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FOR THAT
BIG ONE
THAT
DIDN'T
GET AWAY

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
SPECIES
LARGEMOUTH BASS 8 pounds or larger
CHAIN PICKEREL 4 pounds or larger
BLUEGILL (BREAM) 1 1/2 pounds or larger
SHELLCRACKER 2 pounds or larger
BLACK CRAPPIE 2 pounds or larger
RED BREAST 1 pound or larger

All fish must be taken from the fresh waters of the state of Florida, as defined by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fish must be caught on conventional fly, spinning, or bait-casting tackle, with artificial or live bait, in the presence of at least one witness.

The catch must be weighed and recorded at a fishing camp or tackle store within the state by the owner, manager, or an authorized agent of the respective establishment.

APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION

The Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation is available without charge, to any and all subscribers to Florida Wildlife Magazine, and their immediate families, who catch any of the fresh-water game fish of the prescribed species and size requirements. Citation, showing recorded date of the catch, will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of the following application form that has been properly filled out and signed.

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DEPARTMENTS

Florida’s Striped Bass                Horace Loflin 12
Flying Wildlife Officer             George X. Sand 16
Big Cypress Jamboree               Max Hunn 20
Wanted Dead Or Alive               Jim Floyd 22
He Sees What We Miss               Edmund McLaurin 26

Florida Birdlife                   31
Wildlife Balance Wheel             35
Boating                           38
Test and Tells                    41

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MAY, 1960

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FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION
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Dedicated to the
Conservation, Restoration, and Protection of Our Game and Fish

WALLACE HUGHES, Art Director
C. L. SATTERFIELD, Circulation
CHUCK SCHILLING, Angling Editor
EDMUND MCLAURIN, Firearms Editor
MRS. ONSAID

Editor:

do you know what my eight-year-old son said when he saw the picture on page 18, your March issue? "Daddy, look where these hunters have laid their guns. On the table."

I thought you was telling the boys that good hunters and sportsmen always put their guns up SAFELY. What could I tell my son? The only excuse was carelessness, but pictures like these will sometimes remain in a boy's mind.

Mr. Taylor
St. Augustine, Fla.

- The boy's gun safety training has paid off, Mr. Taylor. He certainly was quick to spot right from wrong—quicker than we here on the stuff.

CANAL BASS

Dear Editor:
The enclosed photograph shows two bass I caught late in January, 10 miles west of St. Pierre, while fishing along the drainage canal. The larger weighed 18 pounds, the smaller 7.5 pounds.

Orvis Coursey
F. Pierce, Fla.

- LAKE BASS

Dear Sir:
The enclosed picture is of Charles D. Jacobs, of St. Petersburg, with a largemouth bass that weighed in at 12 pounds, 2 ounces. As you can see, we catch big ones in these parts too.

James Bookway
St. Petersburg, Fla.

- LIP SERVICE

Editor:

Enclosed with my subscription renewal check is a snapshot which we have titled "Let's Talk Things Over—A Congregatory.

J. C. Williams
Bermuda, Fla.

- CARELESSNESS

Editor:

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St. Augustine, Fla.

- The boy's gun safety training has paid off, Mr. Taylor. He certainly was quick to spot right from wrong—quicker than we here on the stuff.

ANOTHER BIG ONE

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Jennifer Bookway
St. Petersburg, Fla.

- LIP SERVICE

Editor:

Enclosed with my subscription renewal check is a snapshot which we have titled "Let's Talk Things Over—A Congregatory.

J. C. Williams
Bermuda, Fla.

- FOREST FACTS

The Editor:

Reference is made to Muzzle Flashes which appeared in the March 1960 issue. We feel a few points need clarification.

It was not pointed out that the deer management program on the Ocala National Forest is jointly carried out by the U. S. Forest Service and the Game Commission. As a joint operation, the two departments keep in constant touch with each other and put into effect those measures which experience and research on the area indicate to be practical and feasible. For instance, it was stated that the Ocala Forest could benefit from controlled burning with the indication that such burning is not now being done. Actually, during the past year, approximately 1,000 acres were burned in the Forest specifically for wildlife, and additional burning beneficial to wildlife was done as part of the forestry management program.

So far as food plantings for deer are concerned, it must be pointed out that such plantings in themselves and without companion management measures do nothing to improve the deer herd. As was pointed out, the site and conditions of any herd will depend upon the quality and quantity of food which is available. Further, the soil and climatic conditions of any deer range are the basic controlling factors in determining the types and quantity of food which may be produced. When artificial plantings are put in, the deer herd soon uses up this additional food, so that the general condition of the herd is not in the long run improved. On the other hand, a much sounder program is to improve the quantity of good natural foods available. Contrary to some statements, we know of no instances in which deer take non-nutritional foods when they have available supplies of good quality natural foods. Improvement of deer habitat in the Ocala is being achieved by use of such management practices as controlled burning, discing of road and power line rights-of-way, pole-padded cutting, and brush cutting of timbered areas with heavy drum choppers.

As a matter of interest, there is a bulletin available, by Mr. Dan Stroud, of this department, titled- "Habitat Management in Florida National Forests," and was presented at the October meeting of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, Baltimore, Md.

E. B. Chamberlain, Jr.
Chief, Game Division
Game & Fresh Water Fish. Canton, Tallahassee, Fla.

- NAAS WHITING FIELD, MILTON, Fla., March 10—Just recently an episode in the never ending struggle for survival in the wildlife world took place on the Blackwater River near here.

The event was recorded on film by Ernest J. Gaines, PHC, USN, and Marvin Dockery, AN, USN, who happened to have their cameras along.

The pair was preparing Chief Gaines' boat for a trip up the river when Dockery noticed something thrashing in the water close to the bank around some reeds.

Thinking it might be a snake, he reached for an oar in the boat and took a swing in the direction of the unusual activity.

Not knowing what to expect, the two moved their boat around to inspect the area. The water was approximately 2 feet to 3 feet deep along the edge and it was relatively clear.

Seeing a long fish lying on the bottom, the pair thought they had made an unusual catch. And what an unusual catch it turned out to be. Where their catch was in the boat, they found they had not caught one but two fish. The first, a 22-inch Chain Pickerel, and the second a Shadacker approximately 1 1/2 pounds in weight.

However, the "catcher" was the victim of the Pickerel's hunger. The fish had managed to swallow the little fellow to the dorsal fins of the latter.
One of the most important conservation measures of recent years, the Blatnik bill which was aimed at improving the management of America's streams and rivers, was vetoed by President Eisenhower and Congress failed to override his veto.

One of the most important conservation measures of recent years, the Blatnik bill which was aimed at improving the management of America's streams and rivers, was vetoed by President Eisenhower and Congress failed to override his veto. The system provides for a commission with plenty of power, power over policy and budget with an administrator selected by the commission but free to carry out the policies and program of the commission in many sections. Vetoed for reasons of economy and because the President felt that waste disposal is primarily a local problem rather than a national one, it now appears the bill is about as dead as it can ever be. Sportmen's organizations tended to be rather bitter about their defeat but there were some ticks of sunshine through the clouds.

The Florida Wildlife Federation had sent telegrams to Florida congressmen asking that they override the veto. All of the legislators answered the communication and most of them pointed out reasons why loss of the measure was somewhat less than tragic.

It was pointed out that the bill did not provide for the beginning of new projects but simply budgeted more money for previously approved construction. Some of the congressmen were doubtful if the budgeted money would be appropriated and pointed out that part of the funds scheduled in previous years had never been appropriated. In other words, previously planned work has not been done because no money was available.

The Best Way
Ira Gabrielson, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, recently wrote an article on "The Best Way to Manage Fish and Game" for Outdoor America, publication of the Izaak Walton League.

Gabrielson, who has had long experience in the conservation field, has observed many state systems in operation. He says that the best system of administration is one that is organized on broad lines and the management of the state department is inclusive and all-embracing department of conservation or natural resources.

The natural resources department idea is generally supported by those who believe in a strong, central government completely under the thumb of the governor, including some theory-blinded students of government as well as partisan politicians; and every budget officer who chafes at having his operations restricted by earmarked funds.

Among the reasons usually advanced for advocating this type of administration are:

1. It would centralize administration and give the governor control of the management of the state government and of the budget.
2. It would eliminate earmarked funds.
3. It would provide better integration of resource administration . . . .

Theoretically, putting management of all natural resources under one roof sounds good. But in a matter of cold, practical operation, wherever minerals and oil have been placed in one department, it has almost invariably resulted in the complete domination of the department by powerful commercial interests and the sweeping aside of the interests of the general public when there was any conflict with the desires of the oil or mineral people. In two cases within recent years, such departments have been established only to have fish and game pulled out of the overall department because of the sportmen's dislike of the results of such administration.
Even more acute than usual. In the
where most anglers do some salt­water
solved, and were generally
an average
year. They rusted, corroded, dis­integrated;
years
factory. Just after the war,
around for a tackle box that would
prove interesting to you readers.

My friend, Maynard Merritt of
Miami, is an avid and expert angler
and, also, an expert cabinetmaker.
When I told him what
I,
also, wanted one that
be perfectly suited to my Florida
needs. I, also, wanted one that
matched the tackle box exactly like the

This tackle box stands 12 inches
high, is 8 inches deep, and 15-3/4 inches
wide. Except for the three
drawers, it is built throughout of
3/8-inch, 5-ply Weilwood. The
drawers have 5/8-inch side pieces (to
take the slots) but the front, back,
and bottom pieces are made of one-
quarter, 3-ply stock. The two
dividers in the big bottom drawer
are of one-quarter inch stock, while
the dividers in the two smaller
drawers are made of basswood
Venetian blind slats.

Bottom of top compartment is
one-quarter inch plywood, the lid itself
is 1-1/8 inches deep inside,
while the top compartment is 1-5/8
inches deep. This forms an over-all
inside dimension of the top
compartment of 15" x 7-1/4" x 2-1/4".
I have subdivided this area in my
own box on a diagonal and keep all
manner of often-used items in it.
The two small drawers are 1-1/2
inches deep inside, and the big bot-
tom drawer is 2-1/2 inches deep in-
side. The big drawer has three equal
compartments, while the smaller
ones have 11 compartments each
that are large enough for a big plug.

The three equal compartiments,
while the smaller
tackle box is the
floor of box when
opened. Also note the hole in top edge of
the lid section off on a table saw.
Using a bandsaw here requires great
care. Cut is 1-5/8 inches from the top.
Top and bottom pieces are 8"x15-5/4"
1/4", side pieces 8"x11/2", back (be-
fore lid cut) 11"x15", front panel

a seat for the helmsman on long
runs, putting him in the center of
the boat for better balance and trim,
and making conversation between
passengers a lot more pleasant. For
all these purposes, I use one or two
boat cushions on top of the box, de-
pending on how high a seat is de-
sirable.

I think the pictures accompanying
this article will show most of the
detail of this box's construction. All
fastenings should be corrosion-free
and all joints glued with water-
proof resin.

Picture #1: This shows the over-
all construction detail. I built the
top of the box solid and then cut the
lid section off on a table saw. Using
a bandsaw here requires great
care. Cut is 1-5/8 inches from the top.
Top and bottom pieces are 8"x15-5/4"
1/4", side pieces 8"x11/2", back (be-
fore lid cut) 11"x15", front panel

#1 Overall Construction

#2 Drawer Pulls

#3 Compartment Open

#4 Panel Slots

#5 Bail Slots

(continued on page 40)
Almost a million shotshells we're exchanged by competing shotgunners at Miami, Palm Beach, Sarasota, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Orlando and Daytona Beach, almost a million shotshells were exploded by competing shotguns. That's a lot of ammunition, no matter how considered.

At the St. Petersburg shoot, for example, consumption was so rapid and voluminous that range personnel designated to keep firing points clean of empties and ready for succeeding firing squads used oversize rakes and wheelbarrows to do their jobs with a minimum loss of time between scheduled firing sessions.

However, aside from expressing personal preferences for certain name brands of shotgun shells among the variety of wares stocked by shoot sponsors for the convenience of competitors, few among the hundreds who fired at the whitestones likely gave much thought to shotshell components and the manufacturing operations represented by each chambered shell.

Most of the 212 manufacturing plants was expended in concentrating on targets and in later figuring the cost of tournament participation, no small part of which was shotshell expense. To certain veteran shooters, the increased cost of ammunition commonly prompted rueful mental computations with yesteryear.

Undeniably, shotgun shell cost to the heavy shooter can be a matter of life or death. Few factors are more closely watched by the gun enthusiast than the price of ammunition.

Almost a million shotshells were fired during the three-day shoot at the recent Florida State Shoot in St. Petersburg, with many more being loaded in between rounds.

The primed shell cases are routed via feeder tubes to other machines to be packed with smokeless powders, wads and shot, then crimped and sealed, ready for final inspection and packaging. Early black powder mixtures of saltpetre, carbon and sulphur have long since given way to countless modern formulas for smokeless type powders. These new explosives go by a variety of trade names. DuPont MX, Acapnia, Nike, "MB," "AL-5" and "AL-4" are only a few of the available shotgun shell powders. (It is generally believed the Chinese invented gunpowder. However, there are some dissentions among the historians. Roger Bacon and Friar Berthold are two others regarded as discoverers. Bacon did mention gunpowder in his writings of the year 1249, but most authorities believe the Chinese were the true discoverers and initial users.)

Old-type powders abruptly developed maximum energy practically at the instant the charge of shot was discharged from the gun barrel. Black powder, a holder over from yesteryear, is in this class. Old-type powders, on the other hand, burn relatively slowly and develop energy gradually. They reach a point of maximum energy only after the shot charge has been well started. The result is high velocity and less deformation of shot.

However, there is a limit to the maximum shot velocity that can be loaded into a shotgun shell. For one thing, the shot charge cannot be moved much faster than 1,000 feet per second without ruining the effective pattern, no matter what the choke boring of the gun.

During all shotshell manufacturing operations, and before finished, ready-to-use shells are released for shipment to dealers, inspectors and technicians are constantly at work. In test firings, shotshells must function reliably in a variety of guns of corresponding gauge. Among other conducted tests, ballistic engineers make close check of uniform velocity and effective, even shot distribution of test-fired shells.

Around 1920, shotshells were produced in thousands of different shot sizes and shell velocities. Fabrics, materials, forms and orders based on expressed personal preferences, with ultimate confusion among unformed shooters. Standardization of shot sizes factory loaded—by agreement among the manufacturers—and the development of caseless shotshells, also wads and the folded crimp, together, give today's shooter the best and most practical shell loadings to be had. Next step will probably be adoption of some sort of plastic shell case (already perfected and used by Du Pont) and plastic motion makers, or perhaps a completely self-consuming shotgun shell. Mean
The Commission’s newest research program may mean more and different fishing thrills for Florida sportsmen.

The average weight of Florida’s Stripers is from nine to twelve pounds. Forty pounds or more are uncommon and some in excess of 60 pounds have been landed.

The current striped bass rush began shortly after the Jim Woodruff Dam was completed. The big stripers went way up into Georgia to spawn in the old days, but now the dam halts and concentrates most of them in the Florida stretch of the Apalachicola. Luck in the Apalachicola sent anglers looking for stripers in other Florida rivers. Today more striped bass are being taken in northwest Florida than ever before.

Fish weighing from nine to 12 pounds are being taken regularly, and some of the biggest range up to 45 pounds. Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission personnel obtained actual weights of 17 striped bass taken from the Jim Woodruff Dam catwalk, December 12-16, 1959. Total weight of these fish was 237 pounds. Nine weighed more than 30 pounds apiece, and six weighed more than 20 pounds apiece.

The picture is even brighter farther downstream. During the coldest months especially, striped bass weighing 40 pounds or over are taken rather frequently. These big ones have been caught mostly in the Dead Lakes—Winimco and the Intra-coastal Waterway. Not many were taken upriver in Florida then, but some were taken across the border in Georgia.

For years, river fishermen along the Florida Panhandle have been losing gear to “gars, logs and turtles.” Now that the secret is out about the striped bass in northwest Florida, this battle must be credited for a good share of lost light tackle. It has been known for a long time that the striped bass (mostly called rock bass or just plain rockfish) could be caught in the Panhandle, but only a few sportsmen armed with the proper tackle and bait managed to take many of them.

The striped bass take in order to yield the maximum number of fish for the sportsmen without hurting the breeding capacity of the striped bass population?

Before any of these important questions can be answered intelligently, we have to learn a whole lot about this “mystery fish.” The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission has already begun an ambitious program to find the answers.

From: The Commission’s newest research program may mean more and different fishing thrills for Florida sportsmen. The average weight of Florida’s Stripers is from nine to twelve pounds. Forty pounds or more are uncommon and some in excess of 60 pounds have been landed.

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The picture is even brighter farther downstream. During the coldest months especially, striped bass weighing 40 pounds or over are taken rather frequently. These big ones have been caught mostly in the Dead Lakes—Winimco and the Intra-coastal Waterway area especially. Upriver, fishermen are catching good-size stripers on shoals near the mouths of spring-fed creeks. The ones taken from the tailrace of dams seem to average a little smaller. For tailrace fishing, either heavy freshwater or light saltwater tackle is being used. Around the creek mouths, lighter tackle can be employed, since the current is not so swift and fishing is usually done from a boat there. Favorite baits for river fishing are eels—live or artificial—, threadfin shad, or heavy lures. The best results have come from fishing on the bottom.

Angling for the 40-pounders downstream usually calls for heavier gear. Live shrimp, fished on the bottom, is an effective bait. Even heavy saltwater line is being snapped in two by some big fish downriver and in the lakes. The world’s record for striped bass taken with rod and reel is 73 pounds, made in 1913 off Massachusetts. Makes you wonder if there isn’t a record-breaker waiting to be taken in the Florida Panhandle!

The striped bass “rush” really means that a whole new sports fishery is opening up in Florida. And this poses some tough problems:

1. How much fishing pressure can the striped bass take and still maintain its present numbers and average size?
2. What can fish management experts do to increase the abundance of striped bass over the present level in areas already being fished?
3. Can striped bass be introduced into areas where they are not now present?
4. What kind of regulation of the fishery— if any—is needed to control the striped bass take in order to yield the maximum number of fish for the sportsmen without hurting the breeding capacity of the striped bass population?
The range of the striped bass extends from the St. Lawrence River to Louisiana. Since stripers are not found around peninsular Florida, it is believed that the Gulf Coast stripers got cut off from his eastern kinsmen many years ago when the coastline of Florida and Georgia was on indicated by the solid black line on map shown at left.

**Research work includes a complete check of food and habitat requirements, the striped bass's distribution, and their growth rates.**

(continued from preceding page)

The easternmost report of a stripper on the Gulf coast seems to be from the St. Marks River. Does this fish extend further east and south along the peninsula? Does it migrate up the Suwannee? Questions like these will call for a lot of exploratory fishing, using seine, tackle, electrical equipment and even aquanauts and spears, before the actual range of the Gulf Coast striper will be finally spelled out. So far as is known, there are no striped bass along the lower portion of peninsular Florida on either the west or east coasts. But another population of Stripers put in their appearance in the St. Johns River. These east coast bass differ from the Gulf coast variety in a number of ways. The east coast striper's habits are more like the striped bass found along the Atlantic farther to the north. Apparently, the Gulf coast striper got cut off from its eastern kinsmen when the Florida peninsula rose from the sea following the last Ice Age, some 25,000 or more years ago.

Along with the exploratory phase of the investigation, Barkuloo and Grover are piecing together the life histories of the Gulf and east coast stripers. This work is at the very heart of sound management of this growing sport fishery. We still have to learn where, when and how the big fish spawn and what kind of water and bottom they need for most favorable reproduction. There are already some good guesses around concerning these points, but nobody knows the real facts for Florida stripers yet. Then we must find out about the nursery grounds: what kind of food and surroundings the young fish need for maximum growth and survival. How long does it take them to reach reproductive age and gauselsh size?

We have the answers to most of these questions for the largemouth bass, crappie, and other old favorites, and on this knowledge our management policies are based. But, frankly, the Florida striped bass is still a mystery fish, even when it is compared with the striped bass of the Atlantic coast north of Florida. Take their migratory habits, for example. For years fishery biologists have been studying the big stripers of the Chesapeake Bay to Massachusetts area and know their ways pretty well. These Yankee stripers are essentially salt water fish, appearing in great schools along the outer banks where they gladden the hearts of surf casters. At spawning time they run into the rivers, deposit their eggs and after a stay in fresh water move back to sea. But our Gulf Coast stripper may get only to brackish water. It is taken upriver mostly from spring into winter. They seem to pass the coldest part of the year far downstream. Little stripers are found upriver almost any month of the year, so the young probably stay there at least until their second year.

To find out when and where the striped bass spawn in Florida waters, Barkuloo and Grover will periodically drag small, fine-meshed nets in various kinds of river situations—upstream and down, in creeks, over rock, mud, sand, etc. Based on the number of eggs the nets come up with through the year in the different localities, this phase of the mystery of the striped bass should soon be solved.

The fishery biologists will have to go "minnow chasing" to check the food and habitat requirements of baby stripers, their distribution and their growth rates. But once the biologists start after the secrets of mama and papa striped bass, the work and tempo will pick up sharply. The big ones will be collected by skin-diving, by hook and line, by electrical gear, haul seines, gill nets, hoop nets—any way the biologists can get hold of them. Interviews with sportsmen and creel censuses will yield a store of information.

From such research, data on [continued on page 36]
I PAY A VISIT TO

THE FLYING WILDLIFE OFFICER

By GEORGE X. SAND

The time is 7:30. Ten minutes earlier, just as the winter sun arose, you took off from Bradley Field at Fort Lauderdale in Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission plane N193D. In the forward seat of the 130 Super Cub Flying Wildlife Officer Lewis "Cossie" Conrad is scanning the thinly flooded brown face of the sawgrass Everglades, scarcely 150 feet below.

Cossie is young, stocky, quiet. A good pilot. An ex-Navy man, he lives with his wife at Fort Lauderdale. He was waiting with his ship on the line when you drove up. He knew his bosses at Tallahassee want you to see for yourself how it is practically impossible to hide a game violation from the watching eyes of the Commission's air arm.

Well, you're ready to be shown. You've often wondered about this as you paused in the Big Cypress and Cossie promptly follows it.

You note an occasional swamp buggy or other hunting vehicle being towed behind its owner's car. Most are enroute to the Big Cypress. For the season has barely opened and the air is charged with anticipation. The pilot deserts the highway abruptly to follow a pair of swamp buggy tracks as the parallel ruts veer off into the sawgrass. He turns in his seat to ask, "How old would you say those buggy tracks were?"

You study the bent-over grass. You guess that they look pretty fresh.

Cossie shakes his head. They're at least two days old. Notice how the grass tops have returned to the same dull color as the unwhashed tops on either side of the trail. A fresh track will always show up glossy where the buggy has turned over new grass that hasn't been exposed to the sun. The same goes for an airboat trail.

Shortly you fly over another trail, a fresh one this time. It angles northwestward, toward the Big Cypress, and Cossie promptly follows it.

An idea comes to you. "If this guy down there had gotten into the swamp before we cut his trail you'd have no sawgrass to tell you how fresh his trail was—if he left any trail at all," you tell your companion. "There'd be no sawgrass—most likely nothing but water."

Cossie smiles again at that. "We could still tell," he assures you. "Most of that swamp bottom is marl. If anyone has been over it within a day—even two days—in a vehicle or walking, it stays muddy and is easy to spot from the air."

As the Commission plane flew low over the sawgrass country, a big buck halted and looked us over. Wily deer often disappear beneath tall grass, not to be seen again—even from the air.

You sit back. Your respect for the pilot's ability is steadily increasing.

Before long Cossie drops the wing again. You glance down. You've caught up with the track-maker. He's driving a motorized contraption that somewhat resembles a cableless truck with a bulky building contractor's tool shack mounted behind. Two companions bounce alongside the driver on the uncomfortable front seat.

As the shadow of the plane flicks over them the three men glance upward. One gives a brief wave. Then they resume their conversation.

"It's always a good sign when everything appears calm like that," Cossie says as you continue on your way. "You can pretty much tell from the manner in which men and vehicles—even planes—are operating whether they're apt to be engaged in game or fish violations. Particularly when you move in close overhead to observe how they react to your being there."

"Suppose they're in camp," you bait. "A camp can be made to look awfully innocent. And if there's no place handy for you to land nearby, as there likely wouldn't be way out here, what can you do then?"

"We pay close attention to the location of such camps, for one thing. Especially when they are pitched close to areas where hunting is not permitted. Take the Collier hunt area, for instance. We've had trouble from fellows who camp just on the inside of the open

(continued on next page)
During the hunting season you’re apt to see most any kind of swamp vehicle lurching deep into the Big Cypress swamp.

(continued from preceding page)

country there, then walk over to hunt illegally in the posted turkey breeding grounds.

"From the air, however, if you’ve learned how to look closely, you can easily spot their footprints. A quick call on the plane’s radio then brings in the Commission’s ground units—airboats, swamp buggies or whatever other vehicles may be needed—to check out your suspicions."

"You spoke earlier of planes," you remind him.

"Several ways. One favorite trick is to ‘rally’ ducks. A pilot can keep birds stirred up on a calm day just about any direction you want, just like you’d drive airboats—to move in upon the blinds. From the air you can bulldoze where his friends await in their blinds. In fact, with a plane you can run a duck in the middle of the Glades. I guessed what they were looking for and went over to call for the nearest unit."

"What was your most exciting apprehension case?" you ask.

"Several years ago biologist Jim Powell and I were making an alligator count in the Miami Canal. I was based at Okeechobee at the time and we’d taken off from there to follow the canal southeastward toward Miami. We were flying low, just taking our time and looking, when unexpectedly we came upon this swamp buggy stopped beside a ‘gator hole."

"There were three men in the buggy, way out here, just about 10 miles to the county north line. It was too soft to land out there. So we had to wait for them to move. We watched them scurry around in the sawgrass and pick up a ‘gator that must have been 10 feet long. Now that’s a big ‘gator for three men to pick up, much less throw atop a high buggy. They did it, however, and took off toward the north. I guess they were pretty scared."

"They were in Broward County at the time, about 10 miles from Hollywood. We radioed for other Commission units to leave their ‘gator holes and throw these pieces off as they went along."

"Meanwhile, it was important we remain over the men unseen in the tall sawgrass ahead of them. Each time we lost contact thus we’d have to buzz the men over. To make matters worse, the repeated pounding kept jarring the connections loose inside the buggy’s radio, so we had difficulty giving them instructions on how to head-off the constantly zigzagging ‘gator hunters."

"How did the ‘gator hunters stop oft?" you ask.

"The ‘gator hunters set a course westward, into Broward County at the time, about three miles of this they managed to do. By this time the men below had set their wing tank gauges were dropping steadily."

"At 4 o’clock in the afternoon Supervisor Thompson arrived from Clewiston. He picked up a couple of our officers waiting beside the highway, and, as they left the road to take to the sawgrass, Jim and I led them straight toward their quarry."

"When the ‘gator hunters spotted this maneuver they knew exactly from what quarter to expect trouble. They took off at high speed to begin what would be probably the wildest Everglades chase I’ve ever seen. Had not the consequences been so serious—they might even have appeared ludicrous as our officers proceeded to chase those fellows back and forth, all over the Glades. Those hide hunters knew the sawgrass well."

"It was real rough going over those sawgrass ponds at full speed, believe me. Jim and I could see their ‘gators hanging on. To make matters worse, the repeated pounding kept jarring the connections loose inside the buggy’s radio, so we had difficulty giving them instructions on how to head-off the constantly zigzagging men unseen in the tall sawgrass ahead of them. Each time we lost contact thus we’d have to buzz the Commission buggy and yell from the plane for them to repair their set again."

"The ‘gators, meanwhile, were dodging and doubling back on their own trail like a rabbit trying to shake a bound. The grass was higher than both ‘gator and either driver could see a dozen feet ahead. How they managed to miss the many ‘gator holes in that area—any one of which would have bagged them down—remains a mystery to me."

"Nevertheless, thanks to the plane, the fleeing men didn’t have a chance. Gradually Brown and the other officers wore them down. About 5:30 that afternoon we saw two of the hide hunters leap from their buggy and run off."

(continued on page 32)

We landed at camp of R. W. "Giff" Griffin, deep in Big Cypress country. Flying Wildlife Officer Lew "Cassie" Conrod, left, discusses deer hunting with veteran Glades camper Griffin.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

MAY, 1960
Fun on a swamp buggy at the Big Cypress Jamboree.

BIG CYPRESS

The Big Cypress was jumpin' when the Everglades Conservation and Sportsmen's Club held its 10th annual Big Cypress Jamboree and Wild Hog Barbecue.

The spreading fame of this annual event caused 2,250 people to drive deep into the heart of Collier county's Big Cypress south of Monroe station on the Tamiami Trail to chomp on wild hog meat, eat Florida's famous swamp cabbage salad and such standard table fare as cole slaw, beans, buns, domestic ribs and chicken.

During the two-day event—which was expanded into a Saturday and Sunday affair for the first time this year (1960) to accommodate the steadily increasing crowds—the visitors consumed better than three tons of hog, ribs and chicken. The 3,283 pounds of wild hog, of course, was the prime dish, but the outdoor eaters back this with 950 pounds of ribs and some 1,900 pounds of barbecued chicken. More than 200 head of swamp cabbage were consumed along with gallons of coffee, cold drinks and beans, flavored with wild hog meat.

Visitors came from as far as Cocoa and Key West, and one group even arrived a day early, coming on Thursday afternoon. The Conservation club members, however, weren't perturbed, and treated the "early" guests to wild hog barbecues and took them on impromptu swamp buggy rides.

A new feature this year was Saturday night's old-fashioned square dance which attracted some 200 dancers, who rollicked until the wee hours in the Cypress. Many even pitched their tents and camped on the club grounds.

The two-day affair featured something for everyone, with the free swamp buggy rides attracting top attention. The club members drove their buggies from 10 a.m. to sunset each day, and there was never a lack of riders.

The program also included turkey, archery, trap, skeet and B-B gun shoots; primitive camp exhibits; a display of Florida tree snails; Seminole Indians; conservation exhibits and plenty of sunshine and cypress atmosphere.

Funds from the barbecue and the club's annual membership drive held at the same time are used to carry on the organization's conservation program. During its ten years of existence, the club has conducted a deer restocking program and has cooperated with Wildlife officials by putting out turkey feeders and creating water holes during droughts. The club also provides free primitive camping facilities to Boy and Girl Scout troops.

The cooks kept busy preparing wild hog, domestic ribs and chickens for more than 3,000 visitors.

Mighty tasty—says Max. Lilly Cassette about the barbecued wild hog servings.

JAMBOREE

Photo Story By MAX HUNN

Swamp cabbage was another favorite on the menu, right center, and the KP detail here was performed by Harriet and Richard Stanley.

The serving lines, lower right, were hard pressed to keep up with the hungry visitors.
The Rattlesnake Rodeo proved to be fun and educational

The purpose of rattlesnake rodeos is a "control measure" adopted since the stoppage of woods-burning, and also provides additional outdoor recreation for the sportsmen.

WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE

By JIM FLOYD

The Rattlesnake Rodeo proved to be fun and educational

The purpose of rattlesnake rodeos is a "control measure" adopted since the stoppage of woods-burning, and also provides additional outdoor recreation for the sportsmen.

Directed me toward a frame building marked "Rodeo Headquarters." My escort, who turned out to be the chief of Chipley's Fire Department, said, "Just come with me, boss, and I will introduce you to a man who can answer just any little question you might be of a mind to ask."

Steered through the crowd and into the headquarters building, I was introduced to Roy Sanders of the Washington County Sportsmen Club and official weight master of the Rodeo. Roy proceeded to explain the purpose and cause of the commotion and attraction I had noted previously. After several interruptions due to telephone calls, I began to weave a fascinating tale from our broken conversation.

The Washington County Sportsmen were in the final phase of the 1959-60 National Rattlesnake Rodeo. The assortment of snakes I had viewed outside the headquarters were collected from all points of Florida and Alabama by sportsmen and amateur herpetologist. Rodeo rules stipulated that anyone could enter the rodeo by paying a one dollar registration fee and in turn would receive a one dollar bounty for each snake turned in at the rodeo headquarters. These snakes could be either dead or alive. In addition to

(continued on next page)

Representatives from the Armed Forces attend the rodeo, and give special demonstrations on how these reptiles can be utilized by men for entertainment during survival exercises.

Lovely Betty Arnold, from Blakely, Ga., was crowned Queen of the Rodeo. With her here is snake-specialist Jerry Tabor of the Ross Allen Reptile Institute, during special evening festivities marking the end of another successful 'snake-hunt.'
the bounty, contestants were viewing prizes. These prizes were to be presented to the individuals who turned in three divisions, Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, Pigmy or Ground Coral snakes. 

To evict a rattler from a gopher hole, a length of garden hose is placed in. The hunter places his ear to the open end, listening for that tell-tale hunting sound.

(continued from preceding page) the concomitant weight master and received a reply of, "Come on, let's find a cup of coffee and see if we can scout up a couple of the boys who will be able to give you more detailed information."

The cafe had an honor system for coffee customers where one drew their own coffee and paid when leaving. We filled our mugs and joined a group of men at a large community coffee table where I was introduced to Douglas Birge, a lanky individual, wearing the boots and hat of a Florida cowman. Doug was introduced as a hound dog man with a hankering for snake catching.

In reply to my questioning, Doug promised to do more than tell me how to catch a snake, he would show me. If I would spend the night and join in the rodeo festivities, he would take me on a snake hunt at sunrise tomorrow. Nuff said. I paid for the coffee, phoned the wife and boss, mumbled something about car trouble to confuse the issue, and advised them that they would have to wait another day before I could honor them with my presence.

After an evening of rodeo festivities which included a covey of lovely southern belles competing for the title of Queen of the Rodeo, and an exhibit of snake handling and gator wrestling by Jerry Tabor of the Ross Allen Institute, the bed felt good and day broke much too soon. The unceasing knocking served its purpose, and it was with reluctance I forced myself to open the door and greet Roy and Doug. Any qualms I may have had about snake hunting was soon dispelled by the enthusiasm of these two. A quick breakfast and we headed for the hill with what yankee soldiers must have called a rebel yell. "Doug's got one located," Roy said, as we started over the rise toward the sound. I was surprised to discover that he had found was a gopher hole.

To those so uninitiated, a gopher to a Florida cracker boy is actually a land tortoise. These tortoises, generally found in the sandy pine woods, will dig a burrow in the ground from ten to twenty feet long. This burrow serves not only as home for the gopher, but other small wild critters as well. There must be a gentleman's agreement between the gopher and rattlesnake as the snake will often use the gopher hole for winter hibernation quarters, then again maybe the gopher just doesn't have the nerve to evict the trespasser.

I was disappointed to find that Doug had gotten excited and raised such a fuss over a simple little ole gopher hole. Even had he seen a snake crawl into the hole, how were we to get it out. Digging was out, we had no shovel. In answer to my query, Doug began to poke one end of his garden hose into the hole, placing a finger to his lips, motioning us to remain quiet. Placing his ear to the open end of the hose, he appeared to be listening for something. As Roy explained it to me, Doug was listening for the tell-tale sound of the rattlesnake. Doug tried another trick, blowing into the hose, which will sometimes cause the (continued on page 40)
For one Florida man, nature provided a happy way of life, plus an interesting and rewarding occupation.

Tom Gaskins habitually carries a razor-sharp, full-size one-ashore, always ready to cut an unusual cypress knee.

Fisheating Creek, where Gaskins constantly seeks interesting cypress knee shapes, embraces miles of scenic swampland. It is also wild turkey country.

MILLIONS OF VISITORS to Florida have found the Sunshine State memorably scenic and unique. Many more have long called it home, by reason of birth or migration. Of the latter group, some unquestionably have loved it dearly for its natural beauty and resources, and have been true proponents of conservation.

But, notably among the many, relatively few have loved its forests, streams and wildlife to the extent that nature has seemed fit to share profitable secrets with them. One such person is Tom Gaskins, of Palmdale, originator of the cypress knee product industry which Gaskins operates adjacent to his home on U. S. Highway 27, one mile south of Palmdale, Florida. Here is housed the largest, most unusual collection of cypress knee shapes in the world.

Although the combination has made Gaskins internationally famous, and brought him financial profit, Nature seemingly took her time in sharing her secrets with the Palmdale man, after noting his interest in cypress knees.

For a long time, she only shared with him the secret of using inverted, hollowed-out cypress knees as ornamental flower stands and bird houses, for sale through gift shops and by mail. One of Gaskins’ first customers was Joel Chandler Harris, author of the Uncle Remus folklore tales. He bought several cypress knee bird houses.

It was while making a bird house that Gaskins accidentally peeled the bark from a cypress knee and realized the marketable value of the cypress wood’s hidden beauty. He experimentally boiled selected knee specimens for two hours, to steam-loosen the bark. When dried and bored out, the knees finished beautifully, but did not retain so; black mold quickly ruined their attractive appearance. Experiments with a du Pont-developed chemical treatment solved the problem.

Early creations found ready sale in St. Petersburg and Sarasota gift shops. Silver Springs and Cypress Gardens were likewise listed among Gaskins’ first wholesale shipments. But Wanamaker’s was the first big store in the world to sell cypress knee products. John Wanamaker bought a variety of Gaskins’ wall ornament and flower-fountain pieces as stock for his famous department store.

Gaskins placed his cypress knee creations on display at the New York World’s Fair. The enterprise was a failure; although millions saw his exhibit, few evinced enough interest to buy.

However, the effort was not entirely without gain: While sitting in his hotel lobby, Gaskins saw a stuffed owl, and visualized a cypress knee as being an ideal base for taxidermy mountings! He successfully sold the idea, by mail, to taxidermists throughout the country.

For years, Gaskins had been saving unusual and exceptionally beautiful cypress knees, but did not get the idea of establishing a museum—to perpetuate these objects long after cypress forests have fallen to modern electric saws and restless builders—until 1948. He had already moved to Fisheating Creek, from Arcadia, to be closer to the best cypress knee country.

In these days, Palmdale consisted of two stores and a freight station. There were no electric power lines or telephones. The few families in the area logged cypress cruisers for the railroad, for livelihood.

Several hundred rare cypress knee pieces comprise the present museum display, which is under glass in a modern open air building constructed around the largest living transplanted cypress tree.

The tree is a focal point of interest in its own right. Already close to a thousand years old when it was moved to its present location in 1951, the 12,000 pound tree has since grown a characteristic knee. This same big cypress is the one that people said could never be moved, and which they claimed would not live even if it could be moved! Gaskins believed otherwise, and subsequently proved himself right on both counts. The tree now stands as a living monument to the Gaskins— held principle that you could never truly love a cypress knee find, but did not get the idea of establishing a museum—

Practice and patience are the secrets of successful turkey calling. Tom Gaskins says . . . . He should know, having been named national champion many times.

Located on U. S. Highway 27, one mile south of Palmdale, the Gaskins Museum houses the largest, most unusual collection of cypress knee shapes in the world.

By EDMUND McLaurin

(continued next page)
When assured that it was usual cypress knee piece on sale.

Human nature being what it is, people see things differently. Exhibited cypress knee shapes take common, recognizable forms to some; others mentally catalog them entirely differently. When Gaskins noted the various reactions of tourists to some of the shapes of his museum pieces, he reported his observations to the editors of Psychiatry QUARTERLY.

Intricate sculpturing hand.

If... a visitor can be amid tall, moss-festooned cypress trees and growing knees. One sees the local cypress swamp almost exactly as the Indians did hundreds of years ago.

So far as Gaskins can determine from long period observations, there is no factual basis for the oft-repeated statement that cypress knees have the ability to grow phenomenally overnight to compensate for an abnormal water level that submerges their tips. Normally, according to Gaskins—cypress knees grow very slowly. It has taken years for selected specimens to grow around bottles and horsehoes he has placed in them for growth experiments.

Usually, an undisturbed cypress knee will grow around any foreign object not dislodged by wind or man, and likewise will eventually conceal its own surface wounds. The rate of growth of a cypress knee is unpredictable and also may take any form that the whim of Nature's sculpturing hand.

Contrary to general belief, cypress knees are not naturally hollow. Where such specimens are found in natural state, they are usually in areas that have known fire. Most of the knees which Gaskins brings in from the swamps must be bored with special tools of his own patented design.

He habitually carries a razor-sharp, full size axefield in the same

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He habitually carries a razor-sharp, full size axefield in the same
enervate a cut or attempt a killing. He believes it would have been a record specimen, had he been able to kill or capture it.

"That day, I knew first-hand that fear can really make a person's scalp tingle and his hair stand up," he says, when reviewing the experience.

As a turkey caller, Gaskins has been named national champion many times. Likewise, his hand-made, cedar box-and-slate turkey call has been widely imitated.

One rival even used Gaskins' published advertising "copy" and illustrations, word for word, comma for comma, to advertise his own product. Gaskins was reluctant to institute legal action, word for word, comma for comma, because he was quick to recognize the misuse and made the cedar box-and-slate turkey calling a combined autobiography, a book-a combined autobiography, a book-a combined autobiography, a book. He described the making, the cutting, the trimming, the cutting, the trimming, the cutting-and whittling. His best advice to others is to concentrate and work carefully.

The Palmdale man recommends either turkey calling or whittling to your day's efforts are wasted! He will note, however, that he sticks to his own admission, the hardest part of his work was thrust into my hands. Behind me, a huge iron pot, serving as a mass-production deep frying unit, kept a second and third helping available to pass. The inroads of an assembled host of these "ricebirds" frequently amount to a serious drain on the year's crop. To the celery grower the bobolink renders a valuable service. Like the Western palm warbler the species feeds vast numbers of the destructive celery leaf leaflet.

During the breeding season the male displays a distinctive plumage pattern of black, white, and buff. The rest of the year his plumage resembles that of the female and the young, that is, predominately buff below and olive brown above. The nesting range of the bird extends over a considerable expanse of territory encompassing southern Canada and the northern United States.

In Florida the bobolink occurs in abundance during both the northward migration of spring and again during the fall passage. South America hosts the birds during the winter months. Mid-August is the usual time at which the first of the southerly-bound birds appear in Florida. During April and May vast numbers of them again pass through the state on the way north.

The characteristic song is of a particularly pleasing and mellow quality. The strong steady flight of a bobolink flowed from the ground at close range is somewhat reminiscent of a bobwhite encountered under similar conditions.

Insects make up some seventy-five percent of the meadowlark's diet. Beetles, grasshoppers and crickets are among the most important of these. When insects are in short supply, various weed seeds are taken to compound the main body of grass stems. It is usually at least partially dowed over with plant stems and grass. In Florida the nesting period extends over several months, starting as early as February in the southern part of the state and extending at least into the later part of June in Duval County. Three to five eggs comprise the usual clutch. They are white with spots of brown and purple hue.

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Bobolink, Dolichonyx Oryzivorus.

The bobolink is a bird of the meadowlands, pastures, and open fields. Although insects comprise something more than half of the diet, food of vegetable origin, especially grains of various sorts, are taken in quantity. Rice especially offers an attraction no bobolink seems able to pass. The inroads of an assembled host of these "ricebirds" frequently amount to a serious drain on the year's crop.

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FLYING WILDLIFE OFFICER (continued from page 19) and try to escape on foot in the tall grass.

The Commission men couldn't see this. We reported it to them by radio and advised we would fly in to join them in some freshly-brewed coffee. It's obvious from their manner that they have known Captain Cossie a long time and think highly of the wildlife officer.

Airborne once more, Cassie points out an egret rookery, then a lone doe standing quietly beside a cypress trunk. In the distance you see several other camps. You are struck with the dominating vastness of this tropical wilderness.

The pilot senses your thoughts. "A good place to stop," he says soberly, adding: "Much of the getting lost could be avoided, however, if hunters would keep a few simple things in mind.

First, if anyone gets lost in the Cypress, or the Glades or anywhere else, the first thing he should do is remain with his vehicle as long as possible, if he has one. Being larger than himself, it will prove much easier for searching planes to spot from the air. If he strikes off on foot he'll likely just walk in circles, anyway.

"He should build a good fire. And after it is going good put green stuff near it, in the shade beneath a stand of bushes, trees, you make out a con- fume."

Several khaki-clad deer hunters come out to meet you with wide grins, despite the fact they've had no luck so far. It's all in an airboat about five miles away. I dropped them a note and they came over.

Sometimes the grins w a m p doesn't give up its victims so readily. Recently Cassie Conrad managed to find an egret nesting site on the Big Cypress. The plane apparently had come apart in mid-air, perhaps during a thunderstorm, and had telescoped into a cypress head.

"It was very hard to see," Cassie tells you matter-of-factly. "I just happened to be looking straight down to catch the noon sun striking one of the light blue wings.

"I had been alone in the 150 Cessa. He was dead. Cassie radioed for a Coast Guard helicopter to bring out the body.

The plane leaves the Big Cypress and follows a course that will take it to Glades County and Fisheating Creek. Cassie wishes to inspect the inveigling acreage in the vicinity of Lake Okeechobee and the talk turns to fishing and boating. It's also part of the Commission pilot's job to carefully scrutinize boats to determine whether they be violating the law—for instance, casting or shore Casting while under-way—or may be in need of assistance.

Here, again, specimens in trouble should not desert their craft and try
of these family heirlooms have been reluctant to give them up. Many owners suspecting hunters in the high saw-... tion. We looked for a big turnout for this past. "I took a piece of plastic clay... the heart. Your early impress still it bore...
growth rate, age, weight, food, sexual maturity and a host of other life history matters can be determined. Special effort will be made to determine how many of the striped bass as is possible, then releasing them for possible recapture later.

Tagging striped bass is not a simple operation. If you catch a big one on hook and line, it usually fights itself to death before it is landed—so that's going to be a problem with the usual kinds of nets and they injure themselves while trying to get free. Maybe special nets or traps will provide an answer—the problem remains to be worked out. One idea high on the list of possibilities is to feed them with a chemically treated dart, using aquangling technique to catch them. This is not as far-fetched as it may seem, since under some circumstances the big striper are easily approached by aquanglers. Barkuloo and Grover have already been able to make underwater studies on striper behavior using the aquangling.

It is known from experience in South Carolina and other areas that it is possible to establish reproduction populations of striped bass in lakes and ponds. The Council membership when completed will be twenty-five.

During the meeting regional chairmen were appointed by the AAC chairman Herh Mayhew. They are as follows:

1st district — Ralph Tompkins, chairman; Mrs. Miller, co-chairman.
2nd district — Bob Gottron, chairman; Jack Partue, co-chairman.
3rd district — Helen Ross, chairman; Ralph Tompkins of Land O’ Lakes, Mrs. B. W. Crittenden, and Jack Partue of North Miami.
4th district — Bob Gottron, chairman; Jack Partue, co-chairman.
5th district — Helen Ross, chairman; Mrs. William Hall of St. Augustine, Ralph Tompkins of Land O’ Lakes, Mr. B. W. Crittenden, and Jack Partue of North Miami.

The meeting was presided over by Herb Mayhew, chairman, from Miami, Secretary Bob Gottron of Stuart was in attendance. Other members present were:

Mrs. W. S. Miller of Bartow, Mrs. Helen Ross of St. Augustine, Ralph Tompkins of Land O’ Lakes, Mr. B. W. Crittenden, and Jack Partue of North Miami.

The Councils membership program to American Camping Association. 

and a counselor training program in meeting was attended by Mrs. G. T. Costello of Lake Alfred, Mrs. Evelyn Brud- 

dock of St. Augustine, and Bob Scorn of Ocala. The meeting was presented by Herb Mayhew, chairman, from Miami, Secretary Bob Gottron of Stuart was in attendance.

FLORIDA'S STRIPED BASS

Light tackle anglers hold the smaller striped bass as “fighting-dolls” and a true goomeat.

and impoundments completely isolated from the sea. Can we do the same thing in Florida? Can we stock certain suitable lakes with stripers to increase the wealth of freshwater sport fishing? Can dams, placed at strategic locations, increase the number of striped bass available to our sportmen? 

Along this same line, can striped bass be successfully transplanted into other Florida rivers without damaging present fishing conditions there? One of the most successful transplantations in the history of freshwater management involves the striped bass. Toward the end of the last century, a number of young stripers from the New Jersey area were shipped across country by rail and were released in the San Francisco area. Today, as a direct result of these transplantations, striped bass is one of the most valuable sport and commercial species on the west coast.

Stocking of lakes and transplantations must await the results of life history studies. Before we can think seriously about stocking new waters with striped bass, we need to know what conditions are most favorable for them. We could spend a lot of time, effort and hard cash in a program of lake stocking or transplantation, and lose it all by not providing for the introduced stripers with the special things it needs to live and multiply. Transplantation of striped bass to a peninsular Florida lake system should result in severe competition between the stripers and native fish, leading to reduced fishing in a once productive river.

To get a head start on the problem of stocking striped bass, Barkuloo has placed a known number of small striped bass in a lake which has been studied up and down. The fish management experts know how the bass was before the striper were placed i in it, the composition of the fish population, the kinds of food and cover available, even the kinds and numbers of fish taken by fishermen there. Therefore, they will watch what happens (1) to the striper and (2) to the original fish population. Under such controlled conditions, studies about the risks and benefits of stocking striped bass may be expected.

Tagging striped bass is actually a part—though the largest part—of a general study of all Florida fish that leave salt water to come into fresh water for spawning. Though it still remains to be proved that Florida’s striped bass ever venture further than brackish water, it techni- 

ical basis of how it behaves “up north.” Several well known game fishes like the sturgeon and tarpon frequent fresh water, but these do not breed in the rivers and so are not included in the study at this time. Among the most important Florida fishes that do leave salt water to enter the rivers for spawning are the sturgeon, the alewives and the American shad. It comes as a surprise to most Florida anglers that the mighty sturgeon of caviar fame is found in the state at all; but this big fish is present in large rivers of both coasts. Sturgeon support a considerable commercial fishery. In the Apalachicola- 

oca area, the catch being sent to northern markets. Barkuloo will study the sturgeon as a possible game fish for Florida.

The American shad is familiar to light tackle anglers “in the know” as a fast and fishy game fish. Sturgeon studies have been made in recent years. The plan is to use barkuloo studies as well as those of the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission as a basis for determining the risks and benefits of stocking striped bass. It may be that new dams are holding some of these “Yankee” fish downstream for Flori- 

dians to catch. We don’t really know the reason. But we sure can catch them!

 Appropriately, this entire project is being supported by Dingell-Johnson funds. The reasoning, which sportsmen help finance research toward better fishing. Every time you buy a bit of fishing tackle, you pay a federal excise tax. This money goes into a special kitty, and is later given to financial aid to state conservation agencies for good fishing tackle, you pay a federal excise tax. This money goes into a special kitty, and is later given to financial aid to state conservation agencies for better fishing. D-J makes possible any research effort worth doing. Under the Dingell-Johnson (D-J) Act which provided for this fund, a state conservation agency draws up plans for a management project it wants to undertake—such as the striped bass investigation. Then the plans are studied, and when okayed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, funds are provided at the rate of three D-J dollars to one dollar of state-matched money.

Thus, through this Act, Florida’s sportfishmen help themselves toward better fishing. D-J makes possible research on our “newest” sport fish-

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

May 1960

76
By DON CULLMORE

They say that rubbing ointment and limincent sales have a sharp upturn in Ecology every time a boat­ing cruise group arrives via the Oklawaha River.

There’s a reason for that statement. In the 60—odd miles between its mouth, at Welaka, and the Oklawaha basin on the tributary branch that flows from Silver Springs, the Oklawaha averages 10 tortuous turns to a mile. That’s 600 hairpin twists that demand constant action by a whole slew of arm, wrist, shoulder and back muscles which ordinarily wouldn’t see that much service in a month.

The Indians named the river. They were quite literal. “Oklawaha” means “River of the Hand.”

Regardless of tortuous twists and strained muscles, the Oklawaha should be a “must”—sometime or other—in everybody’s cruising book. It has breath-taking beauty and is its mouth, at Welaka, and the area is launching ramps and parking areas at Eureka, and at the Oklawaha basin. Upstream in the headwaters, entry is by means of Lakes Harris, Eustis and Griffin. The Leesburg-Eustis area is possible, however, to put in on Lake Apopka, traveling by man-made channel and leakage to Lakes Beul­clair and Dora into Lake Eustis and thence through the Haines Creek cut and lock into the Oklawaha.

From Welaka to Leesburg should be a two-day run, with stop-over for the night at Silver Springs, trailerborne boat from almost any­where in the state (except the Keyes and western tip of the Panhandle). And there are available.

Having once run the stream, you become an automatic member of the unorganized and unofficial Society of Oklawaha Braggarts. It’s com­prised of all folk who, having negotiated the river’s tricky currents, swift currents, blind chutes, recur­rent snags and prop-busting semi-subsmerged “gators,” have found delight in initiating the uninsured with harrowing tales of the Oklawaha’s horrors. Don’t let their yarns deter you. It’s a thoroughly worth­while trip. Take it easy and you’ll truly enjoy it.

Two years ago navigation of the Oklawaha was curtailed by low water. This year the situation is re­versed—there is too much water, to the extent where Mos Bluff lock has been damaged by heavy run-off. The necessary repairs may require periodical interruption of lock serv­ice. Before starting on your trip, check on this by inquiry to the U.S. Corps of Engineers at Jacksonville, or with chambers of commerce, marine dealers or other sources in the area in a position to have up-to­date information.

With the advent of May, Of Man Frost has moved on up north. Clam­my rains, high winds and fog have pretty generally tapered off. The warm-weather-farmers cruising seas­son has set in.

Here are a few precautions, vital on the Oklawaha and advisable eve­rywhere:
1. Leash down all loose equipment securely. Particularly fuel cans, battery, anchor and those items of weight or sharp edges.
2. Check all steering cable fasten­ing and the like for soundness be­fore you start. On the Oklawaha, check them again ever hour or so—for the twisty turns can loosen things up. For quick and easy han­dling on the hairpin turns, you may want a trifle more slack in the till­er cables than normally.
3. In the Oklawaha (and the same is true of the upper Kissim­me and a good many other streams) some of the blind sloughs are broader than the river channel. When the stream splits, slow up, stay with the channel where there is an apparent con­tinuing down- stream current.
4. Take it easy on the blind curves—that snag around the bend can wrench your boat. So can another approaching craft.

Remember . . . both Coast Guard and State regulations require a life (or approved cushion for each person aboard) at all times.

Central Florida Cruises, Inc., with membership in the general Orlando area, reports a “Rebel Cruise” for May 28—30. Writes Commodore E. H. Zonian, Jr.: “This is a long, winding wild cruise . . . we proceed to IEEE Fish Camp from Kissimmee and back the first day and having a fish­ing contest the second day. . . . on the two nights, barbecue steaks, smoked chicken, etc. . . . this one is through the wildest untouched part of Florida . . .”

Writer-Navigator Ann Davison Billheimer, who won fame by a solitary Atlantic Ocean crossing by sailboat, is down in the Everglades doing a series of articles on out­board boating in that vast wilder­ness. Her husband, ex-Navy officer Bert Billheimer, is the photogra­pher.

This is the terminus of Ann’s 5,000-mile cruise in the eastern in­land waters of the U.S. (“eastern” being interpreted as the Mississippi and those waters lying east of it.)

A recent cross-section survey of outboard boaters posed the ques­tion: “Did your wife or daughter(s) influence your selection of equip­ment?”

“I never,” replied 44 per cent of the husbands. Which proves that the gals are very much a part of out­boarding all the way. And, to an inquiry as to what most influenced wives and daughters in their selec­tion, the males replied: “Roominess, comfort, speed, safety.”

A close second, as an influencing factor, was “versatility for all-fam­ily use”—cruising, skiing and fish­ing.

“Appearance, styling and color” ran in third position.

“Room, safety and comfort” out­numbered all other reasons put to­gether. The gals know what they want. More power to ’em.
DEAD OR ALIVE

(continued from page 25)

rattlesnake to wake up and start buzzing. Nothing doing at this hole, so off we go, hunting for another.

Roy discovered the second hole and called for Doug to bring the hose. This was it! Slipping the hose into the hole one could hear the angry buzzing of the rattlesnake through the hose. Well, so what! How are we going to get the thing out? In reply Doug slipped a soft drink bottle from his hip pocket and poured an ounce of gasoline into the hose, placing the hose to his mouth, he began to blow the gas down the hole and into the hole. Roy recalled his hay fork and piled on the operation. Seems the rattlesnake doesn’t like the fumes from the gas-oline and went for the hose, leaving the fork laying out. The garden hose serves both as a stethoscope and method of getting the gasoline to the bottom of the hole quickly. At one time the local sportsmen would squeeze a lemon, fill it with gasoline, and roll it down the hole. The garden hose served the same purpose, only much quicker.

We had just started on our second cigarette when the snake poked his head out of the hole. I expected Roy to pin him down but he waited until the snake quit the hole completely before beginning the catch- ing operation. As Roy eased closer a scared snake would go back into the hole and no amount of gasoline would induce him to leave. According to my hosts, if the snake was not free of the hole, it was almost impossible to pull him out due to the treacherous construction of the snake could apply. As the snake wiggled free of the hole, Roy reached his catching hook and shortly pinned the critter to the ground. Securing the head with a fishing rod. These fit in the bag easily. The rods are a 4-7/8 ft., 1-pc. having 3 inches and a 4-6 ft., 3-pc. spining rod weighing the same. With these two bags, I can spend weeks on a fishing trip always with ample gear readily at hand. I can’t recommend them too highly for the traveling angler.

NEW BOXES

Just because I personally find canvas tackle boxes for trout-fishing and a homemade wooden box best for boat use, doesn’t mean I don’t admire the many fine, conventional tackle boxes now on the market. New materials in plastics, Fiberglass, aluminum alloys, and others have come along so fast that only a few years ago were but dreams in the discerning angler’s mind.

If your needs can be properly met with one of these fine creations, then by all means stick to it. If you want more flexibility lacking in boat or travel tackle boxes, then perhaps this column will point the way to greater satisfaction.

The Rodeo also served as an educational medium by acquainting the people with the rattlesnake and its nature, habits and requirements. An Air Force survival team was on hand during the rodeo festivities to demonstrate how the snakes could be controlled and how man for food and nourishment. Through the rodeo and its activity, the sportsmen of Washington County could combat the ancient fears and explode many of the superstitions connected with rattlesnakes. "One major point to remember about the rattlesnake," said one of the members present, "is that Rattlesnake Rodeo is not a witch hunt, but fun, and educational."

Once more I wheeled the station wagon eastward on U.S. 90. Now the ice chest contained several choice slices of ice cream and a few slices of carefully cleaned rattlesnake skin. Not as peace offerings for the wise mate, but to await the special occasion when quail hunting crooners would return for a period of pam­nering during the summer.

the bottom and is reinforced on the side to pull him out due to the tremendous traction the snake could exert. For the angler who prefers some type of activity, a club soon falls into the rats of meet, eat, and do something different.

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The same "Cone" on a cutting blade is a familiar one. Should it be! The form that makes the famous line of pocket, general and general purpose knives for more than 100 years of cutlery experience associated with the marketing of its brand­name products.

Currently, the W. R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company, Bradford, Pennsylvania manufactures more than 150 different catalog listings. Many of the blades are especially suitable for use by sportsmen.

For fishermen, there are several Case models worthy of reader consideration...
Question: I've used at least half a dozen landing nets and gaffs in the past year or so, some of which lasted very long or was satisfactory. What do you use? Are any of these products on the market of superior quality? H. Shelton, Jacksonville, Florida.

Answer: We have Florida manufacturers of both gaffs and nets. Ed Hatch down in Hollywood produces stainless steel gaffs in all sizes. These are the very best. They will last a lifetime and be completely satisfactory. They are called "Pompanette." Your local tackle store can tell you more.

The landing net I use and like is a York net, made by the York Manufacturing Company, Sanford, Florida. They make large and small, and are of aluminum tubing with strong, sturdy laces. It is ingeniously fastened to the handle with a couple of metal screws, which makes the ring instantly detachable. Installing a new net in this jacket which takes but a few moments. This is the best all-around net I've found.

Question: I've read that Florida doesn't provide more boat ramps for fishermen. I had to wait about two hours to get my boat in the water the last time I went fishing. If something isn't done, a lot of us are going to quit coming to Florida for this reason. C. Pressell, Miami, Florida.

Answer: I feel for you but I think you are getting angry at the wrong people. I once went all the way to Shebrookess, Nova Scotia, to fish for Atlantic salmon in the St. Marys River. We found the river boat again, I, too, was disappointed but don't hate Nova Scotia.

I think a little planning and knowledge of alternate boat ramps would solve your problem. In the meantime, there is hardly a Florida community that is not building more boat ramps for visitors.

Question: Why would you be kind enough to tell me what the summer insect situation is in Central Florida and particularly around the St. Johns River? Is it a head net necessary? Bill Smith, Fishing Creek, New York.

Answer: I haven't seen a head net worn in Florida for over 20 years and, as a matter of fact, our summer bug problem is not nearly as acute as are black flies in Canada and mosquitoes in many of the northern states.

I fish fresh and salt water from one end of Florida to the other all summer long and find an occasional application of "CIT," that wonderful insect repellent, all that is required. Continue your fishing to daylight. If you insist on fishing at night, the bug problem in Florida, as elsewhere, would be more serious.

Question: I am new to Florida and don't know much about fishing, but even I am not so green that I believe sand flies can be used for fish bait. Who's trying to fool me? N. Jenkins, Delray Beach, Florida.

Answer: I've heard sand flies called many things but never fish bait. You are confusing sand flies, a small biting insect that bites like the job of a red-hot needle. With sand fleas, a small crustacean found in the wash of the surf and famous as bait. If the sand flea could bite in proportion to the sand fly, Florida, beaches would be deserted.

Question: It is a small snack or fancy I once use with flies and pugging bugs. I have trouble threading the fine nylon into the small hook-eye, which makes changing flies a chore. I know there are some magnifying glasses that can be worn on the shirt, but I'd rather see a gadget like this is practical. Frank Dunn, Montrice, Ga.

Answer: I, too, am troubled with short turns, but I can't offer any easy solution to your problem. I've never seen a snap or fastener that was easy to use than tying the jam knot, and in my opinion, any extra weight at the fly or bag is wholly undesirable.

Why not try a cheap pair of "diane store" magnifying glasses to see just for this purpose? They will solve your problem, and if you lose or break them while fishing, you're not out much. I know this is not much of an answer, but it's the best I can do.

Question: I am visiting the vicinity of Orange Lake and would like to plan a vacation down there this summer. How is the fishing? Are there camping sites available? How about accommodations? What kind of fishing tackle should I bring? A. Hooper, Richmond, Va.

Answer: You'll find everything your heart desires in the wonderful Orange Lake region this summer. Bring your camping outfit and your regular fishing tackle. For fresh and saltwater, up-to-date boating information, drive through Gainesville, Florida, on the way down. Stop in the Bank Hardware Company and have a talk with Sid Meere, manager of the Fishing Tackle Dept. Sid will be able to answer all your questions and offer a gold mine of other information.

Question: I plan to retire to Florida, hunting and fishing. In a few years, I would like to make contact with some Florida ham radio operators to exchange ideas and information. Do you know any operators who would give me a call? My call letters are WSMQ, Dave Trull, Hinkley, Ohio.

Answer: The only "hams" I've acquainted with are other writers, and they think of radio only in terms of scripts. How about it, all Florida outdoorsmen. Why not give him a buzz?

Question: I would like to get some authentic prints of Florida's ducks and wading birds. Can you tell me where to apply? R. L. Coates, Winter Park, Florida.

Answer: I, too, have heard the story of writing or writing C. Russell Mason of the Florida Audubon Society Box 885, Matlata, Florida.

Questions: My partner and I fish together a lot, taking turns rowing and casting for bass. We have a friendly difference of opinion about points and pinches. When I have to choose, I always cast into the pinches at the best bet. She says I do wrong. Can you settle this argument for us? C. Jenson, Crescent City, Florida.

Answer: You pose a question that has been going on as long as bass have lurked along the door lines. It will not be settled here or any other place. If you believe it's a matter of personal opinion, I know that's not much of an answer and I always try to be at least partial about any question, so here goes.

I prefer to cast to points. Many expert anglers of my knowledge do likewise. They don't ask who's right in your advice. I have been advised to watch for gulls, but, so you see, a lot of people are misinformed.
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