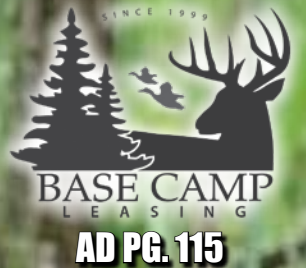


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ON THE COVER:
Raylynn Williams, age 6,
has been mushrooming
since she was just 2 years old
and doing a great job.



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ANDY'S CHRONICLES

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we walked to the edge of the ravine, I hear grandma say "there's one! There is two, three, four, they are everywhere!" That was the moment I knew that I was all in on the mushroom hunting. We picked a bag full and headed back to the house. I had never eaten a mushroom that I recalled up to this point. One she breaded and fried those mushrooms I was in heaven and so my addiction began. I can't remember a time in April and May that I didn't go mushroom hunting.

Over the years I have read and studied information about Morel Mushrooms. I have attended many seminars by mushroom hunters and still to this day I believe I have learned the most from Tom Nauman with Morel Mania. Back in the late 1990's I was producing sport shows across the Illinois area and I received a call from Tom about wanting a booth at our Central Illinois Outdoor Expo that was held in Peoria, IL. I was excited



Picture of an Elm tree that is starting to loose its bark

to meet Tom and see what additional knowledge I could squeeze out of him. He went in depth about the many varieties of mushrooms, where to find them and how to preserve them for future generations. It was at this time that I learned of mesh bags. Now I had been carrying around grocery bags since I was a kid, but this intrigued me. It made sense. Mushrooms are from spores and if you have them in



Picture of a dead elm that has lost all of its bark. This has been dead several years and is easily identified while walking in the woods.



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Nice group of morel mushrooms I found in 2019



Grey Morel Mushrooms



Yellow Morel Mushroom

a bag that doesn't release spores you are not helping the future potential of your honey hole. For the first year or two of using the bag, I didn't really notice a difference. What I did try to do is go from honey hole to honey hole following the same path. After a couple of years I started noticing that I was finding a few here and there along the path I had been walking for years. Now I have never found the mother load that I can say was a direct result of the mesh bag but I can guarantee a few of the mushrooms I have found over the years have been because of using the mesh bag to transport. Besides the bags don't rip and I have two that I have had over 20 years now. If you would like to check out these bags you can order them on

the web at morelmania.com.

If you are ready to hit the woods this spring here are a few pointers. The first thing is you shouldn't even go to the woods until the soil temp is 55 degrees a couple of inches into the soil. I watch the soil temperature map and when we get to 58 – 60 degrees on the surface I know that we should have the 55 degrees a couple of inches down to get the mushrooms a popping.

As you will see in the some of the pictures on this page, I target Elm Trees that have died from Dutch Elm Disease. These should be your main target when entering the woods. You will find some trees that are completely void of bark and others that the bark is falling off. In my

experience I look for the trees that the bark is still falling off. They seem to produce the most mushrooms. I know you can find mushrooms in several locations but if you're a beginner and just go from dead elm to dead elm eventually you will find some morel mushrooms. I will look at every dead elm I can find in the woods. Another thing that is really good for mushrooms is fire. We don't have as many fires around Illinois but out west and many places where massive fires have covered the landscape in black is a great area to visit. I have found plenty of mushrooms in the

woods that weren't directly around dead elms, but I will say most of my patches that are consistent for several years are around dead elms. So, if you just want to take a quick walk in the woods to see if you can find them target dead elms and you should have some success.

Now there are some mushrooms

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Chronicles ... continued



False Morel. Do not pick or eat

you have to avoid. A true morel had a network of ridges with pits composing their caps. Morels are distinct looking mushroom with a cone-shaped cap and sponge-like texture. They typically grow from two to six inches tall and come in a variety of colors. Some colors you will see are gray, black and yellow. There are a few mushrooms that you will find that they call false morels. Many people who are just starting to mushroom hunt worry about picking the wrong ones. Truth is if you live here in the Midwest you will only find a few false morels over many years of hunting. I have been hunting



This shows how a morel mushroom looks on the inside. Notice the hollow body and the cap is attached at the bottom to the stem.

mushrooms a long time and only found a few false morels through my years. They are easy to identify. If the cap doesn't connect to the stem at the base, then it's not a real morel. On the false morels the cap will hang done over the stem and not connect until the top of the mushroom. I always tell people if you're not sure then don't eat it because more than likely you will have plenty of real morels to eat. If there is one you are not sure of just don't eat it. You will see some of the false morels in pictures in this article to help you identify them while in the woods. The season here in Central Illinois usually starts



Two pics of false morels. You will notice the cap doesn't attached to the stem at the base.

around mid-April and goes into mid-May. I usually don't go by dates but by the ground temperature. Once that ground temp is 55 degrees you will start finding the smaller black and gray mushrooms and as the season progresses you will begin to find larger yellow morels. My personal preference is the little grays. They pack so much flavor that I prefer them over the bigger mushrooms. Don't get me wrong, they are all very good but something about the first mess of gray mushrooms are the best. Maybe its because I have been waiting a full year to fry them up.

I am not sure how my mushroom hunting will go after losing my best mushroom spot that I have hunted for over 30 years. This year may be a challenge for me finding new ground. I would like to throw it out there that if there is anyone that loves morels but doesn't have the time or know

how to go find them and you have some property...give me a call as I enjoy finding them little boogers so much that I will gladly give you the first pound we find, and we can split them after that. I just love spending time in the woods. For many years I would find 12 – 15 pounds and we would eat three of four pounds then I would make sure my family and friends have a few to eat as well. It's almost more off the hunt I enjoy as I find myself sharing more of my find than eating them. I know many people charge high dollar for a pound of mushrooms, but I would rather make someone's day and give them a pound then to make it profitable. Every year around the first of May I get several calls asking if I have extra mushrooms. If I do you can guarantee I will share the harvest.

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ELLEN COURTNEY



ANDY'S MUSHROOM DELIGHT

- 1 Pound of Morel Mushrooms
- 4 Eggs beaten
- 2 Sleeves of Saltine Crackers crushed (Ritz Crackers work great as well)
- 2 Cups Vegetable Oil in Large Skillet (I prefer cast iron)

Directions:

1. First give your mushrooms one last rinsing and set aside to drain.
2. Scramble the 4 eggs into a bowl.
3. Crush the crackers in a one-gallon zip lock bag using a rolling pin
4. Heat oil to 375 degrees
5. Take each piece of mushroom and roll in egg
6. Drop mushroom into zip lock bag
7. Shake bag and make sure you are getting them coated. If not coated just press down on the area not covered and you will be all set.
8. Cook mushrooms until they are golden brown on each side and enjoy one of Gods many great creations



SAUTÉED MOREL MUSHROOMS

- 1lb Morel Mushrooms
- 4 tbs butter
- 1 tbs crushed garlic
- Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Cut the morels in half
2. Thoroughly clean morels under cool water.
3. Fill bowl with clean water and put morels in the water
4. Swish the morels in the water to remove any grit, dirt, leaves, etc.



5. Pat the morels dry
6. Heat skillet on medium heat
7. Add the butter
8. Once butter is melted add garlic
9. Add morels (note for best results cook ½ pound at a time with half the butter and garlic)
10. Cook for 5 to 7 Minutes until the morels release their liquid
11. Turn heat up to medium high and fry until the liquid has evaporate. Approximately 10 minutes.
12. Transfer to plate and serve

MOREL MUSHROOMS AND ASPARAGUS

- 1lb fresh morel mushrooms
- 12 ounces white asparagus, trimmed
- 12 ounces green asparagus, trimmed
- 1 tbs. butter
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 1 tbs. olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Bring 3 quarts water to a boil in a large saucepan. Peel bottom 2 inches of white and green asparagus. Cook white asparagus in boiling water 5 minutes or until crisp-tender; remove with a slotted spoon to a colander. Rinse under cold water; drain well. Cook green asparagus in boiling water 2 minutes or until crisp-tender; remove with a slotted spoon to a colander. Rinse under cold water; drain well. Cut asparagus diagonally into 1 1/2-inch pieces.
2. Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat; swirl to coat. Add shallot; sauté 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add morels and salt to taste
3. Sauté 5 minutes or until mushrooms are lightly browned. Add asparagus, oil, and pepper, toss gently to coat. Cook 2 minutes or until asparagus is thoroughly heated.



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questions. I firmly believe this event should be short lived with Donald Trump running things. It will be tough on those who make a living in our service industry and will be interesting to see how it all plays out.

We are here in SW Florida at our winter home and will not come back till the coast is clear. Might as well stay here, you folks are shut down tighter than nuts on a new bridge. Be careful stay home and this time will pass. It is really a great time to spend with family so take advantage of these tough times. My good friend Richard Wagoner has written a very interesting note on these crazy days. He is a man who is an optimistic kind of guy. I think you will enjoy this.

"I noticed something about my cattle. When the stupidest one in the herd spooked the others spooked too and ran after the idiot cow that was scared when it heard a strange noise. It's called a stampede. People are social animals and too often follow the lead of stupid spooked humans. Don't be the stupid human that hoards more than you need or runs from the responsibility of protecting others by self sacrifice."

Hope all of you are healthy and doing well. This Virus has been devastating to virtually every part of this country whether it is the stock market or your local bar and grill. This is a first for all of us unless you lived through the 1918 flu. My opinion on this dilemma might be considered farfetched to some but right on to others. I really think this is over played because there are those who want to destroy Trump. That includes the Chinese, Iranians and a number of other countries like most. If it wasn't for the UK and Australia, we would be hard up for friends in the world.

I am just like you when it comes to what's happening, how long will it last, will I get it and survive, will any of my family or friends get it, and a dozen other



Carvings by Mark Zimmerman in El Jobean, FL

America has freedoms-yes-and that's wonderful, but any healthy society can only exist through education and mutual respect. Be smart. Be kind. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't think so much about the here and now.

Study our past challenges like polio, cholera, tuberculosis, malaria, etc etc. We as a people come together when disaster hits. Your family is best protected by what others do, not what you do. Yes the stock market will drop- yes the news carriers will sensationalize events to sell ads- yes there will be rumors and strange sounds in the night. STAND STRONG AND THINK OF THE FUTURE IN A POSITIVE LIGHT.

I promise you that in the future the stock market will rebound, the virus will subside, and life will go on- maybe better than before

because we have pulled together and fought the good fight. But there will always be the strange sound in the night- but before you panic and grab enough toilet paper to wipe your Ass for the next 5 years -take a deep breath and remember that you don't want to be THAT COW.

DAILY SUGGESTIONS —Don't panic- don't sell stock- don't expose yourself to the virus- wash hands frequently-don't fire your employees- buy gift certificates from local businesses that have to close- encourage your representatives to legislate pharmaceutical independence in our country but don't hate other countries for taking advantage of our greedy need for goods made by slave wage labor- buy American - if you are a millennial help the elderly- if you are a drug or alcohol abuser seek

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help- put your iPhone down and read to your children and explain to them why bad decisions lead to unhappiness- be an example of compassion and self reliance-and if you are lucky enough to survive this tragedy reach out and help those that haven't been so lucky- try to listen to Jimmy Buffet and a little George Carlin never hurt anybody."

Rich Wagoner

We have really enjoyed our stay here in South West Florida this year. We have been doing a lot of fishing and that has been great. We've been working on this home just like back in Illinois and can do it virtually every day if I want to. I worked hard all my life to be able to do this and believe me I do not feel guilty. I highly recommend if you can spend your winters in paradise do it. I was getting anxious to come home and go mushroom hunting but as it seems this outbreak from China may screw that up. As I said earlier I think it was planted to take us down and up to now they have.

As they say when everything that happens is bad, something always happens

that's good. This will hurt us all but in the end this will temper us as Americans. So be diligent stay healthy and it will pass. I think sooner than later.

Now on a lighter note my new baby girl Nellie has been with us for nearly 6 months. She has more drive than any dog I have ever owned. She comes out of a breed of American Water Spaniels in Kentucky. Chuck Servino and Billy Broderick of Endless Limit Water Spaniels in Jefferson Town, Kentucky have created a breed that is so dynamic it's unbelievable. Nellie and I go a couple of times a week to a park to train on the water and land. I have her doing doubles now and she is a super hunter. I can't tell you how happy we are to have this little girl for she is not only a great hunting dog but a loving and fun pet.

My wife Cathy loves her to death. I thought I would miss not having another Lab but she has filled that loss and makes us so happy. I am looking forward to this dove and duck season with Nellie. There was an article a month or so ago naming all of the other retrieving breeds but not one mention of the American Water



Cowboy Anderson and Rich Allram with a post fire.

Spaniel. Boy did they miss the boat. I do know there is not a lot of AWS dogs, but they are one of the hardest charging retrievers in the country. We are excited about our little dog and look forward to hunting with her.

Chuck has a litter coming now but I believe he has all of them spoken for. But if you are interested in getting one give



Chuck or Billy a call at 502-889-1972. Look them up on the internet I think you will find them pretty darn cool.

See all of you hopefully in May or June, if not sooner after all this is America.

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From the Desk of: Rich Pearson, ISRA Executive Director

Due to the corona virus threat, the Secretary of State's office has canceled all events at the Illinois State Capitol including Illinois Gun Owner Lobby Day (IGOLD) which was to be held on April 1, 2020. We have tentatively rescheduled IGOLD for Wednesday, May 13th, 2020. We regret any inconvenience caused by this cancellation. We will keep you updated. The IGOLD raffle drawing will still take place on April 14th.

Starting March 24th, 2020, the General Assembly is in session. Right now, we are tracking 259 gun bills. There are also an untold number of shell bills we are watching that could become reality in a very short period of time, even as little as a couple of hours. We will be very busy the rest of the session.

Tuesday, March 17th was the Illinois Primary Election, along with Florida, Ohio and Arizona. Illinois had 155 Democrat delegates at stake and 67 Republican delegates at stake. The Republican delegates are moot because we

have an incumbent President in the White House. The down ballot races are very important however.

Joe Biden has willingly walked into the clutches of Michael Bloomberg's Everytown anti-gun front group. In fact, not only has he been endorsed by Everytown, he will undoubtedly be on the receiving end of some of the \$60,000,000 they have pledged to support anti-gun candidates. This does not count the other financial support that Michael Bloomberg is willing to throw into the 2020 General Elections.

Adding to the clarity of Biden's anti-gun position is his response to a Michigan auto worker's question about gun control. Biden came unglued on video for all to see. What was cut from most videos was the crowd who erupted and chanted Trump, Trump, Trump!!! Nevertheless, this is a dangerous time for American firearm owners.

Joe Biden will have the Democrat nomination for President on April 28th, 2020, when New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Delaware, Rhode Island and Maryland have their primaries. Looking over the cabinet picks Joe Biden is suggesting if he is elected,



ISRA.org

it would be a nightmare for gun owners. The cabinet would be full of nuts which would make every squirrel in the Country happy, not to mention our enemies overseas.

Friday, March 13th, was the anniversary of the Army's formation of the K-9 Corps in 1942. It is amazing how much man's best friend role has expanded in both military and civilian police and rescue since then. As an admitted dog lover, the relationship between dogs and man has always been interesting to me. The best explanation I ever found came from the Indians around the Grand Canyon and is as follows: One day a great crack began to appear in the earth. All the animals except man jumped to one side of the crack. Man was too frail to jump the crack. The dog, seeing man's plight, jumped back so man would not be alone. Dogs and man have been together ever since. Makes perfect sense.

Leupold & Stevens, Inc has announced that the Mark 5HD Rifle scope has been selected as the day optic for the Army's Precision Sniper Rifle program. The Leupold 5HD is a 5-25X56mm scope. It will be used on the new Barrett multi caliber platform rifle which includes calibers 7X51, 300 Norma Magnum and 338 Norma

Magnum. It sounds like the bad guys better stay further away.

SB1966 has reared its ugly head again and is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee. SB1966, if passed, would require you to pay for your own fingerprints and your own background check to get a FOID card and force everyone to go through an FFL to transfer firearms. It would also raise the fee for a FOID card to \$20 for five years. By the time your FOID card is processed, this would cost you between \$300 and \$400 – a lot of money for a Constitutional Right.

In the haste to get the SB1966 alert out, I made a mistake in the headline on the alert. I apologize for that error. SB1966 will go to the Senate Judiciary Subcommittees but that does not mean it is dead. Please call your Illinois State Senator and tell them not to vote for SB1966. SB1966 started out as a bail bond bill but the language was stripped out and replaced with new language. The language in a bill may change but the title does not. Although this is very misleading it is the way it is done.

There are many bills being passed through Committees with no real language in them. They typically are titled as a technical change. The most common wording in a shell bill is changing a word to the same word. An example would be taking a section in the statutes and change THE to

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THE. These bills can be amended quickly and have to be watched constantly.

The FOID Card and ICCL systems are awash with problems. There are some delays in issuing new FOID cards and ICCLs but the more urgent problem is in the renewal of those same cards. It takes months in some cases, even though there is nothing wrong with the applicants or their applications. If there is a clerical error on any application they seem to simply disappear into the bureaucracy, never to be seen again.

We keep hearing claims that there is not enough money. I do not believe that. We know that \$29,500,000 was swept from various Illinois State Police (ISP) funds. Simple math gives us an idea of how much money was taken in by fees paid by FOID card holders and ICCL holders.

There are approximately 325,000 ICCL holders. The ISP receives \$120 for each ICCL. That

equals \$39,000,000. Moreover, those cards/licenses are now renewing so the ISP is getting that money again. I would guess it is about \$55,000,000 at this point. Add to that the money taken in from FOID cards in the last 10 years, and that is another \$22,000,000. That total is \$77,000,000. That is not chump change. Those monies are coming in every business day so it could even be more than that.

Under the Administration of Governor Quinn, the staffing level for the FOID Division was 39 people. Quinn froze hiring and kept the number of employees to 13, or one third of what was required. Quinn also swept the ISP funds. Quinn was an enemy of the Second Amendment and it was intentional, I believe. Governor Rauner also swept funds. These monies were not tax funds. They are monies that gun owners paid for a service but are not getting.

There are bills being introduced to fix these problems. In my

opinion, it takes more than laws, it takes a customer service attitude that seems to be lacking. To be honest, the system either needs to work for the benefit of law-abiding gun owners or it should be scrapped. There are bills to do away with the FOID card but they are not going anywhere in this General Assembly.

Representative Patrick Windhorst (R-118th Harrisburg) is a sponsor of HB4447. This bill would allow FOID card and ICCL holders to apply for renewals 180 days in advance and would not affect their expiration date, which means no lost time.

Representative Windhorst also has HB4448 and HB4450. HB4448 would require the ISP to automatically renew a person's FOID card if it expires during the term of their ICCL. This would prevent midterm cancellations of their ICCL which is an ongoing problem. HB4450 would require the ISP to either act on an appeal for reinstatement because of a denial, revocation or seizure of a

FOID card within 30 days or issue a denial of the FOID card within 60 days.

Representative Dan Caulkins (R-101st Decatur) is sponsoring HB4591 which is very similar to HB4450. This is the first time in a long time that Representatives and Senators are addressing the FOID card and ICCL problems and trying to fix them.

The NRA Annual Meeting scheduled for April 16-19, 2020 in Nashville has been cancelled. Please remember to cancel your rooms if applicable. Details regarding a rescheduled NRA Members' Meeting will be forthcoming.

I am really excited about the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) bringing the Rifle Marksmanship 101 Training Course to the ISRA Range. The class will be held on September 26th and 27th at the ISRA Range in Bonfield (near Kankakee). This class is taught by the Army Marksmanship Unit. The course

Article continued on page 116

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Here in Peoria, Illinois the local newspapers reported the war news daily, listing casualties from the city and county of Peoria, Illinois. Just over 5,500 of our young men went off to 'Fight the Hun,' resulting in the death of 211 of them. However, on October 6, 1918 the headlines and stories reported a terrifying threat to the folks right here in Peoria, Illinois. They called it 'La Grippe'; the Spanish word for the flu which was at that time reaching epidemic status and apparently heading our way. Articles in the local newspapers spoke of things most of the people here never heard of, like pandemic and the closing down of cities all over the many parts of the World.

Peoria Health Commissioner, Dr. George Parker reported that Spanish influenza cases in Peoria were growing in leaps and bounds and he warned that the epidemic would only get worse. The news terrorized the area and folks who began to retreat inside their homes as much as they could. There were bulletins in our papers about prevention and radio stations that warned people not to gather in large groups. As for a cure the only thing that seemed to be available was for the ill person to stay home, stay warm and to use a substance the doctors recommended be rubbed on the stomach, chest and throat. The patients were then to put a light cover over their heads and bodies and breath in the 'vapors,' That magic elixir was none other than Vicks Vapor Rub.

As expected, the Flu spread, folks quickly understood that there was no cure for this illness and only time would end the symptoms or kill the patient. Dr. Parker began a long series of closures in town from the theaters to public gatherings, even weddings and funerals. The city was 'Locked Down' and life as our relatives knew it came to an abrupt halt.

PEORIA: 1918 SPANISH FLU TERROR

By Norman V. Kelly

To add to our local problem, thirty-seven of our physicians were in the United States Army as well as many of our female nurses. Parker asked that every nurse in the area report to his office so he could get help to the folks that were in dire straights. They responded along with retired nurses and women that had nursing experiences.

'Hospitals' were opened up in vacant buildings and masks were handed out by the hundreds to worried Peorians. Still the epidemic spread almost as fast as the panic it caused.

A CLOSED CITY

More orders were issued banning gatherings of any kind, including church services. All of the city hospitals were overcrowded, and more vacant buildings were used to open up temporary, make shift hospitals to care for the influenza victims. Peorians, as always, from service clubs to single volunteers banned together to help wherever they could. Most businesses were closed, and the city took on a vacant look as the disease spread along with the fear and isolation.

I remind you again that the war was raging and that news alone was depressing enough, but now the population that worried about their loved ones in the Armed Forces, had

to worry about themselves and their families dying from a dangerous threat of their own.

Physician's offices were besieged with new patients even though there



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was little if anything the doctors had in the way of proper medicines. The patients were advised to "stay warm, try to remain isolated, and drink plenty of juices and water."

One set back as far as the epidemic caregivers were concerned was a huge gathering of folks downtown when the false news of the war ending became a wild rumor. Thousands of Peorians broke the ban on assembling and hurried to Downtown Peoria. Parker was certain the epidemic would quickly destroy the city. The number of flu cases did indeed increase but not as badly as the doctor had predicted.

Mayor Woodruff ordered the inhabitants of the city to clean up their area, including the alleys; declaring that filth was a way for the disease to spread. This order did not come from Dr. Parker who doubted that cleaning up around the house would help. But...it did keep the healthy folks outside and away from their sick relatives.

As the city darkened, the factories began to close, the libraries and many of the restaurants and downtown

businesses turned off their lights as well. By now there were 510 confirmed cases of Spanish Influenza in one stage or the other. Parker stated that there were probably many, more unreported cases. Once people learned there was very little that could be done, they simply stayed home. Meantime the bad news was mixed in with the terrible events of WW1, and this small town in the middle of America was in dire straights and it looked like there was no end in sight. No one had any idea how many active cases there were and counting them seemed pointless.

Throughout the ordeal the local authorities, led by Dr. Parker reminded people to stay calm, warm and hydrated. They asked every citizen to wear the gauze masks and simply avoid human contact if possible. The real heroes were the nurses that worked above and beyond the call of duty to help where ever they could, comforting the sick, dealing with the dead, and of course contracting the Flu as well.

Within three additional weeks

Parker... when asked, said he thought the number was well over 1,500 but it was a guess. As October ran out of days some good news came from Parker when he let the folks know that he thought the illness was abating. That was good news to the beleaguered medical workers, but the fight was far from over.

MORE GOOD NEWS

Local newspapers reported that the Germans had agreed to treaty terms and it looked like it "Was over over there." Still there were reports of Americans being killed and our local casualty count went up.

The final count was 400 communities in the State of Illinois had been affected by the epidemic, and reports of deaths were coming in from all over. The big weapon against the flu seemed to be Vicks Vapor Rub, which of course was not a cure by any means. The final count in Peoria, Illinois was 40 dead, many by complications of pneumonia. My mother-in-law was born in 1917 and fell victim to the Flu in October of

1918 but survived.

By the end of October 1918, the major storm appeared to have passed. It was remarkable how a few dedicated doctors and nurses managed to take care of so many sick people. The volunteers, the Red Cross, the churches and the missions worked hundreds of hours to stop the spread here in town. It was a prideful time for Peorians, and officials praised the folks that fought in the front lines to save the citizens of their city.

Our records clearly show that the spirit of this town was lifted far beyond what any miracle drug could have provided. Of course, we could have used one during those scary days of October 1918, that is for sure.

Editors Note: Norm is a True Crime Writer, Peoria Historian and monthly contributor to ADVENTURE SPORTS OUTDOORS, asomagazine.com Norman.kelly@sbcglobal.net

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MORE TECHNIQUES FOR RIVER EYES!

By Walt Matan

Man, I've used every technique for walleye on a river you can think of.

I've tried jigging, rippin' blades, trolling cranks, leadcore trolling, Dubuque rigging, slip bobbers, bottom bouncers, slow death hooks, hook and split shot, slipping, drifting, casting minnow baits, swim baits, Moxi's, Pulse-R's...I could go on.

I fished tournaments where guys were slipping downstream as others trolled upstream and guys running leadcore trolled around us in circles. One thing for sure, whether you fish a river or a lake for walleye...there sure are a lot of different ways to catch them!

While a lot of anglers still think that live bait is the ONLY way to catch walleye, more and more anglers are giving lures a try and catching monsters and limits of walleye in the process. I'm one of those guys. I used to grab minnows, worms and leeches every time I went fishing, but now instead of spending \$40 on live bait, I'll spend under \$10. Of course, I've added hundreds of dollars of tackle boxes filled with plastics and lures on board to pick up the slack!

I like trolling shallow sections of the river in spring and summer to locate fish. Shallow to me means eight foot and under. Flicker shads, Hornets, Dredgers, Shad Raps and Reef Runners are cranks I use. I've got 11-foot trolling rods off the back

and 8 footers off the front. Deep divers with less line out go off the front and shallow runners off the back. You'll want to let out just enough line to get the lures to tick bottom once in a while.

Deeper water requires weight to get the baits down to the strike zone. One to four-ounce pencil lead weights get you down quick where you can use shallow running minnow baits off of a three way a few feet off your main line. This can be a pinpoint presentation, where the current will keep your bait in motion constantly as you point upstream. You'll want to run your three-way three foot from the weight and then a two-foot lead to your lure. You can experiment with line lengths obviously to dial it in!

When the current isn't as strong, I'll try Dubuque rigging. Basically, replacing the bottom weight with a 1/2 ounce to 2-ounce jig tipped with a large plastic tail, like an AuthentX Moxi. I'm using my electric trolling motor at this point to move downstream or pull upstream. Also, a lift and fall jigging motion is employed, so at this point I am hand holding one rod.

Dubuque rigging options are endless. You can use the minnow bait as a trailer, live bait on a hook or lightweight jig or floating jig. You can also use plastic tails on a Dubuque double jig rig. This is my favorite technique where I'll use the Moxi on the heavy jig and a AuthentX Ringworm on a 1/8 ounce trailer B-Fish-N H20 jig. I'll mix the colors

until a hot color is discovered.

A jig and minnow has accounted for billions of walleyes over the years and I still love a good minnow, leech or minnow behind my jig. But more and more I've replaced the live bait with plastic. Plastic has several advantages. The first is color. Walleye see color and when a hot color is



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discovered, it's game on! Next is size. Walleye key on certain sizes of plastic. Sometimes small is better, other times they like a large offering, this is related to the size of bait they are feeding upon. Finally, there is vibration and sound. A walleyes lateral lines allow the walleye to "hear" the lure as it's moving underwater.

In the spring walleye move shallow and get right up to shore. Pitching jigs shallow is a deadly technique this time of year. A jig and minnow is one way, but you'll need a lot of minnows with bite offs, trees and debris knocking them off. I prefer plastic at this time. Walleye are aggressive and I can pitch into heavy cover without fear or losing a minnow.

Jig weight makes all the difference between snagging and catching. I'll use B-Fish-N H20 jigs with an AuthentX Pulse-R or Moxi slid right up the jig so the wire keeper holds the plastic tight to the head of the jig. I can pitch this combo anywhere with the key being to cast to the side of the boat and

allow it to tumble slightly off bottom into the strike zone. I'll start with a 3/16th ounce jig and then go lighter or heavier, depending on the current.

One final technique is jig dragging. I'll use a B-Fish-N weedless Draggin' Jig with a Moxi and pitch it out behind the boat. These jigs are thin and designed so as not to snag rocks, weeds and branches, which is where walleye will hide. You'll want to be far enough behind the boat to barely tick bottom. Using this technique, you can pull a 1/8th Draggin' Jig that walleye feel no resistance when they suck it in. If you are interested in this hot technique, there is a DVD available specifically about jig dragging on the B-Fish-N Tackle website.

To find out more about B-Fish-N Tackle's line of AuthentX Ringworms, Moxi's, Pulse-R's, and jigs go to www.bfishntackle.com or you can link to it via www.customjigs.com Also, be sure to like Custom Jigs & Spins, B-fish-N Tackle and join the group Walleye College on Facebook for some up to the minute info.



A plump female fell to the Moxi

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RULING THE ROOST

By Mike Roux • www.MikeRoux.com

The April sun just dipped below the western horizon in central-Illinois.

The slight breeze had died completely, and the spring peepers were singing.

I made a single barred owl hoot with my voice and not one, but two gobblers responded from their roosts. These gobblers allowed me to know without doubt exactly where these toms were for our round the next morning.

There are lots of opinions and just as many methods on roosting spring gobblers. Let's take a couple of minutes to look deeper into this very interesting topic.

Before we get into the "hows" of locating toms on the roost, let's talk about the "whys" of this process. If you hunt the same property every

year and have for many seasons, then roosting birds the night before may not be a top priority. These are creatures of habit.

You no doubt have your favorite spot already picked out. You know where the established strut zones are located, and you have previously determined the best routes to get to those spots.

All that having ben said, how depressing would it be to bump a tom off his roost on opening day heading to your best spot? Roosting is easy and quick. Why take the chance?

The other great "why" to roost the evening before is if you are on a property for the first time. These days many of us travel from place to place and even state to state chasing spring toms. Getting to a new spot the evening prior to opening morning to locate the birds can make all the difference.



Finding roosted gobblers can both exciting and productive.
(Photo by Mike Roux)

Now we will discuss the best methods to use as you put your gobblers to bed at night. My preference is the call of the barred owl. Both at dusk and at dawn, this call will entice a shock gobbler. Often a single, drawn out note will generate the desired response.

Other experienced turkey hunters prefer louder, more alarming calls with which to scare a tom to gobbler. Crow

calls and coyote calls are often used. Remember, you are not trying to call these birds in. All you need to know is where they are spending the night, so you do not bugger-up your hunt the next morning before it ever begins.

My good buddy and turkey hunting Professor Emeritus Ray Eye swears by using turkey calls to find roosted toms. His methods are proven, and he is about the best "rooster" I

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2012 Ford F150 Lariat, Supercrew, 4x4.....	\$19,660
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know. He yelps and cuts very loud, gets the information he requires, and starts the next morning with the odds stacked in his favor.

Obviously, there are circumstances that prevent you from roosting the night before. Most often it is simply a matter of not having the time. Many of us work the day before we start hunting and either get to turkey camp too late to roost or drive in that morning. Always remember that the exact same methods used to roost a bird at sunset can be used to coax a shock gobbler just before sunrise.

And, as with everything else turkey related, roosting does not always work. I have stepped out of my truck at dusk and hooted, howled, cawed, cut and yelped to absolutely no response. Then I get there the next morning and with a single hoot rattle 3 or 4 toms. But that, my friends, is turkey hunting. Have fun this spring and be safe.

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The author uses roosting techniques at dusk in order to get close to toms at sunrise. (Photo by John Caldwell)



Bill Langan with a late December Irish Acres Honker. Thanks to Mike O’Bryan with Remax Traders Unlimited Commercial for sending us this great photo. Call Mike for all of your commercial needs at 309-635-8901.



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THE GUN THAT STARTED IT ALL

A few years ago, the first *Shoot 'N' Plink™* column started in 3 different magazines, one of which was starting in a March issue of *Adventure Sports Outdoors*, and soon afterwards became a video series. The gun that spawned the idea of the column was a Henry Frontier, but ironically, until recently, I have never written or filmed a review about this lever action rifle.

As with all Henry firearms the Octagon Frontier, model H001T, TM and TV, has a beautiful walnut

stock. In fact, the one that I have has stripes. Because of this I've named the rifle "Tiger."

There are three models available—22 S/L/LR, 22 Magnum and 17 HMR. The model that is being reviewed is the H001T - 22 S/L/LR, which has a capacity of 16 LR and 21 S.

The blued octagon barrel's length is 20 inches, and the overall length of the rifle is 38.5 inches. It weighs 6.50 pounds.

For mounting a rimfire scope or red dot the receiver has a 3/8-inch

groove. The hammer has a quarter cock as a safety, and if a scope is mounted it would be advisable to get a hammer extension, which is easy to mount, and sticks out to the side to make it easy to use the hammer with your thumb.

My favorite feature is the fully adjustable sights that have a brass bead for the front sight, and a buckhorn with a white diamond insert for the rear. To me this is the next best thing to a Skinner Peep Sight. The white diamond can be turned around for those who would prefer the old black buckhorn.

I've run several different brands of ammo and velocities through this gun and it has all performed very well. Even the Aguila Colibri with a 500 fps, for ultra quiet shooting, has worked well. My favorites have been Federal Hunter Match, Remington Thunderbolt, CCI Mini-



The Henry Octagon Frontier and the target used with open sights shooting from 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards with open iron sights in a free-standing position.



Using scope at 25 and 50 yards helped nail the middle part of this 6-inch Shoot-N-See target.

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A Tasco 3-7x20 rimfire scope mounted to the receiver's 3/8-inch dovetail grooves.



Some of the targets used were the Do-All resealing Knock Out Discs and swinging Bowling Pin.



This was when the first shots were fired with the Henry Frontier to start *Shoot 'N' Plink™*.

Mag and Standard, Aguila Standard and Winchester M22. The M22 was the main ammo used in the video.

Most of my test shooting of the gun, as it normally is, was done free standing. Using the open iron sights, I've fired at distances of 10, 15, 25 and 50 yards. I did both target shooting and plinking on paper targets and Do-All Outdoors resealing swinging Bowling Pin and Knock Discs, as well as a Blast Back resetting steel target system.

I also mounted a Tasco 3-7x20 rimfire scope to use for some 25- and 50-yards shooting, but I recommend

a Barska 3-9x40 scope. This is the same scope that I use on the Henry Frontier Long Barrel, for which I found the scope on sale for around \$27. There is no need to "break the bank" purchasing a scope for a rimfire unless there is a definite reason, or you have an unlimited budget. The Barska has worked extremely well, and is very well built, especially for the cheaper price.

Speaking of prices, the Frontier retails for \$473, but as with all retail prices it can be found much lower. I've seen them as low as \$250 during a sale, but of course prices have gone

up some, so if you find it for \$300 or a little below you are getting a good deal on a great gun.

There is now a *Shoot 'N' Plink™* video review about the Frontier, where I'm shooting at the yardages previously mentioned, while free standing with open iron sights. It is available for viewing on the *Dan's Fish 'N' Tales/Shoot 'N' Plink* You Tube channel at www.youtube.com/dansfishntales.

If you are looking for a great

shooting, basic lever action, western style octagon barrel rifle, with the added white diamond/brass bead sights as found on a Golden Boy, then take a good look at the Henry Octagon Frontier. I'm certainly glad that I did, as it was truly the gun that started *Shoot 'N' Plink™*. Thank you, Henry Repeating Arms, for helping kick off *Shoot 'N' Plink™*.

Until next time, shoot safe and have a great day of plinking.

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GOOD-BYE MY DEAR HUNTING BROTHER JOHN

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by: *Ted Nugent*



I want you to know my younger brother John. He died this week at the age of 66, and the Nugent family is in a whirlwind of heartbreak. I'm not sure I can even get through this tribute to him.

If ever there was a glowing, positive force of nature, it was Johnny. The guy could light up a room and magnify a joyful spirit like no one I have ever known.

I don't care what the mood may have been prior to John's arrival, but immediately everybody had a smile on their face, laughter was in the air and everything turned positive.

His work ethic alone was a constant reminder of just how efficient and productive a human being can be, and as a brother, husband, father, uncle and full-on great American, he was a shining light for 66 years.

We are being flooded with support and good wishes from around the world from everyone who ever had even the slightest encounter with John. Everybody loved Johnny Nugent, and we struggle to make sense of his early departure and a day without him.

The guy would get up every day of the year at 4am and make his way to his foreman duties at the Pepper Construction sites in downtown Chicago. He was notorious for not only getting the job done, but getting it done ahead of schedule and under budget.

In Chicago mind you! Think of the entrenched corruption and obstacles he would face in that gangster run environment.

Which reminds me of the time the mafia tried to bootleg my concert tee shirts in New York City during one of my sold out Madison Square Gardens concerts back in the 1970s.

John and I were told about gangs of punks with sacks of merchandise out on the streets ripping me off, so we did what a couple of Detroit born and raised brothers would do and took off to confront the thieves.

Well, suffice it to say the NYC thugs had never run into the Detroit Nugent brothers, and when the dust settled, we had possession of all the merchandise which featured my name, image and likeness, and the mob was not real happy.

In fact, there was a classic moment on a network TV report how the head honcho of the mob was actually impressed we had the gall to do what we did and declined to retaliate.

There are a million stories in the naked city, and Johnny and I were there for most of them.

My memory bank overflows with wonderful recollections of family hunting trips in Michigan and Alaska with John, and the guy was as natural a marksman, archer and predator as ever there was.

It didn't matter whether he grabbed our dad's old longbow, 1911 .45 pistol, or our sporterized '03 Springfield 30-06 with iron sights, Johnny was a natural.

I so wish he had never started smoking, in fact I wish nobody ever started smoking or poisoning their sacred temple with such irresponsible substance abuse, but alas, mankind seems to have this inherent weakness

and we all pay in heartbreak and tragedy.

His lung cancer was basically beat, but like mom and dad and so many others, the ongoing and abusive medical procedures slowly but surely took their toll.

Us brothers and sister keep in pretty good touch throughout the year, and I had just spoke with John last week when we excitedly planned shooting, hunting, fishing outdoor fun together soon. He sounded energetic and upbeat, but it just wasn't in the cards.

I will share with you here a brilliant statement by a family friend that seems to sum up the emotional trauma we all experience when losing a loved one. It is the best I have ever read.

Alright, here goes. I'm old. What

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that means is that I've survived (so far) and a lot of people I've known and loved did not. I've lost friends, best friends, acquaintances, co-workers, grandparents, mom, relatives, teachers, mentors, students, neighbors, and a host of other folks. I have no children, and I can't imagine the pain it must be to lose a child. But here's my two cents.

I wish I could say you get used to people dying. I never did. I don't want to. It tears a hole through me whenever somebody I love dies, no matter the circumstances. But I don't want it to be "not matter." I don't want it to be something that just passes. My scars are a testament to the love and the relationship that I had for and with that person. And if the scar is deep, so was the love. So be it. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are a testament that I can love deeply and live deeply and be cut, or even gouged, and that I can heal and continue to live and continue to love. And the scar tissue is stronger than the original flesh ever was. Scars are a testament to life. Scars are only ugly to people who can't see.

As for grief, you'll find it comes

in waves. When the ship is first wrecked, you're drowning, with wreckage all around you. Everything floating around you reminds you of the beauty and the magnificence of the ship that was, and is no more. And all you can do is float. You find some piece of the wreckage and you hang on for a while. Maybe it's some physical thing. Maybe it's a happy memory or a photograph. Maybe it's a person who is also floating. For a while, all you can do is float. Stay alive.

In the beginning, the waves are 100 feet tall and crash over you without mercy. They come 10 seconds apart and don't even give you time to catch your breath. All you can do is hang on and float. After a while, maybe weeks, maybe months, you'll find the waves are still 100 feet tall, but they come further apart. When they come, they still crash all over you and wipe you out. But in between, you can breathe, you can function. You never know what's going to trigger the grief. It might be a song, a picture, a street intersection, the smell of a cup of coffee. It can be just about anything... and the wave comes crashing. But in

between waves, there is life.

Somewhere down the line, and it's different for everybody, you find that the waves are only 80 feet tall. Or 50 feet tall. And while they still come, they come further apart. You can see them coming. An anniversary, a birthday, or Christmas, or landing at O'Hare. You can see it coming, for the most part, and prepare yourself. And when it washes over you, you know that somehow you will, again, come out the other side. Soaking wet, sputtering, still hanging on to some tiny piece of the wreckage, but you'll come out.

Take it from an old guy. The waves never stop coming, and somehow you don't really want them to. But you learn that you'll survive them. And other waves will come. And you'll survive them too. If you're lucky, you'll have lots of scars from lots of loves. And lots of shipwrecks."

And this from another friend.

As much of a sucker gut punch death is, none of us have been promised a set number of days, weeks, months and years. This is the reason all of us should live passionately,

love unconditionally, and laugh hysterically with the days we have. The bottom line is that your brother made a difference in his loved ones' lives, moved the ball forward, and left our wonderful country in better shape when he left it than when he arrived 66 years ago. That's the real American Dream. For that, his loved ones should smile knowing that he made a difference and did his job as a husband, dad, brother, and uncle. His life should be celebrated, respected, admired, and emulated.

Good-Bye my brother. Your spirit, goodness and energy will live in all of us forever. I know you will be at my side everyday. I so miss you dammit. I so love you.

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SHADOWS

ON THE WATER AND IN THE WOODS

MANY SPECIES DECORATE OUR LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE

by Dave Shadow • davidsha@consolidated.net

Our east-central Illinois countryside has become enhanced with the beauty of many and varied species in the past few weeks and maybe even more-so this past week. Most of the new décor comes from winged critters that are just passing thru on their way to more permanent resting spots. It seems like many of them don't know whether they are traveling north or south, however. That's probably due to their circling tendencies as they search for nutrition to fuel their travels.

We've seen many, many waterfowl this past week as well as other winged and four-footed creatures. The pelicans once again were on the local lake in great numbers and the seagulls turned some fields white with their numbers. These along with the snow geese, duck varieties and Canada geese made for some fine viewing of varied waterfowl. Couple that with the arrival of the robins and the majestic eagles and you

just can't beat the views in our local country-sides.

On top of the above we of course still have our ever-present turkey buzzards. They are the "sanitary engineers" of our roadsides etc.. All of these critters have their place and function in God's great plan. Sometimes it's a bit hard to see just what that function may be, but it's there.

Another one of the "cool" sightings in the recent past has been the sightings of some flocks of wild turkeys. I got a chance to sit and watch two flocks recently and am always in awe of their grace and survival faculties. They look so clumsy as they walk but they can move like the wind when startled and their eyesight is so acute that predators seldom sneak up on them. It would sure be nice to see these flocks flourish in the future. I suspect the reduction in the coyote population has aided in the survival of the turkeys.

The whitetail deer population

seems to have recovered somewhat from the drastic reduction of a few years ago. This reduction was the result of a couple of diseases that flourished due to some environmental conditions. The arid conditions contributed to much of that problem. Some normal reproduction and selective hunting helps the population to recover.

Rosalie and I take a short drive somewhat regularly and we counted seventy-two deer in about an hour one recent evening. I'm sure larger numbers were available in some locales. The whitetails lifestyle habits of "herding up" at this time of year makes it easier to get an idea of the population in each area.

Survival and/or perpetuation of all of the above species along with our fisheries is directly related to three things: Food, water, and suitable habitat. We are fortunate locally to have good water sources consequently we are seeing more waterfowl that we did in the past. Unfortunately, the water quality is sometimes affected by chemical run-off from adjacent fields and this affects the water-borne vegetation that

is necessary for good habitat for the fisheries. Sometimes this results in the eradication of vegetation and in other instances the excess fertilizers create a condition that is too rich and results in undesirable algae's and vegetations. Farmers need to get all the production out of the land that is possible and the reduction in habitat is one of the ill-effects of those practices. It's always a compromise between production and the environment.

All in all, we're fortunate to live in this time and locale. Be sure to get out and enjoy all of the opportunities.

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SHADOWS

ON THE WATER AND IN THE WOODS

GO FISHING TO AVOID THE "TOILET PAPER" CRISIS

by Dave Shadow • davidsha@consolidated.net

There are a lot of things that I don't understand these days. Back many years ago there was a time when I thought I "had a handle" or at least a personal philosophy on world affairs and just what made our world tick. That all flew out the window with the major crisis concerning the worldwide shortage of toilet paper. Age has had an effect on my lack of understanding of this generation, but come on folks just how important is toilet paper in the scope of our total lives? I sorta understood the concern about the virus but that seems to have become lost with the great shortage of toilet paper of 2020! Then again, maybe it

is age related! I still vividly remember the old outhouse in the back yard that held last years Sears Roebuck catalog. We didn't know toilet paper also came in rolls.

I think all this panic at the various stores is a product of the social media and the television networks desire to "one-up" each other with each entry or broadcast. Each time there's an entry on the social media or a broadcast on the TV, another station or person has to come with a bigger problem or crisis. Add the political aspect to this and it just becomes an exponential problem. Each already elected person becomes an instant target for not having a

solution for the situation and those not now in office promise if it were them they would have done more. They would have already had the crisis under control and the stores restocked with personally autographed toilet paper. "ELECT JOHN DOE" It's also strange how this became a big problem right before election time, giving the politicians another soapbox and mud to sling!

I have the solution for us folks here in east central Illinois. The ice is gone and the fish are biting, "sorta". Kinda slow for me, but some of the guys are catching some nice walleye. Due to the restaurant shutdown we can't go to the coffee shops and restaurants to solve all the world's problems. But we can go fishing and avoid some additional crisis runs on the grocery stores. Man doesn't live by bread alone, but bread and fish will work! Nobody seems to use the old phone books any more so you might consider carrying one of those with you for emergency purposes. Avoid the pages with red colored ink; it can come off on moist surfaces. Also, how

about the bottled water shortage? It's handy to have a bottle with you when fishing but bear in mind that water still runs out of the faucets, not just the grocery stores. Refill the bottles and reduce litter.

Enough of this rambling, I've got to wax my boat if I can get Rosalie to help. Otherwise, I'll just go fishing again. It's about time to buy or renew your fishing license. March 31st is the last day for the old ones. Be sure to do your spring maintenance on your boat, engine, trailer and tackle before getting too involved with the rush to the lake. A bit of maintenance makes the fishing trip much more enjoyable.

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ON THE SURFACE IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

*Multi Species Top Water Fishing at the
Famed Waters of Kinkaid Lake*

By: Colby Simms with Ray Simms & Chris Shannon

Photos by: the Colby Simms Outdoors Team

www.ColbySimmsOutdoors.com

In the wide world of outdoor sports, is there anything better than topwater fishing? Getting aggressive predators to come up to the surface to smash our helpless looking offering is an ultimate experience. It's a thrilling event that leaves anglers begging for more. A variety of species can be caught on top during the spring, summer and fall. But how many times do you imagine catching many different species, at the same time on the same surface baits? In the heart of the Shawnee National Forest, Southern Illinois' beautiful Kinkaid Lake has one of the most consistent top water bites anywhere. What's more, is that it's not just for one species, but several.

Many Kinkaid species can be targeted together. Some are obvious, like largemouth and smallmouth bass, or bluegills and sunfish. But, it's common for us and our other staff guides to target muskies and largemouth together, or white bass and bluegills at the same time. At times, many species can be targeted together. The only species we don't target together of course would be muskies with bluegills and sunfish. So, the only decision is whether to fish for muskies or pan fish, along with the lake's black and temperate bass species.

We all know largemouth bass attack giant lures, so it's common to catch big largemouth, and sometimes even small ones, on average and even large sized muskie lures, and topwaters are no different. What you hear about less often, is how smallmouth attack muskie lures, but they do just the same. While less frequently, white bass sometime hit giant baits. Still, choosing small muskie lures instead of big ones significantly up the odds of connecting with all bass species.

Muskies eat small offerings too, so plenty of skis are caught on standard bass lures. But, choosing large bass lures tends to select a little better for muskies. So, it becomes easy to see just how we target muskies, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and white bass together. Choosing medium to large bass lures and small muskie lures becomes the ticket to success. This works with many lure styles, and topwaters are no different.



***Large & Mid-Sized Gamefish
On Top**

**Bluegills and sunfish readily attack small
lures on the surface.**



Kinkaid Lake guide & tournament champion Ray Simms landed this big Southern Illinois topwater bass.



The author with a pair of white bass taken on the surface.



Internationally renowned fishing pro & media personality Colby Simms shows off a big Kinkaid muskie.

*Small & Mid-Sized Gamefish on Top

All temperate and black bass can be caught on tiny offerings intended for pan fish. These lures also tempt sunnies well, particularly bluegills and greenies. Bluegills are often very aggressive, attacking even standard bass offerings. Green sunfish are also an aggressive species, normally very competitive feeders, just like bluegills. While gills grow larger, greenies have giant mouths compared to their bodies, and often attack larger lures. Choosing large bluegill and pan fish lures, as well as small bass lures, allows angler to easily target green sunfish, bluegills, white

bass, smallmouth bass and largemouth bass, all at the same time.

*Lure Choices

A wide variety of lures work well on Kinkaid given location, cover, temperature and time of year. Most come in sizes to target everything from bluegills, to bass to muskies. Buzzbaits, poppers, propbaits, flies, frogs and

walking plugs are most common. Spinnerbaits, minnow plugs, wakebaits and shallow cranks can be fished on the surface with great success too.

*Get Out There

Kinkaid's topwater fishing can be incredible. We still have some dates open for guided charter trips during the peak periods, but they are

going fast, as this is a popular water to hit in search of big fish that strike on top. In the rolling hills and the tall mountains of the lower portion of the Prairie State, we find a natural and unspoiled place of beauty called Kinkaid Lake. Doing battle on top with its predator sport fish is a pursuit, a sport, a tradition as old as time, so, get out there...

COLBY SIMMS is a multiple muskie, bass and billfish tournament champ and multiple circuit championship title holder, record holding guide, public speaker, award winning international writer and network TV & radio personality, and Owner of Colby Simms Outdoors LLC, offering custom lures & tackle, professional promotions, media services, seminars, and guided trips & fishing vacations in the U.S., Canada, Mexico & Costa Rica at: www.ColbySimmsOutdoors.com or 618-521-0526 / 573-358-5948 or colbysimmsoutdoors@hotmail.com and follow them at: www.facebook.com/ColbySimmsSportFishingPro & www.facebook.com/ColbySimmsOutdoors.

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**By Bob Park, Owner/Maker
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With the Spring Bass fishing season coming into full bore, we are now at the time of the year when guys like me who love fishing for Big Bass are literally chompin' at the bit to get on their favorite Bass waters and get busy. Keeping in mind that the Bass are still in their pre-spawn staging mode, some good location choices and a bit of patience will afford you the shot at taking these early season Bass with a surprising amount of consistency. Also, this time of year

poses the problem of just what lure type and presentation to use to catch these early season Bass. To me, this choice is not that difficult... I'm talking Spinnerbaits!

If I was nailed down to taking only one type of lure to fish for bass on any lake or river at this time of year, it would most certainly be a spinnerbait. The great thing about spinnerbaits is that it gives fishermen a very high hook set percentage and for some unknown reason, spinnerbaits attract more and bigger bass into striking that offering than any other bait or lure out there. Additionally, you just have to take into account that there is no other lure, except maybe a jig, that is as versatile for the Angler than a spinnerbait.

The best thing about this lure is that it can be used in many different conditions and situations to attract most all different Bass, like Largemouth, Smallmouth and even Spotted Bass. You can use it in darn near any weather

conditions and have success, as well as there is no place that a spinnerbait will not catch Bass if they are in that body of water. At those times when I choose a spinnerbait over any other lure selection, several factors always come into play. Water conditions like depth and clarity as well as weather conditions like wind are the most important. I prefer the lake to have a slightly high water level, with clarity in the lightly stained to mildly muddy. These are the general types of conditions found early in the year with run-off occurring after spring rains. Areas like flooded brush or willows and also flooded grass beds are loaded with hungry Bass this time of year. Key in on areas like these in the 1 foot deep out to 10 foot depth range, and I guarantee you will find some Bass ready to take the spinnerbait you put in front of them.

Water clarity is probably the most important condition I have experienced over the years, even more so than

structure or weather. Reason for this is that a spinnerbait is a reaction bait, that elicits a strike in reaction to a movement or disturbance in a Bass' immediate area. You don't want to be throwing them in Gin Clear water where the bass gets a real good look at the lure, there for the preference of off colored water where the bass reacts to rather than stalks the lure. Your success rate drops off dramatically with clear water, and in calm, smooth as glass water too. I prefer, and have better success when there is a bit of wind putting a slight to moderate "chop" on the water surface. Bait fish also tend to be more active and moving at these times and that is what you are imitating with your spinnerbait. The choices of structure don't matter nearly as much as the spinnerbait is naturally weedless and snag proof and can be fished around almost any structure from grass to wood to rocks and docks, as well as open water!

When using spinnerbaits, you

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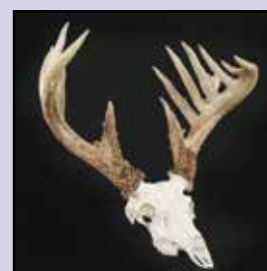
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will need to match your rod, reel and line choice to the type of lure you are using with these lures. My best set-up for spinnerbait fishing is a quality 7'2" rod with a good stiff handle and butt section, moderate action and an extra fast tip. Rods like this in the medium to medium heavy action range will have the backbone to "load up" when you set the hook. And the extra fast tip comes into play by giving you the ability to make longer casts and then acting as a "shock absorber" when the Bass strikes your lure, and during the ensuing fight back to the boat. Add a quality Baitcasting reel spooled with a minimum of 10-12Lb test up to 20Lb test monofilament line, and you have yourself a dandy spinnerbait combo. The heavier choices of line will be dictated by the structure or cover you are fishing, and lighter thinner diameter line will be used in open water. In real thick cover you want the strength that the 20Lb test affords you.

Now, for the choice of spinnerbait to use. This option is totally up to you and what you are confident in using. As we all know the bait shops have a wide variety of spinnerbaits to choose from and even my own company, Raptor Premium Spinnerbaits has over 60 different patterns to choose from depending on conditions. They come

in all shapes and weights and your best choice is to start in the 3/8 Oz size range and go from there. Increasing or decreasing the weight of the lure depends on the particular conditions you encounter. Colors of skirts are fairly simple too. The dirtier and more heavily stained or muddy the water, the brighter the skirt, and conversely, the cleaner or clearer less stained the water is, go to a more natural color choice. "Matching the Hatch" comes more into play in cleaner water. And as far as blades go, throwing a single blade, or a tandem blade model is up to you. Single blade models tend to have larger Colorado blades and they put out more "Thump" and vibration, and the tandem blades tend to have double Willow, or a Willow and either Colorado or Indiana in combinations. These will put out less vibration, but give you more "Flash". Hank Parker's "Go-to" spinnerbait for years featured a lead Indiana blade, with a Willow on the back, and was called the "Classic" by the Mann's Bait Company. Roland Martin was known for his "Big Bass" spinnerbait and its large double Willow blade set-up made by the Blue Fox Lure Company. Myself, I prefer double Willows in the early season unless the water is very heavily stained or muddy and then I go to a Willow/Colorado

or a single Colorado for that extra "Thump". The combinations of these blades are not only limited to the three types/shapes mentioned here, as there are several more types and shapes available and only limited by your own imagination! Feel free to try your own personal combinations of blades, weights and colors, to come up with your own special "GoTo" lure.

The next time you are out on the water chasing some of those early season Bass, give your spinnerbait selection a thorough workout and throw a good many of them until you find the combination of size, color and blades that the bass are keying on. Don't worry, when you hit the right combination, the Bass will definitely let you know by knocking the heck out of the lure and the catch rate will really go up! And, should you feel you need some new spinnerbaits, give Raptor Premium Spinnerbaits and our wide variety of choices look on our Facebook page, and let us make some fish catchers for you this season.

Until next month, good luck and good fishing and hope to see you on the water somewhere!



Camden Johnson
enjoying a fishing trip
with his father Nate.

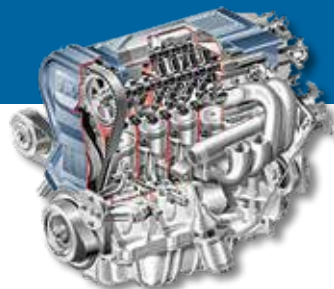


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SEAARK BOATS WINS BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

*Chamber of Commerce
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centered efforts*



MONTICELLO, AR – Last night, SeaArk Boats was awarded the 2020 Business of the Year by the Monticello Chamber of Commerce at the University of Arkansas Monticello's (UAM) campus.

The Monticello Chamber of Commerce awards this honor to a business that goes above and beyond in their communities. Community members nominated several businesses and the chamber board selected SeaArk as the 2020 winner.

SeaArk received this top honor due to its mission of "Making life better". SeaArk supports the local animal shelter, schools, UAM, the Baptist Home and Presbyterian Home. Over the past year SeaArk provided aid in building cages at Second Chance for Dogs, supported the UAM football program with an aluminum template to paint the field and sponsored events for the Presbyterian and Baptist Homes that allowed employees to interact and have fun with the local children.

Global outreach is also very important to SeaArk and its parent company Correct Craft. Each year SeaArk along with its sister companies from Correct Craft take its employees on mission trips to places like Haiti, Jamaica, California, and this upcoming year, to Monticello. SeaArk and the Correct Craft family will be helping the Presbyterian Home with several large projects to improve their facility and make life better for the kids.

Steve Henderson President

of SeaArk Boats stated, "We are humbled to receive this honor from the Chamber of Commerce. This award is truly a testament to our amazing team and their positive energy that creates a culture we all love being a part of. Our team truly enjoys helping anyone we can whether it's a customer, vendors, someone in our community or even a person in need and we look forward to bringing our sister companies here to Monticello to make more lives better."

About SeaArk Boats: With over 59 years of experience in boat building, SeaArk Boats (owned by Correct Craft) is the industry's premier aluminum fishing boat known for outstanding product quality and excellent customer service. Mostly known for heavy-duty aluminum boats built specifically for cat-fishing, SeaArk also builds bass-and crappie-fishing boats, jon boats, duck boats, and bay boats, offering a wide variety of tunnel and jet tunnel hulls. For more information visit www.seaarkboats.com.

About Correct Craft: Celebrating 95 years of excellence in the marine industry, Correct Craft is a Florida-based company with global operations. Focused on "Making Life Better," the Correct Craft family includes Nautique, Centurion, Supreme, Bass Cat, Yar-Craft, SeaArk, Parker, and Bryant boat companies, Pleasurecraft Marine Engine Group, Watershed Innovation and Aktion Parks. For more information please visit www.correctcraft.com.



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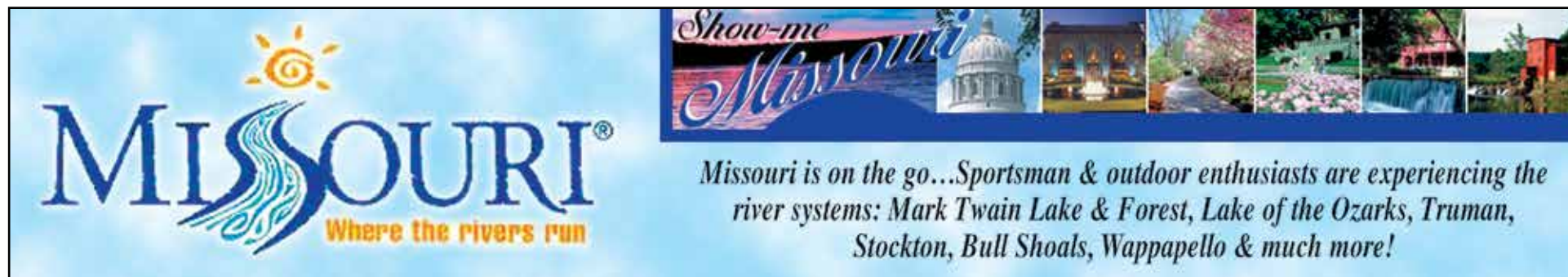
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OSAGE COUNTY ANGLER CONTINUES RECORD-BREAKING STREAK

By Jill Pritchard

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) congratulates Bryant Rackers of Bonnots Mill for breaking yet another state record – this time for a shorthead redhorse that weighed in at 2-pounds, 6-ounces. This is the first record for the species under alternative methods. It was caught Feb. 16 using a trotline.

The shorthead redhorse is the fifth state-record Rackers now holds. The other four records include blue sucker, skipjack herring, white perch, and sauger.

Rackers has caught all of his record fish on the Osage River.

"I do fish other places, despite what

it looks like," laughed Rackers. "But I do fish a lot on the Osage because I live pretty close to it. And it keeps supplying me with record fish!"

Like a few of his other records, Rackers says he was targeting this species of sucker.

"It was a normal spring morning and I got a hankering to do some sucker fishing with a trotline," Rackers recalled. "So I made it up, set out some hooks, and ended up catching the redhorse. I knew one of the slots was open for the record."

MDC staff verified the fish's weight on a certified scale in Loose Creek. It's the third state-record fish of 2020.

Though Rackers says he's caught a few record-fish just by the seat of his pants, he does credit his log book with helping him along.

"I keep a little book of all my logs," explained Rackers. "I track what the weather is doing, how much water is being released by the dam, stuff like that."

Rackers has made a name for himself, but he said he has no plans of stopping anytime soon.

"I know my girlfriend is getting tired of me getting all these records, because she really wants one," he laughed. "But I'm not going to stop! I'm going to keep going. I've got my eye on snagging season coming up. And I'd also like to break the tie I currently have for the skipjack herring."

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-



line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: trotlines, throwlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.

For more information on state-record fish, visit <http://bit.ly/2efq1v1>

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MDC FORECASTS CHALLENGING SPRING TURKEY HUNTING SEASON

By Joe Jerek

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Missouri turkey hunters can expect a challenging spring season according to the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). The spring turkey hunting season starts with a youth-only weekend April 4 and 5 followed by the regular spring season April 20 through May 10.

MDC Turkey Biologist Reina Tyl expects spring turkey hunting to be challenging.

"A great deal of what makes for a good spring turkey season depends on the hatch two years prior because it affects the number of two-year-old gobblers on the landscape," Tyl said. "These young gobblers are not associated with hens as often as older, more dominant birds and are the most likely to respond to hunters' calls."

Poor production statewide during 2018 will result in fewer two-year-old gobblers available for harvest during this year's spring hunting season. Tyl added that in 2018, the best production at the regional scale occurred in the northern half of the state. This could potentially translate to relatively more two-year-old gobblers on the landscape north of the Missouri River.

Considering the prospects for the 2020 spring season, hunters should be prepared to put in a bit more effort to be successful this year.

"When turkey numbers are down, it becomes even more important to spend time scouting for flocks before the start of the season," said Tyl. "Hunters should get out to their hunting areas as much as possible to listen for birds gobbling at daybreak."

Tyl noted that hunters should also take the time to learn where turkeys are spending most of their time after they fly down from the roost.

"Use binoculars to spot turkeys feeding in open areas or look for signs of where turkeys have been feeding in the timber," she said. "This will help hunters be in the right area when the hunting season gets here."

Although the prospects for this year's spring season aren't encouraging, this isn't the first-time poor turkey production has reduced turkey numbers in Missouri. After reaching a population peak in the early-to-mid 2000s, Missouri's turkey population experienced four years of poor production from 2007–2010, causing the population to decline. However, Tyl noted that turkey numbers rebounded following several years of improved production.

"In much of the state, we observed improved production during 2011, 2012, and 2014," said Tyl. "As a result, turkey numbers increased, and hunters generally had better hunting seasons in the years that followed."

"We are again in a period of poor production and lower turkey abundance,"

said Tyl. "We can expect to see the effects on harvest for several years until production improves and turkey numbers rebound."

GET MORE INFORMATION

Get detailed information on spring turkey hunting from MDC's 2020 Spring Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information booklet, available from MDC offices and nature centers, other places where permits are sold, and online at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/spring-turkey-hunting-regulations-and-information

For more information about spring turkey hunting, visit MDC's website at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/turkey

HUNTER SAFETY

Tyl stressed that hunters can easily avoid the main cause of turkey-hunting incidents—mistaking or being mistaken by another hunter for wild game.

"Each year, most turkey hunting incidents typically involve hunters who fail to identify their targets," said Tyl. "Unless you are certain that what you're looking at is a wild turkey, remember that any movement you see or any sounds you hear while you're hunting could be another hunter."

She also advised hunters to wear some hunter-orange clothing when moving through the woods or fields, particularly when hunting public land.

"Bringing along an orange hat or vest is an easy way to stay safe," said Tyl. "Wear one when you're moving and put it away when you sit down to work a bird."

Tyl also noted that many turkey hunting incidents involve members of the same hunting party.

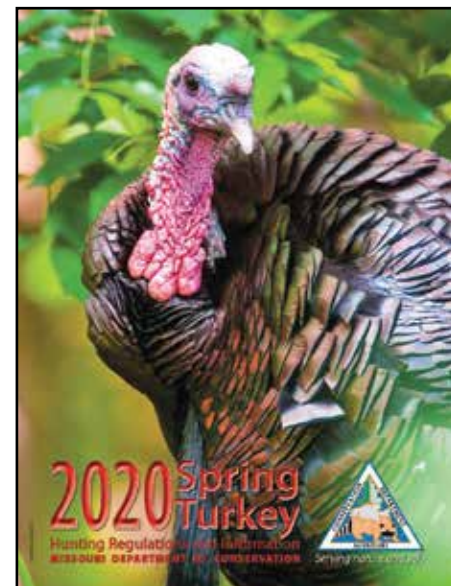
"If you're hunting with someone else and you split up, be certain you know where

your hunting partner will be at all times," she advised.

BRAG A BIT

MDC hunting certificates are great ways to memorialize a hunter's first turkey harvest. To create free MDC commemorative certificates, go online to huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/trophies-certificates/certificates.

Hunters can share photos of their harvests through MDC's Hunting Bragging Board by using #mdcbragboard when posting pictures to their social media accounts. Learn more at mdc.mo.gov/huntingbragboard.



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MDC SAYS REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR LANDOWNERS SEEKING FREE AND DISCOUNTED PERMITS

By Bill Graham

Kansas City, MO – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds landowners that registration is now open for landowners seeking free or discounted deer and turkey hunting permits. Applications can be completed and submitted online, or printed applications can be picked up at MDC offices. The applications must be completed by the landowner. Some MDC offices can assist with inputting the completed applications into the Landowner Permit Registry.

MDC advises submitting applications now to complete landowner registration prior to turkey and deer hunting seasons. The registry will allow landowners to obtain permits through MDC's online system, at MDC offices, or over the counter at participating vendors. A registry will help the Department, vendors and landowners have clarity on who is eligible for free or reduced-price

permits. Resident landowners meeting the qualifications may obtain free permits, and nonresident landowners who qualify can get permits at a reduced cost.

Starting this year, resident landowners with 20 or more contiguous acres and nonresident landowners with 75 or more contiguous acres may qualify for landowner deer and turkey permits. Each qualifying household member must complete their own landowner registry application. No additional proof of land ownership is required besides the information about the property listed on the application. According to MDC, the landowner registry is needed by both the Department and permit vendors to help eliminate misuse of landowner permits and privileges.

To learn more about the Landowner Registry or to apply, visit the secure MDC webpage at <https://mdc.mo.gov/landownerpermits>.



In MDC's Kansas City Region, the following MDC offices can provide print applications and assist landowners with inputting completed applications: Kansas City Regional Office, Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center, Clinton office, El Dorado Springs office, Lost Valley Fish Hatchery, and Sedalia office. The Burr Oak Woods Nature Center in Blue Springs can provide printed applications but cannot input completed applications.

In MDC's Northwest Region, the Northwest Regional Office in St.



Joseph and the Chillicothe office can provide print applications and assist with completed applications.

Landowners can also request an application by sending an email to permits@mdc.mo.gov (link sends e-mail); or call MDC Permit Services at 573-522-0107; or mail a request to Missouri Department of Conservation, Permit Services-Landowner, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102-0180. The permits can also be applied for through the MO Hunting app available at <http://mdc.mo.gov>.

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SPRING BRINGS FISHING ACTIVITY

By Bill Cooper

The official outdoor beginning of Spring in Missouri, the trout season opener, has come and gone. Thousands of trout anglers packed the four trout parks scattered across the Ozarks to catch their first trout of the 2020 season.

I had the pleasure of firing the opening day cannon at Maramec Spring Park to begin opening day festivities. My grandson, Ronnie Austin, assisted, which was a big thrill for a 10-year-old.

Hundreds of hearty anglers hurled lures, flies and baits into the cold waters of the Maramec Spring Park branch in hopes of catching big, colorful trout. Prizes were given for the first fish brought to the scales, first limit and biggest limits for men, women and kids.

Maramec Spring anglers enjoyed a 5 fish limit for the day, an experimental regulation being used only there for

the season. Both pros and cons were expressed about the regulation. Many liked the additional fish, while others feared the regulation might slow fishing in the afternoon, because more fish will be removed from the stream in the morning. Only time will tell, but heavily experienced anglers seemed to support the new regulation.

In other outdoor pursuits, the longer days and effects of warming waters are beginning to turn on bass fishing in area ponds and lakes. Water temperatures are climbing which in turn increases the metabolism of fish, which are cold blooded creatures. Their level of activity and body temperature are controlled by the water temperature around them.

Largemouth bass are a popular game fish and they begin to feed heavier as temperatures increase. They do feed in colder temperatures, but at a lesser rate due to slow metabolism and less energy usage. As temperatures increase, they become



Angler Travis Tackett connected with a few good bass in March, but expects bass fishing action to increase dramatically in April

more active resulting in higher energy levels, which in turn causes them to feed more.

Ken Cook, a retired fisheries biologist and a 14-time BassMaster Classic Qualifier, knows largemouth bass behavior pretty well. However, Cook is quick to admit that he doesn't fully understand all of the impacts of temperature change and seasons on bass.

"Bass don't move all that far as

water temperatures change," Cook said. "It's more of an up and down movement. They move shallow and deep all within the relatively small area as the seasons change, but they don't migrate from one end of the lake to the other."

As winter ends and longer and warmer days heat the water, bass begin to think about spawning, so they move into shallow water because

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bass eggs need sunlight and warmth in order to hatch. Too, bass will eat much more in warmer water, which often makes them much easier to catch. They typically stay in water 8-feet, or less, until hot summer days push temperatures into the 80s. It's then that bass begin to move to deeper water once again. They stay there until fall, until water temperatures cool down again. In fall bass may be caught up shallow once again.

Food sources are what controls the lives of bass. In spring and fall, food sources are usually close to the shoreline and around cover like aquatic grass, rocks and fishing docks. Smaller fish, minnows, crayfish, frogs and other potential bass foods are most abundant and most active in shallow water, so that's where bass are most likely to be.

Fishermen often catch their biggest bass of the year in small lakes and ponds as they quickly warm up as spring arrives. These smaller bodies of water warm up much quicker than larger bodies of water. Another advantage of fishing smaller bodies

of water is that they can be covered quickly. A big, white War Eagle spinnerbait is a great lure to use to prospect waters quickly. Big Colorado blades will allow you to work the spinnerbait slowly, while making lots of vibrations in the water that fish can detect through their vertical lines on their bodies.

Spinnerbaits should be fished in ultra-slow fashion at the beginning of March. Fish are still rather lethargic and may not be physically capable of chasing after fast moving baits. As the water warms into April, bait speed may be increased. Too, willow leaf blades often work better as water warms. The narrower blades will tend to sink a little faster, putting your offering in front of fish quicker. Too, the baits can be retrieved faster with willow leaf blades, allowing you to cover water quicker, and hopefully find more fish to catch in a shorter period of time.

Ned rigs have become very popular in recent years. A short 3-inch plastic worm is anchored on

a specialized jig head. The straight plastic bait is the perfect do nothing baits and is simply allowed to sit on the bottom of the lake. A simple twitch or two is often all that is required to get a bass to strike.

Travis Tackett, of St. James, has been plying the waters of local ponds

and lakes recently. "I've been out in cool weather, and the bite has been a bit slow. I have connected with a couple of big bass on Ned rigs, but they both got off. I've landed smaller fish; bit still remember where the big ones live. I'll revisit those ponds when the water warms a few more degrees."



Diane Silvernale enjoys taking a break from family duties and doing a little off roading in the Ozarks.



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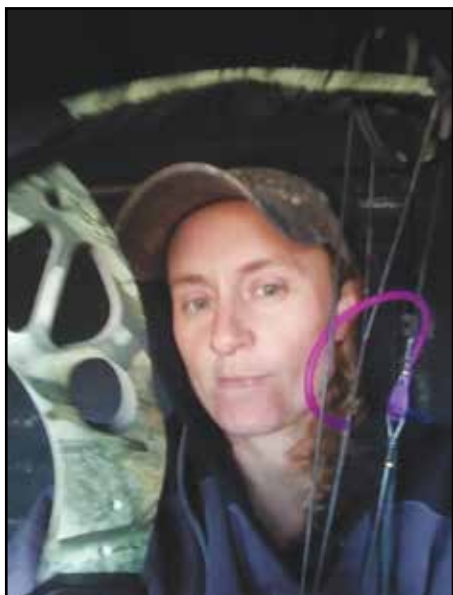
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"DARREN EVANS" SECOND SUNDAY PISTOL SHOOT / LEAGUE'S ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET DINNER SPEECH - FEB 29, 2020

By Crystal Routley

2017. It was at Darren's Cancer Benefit in Eureka that Darren asked a favor of Becky Haas. She already knew what Darren had on his mind, before he began. Darren asked that Becky keep the Pistol League going. With a lump in her throat, she made a promise to Darren to continue the Second Sunday shoot, as long as Mark Ewert could assist her on the range, taking over the position of NRA Range Safety Officer. I know that their friend Darren is looking down on us all, with a smile on his face, while Mark and Becky continue to keep his dream alive.

Mark Ewert has the most important job of being responsible for the safety of all the participants and spectators from the start to the finish of our events, as well as assisting shooters. He helps us to always be aware that safety is a top priority to all men & women, young & old, who love calling competitive shooting, their favorite sport or hobby of choice. It is unanimous we all share the opinion that no one could do a

better job than Mark does!!!

Becky is also an NRA Range Safety Officer but during the shoots, she is actively seeing that all necessary forms are completed prior to the start of each event, collecting league fees, recording everyone's shoot times and missed targets. She finds great pleasure in scolding us when we accidentally shoot the paper woman hostage, as she sadly has to add 20 points to our score sheet, for our error. Once the

shoot is over, Becky goes home to play her part as statistician by figuring everyone's individual scores & current placements before calculating final averages. Becky returns shooters score sheets on their return visits.

At the Awards Banquet Dinner, many award certificates were presented for the several competition divisions that shooters can try their skills at. The shoot consists of two types of shoots, the standard league shoot

This league became a reality after Mark Ewert & Darren Evans got their heads together in 2011 and approached Becky Haas about their dream of starting a pistol league at Secor Sportsman's Club. They wanted to know if she would join them on this new journey. They both knew she was into shooting, competing, safety, coaching women & children and assisting with events involving people keeping the shooting sport alive. So, in a nutshell, everyone present have Mark Ewert and Darren Evans to be thankful for sharing their dream.

In 2017 the event changed its name to the Darren Evans Pistol League, after the passing of their Dear Friend Darren on January 10,

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The pistol range



plus the action shoot. Each of those two competitions have eight classes involving Rim Fire, Center Fire, Carry Conceal Pistols and Revolvers, using iron sights or red dot sights.

Four special awards are also awarded at the annual banquet dinner. Those are Best Attendance, Most Improved Average and two specific youth awards, where the youth, (ages up to 19), place in the top third of the two largest classes: League shoot - Center Fire - Open Sight and Action Shoot - Center Fire - Open Sight.

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WEBSTER COUNTY ANGLER BREAKS DAYS-OLD RECORD FOR YELLOW PERCH

By Jill Pritchard

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) congratulates Brian Holiday of Fordland for becoming a state-record holder after catching a 2-pound, 3-ounce yellow perch from Bull Shoals Lake. This is the second time the record for yellow perch has been broken in 2020.

"Missouri is on the very southern range for yellow perch, so records for this fish are uncommon," said MDC Fisheries Programs Specialist Andrew Branson. "It's even more unique that we've had two state-record yellow perch caught within days of each other."

Holiday caught his state-record fish from Bull Shoals Lake Jan. 27 – just three days after a 1-pound, 14-ounce record had been caught in Nodaway County. MDC staff verified Holiday's fish's weight using a certified scale in Springfield.

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: throwlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl. For more information on state-record fish, visit <http://bit.ly/2efq1v1>



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CHASING SPAWNING LAKE OF THE OZARKS BASS

by John Neporadny Jr.



When the dogwood and redbud trees are in full bloom, the bass spawn is usually on at Lake of the Ozarks.

Although the blooming trees usually indicate bass are spawning, the real factors that trigger the bass spawn at the lake is a combination of water temperature and hours of daylight, according to Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Fisheries Biologist Greg Stoner. "I think those couple of different environmental factors that the bass rely on is kind of a failsafe (on when the spawn will occur)," Stoner said.

Spawning activity at Lake of the Ozarks usually begins when the water temperature climbs into the upper 50-degree range, which coincides with the hours of daylight increasing in the spring. The spawn continues through the 60-degree range and usually ends when the water temperature rises into the 70s.

The bass spawn can run from early April into June depending on what part of the lake you fish. Bass on the upper ends of the tributaries are the first to build spawning nests while their cousins in the dam area are the last to spawn.

Lake of the Ozarks bass in will spawn on just about any type of bottom. "They are really not that picky," Stoner said. "They do seem to like to have something they can get their backs up against. Then they only have to guard in two or three directions away from the nest against little egg-stealing bluegill and longear sunfish."

The full blown spawn on the lake usually occurs around the full

moon in April.

Stoner notes the spawn starts where the water warms up quickest in the tributary arms of the Gravois, Niangua and Grand Glaize. My fishing logs indicate the spawn on my home area close to the dam occurs during the last two weeks of April. The massive size of the lake (54,000 acres) allows anglers to fish the spawn for more than a month and during some springs spawners can be caught in late May or early June.

Typical spawning sites for both largemouth and spotted bass at Lake of the Ozarks are pea gravel pockets where the fish nest at depths ranging from 1 to 8 feet deep depending on the water clarity. The biggest fish will nest behind docks in hard-to-

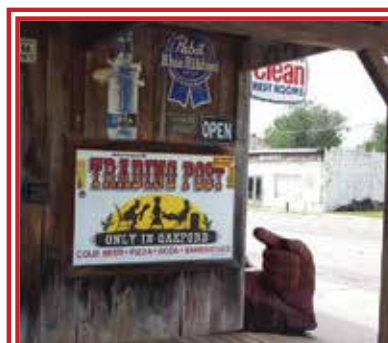
reach areas under catwalks and next to concrete pillars. Skipping a soft plastic bait or a jig under the dock cables is the best way to trick the larger bass nesting behind the docks.

In the dirty water areas, the best lures for spawning bass include plastic lizards, Salt Craws and creature baits. During dry springs I sight fish for spawning bass on the lower end of the lake with floating worms, wacky-rigged Senkos, plastic lizards on split-shot rigs, soft plastic jerkbaits and tube baits. Working Zara Spooks or floating stickbaits over spawning beds is also effective throughout April. If a bass blows up and misses my topwater offering, I will throw back to the same spot with

a Senko or floating worm to catch the nesting fish.

For information on lodging and other facilities at the Lake of the Ozarks or to receive a free vacation guide, call the Lake of the Ozarks Convention & Visitors Bureau at 1-800-FUN-LAKE or visit the Lake of the Ozarks Convention and Visitors Bureau web site at funlake.com.

For copies of John Neporadny's
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LEADERS ADVOCATE IN WASHINGTON FOR CONSERVATION LEGISLATION



DU volunteers, staff and partners meet with members of Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. –This week, more than 75 members of team DU, including state chairs, state policy chairs, senior volunteers and members of the Ducks Unlimited Board of Directors gathered in our nation's capital to meet with members of Congress and advocate for legislation to protect and restore wetlands and migratory bird habitat.

Meetings focused on passage of the bi-partisan America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act, which affects many important wetland habitat and wildlife conservation programs including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This critical legislation unanimously

passed the Senate in January and now awaits further action in the House of Representatives.

DU volunteers highlighted how NAWCA partnership grants play an important role in accomplishing Ducks Unlimited's mission, from restoring altered wetlands and enhancing water quality to reducing soil erosion and mitigating the damaging effects of floods. Conservation projects also provide outstanding recreational opportunities like hunting, fishing and bird watching.

"At Ducks Unlimited, we have a mission and a message that resonates with people on both sides of the aisle," said DU CEO Adam Putnam. "Our state chair fly-in is a tremendous opportunity for DU volunteers from all across the country to advocate for important conservation priorities face-to-face with legislators who want to help us achieve our habitat restoration goals."

NAWCA is a voluntary matching grant program that leverages non-

federal and federal funds for wetlands restoration. Since enactment in 1989, NAWCA has conserved more than 30 million acres and created an average of 7,500 new jobs annually. Every dollar spent by the federal

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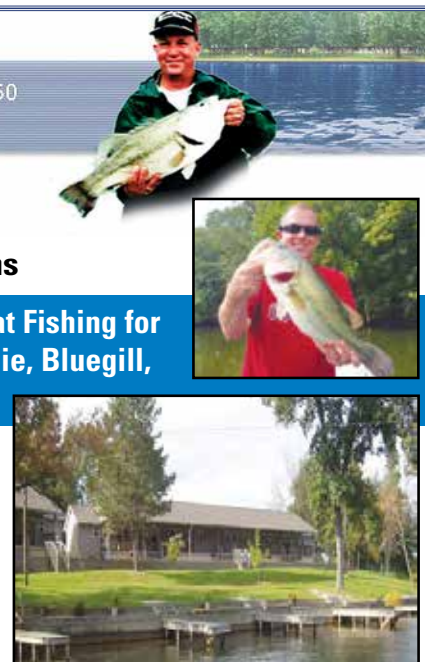
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WOO'S CORNER

BY WOO DAVES

April has come way too fast for me, but I don't mind because it is one of the three best months of the year to bass fish. Fish are going to be shallow in one to eight feet of water. They will be in one of three stages depending on water temperatures. On a lot of lakes, you will find the bass in pre spawn, spawning and post spawn. No matter what your preference of fishing is you can usually catch bass. It's just a great month to get your **Mercury** powered **Nitro** or **Bass Tracker** on the water.

I like to ride the lake and look at the temperatures and the color. I am looking for slightly colored water if possible, but hey they will bite in any color this time of the year! Secondary points and the last point or two leading to a flat can be a good place to look. Depending on the cover in the lake there are many options to try and all of them works good, buzz baits, shallow cranks like the **XPS** square bill, and spinner baits. Top water bait I use is an **XPS Z-Pop**, it can be

LOOKING FOR BASS IN SHALLOW WATER

good especially in early morning. But my favorite four baits are the **Zoom** Zlinky, **Zoom** lizard, **Zoom** trick worm and the **Zoom** Baby Brush hog.

Docks can almost always be counted on to be a contender to hold bass along with brush, willow trees, lay downs and rip rap! Again, I'm looking for bass in shallow water! The wind can be a factor this time of the year and if it's blowing, I'm fishing windy points and rip rap with a moving bait be it a spinner bait or square bill. Once that stops it's straight to any wood, brush or docks. You can usually pick up some kind of pattern this month and make it work for you. But remember if there is a weather change and what you're doing quits working, go back to trying different things till you get another one going! In other words, don't die when your pattern quits look for another one. Let's say you're fishing docks and it's sunny, then it gets cloudy, the fish will start roaming. I would move down the bank fishing a buzzer or popper. Or look at that in reverse and say

it's cloudy and you're getting bites. If the sun comes out, go to cover.

It is pretty hard to beat **Zoom's** Zlinky or trick worm fished wacky style, but I have caught many bass on the **Zoom** lizard by Texas rigging or Carolina rigging. Big sows hate lizards and brush hogs in the spring! I like to fish the lizard in cover Texas style, and I fish flats, secondary points or shallow humps with the Carolina rig.

Now if the dock fishing comes about, I will fish the Zlinky wacky style, the trick worm on a light shaky head and a **Zoom** super hog Texas rigged. One of these three methods will get you a strike! Basically, fish the outside poles and then skip under the dock or around floats and work



back slowly. I usually fish these on a 7' **Johnny Morris Patriot** medium action spinning rod with a **Platinum** spinning reel using 10 lbs. test **Bass Pro Shops** fluorocarbon line. If the water is stained, I will use 10 lbs **Bass Pro Shops** braid with a 12 lbs. fluorocarbon leader. Pay attention to where you are catching fish on a dock

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because that can move into a pattern. Are they on the front, in the middle or under the back? If you figure something out run with it till it stops.

I use my trolling motor to move on down the bank until I catch a bass then I ask myself several questions like where was the bass located. Was it on a point or halfway back or all the way back? Then what cover was it using

and also what was the depth. Then try to duplicate that and see if you have a pattern. In other words, was the bass on the point. If so, then don't waste time fishing to the next point but high trolling motor to the next point or big engine if too far. Just fish points to see if this is working. Same thing if you catch him in the back of a pocket or on the shady side or sunny side and

get right over to the next available spot. You can waste a lot of time fishing where there are no bass.

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THAT SHIRT THOSE MEMORIES

By Daniel Vinovich

I shook her and heard the faint sound of a #5 pellet rattling around in her innards. Well how in the hell had that gotten in there. Then last year's hunt popped in my head. I had him coming hard to the call straight off the roost. He stayed just out of range and strutted trying to get my feeding hen to pay attention. After every strut, he would move towards the opposite timber line trying to get her to follow. Each time, I would halt his departure with a loud "Cut" making him turn and walk back a few more steps closer. After about 10 minutes of this game, I figured he would not play much longer. I put the Benelli on the sticks, ranged him at 50 or so yards and let the 2 oz. of number 5's fly. The recoil was unexpected as the Indian Creek choked barked out the load sending my off balance a.. to my back, gun barrel pointed straight to the clouds. Ha, I chuckled at the thought of that one. If I remember, the bird was pretty close in line with the decoy. He was a dirt nappin', but my little hen decoy had taken one to her mid-section. With decoys patched and laid in a row, I resumed my task by laying out my new RedHead outfit I had gotten with some gift cards from Bass Pro Shops over Christmas. It was some nice stuff. The cold spring winds would not get to me this season. I then pulled a few shirts out of the drawer. I refolded them and laid

out the two I wanted and proceeded to put the other two back in the drawer, but they would not fit. I pulled the drawer from its birth and out popped a faded long sleeve shirt I had not seen in years. I held it up only to notice a huge blood stain on the back. It had been washed so many times that the stain looked like the picture of a black cloud. Now, where in the Hell did this come from? The stain jogged a memory from another hunt. It was so long ago. Peoria County had not been open for very long. My son and I drew two 4th season tags. We

were chasing a group of gobblers up the steep hill behind where we parked. The underbrush was so thick that we never could get a clean shot off at the bachelor group of gobblers that was playing cat and mouse with us. I was pulling Colt up the wet hill by the scuff of his shirt trying to get ahead of the birds. He was probably only around 10 years of age. We got ahead of the birds and placed the ugly foam decoy in a little clearing and started calling. The birds were gobbling hard as they walked into the clearing. I told Colt to pick the first bird and shoot for his head. Boom! The 12 guage went off. The 3-inch mag turkey load sent all its force through Colt and into the tree he was leaning up against.

It was early April, as the steady rain pelted the big window in the front of my house. I just sat and stared at a squirrel munching on a fresh ear of corn I had just placed on the nail in the tree. He had an agenda with that ear of corn, pulling kernels off it as fast as he could, almost as if he was afraid something was going to take it from him. Wow! I wish I had an agenda this cold wet April day. We have not seen the sun in a week. With last weekend's snow, it had all but burned me out on the task of spring cleaning or getting the boat ready for post spawn muskies. I just sat and stared almost in a trance. I clicked through the channels on the boob tube not paying attention to what was on them. Suddenly, I heard a thunderous gobble come through the speaker. I stopped and focused on a big ole gobbler strutting in front of a decoy. He gobbled again as he tried to get the rubber hen to respond. Just then, a shot rang out over the speaker and a flopping he went. "Well, that was cool," I thought to myself. Now that shot sparked an idea of the perfect way to spend a wet cold Sunday getting my turkey equipment laid out for the upcoming season. To the safe I went to secure my tags, opening and reading each one to make sure the dates and information were correct. Then to my calendar to write off those days as not to book anything by mistake with a red line drawn through the calendar dates for the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Illinois turkey seasons. I was relieved that I had not booked a trip by mistake. I had newfound energy as I grabbed my reading glasses and headed down the steps to begin work. I grabbed the Avian X bags and pulled the decoys one by one. I pulled the valve open and puffed a little air in them to re-inflate. The third hen was really low on air, almost flat.

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I looked first at the flopping turkey, then at Colt. He had laid down the gun and looked as if he had a tear rolling down his cheek. I thought to myself ewww that one hurt. We looked at the flurry going on as the other two gobblers jumped and spurred their fallen brother. Colt yelled, "kill that one. He is killing my turkey." I looked at him and almost started laughing. I pulled up on one of the other birds and squeezed the trigger. The report of the shotgun smoked another bird and sent the other one running for cover. I was still laughing as we picked up the birds. "He's killing my turkey." Don't you think he was a little bit dead Colt? I laughed so hard I almost peed my pants. The blood was from having both birds strung over my shoulder as I tried to make it down the steep wet hill. I almost threw the shirt away, but after reliving the memory I folded it and placed it back in the drawer. With the clothes and decoys laid out, I moved a few old gun cases and located my turkey bag, the one I kept my vest in. I pulled the vest from the bag and noticed a couple of old foam decoys in the bottom. I pulled both from the bag and noticed the old Jake was torn up. It looked like a mouse had chewed it up, but there was no bed

or pile of foam. That's when it hit me. About 20 years ago my father and I had been invited to a trip down to Missouri for a turkey hunt. We were pretty green and hunted for 3 days without any luck. One of the old boys in town told me I needed a Jake decoy to help bring them gobblers in close as they were probably henned up. Not knowing what the hell he was talking about, I just nodded my head. On the way back to camp after dinner we stopped in at the local gas station to grab a couple of candy bars for tomorrow's hunt. There on the shelf was a box with a Jake decoy in it along with other turkey hunting necessities. I convinced Dad we needed that decoy. We purchased the decoy and headed to the cabin. Daylight had us traveling along a ridgetop looking for a field my Dad's buddy had told us about. After a half hour of walking and with soaked feet, we found the field. I set out the hen decoy with the new Jake and started calling. It was not long before we heard a gobbler and then another. I was sending sound into the air. Lord knows what call I was doing, but I'm here to tell you I was making a whole hell of a lot of noise. A pile of Jakes popped out of nowhere and started beating up that poor decoy. It first

spun right with a thump. Then it spun left. Then it was hammered blow after blow. I told Dad to shoot, but neither of us pulled the trigger. We walked up to the decoy with amazement as it laid flattened with not much left of its foam body. A few parting gobblers was all that was heard as the gang of teenage delinquents headed back up the ridge. We were speechless. All that was said was, "Dad, we know what pisses them off now!" I smiled as I placed it back in the bag. I looked at my watch and it was already 4 pm. Wow, where had the day gone? I grabbed the vest and placed it alongside the other equipment I had already laid out. I turned and looked back at the pile of gear. A tear rolled from my eye. This had been the best Sunday I had spent in a while. I hunted all day AND NEVER LEFT THE HOUSE... A voice came from the kitchen. "Dinner is ready." With the flip of the light switch I was back in the present.

Don't just throw that hunting equipment in the backseat the night before opening day. Take a weekend and lay it all out. You might be pleasantly surprised how that stuff can bring up memories you have all but forgotten.



I am booking the last few days on the water for muskies before the water gets too warm and we stow the heavy tackle for fall. So, if you want to swap some stories and catch some giant fish, you can reach me by calling 309-267-8309 or by email at trolling@mtco.com. Late spring trips are limited, so call soon or you may miss the boat!!! SEE 'YA ON THE WATER!

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BACKCOUNTRY TURKEY HUNT

By Pete Muller

Hunting off the beaten path is one of the surest ways to up the odds of finding game animals, especially when hunting on public ground. And, no, I'm not just talking about hitting the trail earlier than your competition; I'm talking about carrying in camp on your back in preparation for a multi-day hunt.

While backpacking in for big game hunts is more common, especially in western states, I don't recall hearing or reading much about ANY hunters hitting the backcountry to chase gobblers.

Maybe it is because the majority of turkey hunters live in states east of or bordering the Mississippi River and tracts of public land aren't as vast as in the west. Nevertheless, a backcountry turkey hunt is a trip adventure-seeking hunter should definitely consider.

To make this hunt a reality, you'll need your typical turkey hunting gear and the following big-ticket items:

Backpack: Yes, you'll need to ditch your treasured turkey vest for a backpack. Start with a backpack that is in the range of 2200-2500 cubic inches to find a pack that should hold enough gear for a few days. Expandable sections or the ability to strap gear to the top or bottom of the pack will help immensely. The ALPS OutdoorZ Hybrid-X is a great place to start, marrying an internal frame pack with a meat-hauler frame pack. This means when bag a bird, you can stash it between your frame and storage, keeping your gear free of blood and feathers.

Backpacking tent: The hub of a backpacking camp is the tent, so make sure it is a good one. Shoot for a tent that is easy to pitch and strike. Make sure the floor is waterproofed in case of inclement weather, and also make sure it has room to store needed gear. A single-person tent is great if you know you won't have a hunting partner with you, but for as little as a pound extra in weight, you can upsize to a 2-person model made by most of the big tent manufacturers. The Browning Granite Creek 2-person tent has been my tent of choice for the past few seasons. All the poles come shock-corded together, meaning it would be hard to lose and parts, and the double vestibule gives added space to stash gear should rain move in.

Light sleeping bag and pad: Since you won't have the comfort of your bed for sleeping, you'll want to make sure you have a decent sleeping bag and pad. But since you'll be carrying in things on your back, you should consider weight and size for both. I ran with a Browning Vortex 35 and an ALPS Mountaineering Cirrus sleeping pad for a



backcountry elk hunt in the fall of 2018. Total weight for both was just more than three pounds, which is heavier than I would have liked, but the comfortable sleep made up for it.

Water filter: It is wise to carry a water filtration device when camping off-grid as you surely don't want to carry in the extra weight that quickly tallies up when toting a few days' worth of water. There are a number of filtration systems out there, but I snagged the Survivor Filter Pro. At just \$65, you get a system capable of filtering 100,000 liters before either its pre-filter and internal filters need replacing. It also comes with a lifetime warranty and a 100% money-back guarantee.

Backpacking stove: You could carry premade meals but using a stove to boil water for morning coffee or dehydrated meals is the way to go, at least in my opinion. I've been using a Jetboil for years because of its ability to boil water at a rapid rate and the boiling pot also can double as a coffee mug. While it has evolved over the years from when I first

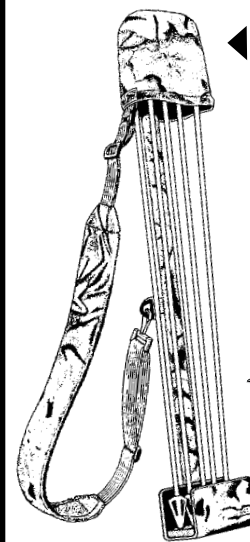
First aid kit: Okay, you might already carry this to begin with, but hitting the backcountry for a couple extra days might mean you beef up your stash of medical supplies. Make sure you have medical tape, bandages, band aids, antibiotic ointment, alcohol wipes, moleskin, pain relief, needle (for removing splinters), scissors and other normal meds you may need for spring allergies.

Misc. small items: While the above items will give you a great start on what to pack, you might also need a few of these smaller but ideal pieces of equipment: trowel, compass, extra batteries for flashlight or headlamp, eating utensils, rope, fire starting materials and a power bank to charge items like your phone.

Now there is no need to purchase all the items at once. See what you can borrow from friends or purchase second hand just to get yourself started. But, spend a night in the backcountry while chasing turkeys, and you'll make it a regular event each spring.



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UNORTHODOX SUCCESS!

By: David Herschelman

the truck, the sequence of events had occurred just as suspected and one Tom was hanging by the pole! The weather had begun to subside and although threatening – no rain fell at all during the day. After coffee and sandwiches a bird sounded off to the east. I advanced toward the sounding bird and set up in anticipation of an ambush. My partner hung back and attempted to lure the bird closer with the sweetest music he could muster but the effect was quite the opposite and the bird reversed course walking away and talking all the way!

My disgust was palpable – the bird must be sought if by pure stalk!

The bird had entered into the valley headed east – the wet ground made footsteps of no sound. I followed knowing the thick wooded terrain would hide my advance but with the superior senses of the turkey, my chances seemed slim.

The bird moved north along a hillside – I followed seemingly only seventy-five to one hundred yards distant. This was too close based on the openness of the wood! Choosing to move back and to begin a flanking movement about the bird's location seemed best. The gobbles had stopped. Had he seen or heard me? This was probably the case!



David with Unorthodox Turkey

The darkness of the morning was as thick as cowboy coffee. The wind howled and curled the upper limbs of the swaying trees as if to scare one from venturing forth into the wood! There would be no question as to whether to bring the rain suit or not. As the first rays of light attempted to overtake the darkness, I ventured forth and unbelievably a gobble was heard from the roost off to my south! With greater than normal haste, progression was made toward the sound. The powerful wind hid any sound of movement through the woods.

Knowing the terrain, the bird's roost was pinpointed. My advance was closer than usual based on the weather conditions and my features were hidden behind a large oak tree only yards from the roosted bird! Too close! My stand would be here as further movement would upset the bird. Facing away from the bird, my tree call was slight – the bird hammered at every sound and would surely fly down to the sound as if on a kamikaze mission ending the hunt promptly!

The bird hit the ground close enough to feel but unable to turn and peer his direction – maintaining motionlessness was paramount. As is often the case, the bird walked east into a ravine out of my life sounding off intermittently as he progressed! In fact, he was progressing toward my hunting partner this morning whose set up on the primo spot given to him by yours truly was working! Why the bird chose this option was beyond me!

Shortly thereafter, a shot penetrated the wind, indicating the success of my partner. My subsequent activity had proved fruitless. Back at

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Lance Sermersheim with a Turkey the same morning.

I paralleled the birds last known location by walking just over the horizon of the hillside above him but still no sound. Suddenly, the shrill cry of a Red – Tailed Hawk pierced the air above. The turkey shock gobbled below giving away his location! Because a small ravine penetrated the larger hillside holding the turkey

– I worked on hands and knees toward a large oak, hiding my outline in the small ravine where I would peer over into that hillside to locate my prize. Slower than molasses was my advance! Once in position I peered around the trunk of the large oak ever so slowly inching my head forward to see into the hillside. Nothing! Suddenly, the top of a



Success Finally!

turkey’s head materialized twenty-five yards distant. Just as quickly it would disappear! I rotated the gun into a shooting position and waited. I wanted to rise to confirm his location but knew any movement at this range could backfire ending my stalk! The top third of his head broke the skyline as he stretched. Do I risk this shot at such a small target? The bead was

held dead on, and the trigger pulled. The eruption of sound was met with silence – I raced to the shots’ location to find my bird immobilized from the encounter! Success! Quite unorthodox but success nonetheless! The walk out of the woods was one of my proudest moments still giving thanks to the bird for providing the action of the event!



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COLOR COMBOS

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Recently I was fishing with some jig and trailer combinations that triggered this old idea, and to how effective this color system has been. It

started thoughts of various situations of when colors have worked, and not having to use all of the electronic gadgets. This is much like what Keith Lundahl, former owner of Lundahl Lures, used with his spinnerbaits, which are another thing of the past. Keith was one of the best for grasping the color system and developing lures that would cover all three groups with about 3 to 6 spinnerbaits.

Keith's system was to use the blade of the bait as the primary color



Soft plastics used on a faster moving retrieve, such as this oyster colored B-Fish-N Ribb Finn, rigged on a Casey's Runner Head, general work well with shad type colors.

band, which is florescent, and the skirt with some strange combinations that covered the secondary band of colors. Mine is similar, but still a little different since it is used with jigs and trailers, and soft plastics.

My theory has always been that the slower lures, such as jigs and soft



Chartreuse/white, as with this Goby Blitz Blade, are a general primary color combination with the Color-C-Lector, which can work in most any water clarity and light intensity.

plastics, are where the colors come into play more since fish have a longer time to focus on them. Faster baits, such as spinnerbaits, swim baits, and crankbaits, can be with shad, florescent and bluegill type colors, but if you look at these they still fall within the plans of the CCL.

For jigs I have three basic colors –

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black/blue, black/chartreuse/green and pumpkin/purple (peanut butter/jelly). Blitz Lures also has a color that is a true Color-C-Lector clone of some of Keith's spinnerbait skirt ideas with a purple/plum/blue type combination.

Jig trailers are what offset the color combinations, and while there are times when they are matched, such as black/blue with black/blue fleck, there are other times when a black/blue jig is combined with a June Bug trailer, which is sort of a purple with green fleck. This color can cover a lot of the band areas of Dr. Hill's research.

So, here are my six-primary jig/trailer color combinations that can be used in a variety of water clarity and light intensity situations:

- Black/Blue jig with Black/Blue Fleck trailer
- Black/Blue jig with June Bug trailer
- Black/Chartreuse/Green jig with June Bug trailer
- Black/Chartreuse/Green jig with Black/Red Fleck trailer
- Pumpkin/Purple jig with Pumpkin trailer
- Pumpkin/Purple jig with June Bug trailer

The one common color is black, and that is because it can cover about any condition, and most everything that goes along the bottom has black



This bass was caught in clear water with a high light intensity using a black/blue Blitz Spyder Jig with a June Bug colored Natural Forage Baits Mad Craw, which according to the old Color-C-Lector chart would be a perfect combination for these conditions.

somewhere on it.

As for soft plastics, such as worms and tubes, the colors are simple, and about the same – black, black/blue fleck, black/chartreuse tail, electric blue, electric blue/pearl tail, June Bug and melon for worms; black, melon, June Bug and pumpkin for tubes.

The next question is at what light intensities and water clarity are these colors used. My system is a little



The author has had great success fishing a peanut butter/jelly Blitz Spyder Finesse jig in stained water during a higher light intensity, and looking at the Color-C-Lector chart it shows this sort of color combination to work well in these conditions.

simpler than the CCL since it is all done by sight. Because of this you may want to change it a bit to your own thoughts on the two conditions.

For a coverall, the black or black/blue combination is used. In stained and muddy water, it will be anything with the black/chartreuse/green, melon and pumpkin. With brighter and clearer conditions, I go with the black/blue, June Bug and electric blue

combinations. As I said, it is simple, but can be changed to your "taste."

The next time you are looking for that "fish catching color", think of these combinations, and how the old Color-C-Lector system worked. It may trigger the light bulb that will help reel in the catch of the day.

Until next time, get out on the water and have a great day of fishing.

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One key to success in bowhunting turkeys is to place your lifelike decoys at only 5 to 7 yards.

After a couple decades of bowhunting turkeys, the one bit of advice I give to any beginner is to keep your decoys close, 5 to 7 yards is perfect.

Regardless of whether you prefer body shots or head/neck shots on wild turkeys, the vitals are small, and turkeys don't stand still for long — if at all. Your chance of making a poor hit on a turkey goes up dramatically as you increase shot distance.

With a pop-up blind to hide your movement, you can draw your bow on a point-blank bird and not be busted. That said, with decoys set at 5 to 7 yards, I prefer to draw when a tom or jake is 12 to 15 yards away, has committed to the decoys, and is steadily walking toward my ambush. This allows me to take my time, calmly find my anchor point,

then take a deep breath. When the tom is a few yards from the decoys, I've already settled my fiber-optic pin on his vitals, slowly tracking him. As soon as he pauses, I release the string.

Waiting too long to draw — for example, waiting for a tom to engage the decoys — is a recipe for disaster

in my opinion. Too many times I've seen toms get into fighting (or breeding) mode after they get in tight, and then you have a moving target. Not good.

Keep your decoys at 5 to 7 yards, draw when a tom is 12 to 15 yards



out, aim, relax (take a deep breath) and then hammer him as soon as he pauses near your decoys.



In the author's opinion, this bowhunter should have released the arrow a split-second before the left photo was taken. As you can see in the right photo, it doesn't take long for the scene to turn into a rodeo.

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This report represents some events the OLE handled over the weeks of November 15-30, 2019; however, it does not include all actions taken by the Office of Law Enforcement.

Northwest Zone – Captain Laura Petreikis District 1 – Sgt. Tony Petreikis (Counties: Carroll, Henry, JoDaviess, Lee, Mercer, Ogle, Rock Island, Stephenson & Whiteside)

CARROLL COUNTY

CPO's Palumbo, Hoftender, and CPOT Kiprono, conducted a waterfowl enforcement detail on opening day of the North Zone Waterfowl Opener. They patrolled the Big Slough and Savanna Slough area from mud boat on the perimeter of the Spring Lake Refuge on pool 13 of the Mississippi River. Several boat blinds were checked, and multiple citations and written warnings were issued for waterfowl and boating violations. Two federal referrals were also submitted to

USFW Refuge Officers for two Chicago area bass fishermen being in a restricted waterfowl refuge in their bass boat.

JODAVIESS COUNTY

CPO Hoftender and CPO Klemme observed a hunter on an ATV with an uncased shotgun. They made contact with the hunter. He did not have a hunting license or habitat stamp and his deer permit was back at the house he was staying at. Upon further investigation, they found he was hunting over bait. He was issued citations for transportation of uncased gun, permit not in possession, and hunting over bait. He was issued warnings for no hunting license, no habitat stamp, the placement of the bait, and archery hunting over the bait from a date prior.

A Kentucky man and a Saint Charles man were caught hunting State Land with archery equipment during the shotgun season by CPO Hoftender and CPO Klemme. The Kentucky man wasn't wearing the required orange and had a Kentucky driver's license with non-resident hunting license, but resident deer permits. He was issued citations for falsification and no blaze orange. He was issued a warning for the illegal use of the archery device on State Land. The Saint Charles man was issued a citation for the illegal device and a warning for no valid permit.

OGLE COUNTY

CPO Palumbo issued a Davis Junction man a citation and multiple written warnings for firearm deer hunting on property without permission, no blaze orange, no habitat stamp, deer permit not in possession, and hunting license not in possession.

CPOT Williams and CPO Beltran conducted an investigation near Rochelle of an unlawfully taken deer. It was determined a deer was taken unlawfully on Railroad property.

District 6 – Sgt. Phil Wire (Counties: Boone, Bureau, DeKalb, LaSalle, Putnam & Winnebago)

LASALLE COUNTY

CPO Filipiak was on patrol in Northern La Salle county and received a call from an individual who wanted to report a violation on himself. The individual stated he had shot an 8PT buck with a shotgun outside of first firearm deer season. The individual stated while researching the season dates, he was given incorrect information. Due to the individual's honesty and ability to take responsibility of his actions he was issued 5 written warnings. The deer was seized, will be processed and donated to a local food pantry.

District 7 – Sgt. Scott Avery (Counties: Fulton, Henderson, Knox, Marshall, McDonough, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell, Warren & Woodford)

FULTON COUNTY

CPO Thompson responded to a complaint of unlawful deer hunting activity in Fulton County. CPO Thompson surveilled a location from a distance and identified a potentially untagged deer on the tailgate of a truck near a residence. CPO Thompson identified the owner of the vehicle and made contact with him. After a short interview, the man admitted to having shot the deer and not tagging it immediately. Upon further investigation, CPO Thompson identified a second deer on the property having

not been tagged immediately upon kill. CPO Thompson issued citations for the violations.

MCDONOUGH COUNTY

CPO Elliott completed an investigation involving unlawful take of a 10-point buck. The subject admitted to not having a hunting license, habitat stamp, or permit when he shot a 10-point buck with a crossbow. The subject then requested the assistance of another to help retrieve and utilize another's permit to report the deer. The investigation led to the seizure of the buck and the crossbow used in the offense. Both subjects were cited for the violations related to the unlawful take of the deer and for the falsification.

CPO Elliott responded to a trespassing complaint where the landowner of a property reported to have observed a subject on his property dragging out a 10-point buck. The subject was interviewed and found to have known the property line in advance before intruding on the complainant's property. The subject admitted to not tagging the deer immediately upon kill. The 10-point buck was seized, and the subject was cited.

Central Zone – Captain Laura Petreikis and Captain Jed Whitchurch District 9 – Sgt. Eric Myers (Counties: Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Greene, Hancock, Jersey, Macoupin, Pike & Schuyler)

HANCOCK COUNTY

CPO Wheatley and CPOT Leannah were working 1st firearm season. The 2 spotted a truck idling in a field. CPO Wheatley approached the vehicle and saw a man inside with a shotgun sitting in the passenger side seat. The 2 spoke with the man and asked



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Police ... continued

about his hunt. The man said he hadn't killed anything and was resting. CPO Wheatley requested the man's license and permits. The man provided his permits but could not furnish a license or habitat stamp. CPO Wheatley then asked about the shotgun and if it was loaded. After a check the shotgun was fully loaded and outside a case. The man's credentials were checked via computer and was found to not have a habitat stamp. CPO Wheatley issued the man a citation for loaded/uncased firearm. CPOT Leannah issued him a written warning for hunting without a habitat stamp.

JERSEY COUNTY

CPO Michael Goetten conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle from Alabama. One of the non-resident occupants had harvested a buck without a license or deer permits. He was cited for the offenses and the buck was seized.

PIKE COUNTY

CPOs Aaron Jansen, Michael Goetten, Michael Blazinic and James Blakeley made contact with several individuals falsifying applications for landowner permits. Several citations were issued, and additional enforcement action is pending. CPO Michael Goetten cited a Missouri resident for the unlawful possession of free resident landowner deer permits.

District 10 – Sgt. William Gilmer (Counties: Cass, Christian, Logan, Mason, Menard, Morgan, Sangamon & Scott)

MORGAN COUNTY

CPO Wichern cited (2) Pennsylvania firearm deer hunters for unlawfully hunting deer without the proper licenses, and failing to wear 400" blaze orange clothing in the field.

SCOTT COUNTY

CPO Wichern cited a Tennessee firearm deer hunter for hunting deer 20 minutes after shooting hours, transporting a loaded & uncased shotgun, and failing to purchase the proper licenses prior to hunting.

District 11 – Sgt. Brian McReynolds (Counties: Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Moultrie & Shelby)

CLARK COUNTY

CPO Wellum and CPOT Zach Williams received a complaint of dogs chasing/harassing deer in Clark County. Upon arrival we spoke with the complainant who had taken video of the dogs. We went to the house of the dog owner and were met in the driveway by the dogs which were captured on video. We informed the dog owners it was illegal to allow the dogs to chase/harass deer. The dog owners were issued a written warning for the incident.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

CPO Mieure issued a Toledo man one citation for failure to tag deer and two written warnings for failure to report harvest by 10 pm and hunting without permits in possession.

SHELBY COUNTY

CPO Greuel cited three subjects for hunting in a restricted area of Wolf Creek State Park in Shelby County.

CPO Greuel cited two Mattoon men for no valid Deer Permit on Corp Of Engineers property in Shelby County.

CPO Moody cited a Chicago man for hunting deer over bait on the Corps of Engineers property during firearm deer season. The man received other miscellaneous written warnings as well.

CPO Moody cited a Mt Zion man for failure to wear any blaze orange while deer hunting during the firearms deer season. The man was also found to be hunting with a .243 rifle and was cited for that as well.

District 19 – Sgt. John Williamson (Counties: Champaign, DeWitt, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Macon, McLean, Piatt & Vermillion)

PIATT COUNTY

CPO's Ausmus and Viverito came upon two hunters field dressing a mature buck. The hunters were still afield with no blaze orange on and the deer had been moved by ATV and was still untagged. When asked about the missing tag the hunter admitted his license and permits were still up at his house. The hunters were issued a citation for the untagged deer, and warnings for no blaze orange and tags not in possession.

South Zone – Acting Captain Eric Manker District 13 – Sgt. Eric Manker (Counties: Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Randolph, St. Clair & Washington)

MADISON COUNTY

CPO Liebl was notified of two MO fishermen who were fishing at Coffeen Lake. The lake is clearly posted closed at the boat launch where the fishermen launched their boat. The following violations were addressed: Unlawful entry into posted restricted area, no valid fishing license, batteries not covered on watercraft, over horsepower for lake (limit is 25 hp, boat was using 115 hp).

ST. CLAIR COUNTY

CPO Schachner and CPO Gerdes responded to a complaint of a subject illegally shooting a deer the previous night. Evidence was discovered at the subject's property which supported the complaint and implicated the

violin. CPO Schachner spoke briefly with the subject's wife and left his phone number. While waiting for the subject to return home from work in Missouri, CPO Schachner and CPO Gerdes covertly observed the subject's wife concealing evidence. When the poacher returned home, he lied repeatedly to both officers, but eventually determined it was in his best interest to be honest. The poacher used a .270 rifle to shoot a large buck off the

deck of his house the night before while he shined it with a spotlight. When he went to work in Missouri, he transported the carcass and hide with him and dumped them there. He had also taken the antlers with him to show off but left them with a coworker upon learning the CPO's stopped by the house. The poacher received 3 citations for taking deer with a rifle, hunting/shooting deer at night and falsification of harvest records. He also



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received multiple written warnings including a warning for obstruction/concealing evidence. The rifle, spotlight, deer meat and antlers were seized.

District 14 – Sgt. Jeff Cariens (Counties: Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jefferson, Pope, Saline & White)
FRANKLIN COUNTY

CPO Williams located 2 firearm deer hunters in a pasture in rural Franklin County. The hunters did not meet the required Blaze Orange/Pink requirements and a compliance check was conducted in the field which discovered the hunters were minors (13 and 12 years old) One minor was found to be without hunting license and deer permit and the other had their father's permit in their possession. The adults responsible for the two minors were located at home and indicated they had allowed the minors to hunt. Citations were issued under Parental Responsibility to the adults for the Wildlife Violations discovered during the compliance check.

GALLATIN COUNTY

CPO's Folden and Haggerty arrested a man unlawfully hunting from his vehicle, unlawfully taking a whitetail deer with a rifle, using a permit belonging to another person, transporting an uncased firearm in a vehicle, and hunting without a deer permit. The Gallatin County man shot the

deer from the roadway and was observed by other hunters who contacted CPO Folden. The investigation proved the information provided was accurate. One .243 caliber rifle and a deer cape with a rifle hole in it were seized.

HAMILTON COUNTY

CPO Folden located a vehicle belonging to an Alabama hunter who had Illinois Resident permits and licenses. CPO Folden and CPO Haggerty located the subject and begin investigating. This investigation revealed the AL subject used to buy non-resident privileges when he could buy \$25 doe tags. Starting in 2017, the AL hunter started falsifying information to buy Illinois resident privileges. We identified he harvested 2 deer unlawfully during that time period and reported the harvest of one with someone else's permit. 6 citations issued and 2 written warnings.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

CPO Williams responded with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department to a report of Hunter Harassment. Two hunters advised an adjacent landowner had approached their hunting location during the past two days. Each time resulted in the adjacent landowner screaming across the fence at the hunters and then firing several shots into their woods with a .22 rifle. During the most recent contact, the complaining hunter,

advised they asked the adjacent landowner if they intended on continuing to interfere with their hunting and was told they would be returning in the morning. The statements and intention were confirmed with the offending landowner and a Notice to Appear was issued for Hunter Harassment.

District 15 – Sgt. Dave Hyatt (Counties: Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Marion Richland, Wabash & Wayne)

CLAY COUNTY

CPO Smith checked a deer hunter who was not wearing solid blaze orange while sitting in a tree stand. Prior to contact with the deer hunter, CPO Smith found a block of buck rock approximately 25 yards from the tree stand. The hunter was hunting in the area with this son who only had a youth hunting license. CPO Smith issued 1 citation for hunting over bait, and 1 citation for blaze orange. Several written warnings were issued for various wildlife and other violations.

CRAWFORD COUNTY

CPO Willand along with CPO Skelton observed a truck and trailer with 3 harvested deer on it. The harvested deer were tagged, however after speaking with a female hunter from the hunting party, it was discovered the deer were harvested the day prior and had not been legally reported. It was also discovered

members of the hunting party did not have their required licenses or permits on their person. A total of one citation and 5 written warnings were issued.

FAYETTE COUNTY

CPOT Workman and CPO Roper observed a truck traveling slow in a wooded area. The truck stopped to converse with the CPO's. The driver of the truck had a doe deer on a rack on the back of the vehicle. CPO's initiated a hunter compliance check. CPO's discovered a loaded .44 magnum revolver hanging from a holster uncased on the seat of the truck, and an uncased AR-15 Rifle in the back seat. It was discovered the deer on the truck had a different hunters tag on it. After a brief conversation with the driver it was determined he had killed the deer and used his grandfather's tag to tag the deer as he is a nonresident and could only get the one tag. Driver of the truck followed CPO's to Fayette County Jail. The driver of the truck was fingerprinted and released with a notice to appear in Fayette County Court. The driver was issued two citations, and the deer was seized.

JASPER COUNTY

While field training CPO A. Hyatt uncovered a subject that was fraudulently receiving Nonresident landowner permit for property in Jasper CO. During shotgun deer season CPO

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Police ... continued

Taylor and CPOT Roundcount checked the subject and another nonresident hunter on the property. The subject was found in possession of Nonresident landowner deer permits and admitted to not owning or living with the property owner. He was issued 2 citations and taken to Jasper Co. Jail. Other violations are pending. The other hunter was using Effingham county deer permit to hunt Jasper Co appropriate citation were issued.

CPO Taylor and CPOT Roundcount investigated a hunting accident that occurred in Jasper Co. During a deer drive two subjects were walking woods to push deer to hunters standing at the edge of the woods. A buck deer was running through the woods a hunter shot 5 times using a 454 handgun. One of the rounds struck one of the hunters that was walking the woods in the kneecap. Hunter was taken to local hospital then transferred to larger hospital in stable condition.

LAWRENCE COUNTY

In the spring CPO Taylor received a call from a subject stating he found a rifle in woods. CPO Taylor recovered the rifle and ran the S/N through ATF. The owner of the rifle turned out to be out of state hunter that hunted in Lawrence CO. During shotgun deer season CPO Taylor and CPOT Roundcount checked a hunter that had an uncased shot gun in his side by side. The hunter stated that a rifle had been stolen during last shotgun season from his truck. After an interview with the hunter he stated he had been hunting another state using the rifle and the rifle was stolen from

his truck while he was hunting. Subject was issued citation for uncased shotgun and his rifle was returned.

WAYNE COUNTY

On Saturday of firearm deer season CPO Buhnerkempe received information about a possibly poached deer involving nonresident hunters who'd been arrested previously for falsifying residency and poaching 30 deer over the course of a few years. The subjects paid approximately \$18,000 in fines and fees and one subject's hunting privileges were still revoked from that incident. CPO Buhnerkempe conducted interviews and determined the subject violated the terms of his license revocation. He was arrested and booked into the Wayne County Jail.

District 16 – Sgt. Kris Taylor (Counties: Alexander, Jackson, Johnson, Massac, Perry, Pulaski, Union & Williamson)

JACKSON COUNTY

CPO Somers conducted a traffic stop after following a suspicious vehicle for approximately 5 miles who repeatedly stopped in the roadway for varying amounts of time. The driver was in possession of a loaded 5.56 semi-automatic rifle equipped with night vision and thermal imaging scope and a loaded 7.62 rifle equipped with night vision and thermal imaging scope. Driver stated he was actively hunting deer by aid of his vehicle from the roadway using NVGs and thermal imaging.

CPO Somers conducted surveillance of two hunters who were hunting by the aid and use of corn as bait. One hunter was found to be in possession of two untagged deer and still

actively hunting with no additional permits. Both deer were lying dead in the corn that was used for bait. The second hunter was found to be in possession of two untagged deer, one of which was a large eight pointer. Both deer were harvested over bait. The four deer were seized as evidence and the meat was donated.

MASSAC COUNTY

CPO Wolf arrested a man for hunting deer over bait with a .308 rifle. The rifle was seized and the man was issued 4 citations.

PERRY COUNTY

CPO Lewis and Sgt Taylor investigated a fishing without permission complaint in Perry County. The fisherman had driven through a farmer's soybean field to obtain access to closed mine property causing substantial damage to the crops. Complaints were signed by the mine manager and farmer. The two fishermen were arrested and taken to the Perry County Jail where they were charged with criminal trespass to agricultural land, criminal damage to the farmers cash crop and fishing without permission. The farmer estimated the crop damage to be over \$1,000.

UNION COUNTY

CPO Vasicek, assisted by USFW Officer Schelling, arrested 4 Georgia subjects for a myriad of white-tailed deer hunting violations. The "hunters" killed 3 bucks unlawfully with the aid of bait (corn), did not have firearm deer permits, transported uncased (loaded) unplugged shotguns on ATV, had no blaze orange. 2 firearms, 3 crossbows, and 3 white tailed buck deer were seized.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY

CPO Johnson parked, at a location, where he located 2 trucks with Alabama registration. A cooler, with deer meat inside, was also located near the trucks. CPO Johnson left the area and attempted to locate the hunters later in the afternoon. The hunters did not return and CPO Johnson discovered the individuals were in possession of permits in the wrong county. CPO Johnson met with the landowner and got a statement. The individuals were contacted and admitted to killing an 8 point in the wrong county. They said they were unable to get permits for Williamson and bought an adjacent counties permit. The subject, who killed the deer, was cited for unlawful take of an 8-point deer and Hunting without a valid permit.

CPO Johnson was contacted, in reference to a hunting without permission and unlawful take of deer complaint in Williamson County. CPO Johnson obtained a license plate number, of the vehicle used to load the deer, and was able to locate a subject. The subject admitted to hunting the area and killing a buck. The buck was found untagged and the harvest was not reported. CPO Johnson also discovered the subject's father also was hunting without permission and did not tag and report his 7-point deer. They were issued citations for hunting without permission, Failure to tag, unlawful take, and failure to report harvest.

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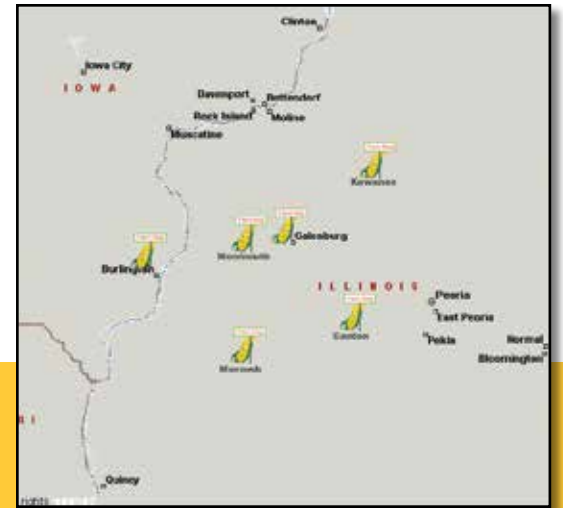
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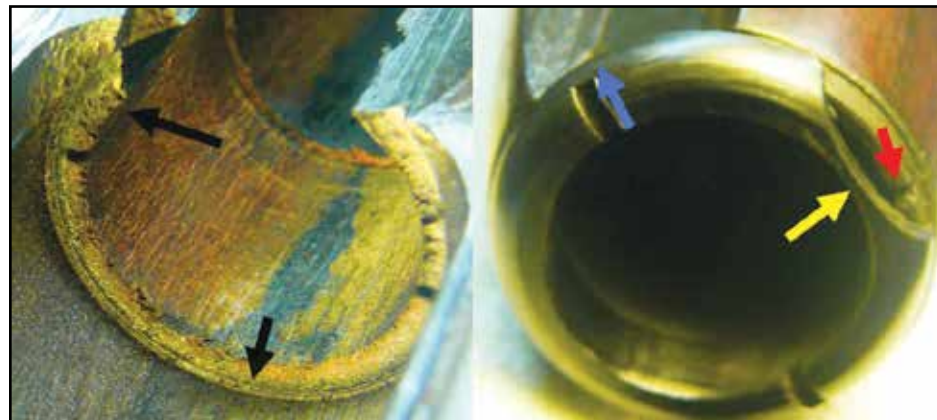
IMPROVING POSITION

Working to remedy some deficiency in a mechanical device can sometimes be limited in the level of restored performance or appearance, or sometimes both, as a particular case may be. If the primary goal is towards performance, but appearance can be helped with minimal input, most would decide to go ahead in both avenues – provided the investment can be limited. The problem with appearance expense is that the operational aspect is not usually improved, and with basic utility mechanisms that don't have such value allowing for typical dress-up, there could be visual benefit from a touch-up at greatly reduced cost. In such a vein, a work car seldom gets new paint, but the owner's wallet might tolerate replaced seat covers or pound out a dent. If some surface deterioration can be made less obviously degraded compared to adjacent areas, the thought of refinish may be pushed back or even eliminated, for the time being.

Finding the first domino will put you on the way to determining the flaw and remedy, and in this case, a loose forend probably became that way from decades of use with no rework. Over time, the wood compresses because the slide strokes forward and back until it stops hard as the bolt bottoms inside the frame, and to a lesser extent when stopping at bolt closure (this impact is absorbed at the front cap nut end of the wood). If bearing wear allows a connecting rod to develop play with the crankshaft in an engine, a rod knock arrives and doesn't get better, as an apt comparison.

However, suppose that some defect in an engine is less severe than a rod knock,

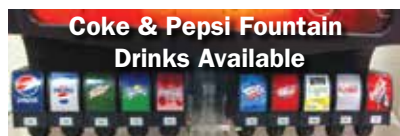
perhaps just generally noisier than normal, smokes a bit, or has the beginnings of a main bearing knock, down deep. These issues may be masked or possibly extend the time that use can be wrung from an older car that has no other serious problems (but doesn't warrant the expense of a replacement engine) mainly by thickening the oil. Using heavier weight oil and even some thickener additives, such as Lucas Oil Treatment, STP, NOSMOKE, and other oil treatments can cushion slack parts and make a loose engine pretend it is tighter, at least for a while, and this is known from personal experience spanning several vehicles in the old days. This type attitude may need to be extended into repair or improvement of devices that are necessary enough to keep working – even if only restored to below par, slightly, but not considered as just limping along, as it were. A gunsmith should fix a split-up stock or forend, so the normal attachments work sufficiently well, since that sure beats using wire or electrical tape to hold fractured stocks together in place (as has been seen on old guns too often for comfort).



As for the forend in question, the wood face in the left image has impacted compression of the contact face and even the edge has crunched fibers raised along the arc spanned by the black arrows. The lower arrow shows a line where the wood and metal flange did not match size, so the wood moved in deeper where pounded

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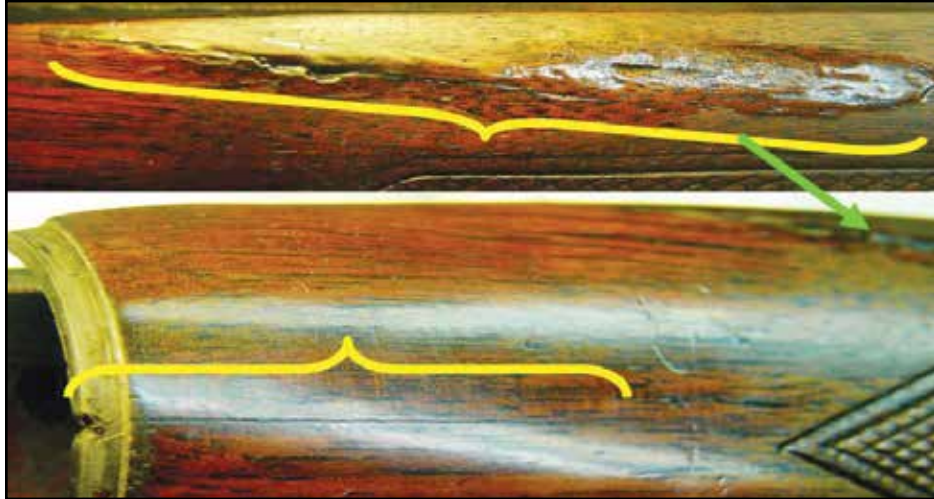
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by the flange on this end; too bad it couldn't fully use the entire contact surface available inside the wood. Some gauge of the slack is seen in the second image with the nut able to be turned $\frac{1}{4}$ turn past the intended place (blue arrow) for the barrel notch cutout (yellow arrow). This is the spot where it got hand tight, but needs more snugging than that when installed correctly: it should have the wood compressed and form considerable nut tension when tight, so figure the approximate loss of a half turn on the nut. This front edge is even more sensitive to slack fit, as it can start the cap nut edge shoving into the wood and/or creating splits, one of which has started at the red arrow (note the notch chip).



The lower image here shows the notch edge (previously seen at the red arrow) and the split is highlighted by a yellow bracket to help visualize the length of the visible crack. The upper image has a deep scratch that someone had partially filled with some substance but could benefit from a bit of fill and smooth during the crack repair and bedding remedial action required. Note the upper bracket shows the span of the initial fill done some time back, and the green arrow shows where that scratch is located in relation to the split requiring repair. One point

of awareness would be to check the adhesion of that initial partial fill in order to assure the latter coverage will adhere as a merged coverage. The next image set will show the details after repair.

Examine the repair and fill to the left end of this forend, with subsequent removal and smoothing of the excess compound concealing the scratch seen at the top of the center image. The split crack is hard to notice, as well, and with a bit of applied finish, fairly concealed and may avoid the thoughts of refinish, at least at the present time. The end image shows how adhesive has been applied to the impacted face and exposed and crunched fibers in order to strengthen this flange contact surface in need of improvement. Some of the leftover adhesive has been used to paint/smear the internal surfaces adjacent to the contacted area, and has also been applied into the front of the wood internally and can be noted as some shine at the center image reflecting from the interior. Provided that some absorption occurred inside the forend (front end, especially), then whatever soaks into the grain has the effect of strengthening the thinner section and improves stiffness overall.

What is most hoped for would be that a well-used forend has had a major scratch/fill defect minimized and some bedding and induced split and wood compression was adequately addressed. The working lifespan has been improved and the repairs should be considered as essentially permanent. If the metal does not have finish loss that looks destined for a re-do, there is no reason that the wood should be given more than touch-up to keep the appearance more uniform between the mechanism and furniture. A somewhat balance in use character is more pleasing to the eye than one section having the look of refinish adjacent to another section crying out for a facelift.



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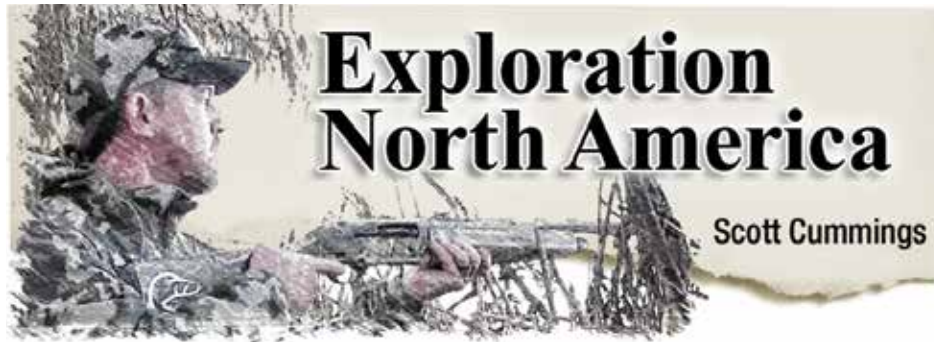
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IN STEP WITH STOHOH

Raising a Bird Dog Series – Part 1: 0-6 Months

As an educator, my teaching philosophy is simple: If you don't know the answer, humble yourself and ask an expert, then be quiet and take notes. And the best way for most folks to understand *anything* is to have it modeled for you.

Hunting dogs, whether they're used to retrieve ducks, flush pheasants, or point quail, need to be properly trained and nourished if you want to see results in the field. This installment is part one of a four-part series, following a *new owner's* two-year journey in effectively raising his German Shorthaired Pointer into a quality gun dog.

The tips I've gathered and executed are penned to encourage all owners, even seasoned hunters like myself, to conquer your fears and reap the rewards of timing

and consistency with your pet. No matter the breed, or type of upland hunting you enjoy. My sincere thanks go out to the folks mentoring me on this project with the hopes I can "pay it forward" in this brotherhood of sportsmen.

EXERCISE AND TRAINING with Joe and Daisy from Winkelman's Gun Dogs, Rockford, Illinois daisywinky@gmail.com

Anyone can let a dog run around the yard, but should there be special considerations when training hunting dogs? "Yes," is the obvious answer.

"Play is important in a young litter, watching them make choices and setting a pecking order amongst siblings. Start the pups running in tall grass at 7-8 weeks to build up muscle tone and teach them to use their noses for picking up



The MWO author's new companion, Stohon Roan Cummings, poses with his playmates.

scents. Pigeons are great when the pups are small and work on basic fetch and retrieve skills. I also like to teach them to climb stairs. We introduce them to water and start them swimming at 8 weeks, if weather permits," informs Daisy.

Pups are sponges; they soak up a lot from ages 8-16 weeks. When selecting my gun dog, I watched a litter play about with the Illinois couple. "While Stohon (or "yellow collar" dog) cohabitated well with his littermates, he also showed signs of independence early on," says breeder Joe Winkelman. "And while we personally

don't field train our dogs with gun fire for about 8 months, he's not shy of it or other loud sounds either. That's good." And so, I made my decision to bring "yellow collar" home at 4 months of age.

For several weeks, your primary concern after bringing a pup home from the breeder is acclimating your new house buddy. Not just hugs and kisses, Stohon needed to sniff and adventure, a learning exercise that'd ease his fears and anxiety. After all, he was just separated from his litter mates and being a GSP with boundless energy, he was like a kid



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learning to shift gears on a manual transmission. A lot of awkward, sporadic action with some grinding, chewing, growling and whining mixed in.

A couple steamy dumps and puddles on your carpet are understandable till they learn to communicate at the back door. Stohon only dremeled one chair leg before we caught on. It is disturbing to see a play duck ripped and bloodied till you realize he just lost another couple baby teeth. Basic fetch and retrieve exercises, without gun shots yet, should be doled out in short 5-10-minute spans before returning to fun runs and play each day.

TRAINING GEAR with Steven Stiner of Lion Country Supply, Port Matilda, Pennsylvania service@lcsupply.com

Like most pups of this nature, Stohon's rapid growth was a weekly observation. More important than racing him through rough woods was to gently train him, but my family first needed him to mind on two-a-day walks. On a visit to his store, Steve Stiner introduced me to a choke collar called the Wonder String, now known the world over as Delmar Smith's Wonder Lead. "The Wonder String is great for problem dogs, beginning dogs or even for ongoing refresher training on leash walking, "heel" and "whoa" commands. You'll wonder how you ever got along without it," says Stiner.

Made from tough cowboy lariat rope, Steve pulled the large loop up to the back of Stohon's ears at the base of his skull, then gently tensed the rope straight up from my dog, so it fit snugly in that spot. While in the tense position, he moved the rubber stopper up the lead 2-3 inches from the small loop and knot, so that when the lead was released it quickly released the stimulation. After 5 minutes of instruction, Stohy went from ripping our arms off to minding beside us, even letting us drop the leash while he waited for his next command. This was alongside a busy highway!

"When you want Stohon to hold point or retrieve on feather decoys and live birds, use an LCS Tangleproof Check Cord for that," offers Stiner. "This 20 ft. rubber leash is incredibly strong and stiff and won't stretch or get caught up on obstacles in the field. It also floats. The extra slack allows you to gauge his curiosity on discovery walks in the field."

NUTRITION with Karl Gunzer, Director of the Sporting Dog Group, Nestle Purina



Getting pups running in tall grasses is a great way to build muscle tone and strength.



"Stohy" proved a natural acumen for bird-dogging early on.

Pet Care karl.gunzer@purina.nestle.com

"Generally, puppies begin weaning around three or four weeks of age and completed by about seven weeks. It is important that your dogs are fed a diet that is formulated for growth of puppies. This can be checked on the Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO) statement on the back of the bag. It should say that the formula is complete and balanced and formulated for growth, or all life stages. Most professionals prefer products that have undergone feeding trials that substantiate nutritional claims over a product that is just formulated according to guidelines."

It is best to not switch a puppy's diet when it first comes to a new home as it can be a stressful time. I made this mistake inadvertently, as the breeder's brand ran out, and Stohon's belly suffered. As I switched to Pro Plan, we simply mixed the brands over the next week till Purina was the dominant feed. A few dollops of canned pumpkin puree were mixed in for a couple days; a tip from a veteran Petco lady that really helped.

Young puppies should be rationed three smaller meals per day. This can be reduced to one-cup feedings in the morning and evening as the puppy ages. The food can be fed wet or dry, but after weaning it's best that the food is not soaked to mush. Puppies need to develop good eating habits



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In Step with Stohon ... cont'd.

and learn to chew their food properly.

"Feeding a high-quality puppy food makes a difference. A couple benefits include firmer stools for easy clean up, less bulk in the digestive tract, and fewer stools make it easier for crate training and house breaking," says Gunzer. On top that, I noticed Stohon began filling out in muscularity and his coat went from dull to shiny and soft in short time.

Prevent the spread of bacteria with adequate fresh water in a clean container daily. Young puppies being crate trained will benefit if you cut off the H2O a few hours before bedtime. Our rule is 7pm, unless he's still exercising later certain days. "Puppies should be fed on a regular schedule, and no human food or treats. Your dog food should supply all the nutrients Stohon needs. Any excess food that has not been eaten in a short time frame should be removed," reminds Gunzer.

VET CARE with Brian Koesters, DVM, Cedar Creek Vet Clinic, Fort Wayne, IN

"Going to the vet repeatedly over several months for vaccinations, and then for boosters or titers throughout your dog's life, may seem like an inconvenience. However, the diseases that vaccinations shield our pets from are

dangerous, potentially deadly, and mostly preventable. For the novice or soon-to-be dog owner, Stohon's vet record might give you a template for how to care for your own pup. Winkelman's handled the first 10 weeks of vaccines and deworming, and I took over at week 16," says Koesters.

2-10 Weeks: Pyrantel Pamoate (wks 2, 4, 6, 10): Dewormer. NeoPar Vaccination (wks 5, 7): Protects against canine parvovirus. Vanguard Plus 5 Vaccinations (wks 10, 13, 16): Aids in preventing distemper, hepatitis, respiratory disease, parainfluenza, and parvoviral enteritis.

16 weeks: The doctor reported, "Stohon's protruding umbilical hernia isn't a concern as it scarred up in a way that closed off further bulging. Eyes, ears, hips look good and his overall demeanor is calm. Muscle tone and weight increase (to 27.5 lbs.) are normal for this age. Interceptor Plus monthly pills will help prevent heartworms transmitted by mosquitos. Fecal Ova & Parasite (poop test) shows negative, so we gave him his Rabies Vaccination and a Distemper Booster for aiding his respiratory, gastrointestinal, and nervous systems."

20 weeks: Stohon put on 8 lbs. to chart him at 35lbs. A Leptospirosis Vaccination was issued, fighting bacteria found worldwide in soil and water.

24 weeks/6 months: In January,

Stohy put on another 7 lbs. (now 42 lbs. and a 15 lb. increase since we got him).

A healthy dog makes a great companion so remember, Prevention = Protection. Follow me for Part 2 of this series, tracking Stohon's development over months 7-12, coming soon in September to Midwest Outdoors!



Stohon's examination with Dr. Koester got the "thumbs up" approval.

Scott Cummings is an avid sportsman, educator, and nationally published freelance outdoors writer and photographer. National Wild Turkey Federation and Wildlife Forever named him their 2013, 2014 Conservation Educator of the Year for his work in and out of the classroom.

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MOREL MUSHROOM HUNTING TIPS: INCREASE YOUR YIELD!

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So you've brushed up on wild mushroom identification and now you're ready for some morel mushroom hunting tips. Whether a novice or veteran hunter, it's helpful to review some commonly held beliefs about finding morels.

Remember that these are just suggestions, nothing is written in stone. You may find them in unusual places, or somewhere not listed here. Nothing's guaranteed, but **the thrill of the hunt is what makes it fun!**

Below is a list of morel mushroom hunting tips I've compiled from research and experience. There are lots of different theories regarding these mushrooms. I've grouped together some of the main ones by time of year, habitat, environmental conditions, and etiquette/personal safety. For a more in-depth look at the practice of the sport, see this page.

Enough talk. Let's learn the secrets of morel mushroom hunting.

Time of Year

- The shortest answer of all the morel mushroom hunting tips: spring.
- Although the reality is that "spring" varies.
- Spring can be February and March for the West Coast and the Southern US. The Mid West sees the most fruitings between late March and early May. In my area on the East Coast, morels usually fruit from late April to early June.
- Parts of Canada and the North Western US will see fruitings into June. Other parts of the world may see some at other times of year, depending on when their spring is.
- The most logical advice I can give for time of year is to start searching during the two months when spring is

considered to be at its height in your area.

- Although if you're truly morel-obsessed there's nothing stopping you from mushroom hunting for the four months around spring!

Habitat

- Some of the most useful morel mushroom hunting tips deal with habitat.

Start by searching near certain trees. Morels are thought to be mycorrhizal, meaning they form mutualistic relationships with the roots of trees. **For this reason, you must learn about the trees in your area.** These are believed to be the trees favored by morels:

- Ash (particularly white ash)
- Elm (dead or dying is best)
- Apple (old ignored apple orchards that is, skip orchards that are very young and still used by man)
- Tulip (yes, there is a tree with this name!)

Another good place to look is in areas of disturbed ground. Mycelia produce mushrooms in response to



environmental stress, so morels are often found around:

- **Burn sites.** One of my favorite mushroom teachers told me "morels love a burn". He's right, as morels

thrive on the nutrients that burned trees release back into the soil. Burn site morels are more common in the West, although it's still worth checking brush/forest fire or burn pit areas the

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Morel Mushroom Hunting Tips... continued

spring after they've happened.

- *Areas disturbed now or in the past by water.* Examples would be old flood plains, near rivers, and near washes.
- *Old logging areas or places with lots of downed trees.*
- *Other places where man has disturbed the ground.* Avoid areas that are overdeveloped or have been chemically treated. You don't know what kind of toxins could be in the mushrooms you find.

Soil composition is another thing to consider. You may not know what's in the soil in your area, so consult a local amateur expert or a geologist (ask around at the nearest college). Morels are often found in these types of soil:

- *Loamy* - meaning a mixture of sand, clay, and decaying organic matter.
- *Soil containing more calcium or lime.* There's so much granite where I live in New Hampshire, you'll often have better morel luck by crossing the border and looking for more calcified soil in Vermont.

Environmental Conditions

More morel mushroom hunting tips exist in regards to soil temperature, air temperature, and humidity. Morels seem to be most commonly found during these environmental conditions:

- *After the first rain.* All mushrooms need moisture, and the rain gives it to them.
- *During the initial warm days and morning of spring.*
- *After the nights start to warm up.* No colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Morel Mushroom Hunting Tips: Etiquette and Personal Safety

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a few things about safety. While not morel mushroom hunting tips exactly, they're on here in the hopes of keeping you and the forest safer:

- *Learn how to properly identify morels.* There are poisonous false

morel look-alikes that can make you sick or even kill. See this page on morel mushroom identification if you need help (includes a quick chart).

- *When wild mushroom hunting, carry your finds in a mesh bag.* Wild mushrooms spread through the dispersal of spores, and the more spores you allow them to drop the better the chances of more mushrooms in the future! Baskets or paper bags don't allow spores to spread, so find something with large holes in it.
- *Don't pick every last mushroom you see.* I know, it's tempting. But leave a few so they can continue to drop spores and you and others can enjoy them for years to come.
- *Don't litter.* Mushroom hunters usually have too much respect for nature to do this but I have to mention it. It's extremely disgusting behavior and you can be fined.
- *Don't directly ask someone where to find morels.* Any mushroom hunter worth his/her salt won't tell you, and depending on where you are you may make some enemies!
- *It's easy to get lost in the woods, especially if you're looking at the ground for mushrooms.* Know your area, or carry a map, compass,



and GPS if you don't.

- *Bring a friend.* Don't wander the woods alone, and it never hurts to carry mace or pepper spray. Think me paranoid? You'll be glad if you have the extreme bad luck of running into an angry moose, a mother bear, an aggressive dog, or an unstable human (most dangerous of all).
- *Beware of ticks!* Where I live in New England, Lyme disease is a growing problem. Always wear long pants, socks, and use some natural bug spray if you have it (DEET free please). Also check yourself when you come home and take a shower.

Lastly, here's the best



of the morel mushroom hunting tips that I can give: **Hope springs eternal.** Don't give up. Keep looking and researching. Most of all remember to have fun and enjoy nature!

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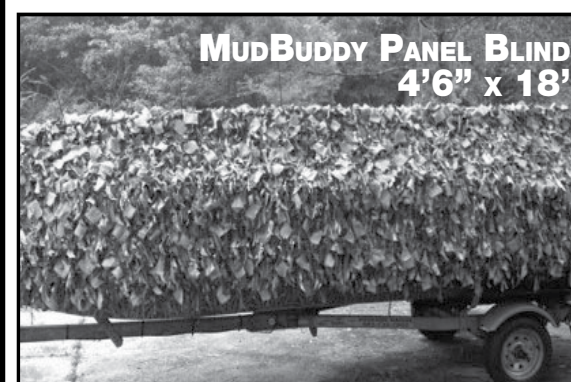
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DEER MATRILINES - WHAT ARE THEY?

By Charles Nixon, Phil Mankin

Female white-tailed deer are socially organized together into matriline, that is, groups of deer related through the maternal line that move, feed and remain together, often for years. These matriline consist of related females of various ages and their offspring that are led by a matriarch, a founding dominant female whose age and experience provides day-to-day guidance to the group.

Deer marked on three areas of Illinois (Brown-Adams, DeKalb and Piatt counties) allowed us to observe the composition of 12 matriline through time (five for three generations, five for four generations and two for five generations). Each of these matriline grew within the large home range of a long-lived dominant female.

Each study area offered deer some refuge protection and contributed to the stability of each matriline. We found that these successful matriline featured: 1) female dispersals and migrations much lower than in the population as a whole; 2) each matriline developed within a large home range that offered succeeding female generations abundant foraging

opportunities and numerous sites to give birth in isolation; and 3) some refuge protection from hunters that enabled members to reach maturity.

Adult females that did not succeed in producing a successful matriline failed because: 1) they lost too many female offspring because of high annual dispersals and/or death rates; 2) they produced too many male offspring in succeeding generations; or 3) their home ranges were small in size, were often situated in landscapes subject to annual hunting pressures or were often located adjacent to high speed highways where deer were often killed. Death of the original matriarch was not a cause of matriline failure as, in each case during

our studies, the oldest surviving daughter became the new leader and the matriline continued on the same home range.

We did not find any significant biological effects as matriline grew larger, at least for the years and matriline numbers we studied. Member survival and female breeding rates were normal for the deer populations we studied.

Studies in Minnesota and New York found that matriline may persist for at least 20 years if left undisturbed. In present day Illinois, however, where hunting pressures are often quite high, such year-to-year stability is rare without at least some refuge protection. Many public lands are now hunted, reducing matriline numbers each year and making

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matriline stability difficult to sustain.

Charlie Nixon is a wildlife ecologist retired from the Illinois Natural History Survey. Phil Mankin is a wildlife ecologist retired from the University of Illinois.

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RING-NECKED PHEASANTS

By Valerie Blaine



Picture an Illinois farm in the old days. My guess is that the image you conjure includes a picturesque red barn, an old Farmall, a sun setting in a hayfield, and a flock of ring-necked pheasants. Perhaps there's a rooster popping up from the fence row or a hen hustling her brood into the bushes. The ring-neck is so ingrained in our image of yesteryear that many folks assume the pheasant is native to the Prairie State. The ring-necked pheasant, though, is a newcomer. Its story begins in the really old days, far before farms and far beyond the ocean of prairie grasses in North America. More than 10 million years ago, archeologists say, pheasants were present in the area now known as southern France. The Romans were familiar with pheasants, and there's evidence that these birds were common in Greece in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. Scholars suggest that pheasants made the trip to the British Isles with invading Normans and Romans.

Ancient pheasants' home turf extended far and wide across Eurasia. "The native range of the ring-necked pheasant stretches all the way across the temperate regions of Asia, from the Black Sea and Caspian Sea eastward to Korea and the coast of China," explained Kenn Kaufman in the January 24, 2017 issue of Audubon magazine.

The pheasant became a favorite of European gentry who enjoyed the birds for sport hunting. In the 1700s, Americans wanted a piece of the action, too. In 1730, governors of the then-Providences of New York and New Hampshire imported ring-necks to their new land. These birds didn't reproduce, though, and the introduction was a flop. That didn't stop Americans from trying. Later in the 18th century, President George Washington bought pheasants for his Mount Vernon estate. Benjamin

Franklin's son-in-law also gave it a try. For many decades, though, the United States remained pheasant-less. In 1880 the U.S. consul general in Shanghai was an Oregonian named Owen Denny. Denny was impressed with the ring-neck pheasants that inhabited the Chinese countryside. He envisioned the colorful roosters and their hens as game birds back home. "These birds are delicious eating and very game and will furnish fine sport," he wrote. Live pheasants were sold in Shanghai marketplaces, and Denny purchased "a large number" of them. He fattened them up and shipped 60 of them across the ocean to Oregon in 1881. Many of these pheasants perished en route. A few released near Portland managed to survive.

Denny continued to ship pheasants to Oregon after his initial attempt. These newcomers settled in and established a breeding population. Washington historian Kit Oldham wrote, "When the first pheasant season opened in Oregon in 1892, hunters reportedly bagged 50,000 birds on the first day."

This was a whopping success, to put it mildly. As the new game birds were catching on in Oregon, other states were eager to bring the birds to



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their turf as well. In a short period of time, 40 states welcomed pheasants to their wild lands. Illinois' first successful population began in 1890, near Macomb.

Although not native to North America, ring-necked pheasants became naturalized. In other words, they successfully bred in the wild and established viable offspring. "By the 1930s," wrote Kaufman, "pheasants were firmly established in most of their current range: abundant on the northern Great Plains, widespread in the interior of the West, and common across the Midwest through much of the Atlantic Coast."

Ring-necked pheasants were the new kids on the block, but they were faring better than native game birds, such as the greater prairie-chicken. Native prairie was disappearing at an alarming rate, but agricultural practices suited pheasants well. Diverse crops, fallow fields and miles of brushy fence rows were an ideal set-up for the introduced birds.

Pheasants enjoyed the ride from the 1930s through the sixties. By some estimates, there were more than 150 pheasants per square mile in north central counties by the 1950s. Annual harvests topped one million birds several times in the 1960s and even into the 1970s.

This was the top of the roller coaster ride for ring-necks in Illinois. The peak was followed by a downward dive. Less than 35,000 birds were bagged in 2017—quite a contrast to the numbers of our grandparents' time. Today, wild birds are an exception rather than the rule.

How did this game bird, once symbolic of the Illinois landscape,

fade from the picture? In a word: habitat. The 1970s ushered an array of agricultural practices that favored plowing from the porch door to the pavement. Instead of a patchwork of small, diverse fields separated by brushy fence rows, the new agricultural landscape is dominated by vast, unbroken acreage of two main crops: corn and soybeans. These monocultures are dependent on hefty doses of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides. This all adds up to big-time habitat loss—not just for pheasants, but for dozens of species of wildlife.

The ring-necked pheasant has come a long way from its exotic origins to its establishment in the Prairie State. The next chapter in its story is being written right now by folks dedicated to habitat restoration. The cackle of the ring-neck, heard first far across the ocean, can still be heard in Illinois, and with our help, our grandchildren will hear it, too.

Valerie Blaine has worked as a



naturalist for more than 40 years, from the prairies and woodlands of Illinois to the shores of the San Francisco Bay. She earned a master's degree in forestry and a bachelor's degree in botany from the University of Illinois. Blaine retired as the Nature Programs Manager for the Forest Preserve District of Kane County.

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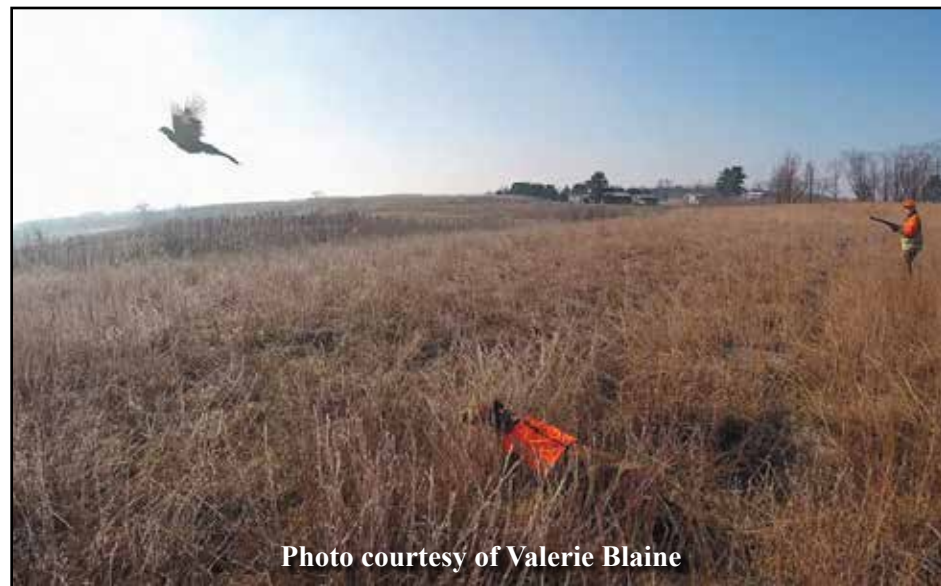


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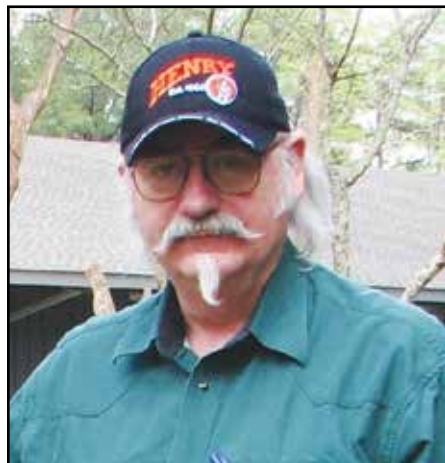
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A SQUIRREL RIFLE SHOWDOWN

By John Simeone

there are even more edible tree squirrels. Over the years it has become an art form for me including inventing a 22-rifle match at the world class level. This article however gets into the Out of the Box performance of three of the most sought after 22 rifles in existence. They are made in America and proud of it and all three grace my collection and I'm sure after you see this, they will yours too.

For the last four years I have been talking about the attributes of various rifles from Henry Repeating Arms. You would think that's all I ever shoot or hunt with, not so. Now it's time to bring out another favorite by Ruger and compare it with two Henry 22 rifles. To be honest I have never owned a Ruger 10/22, so it was about time, as semi-automatic guns never really impressed me. Well it's time to get down and see how the 10/22 shapes up to the Henry Frontier lever action and the Henry Pump action 22 long rifles. All three rifles

are right out of the box with no aftermarket parts or adjustments. Scopes are added for superior accuracy tests being Bushnell and Leatherwood Hi-lux. The Range will be 25 yards for ammo tests and accuracy as this is the average distance edible tree squirrels and rabbits are encountered.



A strange looking squirrel, Armadillos infest my yard and require a bit of culling, the Henry Frontier is always up for the task.

Everyone wants a good-looking rifle for cool points, all three have it in spades as gun beauty is in the eye of the beholder. The two big issues are Accuracy and Reliability. "Only accurate rifles are interesting" and "A jamming rifle is useless" quotes that never go away.

Taking the Ruger to the back yard I decided to jam the rifle if I could. I loaded up with CCI Subsonic hollow points my standard small game load. 10 rounds rapid fire, no jams. That was so much fun I loaded up with Winchester hyper velocity rounds at 1430 fps and opened up on the backstop. It ate them up as fast as I could pull the trigger, no jams right out

of the box. That was a pleasant surprise as I have done this before with negative results from other semi-auto 22 rifles.

The Henry Frontier has never jammed in about 2000 rounds now, while the Henry Pump like the Ruger is just getting into the act but has no jams and one squirrel kill. Time to go to the range for a showdown. There was to be no mercy. I had a whole bunch of different brands of 22 ammo to gum up these rifles I do not intend to clean right away. Lets see what happened.

No frills, right out of the box, the Ruger 10/22 is ready for action on anyone's turf.



The Henry Pump 22, I just had to have one even though it was twice the price of a Ruger 10/22, then I got the Ruger too.

The smaller targets show the kind of accuracy required for the Classic Head shot, not overly intelligent, are they?

Well everyone by now knows I love 22 rifles. I'm an old Arkansas Squirrel Hunter, now in Louisiana where I think

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a Dime to pass my accuracy test at 25 yards. Of course, you can go further but your also dealing with the wind and the sound barrier that can throw a bullet off a little to give a false accuracy reading. Here you will get a good idea of what ammo you may want to start with as I get about the same results each time, I do this. No Lead Sleds are ever used in my gun tests as the human element is a part of the accuracy equation.



The winner, the Henry Frontier, slightly edging the Henry Pump 22, The Ruger 10/22 got honorable mention. 18 Five shot groups took the better part of a day at the range to do right.

The target chosen is the Birchwood Casey "Sight and Glow" two-inch bullseye with a tiny Red dot in the middle. It should be noted that no group or stray round got outside one of these targets and all shots were recorded. If you're going

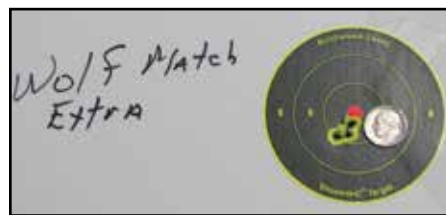
to publish a target these are the easiest to photograph. All three guns were zeroed with CCI Subsonic hollow points and no further sight adjustments were made as this test was for accurate grouping.



The best group of the day was accomplished with CCI Subsonic Hollow Points and the Henry Frontier. Olympic Target ammo was in fact part of the test.



The best Pump Henry group came in third, but the average defeated the Ruger.



The Wolf Olympic target round saved the Ruger 10/22, but was the only group of notoriety for this rifle.

Ammo selection was simple, other than the starting zero rounds the brands were selected at random as I opened the ammo can of assorted 22 ammunition. There were only six kinds of ammo tested as that's all I had room for on one target board. The aforementioned CCI Subsonic hollow point is my standard small game load in all my 22 long rifles. Wolf Match Extra (a Russian Olympic target round that set records at Top Gun Challenge), Fiocchi Winter is a Biathlon match round, Lapua Master M yet another world class target round, Winchester Super X hollow points a proven hard hitting small game round and Aguila Super Extra my favorite practice round. I had much more but concluded this was a good fair group for reliability and accuracy testing.

I have never owned a Ruger 10/22, I do have a Ruger 77/22 and love it, but this was not a bolt action test. This one I purchased brand new and did not feel it was expensive

at the two-hundred-dollar mark at Academy. A new Bushnell 3x9 Trophy was added. Two things were immediate aggravations, the trigger is masy, not crisp and the bolt release that is supposed to go up is difficult to say the least. Otherwise this little carbine is sweet as pie and I like it.

The triggers on the Henrys are not all that great either, but for me, easier to get used to. All three rifles are not Target Class, so it would be the human element of "Don't gripe about the trigger or stock fit" that I would have to contend. My own rule is simple "You fit the gun, it doesn't fit you" if you're a real sharpshooter you can pick up anything and make it work. The maximum range of an excuse is zero meters. The other human element was I was going to have to shoot against myself. They were all my rifles, so I wanted to do my best with each no matter what. It looked to me all things started equal.

The Ruger went first with Conner acting as Spotter and Loader, the first heat looked really good for the Ruger with two Dime groups with the Wolf and Winchester ammo. One mechanical failure came on the last group with a failure to feed. The gun was re cocked and the group was finished with the Aguila ammo. This was not ammo fault I'm afraid. Still everything fired would have been an easy head shot on a Tree Squirrel.

The Henry Pump action rifle was

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A Squirrel Rifle Showdown ... cont.



Boy Scout, Scuba Diver, Football Player, Archer, Sharpshooter and Real Karate Kid. My Student Conner at age 12, just getting started.



Never tell Conner it's a hard shot, his first Top Gun shooting lesson produced two clean, edgewise card splits in a row.

next up to bat. This required I work the action each time by lifting the gun off the bench rest and resetting a new shooting position. Once again, no griping I just did it. All six targets were Dime groups, not differencing from Target or Hunting ammo. That I didn't expect as I know Henry makes a very accurate barrel but nothing like this. I didn't have the Bushnell Trophy turned up all the way, but it was clear this rifle could group well with anything. The action is still a little stiff from newness but there were absolutely no malfunctions. They call it a Gallery Gun, folks this is a Hunter.

Although four years old, my Henry Frontier is still a gun right out of the box. It wears the least expensive scope, but don't tell anyone because the Leatherwood Hi-Lux 3x9 has a brother on my Henry 45-70 and I don't shoot light loads in it. This action is so smooth it makes almost no sound, no malfunctions in about 2000 rounds, it will feed anything. It edged out the Pump 22 only slightly with the smallest group of the day with none other than my CCI Subsonic hollow points that I hunt with. All other groups were Dime groups as well. It was funny as in the end I had forgotten to stoke up the magnification on the scope and shot all the groups on 3 power when I had 9 power, oh well.

The only semi auto Henry makes is the survival AR-7 and is not in the same class as the Ruger. The Ruger was picked as one of the most popular American made 22 rifles. It did have an advantage of a one-piece stock that should have meant a little more accuracy, or maybe not. In my conversations with other shooters almost all voted the Ruger would spank the Henrys in all areas, well it just didn't happen that way.

Henry and Ruger addiction is evident. Like the Potato Chip you can't own just one. The addiction with the Ruger 10/22 is the aftermarket frenzy in which you can

literally aftermarket the entire rifle out of existence. They make a Ruger 10/22 just about any way the imagination can be set, or you can make it yourself with aftermarket items. Or, the Ruger is just fine right out of the box, the way I like it.

Henry's have little in the aftermarket area other than a more open Lever ring or a good set of Skinner sights. The addiction here is with the collector and the nostalgic look of a Lever Action Rifle as a wall hanger or a hunter. I'm hooked on both while either has proven themselves worthy, right out of the box....Pass it on.



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SHED HUNT LIKE YOU DEER HUNT

By Mark Kayser

If you shed hunt this winter, then keep these low-impact practices in mind to minimize your impact on already stressed deer.

You wouldn't hunt whitetails like you shop at Costco, right? Hunting like a coupon-frenzied shopper would most likely be counter-productive. The same is true for shed hunting. To maximize the outcome while minimizing your impact, you need to search for sheds with care. Ignoring this simple procedure could jeopardize future deer hunts with varying consequences.

Early Bird

All whitetail environments are not created equally. Most of North America goes dormant during the winter months, but whitetails living in the extreme southern tier of the nation rarely deal with snow, ice or subzero extremes. The rest of team whitetail, however, lives life in true winter conditions. Harvested crops, overgrazed food plots and winters like those the Abominable Snowman experiences define their life. Their fantasy escape to the Gulf Coast is the hope of a fleeting warmup in February.

In brief, most deer in the heart of whitetail country are at some level of stress. Bucks have shed extra pounds rutting, up to 20 percent in some cases. Does are robbing their own bodies to grow a pair of fawns, and the cupboards are as bare as a grocery store when hurricane warnings sound. Too much stress can cause bucks to shed antlers early, does may abort fawns, and the Grim Reaper is always waiting just outside the door.

Whitetails begin dropping antlers soon after the first of the year, although, the majority drop in February and March across most of the country's whitetail zones. Of course, the biggest bucks tend to shed first due to expending more testosterone in the rut. And as mentioned, a stressful winter could also lead them to drop early.

Traipsing around the woods in a Costco, food-sampling mindset has potential to accentuate that stress. Bumping deer out of cover to pick up the first shed antlers of the year causes deer to burn extra calories, escape to cover they don't know, and possibly create opportunities for predators. Any or all could lead to changes in your fall hunting lineup.

I understand that you don't want to lose that shed antler to warm-day squirrels or a coyote looking for a bone to chew. Nevertheless, an overly aggressive approach to your shed hunting has the potential to increase stress and cause disruptions to the world of whitetails. The best plan of action is to reschedule your shed hunting for later on when the landscape becomes more welcoming.



Disruptive Behavior

Stresses vary from winter to winter; some years your area whitetails could be living The Bachelor lifestyle, while other winters could resemble the horrors the Donner party experienced. Regardless of the winter, one thing is certain: If you hike through whitetail habitat in the middle of winter like you push a shopping cart through Costco, it's going to be disruptive.

Stress aside, most whitetails don't appreciate you picking through their food pantries, snooping in bedrooms and rambling down their trodden byways that show wear-and-tear from survival travel. Taking advantage of your self-assigned visiting hours could cause whitetails to abandon an area to find sanctuary where

the "do not disturb" sign actually works.

Whitetails adhere to their homeland instincts, but slight shifts are not uncommon for survival. Several studies show that whitetails routinely leave preferred home territories — when pressured by humans or other predators — to seek out better winter habitat.

Shed hunting a small property or even a large property that sits adjacent to a Garden of Eden may cause whitetails to reconsider property boundaries. One past winter, one of my hunting buddies was all too eager to collect the sheds off of a potential "Booner" buck. His repeated shed hunting visits created enough chaos that the buck permanently moved to the neighboring property to finish the winter. The neighbor now has that amazing set of sheds, and the buck was a transient between the properties ever after.

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FROM WHERE I SIT

by Marlene Odahlen-Hinz
marleneasomag@gmail.com

November, I was glad to be sitting in a blind when the wind came up out of the north bringing with it a dip in the temperature. I wouldn't have lasted long had I been sitting and shivering in a ladder stand. Granted, it isn't like being next to a campfire, but it sure takes the bite out of those cold, windy and WET days.

COMFORT

For the first time I was able to bring a comfortable chair to sit on instead of just a thin pad that softens

I'm a ladder stand bowhunter and have never really liked hunting out of a blind. I know that over the year's designers have made them easier to put up and conceal.

Earlier I'd broken my ankle in three places, and it wasn't close to being 100 % healed by the time whitetail season opened. I couldn't even climb into my elevated stand safely, so I had no other choice but to use a ground blind. I quickly learned the positives and also the negative of sitting in one this year.

AGE AND INJURY

Ground blinds are definitely worth using as we age or have injuries, afflictions or disabilities that make it dangerous to climb trees. As we age many of us lose the strength and stamina we had when we were younger. I honestly don't like trekking to the "back 40" anymore to reach my favorite stand and when there I find it difficult to pull myself up the ladder, especially when the temperature drops and I have to put on more layers to keep me warm.

WEATHER

Since I found myself hunting into



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the metal platform I have on my ladder stand. Plus, I didn't need to wear a 5-point harness.

SPACE

For the first time I had places to put my calls where they were in easy reach. I could bring snacks and not have to worry about being "busted" should I reach for my backpack to retrieve something.

I also quickly learned about the negatives of using a ground blind.

SHOOTING

I had to make sure my arrow cleared the blind which meant drawing back several times until I was sure no part of the blind interfered with the arrow flight. I tried kneeling, but at my age it was difficult to get back up into my chair. (Just wait, you'll understand this dilemma in a few more years.)

FIELD OF VIEW/HEARING

I am used to seeing a vast amount of area from an elevated stand, but not so with a ground blind. I had to face the window I chose to shoot through along the most obviously traveled trail.

I would miss any action that happened behind me since it is important to keep windows covered. I found I was really restricted as to the direction I could shoot to.

I also rely on my ears to detect anything coming from behind. So that I can remain absolutely still until it comes into view. During the rut bucks can come from any direction and I am constantly aware of any twigs snapping, soft grunts or dried leaves crunching. This sense is lost to me in a blind.

DARKNESS

As the sun goes down so does any natural light. Because the windows must be blackened the ability to see my sight pins was compromised. I found myself heading back to camp sooner than I would have had I been in a ladder stand and often that is when the deer feel comfortable moving to feeding areas.



It takes time to brush in a blind

Blinds definitely have their place among the gear I use but there are also drawbacks to using them. I just have to recognize their limitations and their benefits.

Until next month, don't forget to take your daughter, granddaughter or niece bowhunting.



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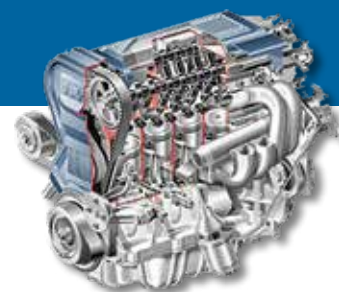
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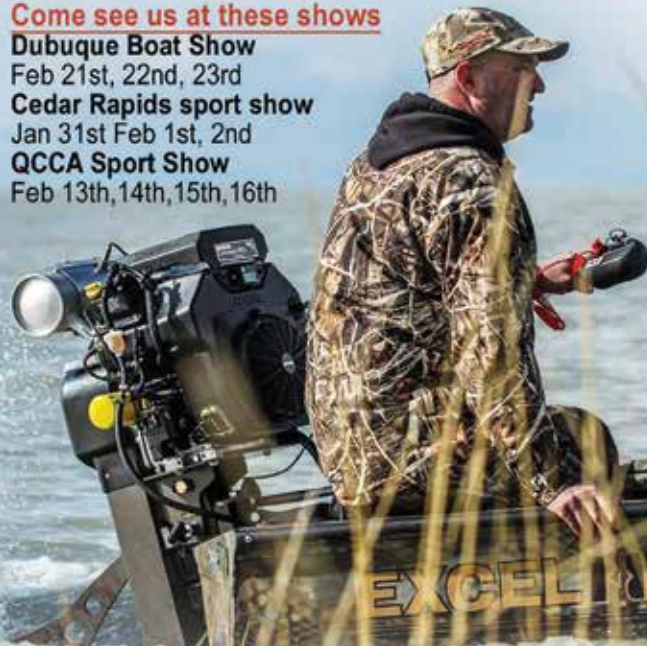
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INTRODUCING DOGS TO GUN FIRE

by Dave Molyneaux

How many times have we seen pups tied to a bench at your local skeet range? Or, how about the fellow who has a complaint regarding how his new pup has been determined to be gun shy. He simply fired a shotgun over the pup to test his response and reaction.

There are many ways to acclimate young gun dogs to loud noises. Many owners start with having metal cans and dishes for litters to play with, getting the pups accustom to the constant clanging so sounds are virtually ignored. The proper way to introduce a dog to the sound of a gun report is with a distraction. When done correctly the pup will not only accept the sound of gun fire, but also relate it to birds as a good thing.

We want to begin by creating a bird crazy dog. Pigeons are inexpensive and seem to take to being roughed up by a pup quite well. Take a bird and cut the wing feather short on one side only to prevent it from flying away. Tie its two feet together so as to stop it from running away. You now have a bird that will not intimidate even the most sensitive or soft pup.

The inexperienced dog should be on a check cord so we have complete control of the situation. The object is to get that pup as excited as possible using an enthusiastic higher pitch voice and lots of strokes of encouragement. Throw and toss the bird only a few feet at a time so you are right next to your dog when he mouths the bird. Do not show any emotion if the dog happens to get too rough with the pigeon. For if you rush in all excited trying to

save the bird, the dog will read your body language and begin to shut down, reducing his bird drive. The very best outcome we can observe is your pup actually picking up the bird and carrying it around. This will reflect the ultimate in his interest and prey drive. This is important for two reasons. It will take a lot of confidence for a pup to pick up a struggling pigeon, which obviously we are making progress. Secondly, to be completely distracted to gun fire, we need a bird crazy dog.

Let us go about taking your pup out into the field to introduce him to a gun report. This will take two people so put some distance between the dog and the gun. You can initially start out with larger gauge shotgun, but it is not advisable. Something of a smaller gauge or starter gun is to be stationed at least 60 yards from

the dog. As the handler begins to work the dog and bird together, the gunner will be signaled at the appropriate moment. Like all training, the timing is critical when the signal is given. The gunner is to shoot the firearm when the bird is thrown and is at the apex, being the highest portion of the ark, as the dog is running for the bird.

It is important for the dog handler to read the dog's reaction correctly. If there is any apprehension, then the report is too close. It is up to the handler to guide the gunner to move in ten-yard increments either closer or back.

There is a great advantage to this method of introducing a pup to the sound of gun fire. You not only are able to accustom a pup to the sound, but you are also establishing the correlation that birds and gun fire go together. These are the dogs that go nuts at the sight of you grabbing your gun and hunting clothes.




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HARD MOUTHS AND POOR RETRIEVES

by Dave Molyneaux

This is not an article on how, but why force fetch training should be considered for your dog. The vast majority of gun dog owners are not content with their dog's retrieves. Many of us compromise with the retrieving problems, not realizing that the dog can be taught to have an intense, professional looking retrieve. Most of us have either owned or have seen where the dog runs over to the bird and leaves it for the next find. Or, how about mouthing problems? Like the "pluckier", the "tenderizer", the "crusher" or even worse, the "eater." Why own one of these dogs when the annoyance can be cured easily at home?

There is a total misconception of retrieve training often referred to as 'forced retrieve training'. The process of achieving the perfect fetch is obtained not because the dog has been overpowered by being intimidated or by pain. Training by repetition over a period of fifteen minutes a day is all it takes. When you are finished you will have control over such things as rolling a bird in its mouth or playing with it prior to picking the bird up and dropping on the

retrieve. First and foremost, this is not an overnight fix. The concept of force fetch is that you are no longer ASKING your dog to retrieve, but COMMANDING it to do so. Go get the object, not fumbling around, and present it to me and open your mouth on my request.

The process of force retrieve training will fix all of these problems. There is also even a command taught to freeze your dog's mouth from a distance. Thus, allowing you to stop and prevent any future bad mouth habits from occurring from several feet away in the future. If the pup refuses to comply, it can be reprimanded with an ear pinch or an e-collar stimulation. By stimulation, I don't mean a painful ZAP. For this would cause the dog to drop the object, mentally shut down, and desert the whole retrieving situation. Incidentally, when force fetch training is being done with the e-collar, the receiver is placed on the back of the neck, not on the throat area we are so accustomed to seeing it. Dogs move away from discomfort, so this teaches them to reach down and pick up the object selected. Often times a vibrator

or tone is all that is needed as persuasion.

To achieve an ideal looking style retrieve, which is straight out and straight back, it takes about fifteen minutes a day for approximately six weeks. Obviously, if you spend more than one lesson a day this process would take considerably less time. The dog learns through consistency and repetition. All commands are obeyed and without any exceptions. If a "test of wills" occurs, use repetitions without losing your temper, which will succeed over all else. One word of caution though, once you begin the force training program you cannot stop till the dog is fully trained. This is a commitment that cannot be dropped mid-stride in the training program. Your pup will learn that he can beat you by using bull-headiness, which he will intensify whenever he wants to get his own way, like not retrieving.

An e collar is not totally necessary to conduct force retrieve training; for years, dogs have been trained without the use of one. Oddly as it may seem, there is a lot less stress on both the teacher and the pupil when using the e-collar. Simply put, the timing of the corrections can be



more correctly applied with the e-collar. It is wise to also install the long probes on the collar so it doesn't have to be as tight and more comfortable for the dog.

There are several good books available, but the videos are much better because they allow you to see the process and view the importance of the timing of the corrections. What they say holds true here, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Whether you choose to force train your dog yourself or use a professional trainer to do the task, there is no reason to compromise, or make up excuses when bad retrieves occur. Retrieving problems, like all bad habits, get worse with time.

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MOREL MUSHROOMS: THE HUNT AND HARVEST IN SHAWNEE FOREST COUNTRY OF SOUTHERNMOST ILLINOIS

Have you ever wondered where Morel mushrooms grow? Morels grow throughout North America, and there are some fantastic hunting spots right here in Southernmost Illinois. They can be found around dead Elms, Poplar trees, Old Ash and Apple trees, and various other places. They love rain and cool nights followed by warmer temperatures. Morels in the gourmet world are considered a delicacy.

The Morel mushroom comes in several different varieties. The most common, seems to be the yellow Morel followed by the gray Morel. These mushrooms can appear as early as March and have been spotted through the month of May, but April is generally the best month. They can appear to grow overnight, so a good site can produce Morels over and over again during a season. **Giant City State Park** has a free program on April 11 from 1 to 2:30 that will focus on Mushroom hunting. Call 618-457-4836.

Giant City Visitor Center offers books for sale about mushroom hunting. Join Flyway Family Farms for the **Makanda Mushroom festival** April 18-19, 2020 for Mushroom educational



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classes and workshops. Private guided mushroom hunts with a certified mycologist are offered at the Garden of the Gods Outpost and thru Timber Ridge Outpost and Cabins 815- 693 -1422

Morels should never be eaten raw because of a natural toxin they produce. They have evil cousins called false Morels, which can be toxic and poisonous. On your



first hunt, make sure to go with an experienced Morel hunter and carry a good Morel identification book. If you are uncertain whether it is a Morel or not, leave it be.

Internationally known Chef Lasse Sorensen, owner of Tom's

Place Fine Dining will be serving up some of these delicacies in April at his restaurant in De Soto, IL. If you've never had a chance to try these delicious mushrooms, make a reservation for the Morel dinner at Tom's Place.



For more information about Exploration and Morel Hunting in Southernmost Illinois contact:

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WATERFOWL 2020



IDNR ANNOUNCES PROPOSED WATERFOWL SEASONS FOR 2021-2025

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed waterfowl hunting zone lines and season dates for the 2021–2025 seasons. The five-year proposal will be reviewed by the IDNR Natural Resources Advisory Board (NRAB) at its meeting March 30 in Springfield.

The proposal was generated after reviewing waterfowl abundance based on aerial inventories, average freeze dates, waterfowl hunter harvest data and hunter preferences as measured by multiple years of mailed surveys (Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey), meetings with waterfowl hunting constituent groups, five public open house meetings and questionnaires filled out at those open houses, and emailed comments. Information presented at open houses can be viewed on the IDNR website at this link: [Waterfowl](#).

Proposed waterfowl regulations were presented to members of the NRAB and IDNR Director Colleen Callahan at the Board's

January 13 meeting, and the March 30 meeting will provide an opportunity for NRAB members to discuss the proposal and suggest changes or alternatives to the staff proposal. Once final regulations for Illinois waterfowl hunting are determined, they will be presented online and must be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service no later than April 30, 2020.

IDNR Wildlife Resources staff has recommended no changes to existing waterfowl hunting zone lines. Previously proposed changes (Option 1 and Option 2) did not receive strong support.

Among the recommendations:

- Season dates in the proposed regulations are similar to current dates in the North and Central zones, but trend slightly later than dates used during 2016–2020 to match hunter preferences and waterfowl migration.
- South Central Zone dates move a week later in two years but remain similar in other years to avoid opening day conflicting with first weekend of Firearm Deer Season in Illinois.

- South Zone dates have been shifted to either the Saturday following Thanksgiving Day or the Saturday following Thanksgiving weekend to match waterfowl migration and hunter preferences to maximize January hunting days.
- Teal season dates remain similar to 2016–2020 dates, while avoiding opening day falling on Labor Day weekend.
- Canada goose season dates have not changed and will include 15 days in September and reopening with duck season in each zone.
- Later Canada goose seasons were not considered at this time due to ongoing evaluation of the 3-goose daily bag limit and potential impacts to subarctic breeding Canada goose populations which still make up a substantial proportion of Illinois' goose harvest.
- White-fronted goose season dates will be similar to current dates.

The proposed 2021–2025 waterfowl season dates and a map of waterfowl zone lines can be found on the attached press release.



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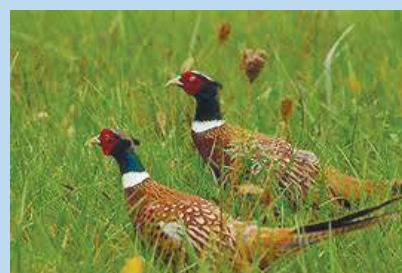


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IDNR ANNOUNCES 2020 WINGSHOOTING CLINIC SCHEDULE

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), in cooperation with partners and co-sponsors, will conduct wingshooting clinics at sites throughout Illinois from March through mid-November. Wingshooting clinics are intended to provide instruction and improve the shooting skills of beginning shooting students as well as experienced hunters. Most clinics are conducted weekends at IDNR sites, cooperating gun clubs and shooting ranges, hunting preserves, and farms.

Youth/Women's Wingshooting Clinics are designed to provide instruction on safely and successfully shooting a shotgun at flying clay targets. Girls and boys ages 10-15, young adults ages 16-18, and women of all ages are eligible to participate. Each clinic starts with a morning shotgun safety presentation, followed by a short small group hands-on shotgun orientation session with each group's wingshooting instructor. After a lunch break, students spend the afternoon in the field shooting flying clay targets on presentations designed for beginning and novice shooters. Most youth/women's clinics are provided at no cost to participants while some have a nominal registration fee. Shotguns, shotshells, clay targets, safety glasses and hearing protection are provided.

Hunter wingshooting clinics are hands-on and include extensive opportunities to shoot a variety of clay target presentations on sporting clays courses specifically designed for hunters. The clinics consist of two wingshooting sessions each day. A short briefing about shotgun safety, handling and on-range safety protocols occurs during the first 15 minutes of each four-hour shooting session. The clinics, designed for shotgun shooters with reasonable experience, will improve the wingshooting skills of hunters and others who enjoy shooting sports. Young shooters ages 12 to 15 must be in at least the "intermediate" skill level category to enroll in these clinics. Young shooters 12 to 15 must also be accompanied by and shooting with an adult who is participating in the hunter clinic. Shotgun shooters 16 and older with beginning to advanced wingshooting skills who want to improve their shotgun shooting skills are encouraged to attend. The fee is \$30 or \$35 per participant for hunter clinics.

Clinics are taught by instructors certified by the IDNR. Many clinic instructors also have a National Sporting

Clays Association (NSCA) instructor certification. The participant-to-instructor ratio is usually four-to-one. Participants are typically grouped with others of similar shooting ability.

The 2020 clinic schedule includes several special events. The IDNR Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program offers shotgun shooting classes as part of an extensive outdoor skills

program. The Healing Outside of a Hospital (HOOAH) Program provides sporting clays shooting opportunities under the supervision of IDNR wingshooting instructors to active duty military personnel recovering from injuries and to veterans with disabilities. Another special wingshooting clinic involves combining a youth wingshooting clinic with a pheasant hunt. Advantages

of this combination of activities for the participating young hunters includes enhanced shotgun safety training, improved wingshooting skills and higher success when afield hunting. There are eight of these wingshooting clinic/pheasant hunts planned during the spring and fall in 2020.

To access the 2020 IDNR Wingshooting Clinic Schedule and information on registering for clinics, check the IDNR Website at www.dnr.illinois.gov. The Wingshooting webpage can be accessed directly at the following link: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/recreation/wingshooting/Pages/default.aspx>

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KEEP YOUR FISHING BOAT TIDY

By Jason Houser

I do not know if it has ever happened to you or not, but I have been accused more than once of having an unorganized fishing boat.

There was a time in my life that every time I headed to the water; I was unprepared for the day ahead. Sometimes, tackle would be left behind, the fishing net was buried under clutter in the bottom of the boat, and there were times I forgot gear behind at the house. Not everyone reading this is as bad as I once was, but I bet everyone from time to time could have been more prepared.

Anglers are known to get tunnel vision, and the only thing they can think about is being on the water and catching fish. When this happens, they are liable to get in too big of a hurry or forget things. This can cause what was going to be a good day of

fishing to turn bad. In some cases, you might not even be able to fish, depending on what you left behind.

The good news is that it does not have to be that way. With a little time spent thinking ahead, you can tidy your boat up. Once completed, you will not have to worry if you have everything or not. With all your gear stowed away in an orderly manner in its place, you will have more productive time that you can use to spend fishing, not looking for tackle.

It all begins by knowing what you will spend the day on the water fishing for. Different equipment will be required for spawning bass than what you would need for fall musky, or bluegill vs. catfish. Do not take tackle that you will not use. It will only be in the way, and cause clutter on the floor of the boat you do not need.

I fish for just about every fish that swims. I have a large tackle box full of nothing but bass fishing lures, plastic worms, hook, weights, spinners,

and so on. I have a small box with assorted panfish hooks, weights, and bobbers. Another is ready for catfish, and still another ready for walleye and musky. You get the picture. This year to help keep my lures, terminal tackle, gear, and other items organized I have switched to the Edge Series from Plano. Besides keeping everything organized, they help prevent rust and they keep water out.

When I get ready to go fishing, all I have to do is grab the box I need and put it in the boat. Each box in the Edge Series can be identified easily with their EZ Label™ system for quick identification of contents.

When fishing, there is no other piece of equipment more important than the rod and reel combination. For that reason, it is necessary to have a rod holder or rack of some type in the boat to keep them from getting stepped on, as well as out of the way.

Depending on the size of your boat, it might already have a rod



Don't let an unorganized boat keep you from catching fish.

holder. Some larger boats come from the factory with rod boxes, or another type of rod holders. For those boats that do not, it is up to you to build a holder of some type or purchase a tubular rod holder. When choosing the location to put a Velcro or groove type rod holder, it needs to be out of the way and easy to get to.

Other equipment such as first aid kits, coolers, towels, rain gear, cameras, and the like also need to be

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Having your gear organized and in places easy to get to, it will be easy to net your next fish without having to trip over everything.

out of the way. Many boats come with plenty of storage compartments under the seats and on the deck. For those that do not, rubber totes are good to keep the clutter to a minimum, while still keeping those items protected and easy to get to.

With a little planning, all of your

gear will be in your boat, easy to get to. So, the next time a big trout attacks your lure, you will be able to get to your landing net without having to move a lot of non-essential items. It might seem too simple, but a tidy boat makes for a better day of fishing.

ISRA ALERT

We have received word from the Secretary of State's office that all events at the Illinois State Capitol have been cancelled due to the coronavirus threat. This includes Illinois Gun Owner Lobby Day (IGOLD) that was scheduled for Wednesday, April 1, 2020. We have tentatively rescheduled the IGOLD event for Wednesday, May 13, 2020. We regret any inconvenience caused by this cancellation. We will keep you updated.

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HOT ACTION FOR OHIO RIVER WIPERS

by Tom Berg

The mighty Ohio River on Illinois' southern border is home to an incredible fishery. Whether you are fishing for huge catfish, tasty walleye and sauger, slab-sized crappies or spunky spotted bass, the Ohio River is almost always a great place to wet a line. As long as the river is not at flood stage, the fishing here can be hard to beat.

One of the most prized species, especially during the springtime and early summer, is the hybrid striped bass. Hybrid stripers are also called wipers, and they are a genetic cross between a male white bass and a female striped bass. They are aggressive, fast-growing fish that are highly sought-after by anglers.

Wipers have a deep, streamlined body with silvery sides and a white belly. They have several black horizontal lines or stripes on their sides, and the stripes above the lateral line are usually broken. Like striped bass, wipers have two patches of teeth on their tongues, while white bass have only one. The tooth patches on their tongues can be hard to distinguish, though, so most people identify them by the broken black stripes on their sides.

In the swift current of the river, the power and speed of a big hybrid striped bass is incredible. They always use the current to their advantage and if your reel's drag is not set properly, they will snap your line in an instant. Since they look silver/white under the water and are such speedy swimmers, some fishermen refer to them as "Ohio River white lightning". When you hook your first wiper, you'll know exactly why they are called white lightning!

Wipers are a schooling fish, and they can get very large. They usually weigh anywhere from 5-10 pounds, but they can reach weights of more than 20 pounds. The Ohio River hosts large populations of shad and skipjack herring, and the wipers grow quickly by gorging themselves on these fish whenever they get the chance.

Where to Find Wipers

Wipers can be caught almost anywhere on the river at one time or another, but the best bet for finding

them consistently is to concentrate on the tailwater areas beneath the dams. Hybrid stripers are naturally attracted to flowing water and areas where the turbulent current can confuse and injure shad and other small baitfish.

Gizzard shad are fairly fragile fish, and it doesn't take much bouncing around on the rocks to injure or disorient them. Shad that get sucked through the spillway gates are often wounded or killed outright. Injured or wayward minnows don't last long in the tailwaters when a school of hungry wipers appear!

Since wipers know there is usually plenty of food around spillways, the swift current and confused water right below the dams can be a real hotspot. Certain locations around these current areas are better than others, too. Wipers generally won't stay right in the swiftest water. There are sometimes small spots between the gates where the water is slack (or at least not roaring) where they congregate. The hybrids also cruise the current edges and watch for unsuspecting or injured baitfish tumbling along.

The swirling water directly beneath the dam gradually becomes calmer as it moves away from the spillway, and this transitional area can also be a great spot to fish. Baitfish that are attracted to the current and super-oxygenated water generated by the dam often swim around here, 100 or 200 yards downstream of the dam. Of course, wipers patrol this area hoping to intercept them.

Note: Be very cautious when



This Ohio River angler battles a bruiser hybrid striped bass in the swift current. Photo by Tom Berg.

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fishing near spillway gates and in the strong current below the dams. Don't get too close and use your trolling motor to keep the boat in position. Rough water is dangerous, and you don't want to risk capsizing your boat.

The rocky riprap areas along the shoreline adjacent to the dams can be a great place to target hybrid striped bass, too. Schools of shad frequently roam through this slower moving water, and groups of wipers follow them and try to herd them up against the shoreline. Shore fishermen get in on some really hot action when a big school of hybrid stripers trap the shad against the shore.

Look for signs of fish breaking the surface as the wipers corral and chase these large schools of shad. The bass often go into a feeding frenzy, and as long as you can get a bait into the strike zone you can experience some fabulous action. It is not unusual to hook a fish on every cast during these short feeding frenzies. Long casts, either from shore or from a boat, are often required to get your bait or lure in front of the fish without spooking them.

Productive Baits for Hybrids

Hybrid striped bass are voracious

fish eaters, and the river's resident shad are one of their favorite foods. Gizzard shad and threadfin shad may make up the bulk of their diet, but emerald shiners, small skipjack herring and other baitfish are eaten, too.

It only makes sense, then, for anglers to use baits and lures that resemble shad and minnows when fishing for them. Live shad are one of the best baits, but they are hard to find at bait shops and even harder to keep alive in a livewell. Some fishermen use cast nets to gather their own bait as soon as they hit the river, and others rely on dead bait.

Dead shad and cut baits are usually not as productive as live ones, but they can be good when bounced along the bottom with the river's current. Cast a dead shad or a skipjack chunk up near the spillway gates and let the current carry it downstream. Hopefully the wipers will think it was killed when it got sucked through the gate and they'll snap it up. Of course, dead shad and skipjacks are easy to freeze and reuse on future trips, too.

During a hot wiper bite, live bait or natural baits are not needed at all. Lures allow you to keep your bait in the strike zone for longer periods of time since you



Success! A big wiper is in the boat. Photo by Tom Berg.

don't have to re-bait a hook. Good lure choices for Ohio River wipers include various sizes of Reef Runner Ripshads, Rapala Shadraps and other shad-imitating crankbaits. Plastic swimbaits like the Vudu Shad and the Jackall Glossy Shad are also a great choice.

Casting spoons take plenty of wipers, too, and some of the heavier spoons like Dardevle spoons, Al's Goldfish spoons (Northern Edition) and Mepps Syclops allow the long casts often required to reach the fish. If you use a spoon, be sure to use a swivel to eliminate line twist. The clear Invisawivel works great and is nearly invisible underwater, so give it a try.

Lure colors are easy to choose when fishing for hybrids. Since your



The net man gets ready to scoop a big wiper that his fishing partner is battling in the tailwaters below the dam. Photo by Tom Berg.

lures should be mimicking shad, silver or gold are always top choices. Silver/black, silver/blue and silver with a splash of red are all good. White is another excellent color, and chartreuse can also be productive. Experiment with different colors if the action is slow to see what the fish want.

April is one of the best months to enjoy a day of fishing out on the river, especially if you are targeting bruiser hybrid striped bass. Be safe and bring along your best tackle. These powerful fish will really put it to the test!

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HIGGY'S STAND

By Don Higgins

BIG BUCKS ARE EASY!



OK, now that I got your attention with the title of this article, I will confess that it is a bit misleading.

Any deer hunter knows that consistently tagging giant mature bucks is a bit tougher than simply consistently killing "bucks". On the other hand, I think a lot of folks in the hunting industry and especially whitetail consultants have made it out to be a lot more complicated and harder than it really is. Let me explain.

I am blessed to visit a lot of consulting clients on properties all across the country. In fact, over the past two winters I have met with more than a hundred clients in a dozen states. I also speak with deer hunters every single day through my hunting-related business ventures as well as friendships that have been developed over the years. This constant communication with deer hunters has given me a pretty good handle on the mind-set of the "typical" would-be big-buck killer. I can clearly see that many of these folks have been seriously misled regarding what it takes to consistently tag giant mature bucks.

Mature bucks are certainly a different animal than the average deer, but they are not the super-complicated mystery-beasts that some have made them out to be. Hunting them successfully definitely requires a different approach than typical deer hunting if one hopes to tag them on a regular basis. With that said, once a hunter makes some changes to his or her hunting approach, consistent success becomes very possible. One must first accept that there are a whole lot of fewer older bucks than "average deer" and they behave a bit differently. This does not mean they are as complicated as some make them out to be, however.

In many instances the internet has become the mis-information highway in regard to material related to deer management and hunting mature bucks. It is full of "experts" who are offering advice on something they have never done successfully. The blogosphere is

filled with ridiculous information put forth by consultants and others who have muddied the waters causing many deer hunters to think that managing a property for mature bucks and killing them consistently requires a superior degree of knowledge and skill-set. This is simply not true as evidenced by this simple country boy. Believe me when I say, "if I can do it, anybody can do it."

One of my biggest challenges as a whitetail consultant is getting some of my clients to forget much of what they have read on the internet. Here is an example; I had at least two clients this winter that just couldn't seem to accept that mature bucks and does will share the same bedding areas or that multiple mature bucks will bed near each other. They were convinced that a mature buck just won't bed in the same area as another mature buck or does and when I tried to explain that this is simply not true and mention that I have seen multiple instances where it has happened, they looked at me like they weren't sure what to believe. There are numerous other examples of misinformation that a lot of deer hunters have accepted as fact.

I try to simplify things regarding whitetail land management and consistently killing mature bucks whereas I often see others trying to complicate these things. One of the first things I tell those attending my Whitetail Master Course is that killing big mature bucks is pretty darn simple, don't make it harder than it really is. The internet has reached the point where I now believe that close to half of the information being spread regarding whitetail land management and hunting mature bucks actually does more to harm a hunter's chances of mature buck success than help it.

I strongly suggest that you closely look at the hunting success of anyone providing the information you are digesting. It really doesn't matter if the person has a fancy website, a decked out truck, a long list of sponsors, a title after their name, a million social media "likes" and followers, if they give seminars, wrote a book or come

highly recommended by a big name in the hunting industry. These things may give the impression of credibility, but I promise you a mature buck is not impressed with any of them. It really comes down to "bucks on the ground". New ideas and unproven theories do not put mature bucks on the ground. If an idea has merit, then the promoter needs to go out and prove it before they push it ... and not with middle-aged 3 and 4-year-old bucks but ones that are truly mature. As whitetail students, I don't think it is too much to ask for you and I

to see the proof before we buy in.

There are plenty of high-integrity people in this industry putting out great material. I consume everything these folks put out and continually learn from them. I urge you to do the same. Today we have more world-class bucks and world-class deer hunters than ever before. We also have more world-class marketers and world-class bullshitters peddling fairy tales in an effort to make a buck. Be careful what you believe and look closely at who is promoting it. Everything that glitters is not gold.



ILLINOIS DNR NEWSBITS MARCH 2020

Spring Turkey Applications: 2020 Illinois Spring Wild Turkey Season permits still available after the lottery drawings will be sold over the counter by DNR Direct license and permit vendors beginning March 10. Go to the IDNR website for more information: <https://bit.ly/396Ccmw>.

2020 Licenses Now Available: Illinois fishing, hunting and sportsman combination licenses for 2020 are now available from DNR Direct license and permit vendors throughout Illinois, or online through the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov. The new license year in Illinois begins April 1, with 2020 licenses valid through March 31, 2021.

Illinois Bobcat Harvest: The 2019-2020 Illinois Bobcat Season ended Feb. 15, 2020 with 335 bobcat permits filled. The bobcat harvest was 306 (the same as during the 2018-2019 season) and there were an additional 29 roadkill bobcats salvaged by permit holders. There were 1,000 permits issued for the season. The percentage of bobcats taken by hunting was 45 percent and trapping accounted for 46 percent (the remainder were salvaged by permit holders). Pike County led the harvest with 22 bobcats. The IDNR appreciates the support of hunters, trappers and IDNR staff who collected jaws for bobcat research at SIU Carbondale and of cooperating landowners and trappers in central Illinois who have helped with bobcat research at Western Illinois University. The IDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fund research to continue learning about Illinois' only feline furbearer. The recovery of this species, as well as many others, and continued research are possible because

of the support of the sportsmen and sportswomen of Illinois. A table with bobcat harvest totals by county can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2T7cbhj>.

Becoming an Outdoors Woman: Registration is open for the IDNR 'Becoming an Outdoors Woman' Workshop June 12-14 at the Lorado Taft Field Campus in Oregon, Ill. Becoming an Outdoors Woman workshops are designed to provide introductory instruction and experiences in many outdoor-related activities and skills. The cost per person is \$245, which includes meals, lodging, four instructional classes, use of class materials/supplies, transportation during the workshop, and more. The June workshop usually fills up fast, so don't delay in registering. Registration materials can be found at: <https://bit.ly/32C2PgZ>.

Seed Packets Available: The IDNR Mason State Nursery has developed a seed mix of Illinois native forbs and grasses that is suitable for use in developing a monarch/pollinator habitat. Tree seedlings also are available for sale. For ordering information, visit: <https://bit.ly/3acm2rW>.

Camping Reservations: It is time to make reservations for campsites and shelters for many Illinois state parks and other IDNR sites for 2020. Reservations can be made online through the Reserve America website at www.reserveamerica.com using a Visa or MasterCard.

Hunter and Boating Safety Education Courses: Register now for Hunter Safety Education and Boating Safety Education courses from the IDNR. Spring classes are being scheduled. Check the IDNR website for class dates and locations: <https://bit.ly/2ThvMdw>.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF MOREL MUSHROOM SEASON

By Anna Claire Howard

When most think of springtime hunting, they think turkeys. But there's another bounty that has everyone's feathers ruffled this time of year — morel mushrooms.

Morels are kind of a big deal in the hunting and foraging communities. Mushroom hunters across the United States are reporting morel sightings every day on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. News stories are popping up across Indiana, Ohio, Michigan. More states will follow as their morel seasons get into full swing. And as springtime sweeps the country, you can expect more of these reports on a daily basis.

True morel mushrooms, or morels, have a distinctive honeycomb appearance on their cap and can range from an inch to a foot in height (although the larger ones are more rare). They grow in moist environments with air temperature between 60 and 70 degrees and soil temperatures in the 50s. They typically expire three weeks after they emerge from the ground. While it can appear that they pop up overnight, it typically takes 10 to 20 days for a morel to complete its life cycle, which you can see here. They're especially apt at remaining hidden in plain sight. It's enough to drive any mycophile mad. They often appear in patterned lines, or veins. If you find one, stop and examine ever centimeter of your location. Leave no rock or leaf unturned. Where there's one, there's many.

There are 19 known species of morels in North America. They typically grow between 1 and 5 inches in height, although one lucky Kansan found one that was a foot tall. Early-season morels are typically black and no bigger than your thumb. Morels with a more distinctive grey or yellow color appear later in the season and are generally larger.

Unlike most plants that grow best in favorable environmental conditions, morels grow underground and then fruit, or reveal their

spore-filled honeycombed caps, when the going gets tough. That's why people often find morels after forest fires or around dying trees. This fungus prefers "softer" trees over big hardwoods, so look for elms and sycamores, as well as old apple orchards, conifers, poplars and ash, depending on where you're hunting.

Morels are prized for their rich, meaty flavor, and many people forage them to sell to local grocery stores and restaurants. Other mushroom lovers do it to put food on the table. Most say they're best prepared sliced in half and sautéed with salted butter and aromatics (garlic, shallot, parsley, etc.). Do you prefer to dry your mushrooms and save them to use throughout the year? You're not alone. Most people cook and eat morels that way. Here's a how-to on dehydrating morel mushrooms.

It's best to collect morels in a bag or basket with holes in it so the spores can be released as you explore the woods in search of more. It's also recommended to cover them with a cloth to help keep debris and bugs away. Be sure to clean them properly and remove any stowaways that may have made it back to your kitchen (aka, bugs and worms).

Finally, avoid false morels, which can be poisonous. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation, false morels often have wrinkled, irregular caps that are brainlike or saddle-shaped. They may be black, gray, white, brown or reddish. A good rule of thumb is if you have any doubt whether a mushroom is safe to consume or not, just leave it be.

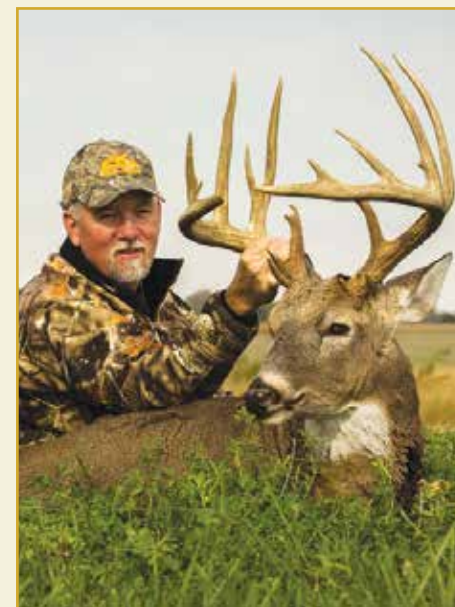


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FISHING FEVER

By Dru Hauter

bluegill, bass and catfish are mighty tasty even if my friends "up North" would not keep or eat them. Yes, I love carp especially buffalo and yes, I have eaten Asian carp. I have fished for carp in the ditches and creeks for years. I really never worried about the chemical exposure from eating those fish. I have seined the creeks near my home for crawdads and boiled what was left after fishing. I have consumed Lake Michigan salmon and trout and really did not worry about the PCB's in the fat of the fish. (Those studies were done with whole fish in a blender, Bass-0-Matic style) I am careful to cut away belly fat and cook the fish, so the fat runs away

It is finally starting to feel like Spring, and I have a bad case of fishing fever. I did not get to ice fish (I really need 4 inches of ice). Although I love the Friday night fish fry, it has been since the fall that we had fresh fried fish. And I really have the fish munchies. My Spring tonic is fresh crappie and morels. And I am looking forward to getting the grease hot very soon!

We may not be blessed with the greatest array of fresh sea food here in "the Land of Lincoln" but crappie,

from the meat. With all that toxic talk what really freaks me out is worms in the fish!

The first time I really saw worms in the fish meat was while we were cleaning some small mouth bass on a trip to Canada. That was it, I was done and was not about to eat the fish. Small mouth are one of my favorites to catch but not one of my favorites to eat because of that memory of worms. I am at least older and maybe wiser now and will share my research on the safety of eating fish with parasites.

Just hearing the word "parasite" can give me the willie's and make my skin crawl. Every type of wild fish can host parasites. The most common worm is called a nematode and they usually live inside fish. These worms are not just disgusting but can be a health hazard. Although not deadly, these parasites can cause a gastrointestinal infection with nausea, upset stomach and diarrhea. Thankfully these infections are very rare. Of the 20,000 cases annually, the most are reported in Japan and only about 60 cases a year occur in the United States.

There can be evidence of parasites on the outside of fish bodies. Black spots on the outside of a fish can be signs that parasites are on the inside. Flukes, another type of parasite, can be both inside and outside of a fish. These often look like a thin yellow grub near the tail or within the meat. Larvae can form white cysts within the meat and can be found in the internal organs and gills. The safest preparation is to avoid internal organ, gill, and external scale parasites is to filet the fish. This would limit the parasites to just in the meat. Then candle the filets (shine a bright light from behind the meat) to identify a cloudy or dark spot that could be a cyst or worm and remove that from the meat.



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Freezing the fish will also kill the critters but is not the best tasting and defeats the delicacy of a shore lunch.

Cooking your fish is a great way to kill the parasites and bacteria that remain after filleting the fish. It is recommended that the fish be brought to a temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 15 seconds. Overcooking makes the fish less tasty, dry and rubbery.

So, what about sushi. There is still the risk of parasite infection because it is raw. Fortunately, trained sushi chefs use great quality inspected fish which minimizes parasite exposure and use great preparation technique to minimize bacterial contamination.

The only way to avoid the risk of parasites is to avoid fish all together. This is just not acceptable to most of us. Fish from fish farms decreases the risk of parasites found in wild fish but, in fish farms fish are grown in a crowded environment and therefore a dirtier environment. This is the reason the fish are more likely treated with antibiotics. So, less parasites but not without other risks.

There is no doubt that fish are a great food protein. According to a Study from Tufts University, eating seafood helps prevent 54,000 deaths from heart attacks and strokes. Eating fish boosts your brain power and decreases total body inflammation. The dietary recommendation is to eat fish or seafood 2-3 servings a week.

I am still going to eat fish especially fish that I catch, and I will take these precautions to avoid parasites and bacterial infections.

- Fillet your fish to get rid of intestines, bones, gills, skin, and scales. (Decreases potential parasites)
- Candle and carefully inspect your fillets for dark or opaque spots and

- remove those spots
- Freeze your fish until ready to cook.
- Cook until fish is no longer clear but more a white appearance. (140 degrees for 15 seconds)
- Eat fresh and do not leave sitting out for long as the bacteria will multiply more quickly.
- Prep well using clean utensils. Wash hands and disinfect all surfaces properly
- Consume in moderation. Try to limit your raw fish intake. Don't eat it every day.
- Skip entirely if you have a weak immune system or eat only cooked fish. (Remember children and elderly are more susceptible.
- When in doubt.... throw it out!

Let's get fishing instead of wishing!
Dru Hauter, MD

Dru Hauter, MD is an avid outdoorsman and a native of Central Illinois. He is the physician at Central Illinois Direct Care in Lincoln, Illinois and can be reached through his website cidirectcare.com at drdru@cidirectcare.com or 217.632.6236.



Avery Houk with her first farm pond walleye, and with a doe with an ear tag harvested by her father Tim Houk. Thanks to Tim Houk for sharing these great photos with ASO Magazine.

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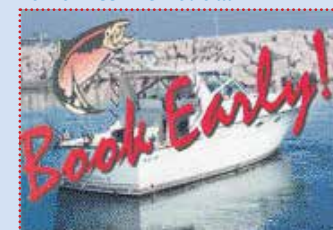
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TROLLING FOR TROPHIES

Lake Shelbyville is PRODUCING RESULTS!!! As March ended many of the early patterns for walleye and crappie had started with a positive fish mood and increased fish activity. Daily conditions and water levels are constantly changing during this time of year so always check the daily lake levels to avoid any mishaps. Lastly, be sure to renew your fishing license because they expired on the 31st of March.

Early spring crappie fishing on Lake Shelbyville starts near or in deep water. Submerged points that have decent drop offs in the 25-foot water column is where to start looking for the schools of crappie now. Depending on water temperatures during this month the crappie will be transitioning from the open water to points and to the mouths of larger coves. Once the

water temperature reaches the low 50's that is when to expect this transition and with the weather we have in the Midwest that could be early or late April. Slip-corks and either jigs or with minnows is a terrific technique to catch early spring crappie on Lake Shelbyville. The true benefit of a slip-cork is to be able to keep your baits just above the school of fish you are after. Using a blade bait and a slip-cork is the ideal way to introduce vertical jigging to anyone and very successful at the same time. Most of the time I have clients with two poles out at the same time and one with a minnow and the other on an England Expedition Pony Blade. Let the day determine which bait is working the best! With two poles out at the same time be sure to try different depths on the two poles.



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**Sauger-Mania!!**

Many times, crappie will hold at one depth and feed at another. Casting for crappie adjacent to the same points can be very successful also. Many times, I use a marker buoy to mark my structures then back the boat away and cast from a distance. This is a great approach when fish are acting spooky. Regardless how you fish for crappie during this time be sure to cover plenty of water and try different strategies from time to time if things get slow.

TROLLING FOR TROPHIES!!!
April brings a tremendous possibility to land your first "wall hanger" of the year! First, trolling for walleye

right now can produce not only numbers but the real "eyes" we are all chasing: the elusive DOUBLE-DIGIT WEIGHT FISH! Lake Shelbyville has tremendous flats with excellent depth contour ranges that are ideal for holding walleye. Trolling it is key to maneuver your boat through different water depths in search of the most active fish, while trolling use an elongated "snake" formation. The Kaskaskia River channel is the next place to troll while searching for active fish. A 14-inch walleye can eat a smaller fish up to 6 inches with no problem at all and the river channel is another main feeding

**Four for Dinner!**

area on Lake Shelbyville that hold all sizes of baitfish. During April, some walleye will travel north to the rock riffles during their spawn migration. During this time, you can find them holding in shallow water. Walleye can be found holding in slack water right next to a faster current waiting to ambush their next prey. Casting paddle tail baits or twister tails is ideal for walleye holding in shallow water. A constant retrieval works better on some days and other days it is better to slowly walk it on the bottom. Night crawlers are great to tip your baits with now also. Pay close attention when

**Jim with a SLAB!!**

fishing slowly because many times a walleye will give the slightest soft hit at first then really attack your bait on the second hit. Keep the wind in mind and try wind blown shorelines with crankbaits if that is more your style. The walleye will hunt those smaller fish being pushed to the shore by the wind, and those walleyes will be much more active so you can speed up your retrieval for ultimate success.

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FISHING CENTRAL ILLINOIS WITH REAG'S GUIDE SERVICE

By Reagan Smith

Hello again, friends. I hope everyone is doing well in the month of April. I am writing this in March, and I can honestly say I am at a loss for words on what to say. All in one week our Country has gone crazy. No food in grocery stores, no toilet paper, no big events, restaurants and bars have closed except to carry out and take out and now the state parks and lakes have been shut down, as well. My career is a fishing guide, I am a husband and a father of two, a son, a brother, an in-law, and a friend to many. I am scared

to see what this virus holds for our country. Am I taking this as serious as I should? Is it bad that I am upset that I cannot fish? Is it bad or selfish thinking that I am not able to do my fishing trips, will I get money back that is being lost during this time? All of these things and more are going through my head. Will my family be okay? Does anyone I know have the virus? How can you close down a state park and lake when we are supposed to be away from people? What I can talk about is this...



I have been catching a lot of crappie lately and the bite is starting to heat up. On Clinton this last week, I caught fish in 20 feet of water and then fished the warm side and used a bobber set at 1.5-2.5 feet and fished in three to six feet of water. I fished on Lake Springfield as well and caught fish in 10 to 20 feet of water on jigs casting or jigging. The fishing is going to improve as the spawn starts to take place this next month and into May for our crappie and white bass. We will see if any of us get to enjoy the spawn

or if we are going to be stuck at home. I look at the virus in a few different ways. One way is selfishly, it stinks that we cannot fish right now. This is a full-time career for me, but money aside I live to fish and all I think about is fishing. At first, I thought man, this is terrible I won't be able to fish and the second part of me is thinking wow, when was the last time that lakes and river systems around here were not touched during spawning season? I can not remember a time that this has happened, and it got me excited!

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Thinking of all those fish that are going to be able to have babies in peace, no pressure on fishing, no pressure of beds getting messed up by outboards or trolling motors and no taking of all the females who are spitting eggs. This is a good thing for our lakes, maybe not the economy or small businesses, but for the future of fishing for our children and grand children this is a great opportunity to think on, rejoice about and understand that in a dark situation there is always light at the end of the tunnel. If the state said I could fish tomorrow would I be out there doing it? Probably!!! But on the other hand, I am excited that our fisheries are not getting touched during one of the most fished times of the year.



Now onto how I am fishing in April. On Clinton Lake I will be fishing shallow on the warm water side using a jig and bobber or a minnow, if need be. I enjoy casting and retrieving Charlie Brewer Slider grubs as well. My main colors in using those are baby bass with a chartreuse tail, blue ice, and funky monkey. These three colors are kind of my staple colors that I use for any water conditions, is it practical or is it just comfort? I am confident I can go to any



lake and catch fish on one of those three colors! If I am not fishing warm side of Clinton, I am fishing the west side using the same techniques maybe just deeper. I also love to vertical jig the deeper fish. You can follow the spawn around the lake for quite a while and catch fish shallow until the end of May. On Lake Springfield, you fish the areas that the fish can go shallow or creeks, and I like finding deep drop offs close to shallow structure such as docks or bridges.

This is a weird and hard to follow article, I apologize for that but I am just letting my thoughts go in this article and I am already in trouble for turning it in late. Sorry Andy, I apologize brother. I look forward to seeing how our country and outdoorsmen go about life the next few weeks and I pray it doesn't get too crazy and that we can find peace and rest somewhere in the middle of all this! My wife reminded me today when I freaked out that my hope is not in the government or anything in this world, but in God and I'm going to hold on to that for a while and let it sink in and calm me as much as it can. I want to say thank you for the support from everybody that reads these articles and supports my business as much as you do. I really do appreciate it and so does my family! We will be praying for each and every one of you as life unfolds the next few days and weeks. If we are able to get out and go fishing again soon, I would love the opportunity to get you out on the water and make your fishing endeavors come true! As always, I'm available at 309-642-8106 – if we can't get out and fish, give me a call and we can talk fishing!

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THUMP112	11'	2	7+TIP

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CWRB102	10.5'	2	8+Tip

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FINDING OUR WAY

By Thane Hunt

As a avid camper I enjoy being outside but as a person with a disability it is important I can see where I am going. A fall due to not being able to see could cause serious injury even if I wasn't a person with a disability. Typically, the vast majority of flashlights are round and if you use a cane or other assistive device this can leave you with only one hand for a flashlight and things you need to carry. A traditional flashlight is not the best for this and you either end up aiming the light straight up or straight down and it doesn't put the beam where you needed it. There are two products that I tend to use that help me find my way in the dark.

First is the TORQ FirstLight, they make four different models, TORQ, TORQ LE, TORQ EMT and TORQ NV. I have the original TORQ, there are many features that I like about this model. First is the head of the flashlight rotates 320 degrees allowing the beam of light to go where you need it. Second is the MOLLE-compatible steel clip, the clip is very strong, and I haven't been able to bend it yet. I like the clip because I can clip it on a pocket or my belt and angle the light beam where I need it. I also like that the light itself is flat and had a finger retention loop. This light allows multiple ways to hold and use this light. Other features that make this flashlight stand out is the availability to switch between three different brightness levels of white LED light. There are also options of three different led lights colors red, blue, and green that have adjustable brightness. These are great for nighttime for not waking those camping with you

in the tent or camper. The light also has a large interment button that allows you to quickly use the light when need. This by far is my favorite flash light that I own. It uses AA batteries, so you don't have to buy expensive batteries. This light was designed to be a tactical light however it is great for sportspersons with disabilities too.

Second is the NEBO GLOW, it is a light that is also a handle for your favorite tumbler. The Glow fits 20 oz and 30 oz tumblers they style of Yeti and Rtic. I have also used it with my Tervis as the Glow has a universal fit. It has an adapter insert to make it fit the 20 oz. tumblers. I have had mine for over a year now and still use it almost daily for my tumblers. The Glow has two lights a task light that points forward and lantern that it the entire bottom ring. The Glow has three brightness settings as well. The switch is

on the top of the handle and is easy to turn off and on by pushing down with your thumb. The Glow uses AAA batteries for power. When I look at the gadgets that I have bought over the years and this is one of my favorites by far. NEBO did a great job with this lantern/flashlight.

Both of these lights are great choices, I have used both of them with no issues or failures. If you are a sportsperson with a disability and would like to share equipment you like to use or one of your outdoor adventure please feel free to contact me at +1 (309) 338-0990 or huntsgungetaway@gmail.com.



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BOTH BARRELS

By Lawdog Dago Dom & Shortcake (Dominic & Kathy Visione)



Border Bandit logo

THE BORDER BANDITS ARE HERE!!!

Very few things are more exciting to a cowboy shooter than the opening of a new cowboy club in which to practice their trade.

Well, we have one that you need to visit!

Where Are They?

Saddle up and head north near Rockford. At the Northern Illinois Rifle and Pistol Club is where the Border Bandits have their hideout. For your GPS, punch in 3660 Harrison

Road, Rockford, Illinois.

In all fairness, we have mentioned the Border Bandits last year, as they were brand spankin new, during our stories about CAS in the Midwest. This month we will focus on the club itself, and the fine folks who have worked very hard to bring it all together.

The Border Bandits were the brainchild of Tina and John Saporiti, i.e; "Turkey Legs" and "Dry Fire". Both are well known and respected shooters, who have been in CAS for 19 years. Both are retired educators, Turkey Legs taught 8th grade science and John taught art, spending a lot of time with a kiln. These are very challenging curriculums for the teachers as well as the students. As a substitute teacher, I know this first-hand.

John brought the cowboy bug home and invited Tina to come with him to another match. There they met up with the "Krooked River Outlaw" (George Heller) and "Kocheese" (Wayne Konkle). Kocheese let them try the stage with his guns and they were sold.



Sawbones Cooper working his rifle under the watchful eyes of Timing Officer Arkansas Lew.

And Those Crazy Names?

They are something! One of my enthusiasms with CAS is some of the aliases adopted by the shooters. I don't have a reference for Krooked River Outlaw, but Kocheese is a reference to Wayne's Wisconsin roots. Tina was christened "Turkey Legs" in high school by track and field teammates



That would be Lady Pearl rockin her rifle.

because they said her ankles were so small, they looked a turkey's leg. John's name came from his art classes running the kiln for students. If you hung out around an 1800-degree kiln regularly, the alias Dry Fire is a good fit.

Match Strategies

Turkey Legs and Dry Fire have

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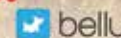
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First National Title for Turkey Legs! Big Congratulations!

their shooters. This is the goal here. Also, since many shooters do not have the means to get to some of the bigger matches, you can shoot those very stages you have read or heard about right here with the Border Bandits. Courtesy of Turkey Legs and Dry Fire. While both are accomplished and respected CAS shooters, Turkey Legs has gathered a nice assortment of regional and local match titles. Just recently, she won the Lady Duelist Title at Winter Range just outside of Phoenix, Arizona. Winter Range is the National Championship for CAS and



Turkey Legs, Dry Fire and some other shooters did a Cowboy Action Introduction for prospective shooters on March 10 in Elgin. From left; Dry Fire, Brett Glavin (range owner's son), Turkey Legs, Roughrider Ron and JC Deadwood.

is her first National Title.

Wanna Go?

Of course, you do. The Border Bandits have monthly matches on the 4th Saturday of the month from March to October. Registration starts at 8am, safety meeting at 8:45am, and shooting commences at 9am. Shooters pay \$15.00. Spectators, which are welcome and strongly encouraged, are free. Please remember to bring eye and ear protection. Some shooters may have extras you can borrow but play it safe and bring your own. As this goes to press, the next match will be on April 25. Big congratulations



Big thanks to Mark and Brett Glavin for letting Cowboy Action Shooters use their facility for the March 10 program.

and thank you to Turkey Legs and Dry Fire, for bringing the best of Cowboy Action Shooting back to Illinois. www.borderbandits.net



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APRIL ON NORFORK LAKE

April is a great month on Norfork Lake. The fish will be moving up the creeks chasing shad and trying to spawn. The normal pattern for April is warm gusty south winds that warm the northern banks and push the bait up into the creeks. The fish will follow the bait and once the water temperature hits the 60 degree mark the stripers will start their spawning cycle. The crappie will also be beginning their spawn. The white bass will be finished but their post spawn feeding cycle will be in full swing. The bass will be busting the surface chasing shad and the males will be getting ready making the beds and waiting for the big females.

Once we get the consistent April

weather these patterns will work for stripers, bass, and crappie. The stripers will be staging up the creeks feeding on spawning shad. You can find them in very shallow water early and late afternoon and into evening. If the water is stained or off color and the wind is blowing into the bank you can catch stripers all day long. The night bite for stripers will be at its peak all over the lake. The best bite starts at dusk and is usually over by midnight. The best baits are 5 to 6" rouges thrown parallel to the bank and either twitched or slow reeled back. Sometimes the bite will be right at the boat. A bonus fish when night fishing is walleye. A lot of good size walleye



are caught when anglers are fishing for stripers. My fishing technique in April and May for stripers revolves around shad. I like to use 4 to 6" gizzard shad and 4 to 5" threadfin shad. I use floats with no weight or a small split set far behind the boat. I then set out 2 planner boards that parallel the shore. The closest board to the shore will have a 6" gizzard shad, the next one will have a bigger shad on it, that one is my attraction shad. Stripers will come up to look

at that bait then hit the smaller bait. I then set out free lines with small split shot, these lines have just a small split shot and bait. Again, I let them out far behind the boat. I then put out a giant bait right behind the engine that I call a transom bait. A big striper will swipe at that bait and sometimes take it. The bait size will average 10" or bigger. Finally, I will add 2 more free lines but they will be set out shorter than the others. The best places to fish in April and May are

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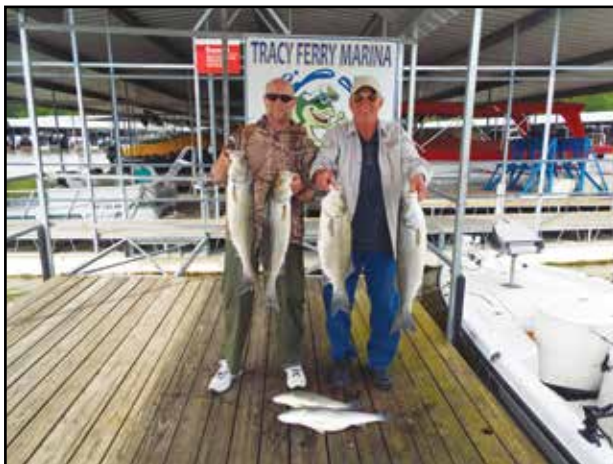
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shorelines that contain old roadbeds, foundations, and brush piles. Stripers will hold in the brush piles waiting on bait. These techniques are tried and true and will work on any body of water. If you cannot get shad try big shiners known as brooders or number 30's. They will also work but will not produce the numbers that shad does.

Crappie should have moved into shallow water spawning on small brush or shallow brush piles. As long as the weather stays warm and mild the spawn will continue until a heavy

rain or sudden cold snap will push them off the banks into a little deeper water. Just move off the bank and fish the same method you were using but in deeper water. Once it warms back up you will find them on the bank. Minnows and small jigs are the best baits on the lake. Jig colors vary by the day but day in and out minnows is your best bait. Once the spawn is over spider rigging the deeper water will produce limits of crappie. The best creeks for crappie are Big Creek, Brushy Creek, Pigeon Creek, and

Bennett's Bayou on the main lake. The upper lake areas are Red Bank, Calamity, and Bryant Creek.

Bass fishing is very good in April. The bass will have moved up on shore and will be chasing shad. Throwing spinner baits on windward shore will catch you lots of active bass. If that bite slows, try a jig and pig or worm on slopping points in the creeks. Early morning and late afternoon will see lots of top water action. Look in the bays heading into the creeks like the entrance to Bennett's Bayou. It has a very large bay that holds whites and bass in the spring. This time of year, you can catch bass on any bank on this lake. Some of my favorite spots are Big and Brushy Creeks. They get stained early and the water is usually warmer but don't be afraid to pick a bank and

start fishing. There is not a bad place on Norfolk Lake that time of year.

No matter when you fish in April you can expect very warm temperatures to very cold temperatures in the same day or week you're here. You just have to be prepared for the weather and you will catch fish and have a great time doing it.

Tom & Sean Reynolds have fished Lake Norfolk for over 51 years and they guide out of Tracy Ferry Marina; you can reach him at www.stroutfitters.com, 870-421-1541 or on Facebook.



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FREE APPRAISALS OFFER "ANTIQUES ROADSHOW" APPEAL TO 55TH NORTH AMERICAN VINTAGE DECOY AND SPORTING COLLECTIBLES SHOW AT THE WESTIN LOMBARD, LOMBARD, IL



Lombard, IL, May 8-9, 2020: Each year, at the North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show, free identification and appraisals are offered for any item that is brought to the show. This effort is designed to help discover those old artifacts that are hiding around the country and recapture our rich hunting and fishing history. A wide range of items including artwork, duck, goose, shorebird, and fish decoys, wildfowl calls, shotgun shell boxes, fishing items and various outdoor collectibles show up each year for review by the experts in attendance at the show. Several years ago brought

in a wonderful old hand carved duck call that was a gift to Joseph Nathaniel Whitley, a former top game warden and official in Arkansas over 100 hundred years ago. It was easy to see that this item was special as it was uniquely carved on all sides and had the image

of a rattlesnake integrated into the mouthpiece. The call, carved by James Beckhart around 1890, subsequently sold at auction for a record \$103,650. The diverse number of unique items that are brought in to the show each year has been growing steadily

and attendees are always excited to discover that grandpa's old "stuff" can be so important and command such strong interest.

Free appraisals are available at our public sales event in The Westin's Grand Ballroom on **Friday, May 8**





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from 2pm to 7pm, and on Saturday, May 9 from 9am to 2pm.

The Midwest Decoy Collectors Association is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to collect and preserve the history of the decoy as original American folk art. As the largest gathering of its kind, the North American Vintage Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show is the premier opportunity for the novice, antique dealer or experienced collector to network and learn more about the decoy as functional folk art or to add to their collections. For more information, please visit midwestdecoy.org

55th North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show Offers Antique Dealers and Pickers Non-Stop Buying Opportunities

The Westin Lombard, Lombard, IL, May 5-9, 2020: The 55th North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show, sponsored by the Midwest Decoy Collectors Association

(MDCA), will be held at The Westin Lombard hotel in Lombard, Illinois May 5-9, 2020. Starting on Tuesday with Room-to-Room trading throughout the hotel property and ending with a tabled show in the hotel's Grand Ballroom exhibit hall on Friday and Saturday, this annual event is the largest gathering of antique sporting collectibles anywhere in North America.

The Show is an antique picker's paradise! By the morning of Tuesday, May 5 collectors from all over North America will have begun descending gathering at The Westin and rooms will already be overflowing with every imaginable kind of sporting collectible. There will be duck decoys by the thousands, fishing lures, spearing decoys, traps, rods, reels, duck calls, paintings and prints, outboard motors, canoe paddles, stacks of wooden ammo boxes and items so unique there may be only a few in existence. With over 30,000 items for sale throughout the week, this is a unique opportunity to

acquire enough inventory to last a year. In addition to sporting collectibles, dealers will find all kinds of antiques including stoneware, marbles, old toys, oyster tins, Inuit ivory carvings and Indian artifacts. You name it and you are likely to find it here.

There is simply not another event that compares to this experience. A full five days of events that offer something for everyone with an interest in great American folk art. Here's the week at a glance:

May 5 through May 7:

Room-to-Room Trading

May 7 and May 8:

Guyette and Deeter Decoy Auction

May 8 and May 9

Tabled Sales Event:

Friday, 2-7pm & Saturday 9am-2pm;

The Westin Grand Ballroom

-- Continuous Silent Auctions



-- Free identification and appraisal service

The Midwest Decoy Collectors Association is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to collect and preserve the history of the decoy as original American folk art. As the largest gathering of its kind, the North American Vintage Decoy and Sporting Collectibles Show is the premier opportunity for the novice, antique dealer or experienced collector to network and learn more about the decoy as functional folk art or to add to their collections. For more information, please visit midwestdecoy.org.

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YES, YOU CAN STILL AFFORD A HOME

The residential real estate market has come roaring out of the gates in 2020. Compared to this time last year, the number of buyers looking for a home is up 20%, and the number of home sales is up almost 10%. The increase in purchasing activity has caused home price appreciation to begin reaccelerating. Many analysts have boosted their projections for price appreciation this year.

Whenever home prices begin to increase, there's an immediate concern about how that will impact the ability Americans have to purchase a home. That thinking is understandable. We must, however, realize that price is not the only element to the affordability equation. Mark Fleming, *Chief Economist at First American*, recently explained:

"When demand increases for a scarce (limited or low supply) good, prices will rise faster. The difference between houses

and other goods is that we buy them with a mortgage. So, it's not the actual price that matters, but the price relative to purchasing power."

While home prices have risen recently, mortgage interest rates have fallen rather dramatically. At the beginning of last year, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage stood at 4.46%. Today, that number stands over a full percentage point lower.

How does a lower mortgage rate impact your monthly mortgage payment?

Michael Hyman, a research data specialist for the *National Association of Realtors (NAR)*, explained in a recent report that, even though home values have increased over the last year, the monthly cost of owning a home has decreased:

"With lower mortgage rates compared to one year ago, the payment

as a percentage of income fell to 15.5%... from 17.1% a year ago."

When purchasing a home, the price is not as important as its cost. Today, the monthly expense (cost) of purchasing the same house you could have purchased last year would be less. Or, you could purchase a more expensive home for the same monthly expense.

Fleming, looking at all aspects of the affordability equation (prices, wages, and mortgage rates), calculated the actual numbers in a recent blog post:

"Low mortgage rates and income growth triggered a 13.5% increase in house-buying power compared with a year ago."

Since wages have increased and mortgage rates have dropped to historically low levels, this is a great time to buy your first home or move up to the home of your dreams. As Tendency Kapfidge, *Chief Economist at LendingTree*, recently advised:

"If you are in a point in your life where you're considering buying a home today, it's a better time to buy than 10 years ago. If you can get a mortgage, you're getting much lower interest rates, and it enables you to afford more."

Bottom Line

Whether you've considered becoming a homeowner for the first time or have decided to sell your home and buy one that better suits your current lifestyle, now is a great time to sit with a real estate professional to discuss your options.



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General Admission: \$5.00 • Children 12 & under are Free w/paid adult • Free Parking
Show location: Diamond Banquet Hall, 55 S. Daly St., Diamond, IL 60416

KANKAKEE GUN SHOW

May 16th & 17th

Hours: Sat 8:00am – 3:00pm • Sun 8:00am – 2:00pm
General Admission: \$6.00 • Children 12 & under are Free w/paid adult • Free Parking
Show location: Kankakee County Fairgrounds, 213 W. 400S Rd., Kankakee, IL 60901

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CONFIDENCE IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS FOR YOUNG HOMEBUYERS

Buying your first home can seem overwhelming. Thankfully, there's a lot of great information out there to help you feel more confident as you learn about the process. For those in younger generations who aspire to buy, here are three things to consider sooner rather than later in your journey:

1. Understand What it Takes to Purchase a Home

Overall, Millennials make up the largest group of homebuyers in today's real estate market, and Gen Z is not too far behind. A recent study shared by Freddie Mac shows, however, that Generation Z isn't as confident in the homebuying process as Millennials. The best thing potential young buyers can do is understand what it takes to buy a home. Learn as much as you can about the mortgage process, down payment options, and the overall steps to take along the way.

2. Realize Your Opportunity to Build Wealth

Homeownership allows you the chance to put a small portion of the home's value down when you buy, and then watch your appreciation grow on the full value of the home – not just on the down payment. It's one of the best investments you can make, and a form of 'forced savings' working in your favor over time. The added bonus? You get to live there, too.

3. Find Someone You Trust to Help You Through the Process

Having someone you trust to guide you through this process is invaluable. Finding a local real estate expert to help you navigate through the transaction and feel more confident as you make important decisions could be the best choice you make.

For Millennials and Gen Z'ers thinking about buying, today's historically low interest rates combined with the outlook for future home appreciation is a big win. This means whatever you buy today, you'll be bragging about 10 years from now. You can feel confident about that!

Bottom Line

If you're ready, buying your first home sooner rather than later is one of the best decisions you can make. But there are many things to consider before taking that step, so it is critically important to educate

yourself properly and find someone who can help you confidently navigate through the full journey.

New Homes Coming to the Housing Market This Year

The number of building permits issued for single-family homes is the best indicator of how many newly built homes will begin to come to market over the next few months. According to the latest *U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Residential Construction Report*, the number of building permits issued in January was 1,551,000. This is a 9.2% increase from December.

How will this impact buyers?

New inventory means more options.

Lawrence Yun, *Chief Economist at the National Association of Realtors (NAR)*, explained how this is good news for the housing market – especially for those looking to buy:

"More construction will mean more housing inventory for consumers in the later months of this year...Spring months could still be quite tough for buyers since it takes time to convert housing starts into actual housing completions."

How will this impact sellers?

More inventory means more competition. Yun continues to say:

"As trade-up buyers move into these newly completed homes in the near future, their existing homes will be released onto the market."

Today, because of the tremendous lack of inventory, a seller can potentially anticipate:

1. A **great sale price** on their house as buyers engage in potential bidding wars.
2. A **quick sale** as buyers have little inventory to choose from.
3. **Fewer hassles** as buyers want to smoothly secure a contract.

Bottom Line

If you're considering selling your house, you'll want to list sooner rather than later. This way, you'll get ahead of this new competition coming to market and ensure the most attention toward your listing and the best price for your house.



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HARVEST, FLOOD, HARVEST

By Mike Budd

Photos courtesy of the author.



The perfect opportunity awaits Illinois waterfowl hunters and farmers to strengthen their alliance for more hunting opportunities, the preservation of our rural areas and enhancement of community profits.

After corn and soybeans are harvested each fall there is still ample time to collect rainwater to flood small depressions, which create magnets for waterfowl. A flooded corn field, even after it has been harvested, is still a prime feeding spot for ducks and geese if flooded during the fall and winter. These temporarily flooded fields will allow for more waterfowl hunting throughout more parts of the state. Randy Smith, Wetland Wildlife Program Manager with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), said "As waterfowl hunter numbers decline nationwide and throughout Illinois, access to areas such as shallowly flooded fields provides easy opportunities for new or seasoned hunters. All that is needed for success are hip boots, a shotgun and a few decoys."

Waterfowl hunting is estimated to have a \$261million economic impact in Illinois alone¹. Given that the state has relatively few waterfowl hunting opportunities outside of the river valleys, any increase in hunting opportunities should result in a dramatic increase in economic impacts. This is particularly true in rural areas through increased spending on lodging, meals at restaurants, a few beers at the pub, etc.. Dr. Jared Duquette, Hunter Heritage Program Manager for the Illinois DNR, said "Decreased access to hunting land has long been a major factor leading to less hunters in Illinois and an issue we need to address if we want hunting to continue."

In order to create these "pothole" bodies of water, all that is typically needed is a water control structure

fitted onto existing drain tile lines. These structures allow water to flow unimpeded through the tile lines during the growing season, but also allow a few boards to be inserted after harvest to back water into low lying depressions or potholes. Typically, a water control structure will cost around \$800 on average and installation will be an additional expense.

Let's not overlook the impact this has on flood storage and water

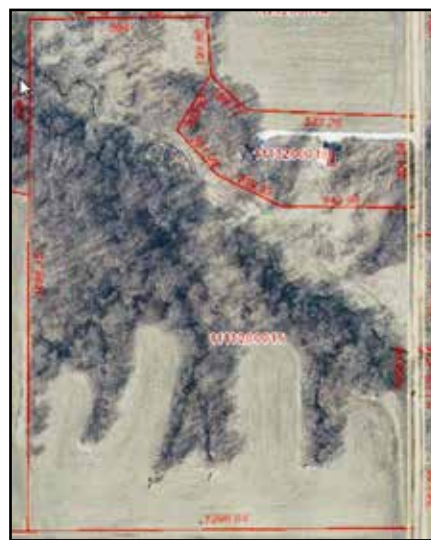


Avery Houk on a snow goose hunt in Central Illinois.
Thanks to Timothy Houk for sharing these great photos.



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quality as well. In the fall, most fields are bare soil with nothing in place to help soak up or slow down the water after rain events. By holding water in fields, water will not race to drainage ditches, then into larger streams where it can result in water damage to infrastructures, sand/silt deposition or severe erosion. A half-acre "pothole" flooded at 8 inches deep will store at least 109,155 gallons of water in the field. That is enough water to fill up the main floor of a 14,000 square foot home from floor to ceiling.

Hunters and farmers should take all opportunities to work together. The future of both sectors relies on the preservation of our rural areas. When

times are tough for either group, it's always nice when somebody else has your back. There's never been a better opportunity to work as a team than on this effort to harvest crops, flood the fields, and then harvest a few ducks and geese.

For more information or to discuss potential programs covering fall flooding, contact Mike Budd at michael_budd@fws.gov or at (217) 557-4474.

1 – Data from the 2012-13 Illinois Waterfowl Hunter Survey, INHS Human Dimensions Program

Mike Budd is the Private Lands Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Illinois. He has

worked with private landowners for the majority of his 12-year career in natural resources, including stints with Ducks Unlimited. Originally from Michigan, Budd has had the opportunity to work in multiple states including Virginia, New York and Arkansas and is excited that Illinois has such a rich opportunity for wetland restoration. At each stop, he has picked up a new tip or trick from private landowners on how to restore wetlands efficiently and effectively. Budd, his son, daughter, wife and old retired duck-dog live in Sangamon County.

This story originally appeared in OutdoorIllinois Wildlife Journal

(OIWJ; Outdoor.wildlifeillinois.org), an Illinois Department of Natural Resources ezine developed in collaboration with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-147-T). No additional reprints may occur without advance consent from IDNR Division of Wildlife Resources.



NEW LISTING

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**1429 Knox Rd. 2500 N
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FORESTRY HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DESIGNED TO BENEFIT WILDLIFE

By Kathy Andrews Wright

What happened to the patch of trilliums that bloomed here each spring? I seldom see wild turkey broods on my property anymore; has the population declined in my area? It is annoying to have to push through a dense shrub layer when walking my woodland; why did it develop and what can be done about it?

Recognizing the concerns of private landowners, and the overwhelming demand for participation in cost-share programs addressing land management issues, the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) submitted an Illinois Habitat Fund application to establish a forestry technical assistance program for private landowners in NWTf's three primary Illinois focal landscapes—Driftless, Illinois and Kaskaskia River, and Shawnee Hills (see map). The focal landscapes were developed in large part on information from the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan. Collectively, the program may assist private landowners in 20 Illinois counties.

Administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Habitat Fund provides qualified not-for-profit organizations and governmental entities with the opportunity for funding to enhance game and non-game wildlife habitat.

Funding for the grant program comes from the sale of Habitat Stamps to sportsmen and sportswomen.

Recognized as a leader in wildlife conservation, NWTf is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage. Working with

numerous non-profit, corporation and governmental agency partners, as well as private landowners, NWTf has helped restore wild turkey populations throughout North America from a historic low of approximately 200,000 to a high-water mark of nearly 7 million.

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Mike O'Bryan and friends with a successful ice fishing trip up north. Thanks to Mike O'Bryan for sharing these great photos. Please call Mike at 309-635-8901 at Remax Traders Unlimited for all of your Commercial needs.

creating quality habitat for the wild turkey, recognizing that the biggest limiting factor on the landscape for the turkey is quality nesting and brood rearing habitat. The wild turkey, like many other native wildlife species, will not use forested areas dominated by dense stands of bush honeysuckle, preferring an open woodland with an herbaceous vegetative cover that provides the protein-rich insect food source growing poults need. Habitat management actions, however, rarely benefit just a single species.

"The current Habitat Fund project, like most other projects undertaken with our partners, focuses on enhancing the wildlife quality of privately owned forest stands," explained Jason Lupardus, Director of Conservation Operations for the Midwest Region of the National Wild Turkey Federation. "Such management efforts can be most impactful in Illinois on private land as approximately 90 percent of the state is so owned."

"Woodland management for turkeys, as a generalist species in terms of food and habitat requirements, improves nesting and brood-rearing conditions, but also the habitat needs of

a plethora of other species—migratory songbirds, bats, deer, squirrels, raccoons and more," Lupardus continued.

"Since September 2019, we have contracted with 36 landowners who have committed to habitat improvements on close to 1,200 acres," said Lupardus. In total, by early 2020 around 70 landowners will be contracted with to participate.

"A broad spectrum of habitat improvements is allowable under the program," Lupardus said. "Some of the bigger actions are timber stand improvement, removal of non-native invasive species and planting of trees and shrubs beneficial to wildlife. Removal of native or non-native trees to release targeted tree species, such as oaks and hickories, ensures a preferred wildlife food is available throughout much of the fall and winter."

In addition to being located within a focal area, qualifying landowners must have worked with a wildlife biologist or forester on the development of a forest management plan.

When it comes to the boots-on-the-ground work, landowners can opt to undertake the work themselves or



they may contract with a conservation organization or private contractor. Once all the action items in the agreement have been completed, and the work has been inspected and certified, NWTF will pay the landowner their 75 percent cost share.

"I feel so good that we are able to help landowners get started down the path of quality land management actions on their forested land," Lupardus concluded. "It is critical we provide quality technical assistance to the landowners who are motivated to remove non-native species and bolster the presence of high-quality wildlife food plants. Regardless of their anticipated end result—enhanced hunting opportunities or wildlife watching or wildlife photography—the work these landowners undertake will be benefit area wildlife for years to come."

To learn more about the program,

contact Jason Lupardus at (270) 599-1491 or jlupardus@nwtf.net

Kathy Andrews Wright is retired from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources where she was editor of Outdoor Illinois Magazine. She is currently the editor of Outdoor Illinois Wildlife Journal and Illinois Audubon magazine.

This story originally appeared in OutdoorIllinois Wildlife Journal (OIWJ; Outdoor.wildlifeillinois.org), an Illinois Department of Natural Resources ezine developed in collaboration with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W- 147-T). No additional reprints may occur without advance consent from IDNR Division of Wildlife Resources.



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LET'S TALK DOG PROOF COON TRAPS

By Neal Graves, President of the Illinois Trappers Association

Let me start by saying thank you to all who read my stuff in ASO it is so humbling for me.

The dog proof coon trap came out several years ago. My first one was called the dark hole you had to take a pan off a 1 1/2 and replace it with the dark hole and let's not forget the one and only dog proof called the egg trap it was a pain to use you had to take the trap apart to set it as well as to remove any thing you caught in it. And now there seems to be a ton of traps out there calling them self a dog proof.

In fact many so called dog proofs are not dog proof because of the firing system on them. To put it in a nut shell if the trap is a pull style triggers it could be a dog proof if any trap has a push style trigger it is not a dog proof trap. A dog may not be able to put there paw in it but they can put there tong in there and set the trap off and then you have a dog

by the tong that will most likely die because he ripped his tong off and bleed out. Not a pretty sight.

Now with this being said the dog proof trap has made a dummy a coon trapper now, but if this is your go to coon trap you will miss a lot of other stuff. When setting a dog proof trap on a creek or pond you should be setting a #11 or a # 1 1/2 . by using these one of these 2 traps you will be setting you self-up for a few insensate catches like mink and muskrat as well as maybe an otter. This is where we as trappers must understand the tools we have in our tool box to go and harvest fur.

Is the dog proof trap a good one yes it is but do not think you will catch only coons in them as I have used them and caught all kinds of stuff like opossum, house rats as well as mice and skunks. What is important to say is use the right tool for the right job Also ,if you have any questions call me with them or send me an email as I may put a few Q and A in a story in the latter issues of ASO Neal Graves President or the ITA



Avery Houk and her mom Justine waiting for the deer during the 2019 season. They are never too young to enjoy the outdoors.



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RAI NAA



LOSS

By A.K. Thompson

It's been a while, folks! I'm back! I have had a really rough couple of months and had to step back from the column. I apologize if you've missed me, and dear readers, I've missed you! From loss we have to find silver linings, and it can be very hard to pin those down. August started out with the sudden loss of my boyfriend, Travis's father, Joe. 55 years young. Totally unexpected. A shock. It was a true test of our relationship. Could I really navigate such a profound tragedy with this new man in my life? We had only been dating for 3 months. We came together. We supported each other. We grew closer and the helped one another to move through the grief. The wounds are still fresh but having someone by your side is very comforting. Love helps us all to get through difficult times.

Then, the day of my 38th birthday, I received the most devastating news that my good friend from graduate school, Bryan, had taken his own life. It seems like every year on my birthday something terrible happens. I do not look forward to my birthday at all. My grandfather passed the day before my birthday, Heath Ledger passed the day before my birthday. Salvador Dali passed on my birthday. Maybe it's just a coincidence, but certainly I get leery about my birthday and do a lot of praying.

The loss of Bryan hit me particularly hard. I've been dealing with unusually high instances of my BiPolar Depression acting up. I am an emotional train wreck. My mind is swimming in circles and my chronic insomnia has been out of control. We all know that if you aren't getting good sleep, it messes up the whole day. When we lose someone, especially to suicide, it really makes a person intensely reflect on their own existence. Lots of questions that will never be answered.



How can such a happy, kind, funny and intelligent man do something that? Indescribable sorrow washes over you, and then anger. Why did you take yourself away from us? We all loved him so.

And what do you say to that? In his novel, "Missouri Mean," Bryan wrote, "All men who die are dead forever." I wonder if he had his own mortality in mind when he wrote those words 8 years ago. Maybe so – maybe not so. To think of death as being so final is tough. Through Dirt Church I have always felt that our spirits do go somewhere else...maybe they melt into the ether, the cosmos, return to the earth. Maybe our spirits join in the chorus of the natural world. That's what I believe. It's not so finite if the energy of our spirit is still charged in the air around us.

I thought of the pain Bryan was experiencing. I have had suicide ideation many times in my life. It's just a nasty side effect of having BiPolar depression. When life gets really hard, it's easy to imagine just simply not being in it any longer. I think maybe that's where Bryan was at—in that terrifying place of desperation and an intense yearning for peace. I hope that's what he has now – wouldn't that be so wonderful for him? A calm settled into the soul. No more pain. No more ghosts haunting his heart. I hope he is at rest. I pray for these things for Bryan.

But what is the take-away for an experience such as tragic loss? What do we learn? I have had a terrible time of it. I see how hard it is for me day to day to try to stay positive and think happy thoughts, and then my mind will have a fluttering thought... "Bryan is dead. Bryan is never coming back again. Bryan left. Bryan is gone." Then, I think. I want to be here. I love the forest. I love my animals. I love my boyfriend. I love my family and friends. I might not love my life, but I love everything in it. I need to stick around so I can enjoy all of those

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things. I should not take myself away from what gives me joy. Push through one shitty day to get to the next.

Everything will be alright in the end, and if it ain't alright, it ain't the end.

So, you push through to the next day, and the next. The other side of sadness is one of those days ahead. I just gotta be strong enough to get to that day. I must remain humble and focus on the things in my life that make me happy, that make me love who I am as a person. Stay. Like a good dog, I need to stay. Life is hard. It's not fair. We were made no promises as little babies that life was going to be all wine and roses. We chose how we live our lives. I try every day to choose to have gratitude and grace...to look for those silver linings. To be quick to forgive, and even quicker to love. I am grateful for each and every one of my readers. Sharing my stories with you all these years has been therapeutic for me, and I thank you. Feel free to reach out to me via email at akdirtchurch@gmail.com if you ever have any thoughts or reflections about my essays. I hope this issue of ASO finds everyone well and happy! Amen.

DOUGLAS COUNTY MAN SHOOTS NEW STATE RECORD SUCKER

By Jill Pritchard

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) congratulates Justin Lahey of Ava for shooting a new state-record white sucker. Lahey was bowfishing Feb. 22 when he shot the 5-pound, 1-ounce fish in Lake Taneycomo. The previous record under alternative methods was caught in 2010 and weighed 4-pounds, 5-ounces.

Suckers are one of the dominant groups of large fishes in Missouri waters. They feed mostly by sucking up material from the bottom. White suckers are found nearly statewide, but are absent from the Bootheel lowlands and southeastern Ozarks.

MDC staff verified the white sucker's weight using a certified scale at Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery



in Branson. This is the fourth state-record fish of 2020.

Missouri state-record fish are recognized in two categories: pole-and-line and alternative methods. Alternative methods include: trotlines, throwlines, limb lines, bank lines, jug lines, spearfishing, snagging, snaring, gigging, grabbing, archery, and atlatl.



Eric Hilst with his first snow goose. Thanks to his dad Gus Hilst for sending us this great photo.

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WHAT'S IN YOUR TACKLE BOX?

By Brent Vonderheide

Before the introduction of solid or hollow fiberglass bait casting rods, back in the 1930's, 40's and 50's the steel shaft bait casting rod was considered to be a standard go to rod for the avid fisherman. These metal rods were priced all over the spectrum, from the very low end of less than \$5.00 to the higher side of \$45.00 plus, encompassing every level of sportsman.

The Orchard Industries company located in Detroit Michigan started their operations in 1940 and quickly became well known for their great line of steel action rods. By the late 1940's Orchard Industries had branched out to the fiberglass rods as well as a few bass lures. In this brief article we will just touch on some of their steel action rods.



Close up of rod and reel

Their steel action rods came in both square and round shafts. The handles are what make these rods stand out they came in the pistol grip design constructed of metal and a solid Bakelite type plastic with the company's name embossed in the reel seat, with the rest of the handle being made of the solid colored plastics.

Orch. Ind. offered their steel rods in many different lengths 40"- 46" 52" and 56" respectively. The steel rod has metal line guides that were wrapped



This shows the difference between rods and square.



Rod handle

with metal wire.

The Orchard Industries action rod had a unique reel seat locking mechanism and offered the handles in many different colors.

Sometimes when you find one of these vintage rods if you look at the butt end of the rod you will find the fisherman's name or nickname imprinted on a metal cap. This was a special promotion the company offered in some of the old ads found in outdoor sporting magazines. The fisherman could send in 25 cents and they would stamp his or her name on a metal washer that could be attached to the butt of the handle to help



Group of different color handles



End cap options

personalize their rod. Just a fun little bit of history to share with the collectors.

When you start collecting all the different colored handles it makes for a very interesting presentation.

Another great fishing collectable is the glass minnow trap. One of my favorite avenues of old tackle. These great jars have been around as far back as the mid 1860's. They only stopped selling them for catching minnows in the late 1960's and early 1970's this is a state by state law because of glass breakage in the public waters, cars, and boats.

The trap that I have featured here today is the Ball Mason



Group of different color handles



One gallon trap with original box

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glass minnow trap. This minnow trap can actually be found in three different sizes, the one gallon, the 1/2 gallon and the one quart size as well. These glass traps were being sold to the general public in 1960 by the Ball Mason Canning jar company out of Okmulgee Oklahoma. With a pretty limited life run of only 1,000 one gallon traps these jars were not on the market but for a very brief period. We are not sure the run on the two smaller traps the 1/2 gallon and 1-quart size because of rumors that claimed they were being made after hours without the knowledge of the supervisors. Once they got wind of these activities, they ceased production and let the culprits go.



Three different traps

All three sizes were constructed using clear glass with a standard ball size mouth opening that can accommodate the regular ball canning lid. Ball would punch three holes in the tin lids to allow air bubbles to escape while the trap was being placed in the water, and to be able to pour water out to retrieve the minnows. Only the one-

gallon size trap came equipped with a wire bail handle for easier transport of the jar to and from the water. The larger one-gallon size trap is basically the same jar ball made for food products during the 1950's-60's with a modification of the base to include the funnel shaped opening for the minnows to enter freely.



Wire bail handle



Close up of funnel

The one-gallon trap measures 10 3/4" tall the 1/2 gal. Size is 9 1/4" tall and the smaller one-quart meas. 7" tall. These Ball traps are not easy to find, and the two smaller ones are even more difficult.

If you have any questions or remarks please call or text me Brent Vonderheide at 217-690-8290 Or email me at brent.traps@gmail.com Spring is here grab some vintage tackle and go land some fish like grandpa did !

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

By Rich Creason

Some hobbies in the outdoors are not common, are unusual, or even strange. One of my hobbies might even be called "unbelievable".

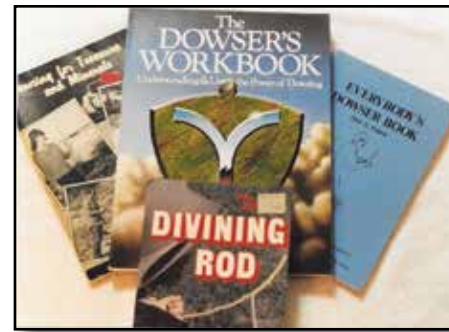
When I was young (Yes, I was young once!), I watched a man slowly walking across a field. He was holding a forked stick in front of him and was obviously looking for something. The walker finally stopped, placed a stake in the ground, and approached a nearby group of onlookers. "Drill your well at the stake," he told the landowner. "It will yield 650 gallons of water per hour at 150 feet deep." This man was a dowser and had just located water for the farmer. Many modern plumbers use dowsing skills to locate lost wells, water lines, and septic tanks, and more

Some years ago, I watched a demonstration as a man took a pair of "L" shaped wire rods, held them

in front of him, and walked until the wires crossed. Underneath where they crossed, he dug a coin out of the ground. This man also was a dowser.

Dowsing has been practiced for centuries. Ancient Egyptian drawings show dowsers in action. But even now, science cannot explain how it works. Studies show that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the adult population has the ability to dowse, while nearly 100 percent of children can. (Is this because kids are less skeptical?) Some people don't know what dowsing is. Many don't believe it's possible. Some not only believe in it, but also practice it on a regular basis. In the simplest of terms, dowsing is the act of a person locating lost, hidden, or undiscovered objects or resources from a distance.

In most peoples' minds, dowsing is done with a forked stick to find water. This "Y" rod or "witching stick" is usually about 18 inches long with the diameter of a pencil, but size varies greatly. As long as the twig is supple enough to bend without breaking, it will work. It is usually made of willow, witch hazel, or maple, but any tree can be used



Assorted dowsing books.
These are hard to find.



Author holding a "Y" stick.
This is usually for finding water.

depending on the personal preference of the operator. But, the "divining" rod is not the only tool of the trade and water not the only object of the search. An expert dowser can find almost anything!

The "L" rods are probably the widest used tool and the easiest to learn. The rods are often copper or brass, but a wire coat hanger will also work. Bend the wire so the short leg is about an inch longer than your closed fist. This allows it to turn in your hand without binding. Make the other leg around 12-15 inches long. You will need two of these rods.

Hold them loosely, level, and

about chest high, with your hands about a foot apart, and your elbows snug against your sides to steady them. Walk slowly forward and concentrate only on what you are searching for. The rods will cross to form an "X" when you are over the target. What is hard to believe is that your dowsing rods will find whatever you tell them to, water, jewelry, coins, minerals, underground pipes, etc. Place a dime and a nickel on the floor about four feet apart. Walk slowly across them while concentrating on "coin". The wires will cross over both coins. Repeat while thinking only "dime" and the rods will react on the dime but

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not the nickel! Try it with other items. Holding a sample of the object you are searching for in your hands while walking often enhances the signal, like an antenna. Try first with the item in plain view, then, have someone else cover it with a large throw rug or paper. Then find it without seeing the object. Practice and it will work.

I had a friend who owned a metal detector shop. He taught me how to dowse many years ago. It doesn't take long to learn, but it does take practice to become good at it. I would practice at work when things were slow. When I did it in front of an audience, most would say it was a trick, or I was making the rods turn. I would teach them how to do it. Even most of those sceptics easily learned how to dowse. My best friend still is not sure if dowsing is real or not. One day at work, he told my crew and me to stay in the shop while he left. He returned a few minutes later and told us all to come outside. There was a 60 ton pile of sand we used to spread on the roads when they were icy. He had buried a golf ball in that pile and told me to find it. I proceeded around the sand until one of my rods turned sharply



Author with "L" rods. I can find a wild variety of items with these.



Assorted tools of the dowsing trade.

toward the pile. He dug down and the golf ball was about a foot deep in the sand. He said he didn't know how I did it, but it still had to be a trick.

I have another friend I taught to dowse. He practices almost daily and carries his L rods in his vehicle, as do I. He has a bad habit of arriving home and tossing his car keys in various spots around the house. He often has to use his dowsing rods to find them. He does the same with his cell phone. At a recent metal detector club meeting, he left the room and had someone hide his pocketknife. He

returned and walked around as his L rod (He often uses only one.), guided him to a young girl in the room. When he reached her, the rod immediately began spinning over her head. (I had never seen one do this!) She was sitting on his knife.

Need something even more unbelievable? Skilled dowzers can even "map dowse"! They place a map or even a photograph of an area on a table and use a pendulum suspended over the map to pinpoint the target. When the pendulum arrives over the spot on the map where something is buried,

it will begin twirling in a circle. Then the dowser can go to the area depicted on the map and verify their findings at the actual site. (I told you it might be unbelievable!) Many detector dealers can sell you excellent rods to help you learn the art of dowsing. Books on the subject are hard to find, but research will uncover a few.

Dowsing is like gravity. You may not understand how it works, but if you step off a tall building, you're still going to fall.

The writer can be reached at eyewrite4u@aol.com.



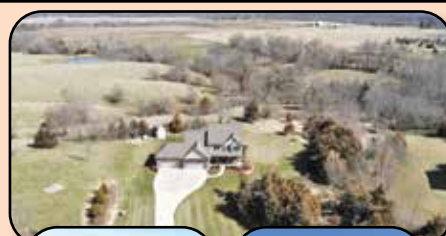
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63.463 acres (58.703 ac zoned I-1, 4.76 ac zoned A-2) Remarkable Equestrian Estate w/ 4,800 sf home. 3 gated entryways & paved roads lined w/ gorgeous Maple trees lead up to the stately home w/ circular driveway & many other buildings. An abundance of wood fencing outlines the property & seen throughout the acres of pasture. Located near the Shoppes of Grand Prairie & easy access to Rt 150, with great traffic count!



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4 bedroom, 3.5 bath Custom Legend Home built on 2 acres! Open main floor plan with great daylight, stunning stone surrounded fireplace and wonderful views of the property! Spacious eat-in kitchen features cool tile flooring and new stove and microwave; sliders from kitchen lead to deck facing the back of the property, which backs up to pasture. Main floor laundry and mudroom off of huge 4-car garage with room for lift. Large MBR and BA with double sinks, large linen closet and walk-in tiled shower. 3 BR's up with loft space (currently used as an office) which could easily be additional BR. Full, finished basement features wet bar, full bath, blackout blinds, tank-less water heater and great storage. Walk-out patio with fire pit with steps to upper deck; shed, shared well, and natural gas line in place. Schedule your private showing today!



**0 W. Cruger Road
Washington, IL 61571- \$720,000**

27.15 acres - perfect site for subdivision development - utilities at lot line; mostly tillable, gently rolling farm ground

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HEAD SOUTH!

By Shawn Stafford
Owner, Hunting Fit
www.Huntingfit.com

along the gulf, specifically for me, the Galveston and Trinity Bay Areas. If you have a lingering fear of being miles and miles off shore or easily get sea sick, fishing in the bay you are always in sight of land and the waves are very minor most of the time. Occasionally you'll have to delay your trip due to small craft warnings but in general the waters are fairly calm.

Another bonus is you can be fishing in minutes rather than hours. The boat ride can really be as short as you want it with some areas even able to entertain bank or beach fishing. This also helps reduce the cost of your trip assuming you will be booking a charter. If you're within driving distance of the coast and want to try your own hands, entry into this game is lower than if you had to rig up to head to the deep water. Albeit you can of course drop as much coin as

Are you a fair-weather fisherman that prefers warmer temps and sunshine while out wetting a line? Me too. When I think about fishing, short of the steel head run off of Lake Michigan in early Spring, I imagine shorts, sunshine, and summer fun. If you're a little further North like I am those days are still several months away. However, I did have the opportunity to live in Texas for a spell and during that time I was introduced to saltwater bay fishing. What I can tell you is the weather down there is much nicer than it is up here right now.

There are several great things about fishing the intercoastal areas



Red Fish are a huge draw to intercoastal bay fishing. While this wasn't one of the bulls you'll be looking for you can tell by the smile it was still well worth it.

you wish, even on a shallow water setup, but in general the equipment for bay fishing versus deep sea will be significantly lower.

Along the lines of equipment, there is no need for heavy duty, hardcore tackle. Truthfully, I used my regular old spinning rod and reel on several occasions. The one thing I did was change out the line to a saltwater line and bumped up the test strength to 16 lbs. The only other investments I needed to make were some metal leaders, popping corks,



Coming prepared to catch your own bait can add a certain DIY field to table feel and a different dimension to bag of tricks.

and treble hooks. I'm sure that if I would have stuck around along the coast, I would have delved into some artificial bait but for my experience I stuck to shrimp and the occasional bait fish if we were lucky enough to

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23168 N. GOLF RD., CUBA, IL 61427 - \$419,500

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Drum can fill in the slots where the other fish aren't biting and are certainly fit for the table.



The author relaxes and takes in the scenery while cruising in Galveston Bay, TX in search of the next hot spot.

net a few. Honestly, my first-time bay fishing was the first time I had ever seen a whole shrimp. Most of us only get to see the tails. Funny looking things I might add. What's interesting about using shrimp as bait I heard two different, specific opinions on whether to use live or dead. One guy swore by live shrimp and another swore that he buys the dead bait since it's cheaper and he found there was no discernable difference in the amount of fish he caught whether there was a lively or limp shrimp on the end of his hook. I'll let you decide for yourself which is better but what I will tell you

is that if you get the live ones, and the fishing is less than spectacular, you can at least take the rest of your bait home and have some fried shrimp. I'm serious.

There are two other cool things about fishing in the bay that you may not have considered. If you like fly fishing, the waters can be shallow in the bays and marsh grass is quite prevalent. On more than one occasion I would see what appeared to be an abandoned boat floating in the water only to see a fly fisherman in waders around the corner trying to make the perfect presentation of his bait in

order to entice a bite. Another option, which I personally haven't tried but would love too, is flounder gigging. Yes, flounder gigging. Much like frog gigging but instead of focusing on a set of eyes along the bank you look for the flat fish lurking along the bottom of the shallow water. The first time I heard about this I didn't believe it. Upon further investigation its real and sounds like a blast.

What I haven't yet mentioned is what you'll be fishing for. The thing about fishing in the bay is you may be fishing for one species but you really won't know what you've caught (unless it's a big 'ole bull red as there is no mistaking that tug on your line) until you get it to the boat or it does some aerial acrobatics for you. Most people target red fish for their tenacious fights and also speckled trout as they are quite delicious. Seems like I caught as many sting rays as anything but there were also black drum, croakers, sheepshead, and what they called a hardhead (catfish). It is an array of opportunity for the angler and tons of fun for the experienced to the first timer.

If you live along the gulf you are probably already well aware of fishing the coastal waters. If you don't but will be vacationing or even out on a business trip give it a shot. There's nothing like being out on the water especially when it's something you've never done before. Be sure to check the regulations before you head out though. I won't go into any details, but make sure you understand the local boating and fishing rules. The last thing I'll mention is be sure to simply enjoy the experience in its' entirety. I enjoyed waiting at the boat launch watching everyone head out for the morning. Talking with the ladies at the bait shop. Wishing a kayaker luck in his tournament. Meeting up with some shrimpers prepping their boat and watching their lights disappear into the predawn darkness. Cruising through waters I'd never seen before. Spending time with my kids. I could go on. Just get out there and have fun. That's what it's all about, right?



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ILLINOIS SPRING TROUT FISHING SEASON OPENS APRIL 4

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The 2020 Illinois Spring Trout Fishing Season will open Saturday, April 4 at 56 ponds, lakes and streams throughout the state.

An early opportunity at select trout sites – the Spring Catch-and-Release Fishing Season – will open March 21. No trout may be kept during the catch and release fishing period, but anglers can keep trout after the opening of the regular season beginning April 4.

The Illinois Catchable Trout Program is funded by those who use the program through the sale of Inland Trout Stamps. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) stocks more than 80,000 rainbow trout each year in bodies of water where trout fishing is permitted during the spring season. An additional 80,000 trout will be stocked for the Fall Trout Fishing Season, which begins in October.

For the 2020 spring trout season, no trout may be taken from any of the stocked sites from March 15 until the season opens at 5:00 a.m. April 4. Anyone attempting to harvest trout before the legal harvest season opening will be issued citations.

All anglers – including those who intend to release fish caught before April 4 – must have a fishing license and an Inland Trout Stamp, unless they are under the age of 16, blind or disabled, or are an Illinois resident on leave from active duty in the Armed Forces. The daily catch limit for each angler is five trout.

Two traditional spring trout fishing locations are closed this year. The Waddams Creek site at Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Recreational Area and Manners Park Pond in Taylorville will be temporarily removed from stocking for site maintenance purposes.

For more information on trout

seasons and other Illinois fishing opportunities, check the website at www.ifishillinois.org.

Illinois 2020 fishing licenses and Inland Trout Stamps are available now at DNR Direct license and permit locations, including many bait shops, sporting goods stores and other retail outlets. For a list of locations, check the IDNR website at this link: <http://dnr.illinois.gov/DNRDirectMonitor/VendorListing.aspx>

Fishing licenses and trout stamps also can be purchased by using a credit card through DNR Direct online via the IDNR website at www.dnr.illinois.gov, or by calling DNR Direct toll-free at 1-888-6PERMIT (1-888-673-7648).

For information about all site regulations, anglers should contact individual sites that will be stocked with catchable-size trout. Not all sites open at 5:00 a.m. on opening

day. Anglers are reminded to check the opening time of their favorite sites prior to the open date.

The 56 locations that will be open for the spring trout season are listed below:

2020 Illinois Spring Trout Locations (* Denotes sites open for Catch-and-Release Early Spring Season fishing)

North

- Boone County - Mill Race Ponds, Belvidere
- Bureau County - Hennepin Canal Parkway
- Cook County - Axehead Lake, Cook County Forest Preserve District
- Cook County - Belleau Lake, Cook County Forest Preserve District
- Cook County - Green Lake in Calumet City, Cook County Forest Preserve District
- Cook County - Horsetail Lake, Cook County Forest Preserve District
- Cook County - Wolf Lake at William W. Powers State Recreation Area, Chicago
- DuPage County - Silver Lake, DuPage County Forest Preserve District
- DuPage County - Pickerel Lake,



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- Jo Daviess County - Apple River, Apple River Canyon State Park **
- Kankakee County - Bird Park Quarry, Kankakee
- Kankakee County - Rock Creek, Kankakee River State Park **
- Kendall County - Big Lake, Silver Springs State Fish and Wildlife Area (SFWA)
- Lake County - Banana Lake, Lake County Forest Preserve District
- Lake County - Sand Lake, Illinois Beach State Park
- LaSalle County - Illinois and Michigan Canal Lock 14, LaSalle
- LaSalle County - Lake Mendota, Village of Mendota
- McHenry County - Lake Atwood, McHenry County Conservation District
- McHenry County - Piscasaw Creek, McHenry County Conservation District
- Ogle County - Pine Creek, White Pines Forest State Park **
- Rock Island County - Prospect Park, Moline

- Stephenson - Yellow Creek in Krape Park, Freeport
- Whiteside County - Centennial Park Pond, Rock Falls
- Will County - Lake Milliken, Des Plaines SFWA
- Winnebago County - Four Lakes, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District
- Winnebago County - Baumann Lake, Cherry Valley

Central

- Adams County - Siloam Springs State Park Lake **
- Cass County - Gridley Lake, Jim Edgar Panther Creek SFWA **
- Champaign County - Lake of the Woods, Champaign Co. Forest Preserve Dist.
- Champaign County - Kaufman Lake, Champaign Park District
- Coles County - Eastern Illinois University Campus Pond, Charleston
- De Witt County - Weldon Springs, Weldon Springs State Park
- Clark County - Casey Park Pond, Casey
- Hancock County - Horton Lake, Nauvoo State Park **
- Macon County - Sportsman’s Club

- Pond, Macon County Conservation District
- McLean County - Miller Park Lake, Bloomington
- Morgan County - Morgan Lake at Nichols Park, Jacksonville **
- Moultrie County - Wyman Lake, Sullivan
- Pike County - King Park Pond, Pittsfield
- Sangamon County - Southwind Park, Springfield
- Sangamon County - IDOT Lake, Springfield **
- Sangamon County - Washington Park Pond, Springfield
- Shelby County - Forest Park Lagoon, Shelbyville
- Vermilion County - Clear Lake, Kickapoo State Recreation Area

South

- Jefferson County - Mount Vernon Game Farm Pond
- Johnson County - Ferne Clyffe State Park Lake
- Madison County - Belk Park Pond, Wood River
- Marion County - Boston Pond, Stephen A. Forbes State Recreation Area

- Massac County - Fairgrounds Pond, Fort Massac State Park
- Randolph County - Derby Lake, Sparta (World Shooting and Recreational Complex)
- St. Clair County - Frank Holten State Park Main Lake
- St. Clair County - Jones Park Lake, East St. Louis
- St. Clair County - Willow Lake at Peabody River King SFWA **
- Wabash County - Beall Woods Lake, Beall Woods State Park
- Wayne County - Sam Dale Conservation Area Trout Pond



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Rich Pearson ... continued

description and online registration can be found on our website at: ISTA.org. The cost is only \$90 and the ISRA is including lunch for both days. If you have special dietary needs you will need to make your own lunch arrangements. Please sign up today. Visit the ISRA website for hotel information.

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Illinois Wildlife Bonus and Pheasant Program
Landowners participating in USDA's Conservation Program (CRP) and Non-CRP can take advantage of Illinois Wildlife Bonus Program payments for completing wildlife friendly habitat practice such as: Native Grass and Forb Plantings, Strip Disking, Invasive Species Control, Legume and Forb Inter-Seeding, Strip Spraying and Prescribed Burn.

Before any project is started a completed application and plat map or aerial photo of the project area must be submitted with a 25% match check payable to QUGA. The total match must be paid in advance by the landowner or QUGA Chapter to QUGA, 1157 600th Avenue, Middletown, IL 62666. Other conservation grant opportunities are available. Please request an application by email to bobwhite@psci.net or visit www.quga.org. For more information contact Jerry Johnson, QUGA Regional Director at 812-536-2272.

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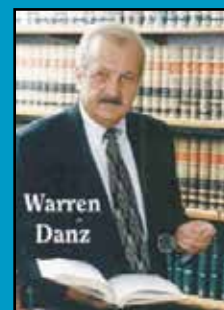
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