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January 2025

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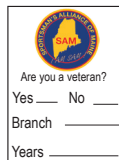
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The Northwoods Sporting Journal is the Northeast’s most comprehensive and readable monthly outdoor publication. Published at the trailhead of Maine’s sprawling North Woods, the Sporting Journal prides itself on being an independent voice for the region’s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

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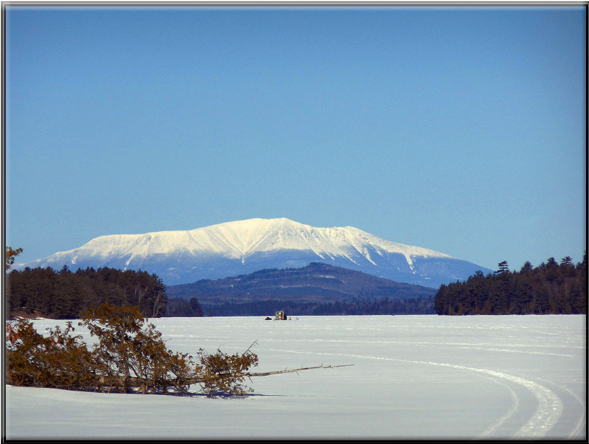
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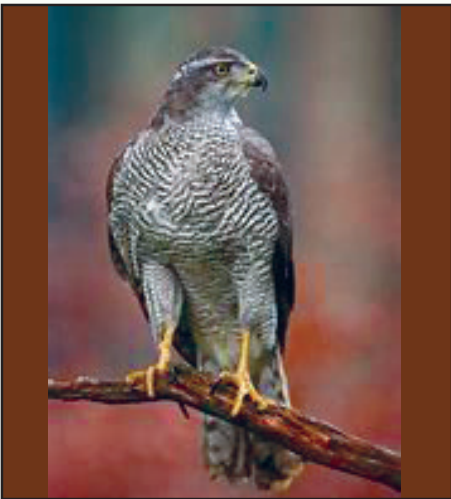
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The King of Robb Mountain

By Haleigh White

This story begins 8 years ago as my best friend and I drove deep into the woods to hunt her family's 100-acre forested plot. It's a gorgeous ridge covered in hardwood trees and a sheltered cedar swamp lies below. We sat in different spots that morning and shortly after 8 a.m. a shot rang out off to my left. My best friend had climbed up into an old oak tree and shot her first buck. It was a nice 8 pointer that she caught chasing does under the oak. We celebrated all day and made memories for life. At some point during the day, she told me the story of the old oak tree and how she and her father had put up wooden rungs on it when she was just a little girl. The old oak was special to both of us now and whenever we returned to the mountain, we often found ourselves back in that same spot, admiring its grandeur and reminiscing about the past.

Flash forward 8 years almost to the day and I would find myself sitting against a small tree, just a few yards from the old oak. I didn't trust the old wooden rungs so sitting on the ground would have to

suffice. It was my first time hunting the mountain this season and I was excited to be sitting in one of my favorite spots. I chose the mountain that morning because the wind was in my

told me to be ready and to stay alert. When the clock passed legal time, I waited just a minute or two more before calling. The forest was still quite dark, and I wanted to make sure I

passed when I heard a weighted step off to my right. Then, I heard a stick break and could see a dark figure coming through the mist. The deer was about 15 yards away as it walked across from right to left in front of me. I could see a bit of yellow hovering above its head, following along with it as it moved. It was a buck. And not just a spike. I couldn't see how big he was, but I knew it was something worth shooting.

the buck jumped up and kicked like a mule. He tore off down the mountain and I stood up to watch him go. I listened and just a few moments later, I could hear him crash into the brush. I stood there in complete and utter shock. From the time I had first seen the deer to when I shot, was barely 10 seconds. But it was just enough time to identify my target and make a solid shot. I began to sob. I was overcome



Haleigh White with her 8 pointer.

favor and the rain would quiet my steps as I crept through the leaves to find my spot. The silhouette of the old oak comforted me as I sat in the darkness before legal shooting time. I had a good feeling about things and something

could see. Around 6:03 I let out three doe bleats from my little green can. The sound seemed to be lost in the constant pitter patter of raindrops. I sat with my knees up, rifle ready and snug in my shoulder. Barely 10 minutes had

My scope was foggy and I could just barely see his face and the glow of antler. I moved the crosshairs down his body and hovered over the crease on his shoulder. I squeezed the trigger and shot.

I gripped my rifle and got ready.

The buck passed behind the old oak tree and when he stepped out in front of me, I let out a soft "meh". It was enough to stop him, and he looked right at me. I quickly took aim. My scope was foggy and I could just barely see his face and the glow of antler. I moved the crosshairs down his body and hovered over the crease on his shoulder. I squeezed the trigger and shot. The forest exploded with sound and

with happiness, excitement, relief and a perhaps even a little sadness that I wasn't with my best friend. I called her. Three times. And no answer. I think I'll give her a hard time about that for the rest of my life. After all, we all know what an early morning or late evening phone call means during November. I tried my mom, and she answered right off. "Guess what?!" I said. "Did you get a deer?" she responded. I told her I'd shot one, but I had to find him first. I also told her to go to my friend's house, wake her up and tell her the news. I said, "tell her Haleigh shot a buck under your tree on the mountain". She would know exactly where I was. We got off the phone and I gathered myself to focus on the next step of tracking and finding the buck.

I waited about 20 minutes, although it felt like an eternity. I walked to where the buck had

(King cont. pg 7)

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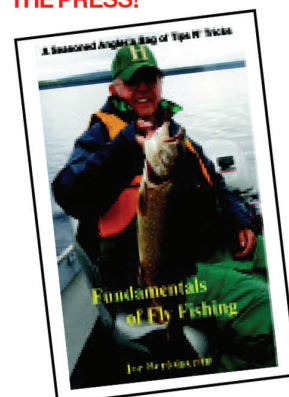
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-V. Paul Reynolds, editor Northwoods Sporting Journal.



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King

(Cont. from pg 6)

been standing when I shot and although there was no blood, a very clear trail of kicked up leaves led down the hillside. As I followed it, I began to see splatters of bright red blood. I knew I had smoked him but seeing good blood is always such a relief. I continued down the hill and then I saw him. He had only gone about 40 yds. I could see a white belly, legs and his head tucked under some brush. When I got a little closer, I could see part of the rack. A big, palmed beam with a split G2. My heart started pounding even more. I was already on cloud 9 because I had a buck down but when I pulled his head up and started to count the points, I couldn't believe it. A 14-point brute lay at my feet. Both his brow tines and G2s were split, and he had big thick beams full of unique character. I

looked over his body and realized, not only was his rack impressive, but he was the biggest deer I had ever seen. His neck and chest were enormous, and he was so long. I called my mom back and when she answered I said, "I found him! And mom, he's a tank!" I was overwhelmed with happiness. My cheeks still hurt from how hard I was smiling. She told me that she and my best friend were on their way with help. I set my gun down and sat with the buck for a long time. I am always so grateful for any animal that I harvest, and this one was a dream come true.

I admired him for a long time and just kept shaking my head. I was in absolute shock. Never in my life have I been so overcome with happiness and such a strong sense of accomplishment. He was gorgeous, and I was so happy that it was a quick clean shot, and he didn't go far. It was perfect. After

taking some pictures and calling friends I decided to cover him with my orange vest and meet the recovery crew back at my truck. It was hugs all around when they got there, and everyone was excited to see what all the fuss was about. We walked together down the hillside as I excitedly retold the story. And when the buck came into view, we all stopped and stood in amazement. We admired him for a long time, and then I carefully field dressed him. We hauled him uphill for about 100 yards and then somehow heaved him into the back of the truck. He was certainly a tailgate down kinda deer.

My whole body was buzzing with adrenaline, as my best friend and I drove together to the tagging station in my hometown. People started to congratulate me and even the Budweiser semi-truck pulled over to have a gander at him. Once he was tagged, we headed north to the Waite General

store to get him weighed. As he was slowly hoisted into the air, it hit me as to how big he really was. The red numbers on the scale climbed higher and higher until they finally settled. He weighed 226 lbs. He was the heaviest buck weighed there so far this season, and I was beaming from ear to ear. We filled out the patch paperwork and left to go show him off. We spent the next few hours driving him around town, visiting friends and family. It wasn't a terribly cool day, so I knew I had limited time with him. My phone was going nuts with notifications and incoming messages as the buck was the talk of the town.

As the shadows grew long, I knew it was time to get him into the cooler. We took a few more pictures and then we started to skin him and get him ready to hang. Over the next two days, I completely butchered him myself and dropped the rack off at

the taxidermist. As I sit and write this story, I am still in complete shock. It feels as though it was a dream but better. I am a first-generation hunter, and this buck was only my second with a rifle. I am beyond proud of myself and so grateful to the land. I would like to thank Adrian Arsenault for coming out to help drag, Makayla Cobb and her family for taking me in as their own and letting me hunt that magical place, and I want to thank my mom for supporting me and always being my biggest fan. Goodluck to all the hunters out there and congratulations to all of you who have been successful so far!



Haleigh White has lived in Princeton for 25 years. She works for IF&W, and owns a taxidermy business. In her spare time she likes to travel and spend time outside.



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Editorial

Reward Offered for Game Thieves

A high ranking Maine Game Warden with whom I once worked at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIF&W), and who had a lot of experience in conservation law enforcement, held firm to the belief that most sportsmen were honest nimrods who would not knowingly violate Maine's fish and game laws. Then there is, he contended, that minority (about 10 percent), that brazenly break the law as hunters or anglers.

It only takes a few fish and game lawbreakers to, not only give the honest sportsman a bad name, but to raise havoc with game and fisheries management.

This year there have been two blatant examples of fish and game lawbreaking that have most of us shaking our heads. What in the world goes on in the minds of these thoughtless, irresponsible individuals whose behavior is reprehensible?

Earlier this year, Maine game wardens discovered a 36-foot gill net that had been placed illegally across the Magalloway

River in the Rangeley area. This river is a precious sport fishery resource and one of Maine's premier trout waters. Dead trout were found in the gill net. Operation Game Thief has offered a \$2,000.00 reward for information leading to the arrest of those responsible. Insofar as we know, although there have been some leads, no one at this point has been charged with the violation.

More recently, the Warden Serice announced that on the island of Mount Desert, there were two different incidents of illegal deer kills. The deer were shot at night. According to MDIF&W, "The first deer was killed on the night of October 5th, or the early morning hours of October 6th when a large buck was shot and killed at night in the town of Mount Desert which is located on Mount Desert Island. The deer was shot and left to rot and discovered on the morning October 6th when a concerned citizen noticed it dead in a small field and called the Warden Service."

"The second deer, another large buck,

was shot during the early morning hours of November 6th in the town of Tremont which is also located on Mount Desert Island. Similar to the first deer, this buck was killed illegally at night. The individual(s) who shot the deer cut off the deer's head and left the remainder of the animal to rot."

Can you imagine what kind of people do these things? Certainly, nobody who even remotely deserves to call themselves a hunter or a sportsman.

Mount Desert Island has long been closed to hunting and hunting at night is both illegal and dangerous.

Maine Operation Game Thief is offering \$2,000 for each of the deer that were illegally killed, or \$4,000 for both deer, for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for killing these deer. Anyone with information regarding either of these incidents should please call **1-800-ALERT-US** with any information.

-VPR



Letters



"Meredith! I told you not to stay in there too long!"



David Raymond of Bucksport who operates Snowman's Grocery on the Duck Cove Rd had this handsome 12 pointer displayed in a European mount.

Hunting Mt Desert Island

To the Editor:

Thank you for your columns and trying to educate the public. Your recent column "reward offered for game thieves" has one point I understand but I don't think a lot of other people do. When pointing out that Mt. Desert Island has no hunting is very true. You can't deer hunt, which I am sure you meant, but you can hunt every other legal species in season on MDI which most people don't understand. Just trying to educate the public and preserve our diminishing tradition. Thanks for your columns and time.

**Michael Young
Southwest Harbor**

Enjoying Tracks

Those who know me know all too well that January isn't my favorite month of the year. Some might even go as far as to say winter isn't my favorite season of the year. They would be right on the money! Deer season is over and

On occasion I hit the ice with a couple of buddies to see what's biting, to enjoy the camaraderie and get some fresh air into my lungs. But since I was a kid and old enough to go on my own what I really enjoy is getting in the woods after

hare, perhaps even a bobcat you realize the woods are actually alive with living things.

I have to admit though, besides just being out there my true enjoyment of discovering fresh tracks, especially deer tracks derive



Muzzleloading Afield

by Al Raychard,
Lyman, ME

the ground you hunt and the deer that reside there. Locating fresh deer tracks in winter and following them to see where they came from and where they

worthwhile at some point down the road than once snow hits the ground.

There are many reasons to get out and enjoy the woods over the next

To me, there is no place more peaceful or beautiful than the Maine woods in winter after a few inches of fresh snow has fallen. There are times it is so quiet it is almost deafening and when I'm alone...

from ulterior motives. Deer season is over but another season will come and be upon us before we know it.

I have hunted the same piece of ground every fall for years and as much as I think I know it, where deer bed during the day, primary evening food sources, major travel corridors and water sources among other things I discovered long ago there is always something new to learn about

go, and why, can literally provide a list of new hunting opportunities this fall.

While it is true deer movements and patterns can change from season-to-season the bottom line is the more we know about the ground we hunt the more we know what the heck is going on out there, the better the odds of success and there is no better time to discover those unknowns that may prove

few months. This is mine. Whatever the reason, I hope you find yours.

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



a fresh dropping of snow and looking for animal tracks. On occasion I'll carry a gun in case I jump a snowshoe hare, which is becoming increasingly rare in my neck of the woods, but most of the time I just go.

unless you're into hunting snowshoe hares and varmints there isn't much hunting opportunity until spring gobbler season. And fly fishing season is still several long, cold months away. To me at least, the new few months is a good time to stay indoors, keep the wood stove stoked and enjoy the heat as it penetrates into my bones.

But I do get outside.

there is no place more peaceful or beautiful than the Maine woods in winter after a few inches of fresh snow has fallen. There are times it is so quiet it is almost deafening and when I'm alone, which is usually am, the woods seem to suck you in and make you feel you're the only thing alive. But as soon as you cut a fresh track of a fox, or coyote, or deer or



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"A Hiker's Life"

By Carey Kish,
Mt. Desert Island, ME



A worthy pursuit that doesn't get much play among list makers in the hiking community is the New England State High Points, which ranges from lofty Mt. Washington to a wooded hill in Rhode Island. This highly rewarding endeavor not only nets you miles of good hiking, but gets you out and about exploring more of the beautiful six-state area.

Unless you're an experienced winter hiker, use the snowy season to do some research. Work out the logistics of the project, which will be more easily and enjoyably tackled in the warm and sunny weather of summertime. Here's some beta on recommended routes to get you started. It's a great adventure, so have fun and take lots of photos!

Katahdin, Maine.

From Roaring Brook Campground, hike Chimney Pond Trail to the namesake pond, then ascend Dudley Trail past Index Rock to the peak of Pamo-la. Ahead, tackle the airy and exciting Knife Edge to reach Baxter Peak at 5,268 feet and the best

Unless you're an experienced winter hiker, use the snowy season to do some research. Work out the logistics of the project, which will be more easily and enjoyably tackled in the warm and sunny weather of summertime.

mountain vista in the state. Descend via Saddle and Chimney Pond trails. At 11-1/2 miles, it's a big day.

Mt. Washington, New Hampshire. Despite its busy nature, outstanding views and extraordinary alpine terrain make Mt. Washington a highly prized objective. From the Marshfield Station trailhead, take Ammonoosuc Ravine Trail

to Lakes of the Clouds Hut. Crawford Path then leads to the 6,288-foot summit. Descend via Gulfside and Jewell trails for a 9-1/2-mile circuit.

Mt. Mansfield, Vermont. The top of Vermont features a grand panorama ranging up and down the Green Mountains, east to

sachusetts. The 3,491-foot summit of Mt. Greylock, capped by a 92-foot granite war memorial, offers fine views over the Berkshires to Vermont's Green Mountains and New York's Taconic Range. From Hopper Road trailhead, combine Haley Farm Trail, Hopper Trail and the AT to

point. Continue west past the Tri-State marker (NY, CT and MA), then take the South Taconic Trail to the top of Mt. Brace (2,311 feet) for fabulous 360-degree views. About 5 miles round-trip.

Jerimoth Hill, Rhode Island. From Route 101 in Foster in the northwest corner of the state, it's a 1/4-mile walk to wooded Jerimoth Hill and the rocky outcrop at 812 feet that marks Rhode Island's apex. Once difficult, if not illegal, to reach because of access issues, the state of Rhode Island now owns the property.



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

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Day on the Ice



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.

We went about the business of "setting up".

In the holes were placed tip-ups. These wooden devices have a reel, a line with a baited hook, and a little red flag. The flag is held down until a fish bites, released it to fly up and tell the frost-covered ice fisherman of his good fortune.

With the tip-ups set,

comfort was attended to. A Primus stove was lighted and water set to boil. The sun shone in a clear morning sky. A glorious day appeared to be at hand.

Then a flag jumped and a nice 19-inch fish on a pond so lovely as Great Pond. The clever and talented Al Martin, who then was located at Great Pond where he painted, wrote books, and dabbled in taxidermy, had suggested Great Pond. And off that first catch, I was impressed by his knowledge and wisdom.

It was an auspicious beginning.

But then the Roman Empire had an auspicious

beginning also, and everyone knows what happened to it.

First was the matter of cigarettes. They quickly gave out because my neighbor in the next fishing shanty who claimed he had given up smoking the day

before, decided he would resume and used mine to start.

Then the primus stove ran out of kerosene.

That reminded me that it should have been

he lighted amid much gloating over its always being full.

A gasket, however, leaked and gasoline squirted all over, starting a mild holocaust, threatening the

A gasket, however, leaked and gasoline squirted all over, starting a mild holocaust, threatening the gear, and melting the ice in an alarming manner.

refilled after its use.

The question of having hot tomato and cream of mushroom soup with or after ham and cheese sandwiches and coffee, became academic. My neighbor in the next shanty saved the day by having his small gasoline stove along, which

gear, and melting the ice in an alarming manner.

Any moment I was expected to see Maine Forest Service responding to smoke that wafted eastward, likely over Alligator Lake and the snug cabin where Carl and Laura Bamford resided year around.

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Outdoor News - January 2025

Edited By V. Paul Reynolds

January. For ice fishermen, this is the best month to fish landlocked salmon. Early March is nicer, but the action is generally slower then. Liberalized toque limits on many waters make for extra opportunity. As you make your plans to fish, don't forget to check out the names and locations of the many statewide bait dealers listed this month in the Journal. Maine in January can be harsh, but for those willing to be bold with the cold there is much to do in the outdoors. Snowsledders and cross country skiers will be busy enjoying some of the best trails in the country. Our snowmobile trail system stretches from Kittery to Fort Kent and provides incomparable snowsled opportunities. The toughest among us will keep on hunting: rabbits, coyotes and sea ducks. Meanwhile, some of us will hunker down near a warm stove, dream of spring and tie up some dry flies with an eye to warmer days. However you get through Maine in January, all of us at the Northwoods Sporting Journal wish you a peaceful and prosperous New Year!

VT Gift Fishing Licenses

Finding a gift that will continue to give for a full year is a challenge, but the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has a solution on their website -- a license gift certificate for hunting and fishing licenses.

"It's a perfect gift for a friend or family member who hunts or fishes," said Fish and Wildlife's Director of Outreach Alison

Thomas. "You can go to our website, fill out the gift certificate and pay for it online, and then print the certificate to present to your recipient."

The license section of Fish and Wildlife's website has a link to the gift certificate. The person who receives the certificate must go to the website to redeem their certificate and purchase their licenses.

"If you have a friend or relative who hunts or fishes, this is an easy gift-giving solution," said Thomas. "The gift certificate will cover licenses for 2025 or for licenses in future years."

Deer Feeding Not Good

"Although people may feel badly for deer and want to help, the Fish and Game Department would like to remind the public to never feed deer as it may actually harm them," said Deer Project Leader Becky Fuda.

The deer are all right, even in the winter. Deer have developed several adaptations to help them survive severe winters, which means they do not need supplemental food. Deer have a highly insulative winter coat to keep them warm, they store large amounts of body fat to use as energy reserves, they will voluntarily reduce both their food intake and daily activity to conserve energy, and most importantly, they migrate to a specialized habitat known as a deer yard, a forested shelter that allows them to better cope with winter conditions.

Since over 80% of

the state's forestland is privately owned, much of the Department's management of this critical habitat is done through cooperative agreements with landowners. Feeding deer also puts these management efforts at risk by drawing deer out of their wintering habitat and removing the incentive for private landowners to conserve and manage deer yards on their property. "It is tough to convince a landowner to expend money and resources managing a deer yard if all the deer have been drawn out to supplemental feed sites," said Fuda.

Conservation and management of natural winter habitat is the key to long-term survival of deer in the Granite State, not the placement of human-provided food sources. **Supplemental feeding can harm our deer.** Although most people who feed deer are well intentioned, they do not realize there are a number of potential negative consequences that are associated with feeding deer.

Feeding deer the wrong type of food or at the wrong time can lead to sickness and even death. This was the case in 2015, when twelve deer were found dead around a feed site in South Hampton after being given food they could not digest. Sudden increases in snow depth can cause people to become concerned for deer and result in the sudden introduction of supplemental food for deer. However, because deer are ruminants, they process food differently than other animals.

Deer depend on microorganisms in their stom-



ach to aid in digestion. As a deer's diet naturally and gradually changes with the seasons, so do the microorganisms that are required to help digest these foods. This gradual changeover can take several weeks. A rapid transition from a high-fiber diet of naturally woody browse to human-provided foods high in carbohydrates can cause a rapid change in a deer's stomach chemistry, disrupting the microorganisms present. This can reduce the deer's ability to properly digest food and cause the release of toxins, which are then absorbed into the deer's system. Many of the most common supplemental foods people provide deer with in winter are high in starches and create a great risk for deer.

"Aside from death directly resulting from inappropriate foods, several other negative consequences are associated with winter deer feeding," added Fuda. "These can include an increased likelihood of vehicle collisions, over-browsing of local vegetation and ornamental plants, enhanced risk of predation, and an increased risk of disease transmission, which is why Fish and Game does not condone the practice."

NH Game Management Plan

New Hampshire Fish and Game's (NHFG) Wildlife Division has initiated the process of updating the state's 10-year Big Game Management Plan (BGMP), which will establish population goals and objectives for deer, moose, bear, and turkey for the period 2026–2035. The current plan expires at the end of 2025.

Recently, over 30,000 New Hampshire residents received surveys to record and measure public opinion on the management of these species. This survey was delivered electronically by the University of New Hampshire's Survey Center, on behalf of NHFG, and represents the first step in developing a new BGMP. This effort underscores the importance of managing wildlife under the direction of long-term planning, and once completed, this BGMP will be the fourth plan established to guide the management of big game species in the state since the mid-1990s. The recent survey is similar to, but separate from, the NH Wildlife Action Plan Survey distributed by the agency in October.

"Most big game wildlife species populations are (News cont. pg 21)



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Maine Tails

By Jonah Paris,
Ellsworth, ME

I am not an “old-timer,” but when I noticed the price of live bait last season, I certainly felt like one. I lost a few hairs just looking at my receipt. Not too long ago, shiners were three dollars a dozen. Last season, the price was double that at several of my usual bait shops. I enjoy supporting small, local

add to the one I had gathering dust. The gear paid for itself quickly; less than four dozen shiners purchased retail at last year’s prices covered a new trap.

Having live bait on hand is very convenient. No more rushed “bait-runs” on snowy Friday nights to make it to the shop before closing, or waiting in the

range of areas and depths. Whether the traps soaked overnight or four nights, it made no difference. They were virtually empty of baitfish. Instead, I caught exactly one homely looking aquatic insect. The State survey map noted golden shiners and common suckers in this particular pond - but also predators, bass and pickerel. I finally gave up on it.

After an evening of

rather expensive. To the little hound’s dismay, I stole a couple handfuls of her food to take to the pond. The traps did not produce well. “Big mistake, dude,” my co-worker beamed. “Baitfish like the cheap, oily, nasty, stuff. You know, the kibble made with corn

delicacies. After finding the right pond, and the right dog food, I was able to keep a constant supply of lively baitfish for the remainder of the season.

Rigging

Rigging bait traps can be done with mostly re-

Not all waters will produce a bait fishery, despite baitfish being present in the water. I stubbornly made three different sets on the same pond, trying a range of areas and depths. Whether the traps soaked overnight or four nights, it made no difference.

businesses, and always buy pricey smelt when chasing salmon up north. However, when the ice fishing is red hot, and the pickerel and perch are hungry, we can smoke through a few dozen shiners before noon.

After purchasing bait one time last winter, I decided to get back into trapping my own. Bait trapping had been a winter pastime of mine that faded after college. We used to set traps not far from the UMaine campus. I invested in two new traps, Gee’s G-40 minnow traps, made with ¼ inch galvanized steel, to

parking lot Saturday morning, then missing the bite. Many Maine communities used to have a “self-serve” bait operation, humbly run out of a neighbor’s shed or garage. But after the cash box gets raided a few times, and bait starts disappearing without payment, the “honor system,” unfortunately, becomes a thing of the past.

Lessons

Not all waters will produce a bait fishery, despite baitfish being present in the water. I stubbornly made three different sets on the same pond, trying a

studying online satellite maps, I located another pond. This no-name pond was considerably smaller and more hidden. I confirmed the wooded access to the pond was not posted, slung my ice picks around my neck, and went exploring. I quickly noticed someone else had the same idea. A string of traps was laced across the western shore of the pond. The eastern shore, however, was available. I would rather have caught nothing on the eastern shore, then filled my traps by setting right on top of someone else’s - and risk having my traps damaged or stolen. The Sportsman’s Ethic must always apply, even when trapping shiners in a swampy drain- age pond.

To the humor of my coworker, I learned that I was using the wrong bait in my traps. Do not bait minnow traps with high quality dog food. Aurora, the beagle, eats the “healthy” stuff, lamb-flavored and



Several dozen “keepers” from a bait trap, set aside for the next day’s adventure.

and soybeans. And if it lists artificial colors on the bag, even better.” I’ll leave out brand names for fear of insulting someone’s dog food of choice, but I purchased a bag of the cheapest, smelliest, corn-based kibble I could find, and threw a generous handful in each trap. The difference in catch rate was remarkable - as was the rainbow grease sheen and cloud of multi-colored particles when the trap hit the water.

Last winter, my traps yielded plenty of fathead minnows, common shiners, golden shiners, and northern redbelly dace - a medley of trout and panfish

cycled materials. I tied the clip of the trap to a six-foot section of paracord. I tied the other end of the paracord to a hole drilled in the center of a three-foot section of scrap two-by-four. Line was wrapped around the board to suspend the trap at the desired depth. I used a few pieces of scrap softwood on either side of the hole to block up the two-by-four, creating a bench on the ice. With freezing and thawing, only the blocks would freeze into the ice, not my whole set-up. After a quick chipping session, the blocks would free up. After chip- (Bait cont. pg 21)

Coastal



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A Clean Break

My friend Todd is bad luck when it comes to pike fishing, which is to say: when he shows up, the pike disappear. Maybe the pike sense that Todd's a trout and salmon guide, a man willing to scramble five miles up a remote gorge to catch a seven-inch wild brookie on a dry fly. Maybe they know he's a seasoned photographer who shoots for big-time fishing magazines, and they don't want their mugshots distributed. Whatever the reason, his lack of pike success has nothing to do with his angling prowess, which is significant. And while I respect Todd's salmonid preferences, I would rather cast seven-inch flies for fish the size of my leg.

When we set out recently to one of the Belgrade Lakes, on one of the last fishable days of late fall, my expectations were low. We were just glad to get out--Todd's guiding season had concluded, and I'd poled a client around all morning after finally getting my skiff's engine to start. It had been 18 degrees when I met my client and now, around 1pm, it had warmed to a balmy 32. We planned to fish for a few hours, hoping the warming afternoon temps would stimulate a bite and break Todd's pike curse.

Poling a skiff is pleasant on a warm day in June; poling a skiff when the water temperature is in the high 40s is less fun. Cold lake water chilled my fingers. Todd casted his giant white and red baitfish fly, affixed to 50-pound fluorocarbon leader, toward weed lines and drop-offs and retrieved it with sharp,

erratic strips. The fly rode high in the water column, and I watched the white saddle feathers quiver and pulse.

The most common question clients ask upon first seeing my pike flies is: "you sure these aren't too big?" Their skepticism recedes when I tell them that pike have been known

a matter of minutes. Two circular clumps of grass, maybe 15 feet wide, poked through the calm, gray surface, good hiding spots. I poled towards the grass.

Todd fanned out 60-foot casts, covering water and working the fly perfectly. We fell into a comfortable rhythm, Todd intuiting where to cast so

It happened quickly. We were both watching. The white fly went dark. What I saw, and what I still remember in my mind's eye, was a pike in profile, its side and white belly, just beneath the surface, having scarfed Todd's fly and turned hard left.

to eat prey up to half their body weight. Todd didn't appear phased by the fly's size, though we joked that he'd gotten soft casting tiny nymphs and dries on four-weights. I told him I got more bites on fluorocarbon compared to tieable wire, and he remarked at how tough the line must be to withstand an adult pike's teeth.

Todd likes to talk, which is good for slow fishing days, or, any day he happens to be pike fishing. We reminisced about mutual fishing friends, some retained and some lost, about guiding experiences, about submitting our work to magazines and dealing with unpredictable editors. Soon after, we first noticed baitfish rippling the bay's surface. Then we spotted two loons, hunting, in the same general area as the baitfish. Then a fish blew up the bait ball--a small-mouth bass, it looked like.

There were few ambush points, given the flat, open expanse of the bay we fished. The baitfish would show here, then there, covering 100 yards or so in

that I didn't need to say much; my only task was positioning the skiff. He landed the fly softly a foot or so from the larger grass patch. His fly, hollow-tied on a 4/0 stinger hook, hovered near the surface. He stripped the line, and the fly came to life.

It happened quickly. We were both watching. The white fly went dark. What I saw, and what I still remember in my mind's eye, was a pike in profile, its side and white belly, just beneath the surface, having scarfed Todd's fly and turned hard left. My outstretched fingers would not have covered the fish's flank. Todd set the hook. His leader, fly- and fishless, flew back toward him. A giant boil, and the lake surface settled again. The whole event lasted less than two seconds. I'm not sure exactly what we said to each other, when it was clear the pike was gone, clear that it had broken the leader I'd sworn by, but I know it was not fit for print.

Todd's leader came back clipped as though with pliers--a clean cut,



Scenes From The Wild

by Ryan Brod

six inches north of the loop knot. In the 10 or so years that I've targeted big pike on fly, I've broken off one or two, usually smaller ones with top-jaw razors that sheared the leader or frayed it during a brief

that was now swimming around with our fly in its mouth.

"That thing was massive," Todd said.

After that, we didn't talk much. Soon after, we called it a day--what could we do to top a fish like that one? Back home, I Googled tieable wire leaders. I sent Todd a GIF of a man crying alone in the shower; he sent back a laughing emoji. We made plans to go again in spring, after the long winter, after ice out and before his trout fishing heated up.



Ryan Brod is the author of Tributaries: Essays from Woods and Waters (2023). He teaches first-year writing and creative nonfiction at University of New England, and he guides between semesters.

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Wing...Long silver pheasant crest feather over which are 4 yellow saddle hackles

Shoulder...Red body feather from golden pheasant, 1/3 wing length

Cheeks...Jungle cock

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



The Adventures of Me and Joe

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

"What's this one here, Good?" Goodwin Berg glanced over at the gun I was pointing at in one of the racks in his gun shop.

"That there's a Savage Model 24 combination gun. Top barrel's .30-30 and the bottom's a 20-gauge shotgun."

I lifted the gun from the rack, broke it open to make sure it wasn't loaded and looked it over thoughtfully. The stock was dinged and scratched in a number of places and the bluing was worn around the receiver, but mechanically it seemed in good shape. The rifling in the .30-30 barrel looked sharp and without pits. Good came over to stand beside me.

"That doo-hickey on the hammer flips up or down to select which barrel you want ter fire."

I closed the action and brought the gun to my shoulder. "Doesn't feel too bad. You know, this kind of gun seems like a good idea."

"Piece of crap!" Joe growled from where he was pawing over the ammunition, looking for rounds to fit his .38-55 Winchester.

"Goose Chainshot had him one of them guns. Said he couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with it."

"Goose couldn't hit the side of a barn from the inside," I said absently. "Say, Good, how much you got to soak me for this hunk of junk?"

"Well, now," the scheme light came on in his faded blue eyes. "You got ter expect ter pay top dollar fer a fine piece o' machin'ry like that there..."

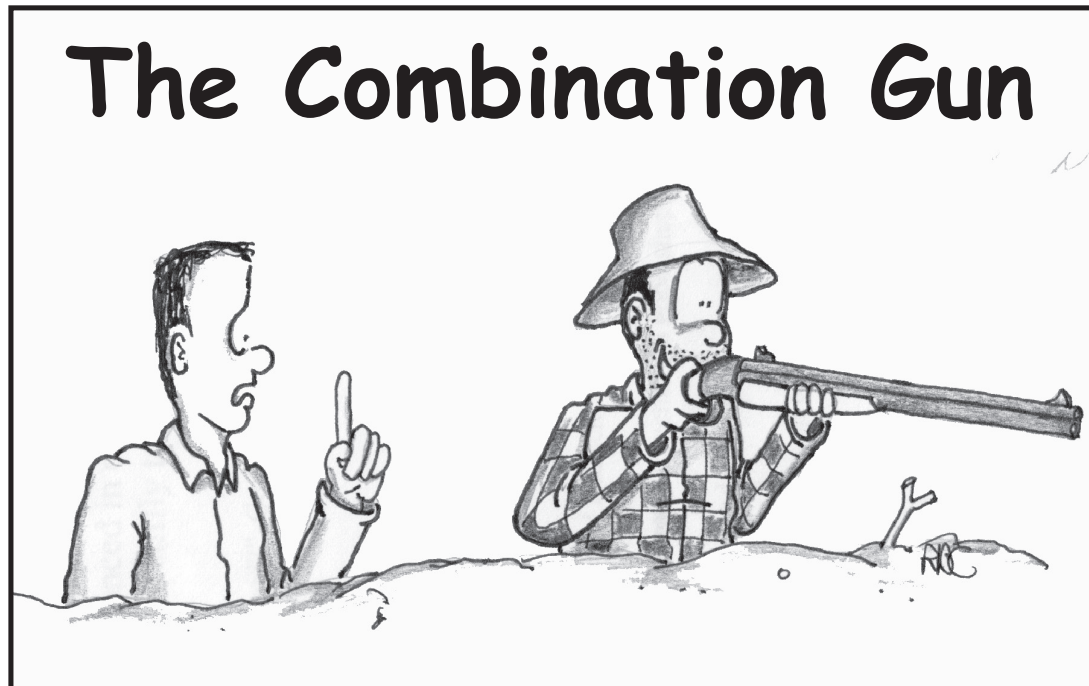
As me and Joe climbed into his Jeep later he looked sourly at the gun I had propped between my knees.

"Don't seem right, somehow. You either hunt with a shotgun or with a rifle. You don't hunt with both at the same time."

"But think about it, Joe. What if I'm hunting partridge and I spot a deer?"

"You kin always carry buckshot. Never mind. Ain't none of my business. But it seems ter me a gun what's s'posed ta do two different things ain't gonna do either one very well."

But the following weeks were to prove Joe



The combination gun roared loudly in the noonday stillness. The buck started slightly, then glanced in our direction. With a lift of the tail, he started to walk stiffly toward some nearby fir trees.

wrong. The little Model 24 was great on birds. Even with low-brass loads in 7-1/2 birdshot the 20-gauge barrel was deadly on grouse near and far.

At first Joe touted the virtues of his old single-shot 12-gauge. It would kill birds at a longer distance, he touted, which was true. With heavy buckshot loads he was ready for any deer that might pop up at close range.

But his 12-gauge with its full choke barrel tore up a lot of meat at closer ranges and even Joe admitted that buckshot was an iffy proposition at anything but point-blank distance.

One bright and sunny

afternoon we were sneaking along an old logging trace east of Shallow Brook. A cock grouse strutted out from under some trailside thorn bushes 20 yards ahead. It was Joe's shot. He looked down at his battered 12-gauge, then over to the Savage cradled in the crook of my arm. I could tell it hurt him to do it but he whispered to me:

"Lemme try that hunk of junk gun o' yorn."

Wordlessly I handed him the combination gun, making sure the selector was set on the shotgun barrel. As we switched guns the birds became aware of our presence and flushed in a flurry of dead leaves. It was a crossing shot, left to right, but Joe swung easily with the flight path, touched the trigger, and the grouse folded neatly in mid-air. He brought the gun down and looked at it thoughtfully, then glanced over to where the grouse lay in patch of dead grass.

"Well, now," he said softly, "ain't that a caution."

He handed the gun back to me almost grudgingly and, after retrieving the bird, we continued along the road. We each bagged our limit that day and for the last three of his birds, Joe used my combination gun. I was pleased that he now appreciated the little Savage. Usually it was Joe that proved me wrong when the subject was firearms, but this time it seemed that I'd been right and he had been mistaken.

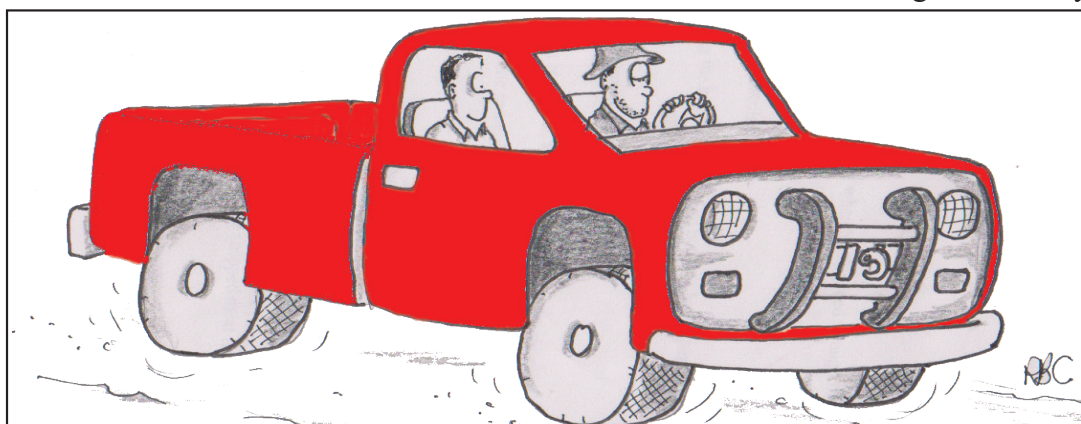
The following Saturday we met to go hunting again.

"Where's your gun?" I asked Joe when I climbed into his Jeep.

"Left'er home. Figured we'd use that there combination gun o' your'n. Got to admit, that's a nice little shotgun. Don't know as the rifle barrel's much use, but she's shore a bird getter."

The day was a beauty, with a few puffs of high cumulous clouds against an azure sky, practically no wind, and temperatures in the low forties. We again took turns with the combination gun.

Joe had bagged two (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)

birds and I had one, so I was carrying the Savage when the big coyote stepped out into the skidder road a hundred yards away.

"Lookit that!" Joe hissed. "Wish I had my .38-55 right now."

Without comment I switched the hammer selector to the rifle barrel and handed the gun to Joe. He looked at it in puzzlement, then comprehension brought a grim smile to his face. He shouldered the gun and aimed for a long minute. The .30-30 barrel cracked and down the trail the coyote gave a convulsive leap and collapsed into a motionless tumble of fur.

Joe grinned from ear to ear. "Well, now... ain't that somethin'?" He opened the gun and extracted the spent rifle cartridge. I could see the scheme light coming into his eyes and felt a sense of foreboding. He rubbed the scarred stock with an avaricious hand.

"Say," he said suddenly. "You're working Monday, ain't yer? How about I borry this here little gun for the day to do some serious huntin'?"

I reluctantly agreed. Except that it didn't end with just one day. I didn't see either Joe or my combination gun until the following Saturday. When Joe stopped to pick me up for a day of hunting I noticed my gun cradles in his back window gun rack like it belonged there. I slipped my .308 into the rack below it and glanced at Joe.

"You know this is the opening day of deer season?"

"Yep, but I figgered we might see a bird or two. Thet combination gun is jist the ticket. Ya know,

you really orta sell me that gun."

"Joe, you hated that gun! You tried to talk me out of buying it!"

"I know, I know," he said sheepishly. "But I was wrong. That there gun is jist the thing. Since I seen you, I bagged a dozen partridges. Didn't see no more coyotes nor nothin', but that .30-30 barrel was always ready."

"Why don't you go over to Berg's and buy another one?"

"Tried. He ain't got no more an' the way things is goin', it bein' huntin' season an' all, he can't git no new ones fer another month or so."

I could see his problem but I'd be darned if I'd sell the gun I liked so much just because Joe had changed his opinion of it. We set out on the hunt in an uncomfortable silence. Things didn't get any better after we'd worked along the slopes of a hardwood ridge for part of the morning. Plenty of deer sign littered the leaf cover along the slopes but we didn't come across any whitetails. Joe did, however, kill two grouse that were filling up on beechnuts. He became even more enamored with the little Savage.

"Yessir, this here gun is the answer. Be the top-pin' on the cake if a buck popped up right now. You got ta sell me this gun."

"No I don't," I growled. "Come on, let's get to hunting."

For another hour we eased along the slopes of the ridge. Then Joe led the way to a low saddle that crossed to the other side. Just as his head raised over the top, he ducked back down, motioning for me to crouch.

"They's a buck jist

over the other side, maybe 80 yards away," he whispered. "Don't even know we're here."

Together we eased up until we could see over the top. The buck, a fat 6-pointer, was nosing the leaves for fallen beechnuts. I felt movement to my left and looked to see Joe raise the combination gun to his shoulder.

"Joe," I murmured suddenly. "You didn't..."

"Hush!" he whispered, squinting down the barrel.

"But you didn't..."

"Shsst!" he hissed. I saw his finger begin to move on the trigger. Carefully, I moved my rifle to ready position and eased off the safety.

The combination gun roared loudly in the noonday stillness. The buck started slightly, then glanced in our direction. With a lift of the tail, he started to walk stiffly toward some nearby fir trees.

Raising my rifle, I followed his movements for a few seconds, then pulled the trigger. At the crack of the .308, the buck gave a pair of bounds, then collapsed right at the edge of the fir thicket.

I looked over to see Joe staring at the dead deer. Then he looked down at the combination gun with something like horror.

"I don't understand it! I ain't never missed no deer at that range."

"You can't kill a deer at 80 yards with 20-gauge birdshot."

"Say what?"

"You forgot to flip the selector to the rifle barrel. You fired the shotgun barrel."

With dawning understanding he stared at the little Savage as though it had stabbed him in the

back.

"Knowed this thing was piece o' crap when you bought it," he said disgustedly. With a jerky movement he reached a hand toward me.

"Gimme that .308!"

He pulled the rifle out of my grasp and shoved the Savage at me with his other hand.

"Joe, it wasn't the gun's fault. All you had to do..."

"Never you mind!" He worked the bolt on the .308, putting another shell in the chamber and engaging the safety. Shouldering the gun he pulled his hunting knife from its sheath and headed toward the deer.

"Tomorrow," he growled over his shoulder

at me, "I start carryin' my .38-55 agin'. That's a gun a man kin depend on."

I followed him toward the deer, removing the spent shotgun shell from the combination gun and replacing it with a loaded one. I noted that the selector switch was still on the shotgun barrel. Fine, I thought. I've already got *my* deer. And now I could enjoy the little Savage without the danger of Joe confiscating it on me.

"But Joe," I said as he knelt by the buck, knife in hand. "What you gonna do when you see some partridge?"

"Same as I always did before," he said grimly, beginning to dress off my deer. "I'll jist shoot their heads off with the rifle."



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Marty



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I found Marty on page _____

Amasa Sholes

(Marty was found on pg 3)

Entries must be postmarked by 1/14/25 to be eligible for this issue.

Outdoor Sporting Library

by Jeremiah Wood,
Ashland, ME



Tough times make tough people. Never was that saying more true than in the case of Sidney and Jimmy Huntington. Raised in the early 1920's in the remote wilderness of the

just five years old.

James Huntington moved from New York to the Yukon during the gold rush stampede in 1897. He never made a fortune, but toiled much of his life pros-

Despite such a turbulent upbringing, Sidney Huntington thrived. His adaptability, respect, work ethic and strong principles allowed him to succeed where many struggled.

Koyukuk River and its tributaries, the boys faced immense struggles from an early age. It was summertime at the family's remote homestead on the Hogatza River when Anna Huntington died suddenly, leaving the two boys and their baby sister to fend for themselves for weeks. Sidney – the oldest – was

pecting for that next great find. In the end he found it – an actual gold mine- but didn't live long enough to learn how immensely valuable it was. The true fortune Huntington found in Alaska, however, was the long lasting friendships he built and the love, support and knowledge he shared with his family. He married

Shadows on the Koyukuk

Anna, a Koyukon Athabascan native, and they lived mostly off the land while raising their family in the wilderness.

Huntington made a

makeshift stores where the activity was greatest. When he returned to the Hogatza River and learned of his wife's passing, he knew it would be impossible

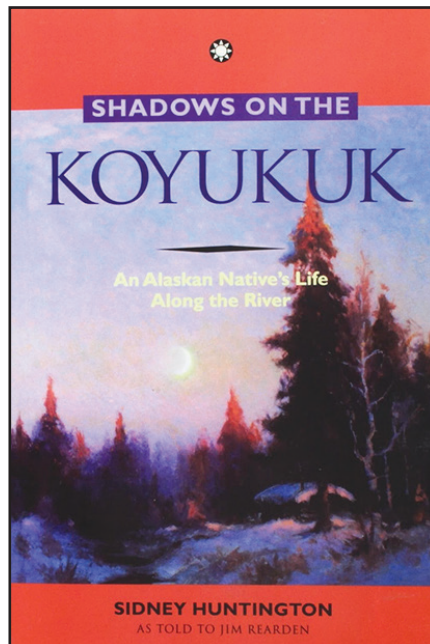
to raise the children and support them financially at the same time. As was the case with many children at the time, Sidney and Jimmy were taken in by the Episcopal mission, and spent years in boarding schools throughout Alaska.

Despite such a turbulent upbringing, Sidney Huntington thrived. His adaptability, respect, work ethic and strong principles allowed him to

end. His father's health was failing, and he was determined to teach Sidney and Jimmy how to live off the land while he still could.

Over the next few years, the boys learned to build boats, navigate rivers, cut trails, hunt, fish and trap. They experienced mind numbing cold winters and devastating spring floods. They felt the highs and lows of living off the land in an unforgiving environment. And when their father's health eventually kept him in town, they went out on the trapline themselves. Both brothers would later look back on those years as some of the best of their lives. Given what they'd been through, the tough lifestyle of an interior Alaska trapper during the Great Depression seemed pretty darn good.

From tough beginnings, Sidney Huntington went on to accomplish great things. He raised a huge family, advocated for education in rural Alaska, created business opportunities in his village, served on the Alaska Board of Game and continued to live at least partly off the land until he passed at the ripe old age of 100. But I think one of his greatest achievements was the book "Shadows on the Koyukuk: An Alaska Native's Life Along the River". The 1993 book is Sidney's life story as told to Jim Rearden, who painted an eloquent picture of a fascinating journey through history. It's one of the best books I've ever read.



good part of his living as a trader. He would purchase supplies and transport them to the various mining camps along the Yukon and Koyukuk, setting up

succeed where many struggled. It was a good thing he did, because the best years were yet to come. At age twelve, Sidney's formal education had come to an

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The New Year Outdoors

Well, here we go. A whole new year of fishing, hunting, trapping and wildlife watching opportunities. And, some new “stuff” to go with those opportunities. Funny thing is, as I’ve gotten older, I don’t need as much new “stuff” as I used to. I’m quite content to use what I have. But I’m not stupid either. If I think that a new fly rod or reel, firearm or other piece of outdoor gear will

alike can fish any inland water - or saltwater - in New Hampshire that day without a fishing license. But, season dates, bag limits and all other fishing regulations must be followed on Free Fishing Day.

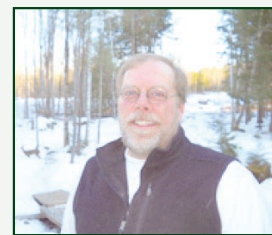
Regardless of the ice conditions, the 32nd annual Yankee Sportsman’s Classic will be held January 17-19 at the Champlain Valley Fair Grounds in Essex Junction, Vermont. Ex-

casting Encore frames.

I just want to say that while I’m happy to see Thompson Center return to the market after its somewhat shabby demise, that is in no way throwing shade at New Hampshire muzzleloader maker Woodman Arms. The Patriot is a high quality muzzleloader that many hunters turned to when Thompson and LRH fell by the wayside. Irrespective of how TC

New Hampshire Outdoors

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



before you put them away for another ten months. It’s easy to put them in the gun case and forget about them, which is ironic, because pitting, corrosion and rust form just as easily.

Depending on snow depths, I may head out and lay down some standing dead ash trees that the Emerald Ash Borers did a number on. But, it makes for good firewood and

Lord knows I could use the mid-Winter exercise! Stay warm.



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

Because of an early editorial deadlines, I have no way of knowing what the ice situation will be on New Hampshire’s lakes and ponds on Saturday, January 18th. That’s the first of two Free Fishing Days in the state.

improve my odds in the field, will I get it? You bet ‘cha! So, here’s to a new year full of promise. Or, as Jimmy Buffett put it in his song Changes in Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes, “Oh, yesterday’s over my shoulder, so I can’t look back for too long. There’s just too much to see waiting in front of me and I know that I just can’t go wrong”. Thus ends the annual sermon on retrospection.

Because of an early editorial deadlines, I have no way of knowing what the ice situation will be on New Hampshire’s lakes and ponds on Saturday, January 18th. That’s the first of two Free Fishing Days in the state. (The other is Saturday, June 7th, 2025). If I remember correctly, last years Free Fishing Day in January was a wash out with rain on already thin (if any) ice. Sure hope we don’t have that situation again this year. The purpose behind the Free Fishing Days are to get folks excited about fishing and try it for free. State residents and nonresidents

hibitors in attendance from New Hampshire include representatives from the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Granite State Gun Dogs, LLC and Woodman Arms from Brentwood, New Hampshire makers of the Patriot .40, .45 and .50 caliber muzzleloaders. And, some reps from the Northwoods Sporting Journal (New England’s Premier Hunting, Fishing and Outdoor Magazine) will be at the show to let attendees know how they can make NWSJ part of their indoor/outdoor life.

As we enter the new year, we should be hearing more from the re-born version of Thompson Center Arms. The Encore made its appearance back in October and was to be followed in short order by the Contender break-open “hand cannon,” the Icon bolt-action centerfire rifle and the Triumph muzzleloader. It’s my understanding that design and engineering will remain in Rochester, N.H., where Thompson Investment Casting is again

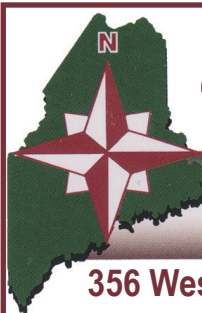
Arms does in this incarnation, there is still going to be a high quality, affordable, locally made product available by Woodman Arms. It’s a great story. Check them out at: woodmanarms.com

With the holidays in the rear view and maybe a little more free-time is at hand, make the time to protect your investment. By that I mean, take down your rifles and muzzleloaders and clean and oil them

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Aroostook Woods & Water

by Mike Maynard,
Perham, ME

For the second time in my life, I am guilty of trying to shoot a deer in my underwear. November 16th, a dark and gloomy Saturday morning; I love these ominously dark and rainy mornings, I really do. It was almost 6:30, and I went down to the cellar to kick the fire back to life. I came back upstairs and poured myself a cup of coffee, and as I sat down on the couch to catch the weather, a little voice in my head said, "Get up and check the back field". I have a lovely view of my back field and the endless frontier beyond from my kitchen window. I had to stand there for a few minutes, waiting for the darkness to subside enough to see down to the end of the field. And sure enough, there was a deer standing on the tree line, 300 yards away. It was still dark enough that I couldn't tell buck from doe. But as

I watched the deer through the binos, the light changed just enough for me to spy bone. At this point I wasn't too excited; I didn't think he'd make the mistake of stepping out into the field.

...but then he did. I was shocked. He started wandering up towards the back of the greenhouse. Not wanting to waste time by getting dressed, I managed to spill my coffee all over myself (ouch), and ran for the handiest rifle available, a lovely Ruger M77 in .25-06 (tang safety and a bull barrel), and went running out of the house. When I got to the corner of the barn, I realized that I was in my underwear and slippers, the good LL Bean slippers that my wife gave to me for Christmas last year. Looking down, they were now soaking wet, covered in mud, and a sizeable dollop of dog doo graced my right foot.

Oh, well, sacrifices must be made.

I snuck a peek around the corner of the barn, and there he was, a mere 150 yards away and coming closer! I was hoping he'd continue to close the distance, but he started looking at the house, and perhaps realizing he was in the danger zone, started to

with the wind blowing, I had to really belt it out. It probably sounded more like Ethel Merman gargling a dead cat than any form of deer vocalization. But he heard it! And I know what he was thinking, "what the hell was that?!"

He stopped and turned, not quite broadside, but enough of a quartering

have broken the bank. My educated guess on dressed weight and antler construction was something along the lines of, 6-8 points, and 150 lb.s. Nice freezer venison. For comparison purposes, one of my nephews, Brad Maynard, shot a monster the day before. Brad dragged out a heavy racked, massive 8 pt., 211

I snuck a peek around the corner of the barn, and there he was, a mere 150 yards away and coming closer! I was hoping he'd continue to close the distance, but he started looking at the house, and perhaps realizing he was in the danger zone, started to turn for home.

turn for home. I stepped out from the corner of the barn and tried to square up for a 150 yard, off-hand shot. But it was cold. It was raining. The wind was blowing. I was in my underwear. Shivering badly, the sight picture in my scope looked like the vertical hold on my grandparents old 19" black and white console TV set had gone all cattywampus again.

I just couldn't get myself settled in. I stepped back to the barn, slipping in the mud and almost landing on my arse (note to LL Bean: put some damn tread on your slippers!), and tried to use the corner of the barn as a bench rest. The buck was now a good 160 yards away and moving off. I gave him a blatt, but at that distance and

shot that I felt comfortable touching one off. He seemed surprised. At least that was my take on the explosion of pure survival instinct that I witnessed immediately following the shot. No big mule kick, no clutching of pearls and sinking to the turf in a melodramatic dying declaration. No, he left the earth in a blur and didn't hit the ground again for a good twenty feet. Then he lit out for that impenetrable black growth on the edge of the field at the speed of light.

I looked at the now empty field, cursing the weather and my inability to hold steady in the face of intolerable physical hardships (standing in the rain at 33 degrees in your underwear qualifies as a hardship). He wouldn't

pound stud of a buck. He was crawling across a wet field on his belly (Brad, not the deer), trying to get close to a doe in the hope that a buck would soon follow. And boy, did it! Brad sat up, and using his knee as a rest, let go a single round of ought six medicine. Measured off later, the shot was 150 yards. There's something to be said for young hunters and their ability to face adversity better than us old dudes. Then again, he had all his clothes on, so there's that.

I mentioned earlier that this was the second time I took a shot at a deer while in my underwear. You know what? The first time didn't work out any better. At least that time I stayed indoors and took the shot from my kitchen window. The moral of the story: Keep your clothes on, people! ...and Brad, well done young man! Well done!



Mike Maynard can be found scraping the dog doo off his slippers at perham-trout@gmail.com

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Bait

(Cont. from pg 14)

ping out the hole to check the trap, I'd pile up the ice chunks and slush along the perimeter of the hole, and place the blocking on top to raise the two-by-four up further.

Always mark your holes with evergreen boughs. A large hole cut for a bait trap, especially after a recent thaw, can quickly expand and create a hazard to people and dogs. State law requires bait traps for personal use be labeled with the owner's name and address. The owner must also possess a valid fishing license and tend their traps not less than once every seven days. Other regulations including trap size limitations and employing a rigid entry and exit apply.

When checking traps, plan to haul a sled with two buckets, a skimmer, ice chisel, extra evergreen boughs, and dog food. I use one bucket to dump the contents of the trap in. Then, using my skimmer as a net, I cull through the catch. "Keepers," baitfish of the right size and species, go into the second bucket. Familiarize yourself with the list of legal baitfish outlined by the State, and visually inspect each fish.

Checking bait traps is a welcome midweek adventure; it's the promise of an upcoming ice fishing trip, and something else to do outside on those short, dark winter days.

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

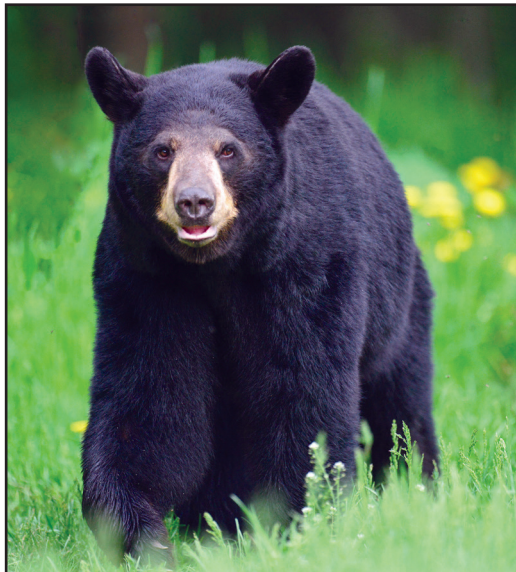
News

(Cont. from pg 12)

healthy and at historic levels throughout the state," said Andrew Timmins, NHFG's Game Program Supervisor. "This outcome is the result of sound scientific management based on long-term planning. By soliciting broad public input throughout the process, we can develop management practices that meet the biological needs of wildlife in a way that is consistent with public opinion. We hope that anyone who receives a survey will take

the opportunity to participate."

Once the survey is completed, preference data will be compared with species-specific biological data to develop an initial draft BGMP in February



of 2025. This draft plan, which will be presented at a series of public meet-

ings in April of 2025, will provide a foundation for public feedback and discussion. "Using both a survey and public meeting approach provides sufficient opportunity for interested people to provide input throughout the process," said Timmins.

Once the New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission approve a final plan, population goals and objectives cited in the plan will serve as "operational targets" and guide management of these species during the next 10 years. This approach allows for measured, steady progress towards goals and objectives for New Hampshire's big game species supported by science and bolstered by public input.

Best Shot!



Olivia Shepherd, daughter of Ashley Shepherd, enjoys the Sporting Journal, and her Dad's glasses.



Northwoods Sporting Journal's Aroostook County Sales Representative Josh Kane and his son Wyatt with a nice buck.

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

*From the crew at the
Northwoods Sporting Journal*



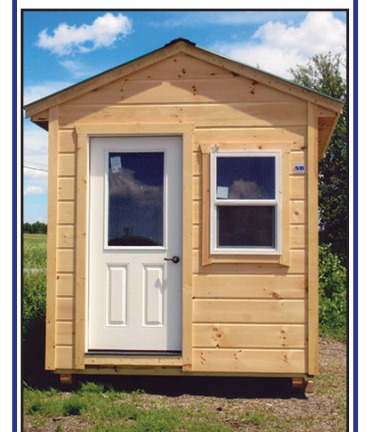
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Warden's Words

by Game Warden
Kale O'Leary,
Ashland, ME

I have a piece of advice about Maine Game Wardens that I often share with people looking to become Wardens or newly hired Wardens during their training process. I tell everyone that Maine Game Wardens are looked at as the experts of all things Maine outdoors. The public depends on us as Wardens, to have a solid foundational understanding of everything outdoors, from waterfowl, fishing, all big game hunting, or trapping. We are frequently presented questions that often catch us off guard, whether it be at a gas pump or local

coffee shop counter. And we are expected to know the answers and provide clear guidance to those seeking our assistance. Retired Lieutenant Tom Ward always preached to his young Wardens that hunting, fishing and trapping as a Warden is one of the most important things to keep doing. It keeps us sharp, more in tune with our jobs and the best professionals that we can be when it comes to the Maine fish and wildlife.

Youtube can definitely teach you a lot, but getting your hands dirty in the outdoors is paramount.

When I was first hired as a Game Warden, I spent several years chasing ducks and geese, learning the “ins and outs” of waterfowl and identifying these birds. I did this because as a young man, I had

lake trout during ice fishing season, just to name a few. This past fall I decided to pick up a new obsession and to get back into one of the most enjoyable fall pastimes I've ever had.... marten and fisher trapping

traps and start chasing Maine's mustelids again.

Trappers have always been a distinguished group of woodsmen and women who seem as keyed in with wildlife and nature as any other user group I speak with. Trappers in general, are very wise and as good


Trappers have always been a distinguished group of woodsmen and women who seem as keyed in with wildlife and nature as any other user group I speak with. Trappers in general, are very wise and as good at reading tracks and sign as anyone I know.



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very little experience with waterfowl hunting. Drake mallards and wood ducks was about the extent of my identification abilities. But realizing this short-coming, I immersed myself with everything waterfowl. Now, I understand the intricacies, common issues and how a duck hunter thinks. which has made me a better Warden.

It is my nature that I cannot just dip my toe in the water. I have to cannonball dive into something and try and perfect that craft by reading, researching and putting my wits to the test. Some of my more recent obsessions include fly fishing with sinking gear, Winchester lever guns, and jigging

in the Northwoods.

My first introduction to trapping marten and fisher came when I was an Allagash Waterway Ranger and spent time learning the art of trapping from Trevor O'Leary. In those days, the “leaning pole sets” was the name of the game and I got into the sport until the lynx exclusion box rules changed conibear trapping in Maine. The law change is what it is, but for me as a newly hired Game Warden with a limited amount of time, I hung up my traps and always said “I'll get around to making some of those boxes at some point.” Years went by and finally, this past fall, I decided it had been too long and it was time to dust off the

at reading tracks and sign as anyone I know. It is however a very “tight lipped” group, with tips and tricks not easy to come by from the experienced trappers. I am lucky to work alongside a very accomplished trapper who just so happens to share his knowledge and trapping exploits on his Youtube channel, “Trapping Today”. This trapper also happens to be a writer for this magazine, Jeremiah Wood. With a head full of information, a truckload of boxes, a pack basket armed with traps, lures, wire and ribbon, I ventured off into the North Maine Woods to run a line again. As soon as I began walking in marten and fisher terrain and cover, (Trapping cont. pg 30)



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Burgess's B.A.S.S. National Championship



Day #2 B.A.S.S. National Championship Burgess's Big Bass
(Photo by Bass Pro Mark Burgess)

Mark Burgess's victory at the July 2024 BASS Nation Qualifier on Lake Champlain, earned the Massachusetts angler an automatic entry into the B.A.S.S. National Championship scheduled November 6-7-8, 2024, on Oklahoma's Grand Lake O' Cherokees. "I practiced on Grand Lake before the official cut-off date. This allowed me to visually be on the water, explore target areas I had marked on my paper map, plus verify any hazards as well as specific structure and cover."

During the Official November pre-tournament practice days, the 245 Pro's and their Co-Anglers, a total of 490 anglers were greeted with windy cloudy skies, torrential rain accompanied with thunderstorms. "This is where my pre-tournament preparation came into play," stated Burgess. The Skeeter/Yamaha Pro had already logged his 'Confidence Areas' into his Humminbird electronics, scouted transitional areas and eliminated major community fishing areas. "In

my opinion, the mid-lake sections were potentially good areas for producing limits of bass. However, they were also areas that would be targeted by a majority of anglers", replied,

With over thirty-years of competitive angling across the United States, the Massachusetts seasoned pro-angler concentrated on his angling strengths. "I'm in my comfort zone when I'm fishing shallow."

Burgess.

With over thirty-years of competitive angling across the United States, the Massachusetts seasoned pro-angler concentrated on his angling strengths. "I'm in my comfort zone when I'm fishing shallow. Additionally, I knew very few anglers would be targeting the same type of cover and structure." Water temperatures lingered within the 64-66-degree range with slightly stain water. Burgess located what he called 'A ton of Bait'! "The bait was small Threadfin Shad, all about two-three inches long. I wasn't getting a lot of bites, however the bass I located were larger. Plus, I only saw one other boat within my entire area."

Championship Day #1:

Burgess's Lake Champlain Nation victory played into his hand once more, as he was Boat #5 in the first flight out of 245

boats. Thus, allowing the Northeast Champion an opportunity to secure his 'Confidence Area' right away. "My primary Confidence Area included a bluff wall located on the outside bend of a river channel. Its location made it a bit difficult to fish, as I had to hug the wall within steeper banks, making pre-

cise casts to isolated targets in five-eight feet along a shelf."

With his Humminbird electronics locked into 360-Degree mode, Mark Burgess was able to pinpoint precise isolated targets. "I can't emphasize enough as to my ability to visually work my baits calmly and persistently, enticing bass, when my Humminbird sonar was set at 360-Degree mode!" Cold windy, bluebird skies had the bass pegged tight to isolated wood and brush cover along the bluff wall. This is when Burgess pitched a 3/8 oz. natural jig paired with

a non-aggressive claw/orange trailer. "I set the hook as a bass took my jig, but the bass was stuck in the wood. Looking at my 360-degree sonar I went into the bluff wall, reached down into the wood cover and retrieved the bass with my jig in his mouth!"

As Day #1 of Competition progressed Mark

Burgess had only four-bass in his Skeeter livewell. "I made my commitment to stay within this area, running would have only been a waste of time, plus it wasn't in my game plan," revealed Burgess. Believing in his decision this was his 'Confidence Area', coupled with the knowledge that baitfish do move, he continued to target the same general area. Targeting the backs of flatter pockets with both rock and wood cover, the seasoned Pro Angler spent the rest of Day #1 covering water with reaction baits. "I burned and slow rolled a buzzbait on the surface. Then Alternated back and forth between my Buzzbait and a Lucky Craft Square-bill crankbait." When the scales closed on Day #1 Mark Burgess's four bass tip the scales at eight pounds, leaving him idling just over one-hundredth place.

"My goal coming into this event was to place within the Top 3 and make the Classic. I just needed to advance within the Top 40 on Day #2 to compete on (B.A.S.S. cont. pg 24)

Best Bassin'

by Bill Decoteau,
Hampden, MA



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Catherine Gordon



Maine Outdoor Adventure

by Rich Yvon,
Bradford, ME

Here in January, our next fishing season will be starting as Maine's ponds and lakes freeze over.

Instead, of a new year's resolution, I have a new year's wish for all people involved with the outdoors.

My wish is simple, I would like folks to really start thinking of our fish first, along with the environment. Having been apart of the outdoor community for years, I have evolved to a better mind set, by learning new and better ways, to be an ethical and responsible sportsman. "At 60 years of age, I am thankful I still get to learn everyday with an open mind.

not a new concept, I believe its one that should be promoted through social awareness and practical education.

<https://www.keepfishwet.org> is a web site representing proper fish handling on information based on science. The main point to this entire movement is simply, to release the fish in best condition possible. The web site gives real, practical examples on how it's done. Let's face it, anyone who fishes can benefit from this approach including our fish!

While fishing, there are times where an angler will release fish due to legal limits, seasons, or just personal reasons.

While fishing, there are times where an angler will release fish due to legal limits, seasons, or just personal reasons. The keep fish wet movement is about reduced fish handling, zero fish contact with dry surfaces and minimized exposure to air.

The "Keep fish wet" movement in America right now seems to be a growing and a very strong message in which I support 100%. I do, however support legal, ethical, harvest of some species. Although

The keep fish wet movement is about reduced fish handling, zero fish contact with dry surfaces and minimized exposure to air. As, a guide who relies on taking pictures, I have always had a 3 second rule

on my boats or streamside fishing. Holding fish over a wet rubber net seemed to be a sufficient, safe way in ideal conditions. I certainly will do more on promot-

ing fish in water, because I believe I can do better. I hope everyone considers this mind set and practice. It will certainly help the survivability of our fish. If we put our resource first, the fishing will take care of itself.

Here below are some great field tips to share regarding safe fish handling and fishing...

Before you go fishing

- Know the fishing rules for your water
- Be aware and avoid spawning fish and their beds
- Be mindful of warm water and how it can impact fish



Before your first cast

- Use barbless hooks
- Use artificial lures and fly's
- Use rubber nets
- Use quality hook removal tools (limit fish lip grip use)

When you hook a fish

- Limit fight time
- Hold fish in or over water

- Grip fish carefully
- Photograph wet fish
- Only revive fish that cannot swim

I wish everyone a safe, fun, hard water season!

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.

B.A.S.S.

(Cont. from pg 24)

Day #3 and make it happen," recalls Burgess with a voice of confidence.

Championship Day #2:

Burgess found himself idling in Flight #18 and headed straight back to his 'Confidence Area'. He made five cast and landed two bass, ending the day with seven bites with his best five-bass weighing 11 lbs. 8 oz.! When the scales officially closed on Day #2 Burgess ended up in 48th place. "I have

no regrets, I fished clean, had the quality bass in my 'Confidence Area' and stayed with my game plan. Once again, it's all about ounces" says Burgess.

Billy "Hawkeye" Decoteau is an outdoor journalist with a strong passion for pursuing the black bass. His activities include: emceeing the Bass University weekend educational seminar programs as well as emceeing benefit tournaments such as Maine's Annual May Special Olympics Team Tournament, Fishing For Freedom, and working with the USO.



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A Maine Caribou Antler

If antlers could talk, this old Maine caribou antler could tell quite a tale. It was given to the Maine Caribou Reintroduction

same condition as the day it was found. Who was C. P. Webber and what was the story behind this wonderful find? Now that I have time

the “Queen City” when the shores of the Penobscot were crowded cheek-by-jowl with sawmills and sailing ships. As a youth, one of Charles P. Webber’s first jobs was to work as a clerk at the family lumber camp on Chesuncook Lake on the West Branch of the Penobscot River.



Project 40 years ago when I was the project leader. We used it at many public speaking engagements. A man from Lincoln, Maine discovered the antler lodged high in the post-and-beam structure of a barn that he disassembled. It was well-protected from the elements and was hidden there for a century for safe-keeping. The shed antler has 8 points and measures 31 inches in length; moderate- to large-sized as Maine caribou antlers go. The inscription “Mt. Katahdin, Oct. 3, 1889 Found by C. P. Webber” is neatly carved into the shaft of the antler. No rodents chewed the antler, and it is in the

in retirement, I set out for Fogler Library at the University of Maine and the Bangor Historical Society to find answers.

The Webber family are prominent in Bangor to this day. “C. P. Webber” carved on the caribou antler was Charles Prescott Webber (1853-1940) who was born in Ripley, Maine. There, his father John Prescott Webber (1832-1911) began the family business of establishing general stores in Ripley, Exeter, and East Corinth. The Webber family moved to Bangor, the lumber capital of the world, in 1864 to launch a forestland and lumber business. These were heady days in

Webber Timberlands expanded quickly and owned extensive land in Somerset, Piscataquis, Penobscot, Aroostook, Hancock and Washington Counties and operated mills in Lincoln and Alton. At one time, the Webbers owned land in more than 100 different townships in Maine and cut from 6 to 8 million board feet

of lumber annually. John Webber became one of the wealthiest men in the greater Boston area.

John Webber’s sons, Charles Prescott and Franklin R., continued in the lumber and land business, eventually establishing the C.P. and F.R. Webber Company; mill owners and dealers in short lumber and lumbering supplies. Charles studied at Hebron Academy and a Minneapolis business college. After returning to Maine, he went into business with his brother in Oakfield until the 1870s when they moved to Lincoln to operate a general store, sawmill and to manage their lumber operations. About 1880, Charles P. Webber moved to Bangor and opened a wholesale grocery store until about 1892 when he began to work full-time in timberland and lumbering operations. His family lived in the Victorian mansion on West Broadway Avenue now owned by Stephen King. In 1909 he moved to Brookline, Massachusetts, to manage the family’s business interests in Boston. He died in 1940. Successive generations of Webbers continued to manage Webber Timberlands, eventually owning 450,000

Northwoods Sketchbook

by Mark McCollough,
Hampden, ME



acres of forestland; second only to the Pingree family.

Perhaps out of wanderlust or to purvey some of his land holdings, in 1889 Charles and his brother-in-law, Dr. Harvey L. Jewell of Bangor, planned a fall hunting and fishing expedition up the West Branch of the Penobscot. The Bangor Daily Commercial newspaper ran an ad from September 5-9, 1889 WANTED – Good large second-hand canvas canoe, Winchester repeating rifle, and set of field glasses. C.P. Webber. On September 5 the newspaper reported, Mr. C. P. Webber and Dr. H. L. Jewell leave next week for a canoe trip down the West Branch, the finest outing which a man can possibly enjoy at this season.

They began their expedition sometime in mid-September with the Daily Commercial reporting on September 24 that Dr. Jewell is enjoying an outing camping out and fishing in the up-river regions. On (Antler cont. pg 26)



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Antler

(Cont. from pg 25)

October 14 the newspaper reported, C. P. Webber and Dr. H. L. Jewell are on a trip down the West Branch in canoes. They returned to Bangor by November 2 when Charles advertised the sale of several hundred cords of wood from Kenduskeag and Glenburn.

One of Webber and Jewell's side trips on their 1889 expedition was an expedition up Mt. Katahdin. Hunting season was in full swing in October with moose, deer, and caribou

in season. Katahdin was a well-known destination for caribou. In October 1894, John Cushman, a noted market hunter who knew Katahdin better than any white man, saw a herd of 68 caribou on the Katahdin Tableland that remained there until spring. The following year, 1895, William Cabot of Boston wrote, Some few caribou were staying about the Sourdnhunk slopes northwest of the main mountain. In 1894, they ranged all around the mountain; in October a small group was feeding near the top of the slide on the Tableland. After snow

came, they gathered to the Tableland in numbers, all, I believe, coming by one path from the north. On December 8, I saw seventy or eighty at one time on the main Tableland west of the peak. Some had shed one or both horns. So, this was the place to shoot a caribou in 1889.

By the late 1880s, Mt. Katahdin was also becoming a destination for hikers. Excited by Henry David Thoreau's glowing report of ascending Katahdin 40 years previous, people began to climb Katahdin for the thrill and spectacular view. Several trails to the

mountain were established by the new Appalachian Mountain Club from the south (from Abol along the West Branch) and east (from Katahdin Lake). Caribou sightings were an added bonus for a fall climb of Maine's tallest mountain.

On their 1889 expedition, Charles Webber and Henry Jewell left their canoe at Abol and took several days to climb Katahdin. There are no records of Webber shooting a caribou at the summit. This surely would have been reported in the Daily Commercial for one of Bangor's most

prominent citizens. But Charles brought home a beautiful shed caribou antler. He carefully inscribed his name, date, and "Mt. Katahdin" on the antler. They carried the antler with them for the remainder of their trip and brought it to Lincoln, where both Charles Webber and Harvey Jewell had residences. One of them likely owned the barn where the antler remained hidden in the rafters for a century.

What should I do with such a priceless antiquity? I plan to give it to the Maine State Museum or Tekakapimək, the new contact center for the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. There the people of Maine can continue to enjoy Charles Webber's unique discovery.



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





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A Gift That Will Last A Lifetime!

Off-Season Deer Hunting Tips: Stay Sharp For Next Season!

By Sam Jacobs

Now that we're entering the heart of the off-season, it's time to get back into the hunting mode, at least for those of us who live the hunting lifestyle.

Throughout the summer, there are numerous actions we can take to significantly improve our

deer population on your property, so you can make more informed choices about which deer you should harvest and which ones you should let walk.

Tip #2 - Take Hikes Through Your Property

It's essential that you get to know your land, and

doesn't love finding a cool antler? I know I still get excited when I find one.

I find the most sheds during and after a control burn on our property along fences and creek crossings.

Tip #4 - Keep Your Shooting Skills Sharp

I mistakenly took the off-season off and did not fire my 270 Win rifle or

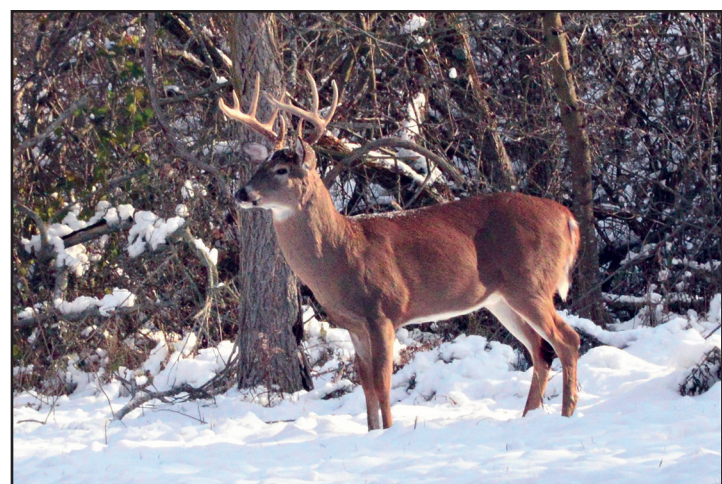
that needs to be repaired or replaced during the season because if I don't, I'll inevitably forget something and be frustrated the next time I need that item.

Tip #6 - Continue Feeding The Deer

Similarly to running trail cams, hunters tend to stop feeding deer once hunting season ends.

manage native plants that deer naturally eat. Yes, food plots and corn are good supplements to bring the deer to your area, but they don't always provide the nutrition deer need (corn is primarily a filler with little nutritional value).

I've planted native trees, especially fruit and nut trees, to help jumpstart an area. Browse, forbs, and mast are essential to a deer's diet, so it's best to have a good variety of native (to your local area) plants.



chances of having the most rewarding deer hunting season yet. It's all in our hands, and it's up to us to put in the effort.

Here are six tips that have helped me succeed in the past and that I continue to use every year to better my odds.

Tip #1 - Keep The Trail Cams Running

The end of deer season typically means hunters gather their trail cams and quit monitoring their hunting property for several months.

This is a mistake.

First, understanding how patterns change throughout the year will give you a better idea of setting up and targeting a specific deer, as you'll have more data on which to base your decisions.

Secondly, it's interesting to see the antlers and fawns drop and then watch them grow. Plus, you'll have a better idea of the

the best way to do that is by walking around your hunting property.

By doing this, you'll be able to identify bedding, feeding, and high-traffic areas without busting them out of an area and screwing up your hunting season.

Walking your property also helps keep you in shape for the walks to your stand or during a deer drive.

Tip #3 - Search For Sheds

Growing up, I primarily hunted public land with my dad. It was illegal to bring home sheds from the Corps land near our house, so we didn't go shed hunting much.

However, when we got a private hunting lease, we began shed hunting, and it was beneficial to see what bucks had made it through the season.

Shed hunting is also a great way to get kids involved because who

draw my Hoyt bow back until a week before opening day.

Knocking the rust off my shooting skills took longer than a week. Thankfully, I didn't have a buck-of-a-lifetime step out, but I still didn't feel comfortable sitting in the treestand, unsure of how I or my tools would perform.

Don't be like me that year; regularly practice shooting throughout the off-season to keep your skills sharp.

Tip #5 - Repair Or Replace Broken Equipment

I'm rough on equipment, especially hunting equipment, so by the end of deer season, I often have gear that needs replacing or repairing.

The off-season is the time to get this done because sporting goods stores often run sales on hunting equipment, and you're not missing the buck of a lifetime by getting it repaired.

I like to keep a running record of everything

The off-season is the time to get this done because sporting goods stores often run sales on hunting equipment, and you're not missing the buck of a lifetime by getting it repaired.

And while I understand it could be expensive, it's a mistake to abandon feeding them completely.

I'm not talking about continuing to purchase hundreds or thousands of pounds of corn, either.

It's best to plant and

Sam Jacobs is a writer, and chief historian, at Ammo. As a self-proclaimed outdoorsman, it's his responsibility to use his knowledge and experience to educate others about ammunition, the outdoors, and conservation.

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North Maine Woods

by Bill Greaves

As we move into the winter months it is always a time of transition, for most of us. Even the fair-weather snow-birds who head south to over-winter will make a transition of

smell. Which by-the-way, is of great interest to my chocolate lab.

Next is the ritual of registering my snowmobile, checking fishing traps, and charging the battery on

At North Maine Woods we are doing the same. In the next couple of months, we will look at trends from the past few years, consider suggestions from our customers and almost 70 employees, meet with landowner representatives, and budget for 2025 projects.

some type. Here in Maine we are wrapping up the fall hunting season and looking towards the ice fishing or maybe winter coyote hunting. I like to clean and oil my guns, and store that hunting jacket with the "Doe in Heat"

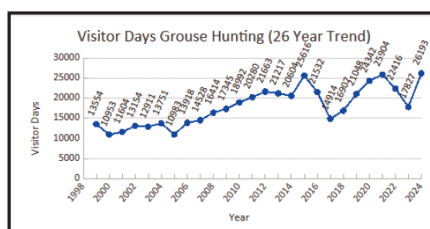
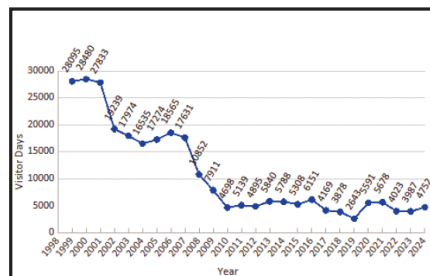
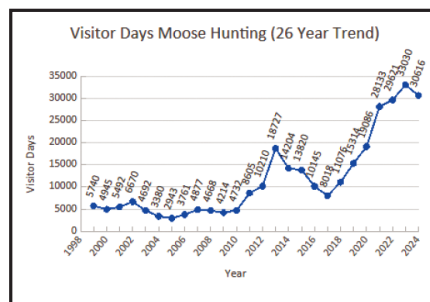
my auger. But don't forget your very important 2025 combination hunting and fishing license before you head out somewhere in January. If you're like me, you look back at the fall hunting season and start to think about what I am go-

ing to differently next year. A lot of sports will even make early reservations at sporting camps or lock in their favorite guides. Many a Christmas present has centered around what we enjoy most in Maine.

At North Maine Woods we are doing the same. In the next couple of months, we will look at trends from the past few years, consider suggestions from our customers and almost 70 employees, meet with landowner representatives, and budget for 2025 projects. The staff here at North Maine Woods Inc. will organize data collected from last year and put it in a format that we can use for reports and make future decisions. Thank you to Mike, Sammi, and Kelly for all that you do. We also consider how potential legislation or IF&W rule changes may impact us-

age. For example, allowing or disallowing the hunting of grouse during the first week of the moose hunt or the future of the adaptive moose hunt, can have a significant impact.

The encouraging news is that game species populations in the North Maine Woods appear to be healthy. This includes hunting, fishing or trapping. Additionally, non-consumptive recreational use such as canoeing, visiting the ghost trains, or just animal watching has remained strong. Whatever your chosen outdoor recreational activity may be, it is never too early to start



planning. Above you will find several graphs showing visitor use in the North Maine Woods. Although the exact numbers may change slightly as we close out 2024, I hope these trends help you to plan for favorite recreational activity in 2025.

See you in the woods.

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The Ghost of the Woods

The “magic hour” had arrived when it was neither day nor night! And I’d been watching a shadowed figure moving in and out of the hardwoods below me for almost half an hour. On this gray afternoon, waiting for darkness to rob me of my day, I re-

from the end of its short tail had me watching in astonishment, as it bobbed and weaved from side to side. The space between its eyes, while not as great as its cousin the “Canadian Lynx,” was far greater than anything I’d ever

far bigger than you might expect to see on an eastern bobcat. And as the creature slowly moved away in the fast-fading light, it took on an appearance almost spirit-like, stopping occasionally to check the wind and its backtrack while continuing to analyze everything around it. I was amazed that it didn’t pick

And for all of us who love the outdoors, just knowing that bobcats are out there adds a broader and richer sense of what it means to be a part of all that’s wild.

mained laser focused on the careful, but steady gait of this figure whose path would soon bring it directly in front of my tree-stand. As darkness continued to advance, I was watching even more closely now, studying every subtle movement. And as the animal continued moving towards me, now well within bow range, I realized for the first time since it appeared that this was not a white-tailed deer! No, it was a large bobcat, with features becoming more impressive by the minute as it continued moving closer, one cautious step at a time, while peering around in every direction, searching for prey, danger, or whatever else was on its mind.

Finally, some good fortune had found me on this late November afternoon as the creature was, without a doubt, the largest bobcat I’d ever seen. The length of its body was so impressive, and the paws appeared to be exceptionally large. And the huge jet-black tip protruding

seen before in a bobcat. Its coat was perfectly fitted to its body, and the darkish grey and tan spots, evenly placed stripes on its legs, flanks, and belly, were

up my scent, which made me think that, despite not having seen a deer all afternoon, I must be doing something right! Finally, as the big cat disappeared in the darkness, it appeared to be more like an “apparition” than any other animal I’d ever seen. Then, in the quiet of this darkness, for

just a moment, I began to feel the gratitude of just knowing that bobcats are here, sharing this region and our woodlands in stable numbers, and in the same areas where we live.

first states in the northeast to reclassify the bobcat as a game animal with a regulated hunting season established. Since then, bobcat populations have risen dramatically with

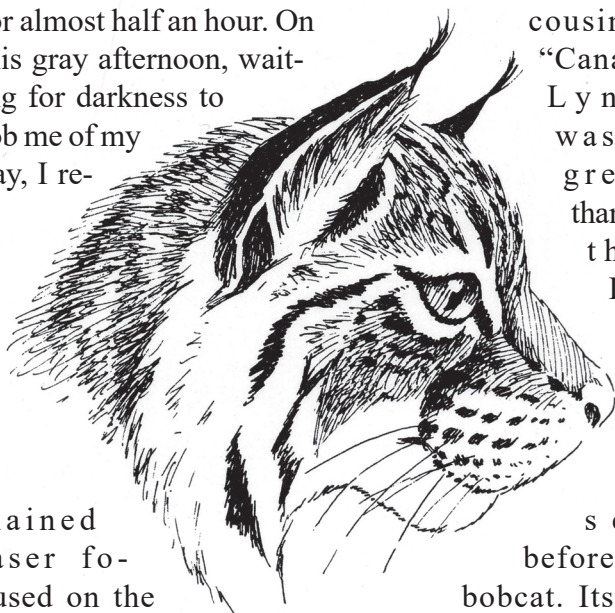
However, it wasn’t always that way!

In the past, bobcats were viewed in many areas as both varmint and predator. And in some New England states it was legal to hunt bobcat year-round with bounty paid for harvesting one. In 1971, Massachusetts was one of the

their numbers now showing up at an all-time high, making the species a well-established, and important, natural resource all over New England. Today, bobcats are classified as furbearers, and state Wildlife Officials across the region have created solid man- (Ghost cont. pg 30)

On The Ridge

by Joe Judd
Shelburne, MA



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Trapping

(Cont. from pg 22)

the feelings of excitement rushed back.

It is hard to describe the enjoyment that I have gotten this fall from trapping. The highs and lows, excitement and disappointment all add to the satisfaction of walking into a thick old growth spruce stand and seeing a sprung trap sitting in the exclusion box. Handling these beautiful wild animals is also an

incredible experience. Tremendous predators that are so often unseen by even the most active outdoorsmen due to their stealthy nature and elusiveness.

As I write this article near the end of the month of November, I have been lucky enough thus far to catch 10 marten and 4 ermine on just 18 boxes. I will likely write another article sometime after the conclusion of trapping season to give a full, detailed account of my fall fur hunt and a more descriptive

account of the trapping itself. For now, this article will simply tell the tale of a Aroostook County boy who fell back in love with a historical pastime that has been an integral part of North American history for hundreds of years. Tight chains everyone!

Kale O'Leary is a Maine Game Warden who covers the Oxbow/Masardis district in central Aroostook County. He has been a Warden since 2016 and lives in Ashland.

Ghost

(Cont. from pg 29)

agement programs to help sustain, nurture, and secure their continued success as classic predators who follow consistent hunting routines. Their diet consists of small-game, domestic cats, porcupines, skunks, foxes and more, but they will occasionally take down larger animals during unusually harsh conditions. Breeding season runs from February into March as females are receptive during this

period. Kits are born from mid-April to mid-May, and by autumn are hunting on their own, but still staying close to their mothers. Bobcat tracks are sometimes confused with tracks of domestic house cats although adult Bobcat prints are easily distinguished with front paws showing five toes while the back paws have only four. The fifth toe on the front paw is high on the forefeet, so it doesn't leave an impression when it walks. And their claws leave no consistent impression(s) as they retract just like a housecat, "ghost-like," as they move silently along forest floor!

And for all of us who love the outdoors, just knowing that bobcats are out there adds a broader and richer sense of what it means to be a part of all that's wild. Even if it's just the thought of them, and other wild creatures like them, that gets you into the woods, you'll always end up richer for the experience. And who knows, one day you might even find the track of this "ghost", a New England Bobcat, whose presence inspires and intrigues us all just knowing that they're here and have become a very real part of our New England landscape, like a "spirit," while taking us back into the pureness of another place, and a simpler time!

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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Time to be Thankful

With the beginning of a new year, comes time for reflections of experiences, new and old, of the trips to faraway those places that are just memories. My grandest out-of-doors memory from 2024 comes from the West Branch of the Union River.

First thing in my mind are these brooks, brook trout and the friends I enjoyed them with. My main fishing partner is my brother-in-law. When reflection time comes, I always go back to our adventures. As the years have gone by, the number of trips and the extent of them have lessened. But we still make our annual trip to the West Branch of the Union River. It is much more fun now that we have matured beyond competitiveness. It is enough to be in this beautiful river. There is no need to be concerned about who caught the biggest or the most. Just to see the beauty of the place and the spectacular beauty of a wild brook trout, is enough.

Here we are in January and the end of one year and the beginning of the next. One of the secrets of a "good life" is taking time to have gratitude and reflect on things. A good

practice is to do that each night before bed, an extension of that is reflecting back on the last year. My reflections will focus not on personal things, but out-of-doors events.

In my maturity, it is enough to just be there, to be in the river and approaching the favorite spots. I read once of a Buddhist Monk who wrote that one did not understand fishing until he could fish without a hook. I am not quite there yet, but I understand. I once had a group of my Dad's fishing buddies at my camp for a day of ice fishing. When I mentioned that we had not caught anything, my Dad's friend, Colon said, "It don't make any difference so long as we are fishing". 'Nuff said.

My best memory from last year was from our annual West Branch sojourn. We had a nice warm spring day with a nice little breeze that kept the flies off. We

caught enough trout to make it interesting. As we headed back to the truck we took a "short cut" through the woods instead of wading back up stream to where we began. Mid way across the short cut was a wet area filled with hummocks.

Naturally, my old body let me down. I tripped on a hummock, my legs

In my maturity, it is enough to just be there, to be in the river and approaching the favorite spots. I read once of a Buddhist Monk who wrote that one did not understand fishing until he could fish without a hook.

and balance left me and down I went with a hummock right under my belly. It was soft all around the hummock and I couldn't get a purchase to get myself up. As a floundered around trying to regain my footing my brother-in-law asked, "What are you doing?" My immediate answer was, "Trying to make love to this hummock" After

the laughter died down he came over and said "give me your hand and I will pull you up". Good idea, except when I was half way up he lost his balance and fell, I crashed back down on top of him. The ensuing

show that all memorable events in the great outdoors are not necessarily about the catch, the size of a rack, or the difficulty of a trip. Lasting memories come when we least expect them. That was one I will

not soon forget and will be forever thankful for.

Bob writes from the shores of Craig Pond where he and his wife have raised three children and ten grandchildren. Bob is an avid outdoorsman and a former Registered Maine Guide. He can be reached at Craigponder@myfairpoint.net



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by Bob Mercer,
Bucksport, ME

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Tales Of A Maine Woodsman

by Joel F. Tripp
Limington, ME

Have you ever experienced fear? Not the Halloween movie shock and awe surprise. True debilitating fear.

There is one time in my life when I experienced true fear. This is how it

was any timber to cut. The owners had recently retired and were looking for a little supplemental income.

The lines were easy to find and I was hanging pink flagging on boundary trees as I went along. It was mid-

there. I didn't or couldn't move. This does not make sense. I realized my hands were shaking.

Cautiously, one step at a time, I moved back to the small pine to finish tying the flagging that was hanging there. My senses were on high alert and before I finished tying the knot I heard a whisper of wind behind to my right.

I realized at that moment that I had not soiled myself so that was one positive, but what was going on. I waited several minutes, looking in every direction at once. There was nothing there. I didn't or couldn't move. This does not make sense. I realized my hands were shaking.

happened. Years ago I was marking boundary lines in the Black Point area of Scarborough. The woodlot was part of an old farm and the boundaries all had the remains of barbed wire fencing. The purpose of my visit was to recertify the Current Use Tax application and to see if there

summer, the woods were perfectly quiet and I was absorbed in looking at the trees. I stepped up to a six-inch pine and started tying a flagging when behind and to my right at head height I heard a screech, loud! High pitched! It was inches from my ear. I dropped to my left and rolled away. When I looked up there was nothing there. My heart was racing, I scrambled to my feet and crouched behind a tree searching in all directions. There was nothing there. Everything was quiet. Nothing had changed except my racing heart. I began to wonder, as my mind raced, did that really happen? What could it have been? There was nothing there. What can make that sound? Cat? Big cat? I searched the trees again, nothing. Fisher? My mind was still racing as my heart started to slow down. I realized at that moment that I had not soiled myself so that was one positive, but what was going on? I waited several minutes, looking in every direction at once. There was nothing

I dropped and turned just as a giant bird swooped at head level, gave another ear-splitting screech and flew straight up through the branches.

My heart raced as before. I was shocked by the sheer volume of the screech and again the bird disappeared. How can something that large disappear. At that moment the wingspan was easily wider than my outstretched arms. What was this thing? Had I stumbled on something nobody else had seen? Adrenaline had pushed logic and reason out of my brain. At least now I knew it was a bird. But what a bird. I had never seen anything like it.

I have been in the woods my whole life and I admit my knees were shaking. I moved away, skirting from tree to tree, looking in every direction. I made a wide circle to the left out of sight of the pink flagging and eventually back to the line. As I retraced my steps I scanned the trees for motion. I saw the flash of a wing and then a huge nest in the top of an old pine.

Fear

This begins to make sense. There must be young in the nest and this dinosauric bird is being territorial.

The bird screeched again, loud, piercing, and I realized I was not the predator. I took stock of the weaponry I had on hand. Jackknife, Silva compass, pink flagging. I was woe-

hawk! I sheepishly told of my encounter and the six plus foot wingspan. The landowner laughed and told me Goshawks rarely have a wingspan larger than 30 inches.

Well, I ended up never going back to that woodlot. The trees were sold and houses are planted there



fully outmatched. Retreat. I circled again and picked up the line a couple hundred yards further on from where I had stopped flagging. As I neared the line there was another screech back at the nest but the distance made it less threatening. The rest of the line was flagged as I looked over my shoulder.

When I got back to the house to report in, the landowner asked if I had seen the Goshawk. Gos-

now. The Goshawks have likely moved to a more secluded location. I know that the Goshawk I saw must have been a prehistoric throwback.



Joel F. Tripp is a Master Blacksmith and Maine Woodsman who has flagged miles and miles of boundary lines and to date has seen only one goshawk. For more information go to; trippsend.com

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What Once Was Old is New Again

If only that title was true. The firearms industry repeatedly follows this mantra. They take popular calibers from the past, add some new twist and make it the newest, best new caliber. They then advertise it as the greatest. They get the firearm influencers to review it, and for a period that is all we hear about. True or not, it's kind of like political campaigns.

Now I am not saying these new super cartridges are not good, I am only saying that maybe grampa's old buck stomper wasn't all that bad. There are lots of examples, but I only have so much room in this column. So, I will only discuss a couple here. Let's start with the hottest caliber in the industry, the 6.5 Creedmore. This caliber has taken on a cult following.

I fully expect some folks to have a sore posterior over my comments. I am not saying the 6.5 Creedmore is not an excellent choice. I am only offering some comparisons with your ancestors' excellent calibers. A while back I did a more detailed comparison with the venerable .270. For this discussion, we

will keep the comparisons limited to a single popular bullet weight and its closest counterpart.

The 6.5 Creedmore is available in 120 gr. configuration. This bullet weight leaves the muzzle at 2910 fps. By comparison, the .270's closest comparison would be the 129 gr. projectile traveling at 3140

ing commonly known as "Cowboy Action Loads".

For our purposes, let's compare a 300 gr. common hunting load with a velocity of 1850 fps. This load is representative of most factory hunting loads. It's a great load. The new caliber that is currently very popular in the big bore market is the .450 Bushmaster.

So, I will only discuss a couple here. Let's start with the hottest caliber in the industry, the 6.5 Creedmore. This caliber has taken on a cult following.

fps. WOW! Next, let's compare the old .25/06 120 gr. bullet at 2990 fps. Pretty quick.

The next side by side is the .264 Win.Mag. with a 125 gr. bullet. It launches its cargo at 3180 fps. In their time, these calibers all had a cult following as well. I wonder if the ammo folks might not have been better off putting all of that effort into reviving one of these calibers. In other comparisons, let's go to the other end of the velocity spectrum. I am referring to the classic .45/70. This caliber is available in a wide variety of bullet weights and loads. From sledgehammer 405 gr. loads to light loads for target shoot-

The comparable .450 load is a 300 gr bullet at 1900 fps velocity. Pretty close, right? So, you can see there may still be some life left in Uncle Zekes' old grocery getter. There are of course, other considerations such as the .450 is available in AR style semiautos. The .45/70 is very popular in lever actions. Ammo cost and availability is also a consideration. The older calibers because of popularity are generally more expensive and harder to find. So, decisions need to be made.

In other topics, I have also always believed in giving back as a hunter, outdoorsman, and citizen. In view of that, I would like to

Guns & Ammo: A Guide's Perspective



by Tom Kelly,
Orient, ME



make my readers aware of an organization doing just that. There is a facebook group that I am a member of. It is called, "Maine Bear Hunters". It is a great place for bear hunters to share pictures and stories and connect with like-minded people. Additionally, the founder and administrator

Maine Bear Hunter merchandise. It's a good thing to teach those youngsters you are bringing into the outdoors. Let's give back to those heroes who have sacrificed so much for our freedoms. I'll see you at the lake. I'll be the one with the Maine Bear Hunters T-shirt on.



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

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The Gun Cabinet

by John Floyd,
Webster Plantation, ME



How many guns do I own? How many guns do I actually use? Could I stand to lose a few? I asked myself these questions a few years ago and was surprised by the answers I gave myself.

At one time, I bought up every firearm in sight that was priced right; I traded where I could and even

some never clearing my gun cabinets' doors since the gun found its way in there. Some I had not put a single round through!

Just so you understand; I'm not talking about fine Italian shotguns or top grade M1 Garands. I'm a meat and potatoes kind of gun guy – nothing too fancy in my safe and all

I decided to put my collection on a diet, favoring quality over quantity, examining the role of each firearm, and most importantly for me, keeping guns I actually use.

bartered services for guns. I just couldn't own enough guns – especially used guns in great condition. That was a big weakness of mine, and admittedly still is. I'm a gun glutton.

Then the epiphany struck. I realized that I was spending more time cleaning and oiling a lot of guns every winter that hadn't seen daylight in years;

the more reason to do some gun cabinet housekeeping.

I decided to put my collection on a diet, favoring quality over quantity, examining the role of each firearm, and most importantly for me, keeping guns I actually use.

To get started, I categorized my guns into roles – Big game, small game and predator hunting, home and self-defense and recreational target shooting. Once that was completed I had a good idea of where my collection was overweight.

This exercise also brought to light something I never really thought about before – arrayed before me

were too many calibers capable of doing the same job. As a result, the size of my ammunition cabinet was just as swollen as my gun cabinets were.

The .223 Remington, another great companion round, serves the needs of my predator hunting bolt gun and my AR-15. Similarly, my FN FAL clone,

I chose the calibers and models I thought best for their role and trimmed the rest. Now, my Glocks and 1911's have the same dietary needs – 9mm and .45 ACP

For revolvers, the .357 Magnum and .38 Special go hand in hand. For practice and training, shooting .38's from a .357 is the way to go.

Sure, I still keep a few standalone calibers hanging around. My 1963 Winchester Model 70 in .264 Winchester Magnum will never pass into another's hands; no matter how desperate the pleas of my long-time hunting buddy, Harley. And the .30-30 Marlin has too many stories to tell to let it go. The .44 S&W Magnum revolver is my duty gun during bear season and lives on my chest in September.

But when it's all said and done, my collection is healthier and far more active. I must admit though, I still consider sneaking an oddball caliber once in a while. And truth be told, what diet has never suffered a little cheating here and there?



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



My solution was a concept called *companion calibers*. Slowly, I whittled away guns that didn't share calibers, especially the ones that were chambered for pricey cartridges. For instance, I kept a couple of long guns (a bolt-action and a lever-action), a semi-auto pistol and single-action revolver, all chambered for the .22LR round.

a semi-automatic battle rifle favored by NATO and known as "The Right Arm of the Free World" shares a chambering with one of my favorite deer rifles in .308 Winchester.

To round out the main stay of my rifle collection, a few guns sharing the .30-06 Springfield chambering will do me fine; sorry .270 Winchester, you don't have to go home but you can't stay here.

The same goes for the handguns and shotguns. I slimmed down to 12 and 20 gauge only, covering the needs of my most used pump-action, semi-automatic and over/under shotguns. With my semi-automatic handguns,

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Ice: Is It Safe?

Ice conditions vary greatly throughout the state, and while ice conditions may be safe in some spots, conditions can be very dangerous in others.

Each year about this time, the Maine Warden Service urges us to use extreme caution before venturing out onto any ice that may be covering Maine’s waterways.

This is timely advice. A number of years ago three night-time snowsledders all perished in one night on Rangeley Lake when they and their machines broke through thin ice.

Many of Maine’s lakes and ponds may appear to be frozen, however safe ice conditions cannot be assumed.

Ice conditions vary greatly throughout the state, and while ice conditions may be safe in some spots, conditions can be very dangerous in others. The Maine Warden Service is recommending that people check the thickness of any ice before venturing out for any activity on frozen water.

If you must go on the ice, the Maine Warden Service offers these tips for

ice safety:

- Never guess the thickness of the ice - Check it! Check the ice in several different places using an auger or some other means to make a test hole and determine the thickness. Make several, beginning at the shore, and continuing as you go out.

- Check the ice with a partner, so if something does happen, someone is there to help you. If you are doing it alone, wear a life jacket.

- If ice at the shoreline is cracked or squishy, stay off! Watch out for thin, clear or honeycombed ice. Dark snow and dark ice are other signs of weak spots.

- Avoid areas with currents, around bridges and pressure ridges. Wind and currents can break ice.

Parents should alert children of unsafe ice in their area, and make sure that they stay off the ice. If they insist on using their new skates, suggest an indoor skating rink.

Cracker Barrel

by Homer Spit



If you break through the ice, remember:

Don’t panic.

Don’t try to climb out immediately - you will probably break the ice again. Reach for solid ice.

Lay both arms on the unbroken ice and kick hard. This will help lift your body onto the ice. Once on the ice, roll, DON’T WALK, to safety.

To help someone who has fallen through the ice, lie down flat and reach with a branch, plank or rope or

form a human chain. Don’t stand. After securing the victim, wiggle backwards to the solid ice.

Again, snowsledders take note. *Snowsledding at night on frozen waterways can be tricky business, especially for those unfamiliar with the conditions of a lake, pond or other waterway.*



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

ICE STRENGTH TABLE From the Farmer’s Almanac

3 inches of ice.....one person on foot
4 inches of ice.....group of people in single file
6 inches of ice.....snowmobile
8 inches of ice.....car or light truck

Note: The above table is for clear blue ice on lakes and ponds.
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View From The River

by Laurie Chandler
Bremen, ME

The morning after climbing Katahdin, everything ached. Even the small step up to our tent from the campfire was excruciating. We certainly weren't going to hike any more. Instead, we rode around looking for wildlife and bought a copy of *Lost on a Mountain in Maine*. By evening, my 13-year-old son Taylor and I had both read Donn

moment.

As a first-time canoe trip leader, I took my role very seriously. The folks at Allagash Gateway Campground on Ripogonus Lake shuttled us and our canoe to the Lobster Stream boat landing. Going west on the Golden Road, we registered with North Maine Woods at the Caribou checkpoint, making it

of my own.

On that morning in early August 2007, though, all of that was in my future. I was not even aware that NFCT Map 11, covering most of our route, had recently been published. We were navigating with a laminated copy of the Penobscot River Corridor map.

The West Branch of the Penobscot from Lobster

Mother and Son Adventure

when a canoe glided in, carrying a friendly young couple, and our map! This is just one of many river kindnesses that we have experienced over the years. There sure are good people out there on the river.

The following day was an endurance mar-

weather cleared, and we awoke feeling well and energetic. We were in for a wild and heady ride. A stiff tailwind whipped us briskly down to Ripogonus. I had only to steer.

For a teenage boy, the rest of the trip was the icing on the cake. Wolfing down

We saw our first moose on the Golden Road, after coming up from Greenville by way of Kokadjo. The massive bull, regal and proud, watched us pass. If we were not already bursting with the indescribable feeling of freedom and awe that the northwoods brings, we got a good dose at that moment.

Fendler's gutsy survival story from cover to cover. The recent release of the movie version has gotten me thinking of that long ago mother-son adventure, canoeing the West Branch then conquering Maine's highest peak.

We saw our first moose on the Golden Road, after coming up from Greenville by way of Kokadjo. The massive bull, regal and proud, watched us pass. If we were not already bursting with the indescribable feeling of freedom and awe that the northwoods brings, we got a good dose at that

all seem very real. At the put-in, we unloaded, then watched our truck cross the bridge back toward the campground, where it would await our return. I was relieved to have no audience as we carefully loaded and secured our dry bags and gear.

A year or two later, I would return there with my parents, on a trip into Lobster Lake. It was then that I met my first Northern Forest Canoe Trail thru-paddler, his canoe piled with gear, his stories planting a seed that would one day grow into a dream

Landing to Chesuncook Lake is a perfect choice for less experienced paddlers. Large beds of underwater grasses wave in the slow gentle current, and Canada lilies and pink swamp milkweed grace the shores. It is a mecca for moose. One sad note is that I wasn't journaling back then. I remember that first big bull and a mother moose and calf we watched from camp, but there may have been more.

Past Thoreau Island and Moosehorn Stream, the water quickens, and rocks begin to make an appearance. That afternoon, I learned a hard lesson—always secure your map. One minute it was there, the next it was gone, blown out of the canoe by the wind. Thankfully, miraculously, that map came back to us that evening.

We were camped at Big Ragmuff, beside a rushing stream where Taylor tried his hand at fishing. I was busy with firewood



The author's son making shish kabobs at camp along the West Branch of the Penobscot.

athon. The exhilaration of early morning and the quickwater around Big Island soon gave way to slow paddling up into Chesuncook Lake and down its long length. We learned the hard price of passing an alluring campsite in the early afternoon and gambling on finding another home for the night.

By my best guess, it was a twenty-four-mile day by the time we made camp on an island far down the lake. We were beyond exhausted. The next morning dawned cloudy and dreary, and Taylor was sick. He slept for hours and read *Huckleberry Finn* while I amused myself trying to keep the campfire going in an off-and-on drizzle. I'm sure there were birds or berries or something interesting, but the day is a gray blur in my mind.

Still, the day of rest worked its magic. The

pizza in Millinocket, then on to Baxter State Park to plot our ascent of Maine's highest peak. Up the rock slide of the Abol Trail and down the rock maze of the Hunt Trail. Descending past Katahdin Falls, our legs were like jello, but we had done it.

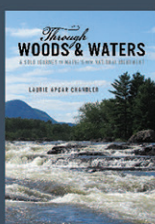
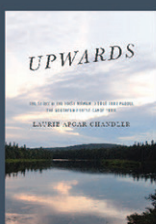
I still haven't seen the new movie, but I will, and think it would be only fitting to watch it with my son.



*Laurie Apgar Chandler is the author of *Through Woods & Waters*, which provides an adventurous look at Maine's Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument, and *Upwards*, the story of her 2015 solo self-propelled thru-paddle of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. To learn more or purchase the books, please visit www.laurieachandler.com*

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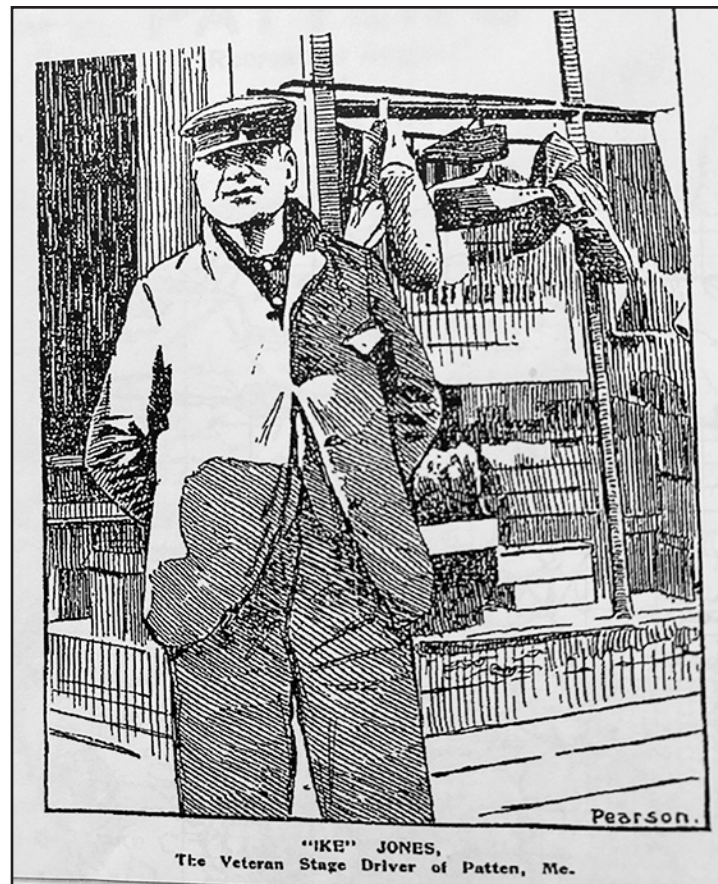
Patten's Last Stage Driver

Much of the information for this story comes from an article, "Stage Driver 42 Years," published in the Boston Daily Globe on December 3, 1899.

Isaac M. Jones (1831-1912) known as "Ike"

married Charlotte M. Dow of Bangor. He was "massive of frame, and tough as a knot, and withstood the rigors of the Maine winters with ease. Jones always prided himself on the appearance and quality of his horses, and he worked

in 12 hours. Ike related that "often on those long, hard drives, the howl of wolves over the snow has been the evening song. He was not scared of anything that ranged in the forest, much less wolves, and when the passengers got nervous, he would cheer them up with a joke and a characteristic "You," an exclamation that expresses much for him." He never lost a mail bag,



"IKE" JONES,
The Veteran Stage Driver of Patten, Me.

Jones, drove stage coach and delivered mail along the Penobscot River for a total of 42 years. He was born in Litchfield, Me. January 12, 1831, son of Nathaniel and Clarissa (Wickwire) Jones. His parents had moved the small family to Passadumkeag by 1850 where his father operated a hotel. Ten years later father and son operated a farm at Enfield, when he

hard to keep his team in condition. His coach was a great lumbering affair of the last century type, but a marvously comfortable vehicle, with its high body swinging on leathern straps from massive springs. In the winter the coach body was set on runners.

Jone's first route, Bangor to Mattawamkeag, he drove for sixteen years, making the 65-mile route

Jone's first route, Bangor to Mattawamkeag, he drove for sixteen years, making the 65-mile route in 12 hours. Ike related that "often on those long, hard drives, the howl of wolves over the snow has been the evening song.

or injured a passenger and he never allowed personal matters interfere with business. He carried many famous passengers, including Henry David Thoreau.

The next three years Ike drove a stage route between Lincoln and Topsfield, Maine, then went to Nova Scotia, driving a 200-mile route from New Gascony to Antigonish on one of the through line coaches of the Sydney Route. Jones returned to Maine and operated the stage coach from Mattawamkeag to Patten.

The Patten Route, being much of the way up-

hill, was one of the hardest stage routes in the country. Snow drifted deep in the narrow forest road in the long winters, and the 37 miles from run between Mattawamkeag and Patten was made on an average of seven to eight hours. The trip up was the longer, ow-

ing to the steady rise.

The day he was married he made his regular trip on the coach from Patten down to Mattawamkeag, leaving his bride at Patten. Regularly, at night, three times a week, the inhabitants of Patten gathered at the post office, or at the leading store, and waited for the coming of "Ike," and his six horses down the hill, which ended at the village.

Once when on his way down to Mattawamkeag

behind his team of six, he pointed out to a citizen of Patten, who sat on the box beside him, a knoll some distance up the road.

"There," said he, "when we get up, over that rise I'll show you a partridge." The man had no doubt Ike was familiar with the ways of birds and beasts along his route, but he doubted if the old driver could point out a partridge when they got over the ridge.

"Bet you a dollar," said the stage driver.

"All right," was the response. "Ill take that bet."

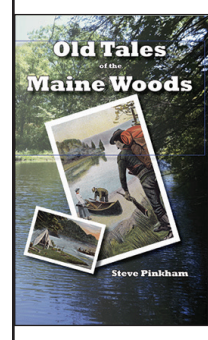
Jones pulled on the reins, and when the coach had lifted the ridge, he reached down under the seat and gravely brought forth a dead partridge. The citizen acknowledged he was beaten, and paid the bet.



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

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The Buck Hunter

by Hal Blood,
Moose River, ME



Action in the Deer Woods

As the rifle season in Maine comes to a close, I find myself dusting off my smoke pole for another go at it. This was one of the best deer seasons for me in recent memory for a lot of reasons. Number one was that I spent the majority of the season with my grandson Rylan. He turned

week, found us high on a mountain where there was a little snow to track on. We spent the day looking for a big track that wasn't headed down out of the snow. We walked up on a spikehorn, which Rylan said he didn't want to shoot. I wasn't surprised because it was only the first

buck broke out the same way the smaller buck had. I watched the buck bound down the hill expecting a shot to ring out but it never did. Little did I know that Rylan being shorter than me and being a little lower on the hill, could not get a shot. It was disappointing but, a great experience. Needless to say, Rylan wanted to go back to the same spot the next day. I knew from experience the

hunts on film. You can find Billy at: moderndaymountainman.com and Youtube. Rylan said he would hunt with his other grandfather that week, so he could keep at it. With no snow on the ground, Billy and I headed out to do some still hunting. We saw a few deer in the next couple of days, and then on Wednesday

When they went into a spruce thicket, I decided to circle around and pick up the track coming out. We got half way around the thicket, there was a cut on the right that was quite open. As I looked for the tracks, Billy was looking for the deer. I heard Billy grunt and when I turned to look back, he was aiming

The big buck broke out the same way the smaller buck had. I watched the buck bound down the hill expecting a shot to ring out but it never did. Little did I know that Rylan being shorter than me and being a little lower on the hill, could not get a shot.

15 in September and after tracking his first buck down last year, he set his sights on shooting another racked buck. He joked about his goal being to shoot a bigger buck than Papa! Well, I was all in to try and help him do it. Since Rylan home schools, he can do his work in the evenings or Sundays. When we hunted together, I didn't carry my rifle as I just want to teach him all I could as we hunted and leave it up to him to do the shooting if the chance came. Next season, he'll be 16 and will be able to go it alone.

Monday of the first

day. A couple days later we were still hunting along a stream with plenty of buck sign. I was following Rylan along, filming things here and there, when suddenly threw his gun up. I saw a tail disappear into some blowdowns and hazelnut brush. Rylan said it was a buck so I began to grunt and told Rylan to go up the hill. When we got to the top I continued to grunt and just then the buck busted out of the blowdowns at 20 yards and ran back where we had just come from. Rylan had his gun up and just then, I saw a big rack move in the blowdowns. The big

a day never repeats itself. We didn't see the big one, but did walk up on another spikehorn, which Rylan also decided to let go. It was a great week of deer hunting for sure.

The second week of the season, I had a guest come out from Wisconsin to experience Big Woods Bucks deer hunting. I met Billy Molls when we had him on our Big Woods Bucks podcast. I had been watching Billy's films on YouTube and had a sense that we were kindred spirits. Billy has been an Alaskan guide for 25 years and has beautifully captured those



The author (right) and Big Bucks podcast host Billy Molls.

snow had hit in some of the higher elevations.

Wednesday, we started climbing up a mountain in search of a big buck track to follow. As luck would have it, we found a nice buck track in a half hour. The buck was searching for does as the rut was starting to kick in. We went a couple miles on him when he found the doe he was looking for. The track took us up into the mountain where the buck and doe fed their way around before coming back down lower. The tracks were freshening up and when they walked in our tracks from a half hour before, we knew we weren't far behind. As they worked their way down the mountain, the snow was getting thinner with just a dusting under the green growth.

up into the cut. I didn't dare to move and what seemed like eternity, he fired. I saw a tail flip way up in the cut. My first thought was, that was a long shot, especially since he was using a .303 Savage 99 with the original buckhorn sight. Just then I caught movement a hundred yards in front of us. The buck and doe we were tracking, took a few bounds up the hill and stopped broadside. Then, bounded up through the cut. At first I thought, why didn't I try to film them. Then my second thought was, why didn't I shoot the buck! I guess I was too much in guide mode. That buck was a heavy horned beauty and certainly would have weighed over 200 pounds.

We went up to see if Billy had connected on (Woods cont. pg 39)

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Deer: Take the Ethical Shot

It was a miserable walk into the stand in the dark. Sheets of rain and wind pelted us as soon as we stepped out of the truck. Dad was a trooper. Even though he had filled his

if you're not in the woods.

Around 7:30 a.m. a deer hobbled into view and bedded down. It was dragging its right leg, not walking or putting weight on it. I know deer can sur-

It's not the buck I wanted nor one I would have shot under normal circumstances. But I used my tag.

I met up with Dad and we walked to where the buck lay. His right front leg was swollen at the knee. He hadn't been hit. He had been shot. I studied the wound. Muscle and bone had been destroyed. What

As a hunter, I understand buck fever and the heart-racing adrenaline that rushes through you as you see a deer and prepare to take a shot. But, if you can't steady your rifle when that adrenaline kicks in, you shouldn't be taking that shot.

was worse is that his left leg had a bullet hole just below the joint that showed shades of green and pus. I couldn't see where the bullet had exited the left leg.

This buck had been shot in both of his front legs. He had to have been standing broadside to get the bullet to pass through his right leg where it did and enter his left. The hunter took a horrible shot. One they should not have taken. The buck was a small 6 point that dressed at 126lbs. He would have been a great buck this next fall but instead, he will feed



buck tag, he was willing to head into a stand and search for a doe. We walked as quickly as we could to our respective stands and waited for daylight. I wondered if it was even worth being out because of how poor the conditions were. But you can't shoot a deer

vive with a broken leg but there is something about a wounded animal that just doesn't sit right with me. I had both my buck and doe tag still in my pocket. I assumed that the small buck had been hit while crossing the nearby road. Perhaps while chasing a doe.

Woods

(Cont. from pg 38)

the one he had fired at, but couldn't find any sign that he had connected. We started back up after the other buck, but when they headed high up again, we didn't have time left in the day to keep going. I thought

the buck would stay with the doe and we would pick up where we left off in the morning. After making the climb the next morning, we discovered that the buck had left the doe and headed over the top and then down out of the snow on the other side. I had a lot of fun teaching Billy the ropes as he had always wanted to try

our way of hunting. Next month, Papa and Rylan will be into week three.

Good Luck on the Trail!

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



Women In The Woods

by Erin Merrill,
Portland, ME

my family.

As a hunter, I understand buck fever and the heart-racing adrenaline that rushes through you as you see a deer and prepare to take a shot. But, if you can't steady your rifle when that adrenaline kicks in, you shouldn't be taking

would need more than two shots if they are sighted in on the deer. This answered my question.

We need to be better. It's unacceptable to shoot at a deer. We must shoot THE deer. If we can not make a clean, ethical kill shot then we shouldn't squeeze the trigger (or release the arrow.) We owe it to the animals we are hunting.

As my friends Dave and Pug say, it is ok to take your gun for a walk in the woods. You do not have to shoot it. Maybe that's a lesson more of us need to take to heart.



Erin is a member of the Professional Outdoor Media Association, Outdoor Writers Association of America and the New England Outdoor Writers Association. She writes the column 'Hunt & Harvest' that can be read in the Morning Sentinel/KJ, Sun Journal and Portland Press Herald. You can read about Erin's adventures and contact her at www.andastrongcupofcoffee.com

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Green Mountain Report

by Bradley Carleton,
Charlotte, VT



If you're anything like me, you're excited to get out on that first ice and feel the cold north wind on your face, the bellowing depth charges of your favorite lake making ice and that first tug on the new ice rod. I know I can't wait. How about you?

I have a bit of a story to share about a buck that I shot and the importance of being honest. It's a bit embarrassing and there may be some of you that might say I'm an idiot for my choice, but I sleep well at night doing what I knew to be right. I shot a spike-horn during archery season whose spikes were a bit too long for my WMU. I didn't realize it until I got home. Matt Anderson from Orwell and his Wonder Dog, Mila, helped me to find the buck down a steep embankment. When we found him, Matt got quiet and inquired about the length of the antlers. When I got home, I looked up the regulations again and found that the spikes were a few inches too long to be considered "antlerless" in WMU F1.

I immediately called

our game warden, whom I have spoken with many times, as we hunt the same property. I told him that I was "turning myself in" and would accept whatever consequences that were due. We had a good talk and I asked him what he would have me do. He asked me to dress the deer and hang it up to cool and he would

I immediately called our game warden, whom I have spoken with many times, as we hunt the same property. I told him that I was "turning myself in" and would accept whatever consequences that were due.

come over the next morning. When he arrived with his warden-in-training, he asked me a few questions and looked at the length of the spikes relative to the ears and deemed it to be an honest mistake. He thanked me for "self-reporting" and took the deer to a charitable group in a town a few miles away to be distributed for their charity chili fest. He thanked me for my honesty and mentioned that he appreciated my integrity. Let me say, that I was raised in the "old school" mentality

of "shoot anything and call it camp meat." This never sat well with me. I have been deer hunting since I was 15. That's 50 years of deer hunting with no violations. I remember past generations calling wardens "fish cops" and that they were out there solely to punish and break the spirits of hunters. Maybe that was the case long ago, but no longer. Do not mis-

understand me. Wardens are there to protect our state's resources and will always enforce the laws as they are written. But they are not the mean green anti-sportsmen and women that you may have thought. I share this embarrassing story with you so that you might learn from my error and share the lesson with others. When you have made an honest mistake, don't hide it, or lie about it. Come clean and be more vigilant. Thank you to our Vermont State Game War-

Deer Woods: Honest Mistakes

dens for recognizing that not all of us apples are bad.

My friend and fraternal brother, Chris Herrick,

cism and arrow-slinging from a group called Protect Our Wildlife, headed by Brenna Galdenzi of Stowe.



who had been our VTF&W Commissioner for the last few years, stepped down from his position at the end of November to return to his first love, Emergency Management. During his tenure, Chris fielded a tremendous amount of criti-

POW's agenda, despite their claims to be collaborative, seeks to chip away at our constitutionally protected right to hunt. Her group, many of which are out-of-state members, tried to stop the coyote and bear (Mistakes cont. pg 41)



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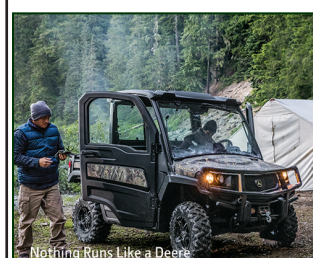
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Sporting Journal Writer Honored.

Mark McCollough, a monthly columnist for the Northwoods Sporting Journal, longtime biologist and artist, has earned the Jay N. "Ding" Darling Memorial Award for Wildlife Stewardship through Art. His artistic abilities have been raising awareness for wildlife conservation in Maine for over 35 years.

Whether working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in the Endangered Species Program at the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW), or even during his graduate research at the University of Maine, McCollough's artwork has brought colorful imagery to

wildlife science.

McCollough has fundraised this way throughout his career, most recently creating a piece for the Maine Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation showing a blue

Biologist and artist Mark McCollough uses art to raises awareness for Maine's threatened and endangered species.

jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) picking nuts from an American chestnut tree. The birds play an important role in the trees' restoration. They cache fertile chestnuts, which germinate and help repopulate the

trees—a keystone species in Maine's forests.

His writing and illustrations have been displayed in the Sporting

of which are dedicated to the MDIFW nongame project. Colleagues say that McCollough's artwork inspires hope for the future

His's artwork has been featured on Maine conservation license plates. Courtesy of Mark McCollough

In addition to directly benefiting Maine wildlife, McCollough has displayed his artwork at the Eastern Maine Sportman's Show for 15 years. Each year, he speaks to attendees about wildlife conservation and helps sell raffle tickets for his prints. The raffle proceeds are donated to the Penobscot County Conservation Association, whose projects introduce the outdoors to a younger generation.

McCollough will receive the Jay N. "Ding" Darling Memorial Award for Wildlife Stewardship through Art at TWS' 2024 Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in October.



Journal, multiple books, journals and even on Maine conservation license plates, the proceeds

of threatened and endangered species while also educating the public about their importance.



Mistakes

(Cont. from pg 40)

hunters from using dogs, as well as change the rules on trapping. They also tried to alter the composition of the VT F&W Board of Directors by claiming that the state's population of "non-

consumptive users" is not fairly represented on the board, which creates the hunting and fishing seasons and bag limits. The VT F&W board uses sound scientific principles, framed by the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation that has guided the board's decisions for

years. But the bill, S.258 failed. Chris had been taking verbal bullets from her organization, and through it all, kept a calm head and worked to maintain a constructive and considerate dialogue. Thank you for your service, Chris. And best wishes in your new position. Andrea Short-

sleeve, a habitat biologist who has worked in the Fish & Wildlife Department's private lands program will act as Interim Commissioner until Governor Phil Scott appoints a new individual within the next 12 months.



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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Angling, Antlers & Artifacts

By Jake Scoville,
Machiasport, ME

There's nothing quite like the excitement of looking at an ice fishing trap and seeing the flag up. As a kid, I'd beg to get on the ice as soon as the calendar flipped to the new year. Thinking back, it seems like every weekend, we were ice fishing. Winter

our dinner. If having a live-ly minnow meant a greater chance of seeing a flag popped, I'd do whatever it took to make that happen. Slowly but surely, I started taking pride in setting my traps and putting them in the spots I had picked.

When I was about

ice and fish longer.

If you have tried your luck at ice fishing for brookies, it's common knowledge that setting traps or jigging in shallow water gives you a great chance at landing a few. Naturally, our favorite holes were in just a couple of feet of water, adjacent to some structure. They were the "honey holes." I'd try

hectic process of trying to get the trophy trout onto the ice. As I lifted the line, the nose of the trout began to poke through the clear water. Then, worst case scenario... the minnow and hook popped out of the

and before I could blink, the red-bellied trout was flopping on the ice at my feet. People weren't joking when they told me my dad could catch a fish in a mud puddle.

We caught some big

When I was about 12, we started religiously going to a local lake to catch brook trout. Catching eight-to-twelve-inch trout was a blast, but we knew there were bigger ones around.

isn't so dreadful when you start looking forward to the cracking and popping of ice being made.

Tending traps was a chore my father made us do, even when we would instead make a fort or play some game to pass the time. As I grew older, I started to enjoy and look forward to the bait checks, knowing fresh bait gave us the best chance of catching

12, we started religiously going to a local lake to catch brook trout. Catching eight-to-twelve-inch trout was a blast, but we knew there were bigger ones around. We found ourselves on this lake so much that we committed and placed a hard shack on it for most of the season. This added to the excitement and allowed me to bring more friends on the

to get my traps near those spots every outing. When a new place was slow, or we needed a change of scenery, it was no coincidence all my traps would end up near those spots where dozens of trout had been landed over the years.

I can't remember if I had set the trap in the honey hole on this trip or if my dad did. What I do remember is running up to the trap and seeing the line spooling out so fast it looked like an aerator was stuck in the hole. Not willing to waste any time, I grabbed the line and started hauling it in. I could tell immediately it wasn't a 12-inch trout. This fish was like nothing I had caught at this lake. Dad reached my side and started coaching me through the



The author with his dad Shawn and brother Jack.

trout's mouth and the fish flopped back into the water as if it was in slow motion.

Just as the big brookie slipped back under the ice, Dad grabbed the line from my hand and, in one motion, sent the stunned golden shiner back into the water. The bait no more than dipped under the ice, and that same trout that had been fooled initially couldn't resist it a second time, even after it had been reeled in from feet away. In awe, I watched my dad pull straight up when the bait disappeared into the brookie's mouth,

trout that day, including my brother Josh jigging one up. It was a banner day for us. This trip was why I asked for a new set of tip-ups for my birthday the following month. Which, if you know me, was spent celebrating while on the ice. A tradition I try to carry on every year. Dad agreed to mount the big brookie (mostly to get me to stop hounding him.). I did make sure to request that the name tag on the mount read "Jake and Dad." After nearly twenty years, the old mount is in rough shape, but I still get a chuckle when I walk past it in my office. It's always a pleasure to share the story of our big brook trout, which is likely the day I got addicted to the hard water.

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

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Brining Your Game

During a recent appearance on the Maine Outdoors radio show, I fielded questions on-air about approaches to cooking wild game, and its occasional challenges that listeners needed help to overcome.

While the cooking methodology of wild meat is completely open to an individual's interpretation - as a seasoned culinary mentor and teacher I have come to understand that people only know what

game has to offer as table fare.

Sometimes, hunters run into challenges in certain situations, and it is only appropriate to share knowledge that you have in helping others gain insight on how to solve those issues.

One such concern is with wild meat that has a tough quality to it. One of our recent callers from the show was seeking help on how to deal with a tough

to you.

Think of any of the variety of steaks that are offered at your grocery store. There is a major difference between a blade steak, sirloin and filet mignon, yet you can alter the results simply by applying cooking methodology that turns those tougher cuts into delicious tender meat.

The last methodology I want to share with you is brining.

When does this apply

There are nuances to cooking game, and they matter to your wild food, regardless of whether you cook a game burger, stew, or use your outdoor grill. The level you desire to take your game is your personal choice.

they know. It's much like how you grow up. The way that food was cooked in your childhood home is often how people often approach cooking their game.

Due to my cooking resume, people usually stereotype me and refer to my style of cooking as fancy, yet no different than others, I cook according to my own knowledge, experiences and likes.

There are nuances to cooking game, and they matter to your wild food, regardless of whether you cook a game burger, stew, or use your outdoor grill. The level you desire to take your game is your personal choice. There are no standardized rules of how you have to enjoy what you harvest. Butter and salt and pepper in a hot cast iron pan, braised to a tender state, grilled for fajitas, or made into sausage and combined with ingredients that stuff a baked zucchini - it's your choice. Enjoy it the way you want to enjoy it; it's all about enjoying the many attributes that

backstrap off a cow moose that was aged 15 years old.

In these scenarios, there are a few ways that you can address these types of challenges. The first was quickly discussed and is the most obvious. You can always grind the meat and use it as burger or sausage.

Another method is to slice that piece of meat into 1/2" - 1" thick. Place one piece at a time into a freezer quart size bag and pound it into a cutlet with a meat mallet. You can then cook it in a recipe; my suggestion would be to coat it with olive oil (this adds the fat needed) and then season and grill it, leaving it medium rare. Slice thinly across the grain.

The next method is to large dice the meat so it can be braised and then used for a stew, or larger cuts, that you can transform that tough meat into delicious boneless short ribs. By searing those pieces of meat and then braising for 120 minutes the meat will become fork tender, and then the world is an oyster

and how does it work?

Brining is an old-style method of using a mixture of sugar, salt and aromatics to increase moisture and instill flavor into your meats and fish.

This technique allows you to create moisture to lean meats, and can remove unwanted flavor, replacing it with compelling taste.

There are two types of brining; the most common being wet brining, but you can also do dry brining.

In the wet brining method, water is boiled and poured over the brine mixture, and then whisked to melt the sugar and salt broth. Aromatics then get reconstituted and infuse their flavor into the brine broth. Ice is added and whisked into the hot brine in order to cool the broth so the protein can be combined with the brine.

In the dry brining method, the brining mixture is utilized externally as a rub onto the protein; using the natural moisture of the meat to concentrate the brine, and given enough

Cookin' With New England's WildCheff

by Denny Corriveau,
Kennebunkport, ME



time, it is naturally absorbed back into the meat before cooking. If you have ever made zucchini fritters or eggplant dishes, you know that salt draws out moisture from the ingredients, and the same applies to proteins.

Brining game is an option when you have a really tough piece of meat as I mentioned, or when you want to do it for certain purposes such as a prep for jerky, addressing flavor with eiders, adding moisture and flavor to wild turkey or smoking or creating gravlax with fish like salmon or lake trout.

In particular situations it is a go-to method that makes sense.

I have created a WildCheff Guide for Brining that describes how to brine and provides recipes. You can find it at www.wildcheff.com and it is free to all who request it and order a WildCheff Brining Blend from the site.

Here's a delicious recipe from my brining guide:

Dry Brined Smokehouse Game Steaks

Ingredients

4 - 8 oz. Steaks (Moose, Deer, Bear - Backstrap or Sirloin) 3/4 - 1" thick.

WildCheff Smokehouse Brine (available at WildCheff.com)

Directions

Place steak on an elevated rack that sits over a baking sheet, and then season each steak with brine, making sure to season both sides. Place in the

refrigerator, uncovered, for 6 hours to overnight. (You will observe moisture on the outside of steaks that will get reabsorbed, and the meat will turn darker).

Remove steaks from the refrigerator and fire up your outdoor grill to 400° F.

Create a chimichurri by chopping the following directly on a cutting board: garlic, parsley, scallions, red bell & serrano peppers. Drizzle with olive oil and set aside.

Place steaks on grill, placing directly on grill grate, over the flame.

Sear approximately 4 minutes per side for medium-rare, turning a quarter way after 2 minutes, flip and repeat. The takeaway is to leave it pink in the middle.

Remove meat from grill and let rest for 5 minutes.

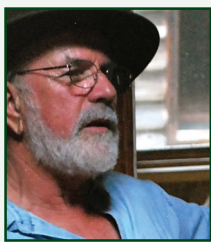
Place steaks on plates and thinly slice each filet.

Top steaks with chimichurri and drizzle with more olive oil.

Serve immediately with your favorite sides.



WildCheff - Denny Corriveau is Award-Winning Native American Game Chef. He is a Wild Game Evangelist and a nationally recognized trendsetter and pioneer for preparing wild game. He is also the National Game Chef for TenPoint Crossbows. You can learn more @www.wildcheff.com or visit him on Instagram @[thewildcheff](https://www.instagram.com/thewildcheff)



The Singing Maine Guide

by Randy Spencer,
Grand Lake Stream, ME

Does the dog get to go? Well, it depends—on the dog, on the boat, and in my case, on the sport you're guiding that day. Is the dog acclimated to the noise, the dips, the troughs and swells of a northwest blow? Will he or she hunker down in the bottom of

net for all the jumping, whining, and hyperactivity he shows. And yet, if it's offered to him, the most he can muster is a sniff or two, not even a lick. By then, he's probably figured out that this thing can't fly.

I give a lot of thought to who I'm guiding that day

before you did. Dogs know who likes them, and who doesn't.

Over all, it's worked out well. For some sports, the day wouldn't be complete unless the dog joined us. They bring treats. They throw sticks at the lunch ground while I'm chopping kindling and peeling potatoes. They develop a rapport throughout the day,

scalp. Having removed hooks from scalps, I can vouch that hooking yourself in the back of the head is highly unrecommended. I made gentle mention of the issue, but all it did was cause him to swing the rod

ticular misjudgment cost me \$450 at the vet's emergency walk-in that night.

So dogs and fishing do go together, but with considerable aforethought. They certainly can ramp up the excitement of fish

The next cast took the dog in the left nostril. When the man moved to cast forward, one of the treble hooks sunk deeply into the interior of the dog's nostril, and he (the dog, not the sport) let out a blood curdling yelp.

the boat and wait till you settle on a fishing spot to rise and look around? What if it rains? Or worse, what if thunder and lightning crop up during the day?

Many sports love the company of a dog on a fishing trip. They can add excitement to every hook up, and especially when fish are netted. In my dog's case, you could almost think it was a bird in that

before deciding if the dog can go. If they've already met and I've found out that this is a dog person, then it's probably a go. But for others—well—it's just not for them. They require being the center of attention, not sacrificing some of it to a dog. It's wise to consider this in advance. Usually, it's an easy calculation to make, and in all likelihood, the dog has made it

asking the dog's opinion on how they're coming with the casting. Occasionally, I'll hear, "Did you see that, boy?" It was a missed strike, or a fish tail walking towards the Grand Laker. The dog is on his feet. He surely did see that.

Just the one time, I made a big mistake and tried bringing him along when I had two sports instead of a solo. Everything went fine for exactly one hour. My bowman was fly casting a Chernobyl Ant, a foam fly with rubber legs and a peacock herle thorax. That was fine, and he was good enough not to pose any threat to the springer who was between my legs in the stern of the canoe.

The midship sport, however, was spin casting a Mepps Aglia #4 with its buck tail skirt and it's dangling treble hooks. His backcast was the problem. Too much line hung down from the rod tip so that when he arced the rod behind his head making ready for a cast, the lure swung in perilously close to his



off to the side instead of directly overhead. If people are used to casting a certain way, it is like pulling teeth to get them to change it.

The next cast took the dog in the left nostril. When the man moved to cast forward, one of the treble hooks sunk deeply into the interior of the dog's nostril, and he (the dog, not the sport) let out a blood curdling yelp. Well, we had a whole day ahead of us since it was only 9 a.m. and I must say, my springer soldiered through it much better than I would have. The sport was duly apologetic and super careful from then on, but he would've had to try harder to hook the dog again as he was hunkered down on the canoe floor between my feet. This par-

fights and nettings. And they'll perform every trick they know for whomever has the interest to indulge them. And my recipe: if the sport's in the bow, the dog's in the stern. In case you're wondering did my springer ever want to go again after that unwanted piercing he took in the nose? Answer: the picture I've included was taken AFTER that harrowing incident.



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 major streaming services. Reach Randy at randy31@earthlink.net or via www.randyspencer.com

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Growing Larger Bucks

For most Maine deer hunters, a fantasy buck is in their mind's eye. This is the trophy buck that will tip the tagging station scale in excess of 200 pounds. We have all seen him in our daydreams, a big-racked, thick-necked bruiser of a deer ghosting his way through a tangled cedar bog as the morning mist mixes with his frosty breath.

Some of us are not

lobbied hard for the state to impose antler restrictions in an effort to bring about a more plentiful age class of older, larger bucks. There are some downsides to antler restrictions and Maine deer biologists as a rule do not support the policy.

There may be another way to grow larger bucks in Maine. It's simple really: let the young ones grow.

This week the Maine

deer. This means that many hunters will now have the option to harvest an antlerless deer and then keep on hunting for a buck. This is the perfect time to consider harvesting an antlerless deer to fill the freezer and then letting young bucks go while waiting for The Big One."

The Department goes on: "Let's look at some of the benefits of allowing younger bucks to grow for another year by looking at antler form and body mass at different ages. Looking at three recent years of biological data from deer in Maine, our average yearling buck sported between 3 and 4 antler points, and our average 2-year-old buck had 6 to 7 points. There's a lot of growth between a buck's 1st and 2nd birthdays! While the most significant antler development takes place between the yearling and 2-year-old age classes, it's not until around year 5 that our Maine bucks begin to approach their peak antler growth potential.

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife issued a press release encouraging Maine deer hunters this fall to take a doe for the freezer and let the young bucks and hold off for a chance at that bigger buck. The Department writes:

"With recent changes to the antlerless deer permit system, the Department now allocates antlerless harvest opportunity using antlerless deer permits, which allow for the harvest of additional antlerless

die-hard trophy deer hunters. Oh, we'd love to have this fantasy buck in our crosshairs, but a doe or a young deer in the freezer will often do. After more than 60 years of deer hunting, and after having hung a few on the game pole, I have a perfect record of never having tagged one over 200 pounds, and I may never. But this November I am still skulking about in the deer woods.

For a number of years now, some hunters have



Outdoors In Maine

by V. Paul Reynolds,
Ellsworth, ME

A yearling buck weighed an average of 122.5 pounds dressed weight, and a 2-year-old weighed 148.6 pounds. Body mass continues to increase with age, and around years 5 or 6, our Maine bucks near their peak body mass with an average body weight approaching 200 pounds dressed weight."

There is some deer harvest data to suggest that we may not need antler restrictions to cultivate larger bucks in our whitetail population. According to MDIF&W, there has been a discernible decline in the harvesting of yearling bucks. It was most pronounced in last fall's deer harvest data. It may well be that the deer hunter's new two-deer option -a buck and a doe -may work to produce larger deer as hunters put a doe in the freezer and then hold out for that buck of a lifetime.

If you are a deer hunter consider this from the

Department: "Looking at three recent years of biological data from deer in Maine, our average yearling buck sported between 3 and 4 antler points, and our average 2-year-old buck had 6 to 7 points. There's a lot of growth between a buck's 1st and 2nd birthdays! While the most significant antler development takes place between the yearling and 2-year-old age classes, it's not until around year 5 that our Maine bucks begin to approach their peak antler growth potential."



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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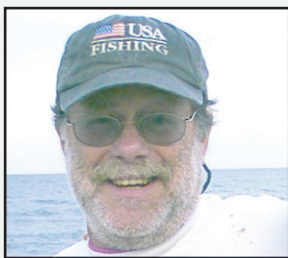
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Vermont Ramblings

by Dennis Jensen
Vermont

Page after page after page, big bucks with massive antlers.

You know, I gave up on all of those outdoor magazines years ago, simply because they neglected 90 percent of traditional hunters in favor of trophy hunters.

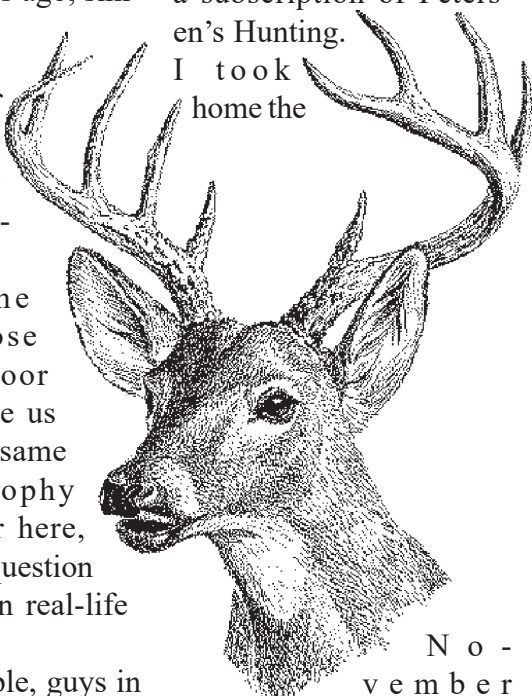
The same goes for those pathetic outdoor shows that give us the same old, same old: Only trophy hunters matter here, they say, and I question their abilities in real-life situations.

For example, guys in camouflage sitting in boxes at the edge of a green field. Deer coming by at 3 in the afternoon picking up corn, spread as if it were a deli for deer. One of the so-called hunters looks on as a big 8-pointer comes into view and makes the most despicable comment

in deer hunting: "He ain't a shooter."

But back to those magazines. A few months ago, the local library stocked a subscription of Petersen's Hunting.

I took home the



November issue and what do you know? Not much has changed, but one thing did stick out. Every photo, every deer taken, has massive antlers.

Here's the thing: Most deer hunters would love to shoot a really big buck, but they most likely will take

the first legal buck that comes along and are proud of getting that buck.

But this constant barrage of featuring guys who somehow manage to kill great bucks, year after year, is misleading. Yes, there are some deer hunters who

son opener and I'd bet my trusty 30-30 that most of these so-called celebrities would be eating their Vermont buck tags after 16 days.

The coverage in these magazines is all about trophy bucks, elk and bears.

Here's the thing: Most deer hunters would love to shoot a really big buck, but they most likely will take the first legal buck that comes along and are proud of getting that buck.

are so committed and so talented that they kill a lot of trophy bucks. Most of these hunters go about their business in a quiet manner.

By the way, isn't it interesting how many of these celebrity hunters have been in the news over the past decade or so, charged with poaching, hunting in states without a license and generally outlaw behavior?

I have said it before and I'll say it again: Take almost every one of these so-called great hunters, drop them into Vermont a day before the buck sea-

son opener and I'd bet my trusty 30-30 that most of these so-called celebrities would be eating their Vermont buck tags after 16 days.

I think the logic here and it is not all that logical, is that all of this stuff will make you a better hunter. I don't think so. I think it falls under the mantra that

goes "more is better." But here's the thing: The only real "more" that pays off in the deer woods is more scouting, more practice, more hunting.

Tell you what. If I had the money, the inclination and the time, I would take a gamble on a new kind of magazine. I think I'd call it something like "True Hunter," and my audience would be the average deer hunter. The writing and the photos would focus on the average "Joe," a working guy who often only gets to hunt on weekends and the passion that this "Joe" brings to the woods and waters.

I would focus my stories on people like a local family of Vermont hunters from my little town who seem to kill more than their share of deer. These guys are humble Vermonters, all blue-collar workers who work hard and hunt hard. And they do not talk up their success.

You want tough? Some years ago, one of the brothers was climbing up a tree stand, slipped and caught a finger in one of the metal steps. As he fell, the finger broke completely off. He gathered up the missing digit, got it reattached and later that afternoon, was back up in his tree stand. Me? I probably would have never climbed a tree stand again. That is the kind of story I would feature in my magazine.



Dennis Jensen is a freelance writer in Vermont.



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Fish Passage and Streambank Projects Benefit Fisheries

I was born and raised and now live within a couple of miles of the Connecticut River and the New Hampshire border so I pay attention to what is happening in the Granite State as I do in Vermont.

When I heard a fish passage and stream bank

rain events. However, it was the upstream cattle crossing that really got my attention.

Child's Brook, a tributary of the Ammonoosuc River, now has one fewer barrier to fish migration thanks to the culvert replacement by the Minot

ever increasing costs.

Joel DeStasio, Trout Unlimited's New Hampshire Project Manager worked with Ron Rhodes of the Connecticut River Conservancy which contributed \$50,000 from the Conservancy's National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Long Island Sound Futures Fund grant. Also involved in finding funding sources

The culvert replacement had been a priority for years but funding was a problem. In 2021 a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services was a big help but more was needed. Enough funding was not secured until 2024 due to ever increasing costs.

was Roland Payne of the Ammonoosuc Volunteer Chapter of Trout Unlimited which used money from the Casella Ammonoosuc River Legal Settlement, which were required to be used for the improvement of water quality in the Ammonoosuc River watershed.

named brook in the western section of Corinth is one of several brooks that were part of a strategic wood addition project implemented by Redstart. Some twelve miles of streams that are all tributaries of the Cookville Brook in Corinth which leads to the South Branch



Cattle crossing protects stream from sedimentation.

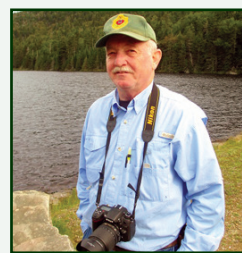
project was taking place a short drive from home, I had to investigate and came away very impressed with what I saw and learned and what should be replicated on countless farm crossings in Vermont.

A joint effort by Trout Unlimited, the Connecticut River Conservancy, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Aquatic Mitigation Program and others resulted in the removal of a barrier on the West Bath Road to fish migration on its path to the Connecticut River and a cattle crossing and associated exclusion fencing to protect the stream bank.

The new, wide culvert designed to accommodate major flood events is now allowing fish passage and should prevent a washout of the road during future

Farm and the Minots have a stable cattle crossing so that the cattle can freely cross the stream and drink from its waters without causing stream bank destruction and sedimentation.

The culvert replacement had been a priority for years but funding was a problem. In 2021 a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services was a big help but more was needed. Enough funding was not secured until 2024 due to



Outdoors In Vermont

by Gary W. Moore,
Bradford, VT

Across the river in Corinth, Vermont the Connecticut River Conservancy was also responsible for protecting and enhancing brook trout habitat.

I visited one such project with Dana Hazen of Redstart Inc. and the Connecticut River Conservancy's Ron Rhodes. The un-

of the Waits River and then to the main stem of the Waits River in Bradford have been the focus of the effort.

The days when trees were simply cut and dropped in a stream are long past. Now a process guided by science and experience determines where and how the wood will be placed to create trout habitat.

In the case of the Corinth projects, the National Resource Conserva-
(Fish cont. pg 51)

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Maple Country Outdoors

by Ben Wilcox,
Essex, VT

Hunting the Midwest is something every Northeast deer hunter should experience. It's hard to complain about seeing lots of deer, more bucks on a good day than you'll see all season back home, and the chance at a giant. It truly is a different world, but one that a good northeast hunter has the potential to

much I've learned in the midwest that have helped me become a better hunter.

To say hunting the mid west is easy, as some would say, is not accurate. Certainly not with archery equipment limiting your range to a 40 yard, unobstructed shot. To clarify, I'm talking about hunting both public and private

nity. Obviously, we are not talking apples to apples here in comparison to the northeast! I've found the biggest hurdle has been the weather. If it is 70+, as has often been the case recently, your opportunities are drastically limited.

My 2024 Kentucky buck was an example of how I find a spot and hunt it to maximize my chances of success. My kill this year is a result of scouting last year. Recognizing the spot

of hardwood, about 45 yards wide with some oak mixed in, before falling off a near cliff down to a very narrow brush hogged pasture and stream leading north to a bean field. Now that I had located an area

the edge. The point could have been good but I felt it would limit movement to deer moving up and down from the food. I wanted to get the cruising bucks checking the bedding area for does as well. I moved

My 2024 Kentucky buck was an example of how I find a spot and hunt it to maximize my chances of success. My kill this year is a result of scouting last year. Recognizing the spot within the spot is crucial to getting a buck in bow range consistently.

thrive in. We have to be good to even see a deer in the Northeast. If you are at all a well rounded hunter than you can have consistent success in the mid west. This year, I was lucky enough to harvest a beautiful 8 point with my crossbow in Kentucky. The lessons I have learned hunting the northeast certainly have made me successful over the years, but there is

land on a DIY hunt without bait, which is legal in many states. Finding the correct location, in order to get into bow range of a mature buck in just 6-7 days takes skill. You cannot just set up next to any old oak tree or big scrape and kill a buck consistently. I've been fortunate enough to kill 7 nice bucks in 9 trips with archery equipment, and have 100% opportu-

within the spot is crucial to getting a buck in bow range consistently. The location I killed my deer this year was a north facing point with a pine/cedar thicket at the top. I focused here because I knew with warm temps the deer would seek cooler locations. There was an old logging road that separated the soft wood from hardwood. The logging road provided a travel corridor, as well as location for bucks to lay down scrapes. Below the road was a gentle sloping area



The author with his 2024 Kentucky buck. The combination of scouting, hunting the best area on the best days, and recognizing the spot within the spot was key to success.

that had all of the features needed to hold deer during the day, I began searching for "the" spot. Immediately I scratched off the actual thicket, nothing to concentrate movement there and they liked to bed in and on

back off the point about 200 yards to where I saw a narrow clearing on the neighboring property coming down off the top, ending just before the logging road. I then found a small drainage only about 2-4' deep, but steep, that began at the downhill side of the logging road. I now had a "soft" feature that would constrict some movement both above and below the logging road. Next, I located a beech tree with scrapes under every branch at the edge of the logging road providing a focal point for bucks to walk past. I then picked the exact tree about 10 yards below and to the side of the scrapes, along the drainage and about 60

(Midwest cont. pg 51)

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Fish

(Cont. from pg 49)

tion Service required the wood to be placed every 100 feet and dictated the size and quantity of the wood.

The locations of the projects are carefully chosen so as to not endanger bridges, culverts or private property should high water incidents move the trees downstream.

The projects require a lot of interaction and many permits from federal and state agencies. They are also labor intensive requiring a lot of hand work to cut and winch the trees in to place without heavy equipment. I should point out that the undertaking is not cheap and has to rely on many funding sources.

In the case of the projects I visited, the Connecticut River Conservancy did the grant writing and contracted with Redstart to do the work which took place in 2023.

I was impressed that most, if not all, of the wood Redstart had placed did not move with the record July flooding Vermont received last summer. The pools and rifles created will certainly enhance the trout population of those streams.



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 gw-moore1946@icloud.com or at Box 454, Bradford, VT 05033. copyright 2025 Gary W. Moore

Midwest

(Cont. from pg 50)

yards from the clearing above the logging road. This allowed me to shoot behind me to the edge of the steep cliff 35 yards, 10 yards to the logging road, and 40 yards into the thicket as well as shoot deer moving up and down along the drainage.

The first two days were the coolest in the forecast, so I went in, setting my stand up in the dark the first morning. I saw 15-20 does and 6 bucks, passing up a 10 with two points broken, and almost killing a giant 8 at 35 yards. The next morning I killed my deer at 12 yards standing in the logging road after being channeled up around the drainage. The combination

of scouting, hunting the best area on the best days, and recognizing the spot within the spot, allowed me to experience another great mid west hunt.



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 maplecountr anglers@gmail.com, or on instagram @benwilcox_maplecountr anglers.



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“The Trail Rider”

by Dan Wilson,
Bowdoinham, ME

Rain, snow, ice, and wind make up our winters in Maine as of late. Some winters will have record snowfalls and some will be wet and rainy. Only time will tell for this winter. We certainly need the rain,

tractors, which are diamond and ladder patterns. A diamond pattern makes a sort of honeycomb shape, crisscrossing chains to form either a 4-sided diamond or mix of 5-sided pentagons and 4-sided dia-

Plows are also a good companion for an ATV too. Plowing a driveway can become an easier job with the nimble performance of an ATV, easier to maneuver about the driveway.

helping us out of the current droughts across the state.

With a wintery mix ahead, it just might not be time to put away that ATV or four-wheeler just yet, especially if you are considering equipping it with a plow for the winter. Depending what kind of terrain you have to plow, winter chains on the tires also might help with traction in slippery conditions.

There are typically two styles of chains for ATVs, similar to that of

monds. The ladder pattern mirrors that of rungs, or steps, on a ladder, crossing the tire in a straight line, horizontally. Chains can come with studs too, making for a more aggressive chain that digs into the terrain. If choosing something more aggressive, pavement needs to be factored in as the studs can easily damage the surface of a paved road or driveway.

When equipping an ATV with chains, they are usually sold in pairs, rang-

ing from \$100 a pair to over \$650. While equipping all four tires with chains is recommended for 4-wheel drive ATVs, equipping just two tires

chains to his agricultural tractor, which he will use to plow the driveway, and for hauling logs from our wood lot. We usually don't add chains to our ATV as we've

displacement and total volume of the cylinders are in the engine. There are many levels and packages within the KingQuad line, adding features such as

power steering, camo paint color, and LED light bar.

Plows come in three major components: plow blade, plow base center mount, and plow mount. As with many accessories, prices can range and add up quickly, but all together you're looking at over \$1,200



Suzuki ATV with plow blade.

with chains is an option too. Some added traction is better than no traction at all. Once chains have been added, review local laws regarding use on roadways and adhere to closed trails restrictions. My Dad adds

found it performs pretty well just with 4-wheel drive for plowing the driveway, if the snow isn't too heavy or deep.

Plows are also a good companion for an ATV too. Plowing a driveway can become an easier job with the nimble performance of an ATV, easier to maneuver about the driveway. Recently I saw a Suzuki ATV for sale that was equipped with a plow. Suzuki's line of ATVs are named KingQuad and are followed by numbers in the 2025 year ranging from 400 to 750. These numbers indicate how many cubic centimeters (cc) of engine

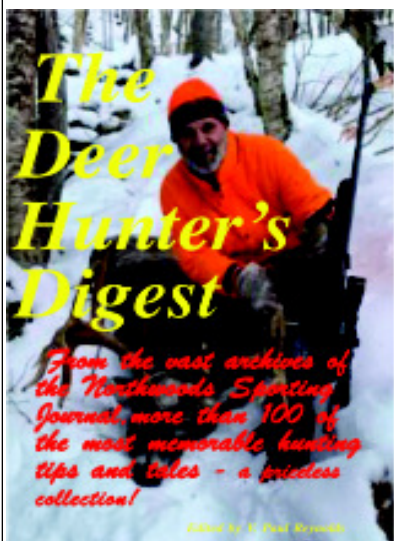
for the three components. There are a few upgrades along the way you can select too, such as quick-release mounts and width of plow blade. There are many “how to” videos online that will guide you through installing a plow on your ATV, plus local ATV dealers and small engine shops that can install for you, just make sure to get on the list early so winter doesn't pass you by.

Here's to a happy and healthy new year. May you enjoy time spent snowmobiling with friends and family, sharing a story or two around the wood stove, and taking in the great outdoors.



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

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(See page 47)

The Kennebago Legacy

Much like sports have been doing since Grant accepted Lee's sword to end the War to Preserve the Union, it was brook trout that drew my wife and I to the Rangeley Lakes Region of western Maine. We were not disappointed. That was nearly forty years ago. Back then, there were no mile markers or signs to help an angler to navigate the many logging roads that weave through the conifer forest like a river-spider's

these fish will rise to any well-placed fly. I've spent many afternoons working upstream while casting a little cane rod, a #16 pheasant-tail, one with a parachute wing, at the end of my tippet or swinging a gold-ribbed hare's ear wet fly downstream. This is classic small-stream fishing—the reward a flash of scarlet and gold through the tea-colored current, and on occasion, the silver-and-black surprise of a land-

pods of brook trout and landlocked salmon cruise in search of smelt, the principal baitfish, coming to the surface in the evenings to feed on the occasional hatch.

The stream leaves Little Kennebago Lake, flowing under a wooden bridge where you can park a vehicle and put in a canoe. Deeper runs may hold brook trout measuring up to fourteen inches as the river follows a serpentine course

Kennebago Lake, known locally as Big Kennebago, is the largest fly-fishing-only lake in the State of Maine, and purported to be the largest east of the Mississippi.

web. GPS were only letters in the alphabet and the guys on Twitter had yet to be born.

Running through the heart of the region, the Kennebago River has not changed much since we first fished it. Originating from a number of ponds found south of the Boundary Mountains near Maine's border with Canada, the river flows for approximately twenty-five miles, terminating at Cupsuptic Lake, an arm of Mooselookmeguntic Lake, located not far from Oquossoc, a tiny hamlet west of Rangeley, the destination town located not far up the road.

The Kennebago's headwaters begin as a small tannin-stained brook, where diminutive brook trout (native char) can be found behind the trunks of fallen spruce, around boulders the size of a moose's shoulder, and in those sun-dappled riffles where fish like to spend time. With limited hatches to bring them to the surface,

locked parr.

To be sure a six-inch fish is about as large as you'll find this high up on the Kennebago, but you'll be alone if you don't count the eagle spiraling upward on a thermal current or the mink slinking through the ferns along the bank.

The current deepens as it slows a mile or so above Little Kennebago Lake. It can now be fished from a canoe or kayak paddled up from the lake that is more like a pond. The trout in this section of the stream are a bit larger, fitting nicely in the palm of your hand, but just as eager to take a fly. Don't be surprised to find a moose knee deep in a bend pool.

Only non-motorized watercraft are permitted on the small lake, where

for about a mile before entering the Logans, a boggy backwater adjacent to Big Kennebago Lake where similar size trout are not uncommon from late May, throughout June and into the early part of July.

Kennebago Lake, known locally as Big Kennebago, is the largest fly-fishing-only lake in the State of Maine, and purported to be the largest east of the Mississippi. Landlocked salmon and brook trout measuring up to sixteen inches can be caught early in the season by casting traditional streamers such as a Black Ghost or Gray Ghost at the mouths of the lake's tributaries. As the season progresses there are dry fly opportunities over successive hatches of black quills, Hendrick-



Against The Current

by Bob Romano,
Rangeley, ME

son's, Blue-winged Olives and Hexagenia. Caddis are present throughout the summer as well as sporadic swarms of ants.

Although the logging roads around Little Kennebago Lake and the river above it are open to the public, the carry road below the wooden bridge at the bottom of Little Kennebago Lake is gated. In addition, most of the river below the big lake also lies behind locked gates. Although an angler can hike in to the river from either end, the gates limit vehicular traffic to the owners of cabins along the lake's extensive shoreline as well as Grant's Camps, a traditional Maine sporting lodge dating back to the early 1900s.

A short stretch above Route 16, the paved road running through Rangeley and Oquossoc, lies outside the gates and includes Steep Bank Pool, known for its late-season salmon and trout fishing. But it's the gates that allow the angler to cast a fly to an excellent population of wild salmonid and native brook trout, some measured in pounds rather than inches through a number of runs with iconic names such as

Pine Stump, Island Pool, and Devil's Elbow.

Since the 1970's, John and Carolyn Blunt have owned and operated Grant's Camps known for his fine food and being family-friendly. Staying at Grant's, a sport has access to entire Kennebago watershed that includes the two lakes, the entire river and a few backwoods ponds.

Named after Ed "Ned" Grant, the lodge is steeped in the region's sporting history. Originally built by Grant's sons in 1905, it later burnt down and was rebuilt. The Sage of Beaver Pond Camps, as he was known, once told a young sport, who complained that they were lost, "See that mountain over thar? Well, it was jest a hill when I began guidin'."

The Kennebago is a river where an angler can cast to western Maine's native brook trout and wild landlocked salmon much the same as Ned Grant once did. If interested in this world-class fishery, consider making reservations over winter as the lodge fills up quickly prior to the start of fishing season. They can be reached at: grantscamps@gmail.com



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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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The ITS: Volunteers Made It

Snowmobiling in Maine started back in the 1950's and 1960's without a trail system. Today our Maine Trail Network is a destination point for rider's from all over the United States and Canada. Our Interconnecting Trail System, or ITS as we

call it, stretches from the deep South to the North Maine woods. Along with the club's trails this ITS network is the Main Line. The snowmobile clubs do their best making the trails, sometimes reroutes are necessary. Landowners may not want us on their

property and unfortunately a new trail has to be made. Its very costly and labor intensive. Many of our clubs are facing time which is old age. We need young folks to join a club and give us a helping hand. Many volunteers have been building bridges, clubhouses,

working on groomers and drags, doing the signing, brush cutting and keeping the routine life of a volunteer.

They have cook outs, raffles, bake sales to raise money to help with costs. This is why its necessary to join a club and help. Without these folks Maine trails would be in horrible condition and or closed. The Maine Snowmobile Association has been around for over 55 years. The MSA has over 280 clubs. A few pioneer's



Snowmobile Trails

By Al Swett

got together back then and formed the Association.

The association has a great group of snowmobilers that get it done and has made Maine a true destination stop. In fact, Maine is ranked the third best place to ride in the USA. That's quite an honor. Built by volunteer's that do trail work, host public suppers, get bills passed in the Augusta and keep their clubs

ers that know the value of our sport.

The MSA and University of Maine have an ongoing study about the economic impact of Maine Snowmobiling. It's in the \$700 million window of revenue for the state. We have supporting businesses statewide that contribute to the MSA clubs. Whether it be a donated item for a club raffle or a deal on diesel

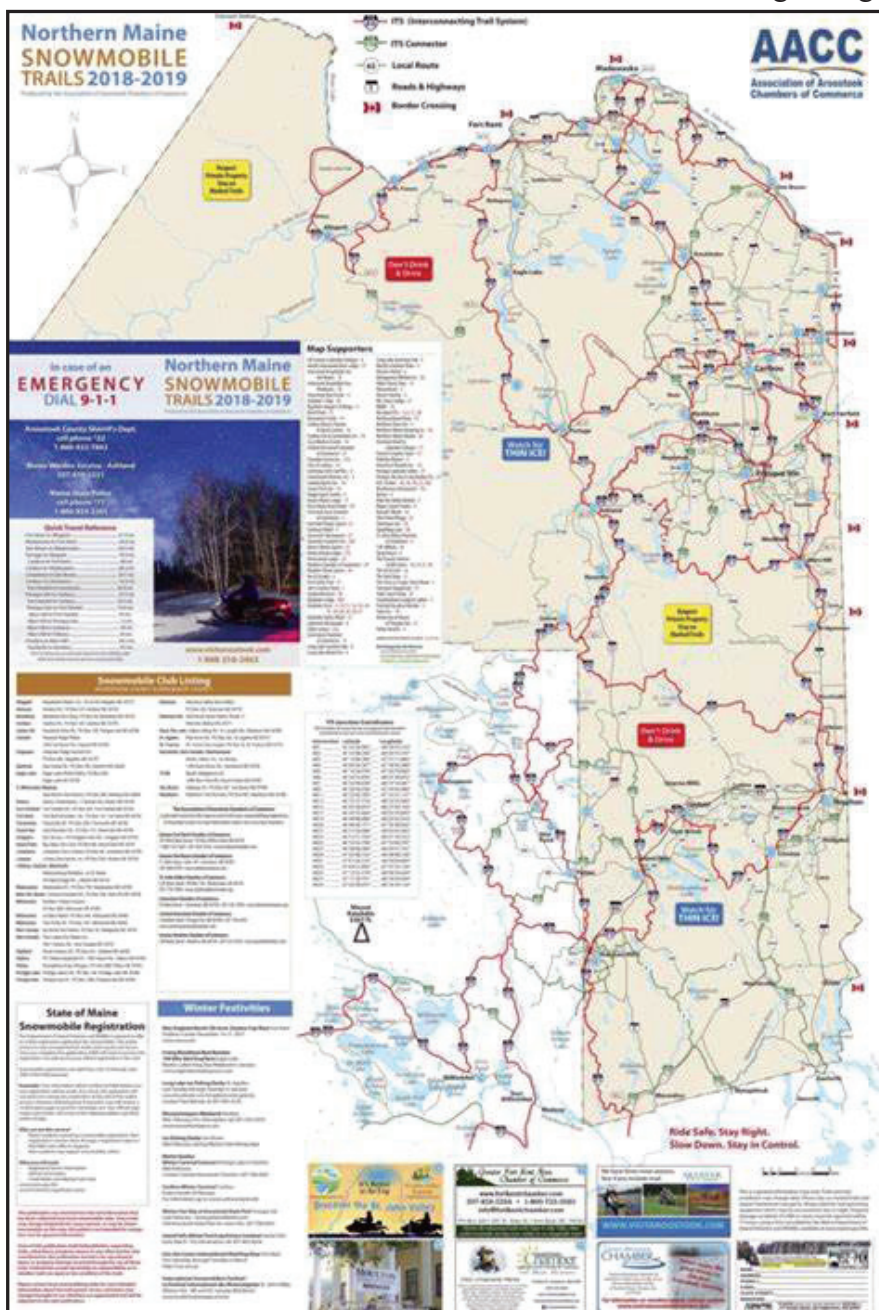
We need young folks to join a club and give us a helping hand. Many volunteers have been building bridges, clubhouses, working on groomers and drags, doing the signing, brush cutting and keeping the routine life of a volunteer.

professionally in order. There's lots of behind the scene actions that people are not aware of. Dealing with landowners are top priority. If it was not for their generosity we'd be out of business.

Over 95% of our trails are on private land. Some clubs deal with a few landowners, others, especially the smaller ones in cities, could have 30 or more. It's a chore getting approvals to ride and communicating with them about their property. But, we have some of the best landown-

ers or fuel for their groomers, these folks are the best. Many club's would be thankful for any help you could give them. Join a club get out and enjoy the Maine woods with a group of awesome people. With over 14,000 miles of trails you can start in Lebanon and end up in Madawaska! Our trails are Maine built by generations of real true snowmobilers that have a passion statewide to make folks smile when they visit to ride!

Be safe out there!




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January Question Of The Month

What is the Optimum Coyote Rifle?

By Paul Violette

Choosing a rifle and caliber of bullet to hunt any given species of game can be a daunting task. Perhaps more so when seeking a predator hunting combination. In this article, I will look at the selection of a rifle and bullet most suitable for hunting the Eastern coyote. For those of us new to hunting coyotes, the Internet is a good place to

parts, being genetically and behaviorally part wolf. Average weights run from 25 to 45 pounds, rarely to 60 pounds according to Gerry Lavigne, retired Maine State Wildlife Biologist. Here in Maine, a typical range for seeing and shooting a coyote would be under 200 yards. When one watches most coyote hunting videos from the

as the lighter to mid-grain weight bullets are suitable for predators and higher grain weight bullets are suitable for wild hogs and deer.

Allowing that so many successful coyote hunters opt for an AR style platform, let us agree to choose a rifle in that genre. When I hunt coyotes, I prefer to make a clean kill that

and dependable.

My choice of the .243 Winchester caliber, as a cross-over caliber, is made due to the flexibility it provides by additionally allowing me a wild Hog suitable caliber when using a 95-grain projectile and a deer suitable caliber when using 100 grain projectiles. Thus, this caliber choice of .243 Winchester dictates that the AR platform choice is an AR 10. In general, an AR 10 will cost more than an AR 15 because it is a heavier build, but there are budget AR 10's available that will get the job done. The beauty of any AR choice is that, whether it be AR 15 or AR 10, is that you can buy complete upper assemblies in different calibers resulting in many different rifle combinations. For example, my choice of the .243 Winchester caliber upper would allow me to use up-

pers in caliber .308 Winchester, .243 Winchester, 6.5 Creedmoor and 22-250 Remington without having to change out the bolt carrier group.

Shown here with an ATN X-Sight 5 (3-15X) Ultra HD 4K+ Smart Day/Night Scope with an ATN IR850 Infra-Red Illuminator and a Brigade Tactical Infantry Model Suppressor.

In closing, some of the reasons that I prefer the .243 Winchester over the 5.56 NATO can be ascertained from reviewing their respective ballistics as shown in the table. The .243 Winchester is a flatter

(Question cont. pg 65)

Allowing that so many successful Coyote hunters opt for an AR style platform, let us agree to choose a rifle in that genre. When I hunt Coyotes, I prefer to make a clean kill that drops them in their tracks and that also preserves the pelt from untoward damage.

start research.

A search for the best coyote hunting cartridges results in a plethora of choices to include 22 Nosler, .22-250 Remington, .220 Swift, 6mm ARC, 6mm Creedmoor, .223/5.56 NATO, 17 HMR, .243 Winchester and .308. Add to that an incredible range of bullet grain weights ranging from 53 to 108 and different projectile types to include Full Metal Jacket (FMJ), Hollow Point (HP), Ballistic Tipped Varmint, etc. There are considerations for each to include whether a given bullet is pelt friendly, wind tolerant, flat shooting, and or long range capable. The fact is that all of these will kill a coyote. Some better than others given shot placement and the hunting conditions specific to how one hunts.

Time to digress and consider the quarry. The eastern coyote is larger than its western counter-

mid-west and out west, the ranges of observation often extend out to a thousand yards and shots may be taken at longer ranges.

One thing that seems to be common in many of the coyote Hunting videos is a preponderance of AR style rifle platforms. What is not always clear is whether the AR platform is an AR 15 or AR 10 type of rifle. The AR 15 is designed for lighter calibers such as the .223/5.56 NATO, .223 WYLDE, 6.5 Grendel, .300 Blackout, 12.7x42, .17 HMR, 7.62x39, .22 Magnum, .22 LR, 6mm ARC, .450 Bushmaster and .350 Legend. No wonder it is so popular a choice given the range of possible calibers. The AR 10 platform is designed for heavier caliber bullets such as .308 Winchester, 22-250 Remington, 6.5 Creedmoor, 8.6 Blackout, and .243 Winchester. These caliber choices are considered cross-over calibers in so far

as they drop them in their tracks and that also preserves the pelt from untoward damage. On average, my shots are 100 to 150 yards. My choice of bullet for coyotes is a Hornady Superformance Varmint .243 Winchester 75-grain V-Max cartridge. Some may argue that a lighter grain projectile would be a better choice, and they may be right. All I know is that my choice plants them where I shoot them and precludes me from having to search for a Coyote that has run off into the woods after being shot. The .243 Winchester cartridge is flat shooting.

When sighted in at 200 yards it will be +0.9 Inch high at 100 yards, dead on at 200 yards, and -4.9 inches low at 300 yards. Its muzzle velocity is listed at 3580 FPS. It is wind tolerant, fast, deadly



My AR 10 (Bear Creek Arsenal Upper and Lower) in .243 Winchester caliber with a 1:8 twist 20-inch barrel is ideally suited for projectiles in the 60

Snow Cave Shelter

In winter in a survival situation shelter is critical, especially if you are expecting a storm. With just a couple tools you can build a snow cave that can keep you surprisingly warm. The coldest I have been in is -35f outside and +25-30f inside. They are that well insulated.

To start, you need a pile of snow or a snowbank you can dig into. If you are shoveling the snow into

the top down so the roof is still only 6-8 inches thick.

Don't dig down and have too much snow above you. Always plan on a collapse.

You will need a large hand full of sticks about 6-9 inches long and the diameter of your thumb or a little less. Push them into the mound evenly around and over the top. They should point towards the center of the mound.

and filling that with snow to drag out works well too.

If you are sleeping in the snow cave, leave a bed of snow in the back just wide enough for your sleeping bag and about 2 feet tall. Cold air flows to low spots like water. On a platform you will be noticeably warmer.

Be sure to open a hole about six inches in diameter in the wall on both sides for Ventilation. If it is snowing you need to check the vent holes a few times to be sure it doesn't fill with snow and create a carbon

If you are digging in a deep snowbank, dig from the top down so the roof is still only 6-8 inches thick. Don't dig down and have too much snow above you. Always plan on a collapse.

monoxide problem. Keep your shovel inside when you sleep in case the door gets snow drifted over it. Use a sled or pack to block the door if you are sleeping in the cave.

Make the inside roof as smooth and rounded as possible. The shape will help support the weight of the roof and keeping it smooth will help eliminate any water dripping on you.



Basics Of Survival

by Joe Frazier,
Bangor, ME

You can use a candle or small stove inside a snow cave for light, heat, and cooking. Again, be aware of carbon monoxide build up. Keep the vent holes open.

If you are sleeping in your snow cave you can use snow or your pack to block the door and retain heat. It is amazing how quiet it is in the cave as well.

If you are building a

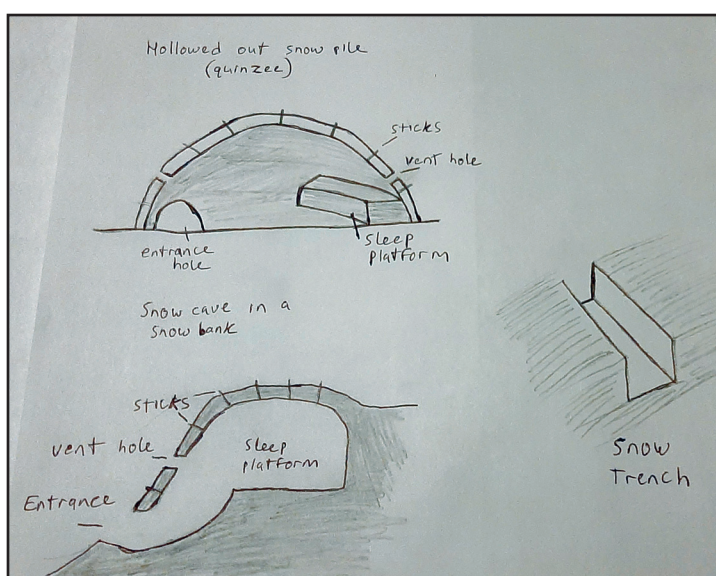
If you don't have time or enough snow to build a snow cave, a trench will do a good job of protecting you from the wind. You can either dig down into the snow or build up walls just far enough apart for you to lay down in. If you bridge the top with skis and/or ski poles or sticks you can put a tarp over the top to create a tent.

If nothing else, shovel a pile of snow just to block you from the wind and it will make you much more comfortable.

Try a snow cave in your own yard and sleep in it. Your own yard is the best place to try new skills and gear. Be sure your snow cave is away from roads or driveways and is clearly marked. Give your kids colored water spray bottles and let them go crazy.



Joe is a husband, father, author and marine. Joe frazier193@gmail.com



a pile, pack it down with snowshoes or with your shovel once it is the size you need.

Let the snow settle and harden for a couple hours before you start to hollow it out. It should be solid enough for you to walk on before you start digging. It should be roughly an even shaped dome. If you are in a snow drift on the side of a hill, be aware of the snow above you and be sure it will not come down. Never dig into a pile a snowplow has pushed up. It is very compact and dangerously heavy.

Also, never dig a snow cave where a snowplow may drive. Snow Caves are impossible to see from the outside.

If you are digging in a deep snowbank, dig from

When you dig out the interior of the shelter, be sure you have a dry set of clothes to get into because you will get cold and wet. A kid size shovel or a car shovel with a collapsible handle works good for this. Dig a hole just large enough for you to get inside. If you have a snowsled make the door just wide enough for it to go inside too.

As you dig you want to shovel in and up until you get to the sticks you inserted. This is why you have the sticks, to maintain an even thickness of the roof.

This is easier if you have a person inside and a person outside. If you are alone you fill the sled with snow, then push it outside to empty it. Laying a tarp on the floor of the cave

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Marsh Island Chronicles

by Matthew Dunlap,
Old Town, ME

Is it just me, or do the sporting seasons fly by way too fast? We spend the winter tying flies when we aren't unsnarling ice fishing line, and then when open water fishing season opens, the actual amount of time we spend wading brooks with light fishing gear blinks by, and then

birthday. Because we all have schedules, we got together the Sunday before so we could all be there. My mother decided not to go to work (yes, she was still working) on Wednesday because she wasn't feeling great. By Saturday, she was gone.

The whirlwind that

a considerable amount of work that goes into closing the books on a long, productive life.

None of this stands as a valid excuse for missing as many days of fishing as I did, but as we progressed on wrapping things up, after we had finished the real estate transfer of the homestead to my sister, I asked her if it was okay if I still did some deer hunting there. She looked at

None of this stands as a valid excuse for missing as many days of fishing as I did, but as we progressed on wrapping things up, after we had finished the real estate transfer of the homestead to my sister, I asked her if it was okay if I still did some deer hunting there.

we're bass fishing, or shaking mackerel off a fishing tree, and then before you know it, the leaves are turning. Time to put away the fishing gear and break some clays.

It doesn't take a lot to throw things off the rails. This summer, we celebrated my mother's 94th

follows losing a family member—whatever the circumstances—cancels out a lot of other things. There are lots of arrangements to be made. For some reason I don't understand, my mother made me one of the personal representatives to her estate, along with my youngest sister. There's

me like I had grown an additional arm projecting out of the top of my head. "Yes, of course," she said, a little confused. Hey, new landowner, I said. I'm not assuming anything.

Opening day was uneventful, although a cool breeze belied the forecast of overcast skies with temperatures in the mid-forties, which isn't bad for early November. Nonetheless, I was underdressed, and got a good chill from sitting at the base of a large beech tree exposed to the wind for a few hours.

Then, the world stepped in, as if to say "you got your hunt in, Mr. Man, and now here are few things to tend to," which ate the next two weekends. Then a head cold, which makes getting up at 4:30 in the morning just that much more fun. Before I knew it, we were in the last week of the season. A sudden

a lack of success from only two expeditions is hardly a mystery comparable to the Riddle of the Sphinx.

The former and now overgrown farm fields yielded as much deer sign as I would expect to find in a zoo enclosure, and with plenty of evidence that the deer didn't just pass through, but hung in the



dump of wet, heavy snow in central Maine with a quick drop in temperatures promised almost-ideal conditions for the last day of the season.

Not to ruin the surprise, but I came up empty again. I wish I could say it wasn't for a lack of trying, but it was completely for a lack of trying. Yes, you only need to go out once in order to be successful, but

area for long stretches; they just weren't there when I was, which is the essence of any unsuccessful hunt.

"Well, you still have black powder season," one of my other sisters helpfully supplied. I explained to her the irony of having sold my muzzle-loader years ago along with a number of other firearms so I could convert the cash, oddly, into the purchase of a gun safe. "I never think of getting another one until the season is on top of me," I allowed.

Maybe it's time to do just that. If it isn't too late.

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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Bush Pilot Envy

By V. Paul Reynolds

Grandiose delusions are not unknown to me. As a young man the challenges of a Navy carrier pilot appealed to me—until I joined the Navy and saw how inherently dangerous it is to land a jet aircraft

seat passenger -- a pair of pickerel snowshoes—fell off the back seat and got jammed between the seat and the rear control stick. The situation became awkward. Since the front and rear control sticks are

No thank you, again.

Charles Darwin nailed it: “Ignorance more frequently begets confidence than does knowledge.” What does happen with shattered self-delusions, at least for me, is that you develop an abiding respect and admiration for those intrepid souls who do land on aircraft carriers or high-time Maine bush

The situation became awkward. Since the front and rear control sticks are wired together, I suddenly lost pitch-up control of the flailing yellow bird. (This is not good, and especially not good in a windy, limited visibility condition.)

pilots — especially those who live long enough to write a book about their adventures.

Jake Morrel is such a man. A high-time Maine bush flyer, who ran Hardscrabble Lodge at Spencer Lake with his wife Beth, Morrell has a new book titled “Hardscrabble Lodge. The book is full of true Maine bush flying stories. It is well done. I liked it a lot. You will, too.

tal pressure accompanied those flights because often conditions were far from ideal.”

Truth be known, Morrel is not the first person who, having a vocation that had him on the edge too many times, looks back in head-shaking amazement. In this book, Hardscrabble Lodge, Morrel

takes the reader with him and shares, in entertaining details, some of these flying adventures in the Maine back country.

Hardscrabble Lodge is a soft cover book published by Maine Authors Publishing, in Rockland, \$21.95, www.maineauthorpublishing.com.



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.maineoutdoorpublications.com



The author with his Aeronca L3 tail dragger circa 1980.

on the pitching deck of an aircraft carrier on a dark and stormy night. No thank you.

Later, as a civilian private pilot who owned and flew an antique airplane, I set out to be a high-time bush pilot. Then I had a taste of Maine bush flying in marginal weather. From my book, Backtrack.:

Once on a return flight from ice fishing at Chemo Pond, my nephew and I ran into freezing rain. With the ice-laden windscreen obscuring my forward vision, we managed to get the airplane back to Brewer and on the ground by looking out the side windows. My nephew’s voice changed an octave during that flight, and he never flew with me again.

That same winter, during a bumpy solo hop to Sebobeis Lake, a snow squall began pounding me over Alton. While struggling to maintain airspeed and get the airplane’s skis onto Boyd Lake, my back-

wired together, I suddenly lost pitch-up control of the flailing yellow bird. (This is not good, and especially not good in a windy, limited visibility condition.) Thankfully, my luck held. After some hair-raising moments, I was able to reach back, hold up the snowshoes with my right hand and control a landing with my left hand.



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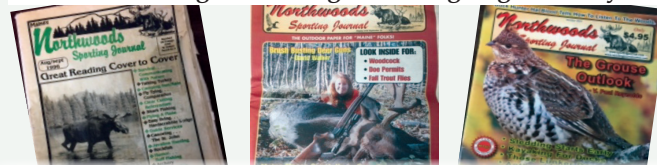
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THE BACK SHELF

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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.

Morrel is retired and, in his final chapter about reflections, he raises the rhetorical question: “Do I miss flying every day?” His answer did not surprise me. “Frankly, no! Great men-

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Kineo Currents



by **Suzanne AuClair,**
Rockwood, ME

Matthew Scott, originally from The County, won the prestigious North American Lake Management Society's Secchi Disk Award. This well-deserved national award represents an exemplary achievement for the State of Maine that we all can be proud of. This man of humble beginnings rose to become one of Maine's most able leaders for maintaining the quality of the water in our lakes and watersheds.

Matt was nominated for the award by Jeremy Deeds of the Maine Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP). Now of advanced years, this national award is a fitting cap to a life's work that saw success both with people and science. Long retired, Matt still shows up with great purpose, still passionate about maintaining the quality of Maine's freshwater and, as a result, its fisheries. He is in demand throughout the state to speak on various water quality projects and provide data for re-

ports, for his mind works like a library and is full of expertise gleaned over a lifetime of work.

In 1958, he was discharged from the U.S. Air Force and used the Korean War G.I. Bill to study wildlife management at the University of Maine, Orono. His work for both

Dr. Harry Everhart, who initiated the first study of freshwater fish life cycles (and co-wrote the first college fisheries textbook in the U.S.). Some may also remember his other mentors, Dr. Horace Quick of the Wildlife Dept. and Dr. Harold Young of the Forestry Dept.

Mid-career, he was offered the chief biologist position at Maine's Dept.

the field and in politics he attributes to his early training with first generation biologist and Maine man, Bob Foye, "What I enjoyed most was working and learning communication skills with [him]. He was a great teacher and always told me to listen to the

ation of the lakes division at the DEP and co-founded the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (now Lake Stewards of Maine) in 1971. In 1976, he along with Pete Nolan of the Environmental Protection Agency, initiated the New England Association

Matt encouraged lake associations to organize around protecting their lake.

This action resulted in greater awareness and actions to protect lakes throughout Maine. Matt still attends numerous lake association meetings through the summer to give pro bono talks on lake protection.

fisheries and water quality in Maine is wide and varied.

He worked on the Downeast Atlantic salmon rivers, on Love Lake in the Machias area, and as an early fisheries biologist for the Belgrade Lakes Region. He counts as important mentors who "brought him along" in early training such innovators as

of Environmental Protection. There, he established Maine's first water quality monitoring of macro invertebrates, which he found were great indicators of high water quality. He later served as Deputy Commissioner of the Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and on the Board of Environmental Protection.

His success in both



customer, which were anglers, boaters, and property owners, as they could teach you a great deal based on their experience. Bob was a very quiet, gentle man and always tried to understand people's concerns. He would draw the line, however, and never ventured across that line when science prevailed in a fishery decision to be made. I learned a great deal from his thinking." Even today, Matt is one of the few people I know who genuinely listens to what the other person is saying.

In his nomination to recognize Matt for the national award, here is what Jeremy Deed wrote:

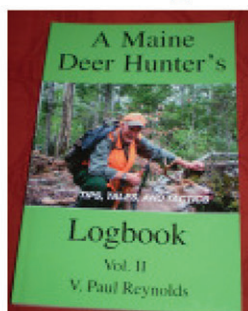
Matt has always promoted the importance of information exchange as it relates to the protection and management of our lakes and watersheds. Matt is responsible for the cre-

of Environmental Biologists, and began an annual multi-day conference for states in the northeastern U.S. that continues today as the Northeast Aquatic Biologists conference. At a 1980 Organization of Economic and Cooperative Development conference in Portland, Matt was the organizing chair of the group that founded the North American Lake Management Society.

Matt is a tireless advocate for lakes and their watersheds, always striving to keep lakes in the public discourse and emphasizing the important of, as he says, "speaking up for the inarticulate organisms." In 1971, he worked with professors at the University of Maine to create the Maine Volunteer Monitoring Program, the first of its kind in the country to partner (Scott cont. pg 65)

The Sportsman's Gifts for Christmas....

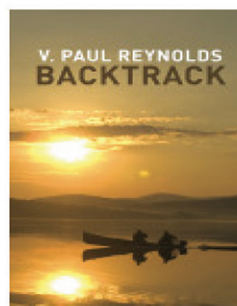
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The Long Pond Collusion

It has long been said that power corrupts, and complete power corrupts completely. It has also been said that many important decisions are made over cocktails at a bar or over a “chummy” meeting where the participants are scratching each other’s backs for mutual benefit. These clandestine meetings certainly happen in the corporate world, but unfortunately, they also happen in government. These corrupt decisions are made behind closed doors for political gain and narcissistic reasons. Then we, the everyday people, have to live with the consequences.

Back in 2007 working for IFW as the assistant regional fisheries biologist in the Downeast region, my boss was a good man. A fair handed and fair-minded manager. He was also an excellent fisheries biologist. Highly respected. One of the best in the state.

I well remember the day that my boss got a call from a high ranking IFW official that he was going to allow another high ranking official from DMR to stock alewives into Long Pond on Mount Desert Island. These two

bureaucrats rode to work together to Augusta each day and commonly hatched non-altruistic plans, so that they could both rise to prominence and power.

My boss’s response to the alewife stocking proclamation into Long Pond was quick. That is a bad idea! And his reasons were solid, fair, and balanced.

For one, alewives were not native to Long

fish, directly competing with smelts for food and space.)

And three, we also knew that the alewives to be stocked in Long Pond would come from the Kennebec River, which has many invasive fish species. Furthermore, the process for collecting the alewives did not include sorting out other fish before stocking.

My boss made all

My boss’s response to the alewife stocking proclamation into Long Pond was quick. That is a bad idea! And his reasons were solid, fair, and balanced.

Pond. They were introduced in the 1950s from the Orland River, and in 2007 there was still a residual run remaining that was increasing slowly due to improved fish passage in the lower part of the drainage.

Two, a huge increase in alewives in the system due to stocking could upset the freshwater ecosystem and have negative effects on the landlocked rainbow smelt population in Long Pond, that is vitally important for forage for one the best landlocked salmon fisheries in Eastern Maine. (Remember, we knew at the time that alewives fed on plankton, insects, and

these points to the high ranking official to no avail. This person’s mind was made up. We were incensed, of course, at this blatant disregard for the people’s inland fishery resources. The best approach was to allow alewives to build up slowly on their own as we monitored the situation and strive for balance between all fish species, while protecting the smelt and landlocked salmon populations, and above all not to risk introducing invasive species with alewives.

Instead, the large alewife stockings happened for multiple years and inva-



Everything Maine

by Greg Burr
Addison, ME

sive yellow perch were also stocked along with them.

The result was a dramatic decrease in the rainbow smelt population due to predation and competition from yellow perch and alewives. Anglers were angry and wanted to know why they were suddenly

creased the angler’s salmon catch rate, making fishermen furious. Also, within this whole fiasco the Long Pond dam tender, who we at the IFW regional office were working with for beneficial outlet flows for landlocked salmon production, was dismissed and replaced with someone who increased flows in the spring to help alewives access the pond, while ignoring our pleas for maintaining lower flows for landlocked salmon spawning and rearing in Ripples Brook, the pond’s outlet. The result was a decrease of wild salmon production from a range of 5% to 13%, to less than 1%. Again, a taking from IFW salmon anglers.

IFW customers deserve better, and decisions like this must be more transparent so that a balanced approach is reached. But hey, this is the world we live in. Stay tuned for more corruption stories.

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The Bird Perch

by Karen Holmes,
Cooper, ME



The new year is always fun for me because in January I can begin a new list of birds I might see in my area of Down East Maine. I could not drive around in 2024 and so I only recorded seeing 152 species. And there was no irruption in my area. An irruption is a form of migration where bird spe-

sidered one species and just called Redpolls. They look like pink-breasted sparrows with black chins and little red spots on their foreheads. They are however members of the finch family of birds and are tough little birds that thrive in the harshest and coldest of environments.

During spring and

of birds and the food abundance, Redpolls will leave and start searching for food

One species I have not seen for a few years here in Cooper, Maine are Redpolls. Recently, ornithologists used genetic evidence to no longer have the two subspecies called Hoary and Common Redpolls.

cies leave their breeding grounds and temporarily expand outside their normal range. Irruptions are driven by food scarcity and this often causes “super flights” of 6 or more species arriving in the winter.

One species I have not seen for a few years here in Cooper, Maine are Redpolls. Recently, ornithologists used genetic evidence to no longer have the two subspecies called Hoary and Common Redpolls. They are now con-

summer, nests are built in the Arctic among bushy areas of the tundra and on the edges of the spruce forests. Twigs, grass, and moss are used to make the nests which could be lined with animal fur and bird feathers. If food resources were plentiful with many catkins on the birch and alders trees and with plenty of seeds on ground plants, there may be plenty left over to feed the birds all winter. But if there is an imbalance in the number

in southern Canada and in the northern United States. They will form large flocks, and loudly announce their presence with whistles and “zap” and “dree” calls as they fly overhead.

Flocks enable more eyes to find food and to spot predators faster. If Redpolls visit my feeding station, I know I have to provide plenty of nyjer and millet seeds and to always keep the feeders full daily. These little birds can eat about a third of their body

weight every day. They will even stash seeds for several hours in their throat pouches. These resemble sacs and can hold a couple of grams of seeds. This can equal their daily energy equivalent, providing food through the long and cold winter nights. Redpolls always grow more feathers for the winter months. I watch them “preening” them, which spreads protective oils and locks together outer feathers so they are weatherproof. They also do “fluffing” of their feathers which also provides insulation.

One winter I was shocked to see how Redpolls can tunnel into the snow and spend the night in a sort of snow cave. My

dog and I were shocked when a flock erupted out of the snow in front of us. We had only experienced Ruffed Grouse doing that behavior. I am writing this column in November and maybe when you read this in January, we may have experienced an irruption of birds somewhere in the northern United States.



Karen Holmes always feels there is so much to learn from nature. When your health is not the greatest, just taking a walk or watching out a window provides such comfort. She lives with her husband Ken and their dog Dingo on 74 acres of woodlands in Cooper, Maine. Every day can be an adventure.

Redpolls



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AI: High Tech Hunting?

If I may be dramatic for a moment, the next handful of decades have serious potential to become a terrible dystopian wasteland, if we keep abusing our intellect and applying our science skills and technology skills in unhealthy ways. BUT. Until that day comes, You and I can really only use such machines, specifically AI, responsibly, and look after ourselves where we're able. But, if we wanted to have some fun with AI, and explore how it can be integrated and applied to enhance our hunting experiences, we can learn how to be more successful as we manage populations, introduce others to the sport, and deepen our own understanding of nature in general. I've decided to do some homework and categorize a handful of different types of AI that we can (and do!) take advantage of when finding animals worthy of pursuit.

First up, Large Language Models, aka LLMs. These AIs can be of advantage to hunters in lots of ways, but primarily, you can take advantage of an LLM for hunting purposes (ideally ChatGPT, because its reasoning capacities are a tad better) by telling it everything you know about an area you'd like to hunt and then asking it when to go, where to position yourself, etc, as well as asking it where you can go to access new places to hunt.

A small disclaimer before I get into the rest of this: most of the technology we think of as AI has existed for much, much longer than LLMs like ChatGPT and Gemini, which are really just algorithms with a

different, very accessible, user-friendly dataset: language.

While they are still useful, as we will see, LLMs don't process things the same way as, say, a game camera with "AI object recognition", such as the Seacams from ZEISS which use code and technology to learn and categorize animal shapes and other objects for their use-

detects in each herd. If your cameras are time-synced and you enter their locations into the program's map, it will give something like a weather report on which cameras have seen deer and at what times they were detected, so you can more easily pattern them, which saves time and money if you're a guide.

Other integrations of artificial intelligence and

I've decided to do some homework and categorize a handful of different types of AI that we can (and do!) take advantage of when finding animals worthy of pursuit.

ers.

For hunters/guides/conservationists who want to integrate AI into their hunting experience even more, there's a subscription called HuntPro that will sift through your game camera footage and sort things that it can and can't identify, going so far as to discern herds (and flocks!) from one another, based on how many immature, adult, male, and female deer it

self-regulating include the ART (Automatic Ranging Technology) scopes from Leatherwood, which will autonomously compensate for bullet drop with minimal input from users. While there's not really a lot to say about these scopes as far as features go, it's still an incredibly valuable addition to add to your rifle when pursuing warier game that demand more precision and speed.

ing context. Before you get too excited, I will point out that this field seems relatively foreign and cryptic, meaning it might take some time to become usable for hunters to be able to take advantage of it. But if we could, we'd be able to tell what WE really smell like, which would be a major leg-up, but also we can determine what smells influence deer (and others) to do what they do when they

do it, and how much better we may need to do in terms of scent-control.

But remember, the best form of intelligence is not being hosted on a server in a dusty building someplace. Your brain is best equipped for the immediate tasks and decision making required for hunting; if it weren't, humanity probably wouldn't have made it this far! Just remember that sometimes success means more when you've worked harder for it. Hence, my new fascination with archery hunting...



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 jaguay26@gmail.com



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by Jake Guay,
Phillips, ME



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The Maine Woods

Matt LaRoche,
Shirley, ME

Trevor O'Leary was recently promoted to Chief Ranger of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW). Trevor has been an Allagash Ranger for the past 20 years, working on the north end of the waterway during the summer season at Michaud Farm and working on the south end of the waterway during the winter. Dur-

the shores of the St. John and Allagash Rivers his entire life. He can operate a canoe and motor with the best guides on the waterway. Some might say that he can't walk on water but he can go up and down the river when there isn't any!

It takes a well-rounded individual to be an effective and competent Chief Ranger in an area as large

Trevor's forefathers lived and died on the shores of the Allagash River. He is a seventh generation descendent of the settlers of the Moore Farm.

ing those 20-years, Trevor has trained and supervised several Assistant Rangers, become the in-house solar power expert, outboard motor and snowmobile repair technician, and log cabin restoration foreman.

Trevor's forefathers lived and died on the shores of the Allagash River. He is a seventh generation descendent of the settlers of the Moore Farm located about two miles downstream from the Michaud Farm Ranger Station.

Trevor is the consummate woodsman having worked and played along

and diverse as the AWW. Trevor brings a wealth of personal & professional skills and abilities to the job having worked in the logging industry, guiding and restoring log cabins.

I worked with Trevor for the thirteen years that I was Superintendent of the AWW. During that time Trevor was my go-to ranger. If you needed something done, he would figure out a way to do it. For example, there were a few old dilapidated cabins at the old Taylor Camps located downstream from Michaud Farm. I told Trevor that

we should get that mess cleaned up. The next thing I knew, he had borrowed an ATV from the Lands Division of the Bureau of Parks

represents the AWW in a friendly and professional manner. If there is an emergency or some other situation in the waterway

istrators at BPL for hiring Trevor O'Leary as Chief Ranger of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

Congratulations Trev-



Trevor O'Leary operating a canoe with motor upstream on the Allagash River.

(Photo by Steve Day)

and Lands (BPL), built a platform for the ATV and lashed the platform between two 20-foot canoes. The ATV was then loaded on the canoes and motored down to the site where it was used to drag the remnants of the buildings into a hole and burned.

Trevor is a natural leader with an outgoing personality. He always

and Trevor is on scene, the public can rest assured that they have the best working on their behalf.

In an organization as large and cumbersome as the State of Maine it is not always easy to get the right person into the job that they were seemingly made for. In this case, I give highest praise to AWW Superintendent Deroche and admin-

or!

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.mainewoodsguide.com

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Scott

(Cont. from pg 60)

with community scientists in the collection of valid, legally defensible data to help protect Maine lakes. The program has proven to be highly sustainable; there are currently approx. 1,200 certified monitors and over 1,000 more have received training over the

last 50 years. These volunteers provide 90 percent of the data used to protect and manage Maine lakes. Matt encouraged lake associations to organize around protecting their lake. This action resulted in greater awareness and actions to protect lakes throughout Maine. Matt still attends numerous lake association meetings through the summer to give pro bono talks

on lake protection. Matt has always had a progressive and innovative sense of how to prioritize lake ecology research and watershed management. He established important partnerships with universities and colleges, wastewater treatment plant operators, federal and state agencies, and whomever had the expertise he felt was necessary to make

the best decisions for lake water quality. His research early on laid the groundwork for the understanding of lake and watershed management in Maine and beyond. He is a one-of-a-kind biologist and person, and the lakes of Maine are immeasurably better off for his prolific career and enthusiasm for protecting the “inarticulate

organisms.”

Suzanne AuClair is an avid outdoorswoman. She lives near Rockwood and has been writing about the Moosehead Lake Region for the past 29 years. She produced Maine’s reference anthology, “The Origin, Formation, and History of Maine’s Inland Fisheries Division.”

Question

(Cont. from pg 56)

shooting cartridge and delivers more foot pounds of energy and greater velocity

out of my 20-inch barreled AR 10 would be slightly lower, but not significantly so. Bottom line, the choice is yours as to which

registered 501 (c)(3) Non-Profit that provides FREE outdoor adventures to active-duty Military, Veterans, Gold Star Family Members, First Respond-

Hornady Listed Ballistics Comparison							
.243 Win	Velocity	Energy	Drop	5.56 NATO	Velocity	Energy	Drop
Muzzle	3580	2134	-1.5	Muzzle	2910	1410	-2.4
100 Yds	3254	1764	0.9	100 Yds	2676	1192	1.2
200 Yds	2953	1452	0.0	200 Yds	2453	1002	0
300 Yds	2672	1189	-4.9	300 Yds	2242	837	-7
24 Inch Barrel				20 Inch Barrel			

than the 5.56 NATO. Wind drift is less as well. Obviously, the comparison is not completely apples to apples as ballistics were developed using different barrel lengths. The figures for a .243 Winchester shot

AR platform to use and what caliber to choose. The author, Paul Violette, is a retired Army Veteran and the Outreach Coordinator for Pine Grove Programs, a Maine

ers (Firemen, Emergency Medical Technicians, Law Enforcement Officers) and their families. To register with the Program, you can sign-up online at www.pinegroveprograms.org/become-a-member/



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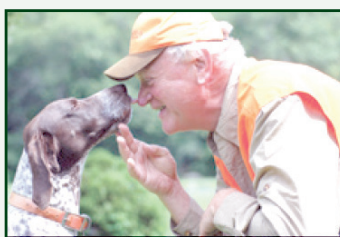




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On Point

by Paul Fuller,
Durham, N.H.

There are many books available which help a puppy/dog owner train his/her dog. Most follow the old method of “do it my way or else”. Going way back, dogs were even shot with bird shot to make them obey. Fortunately,

it is our RESPONSIBILITY to provide them with foundational teachings as a means of communication, rules, and structure. As devoted pack animals, dogs thrive living a balanced life of establishment and order, exercise, safety, security

Jennifer carefully takes you from the first idea of a having a puppy through the first year of the puppy's life. The reader is introduced to Point of Contact and The Quiet Kue. Two important steps in puppy training.

modern thinkers like Jennifer Broome have a more in-depth understanding of our canine friends. In her new book, *Lead Don't Follow*, Jennifer provides what she says is *The Human Guide to the Puppy Mind*.

Here's a quote from the Preface of *Lead Don't Follow*. Since we live with dogs, invite them into our homes and expect them to perform in our daily lives,

and respectful relationships with humans. When a human can equally nourish a dog's MIND, BODY, and SOUL, you genuinely have a stable, happy, and balanced dog!

Jennifer carefully takes you from the first idea of a having a puppy through the first year of the puppy's life. The reader is introduced to Point of Contact and The Quiet

Kue. Two important steps in puppy training. In the beginning of the book, Jennifer suggests you examine why you want a puppy.

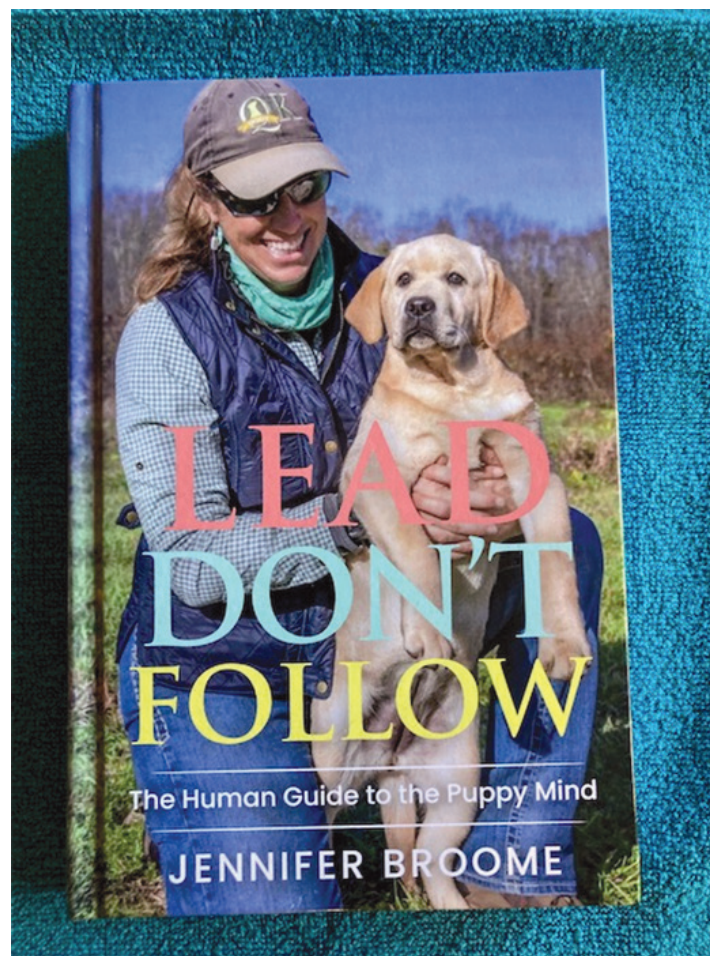
of the family. I like her reference “a member of the family”. In other words, the puppy is not a kennel dog with little human atten-

cally bred well and bred for a purpose. They are intelligent, athletic, and genetically bred for a job to quote Jennifer. That being said, the bird dog puppy will want to run, play, learn and feel fulfilled. In *Lead Don't Follow*, Jennifer provides a step by step discipline for fulfilling a puppy's needs.

The Table of Contents for *Lead Don't Follow* provides a guideline to how we will fulfill the puppy's needs. Here is a taste of what to expect.

Section One is all about setting the stage for success. Subjects addressed are why do you want a puppy? When to get your puppy. What breed and why? Are two puppies better than one? Always meet the puppy first. Is the puppy from a shelter, a foster home, backyard breeder, rehoming situation, or a well established experienced breeder. Jennifer explains how to understand each option. Regarding selecting a breed, Jennifer discusses her German shorthair pointers (GSP). Your author is a GSP owner so I find Jennifer's comment regarding the GSP very interesting. My German shorthaired moms have taught me valuable lessons when interaction with their litters. It may be the German discipline with the cut-and-dry motion because this breed takes nonverbal communication, pack order, and structure to a whole new level.

Section Two is about preparing for the homecoming. A checklist for preparing for the arrival of the new puppy is provided, and a puppy shopping list. Section Three discusses the (Broome cont. pg 69)



Jennifer states: Although everyone's heart is in the right place, it's crucial to establish your motivation for acquiring a life-long partner and new member

tion. The puppy deserves “member of the family treatment”.

Most of the readers of this column are bird dog owners. Bird dogs are typi-

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Casting Streamers

I grew up in a suburb of Boston, Massachusetts. The town of Acton was known for its part in the Revolutionary War. One of its long-time residents was fly tyer Ray Salminen. He lived 2 streets over from my home and I attended school with his daughter.

Ray was known for his fly tying and friendships with many sportsmen and women, the likes included Joseph Bates, Megan Boyd and Leon Leonwood Bean. Like many fly tyers of his era his interest in tying came as a result of attending the Boston Sportsman Show and watching the fly tyers.



Known for his Red Ghost streamer pattern, he also had a few others which he developed and fished. I stumbled across one called the Belknap which was named after the Belknap region of New Hampshire. Ray developed this after catching a small minnow while exploring streams in northern NH.

The pattern is documented in the first addition of Bates book "Streamers, Fly Tying and Fishing." Years later I was sent a copy of a letter Ray wrote a friend in 2005 that updated the pattern and described in great detail the flies history and how it became his favorite pattern for NH.

The photo above is the Bates recipe with the 2005 updates.

Belknap Streamer
Hook: Streamer hook 3-5xl #4-8

Body: 6 layers of flat gold tinsel

Wing: 2 layers of Arctic fox, the first long and the second half as long

Topping: 2 strips of mallard

Eye: Jungle cock eye
Head: Yellow

As I researched through the Belknap fly pattern history it lead me to another pattern I had taught to a class last year. The fly was called the Swift River and was a Wendell Folkins streamer. Folkins is best known for purchasing Carrie Stevens business

and tying flies under her Rangeley Favorite Trout and Salmon Flies name.

The Swift River was a small casting streamer that he had developed. The issue was I had a photo of the fly but no recipe. It is very risky trying to get an accurate list of materials from a photo. However, I reached out to several people and one had the original recipe.

It is a simple fly but right away I could see it working in the Swift River and other northern new England waters.

Swift River Streamer
Hook: Streamer hook 3-5xl #4-8

Tail: Golden pheasant tippet (gap width)

Body: Bright green wool

Rib: Medium silver tinsel

Throat: Red Ewing hen

Wing: Sparse white BT with sparse brown BT over it

Head: Black

After teaching both of these fly patterns in an HMH Bar Flies Series Class I received some feedback. A local guide who takes his sports on the Swift River said, "I guide that river and never new knew this pattern existed".

Known for his Red Ghost streamer pattern, he also had a few others which he developed and fished. I stumbled across one called the Belknap which was named after the Belknap region of New Hampshire.

I was happy to share it with him.

The Swift River has some basic materials in it that make it a useful fly to have in your fly box. Funny these patterns never show up in fly shops but I bet years ago they were readily available.

I've fished both these patterns and have had success with them for trout. The Belknap is a heavier pattern due to the buildup of body wraps and it will get down in the water quicker.

For me the Belknap has been the more effective of the two patterns but as I mentioned before both have produced.

I never met Wendell Folkins but the stories surrounding him are many. His flies were all tied with a unique style and he sold many flies to anglers. Often

you see the Carrie Stevens flies he tied in auctions but I have never seen the Swift River. Maybe someone who reads this will have one.

Ray Salminen taught fly tying classes in Acton for years, sadly I never took one. Years after he passed away, I began teaching free classes in town to the students in the junior high school where I was a teacher. One day Ray's daughter contacted me to remind me I was carrying

Slipstream

**By Scott Biron,
New London, NH**



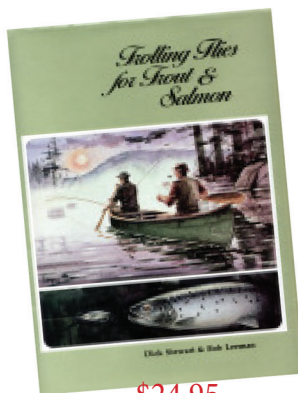
on her father's work of fly tying education. I had forgotten about his classes I guess things were coming full circle.



Scott Biron learned to tie flies and fly fish back in the 1960s in the North County of New Hamp-

shire. He has fished many of the streams north of Route 26 in NH and his favorite the Androscoggin River. He 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 Visas, 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.

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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Living on Borrowed Time

By James Davis

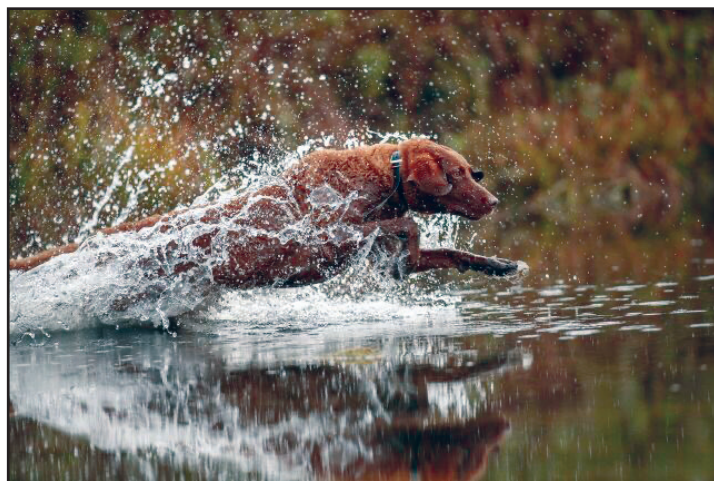
Opening weekend had come and gone. As the season progressed, the heartbreaking scene, would repeat itself every morning. Loading the skiff, both "Pilot" and "Rogue" would come flying out of the kitchen, down the steps, and into the garage. They knew adventure was on the way! A chorus of barks and roos were let out as they jockeyed for position, racing around my truck. However, when the rusty kennel door squeaked open, Pilot, my youngest Chesapeake, would get the nod.

Arriving home, the old girl would be stretched

chance to play the game.... living on borrowed time.

The next days forecast called for unusually warm

the water mirror, illuminating the way. We followed the light, poling deeper into the night.



temperatures. This would be the perfect opportunity to borrow time. Arriving at the marsh, the stars shined

Reaching the point, I dragged the skiff into the cattails. Rogue sat on the bow with a keen eye on

I am not sure how much time had passed but the loud quack startled me awake. A brace of mallards had snuck into the spread and were mingling with the imposters. I rose, the birds jumped straight for the heavens.

out on the couch. Her aged legs and muscles twitching, dreaming of past retrieves. A gentle hand placed on her shoulder, would announce my arrival, as years of booming guns had taken her hearing. She would fly off the couch, a tail wagging, face licking ball of energy! We would head to the local park and I would throw a few marks. A

bright. Orion's belt and the big dipper were visible as we dragged the skiff down the trail. Rogue bounded ahead, stopping every few feet to look back. Her forever watchful eyes on me. At the waters edge, the roosting flock of geese took to the sky. Their honks of discontent filling the air. Pushing off, the October hunters moon bounced off

the set up as I placed each decoy. The day broke, aside from the gaggle of geese we had kicked up and a few distant crows, there was not a bird in the sky. Sitting next to each other, the rising sun warmed our old bones. Combined with the dead skies and motionless spread, we were lulled to sleep.

I am not sure how

much time had passed but the loud quack startled me awake. A brace of mallards had snuck into the spread and were mingling with the imposters. I rose, the birds jumped straight for the heavens. My eyes caught the iridescent green flash of the drake's head as I swung up and above his yellow bill. At the shot, Rogue

Smiling, we worked our way back to shore. A perfect morning borrow time.

The following day, there was no racing around the truck. Food and water was rejected and her legs no longer supported her frame. Cancer had come calling. A rush to the vet revealed it had taken root and eaten her insides. I sat



woke in a panic, noticed the commotion, and was off through the running water. Making her way back, her sides heaved and haunches trembled. Taking her place next to me, cold water dripping from her belly, I reached for the lifeless migrant. "Good girl. Good girl"! I gave her happy pats and ear scratches. She clambered back in the skiff, ears perked and eyes to the sky. The sun moved high into the heavens and the noon church bells rang, signaling the end of the game.

on the floor, her head resting on my thigh. Stroking her soft ears, I told her that I loved her and that everything was going to be ok. Looking into her tired eyes, tears ran. Time had been the fee and I the ferryman. This was her final journey. Crossing the river Styx, I held the duck wing close to her nose. The lethal dose flowed. Her nostrils filled with good memories as she took in her last breaths on the road to Elysium.



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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'...





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(See page 47)



Broome

(Cont. from pg 66)

two to four month period. This is a very important period for learning. Also, the use of a crate is explained. And, the dos and don'ts of a crate. Section Four is all about house training and house breaking. Section Five is about molding your ball of clay. Section Six explains the importance of repetition and consistency in your training program. Section Seven is Learning to Learn. This applies to both the trainer and the trainee. Section Eight is Transitioning to Off-Leash Training. Off leash training may be the most difficult for the beginning trainer. Jennifer explains how to get it done. Jennifer finishes with an excellent Conclusion. She states: My ultimate aim was to foster even better relationships between dogs and their cherished owners. If you've transcended from being a dog lover to a respecter of dogs, I consider my mission accomplished.

Lead Don't Follow is available on Amazon or order directly from www.qkdogs.com/library. If ordered directly, Jennifer will autograph.

On November 27th, 2024, 13-year-old TJ Peters of Buxton completed his Grand Slam with a 128 lb. 8-point buck in Gorham, Maine. On October 17th, 2024, he shot his turkey in Buxton. On opening day (October 14th, 2024) of the Moose Hunt up in Zone 1 he shot a bull moose weighing 690 lbs. with a 44" spread with his father, brother, two grandfathers and friends. On September 21, 2024, with the help of Rough Country Guide Services in Bingham, Maine TJ shot a 150 lb. male bear. TJ is the son of Tom & Shira Peters of Buxton, ME



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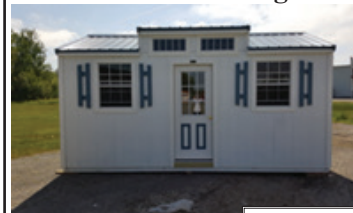


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In these troubled and divisive times for our country, we at the Northwoods Sporting Journal remain proud to be Americans. We still stand for the National Anthem and thank our lucky stars that we live in the land of the free.

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

A digital subscription to the Northwoods Sporting Journal makes a wonderful gift for your military person serving in far away places.

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