A popular salt-water panfish also found in fresh water, rivers & spring runs of both the Atlantic & Gulf coasts. Good food fish; has teeth & powerful jaws for catching & eating barnacles, small shellfish & fiddler crabs, and other crustaceans usually caught on hook & line equipped with wire leaders & using fiddler or hermit crabs for bait.

In This Issue

Man and Birds
Recreational fishing
Hunting Season Regulations — 1965-66
The Florida Wild Turkey, Part II
Fresh Water Fishing Regulations
Departments
Conservation Scene
Fishing
Boating
Muscle Flashes

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Published monthly by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

Dedicated to the Conservation, Restoration, and Protection of our Game and Fish

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FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

Tallahassee, Fla.

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T he owner of a trailerboat thinking of a boating vacation in Florida has one great advantage over his non-boating, tourist brethren: He can go “bottling.”

This is a little-known hobby actively pursued by many residents (and a few visitors) of the Florida Keys. The hundreds of tiny islands that make up this paradise, set down in glittering, tropical seas, have been receiving the sea’s discarded flotsam for centuries. The hundreds of blown, crudely made, green glass bottles are commonly found around the islands, set down in glittering, ocean side; but many tiny islands through which is the Key’s a bottle—known as a “bottler.” The best are on the ocean side; but many tiny islands on the bay side of the Keys yield their share of prizes. A few discreet questions asked locally may guide you to the better ones. Nearly all can be reached in ten or twenty minutes by outboard. A patient search may reward you with a rare prize. Bottling can be an absorbing sport. And if you have a trailerboat, a rewarding one. You may find bottles within the Herald rare finds.

One each will be a living memory of an exciting day on a distant, tropical beach.

**Winter Waterfowl Survey**

A survey to determine habitat conditions and the distribution of ducks, geese, swans, and coot on major waterfowl wintering areas throughout North America was completed March 1, the Department of the Interior announced. Observers from State game departments and Interior’s Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife conducted the annual survey using airplanes, boats, and automobiles. In previous years the Armed Services and Coast Guard were active cooperators, supplying planes and pilots where needed.

In the Pacific Flyway, which lies west of the Continental Divide, food conditions in some areas coincided with severe winter conditions in others to cause a non-typical distribution of birds. On the southern end of both the Atlantic Flyway, which includes States east of the Appalachian Mountains, and the Mississippi Flyway, which extends from the Appalachians to the Great (Continued on page 34)

**THE COVER**

The Chain Pickerel, a fresh water gamefish lost deep in the publicity shadows of Florida’s famous largemouth bass, is commonly known throughout the state as Pike, or Jackfish. Although this scraper will attain weights over six pounds, and length from two to three feet, its midcute counts, the Radfin Pickerel, lower right background, seldom grows more than 12 inches.

**CONSERVATION SCENE**

Boating and Bottle Hunting in the Florida Keys

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For 1965 - 1966

**Hunting Season Dates Announced**

FLORIDA SPORTSMEN will find very few changes in hunting and fishing regulations, seasons, or bag limits. The 1965-66 hunting and fishing regulations and a general framework for the 1966-67 season were established by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission at the annual regulation meeting in Tallahassee, April 23, according to O. E. Frye, Executive Director.

The opening and closing dates for resident game birds and animals were established by the Commission in January. The season will open one-half hour before sunrise Saturday, November 13, in the First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Regions. The season in the Third Region will begin one week later.

The Commission established one bag limit change. This change provides a season’s bag limit of three ducks, a deer increase over last year’s bag limit of two. The daily bag limit remains at one deer per day.

Other regulation changes provide for a training period for deer hunters from October 15 to November 1 in the First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Regions and from October 22 to November 8 in the Third Region. Dog training will not be allowed on wildlife management areas or on lands within National Forests, and trainers may not be in possession of any firearm while training.

The Commission also removed the beaver from the list of protected fur-bearing animals and placed it in the category of unprotected or fur-bearer without closed season. (Continued on page 34)

**Wonders of the Great Outdoors**

**MAN and BIRDS**

By ERNEST SWIFT

National Wildlife Federation

POPULAR OTHER THAN “bird watchers” could well peruse THE Wonders of the Great Outdoors by James Fisher and Roger Tory Peterson. It is more than a kaleidoscope of bright-colored and strange-looking birds, more than a listing of 8,580 species of birds that were known to be alive in 1962. It is more than a bird encyclopedia or dictionary.

This tome takes more than a casual reading to fully appreciate its significance, and today people need more subjects of study and less entertainment. Its collective impact suddenly becomes overwhelming when the years of research and devotion to an objective become apparent; and it leaves any neophyte, which most of us are, with a sense of naked humility.

It could well be called the history of creation, the Genesis of bird life, especially with the discovery of a fossil feather found in a limestone slab in Bavaria, whose formation dates back at least 140 million years.

Then comes the story of evolution, the probability of some reptilian ancestor that learned to fly. All this goes back to the era of the dinosaur, or before, with evidence accumulating from all parts of the world. In our own country the tar pits of California contributed many fossils, and one pit was carbonated at 14,500 years.

Through these there developed many bird families and bird species, often with the larger and more uniquely becoming extinct and the smaller ones surviving. Since the dodo was exterminated in the late 1600’s, at least 75 species have passed out of existence, mostly from man-mades causes, and many more than that are now endangered for the same reason. And through the ages the slow pattern of evolution gradually developed inherent characteristics. Some birds could tolerate changes, others could not.

Since the dawn of history man has speculated on bird migrations, and where the myriad of feathered creatures disappeared during the winter months. Actually the scientific study of birds is not an old science, and much more has been learned in the twentieth century than prior. Ancients, and some not so ancient, believed that birds possibly hibernated, or went to the moon, or even burrowed in the mud. Even with all the accumulating knowledge, bird migrations are still one of the most fascinating phenomena of nature. Billions of birds seasonally take to sky-ways, spring and fall. Some are in flocks, as those in the northern temperatures see the black birds in the fall, some drift in small groups or in small groups. Some migrate strictly at night, others by day, and still others either by day or night. There is evidence that they are guided as nocturnal flyers by the stars and possibly by the moon. In fog and inclement weather they seem to lose direction. The homing instincts of birds have also proved astonishing. (Continued on page 34)
HAVING WRITTEN THIS column for some years now without winning any Pulitzer prizes and hav­ ing turned out some pretty sorry ones without drawing a pink slip, I think I am entitled to a real clinker for my own amusement.

The title for this might be: "How One Scorehead Sees It" or "A Voice From the Past" or "Sour Grapes From a Lousy Fisherman."

My theme is the attitudes of outdoorsmen in general and fishermen in particular. I am aware that I clink for my own amusement. I considered doddering old fuds who thought out­ disregard for a bag limit or boats that make too thing . At fishing clinics I find the vast majority preferred muzz l e-loading shotguns.

Indications are that anglers are becoming more interested in easy methods rather than the use of fishing skills

The true sports fisherman includes such shockers as: "Meat" junker-killing method that will al­ways put the boat and get back to TV.

Incidentally, the "secrets" include such shockers as the fact bass get in the shade in hot weather and sometimes feed at night.

In the night category is the snapper that bass prefer moonlight nights (or darkness as the case may be).

The fact these articles are top sellers simply indi­ cates that no one wants to simply learn fishing skills and then go out and use them. He wants a no­ work, sure-fire, lunker-killing method that will al­ low him to fill the boot and get back to TV.

There are several ways of checking the action of a rod in a tackle store. Most popular method is to waggle it violently, possibly knocking over a counter display or whacking the merchant on an ear.

Even waggle will tell you a lot if you're an ex­perienced waggler and waggle the same way on each rod you pick up.

I'm a little more conservative myself. In checking rod stiffness, I just go through the motions of mak­ ing a snap cast and, at the same time note where the rod bends and how much. I learn some things that way but not as much as I pretend to when someone is watching. I sometimes feel that the proper reel, line and lure are just the way I think it will when I get it suited up with reel, line and lure.

Actual casting is the best test but few purchasers go that far. Generally there's no room for it and it's seldom that the proper reel, line and lure are rigged.

"Sport" fishermen tend to scorn the "other guy's" method no matter how many fish it catches. I want to give one wild example and then retire to my dark closet and sulk some more.

At a public fishing clinic, one of the speakers reacted violently about "stirring," a method of catch­ ing smock with a heavy pole and line. He felt there should be a law against it and spoke in seath­ ing phrases about those who would stoop to so de­ praved a practice.

In the next breath he brought applause with the announcement that he was a bait fisherman and pro­ ceeded to ridicule artificial lures because they don't catch so many fish.

I couldn't help thinking how the premise could be carried through to its obvious conclusion.

"Stirring" would become illegal because the bait fishermen thought it unsportsmanlike; bait fishing would become illegal because artificial lure users disapproved; artificial casting lures would be ille­ gal because fly fishermen simply couldn't stand them; heavy fly tackle would be out because light fly tackle was more sportsmanlike; all fly tackle would be discarded because ultra-light spinning enthusiasts felt 2-pound monofilament line was more sporting.

In reverse, the conclusion might be that dynamite is more effective and cheaper than any of the other methods.

I guess fishermen have always wanted to catch fish but the score seems to be more important as time goes on.

Apparently one of the best gimmicks for an ad in an outdoor magazine is that the method touted is 'illegal' in certain states or has been prohibited in certain national parks. Where? Almost as good as having a novel banned in Boston!

Articles on bass fishing generally reveal bass fish­ ing secrets or mark the way to an "unknown" bass frontier where the fish are actually dangerous. I haven't read of a really exciting bass book for 20 years and some of the giants in the photos come from hatterleys.

The fact these articles are top sellers simply indi­ cates that no one wants to simply learn fishing skills and then go out and use them. He wants a no­ work, sure-fire, lunker-killing method that will al­ low him to fill the boot and get back to TV.
I made the scene of my first bird dog field trial some sixteen years ago. At the conclusion of that first trial, I was nursing some saddle soreness, amused at the number of birds located, fascinated by the outstanding dog work and thoroughly and completely confused by the conversation and expressions that were a part and parcel of the activity.

Recently my wife accompanied me on a field trial, and while she is a bit more accustomed to explain the game to someone completely unfamiliar with the objective of the sport, I was using field trial terminology and thus having to explain the meaning of the expression.

The tremendous growth in recent years of interest in sporting dogs, plus the realization that trials will provide year round activity, has produced a growing field of newcomers. Many of these are experienced quail hunters and long familiar with hunting dogs. As a rule they have the enthusiasm, and they love their dogs. If a man has the time, patience and inclination he will probably tackle the training problem himself; others will utilize the services of a professional trainer. Some will become accomplished field trial fans, but meanwhile there is considerable lost ground through lack of experience.

To help eliminate a duplication of the condition of bewilderedness that I experienced on my first trial the following are some of the terms and expressions of the bird dog field trial game:

**DRAWING:** The drawing is a manner of selecting the running order of the dogs entered in a particular stake. The name of the dog and usually that of the owner or handler is entered on a slip of paper and that slip placed in a hat. The slips are then drawn from the hat usually by someone not directly interested in the stake and numbered as they are drawn.

**BRAKE:** A brace is two dogs that compete at a particular stake. The name of the dog and usually that of the owner or handler is entered on a slip of paper and that slip placed in a hat. The slips are then drawn from the hat usually by someone not directly interested in the stake and numbered as they are drawn.

**BREAKAWAY:** The start of a pointing dog field trial when the dogs are cast off or released for the start of the hunt.

**POINT:** A dog is pointing when he indicates the presence of game by coming to a complete stop. It is important that the birds be located accurately. There are various terms by which a dog's pointing attitude may be described, lofty, intense or rigid, indifferent or positive.

**FLUSH:** When a dog approaches too closely to birds, or nears them in such a manner as to cause the birds to take wing, he is said to have flushed the game.

**STYLE:** This describes the dog in action and on point, with reference to his movement afield and his posture and attitude on point.

**BACK:** A dog is credited with a back when he comes upon another dog who is pointing, and the dog shows confidence in his pointing brace-mate by also stopping or assuming a pointing attitude, without having scented the birds. If a dog fails to honor his brace-mate's find on sight he may be commanded to back by his handler. If he fails to honor either the sight of his brace-mate or his handler's command and advances until the scent of the birds causes him to freeze he would be considered guilty of stealing a point. If two dogs make the same find, each without knowledge of the other's presence, the find is divided.

**TRAILING:** A practice in which one dog trails his brace-mate and will not hunt for himself, permitting his brace-mate to take the initiative. A "head-trailer" will by watching the other dog out of the corner of his eye, turn in front and manage to keep just ahead. This dog is trailing even though at first glance he may appear to be leading.

**TRAILING:** When working birds, this refers to the manner of locating game by putting nose to the ground and following foot scent.

**ROADING:** The method of locating birds by following scent left in the wake of the birds, and this scent may be breath high in the air. When roading, a dog does not necessarily go to the ground with his nose for foot scent.

**POTTERING:** This term has reference to the actions of a dog while working game. The dog that seems unable to distinguish between foot and body scent or is unable to make up his mind as to a find is generally called a potterer.

**BLINKING:** A dog that locates birds and then circles away and leaves them without pointing, is said to have blinked his birds. There are a number of reasons a dog may blink birds.

**UNPRODUCTIVE:** A point without producing birds. This may be a point where birds have been (Continued on page 32)
With the heavy boating season about to start, vacation sailors are reminded to check out their required safety gear

By ELGIN WHITE

Hurley Campbell, editor of Southern Outdoors magazine, always closes out his column in the Baton Rouge Morning Advocate with “take a boy fishing with you.”

With the tremendous surge in buying habits of boaters towards the small 14-ft. aluminum boats for family fishing, ol’ Hurley’s advice is getting to some perk up ears. And mid-summer offers a better opportunity for just such fishing activities with man and boy than any other time . . . especially so since the kids are out of school and Pop has a good excuse now to take the day off.

Fishing isn’t all that attracts ’em, now though. Running these new rigs is easier than handling the family car, and every member of the family is getting to be quite “hooked” on the operation of small fishing rigs in addition to the larger family cruisers.

What’s with the canoe bit? I always thought those things went out with the Indians, but darned if you don’t see more and more of ’em on Florida’s rivers and streams these days. And we even come across a bunch of nuts taking canoes out of Key West heading towards the Marquess of Ails, some 20-miles to the westward! With nothing but paddles yet! Really, fellows!

Canoeing has taken a fantastic turn for the better in recent months, though. New aluminum craft and other light portable types taken to people’s fancy, and the way you can rig outboards to ’em has taken the work out of padding, and for downright enjoyment and easy boating for two-three people, you can’t beat ’em. They are excellent craft for light fishing trips, and don’t try hanging into a tarpon with one. John Wilhelm of St Petersburg tried it not long ago and learned how to swim real fast.

A new idea in safety for boaters who are ardent “stand-up” fishermen has been forwarded our way by Bill Prentiss of Johnson Motors. Bill says they have come up with an idea of looping a floating cushion through your belt while you’re standing up casting, and in case you get one on that’s bigger’n you, and he hauls you overboard, you’ll never have to worry about whether or not you can swim. Too, some anglers get drivers who are cowboys when it comes to starting up fast from a trolling position, throwing the unsuspecting angler into the deep.

It’s an idea worth tryin’ when you’re out trolling next time.

Now that summer is here, it always behooves us to remember a few safety precautions, particularly now when we’re taking the whole family to sea.

Bob Brewster has some thoughtful reminders. For example: Take a double-check when you’re planning to leave for that boating trip or week-end vacation run. Do you have approved type life preservers for each occupant? Remember that this year certain preservers whose kapok stuffing is not enclosed in plastic bags are no longer legal, regardless of condition. Check labels to make sure your preservers meet the new standards.

If night operation is anticipated, do you have the required navigation lights and are they in working condition?

Do you have a suitable horn or whistle aboard?

Is the extinguisher aboard and fully charged?

Do you have a suitable horn or whistle aboard?

If the extinguisher aboard and fully charged? Never try to recharge one with compressed air at a filling station; moisture in that air will cause powders to ignite readily.

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Satisfied anglers are usually good at certain phases of fishing. The unhappy sports are generally those who refuse to learn anything on their own.

By CHARLES WATERMAN

RETIRED

AND

FISH!

The joyful experiences of travel have palled a little. A fishing invitation to Canada or South America would have enraptured me a few years back. Now I study it thoughtfully and wonder if the fishing is really as good as the man says. Packing my gear 20 or 30 times a year is no longer the fun it used to be.

Sure I want to fish in South America and Canada but I weigh the pleasure against the trouble and time spent getting there.

Part of that is a case of getting older; most of it is a matter of laziness and the knowledge that I can go next year if I put it off this time.

By now you wonder what the trials and tribulations of a hack outdoor writer have to do with you. I'll tell you.

If you consider retiring in Florida and spending your time fishing, your problem will be just the same as mine. You'll have all the time you want for your fishing and unless you play it smart you'll get pretty bored.

For one thing, you must be sure, damned sure, you're a fisherman. If you haven't been able to fish before your retirement (no matter what you worked at) the chances are you don't really have much interest in fishing. Don't tell me you didn't have time. If you want to fish badly enough you'd have found time somewhere along the line.

The thoughts of fishing are pleasant. A picture of a man relaxed under a palm tree with a fishing rod across his knees is highly attractive to another man working hard, worrying hard and wading the slush of a prolonged northern winter.

I'm not throwing off on fishing either but it isn't a guarantee of full time joy unless you're a special kind of person. Let's study the procedure of becoming a full-time fisherman.

The old business of getting out what you put into it was never more true of anything. Without exception, all of the happy fishermen I know are good at some phase of it and became good through practice; "work" if you prefer that word.

The most dissatisfied fishermen I encounter are those who refuse to learn anything on their own. Often they can afford all the guides they want and confuse their own skills to deciding when to go and how long to stay. I know some of these fellows who can return from a dream trip to some exotic fishing spot without being able to answer the simplest questions about the method used.

"The guide know where to go," they say, never (Continued on next page)
(Continued from preceding page) considering the reason why that was the place or how the guide had decided.

Some of these folks will fish with guides out of the same dock for years and never learn the first thing about the country. When one of these fellows says he always uses tackle furnished by the guide I immediately suspect he isn't much of a fisherman. Nearly all good fishermen want their own tackle and assembling it is part of the sport. Anyway, these people complain a lot about the fishing and couldn't stand very many days of it.

I am not belittling these casual fishermen but I'm pretty sure that any one of them would have a hard time spending his retirement at fishing. If you fit in the category, don't buy yourself a one-way ticket to a bass lake. Better have some other hobbies.

I don't believe in competitive fishing but there must be some kind of a challenge.

I know a wealthy man who retired to Florida to fish. He bought a deep water cruiser and went out every day, trolling for sailfish, kingfish; anything that was striking. He became pretty good at it after a couple of years during which he fished the Gulfstream as regularly as a charter skipper.

His friends got tired of it and he didn't care to go alone. The last I heard of him he was working in a welding shop for amusement.

If he'd been forced to steal time from a job to maintain and operate his boat, he'd probably have had a lot of fun at it. With nothing else to do, it got tiresome in a couple of years.

Some of the happiest retirees become artists at one specific kind of fishing. I know a retired merchant who has become a fly fishing expert and fishes all over the world using nothing but his fly rod. He catches a lot of fish not usually considered fly fish and has a lot of fun doing it. He sets himself some pretty tough tasks and is enjoying life.

On the other end of the expense account is a man who fishes daily at a pier, specializing in flounder when they're running and going for pompano when they're available. His skill at these two kinds of bait fishing is dramatic although neither is ordinarily considered a "fancy" game fish. His fun is comparable to that of the fly fisherman.

Another retired angler I know has gradually gained greatest satisfaction from building tackle, especially lures.

None of these specialties is particularly easy and all take a great deal of study and practice.

Few fishermen who want to use only the easiest and simplest methods become serious fishermen. Call it ego or self-satisfaction or what you will, there is little fun in doing something that everyone else can do just as well. The novelty soon wears off.

A roller coaster thrills or scares almost everyone but riding one would probably never develop into a satisfactory hobby because someone else is running the thing.

A lot of people go fishing with no abilities at all. The guide makes the cast and gives them move for move instructions when a fish strikes. The customers may have a wonderful time but they're like the roller coaster passengers and it's a dull fellow indeed who wants someone else to do all of his casting for him year in and year out.

But suppose you're a real fisherman and you've definitely decided you want to retire to Florida and fish. You still have some decisions to make. Your next best move would be to spend an entire year in the state before buying a home or otherwise settling permanently. There's as much difference between bass fishing in the Florida panhandle and bone-fishing in the Keys as there is between Maine salmon and yellowtail off California.

Your first reaction is to find something similar to what you had at home. For example, when I came to Florida, I was primarily a black bass fisherman so I sought bass fishing country. A year of indecision is expensive but more desirable than settling where you don't care for the fishing. I know a fellow who bought a home on salt water thinking he'd learn to fish there. He knows now that the light tackle fishing he's used to just doesn't fit in with his new residence.

There are other parts of the state where he'd have a wonderful time but he has to drive hundreds of miles to get to them.

Any fisherman who comes to Florida should study the kinds of fishing carefully. There's more than you think. I have repeatedly mentioned the fellow who fished in Florida for 12 years before he learned he could catch salt water fish with his bass tackle, the fellow who still thinks he has to go North for fly fishing and the bass fisherman who has lived 29 years within two miles of salt water trout fishing without trying it, driving 30 miles for bass fishing.

I have always been against hurried selection of a retirement spot.

Right now there is a boom in fishing classes, (Continued on page 33)
1965-66 Hunting Season

Northwest Region

DEER: November 20-January 16. Hunting permitted everyday. SPECIAL SEASON: Okaloosa, Walton, Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, November 20-December 5, and December 18-January 2. The deer season in Washington and Holmes counties is the same as for the Point Washington Management Area (Nov. 20-Dec. 5).


South Florida Region

DEER: November 13-January 2. Hunting permitted everyday, except DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties which will be open for deer hunting from November 13 through November 21, only.

TURKEY: FALL SEASON: November 13-January 2. Hunting permitted everyday. SPRING GobbLER SEASON: March 12-March 27 south of State Road 50; March 26-April 10 in Hernando County north of State Road 50. Hunting from one-half hour before sunrise to 12-noon.

QUAIL & SQUIRREL: November 13-February 27. Hunting permitted everyday.

SPECIAL REGULATIONS: The use of rifles is prohibited in DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties except .22 rimfire rifles may be used other than for taking of deer and bear. The use of dogs in DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties shall be limited to bird dogs, retrievers and slow trail hounds. The use of running hounds or any other dog that can reasonably be considered a dog usable for running deer is specifically prohibited.

Central Region

DEER: November 13-January 2. Monday, Tuesday and Friday closed except during the first 9 days, and between November 24 and November 28, and between December 22 and January 2. Hunting permitted everyday in that portion of the Region lying south of State Road 50 and west of the St. Johns River.

TURKEY: FALL SEASON: November 13-January 2. Monday, Tuesday and Friday closed except during the first 9 days, and between November 24 through November 28, AND December 22 through January 2. Hunting permitted everyday in that portion of the Region lying south of State Road 50, and west of the St. Johns River. SPRING GobbLER SEASON: March 12-March 27, south of State Road 50 and in that portion of the Richbourg Wildlife Management Area lying south of State Road 50. March 26-April 10, north of State Road 50. Hunting from one-half hour before sunrise to 12-noon. No Spring Gobbler Season on the Ocala and Citrus Wildlife Management Areas.

QUAIL & SQUIRREL: November 13-February 27. Monday, Tuesday and Friday closed except during the first 9 days, and November 24 through November 28, AND December 22 through January 2. Hunting permitted everyday in that portion of the Region south of State Road 50 and west of the St. Johns River.

Everglades Region


QUAIL & SQUIRREL: November 13-February 27. Hunting permitted everyday.

Bag Limits—Resident Game

DEER (Buck): 1 per day, 3 per season.

TURKEY: Nov., Dec., Jan., 2 per day, 3 per season, either sex. March-April Season, gobblers only, 1 per day, 2 per season.

QUAIL: 12 per day, not more than 24 in possession.

HOG: 1 per day, 2 per season, except as provided on certain Management Areas.

BLACK BEAR: 1 per season.

Fox Squirrel: 2 per day, not more than 4 in possession.

SHOOTING HOURS—RESIDENT GAME: From one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

JUNE, 1965
The Florida
WILD TURKEY
Part 2

By JAMES A. POWELL
Assistant Chief, Game Management

Much effort of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission over the past decade has been directed toward the restoration and relocation of wild-trapped turkeys. Most of this stock went into areas without turkey populations or where existing populations had been depleted.

Over a decade of restocking activities with both wild-trapped and pen-reared turkeys has proven the unsuitability of pen-reared turkey for restocking. The total lack of band returns from released game farm turkeys in Florida show that the program was non-productive. The pen-reared turkeys, regardless of the "wild blood" supposedly coursing through their veins, were simply unable to cope with the wild environment. If they were able to survive at all, they generally made their way to the nearest farm house to live with the hand-fed poultry.

If it is desired to put additional targets in the field, then possibly a release of pen-reared birds just prior to the open season could be justified. The real objection to pen-reared birds, however, is the effect that such birds can have on an already existing population of wild turkey. Pen-reared turkeys often carry diseases, such as blackhead and fowl pox. When they are stocked in areas where wild turkeys are present, a large part of the population of wild birds can be eliminated by diseases carried by the pen-reared birds. (Powell 1961)

Several methods have been utilized in Florida's wild turkey trapping program. Drop nets and tunnel traps were tried and discarded. The greatest success has been through use of a drop door pole trap and a double "cannon" net assembly. The drop door trap necessitates that the trapper be in a blind before dawn to spring the drop door when the turkeys enter to feed. During the 1961-62 trapping season, 180 turkeys were captured with drop door traps.

Traps of this type are permanent and remain on location throughout the year. The use of automatic type traps is undesirable because turkeys must be tempted to escape.

To keep them from killing themselves while attempting to escape, several trapping methods have been used in Florida's wild turkey program, including the drop door pole type, at left. A trapper hiding in a blind nearby sprays the drop door when turkeys enter to feed.

Several methods of transporting and releasing of wild turkeys have been used in Florida. Use of the airplane is a good method because of the short time between trapping and release. Turkey in harness map, below, is easy to handle, and can be moved without injury.

The bird fell freely for only 20-30 feet and went into a long glide. Since then many turkeys have been successfully released by this method, with only slight mortalities. Areas were stocked which would have been nearly inaccessible by any other method. They were, however, accessible to hunters operating from "swamp buggies." Since the initiation of the turkey restoration program in Florida, 3,152 turkeys have been trapped, banded and released throughout the State and of these, over 500 have been released from the air. Examination of data from the band returns of the turkeys released by the plane shows considerably greater survival than on areas where the birds had been carried long distances by truck.

Two examples have been previously cited under the discussion of turkey populations regarding restoration success. Both of these areas continue to produce shootable or trapable populations of turkeys each year depending, of course, on the success of the hatch. Almost without exception, the controlled hunt area, upon which most of the restocking is done, are showing a steady increase in harvest.

The 16-year relocation program has had a valuable public relations effect by gaining the good will of the public. Figure 7 presents the location and

(Continued on next page)
numbers of relocated wild turkeys within the state.

Protection

Any discussion pertaining to the protection requirements of the turkey usually incurs heated debate, to say the least. In Florida it is felt that a well established and sizable turkey population in good habitat can withstand any amount of hunting under the present regulations. Good habitat in this respect does not refer to small areas but to blocks of land in the 50 to 100 thousand acre class with well established populations. Of course, illegal hunting on any area, particularly during the late summer months, or what is known as the "frying size" season, can be extremely detrimental to any turkey population. Given a successful hatching season, the turkey population appears to be able to bounce back regardless of the legal hunting pressure during the previous fall. An excellent example of this is the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area in Glades County, Florida, where the population each year is subjected to tremendous hunting pressure. There seemingly is little effect on the next year's population, provided a successful hatching season occurs following the hunting season. Furthermore, if a successful hatch does not occur, the population will decrease whether it had been hunted or not the previous fall. The data illustrated on the refuges where our trapping program is maintained. Hunting laws must be effectively enforced, particularly in the late summer months when the young pouls are "frying size." The amount of enforced protection required is largely dependent upon the attitude of the local people involved. It is most desirable to gain the confidence and support of the local people in order to reduce enforcement problems.

Modern History

The paucity of documented information regarding the Florida wild turkey is apparent. While most states began losing their turkey flocks around the late 1800's southern turkeys apparently held their own until the intensive logging removed most of the virgin forest between 1890 and 1920. The wild turkey population remained alarmingly low until general fencing occurred in the 1930's in southern and central Florida. At this time, farmers began to leave their small homesteads and they were fenced and posted, thus considerable areas were removed from the general hunting public. This situation existed through the 1940's, at which time the turkey population began to slowly recover from the low periods prior to general fencing. The statewide turkey population in 1947 and 1948 was estimated to be less than 26,000 (Newman and Griffin, 1960). In addition, this survey listed 18 counties as being either without any turkeys or having fewer than 50 in the entire county. In 1961, the Florida turkey population was estimated to be in excess of 73,000 birds and in 1964, was estimated to be 80,000. Thus the statewide population has more than tripled in 16 years.

Relationships

In this discussion of the relationships between wild turkeys, other animals, agriculture, forest practices and other land uses, all remarks refer to management on a large scale. Specifically, the discussion pertains to large tracts of natural turkey habitat rather than small private holdings or plantations on which it may be desired to carry out intensive turkey management.

Animals

Numerous investigators in the past have postulated that heavy competition for food between turkeys and other animals such as deer, cattle, and hogs can produce serious consequences for the wild turkey. Observations in Florida, throughout most of the turkey habitat, do not indicate that such competition is a serious threat. Examination of crop analyses data immediately discloses the variance in the turkey's diet which permits the turkey to survive admirably regardless of the competition for specific items.

Referring again to the Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area and refuge, these adjacent areas totaling 225,000 acres, support one of the largest turkey populations in the State of Florida. The land is heavily grazed by cattle and overrun by hogs. Raising free range cattle is the landowner's primary interest and the maximum number of range calves produced in his objective. Free-range hogs were permitted in Glades County, Florida, until 1963. Hogs are a detriment to the turkey trapping program and make it necessary to hog-fence all of the traps, but they do not appear to hinder the turkey population itself. The author has on innumerable occasions observed a group of 10 to 15 hogs rooting through a carpet grass flat, being followed by a flock of turkeys scratching in the freshly rooted ground. It is possible that free-range hogs may destroy a certain percentage of turkey nests, but there is lack of evidence that competition for food is a limiting factor to the turkey population. The Florida deer herd has not reached a high enough density in any of the turkey range to over-browse the available food supply.

In Florida, some conflict has been recently noted between turkeys and agricultural practices. In south-central Florida, considerable acreage has been and is being cleared for the planting of citrus groves. In good turkey habitat, small citrus groves do not appear to be detrimental. Turkeys may frequently be seen dusting and bugging in the small groves surrounded by a combination of other cover requirements. However, in the case of the extremely large citrus groves, i.e., 10,000 to 20,000 acres that are now being established by the citrus cooperatives, there naturally can be a reduction of available habitat and a corresponding decline of existing turkey populations. The same thing holds true in relation to the establishment of very large improved pastures. Small improved pastures are very beneficial in most turkey habitats, but the establishment of extensive improved pastures can reduce suitable winter habitat. This is important in southern Florida where considerable tracts, formerly in runner oak, palmetto and cabbage palm have been completely cleared and planted to improved pasture.

Forestry

Presently, the trend in the southeast is to planted forest and pasture. The trend to forests would seem to be beneficial and probably is, but another factor as yet not fully appraised is the "Timber Stand Improvement" practice. This includes the removal of the hardwoods that have little or no commercial wood value, thus converting the forest to a pure stand, usually of pine. TSI probably does not affect the wild turkey population on range that supports and is ranged for mixed pine-hardwoods, but almost certainly will affect the carrying capacity of the marginal turkey range unless other types of management designed for the turkey are practiced.

Strode (1956) made recommendations in an attempt to coordinate white-tail deer habitat needs with existing U. S. Forest Service "TSI" practices. These recommendations have been altered slightly to coordinate TSI practices with suggested turkey habitat needs. These recommendations are as follows:

A. Longleaf, Slash and Other Pine Types
1. No timber stand improvement (removal of...
Controlled use of fire is a useful turkey management tool. While turkeys thrive in areas where fire is never used, and where it is used with almost annual frequency, the best results are obtained between these extremes, for food and cover.

B. Bottomland Hardwood Type

1. A minimum of ten well formed game food producing trees (oaks preferred) will be left in each acre. If possible, trees will be well distributed. Trees with ten-inch trunks or greater will be selected when available.

C. Live Oak Hammock Type

1. No stand improvement work will be scheduled in areas containing less than two acres.

D. Sand Pine Type (Orcala National Forest)

1. Sand pine encroaching in the longleaf type will be eliminated, except in areas stocked with 500 or more sand pine trees per acre and which average 36 inches or more in height.

2. Control of encroaching sand pine in the longleaf type will be accomplished by prescribed burning or by removal of merchantable trees.

E. Most Desirable and Desirable Trees for Wildlife Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Desirable</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hardwoods</td>
<td>Hardwoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey Oak</td>
<td>Hickory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Oak</td>
<td>Tupelo Gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Oak</td>
<td>Magnolia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurel Oak</td>
<td>Beach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcup Oak</td>
<td>Maple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow Oak</td>
<td>Ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Oak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Jack Oak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Gum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cherry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Preferred Tree and Shrub Species

| Iron Wood | Myrtle |
| Dogwood   | Sparkleberry |
| Persimmon | Wild Grapes |
| Youpon    | Virginia Willow |
| Gallberry |         |

The use of fire must be mentioned in any discussion of forestry and the turkey. Stoddard (1935) suggested controlled burning every three or four years for good management in the southeast. He observed that while wild turkeys appear to thrive both where fire is never used, and where it is used with almost annual frequency, the best results are obtained between these extremes. On most of the Florida wildlife management areas, a three year burning cycle is adhered to as closely as conditions permit where it is possible for game managers to control the burning cycle. Landowners sometimes alter this cycle to one which they feel better fits their individual needs. For instance, on the Palatka-Enchanted Creek Area, the landowner usually attempts to burn the palmetto prairies in alternate years. On the privately owned timber lands, optimum management for turkeys includes controlled burning but may not be possible due to the landowner's contrary primary interest. However, it has been possible to initiate controlled burning after the pines have reached a certain age. Such a program may be continued for a long period, particularly if the pines are managed for sawtimber.

Harvest and Other Mortality

At the present time, as reflected by the annual harvest of over 25,000 turkeys, Florida offers some of the best turkey hunting in the United States. Table 19 presents the statewide turkey harvest, hunting pressure, and hunting success for the period 1959 through 1964.

The estimates of hunting pressure and harvest by species were obtained by means of a random mail survey. The carbon copies of all hunting licenses sold are used as the source of names. From these, a thousand names are selected at random from each of the five (5) conservation districts. These persons receive questionnaires concerning their hunting activity for the previous hunting season. The persons that do not respond to the initial mailing receive a follow-up questionnaire; to the remaining non-respondents, a third reminder is mailed. From the response to the survey, mean estimates are calculated for the various data. The means are then expanded by the district license sales to produce the district and statewide estimates of harvest and pressure (Jones, 1963).

Spring poult mortality can be severe due to excessive precipitation. Other forms of mortality certainly exist, but are not normally significant. Crippling loss certainly exists on areas open to the hunting of the wild turkey. Estimates of this loss are nebulous to say the least. Hunters are reluctant to report crippling loss and almost no estimate can be made of the number of crippled turkeys that recover.

Illegal hunting loss fluctuates from area to area, season to season and with economic conditions. The Florida "cracker" who eats turkey about as often as he eats grits, while remaining vivid in memory, is extremely hard to find. Better law enforcement and land use changes have aided the turkey considerably.

The topic of predation has been discussed more than management. In certain cases, predator control of one type or another might be justified if it is inexpensive. It is a fact, however, that Florida's turkey population has been expanding its range and numbers for at least 15 years in the face of predator populations that have reached great proportions. Certainly, turkeys are preyed upon by birds and animals other than man at all stages of their life, but in extensive management it would be out of the question to recommend predator control to aid the population.

Disease can be devastating to a population. Illustrated here is a turkey from Volusia County, Florida, captured just prior to its death from fowl pox in 1960. A sportsmen's group had released a number of pen-reared turkeys without checking into the possible consequences. Harvests prior to this release varied between 60 and 70 turkeys each season. During the hunting season following these releases, the recorded harvest for the area was two turkeys. The seriousness of blackhead in turkey populations is reported from a number of states, but it appears that in Florida at least, fowl pox is considerably more predominant than is blackhead. Close control of the turkey flock, may expose wild turkeys to fowl pox, or blackhead, resulting in devastation of the wild turkey population in release areas.

Disease is always a serious threat to the turkey population. Releases of pen-reared turkeys by groups, attempting to boost the turkey flock, may expose the wild stock to fowl pox, or blackhead, resulting in devastation of the wild turkey population in release areas.

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over releases of pen-reared birds is strongly recommended. Starvation, particularly in connection with heavy winter snow cover, is of little consequence in the southeastern states.

Other mortality factors of importance are hard to ascertain. Loss from crippling may be important during the hunting seasons. Records from the wildlife management areas reveal that at least twenty-five per cent of the turkeys shot at escape crippled. How many of these eventually recover is not known.

Some hens are lost during the nesting season to predation and other causes, but this is probably negligible. A few records have been obtained which indicated death of the hen from heat prostration, shock or other unknown causes.

Hunting and Regulations

The general hunting season in Florida traditionally begins on the third Saturday in November and generally is terminated after the first Sunday in January. The spring gobbler season, formerly held in a few counties in northern Florida and now held statewide, generally takes place from the end of March through the first two weeks in April. During the fall season, Florida law permits the taking of two turkeys per day and a total of three of either sex for the season. Two additional gobblers are permitted during the spring on a one-per-day basis.

Either sex harvest usually produces heated discussions, not only among turkey hunters but among turkey biologists throughout the country. Table 3 shows the average sex ratio in Florida to be about 40 per cent gobblers and 60 per cent hens, thus under a "gobbler only" law, 60 per cent of the total population is not legally available to the hunter.

The remaining 40 per cent of the gobbler population consists of 85 per cent adults and 15 per cent sub-adults. Since many hunters are unable to differentiate between a sub-adult gobbler and a hen, the percentage of the population available for harvest is further reduced. Thus, out of every 100 turkeys, hardly more than 26 could be considered available for harvest. With an annual mortality, even in non-hunted areas, of 40 to 50 per cent (Table 4) this would permit approximately one-fourth of the total population to be totally wasted each year under a "gobbler only" law. Such a harvest regulation could be rarely justified.

The writer is of the firm opinion that hunting (within the present regulatory framework such as Florida's) in good turkey range of adequate size, cannot be a threat to a wild turkey population. It is unlawful to hunt turkeys with a dog in Florida. The writer also feels that the present "roosting" season in Florida is of no real value, and that unless keenly supervised, will have a detrimental effect on the Florida turkey population.

The author is of the opinion that the key to the problem is to acquaint the farmer with the proper management techniques of the wild turkey. The majority of Florida's excellent turkey hunting is concentrated efforts to acquire areas of good turkey habitat for public use. Such an action is vital to the well-being of the Florida turkey population.

One of the most common methods of hunting and harvesting the Florida wild turkey, particularly in south Florida, is known as roosting. In the late afternoon, a hunter will station himself in a section of hammock or swamp that he thinks is a roosting spot. The area he selects is generally one in which he has previously observed turkeys or turkey sign. The hunter will remain perfectly quiet until well after dusk during which time he hopes to hear turkeys yelping and/or flying up to roost. If he is successful in aurally locating a flock of turkeys in this manner, he will leave the area very quietly and return the next morning before dawn. As the legal shooting hour approaches, the hunter hopes that he has put himself in a position to bag one of the roosted turkeys when it flies down, or to kill one while it is still on the roost.

Wild turkeys, like most other game birds and mammals, can be enticed to frequent a particular location by baiting. It is, therefore, not very difficult to understand why good game management practices dictate that such an unfair and unSportsmen like method of taking wild turkeys with bait should be made illegal and rigidly enforced. It would be quite possible to entirely eliminate a turkey population from a given area if this method of harvesting were permitted. In fact, this is probably how much of the Southeast lost its turkeys.

Included in the protection plans for the future of wild turkey hunting is concentrated efforts to acquire areas of good turkey habitat for public use. In addition, and almost equally important, is the need for a concentrated effort backed by enthusiastic public endorsement to acquire areas of good turkey habitat for public use either by lease, outright purchase or otherwise. The continued application of research, management, and development techniques to such lands would aid materially in forestalling a turkey population reduction by encroaching civilization.

See Next Page
Table 15.—DYNAMIC TABLE BASED ON 160 BIRD RETURNS FROM HARVESTED WILD TURKEYS 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Adult</th>
<th>Subsidiary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16.—BAND RETURN DATA—WILD TRAPPED FLORIDA TURKEYS—1969-1964 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Trapped</th>
<th>Total Banded</th>
<th>Return Return</th>
<th>Per Cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17.—FLORIDA STATEWIDE TURKEY HARVEST, PRESSURE AND SUCCESS—1955-1964 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Harvested</th>
<th>Number Days per Hunter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>26,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>38,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>42,000</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FLORIDA WILDFOWL 

FLORIDA WILDFISH 

FLORIDA FISHING REGULATIONS 

FISHING LICENSES 

1965-1966 

LICENSE FEES—All Florida fishermen between 15 and 65 years of age must possess and use a valid fishing license when using a rod and reel, or an artificial lure in fresh waters, or for taking non-game fish by the use of spooks, gigs, or bow and arrow. 

RESIDENT—Fishing & Hunting Combination $10.50 Annual, Statewide 

NON-RESIDENT $3.00 Annual, Statewide 

$2.25 5-Day Continuous (except children under 15 years of age) 

$3.25 14-Day Continuous 

$8.00 Annual 

Licenses are issued by offices of County Judges and their authorized sub-agents. Residents using cropp poles or other fishing methods outside of home county must possess Resident Licenses. License is not required of residents to fish non-commercially with not more than three cropp poles in county of legal residence, except on Fish Management Areas. 

DAY'S BAG LIMIT 

10 Block Bass—15 Chain Pickerel—30 White Bass 

35 Panfish: Brook, Perch, and Red- finned Pike Individually, or in aggregate 

Total Possession Limit: Two Day's Bag Limit after the first day of fishing. 

SPECIAL LIMITS—Jim Woodoff Reservoir, and St. Mary's River: Limits 50 Panfish, 15 Black Bass, 30 White Bass, 15 Chain Pickerel; 50 of all gamefish in aggregate. 

SPECIAL LIMITS—In Dade, Monroe, Broward or Collier counties, except Lake Trafford: 70 Panfish daily bag limit. 

SPECIAL LIMITS—On Point Lake, and its tributaries, in Bay County: 10 Channel Catfish daily bag limit. 

SPECIAL SIZE LIMIT—No person shall take or possess any Bass less than 12-inches in length in Panhandle waters. 

Method of Taking Fresh Water Fish 

Game fish may be taken with pole and line, rod and reel, bob, spinner, or troll. Non-game fish may be taken with bush hook, set line or trot line baited with cut bait or other substance, not including live or whole fish, or any part of any game fish. Fish lines so baited, and limited to 25 hooks, are permitted for taking non-game fish for personal use with regular fishing license. Use of set lines or bush hooks prohibited in FPB District. Non-game fish other than catfish may be taken by manually operated spooks, gigs, or bow and arrow during daylight hours, except where prohibited by local law. Underwater swimming or diving is prohibited when using such devices. Non-game fish may be taken by certain other devices under permit or as provided by special regulations pertaining to specific waters. 

DO NOT BUY OR SELL YOUR GAMEFISH 

JUNE, 1965 

1 In deriving percentages, the 1964 release figure was not added to the total banding figure since these bands had not gone through a hunting season before affording an opportunity for harvest return. 

Mean recovery rates, 23.5 per year or 7.25% of birds banded.
In addition to a good gun fit, improvement comes from actual shooting under controlled conditions

By EDMUND McLAURIN

T o the shotgunning, good gun fit can easily be more important to successful shooting than dollar value or gun use.

The field gunner preferably wants his shotgun to shoot where he points it, with gun centering its shot pattern at or only slightly above the spot covered by the gun’s front sight. The trapshooter usually wants his shotgun to shoot high, so that he can better see and follow fast-thrown clay targets. Where feathered game targets fly wild and erratic, and in Skeet shooting, the need is a fast-handling gun of unquestioned fit. Even a fraction of a second can mean the difference between a hit and a miss; good gun fit is all important to correct coordination and timing.

Last month’s firearms section in FLORIDA WILDLIFE reviewed the various technical points that, together, constitute good gun fit, and gave tips on how to recognize and obtain it. But the only way to be sure is to do some actual shooting under controlled test conditions.

Every shotgun has its own individual shot size and powder load preference. This combination will pattern better than any other. To find it, you must fire various shell loads at individual paper targets and compare the results.

A variable choke device is particularly helpful in finding the best choke for buckshot loads, popular with deer hunters.

Both shot and rifled slugs are affected by the fixed law of gravity. But even at the long shotgun ranges, such as Modified and Improved Cylinder, slugs only drop about 1/2 inches drop at heel, and a barrel pitched-down of 1 1/2 to 2 inches. These standard dimensions may or may not be correct for your gun, or specific need. (Consult last month’s M UZZLE FLASHES for detailed information as to how to go about obtaining good individual gun fit.)

A right-handed shooter who habitually gets shot patterns that form to the left of point of aim on test papers probably has a stock that is too long for him, or possibly has some conflict between aiming eye and non-performing left eye.

If he is left-handed and aims with left eye, then shot patterns will probably tend to form to right of point of aim if stock is too long. Also, a stock that is too long will invariably tend to catch on clothing when the gun is shouldered rapidly.

If the thumb that encircles the small of the gunstock hits the shooter’s nose when he fires, it indicates too much stock length, or use decorative spacers behind present butt-plate and butt-stock.

To maintain a consistent line of aim when shooting test pattern targets, a second bead sight located on the shotgun’s rib about 12 to 14 inches behind the front sight is helpful.

Use the area of the trigger finger that is between the very tip and the first joint for a better controlled trigger pull. Applied pressure should be straight back. The trigger should be pulled off snapped sharply, in marked contrast to the slowly applied trigger squeeze of expert riflemen.

However, lacking a 40-yard range you can pattern your shotgun at 25 yards, using field loads fired at a pointing mark made from a circle of black paper 9/16 inches in diameter. (Where game bird and deer silhouette are used as aiming points, the figures should be life-size for 40 yard testing, and reduced in proportion at lesser ranges.)

For target paper you can use roll “ends” of newspaper print paper, or sheets of wide wrapping paper. These can be thumb-tacked or stapled to stakes set in the ground or to one of those big cardboard cartons that refrigerators come in. It is best to pre- target paper to uniform size, for more convenient later use.

Very practical is the Xpert Shotgun Pattern Gauge developed by shooter Bob Hyde, 2116 Liberty Street, Lincoln Park, Michigan. Hyde markets a large transparent gauge that is sectioned into half-inch squares and also has a number of shot encompassing circles drawn around a central point of intersection.

Each one-half inch square on the transparent gauge is equivalent to two inches of space at any range fired, and the 78% Full Choke pattern shot density measurement ring is always equal to a 30-inch circle. Larger rings can be applied for accurate measurement of lesser shot density percentages, such as Mod and Improved Cylinder.

With the Hyde graph, shot loads can be tested at measured short ranges, with results equivalent to normal shot pattern expansion over longer ranges. For a 40 yard field shooting range, for example, you could carry out tests at only 30 feet, with assurance of proportionate shot pattern expansion and quality when later shooting at 40 yards.

To maintain a consistent line of aim when shooting test pattern targets, a second bead sight located on the shotgun’s rib about 12 to 14 inches behind the front sight is helpful.

Use the area of the trigger finger that is between the very tip and the first joint for a better controlled trigger pull. Applied pressure should be straight back. The trigger should be pulled off snapped sharply, in marked contrast to the slowly applied trigger squeeze of expert riflemen.

Fix your aiming eye on point of aim, just as you would do while actually bringing up shotgun to shoulder and line of aim, and fire without hesitation. Use only one shell per target paper.

Walk to target and study the results. Mark the target paper with its proper number sequence, size of shot used and range; then replace it with a fresh one.

For truly accurate evaluation of how your gun patterns, fire on not less than six or eight target papers, one shell per target for each size of shot used.

Let’s assume your shot pattern has centered itself high in relation to point of aim, on a majority of your test targets. The evidence points to comb that is too high or high stock, or large bore barrel, or a stock too short at heel in comparison to length of toe.

The shotgunner who uses the binocular method (both eyes open) of aiming usually needs a higher shooting shotgun than the shooter who keeps only one eye open and, therefore, is more gun conscious.

Low shot patterns generally imply that the shotgun stock has too low comb height, too long a heel, or has too much drop and too little butt-plate pitch.

For comparison, the average good shooting gun has about 1 1/4 inches drop at comb, 2 to 2 1/2 inches drop at heel, and a barrel pitched-down of 1 1/2 to 2 inches. These standard dimensions may or may not be correct for your gun, or specific need. (Consult last month’s M UZZLE FLASHES for detailed information as to how to go about obtaining good individual gun fit.)

A right-handed shooter who habitually gets shot patterns that form to the left of point of aim on test papers probably has a stock that is too long for him, or possibly has some conflict between aiming eye and non-performing left eye.

If he is left-handed and aims with left eye, then shot patterns will probably tend to form to right of point of aim if stock is too long. Also, a stock that is too long will invariably tend to catch on clothing when the gun is shouldered rapidly.

If the thumb that encircles the small of the gunstock hits the shooter’s nose when he fires, it indicates too much stock length, or use decorative spacers behind present butt-plate and butt-stock.

To maintain a consistent line of aim when shooting test pattern targets, a second bead sight located on the shotgun’s rib about 12 to 14 inches behind the front sight is helpful.

Use the area of the trigger finger that is between the very tip and the first joint for a better controlled trigger pull. Applied pressure should be straight back. The trigger should be pulled off snapped sharply, in marked contrast to the slowly applied trigger squeeze of expert riflemen.

Whether you shoot from right or left shoulder, good gun fit is essential to fast gun handling aboard. As long targets, a fraction of a second can mean the difference between a hit and a miss.

with muzzle style choke control device may be due to mis-alignment of choke control attachment, rather than poor gunstock fit. This is especially true where choke control devices have been locally installed without actual test firing. Factory or local job, always try to have the gun returned to you accompanied by test pattern targets as tangible proof that the gun delivers its main shot pattern to point of aim.

Target patterns will show only whether or not your shotgun shoots to point of aim or erratically. The targets will not necessarily truly reflect shot pattern quality, simply because not all of the shot in the charge will reach the target paper at the same time, even though the paper will register a hole for each connecting pellet.

Also keep in mind that it takes an average minimum of four or five pellets to kill most feathered game. There must be sufficient remaining shot velocity at target to cause pellets to penetrate to vitals. If you are using small shot and they give killing penetration, then fine. If not, you must use a larger size shot. Small shot rapidly lose velocity as range is increased; it takes heavy shot to maintain velocity and give killing penetration at long range.

To test shot penetration, fill a large cardboard box with SAT. EVE. POST magazines, stacked on end, and fire at cardboard and contents over average shooting ranges. Keep in mind that this is a shot pene-
catch the fish without the slightest warning, things like battery spray is really flying into the face of a fisherman with rapid, easy operation of the rod. If a fisherman doesn't mind failure; he just doesn't want to know how it happened.

In my experience, late spring is definitely the best time for surface baits for panfish or bass. I won't say this is true for any type of fishing, but it's a good bet for "most" fish. Peters sometimes get into trouble with fishing lures. Some years ago I was the surgeon in an emergency hospital in a state that had a state-wide law that prohibited fish caught with plugs. It had three treble hooks. From inside the trailer I heard a tackle box being opened and I turned to the right and there was a fisherman holding a plug attached. It had three treble hooks.

When I was a kid on the farm, I leaned a cane pole against a fence post and the pup went back to his playing. The white rock pullet went for the worm shreds from the hook. A fisherman doesn't mind failure; he just doesn't want to know how it happened.

BOATING

(Continued from page 11)

**BOATING**

(Continued from preceding page)
The handler of a dog at a field trial may, or may not, be the dog's owner. It is the individual who commands the dog during the field trial. This handler has two dogs on leash waiting for the time when his number is called "cast" one of the dogs.

The handler is of course the driving force in the field trial. He or she is the one who directs the dog's actions and makes the decisions that determine the success or failure of the dog in the trial. The handler is responsible for the dog's behavior and performance during the trial. He or she must have a good understanding of the rules and regulations of the field trial and must be able to communicate effectively with the judge.

The handler must be able to read the judge's signals and react accordingly. He or she must be able to keep the dog on a tight leash and under control at all times. The handler must also be able to keep the dog focused and interested in the trial, even when the dog is being judged.

In conclusion, the handler is an integral part of the field trial and plays a crucial role in the success of the dog and its performance in the trial.
Plains, heavy rains flooded most of the hardwood-timbered river bottoms. Large numbers of ducks moved into these flooded woodlands to feed on acorns and other foods. Exceptions were 18,314,657 puddle ducks such as mallards and pintails, 3,837,025 diving ducks which includes canvasback and sculp, and 2,987,732 geese. Also observed were 829,100 black brant, 156,770 black brant, 3,153,590 coots, 96,818 whistling swans, and 555 of the rare trumpeter swans.

In the Atlantic Flyway the observers saw 829,100 puddle ducks, 1,503,000 diving ducks, and 529,469 geese. This Flyway was the leader in numbers of diving ducks observed. The total number of waterfowl seen in the Atlantic Flyway was 3,810,780.

In the Mississippi Flyway 9,552,039 birds were tallied by the observers. Of this total 7,043,837 were puddle ducks and 2,291,160 were divers. The largest numbers of geese were observed in the Mississippi Flyway with 808,174 being counted.

Waterfowl observed in the Central Flyway, the Plains States west to the Continental Divide, the east coast and central highlands of Mexico totaled 8,282,460. There were 3,335,060 puddle ducks, 784,500 diving ducks, and 714,800 goose observed in the central Flyway.

The Pacific Flyway, which for survey purposes took in the west coast of Mexico, had the highest number of birds observed with a total of 9,764,757. This included 7,067,128 puddle ducks, 869,766 divers, and 845,860 geese.

Under the best of conditions the winter survey is not an accurate measurement of annual waterfowl population changes because of yearly differences in visibility conditions, a major shifting of populations from one habitat type to another, changes in observers, variations in weather and other factors. Experience has shown that the best information for setting annual waterfowl hunting regulations comes from a survey of waterfowl populations and production carried out each spring and summer on the Continent’s major waterfowl breeding grounds.

**MAN AND BIRDS**

(Continued from page 5)

In one instance a shea-waterfowl, a native of the island of Skokholm in Wales, was released at the Boston, Massachusetts airport and was back home in 31/2 days, having flown 3,200 miles. Another shea-waterfowl was found in South Australia, a marked bird, having flown some 12,000 miles. Seemingly the artic tern is one of the most noteworthy migrants, flying from the frozen reaches of North America to the Antarctic and back, a round trip of 24,000 miles.

Birds have also changed their habits and habitat for various reasons. Some species have found civilization more to their liking than pure stands of timber or virgin prairies. They have followed the new forest clearing, farms and villages. Some, wilderness species disappear, while others adjust. The pinioned grouse (prairie chicken) increased in population with the advance of pioneer farming, but declined with the destruction of the prairies and the onslaught of intensive farming. Market hunting did not improve their security.

The World Of Birds takes one through the history of banding, describing the nesting habits of many birds, the identification of eggs, and gives the story of sanctuaries. It tells how to become a bird watcher and a bird photographer.

One of the last areas of study has been the sea and ocean birds. These species have been receiving rather intensive study of late, and many men of the different nations have been enlisted to make bird studies. Much of this research fits into ocean navigation.

After all things having to do with birdlife have been documented, there is a reminder that man is the most dangerous and lethal animal on the face of the earth. When there were only scanty populations of primitive men with crude weapons, birds could hold their own. Even then some very cruel methods were employed which have persisted into what is now called an enlightened civilization.

Added to killing, his civilization has reduced habitat and now chemical poisons contribute to the death toll. Man now has the knowledge to kill all living things including himself. It may take some time but he could finally get around to that task.

This book could well be used by teachers through the grades and into high school, to trace the evolution of nature and man. It so dramatically tells of the viciousness of man and the urgency of man assuming new responsibilities for all resources.

It is a book which grandparents could use to teach the grandchil­dren a broadening interest in the realm of nature before they take off for the moon.

**FLORIDA WILDLIFE’S FISHING CITATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>Minimum Size</th>
<th>Eligibility Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largemouth Bass</td>
<td>8 pounds or larger</td>
<td>For Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation, with the inscribed data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain Pickerel</td>
<td>4 pounds or larger</td>
<td>Only fishing citation applications received within 90 days of date of catch will be honored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluegill (Breem)</td>
<td>11/2 pounds or larger</td>
<td>APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shellecracker</td>
<td>2 pounds or larger</td>
<td>The Editor: Florida Wildlife Magazine, Tallahassee, Fl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Crappie</td>
<td>3 pounds or larger</td>
<td>Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Breast</td>
<td>1 pound or larger</td>
<td>listed below:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Name (please print) ___________________________ Address City State ________________ |

Species ___________________________ Weight Length ____________________________ |

Type of Tackle ___________________________ Bait or Lure Used ____________________________ |

Where Caught in_ County ___________________________ Date Caught ___________________________ |

Catch Witnessed By ___________________________ Registered, Weighed By ___________________________ |

(Signature of Applicant) ___________________________ CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK |

FLORIDA WILDLIFE
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