox twenty gauge. Are you crying Gramps? Are you ok? People are watching,” he said. The old man glanced around. He became aware of the odd silence in the gun shop and the group of strangers gathered behind him and in the next aisle. Even the busy clerks had stopped their sales pitches and were staring at the old veteran. “You ok Grandpa?” the boy asked again. The old man looked at the boy and said softly, “Yes, yes, I’m alright. Just let me put this old gun away.”

Randy Randall lives in Saco. He owns and operates Marston’s Marina on the Saco River.

Chores

(Cont. from pg 53)
orange-and-olive feathers. The pair seeks quieter surroundings when a mixed flock of songbirds arrive.

Like a rowdy crowd of Times Square revelers, chickadees and titmice flutter among the cedar’s branches. They are accompanied by a number of finches, both gold and red. I count at least two downy woodpeckers among the partygoers. But it’s a nut-hatch that catches my attention. The bird’s black-and-white head and gray shoulders are every bit as formal as Fred Astaire in his hat, tails, and cane. As the little bird tap-dances up the trunk of the cedar, I’m reminded I’ve yet to begin this month’s article for the Northwoods Journal.

With a sigh, I stare at the empty screen. After a long moment, I begin pecking at the keyboard. The letters M O R N I N G appear, followed by a space and then the letters C H O R E S. Birds flutter about the feeders. I notice the sky has turned darker. Perhaps it will rain. I look over at the metal tube leaning in the corner of the room beside my waders. It won’t be long now.

Tear

(Cont. from pg 46)

habitat of agricultural lowlands, brushy hedgerows, overgrown fields, briar thickets, and shrub-filled creek bottoms. Snowshoe Hare are most abundant in areas with active forest management, particularly in the Green Mountains and Northeast Kingdom. The greatest concentrations are found in areas with dense, low-growing softwood stands, such as cedar swamps, spruce bogs, and cut-over areas with

thickets of young spruce and fir. Rabbit season runs straight through the second Saturday in March and for WMU’s D&E, through March 31.

Bradley Carleton is Executive Director of Sacred Hunter.org, a privately owned Limited Liability Corporation that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature through hunting, fishing, and foraging. His writing can be followed on <https://sacredhunter.substack.com/>

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Kineo Currents



by **Suzanne AuClair,**
Rockwood, ME

It's the heart of winter and the Moosehead Lake Region is all about the outdoors. Some things to plan for: the Moosehead Lake Togue Derby Jan. 31 to Feb. 2; the Wilderness Sled Dog Race, Feb. 8; the Greenville Fire Department's Fishing Derby March 1-3. Check the dates on-line for any of these, in case weather ends up moving them. There's also hundreds of miles of excellent snowmobile trails and plenty of skiing and snowshoeing trails, again depending on weather. Something new in recent years for the young at heart is winter mountain climbing with ice cleats or crampons.

No matter what your pleasure, after being outdoors all day, there is nothing better than topping the day off with a hot shower, a hot toddy, and a hot, super delicious meal. For our house, that means deer and dinner rolls. These recipes are tried and true, and keep

people coming back asking for more.

Venison Stew

3 lbs. deer meat, cubed
2 Tlbsp. fat
3 onions, sliced
1 tsp. marjoram
3 tsp. salt
pepper to your taste
1/4 tsp. cloves
1 bay leaf
6 medium carrots,

mer until veggies are soft. Sometimes I add a can of diced stewed tomatoes, if the mood hits. Thicken stew with a mixture of cold water and flour, about a quarter cup made like a loose paste.

Serve stew over heaping mound of mashed potatoes.

Deer Steak

Fry deer steaks in a little butter, salt, pepper in a hot skillet. (It's worth saying, sometimes simplest is the best.) Serve with hot

No matter what your pleasure, after being outdoors all day, there is nothing better than topping the day off with a hot shower, a hot toddy, and a hot, super delicious meal. For our house, that means deer and dinner rolls.

sliced bite size

1 small turnip, sliced
bite size

6 cups boiling water
Rub ground cloves, salt and pepper into meat. Brown quick in fat in a deep kettle over medium-high heat. Add onions, bay leaf, marjoram, and water. Simmer 1 1/2 hours. Add vegetables and sim-

biscuits or dinner rolls.

Mile-High Dixmont Dinner Rolls

This recipe is impressive to put on the table, and easy to make. The big, soft bread is super quick, only needs one rising, and goes with any meal. It is especially good served warm, slathered with butter, and used to mop up stews, sauces, or homemade beans. This was passed down through a family friend, Sonya Erskine, who was a great cook. I use it often at home. These rolls are

bought out in seconds at the annual church fair. Sometimes they don't even make it to the table!

Dissolve: 2 Tbsp. yeast in 1 cup warm water, with 1 Tbsp. sugar

Combine in big bowl:

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup shortening

2 tsp. salt

1 1/4 cup hot water

Add:

2 slightly beaten eggs

Stir in: the dissolved,

size. (I let them go even a little higher.) Brush a well beaten egg lightly over the top. Bake in a pre-heated 350 degree oven until golden brown.

These rolls make a great toast, cut lengthwise in half the next morning. Serve with a dab of strawberry jam, next to left over deer steak, quickly heated in butter over the stove, a couple of eggs and piping hot strong coffee. It'll start



foaming yeast mixture

Add: approx. 7 cups unbleached white flour

Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured table and knead a little bit. Cover with a warm, damp towel, let rest 15 minutes. Butter hands lightly to keep dough from sticking to them. Make rolls into a greased 9 x 12 inch pan. I usually get 24 to the pan. Cover with the warm towel and let rise until double in

off the new day outdoors just right.



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."



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See page 47

The Slobs Called Sportsmen

I simply cannot let 2024 escape us without sharing one final thought about this past deer hunting season even though, considering the topic, I'd rather not! But I'm going to anyway!

This past year has seen a rash of instances that brought hunting into full public view locally, and I just don't feel like I can, or should, look past it. I'm referring to a series of unlawful incidents that happened during the 2024 deer hunting season involving poaching, trespassing, baiting where it's not allowed, and thievery, which left me, and others, scratching our heads wondering why! Let me be clear, I'm fully aware that most hunters comply with all regulation's year in and year out. But there are individuals who think they have the right to break the law whenever, and wherever, they please. These individuals are called poachers, trespassers, and thieves, and should never be referred to as hunters! They push beyond the limits of our game laws and are never satisfied. They go to places where they're not supposed to and continually trespass and break rules. Something that was witnessed multiple times, just this past year in Western Massachusetts! Also, stealing, or damaging equipment when finding someone's tree stand, trailcam, or blind set-up, which was experienced in 2024 by hunters I know in both Massachusetts and Vermont. Plainly put, these are Game Law Violators, not hunters, and they steal from every hunter and angler who plays by the rules. Now, most law-abiding hunters,

and property owners, can't imagine why these unethical individuals would break the law in the first place, and take the chance of tarnishing their reputations, losing their hunting privileges, face hefty fines, or worse! Because if you don't have permission, or a written permit slip from the landowner that's allowing you to hunt there, then you simply cannot be on the property hunting, trespassing, stealing, or destroying someone else's property. It's not yours, so just leave it alone and get out of there! If you can't harvest a deer while playing by all the rules, then maybe you should learn a little more about deer hunting, learn how to hunt smarter, work a little harder at it, or maybe just take up something else like stamp collecting or making snow globes! Game Wardens in Massachusetts will tell you that baiting, poaching, trespassing, transporting a loaded firearm in your vehicle, and discharging a firearm to close to a dwelling, are the most common deer hunting violations in the state. And I imagine that other states are about the same. But when you add thievery into that mix, then you have a problem that's bound to escalate.

Having said all that, mistakes can and do happen. As a hunter I've made

mistakes, and maybe you have as well. I mean you can't hunt for as long as many of us have without making a mistake or two! But true hunters don't bait deer where it's not allowed! And they don't poach, trespass, or steal other people's property when they happen upon it in the woods! I mean seriously, why would anyone want, or need, to do this? And then the ques-

State game wardens do their best; but in many states they're undermanned to combat the problem. They may not always be able to respond to every call. But if they receive multiple calls about suspicious activity in the same area, they will investigate.

tion circles around again, what's the solution?

State game wardens do their best; but in many states they're undermanned to combat the problem. They may not always be able to respond to every call. But if they receive multiple calls about suspicious activity in the same area, they will investigate. One of the best ways to combat game violators is through hunter and landowner vigilance. Be aware of what's going on around and the property you're on. If someone's acting suspicious, then there's probably a reason for it. Report it to your local Game Warden and do your part to bring it to an end. Because just in case you haven't heard, trying to protect hunting rights is a never-ending

On The Ridge

by Joe Judd
Shelburn, MA



battle. For every non-hunter who supports your right to hunt, three others are lost because someone illegally trespassed on their land. For every non-hunter who supports your right to hunt, because our license fees support conservation

ignorance. These people make conscious decisions to break the law. And in so doing, have no respect for hunters, landowners, or wildlife!

So, if you're a game violator, then you should know this. You can never

and wildlife management, we lose five others because they heard that someone had poached a deer. And for every non-hunter that supports your right to hunt, because of the work we do to protect and improve wildlife habitat, ten others are lost because someone decides to discharge a firearm too close to their dwelling! When game violators commit these crimes, it's not because of an accident or

truly expect to be thought of as, "a hunter"!

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/Cabela's Pro-Staff.

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Maine Outdoor Adventure

by Rich Yvon,
Bradford, ME

In February, we all know it's primetime for our ice fishing season. This month also kicks off our sportsman's shows. The shows are a very good opportunity to find the experience for an outdoor adventure, or simply to find new and innovative products that relate to the great outdoors. Shows will also showcase non-profits that will directly benefit

the venue. Here, starts a journey and an opportunity to schedule your day at the show. Learning the show layout, you can find the booths you may be interested in and can plan accordingly. A well-rounded show will have something for everyone and can be informative, as well as entertaining. Seminars are a great way to learn about fishing, hunting opportuni-

A well-rounded show will have something for everyone and can be informative, as well as entertaining. Seminars are a great way to learn about fishing, hunting opportunities, or techniques to help you while on the water or afield.

our military, environment, or animals and fish. You may even get a chance to develop relationships with folks that have common interest and are willing to share their knowledge and experience. Networking can help with finding that perfect trip, lure, or even a fishing buddy!

At most shows, there will be a seminar schedule displayed when you enter

ties, or techniques to help you while on the water or afield. Attending these inside events are typically free and included in your general admission. For years, I've been attending, The New England Fishing Expo, I will say it's been most rewarding for me as well as my sports! Here below, are just a few high-quality shows that feature reputable, high quality,

vendors, and service providers.

Winter Shows and Expos

Eastern Maine Sportsman's Show. March 14—16, 2025.

Maine Sportsman's Show. March 28—30, 2025.

2025 New Hampshire Outdoor Expo. March 7—9, 2025.

The Great Northeast Boat Show. March 21—23, 2025.

The Fly-Fishing Show

Marlborough MA. - January 17, 18, and 19 2025.

The New England Fishing Expo - January 31, February. 1-2, 2025. (Twin Maple Outdoors booth # 207)

The New Hampshire Outdoor Expo - March 7-9, 2025.

A show is a great way to introduce our children to the outdoor community and culture. Some shows, like the New England Fishing Expo, will have some activities for them. An archery booth will introduce your child to a wonderful sport, that they can

carry with them through high school and beyond. Haven't had your little one fishing yet? No worries, a trout pond for kids will get them introduced to a trout! If you have an older son or daughter, here is a chance to shake hands with a licensed guide that can steer

and clothes are usually discounted so people can purchase without breaking the bank. Savings are always a good thing, especially anyone trying to get the family outdoors. In addition to products, services can also be found at a discount. Have you



you to an adventure, for a memory to last a lifetime. The benefit of having an experienced guide, will most definitely help you get the most out of your outdoor adventure.

The deals found in an expo can be spectacular! No matter what your outdoor passion, there is always something to find at the show. Great special deals such as tackle, lures,

always wanted to take that dream vacation? Sporting shows are always a great place to find and plan an affordable trip. So, take that first step... I encourage everyone in getting to an expo and shake off those winter dull drums. Get out with your family or friends and attend a show nearest you!

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. He is a "Certified Yamaha G3 Guide" that runs fly and spin fishing trips with a G3 Jet boat and Stealthcraft drift boat. Rich also guides Maine Partridge, Turkey, Moose, Deer hunting and recreation adventures.

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Fresh Trail

Apricity; a now obsolete word meaning the warmth of the sun in winter. I like that there is a word describing the sensation of the sun, low in the sky, providing ever so subtle warmth on a cold day that is full of arctic air.

joy accompanies snowshoers and snowmobilers alike. The bright white terrain seemingly limitless to explore and break a new path. Winter in Maine is beautiful and with a good frost in the ground, the snow might just be able to

the ground painted on top with a reflector attached, or simple fluorescent tape tied to a branch... or a beer can tucked on a limb (if you know, you know).

Looking for these clues helps keep you on the designated path and ensures the trails stay open throughout the season and into the future. While a field might be an inviting place to wander off the path, unless you know the area or have permission by



"The Trail Rider"

by Dan Wilson,
Bowdoinham, ME

ter. Most snowmobiles are heavy for fresh snow and sink down to the slippery ground underneath, becoming increasingly hard to get good traction to push through the snow, unless equipped for more rugged terrain. Balance and steady speed is important to get through the biggest drifts. Moving from wide

ing myself with a heap full of snow, reminding me of Robert Frost's poem "Dust of Snow."

"The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued."

This poem is a nice reminder to be present. The snow falling on us helps disrupt our preoccupied minds to be in the here and now, seeing the light and levity in the situation. The seemingly mischievous action of the crow pulls our attention to the moment, perhaps flashing seconds of frustration and anger, quickly followed by a potential smile and laugh. We can now head on our journey with eyes open and a fresh view.



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



Snow covered hemlocks overhanging path with fresh snow.

Windswept fields laden with drifts of snow, tree branches heavy with fresh accumulation now settled, and frozen ice crystals catching rays of sunshine dazzling all in view with an array of sparkles.

Similar to fresh powder on a ski slope, the same

stay for awhile.

The one who goes first often has the hardest job both in exertion and prowess. Fortunately, when enjoying a park or a trail opened for use by landowners, there is usually a marked path to follow. Signage, stakes in

Similar to fresh powder on a ski slope, the same joy accompanies snowshoers and snowmobilers alike. The bright white terrain seemingly limitless to explore and break a new path.

the landowner, there could be hazards or crops hidden beneath the surface, so look for the signs and stay on the trail.

Snow that is too deep may become problematic and hard to navigate by sled or by foot. I equate the feeling of snow that is almost too deep on a snowmobile to be similar to that of a water ski or kayak, where you bound back and forth in the snow like waves and wakes in the wa-

open spaces to a narrowed trail through the woods, snow covered trees add beauty and an obstacle when passing through. Low hanging branches covered in snow can fill your collar if you're too hasty. In some of the old wood roads on our property, we usually stop for a moment and walk ahead to shake off a few branches before diving in. Every now and again I might decide just to forge through and end up dust-

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Best Bassin'

by Bill Decoteau,
Hampden, MA



New England weather patterns were penned perfectly by Samuel Clemens, "If you don't like the weather, then wait a minute it will change." Having survived 74 years of New England winters, I can agree with Clemens (Mark Twain), just about every winter was different than the previous. During many of these winters I traveled south with B.A.S.S. Bass-

example Dale Hollow Reservoir with 16,710 miles of surface water, expanding into 27,700 water acres, while stretching through northern Tennessee and Kentucky. "Mesmerized by the sheer appearance of Dale Hollow Reservoir maps has the average angler scratching their heads as to where to start and what to do," says Todd Hollowell. Adding, "How-

highland reservoirs open water offers avid anglers an excellent opportunity to fine tune their 45-55-degree cold-water angling skills. And conceivably catch their biggest bass of a lifetime. In fact, it was on Dale Hollow where in 1955 David Hayes caught the World Record 11 lb. 15 oz. Smallmouth Bass! Without modern electronics, nor high-definition

on other large bodies of water. Traditional techniques have always been dependably consistent, and when it comes to the "If it's not broken, then don't

tional period is a Football Jig!" But not just any football jig, Hollowell keeps his game plan simple and consistent. His rod is a 7'6" Elite custom graphite

The size of these southern impoundments is overwhelming! Take for example Dale Hollow Reservoir with 16,710 miles of surface water, expanding into 27,700 water acres, while stretching through northern Tennessee and Kentucky.

master University as well as The Bass University. During these seminar programs I developed strong friendships with Professional Anglers, The late Tony Bean Smallmouth Expert, Mark Menendez B.A.S.S. Pro and Todd Hollowell FLW/MLF Pro-Angler. All three are Tennessee and Kentucky Highland Reservoir Expert Bass Anglers.

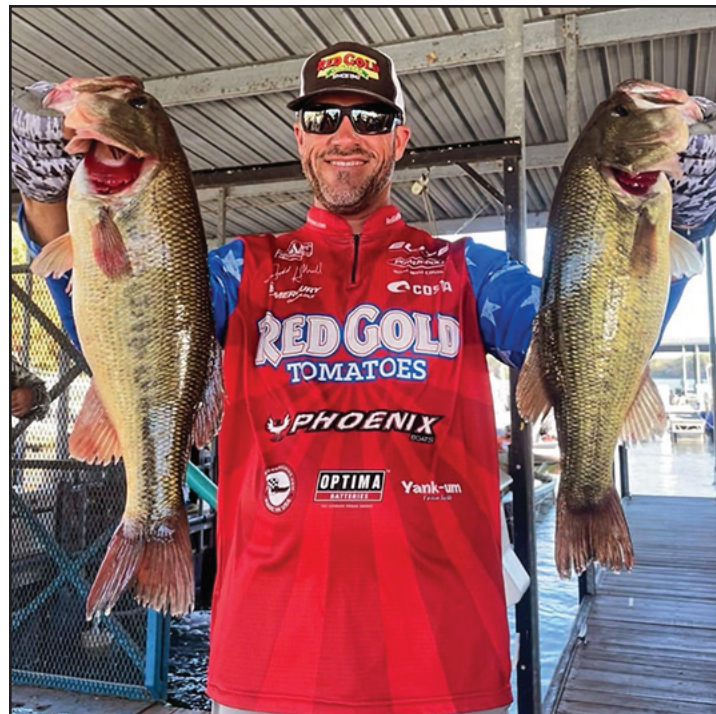
The size of these southern impoundments is overwhelming! Take for

ever, I highly recommend anglers visiting Dale Hollow Lake, hire a guide before venturing out on their own." Indeed, hiring a guide will save visiting anglers both time and money. One popular Dale Hollow Lake contact Todd Hollowell highly recommends is Obey River Fishing in Celina, TN. (www.Obey-RiverFishing.com)

While northern waters most likely are ice covered in February, southern

sonars, Hayes trolled his deep diving Bomber Water Dog 250-300 feet behind his boat along a drop-off ledge diving his Bomber into deep water. Hayes utilized a metal rod and trolling reel spooled with 20 lb. test line to land his World Record Smallmouth. (Hayes Smallmouth is still the World Record. www.gameandfishmag.com)

Seasonal patterns resonate the same on highland reservoirs as they do



MLF Pro Angler Todd Hollowell holds two Largemouth Bass caught on Dale Hollow Lake with his signature Yank-Um Football Jig. Photo Credit: Todd Hollowell Fishing

fix it" philosophy, Todd Hollowell is adamant as to what his technique for this transitional period is! "The one lure I have come to trust during this transi-

MH/Fast action, 8.2 power Elite ELT 7682f Flipping Stick, saddled with a 7:1 high-speed gear ratio, large spool reel for securing (Dale cont. pg 69)

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New Fly Fishers

By Jack Gagnon

So you’re going to take up fly fishing. You’ll need equipment. Thumbing through catalogs is fine, but before you take out the credit card and reach for the phone, consider buying a used rod and reel. New isn’t necessary. New doesn’t catch more fish. The major difference between a brand new fly rod and reel and a comparable used outfit that’s been well maintained is the packaging you get to discard. The money you save can be used for something else, like high quality waders. We’ll get to that.

A used rod should have unfrayed wrapping on the guides, and ferules that fit well. A used reel should be free of rust, with a drag that functions properly. When you look at used equipment, take someone with you who already flyfishes. They’ll know what to look for. And don’t overlook friends and neighbors as an equipment resource. Every fly fisherman I know who’s been at it a decade or two has perfectly good fly rods and fly reels they haven’t

used in years, tucked away in drawers and closets. There might be a better deal across the street than you’ll find anywhere else.

You will want new flyline. Line finishes degrade over time, making them tougher to cast. Worn fly lines also absorb water; sinking lines get too heavy and floating lines sink. I would suggest you start with just a floating weight-forward fly line. For general stream fishing, it will handle wets, dries, nymphs, and even streamers, with a

fish that bolts to the other side of the river. Backing increases the diameter of the spool, allowing more line to be retrieved with each turn. You can put the backing and fly line on the reel yourself. If you Google “fly fishing knots” there are numerous websites that show you how to do it. If you have a fly fishing shop nearby, buy your line and backing there, and let them do this for you. Ask them to also attach a hard mono loop to the end of your fly line. The mono loop will

your comfort, and your safety, than your waders. Buy the best waders you can afford. No leak is acceptable, ever. On a warm spring day, when the water temperature is in the fifties, or even the sixties, a damp foot or knee will transition from a minor irritation, to shivering, faster than you can wade out of the stream.

Waders come in many styles. Boot foot waders that have the “shoe” built in tend to be the least expensive. If they feel right and have a reasonable

slippery surfaces. Plain rubber soles are treacherous. Without felts, slippery rocks on the stream bottom feel like greased bowling balls.

Note that we’re talking about chest waders. Not hip boots. Hip boots have their place but wading a trout stream beyond knee deep is not one of them. Some waders have the required suspenders attached to them, some don’t. And don’t overlook the purchase of thick socks that cushion your feet and insulate you against the stream temperature. Take your time assembling your wading gear. Be sure it all fits. Put your socks and waders on and walk around in them before you buy them. They should fit as well as your shoes.



Jack Gagnon is an avid fly fisherman and upland bird hunter. He has written for a number of national sporting publications.

Waders are personal. You live in them when you fish. They have to fit. They have to keep you dry. If someone wants to give you their old waders, a simple no thank you will suffice.

little weight attached to the leader when needed. You can easily spend a hundred dollars or more on a fly line, but you can spend less than half that and still get a quality line with a good guarantee. And this is a great time of the year to find tackle on sale.

You’re going to need backing on the reel if it doesn’t already have it. Backing isn’t just extra running line in case you hook

allow easy attachment of leaders for the life of the line.

Waders are personal. You live in them when you fish. They have to fit. They have to keep you dry. If someone wants to give you their old waders, a simple no thank you will suffice. People buy new waders for one reason: Their old ones leak. There’s no item of fly fishing equipment that is more important for

guarantee, they might be all you need. If you prefer a bit more ankle support, stocking foot waders with separate wading shoes and ankle gaiters (gravel guards) might be the way to go. Whatever you choose, be sure the soles have some version of felts attached. Felts give you traction on



9 year olds Bode Cummings and Leo Dube fishing on Pickerel Pond in Milford during school vacation. These two both were in the paper last year with their first bucks!

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The Maine Woods

**Matt LaRoche,
Shirley, ME**

We all know that someone who consistently out fishes all the other people around them. What is it about these people that make them better anglers than the average fisherman? Are they just luckier? Were they born with better instincts? I don't think so.

I am going to share

well. A young fisherman came over and asked what we were using for bait. We caught a fish while he was there. When he saw how my tip-ups were rigged, he made a remark about how I was using tippet material on the end of my cloth line. As it turned out- he was just tying a Snell hook onto his

If you're fishing for brook trout near shore, set a couple traps with night crawlers. More often than not we catch more fish on crawlers than shiners. One more thing about brook trout fishing, I have had much better luck using those red hooks than using the traditional bronze-colored hooks.

Bait can be important- smelts generally

fish a person with five tip-up traps with a jig stick. Brady was one of the best togue fishermen I ever met. There is a knack to jigging that most people don't real-

retired Game Warden, Charlie Davis that liked to fish Lobster Lake for togue. He would jig all day long. Sometimes he would use a piece of cut

When ice fishing, don't be afraid to change depths. We all know that brook trout like to inhabit the shoreline. Some really nice brookies are caught in no more than three feet of water.

a few hardwater angling tips that I have learned over the years. First and foremost, get out there and go fishing! You will learn from other fishermen what they are doing and where they are going. Second, go fishing where the fish are plentiful. On a big lake like Moosehead or Chamberlain that might mean go to a different location on that lake. Ask around, there is no harm in asking where a person caught that beautiful brookie.

My wife and I were fishing on Moosehead a few years ago and doing

cloth line.

One of the things I really miss about doing ranger work is going around the Allagash headwater lakes, checking fishermen and seeing where people are fishing and finding out what they are using.

When ice fishing, don't be afraid to change depths. We all know that brook trout like to inhabit the shoreline. Some really nice brookies are caught in no more than three feet of water. I have found that you can have good brook trout fishing 100 yards out from shore up under the ice.

work better than shiners but I usually do not use them because I am cheap and they die easily. Nothing worse than paying \$10.00 a dozen for bait and having them all dead when you arrive at your fishing location. Shiners work well for brook trout but smelt are definitely better for salmon. A big shiner works well for togue on the Allagash lakes.

Now that we are talking about togue fishing- jigging can be the tactic that works the best. One of my mentors, Brady Scott always said he could out

ize. There is more to it than jerking a Swedish Pimple lure up and down. If you get that lure going right, you can feel it going in a circle down by the bottom of the lake stirring up the silt which attracts the fish. If you don't catch anything after jigging for a while attach a piece of cut bait to your lure. I like to use a long narrow strip of belly meat off a chub for cut bait.

I had a friend and

bait on his jig and sometimes he wouldn't. He almost always went home with a nice togue. He was persistent!

I really like togue fishing in the winter. There is something special about seeing a big togue swim by the hole with the water magnifying the fish they can look as big as a small submarine. Last winter I made up my mind I was

(Tips cont. pg 65)



The author's wife, Ruth, with a winter catch.
(Photo by Matt LaRoche)

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Tips

(Cont. from pg 64)

going to jig up a togue. I had to change locations a couple times but was rewarded with a 28-inch fish that gave me quite the battle before I brought it up through the hole.

Next time you go ice fishing, don't just set your tip-ups and go sit by the fire until you get a flag. Keep changing tactics, adjusting depths and trying new spots. Sometimes just moving a few feet can make a big difference. Who knows, you might just catch that big one you have been looking for.



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 See: www.mainewoods-guide.com

Harvest

(Cont. from pg 53)

6 cups of water to a boil, and then add tea bags and simmer for 2 minutes.

Remove from heat and allow to steep 3 - 5 minutes until the brew is quite strong and dark.

Now remove tea bags and add lemon juice, orange juice, molasses and honey, whisking until dissolved; set aside

Heat up the Dutch oven and the oil over medium high heat

Coat rabbit pieces with olive oil, and then season meat with sagemary salt, pepper, and Tuscan seasoning.

Once the pan and oil are heated, place some rabbit pieces into the hot pan and sear for approximately 3-4 minutes. After the pieces are golden brown, turn them over to sear the other side. Do this until all the rabbit pieces are browned, setting pieces onto a plate place until you finish all of them.

Place diced onion and carrot into your pan and season with salt and pepper. Stir with a wooden spoon until onions become translucent. Add minced garlic and stir until garlic becomes fragrant (about 60 seconds).

Place the browned rabbit pieces and juices into the pot. Pour the steeped tea mixture over top of the meat.

Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Cover the pot and cook for 60-90 minutes until rabbit is fork tender. Check it periodically as it cooks to ensure you have enough liquid remaining in the pot.

Use a slotted spoon and remove cooked rabbit, placing it onto a serving platter.

Make a cornstarch slurry (cornstarch with cold water that is whisked with a fork) and add as needed to the cooking broth and whisk until it becomes gravy. (thicken to the level you like).

Place rabbit back into

pot so pieces become coated with the tea gravy.

To serve, place some rabbit and gravy onto plates and serve with mashed potato and cooked veggies.



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New Hampshire Outdoors

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



I hear people talk about weather anomalies and how climate change is responsible. Maybe. But those anomalies have been around long before it became chic to talk about them. Case in point, I saw a news report from Sanborn-ton on February 12, 1824.

bridge in Sanbornton was rebuilt at a cost of \$2,000. Fifteen years later, another freshet demolished the bridge. It was rebuilt at a cost of \$7,000."

If you're suffering from Cabin Fever, here's an idea. As part of the modernization process, Fish

each in three ponds with no closed season for anglers to enjoy. These water bodies are: Tewksbury Pond in Grafton, Streeter Pond in Franconia, and Mirror Lake in Woodstock. Tell me that an eight or ten pound trout wouldn't put a big smile on your mid-Winter face! Now, there are many waters in the state where you can ice fish for trout.

Fish and Game has transferred fish to other state hatcheries and the Inland Fisheries staff have stocked large trout of up to 10 pounds each in three ponds with no closed season for anglers to enjoy. These water bodies are: Tewksbury Pond in Grafton, Streeter Pond in Franconia, and Mirror Lake in Woodstock.

It reads, "For some days the weather had been cold; this was followed by a southerly wind which increased to a gale, and during the night previous the rain fell in torrents; the snow was rapidly melted and in a few hours the heavy ice in the river broke up and the swollen stream swept away everything in its course including all the bridges on the Pemigewasset". The

and Game is taking down the old hatchery buildings and pools in New Hampton to make way for a new facility, which is scheduled to be completed at the end of 2026. But, because of the production loss at New Hampton, Fish and Game has transferred fish to other state hatcheries and the Inland Fisheries staff have stocked large trout of up to 10 pounds

(Lake Trout and/or Salmon waters: fish can be taken by ice fishing only January 1 – March 31. There are seventy-seven lakes and ponds from Errol to Windham that are stocked with trout and open year round for anglers. But, those three bodies of water are holding some beasts. Just sayin'.

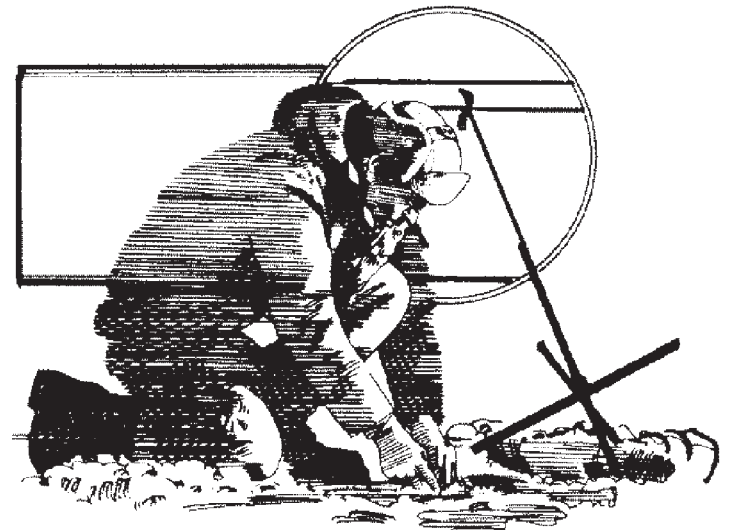
The 46th Annual Great Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby will be held February 8-9. Derby Headquarters is located at Hesky Park in Meredith. Over \$50,000 in winnings! \$15,000 cash to the 1st place winner. Get info and tickets online at : icefishingnh.com. You could win over \$5,000 without even baiting a hook!

If any New Hampshire folks plan on heading down to the New England Fishing Expo, January 21-February 2, stop in and visit Contoocook River Canoes and the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department as they'll both be exhibitors. It's being held at the Best Western/

Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough, MA. For more info on the Expo, go to: nefishingexpo.com

New Hampshire's Open Snowmobile Registration weekend runs from Friday, February 28

are coming up quickly. As a matter of fact, non-resident elk applications in Wyoming opened on January 2 and closed twenty-nine days later. But, Wyoming is having a draw of leftover elk, mule deer and antelope



through Sunday, March 2. That's when riders from throughout New England, the U.S. and Canada, have the opportunity to explore over 7,000 miles of picturesque trails New Hampshire has to offer snowmobilers. During the 3-day Open Snowmobile Registration Weekend, sleds legally registered to ride in other states and provinces will be able to operate on New Hampshire's trails without having to register in the state. All New Hampshire laws and regulations regarding the operation of snowmobiles will be enforced. Maine's Open Weekend will be March 7-9. Quebec cancelled theirs for this year.

New Hampshire's annual moose lottery applications are now out and will be soon in Maine and Vermont. But, if you're looking for some different game, like elk, you'd better get at it because deadlines

tags on June 23- June 27. That's when I pulled my elk tag six years ago. The deadline for applying for the New Mexico draw is March 20. In Colorado it's April 1 and in Utah it's April 24. If you're looking for a white-tailed deer tag in Iowa, the deadline is June 1. It seems like we spend a month or two hunting and the rest of the year getting ready for it. But I don't think that most of us would have it any other way.

Plenty of things to do outside besides plowing and shoveling. Find one of them and go do it!



Peter St. James is a member of the New England Outdoor Writers Association, Outdoor Writers Association of America and a licensed NH Fishing Guide. Reach him at outsides603@gmail.com

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Checklists

Checklists are more than what to get at the grocery store or projects to work on over the weekend. Checklists are an important survival tool in everyday life as well as in emergencies.

There is a reason pilots go through a checklist every time they fly, no matter how often they have done it. It is easy to forget critical items or steps when you are stressed or distracted.

Ask yourself "what if..." and then plan how you would handle it. Each situation is different but a checklist gives you a planned place to start.

A 3 ring notebook that has a cover that zips closed is the easiest way to keep track of your many Checklists. If you are like me, you will add to your Checklists often. Here are some list suggestions:

Medicine. Keep track of over the counter and prescription medication for each person in your family/group. List the person, medicine, dose, where you get it. Keep a copy of prescription labels so you have accurate information.

First Aid Kit. List what is in your kit that you have in your house, car, camp gear, etc. Keep your supplies to your level of training. Everyone should take a Red Cross first aid

class at the minimum; however very few of us need a field surgery kit.

Car. Summer supplies and winter supplies. Before you buy any supplies, List everything you think you need then cross off anything that is not realistic.

Keep a list of things you should do in a survival situation in each of your survival kits. Keep a master copy in your notebook.

Shelter in place. During a storm or black out/Power outage you usually

family notebooks with confidential information? Do you have a place to stay or are you using a camper or tent? What supplies are critical vs what would be nice to have?

Car accident. Is anyone injured? Is everyone in a safe place? Ambulance called? Police called? Exchange insurance information with everyone involved? (Don't depend on just the police report). Take pictures of damage on all vehicles? Take pic-

All this information will be critical if something major happens and you have to start your life over from scratch. It is also an identity theft gold mine so be sure to keep this part of your preparations securely locked in a safe or fire proof box at home.

plan to stay in your house. Are there things that need to be shut off so they don't get damaged when the power comes back on. Do you know where flashlights are? Battery operated radio? Games and other assorted supplies? Do you know how to turn off the natural gas if you have a supply coming into your house? Do you know where to turn off the water?

Emergency evacuation. Who is traveling in what car if more than one? What supplies do you need? How fast do you need to evacuate? How long will you be gone? How are pets traveling? How will you secure the

tures of the weather/road/intersection where the accident happened? Notes on daylight or dark?

Important papers. Copies of Birth certificate, marriage certificate, social security card, driver's license, medical papers for each person? Vehicle titles, insurance, registration? House title, home owners insurance, photos of valuables with serial numbers? Bank account numbers? Credit accounts? Legal

documents, wills, etc.?

Medical history. Notes on each person's medical history with dates, injuries or diagnosis, ongoing treatments.

Copies of your pet immunizations and any official trainings or medical issues. They are part of the family as well.

All this information will be critical if something

major happens and you have to start your life over from scratch. It is also an identity theft gold mine so be sure to keep this part of your preparations securely locked in a safe or fire proof box at home. Possibly a copy with your family lawyer. Depending on what happens you may not be able to access a bank safe deposit box for a long time.

No matter what their age, disruptions in any normal routine can upset kids

Basics Of Survival

by Joe Frazier,
Bangor, ME



or even throw them into a total tailspin. Kids usually understand more than we give them credit for, so include them in planning. Let them make up their own lists of what they need if you are staying in and riding out a storm or if you are going to evacuate. A coloring book and colored pencils, a favorite book or game you might never even think about could mean the world to them. A favorite pillow, blanket, or stuffed animal might be the only way they can sleep. Unless something is VERY unrealistic, don't criticize their list. Their list is what matters to them.

Checklists are not an excuse to go buy tons of new stuff, just a way to organize what you already own. They will give you a direction and a place to start when things get rough.



Joe is a Husband, father, author, and marine. JoeFrazier193@gmail.com



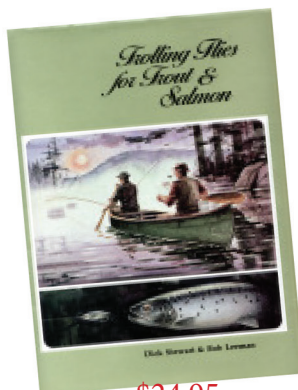
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At long last, revived from the archives of the once-authoritative books on New England streamer flies and how to use them: **Trolling Flies for Trout & Salmon**, by Dick Stewart and Bob Leeman.



\$24.95

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.

"This wonderful fishing book is the gospel when it comes to streamer flies and trolling tactics. A Classic!

- V. Paul Reynolds, Editor, Northwoods Sporting Journal

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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 V. Paul Reynolds

If you survey Maine anglers to find out what cold water species of fish they most enjoy pursuing, it's no contest. The beloved brook trout always wins hands down! Those same anglers will tell you that they would like to see Maine grow more and bigger brookies. That angler

about 15 years since the initiative was launched. Has it worked?

The answer, if you ask serious anglers and fisheries people, is a qualified "yes." Maine's wild brook trout sport fishery seems to have made some positive strides, though we still have a way to go. Yet our brook trout fishing

**What is a trophy Maine trout anyway?
How big does a brook trout have to be before we take special notice? Two pounds? Three pounds? More?**

sentiment was the impetus for Maine's Quality Fishing Initiative, a bold plan spearheaded by former Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Ray "Bucky" Owen back in the mid- 1990s.

Bucky's vision was predicated on the simple premise that if you put fish back in the water they will live to grow bigger. His Quality Fishing Initiative involved reduced bag limits and more restrictive length limits. It has been

may never again be like it once was.

What is a trophy Maine trout anyway? How big does a brook trout have to be before we take special notice? Two pounds? Three pounds? More?

In his book "Big Trout" author and angler Bernie Taylor says that a brookie must be 4 pounds or more to be worthy of calling it a trophy fish. That may be a run-of-the-mill brook trout in Labrador, but

in Maine today a 4- pound brook trout is a fish to celebrate. In more than 40 years of fly-fishing Maine waters, I've yet to boat a brookie in that class. My friend, the late Millinocket guide Wig-gie Robinson, had a pair of handsome trout in that class mounted on the wall of his West Branch camp. They were caught from a pond

back that far to pinpoint the halcyon days of Maine's trout fishing. In his book "Twelve Months in Maine," the late Bud Leavitt wrote this in the mid 1970s. "Every year Maine trout fishermen grass a long line of 3-to 7-pound beauties."

Other big brookie anglers of that era cited by Bud were John Dixon of

can range from the evasive to downright fictitious. According to one report, a new record brook trout was discovered belatedly. The Maine Sportsman reported a few years ago that Mark Collins of Marshfield, Mass. boated a 9-pound brook trout at Square Pond in Aroostook County in May of 1997.

Big Maine trout. Where do you get them and how? Although I am one of those easy-to-please fly-fishermen who is content playing with 10-inch brookies on the surface with dainty dries, I did probe the big trout question in your behalf. Here's what I found.

In his book "Fishing Maine," author and angler Tom Seymour recommends Prestile Stream, Moose River and Rangeley Lake for bigger-than-average trout. He also advises that big trout shoppers carefully study the fishing lawbook. He writes "Anglers intent upon taking trophy fish should take notice of those ponds that are strictly regulated as part of the Quality Fishing Initiative, because these will produce the largest trout."

Kennebec River outfitter and Maine angling advocate Bob Mallard has this advice for big trout chasers:

For rivers it is the Rapid River, bar none. The Roach sees some decent fish as does the Magalloway. For large lakes, it is Eagle but I believe we are hitting her way too hard in the winter to sustain the fishery. For small ponds they are too delicate for

(Brookies cont. pg 69)



in Baxter State Park quite a few years ago in July on a #14 Blue Dun. There was a Green Drake hatch on. A patient, persistent angler who was intimately familiar with a lot of Maine trout water, even Robinson wasn't catching trout of that size during his last few years.

You don't have to go

Orrington who boated a 7-pound, 8-ounce brook trout at Moosehead Lake. Patty Lou Walters of Waterville put a 7-pound brookie on the ice at Messalonskee Lake and a Connecticut angler nailed a 7-pound, 2-ounce trout at Pierce Pond in 1963.

Seven pound Maine brookies! Just imagine. For a long time the Maine record brook trout was an 8-pound, 5-ounce brookie that guide Dixon Griffin took out of Pierce Pond in Somerset County. That record was eventually bested when an Aroostook County angler purportedly caught an even heftier trout - nearly nine pounds - at one of the Black Ponds. Legend has it that the angler actually dredged the monster squaretail from a different pond altogether. Fish stories, as we all know,

Send Us Your Favorite Game and Fish Recipes!

Most outdoor folks like to eat what they bring home from the woods or the waters. And you like to cook it yourself, too right? So what is your favorite culinary lashup with fish or fowl? The Northwoods Sporting Journal would like to know. And we invite you to help us share your proud concoction with all of our readers. Our Northwoods Sporting Journal website: www.sportingjournal.com has a new addition: Outdoor Connections, which includes "Sporting Journal's Top Shelf Game & Fish Recipes." It has become a popular spot for visitors to find some great outdoor recipes, not from TV cooks, but from folks like you who live it.

Email us your favorite outdoor recipe to editor, V. Paul Reynolds, at vpaulr@tds.net. We won't send you any money, or give you a new boat and motor, but we will list your recipe with all the others, along with your name.

If your recipe catches on and goes viral, we'll figure out some kind of reward - say a new fry pan, a crockpot, or maybe a dutch oven?

So get crackin'...



Dale

(Cont. from pg 62)
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Todd's Football jig is a Wally Kilpatrick design, Yank-Um 4/0 hand tied Silicone, 1/2, 3/4 oz. color Money, paired with Allusive Baits Crawdad/Grn Pumpkin Brush Bug. Todd's 'Rule of thumb 1/2 oz. jig 15 feet or less, 3/4 oz jig over 15 feet. Working his way into the backs of creeks he stays in the middle with his side-scan sonar on looking for isolated wood cover on the bottom. "I'll stop at the last deep-water section in the creek. These seem to be the most

stable and high percentage areas. Staying within the middle of the tributary, I'll make long cast allowing my jig to reach the bottom composition. Dragging the football jig on the bottom with fluorocarbon line and a sensitive rod searching for wood and rubble, will inform you when you're in the strike zone."

With bass within a lethargic state, Todd cautions anglers not to imply much action. "I don't want to hop it up off the bottom too much this time of year, just crawl it on the bottom slowly especially once within the high percentage strike zone." When Todd feels his jig starting to catch on bottom objects, he lets it sit and will shake it on semi-slack line to make the living rubber flare and the craw pinchers stand up. This subtle movement often will entice the bass to eat his jig.

(Follow Todd on Facebook @ Todd Hollowell Fishing Instagram @ Todd_Hollowell)

Brookies

(Cont. from pg 68)
me to mention "publicly" but Baxter and the AT (Appalachian Trail) are a good start. Access is key to the small ponds and tough to reach ponds with strict regs are your absolute best bet (eliminate either and the odds for big fish go way down)..

In his book "Big Trout" Bernie Taylor coaches you not to overlook the obvious. Three of his big trout lessons include: 1) Successful fishing happens only when your fly is in the water. 2) You can find success by eliminating the variables. Simplicity in your flies, gear and techniques is the golden key to catching trout, especially large ones. 3) If you fish in the places where the big fish are, when they are actively feeding, you will catch them.



Herbert O'Brien of Whiting, showing off his salmon he caught on East Grand Lake.



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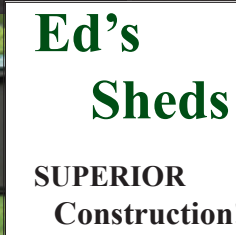
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