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FEBRUARY 1969

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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
CoRMoRANT
Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

FISH CATCHERS

ALSO KNOWN AS MAN-O-WAR BIRD • IN PROPORTION TO ITS 3 1/2 POUND BODY WEIGHT...ITS 7 1/2 FOOT WING-SPREAD IS GREATER THAN ANY OTHER BIRD IN THE WORLD • A SEA BIRD...RAILLY FOUND INLAND...IT CAN'T SWIM • MASTER OF FLIGHT IT PICKS UP SURFACE-FEEDING FISH WITH EASE • ALSO HOPS PELICANS AND GULLS • FOUND ALONG THE FLORIDA COASTS MOST COMMON IN SOUTH FLORIDA

ANHINGA

ALSO CALLED WATER TURKEY OR SNAKE BIRD • CATCHES MOSTLY NON-GAME FISH BY SWIMMING UNDERWATER • OFTEN SEEN SWIMMING WITH JUST HEAD AND NECK ABOVE WATER • COMMONLY OBSERVED HOLDING ITS WINGS OUTSTRETCHED WHILE PERCHED IN A LOW TREE OR BUSH • FOUND THROUGH FLORIDA IN FRESH WATER LAKES, SPRINGS, MARSHES AND SWAMPS • LENGTH 44" • WINDSPEED 4 FEET

FLORIDA CORMORANT

Also occurs in small to large flocks along the coasts ... less commonly in inland lakes ... throughout the state • perches in an upright pose on posts, buoys, etc. in the water ... often with wings spread • flies in V's or single file like geese • catches mostly trash fish by diving or while swimming underwater • length 35"
Fish Management Notes

Florida's shellcracker life history study, a federal and project being conducted by fishery biologist Robert L. Wilbur, Ruston, keep turning up interesting information on this popular game fish, officially called Redear sunfish, Lepomis microlophus.

Wilbur's prime study areas are lakes Griffin (Lake County) and Weir (Marion). He also conducted studies in state fish hatchery ponds at both the Richloam (Sumter) and Holt (Okaloosa) facilities. His 1967-68 Annual Progress Report gives special emphasis to shellcracker food habits, reproduction, size, and growth rates. The authoritative report also considers movement behavior, and some effects of overenrichment of water on this species.

According to the report, shellcrackers in Lake Griffin were found to be well distributed most of the year in almost every part of the lake, whereas in Weir they were generally found away from the shore, or open water—but never below a depth of 20 feet. Early spring spawning brought populations in both lakes closest to the shore.

Midge larvae were the most important food item in the diet of Griffin shellcrackers but the mayfly nymph was the preferred food in Weir. Snails were an important item for Griffin fish but were infrequently eaten by the Weir population.

The study also verified that Florida shellcrackers grow to about 3 inches in length in one year and to about 7 inches by the end of 2 years. They attain maximum lengths of 13 inches, or slightly over, and live probably 5 years. The average weight is about half a pound.

Based on examination of the reproductive organs, Wilbur suspects that peak shellcracker spawning in Lake Griffin occurred last year during March and April. In Lake Weir spawning peaked in June and July. Spawning in both lakes was sporadic from February through July.

Florida shellcrackers appear to be capable of spawning at about 1 year old, but under natural conditions reproduce for the first time at about 2 years. The yearning of sexual maturity appears to be more closely tied to the fish's size than to its age. (Various studies indicate first spawning occurred when shellcrackers reached 5 1/2-6 inches long—whether they were 8 months old, as in south Florida, or 24 months old, as in north Florida, Tennessee and Indiana, investigations.)

These favorite panfish are highly adaptable to various habitats. They live in lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams and are unusually well adapted to life in the grassy marshes of the Florida Everglades, according to previous Commission studies and to Wilbur's own observations.

Down Deep

the deep sea fishing boat crews are often "bottled" by the inexperienced

Fisherman who cannot catch fish like a few others do with ease

DON'T GET MAD at me. I am treading softly on this subject.

Florida's salt water party boats are a pretty big business. The party boat is generally a bottom fishing outfit and professionals call it a "head" boat because the fishermen are taken on board at such a high rate—sometimes for half a day and sometimes for all day.

Head boats come in all sizes, but many can accommodate 40 or 50 customers; most of them can provide tackle and nearly all of them provide cut bait for bottom fish. They are known as Number One fishing attraction for a lot of people, many of whom have no other way of getting into salt water. They bring in a variety of fish but their main targets are usually snapper and grouper.

That's the background; now the pitch:

I have heard a number of complaints from people who say they've spent considerable scratch on head boats, haven't caught enough fish-filled a skiff and have a low regard for the party boat crews and the whole party boat industry. When I have pressed the point, most of them have admitted that on nearly every trip other anglers seemed to catch a lot of fish.

Some of these folks go so far as to say that party boat crews help only a chosen few, leaving the rest to go their confused and fishless way alone.

I am going to defend the party boat crews—to a degree. I would be the first to admit that a properly dimensioned dolly in a snug susnm is likely to have a little special angling instruction; more likely, say, than a retired businessman in a grumpy mood.

I also point out that there are "regulars" who fish those boats daily become very well acquainted with the crews and have regular fishing spots on their favorite boats. These spots on the rail may actually have some minor advantage because of their relation to where the anchor drops. On the other hand, their only advantage may be convenience or the personal preference of the user. A newcomer to the head boat may be irritated to see a fellow in a certain spot catching a lot of fish while other anglers fail

Usual the answer is that the regular knows what he's doing and may even have brought his own bait aboard.

Bottom fishing may not be the most artistic, sportiest or most glamorous angling but it takes skill to be consistently successful at it. Some head boat fishermen have made a modest living by selling their catch and to do that they have to know their business.

The attitude of the crewman goes something like this: He would help the veteran anglers if he could but they don't need help and may even know what's going on down there better than he does.

He knows it is his duty to give elementary instruction to first-timers; he hopes they will catch fish and come back for other trips.

He is so many clients he knows he cannot possibly coach each one extensively so he confines his instruction to rigging the bait, explaining the tackle and giving advice once a fish is hooked. After the bait is riged and the fishing procedure explained he generally figures the fisherman is on his own until a fish is hooked whereupon most head boat mates will go through all kinds of strenuous contortions in order to gaff the catch.

(Continued on next page)
When you're in waters of wading depth you'll find it most convenient to simply sit down with your feet on the bottom. When the water gets too deep for bottom touching you may have a spooky moment on your first trip as you find your feet pawing for something that isn't there.

You can travel well in warm weather but most of my experience has been with chest waders and with them you can keep completely dry unless you are careless in dipping your arms over the side. Believe me, these gadgets are quite comfortable for fishing operations on quiet waters, being a lot steadier than some boats I've ventured forth in.

Now there are plastic floating rigs that blow up considerably greater size than my truck tube and would therefore keep you higher in the water and riding even steadier. The objections would be that they are somewhat easier to puncture and a bit bulkier to transport when inflated.

For propulsion you have an assortment of ideas. If you use nothing but your feet and the water is extremely calm you can kick yourself backward at slow speed, and still be all set for walking in shallow water or on dry ground. If you are not wearing boots or shoes you can use standard swim fins and move backward at a faster pace.

If you want to go forward there is the "Paddle Pusher," available at some sporting goods stores and made by the Fishmaster Mfg., Co., in Oklahoma City. These are light metal paddles that can be strapped to your feet. When you push backward the paddle sticks out and shows how much water. When you move your toes forward they fold back like a pair of horseman's spurs. They are very efficient except that you can't be a strong current, but as I said, the floating rig isn't intended for running-rapid or weathering typhoons. You may need to bend Paddle Pushers to make them fit boot heels.

Now a pushpole is excellent and so are ping pong paddles if you have your hands free. I have used a pole while retrieving and don't know what I'd do with it when fishing.

What about wind and wave? Well, one fellow I know drifts across a deep lake, even when it's blowing pretty high, and if he ever falls in a very exhilarating manner, he bears a life jacket. Of course you have a true life preserver as long as you can stay right side up. For the uses it is intended this type of gear is worth looking into. I have used homemade models consisting simply of a truck tube and a "paddle." These things get you around with a minimum of disturbance.

There have been numberless gadgets built to aid fishermen in night operations. One of the better numbers is the "Tie Focal" made by Wright & McGill and found in some sporting goods stores. The thing fastens to your shirt or jacket with a locking safety pin, closes up to about the size of a railroad stick watch when not in use, and can be opened into a combination light and magnifier for those of us who have trouble tying knots in anything but the best of illumination. It leaves both hands free for handling with line or spearing mosquitoes. Costs about two bucks; takes a small flashlight battery: very light.

I'm vague about the effect of wind but don't worry about it on a busy lake.
Florida Skunks

though much maligned and shunned—these critters are amusing nonetheless.

Sulphurous chemical compounds—irritates the eyes and it certainly dispels their appetites for a while! Enough for a dog, bobcat or fox of even average animal intelligence. Thereafter, skunks encountered along the trail are likely to get all the room they want. The stripped skunk is the more familiar of the two. It is found all over the country. It has long, black fur and usually has a prominent white "V" from its head and nape back over its haunches. Its face may or may not have a white blaze. Likewise, the tail may or may not be partly white. He is a chunkily-built animal—heavier than the average housecat and appearing even larger than he really is because of his ample fur. His feet, especially the front pair, are well equipped for digging for he is a burrowing animal and one that claws much of his food out of the earth. In the north the skunk takes extended, fairley normal, winter slumber. During this time of semi-hibernation they awake periodically to move about in search of food, then resume their rest, awaiting the spring. Florida skunks are active year-round.

All skunks burrow—in gopher holes, under blown over trees, in excavated ditch banks and similar sheltered places, and under junked autos and other man-made objects and structures. Their dens are usually lined with dried grasses and are quite snug. The striped skunk has a narrow mark of fur down out of the line of fire and directs a shot of musk straight toward his assailant while still handstanding. He only stays up for up to 4 or 5 seconds at a time but is quick to rise and fire again if necessary. (It rarely is.) It is a fact that neither skunk species can release its musk if its tail is held down. So, in theory, holding an "armed" skunk would be no trouble if the sharp teeth could be avoided. But the catching and the turnover, dense, on the other hand, could present quite a problem.

Surgically de-scented skunks make passable pets—especially to those with a tough disposition. Even live-trapped skunks usually fail to scent, except in minute quantities. It is a fact that neither skunk species can release its musk if its tail is held down. So, in theory, holding an "armed" skunk would be no trouble if the sharp teeth could be avoided. But the catching and the turnover, dense, on the other hand, could present quite a problem.

The striped skunk has from 4 to 6 young born over trees. Then they begin to trail in single file behind their mother as she prowls the forests, fields and roadways on feeding forays. A skunk family out for an evening stroll is one of the most captivating sights in nature.

The skunk, by nature a peaceable creature who wouldn't dream of using his odoriferous, not-so-secret weapon casually. He employs it full force only in self-defense—and for this we can all be grateful.

Rarely will one see a skunk in a hurry. Their short legs carry them at waddling gait which merely progresses to a faster waddle, or, at best, a cumbersome gallop, if they are pressed. But skunks don't need speed. Nature has endowed them with another defense system: extremely foul-smelling glandular secretions that can fill the air. It may or may not have a white blaze. Likewise, the tail may or may not be partly white. He is a chunkily-built animal—heavier than the average housecat and appearing even larger than he really is because of his ample fur. His feet, especially the front pair, are well equipped for digging for he is a burrowing animal and one that claws much of his food out of the earth.

If the foe is not discouraged by this display, or, like a puppy, is ignorant of the impending crisis and fails to retreat, the skunk turns its back and lets fly! Phew!

But the spotted skunk throws in a variation. He stamps a little, too, but soon goes up on his front paws in a perfect handstand—the better to display his spotted back and full tail to the intruder. This is his warning. If the foe advances he draws the tail out of the line of fire and directs a shot of musk straight toward the would-be attacker. It stays up for 6 or 7 seconds at a time but is quick to rise and fire again if necessary. (It rarely is.) It is a fact that neither skunk species can release its musk if its tail is held down. So, in theory, holding an "armed" skunk would be no trouble if the sharp teeth could be avoided. But the catching and the turnover, dense, on the other hand, could present quite a problem.

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The recent public hearings held by the Florida Boating Council throughout the state revealed that boaters and boating interests are becoming pretty concerned about the distribution of tax monies gathered under the Florida Motor Boating Law.

The hearings brought out on more than one occasion the fact that boaters want to see the tax monies channeled to provide the Boating Council, under the Florida Board of Conservation, with necessary funds to construct more public boat ramps, especially in salt water areas.

They were additionally concerned that some of these monies be provided to the Board to mark recreational channels in waterways not marked by the Coast Guard.

The Florida Boating Council also is planning to suggest legislation to the upcoming session of the Florida Legislature requiring divers to display a registration certificate when boating. They were additionally concerned that some of these safety regulations be forthcoming among us, however, a small boat trip (preferably in a canoe) on the Chipola is an ideal outing. It is especially so after you get into the Dead Lakes. Canoeists can really have a great adventure running these waters. There is a good tidal movement, and you have to use a lot of elbow grease in the Dead Lakes, but to a canoeist this is nothing.

Also, at high water you can easily negotiate the tumbler dam at the south end of Dead Lakes with a canoe, and this leads you into the Chipola cutoff and on into the Apalachicola River. Many scout groups schedule outings of this type in spring and summer, and right now would be a good time for planning a scouting expedition down the Chipola, through the Dead Lakes, and on to Apalachicola. I can’t think of a better wilderness area in the country for a canoe-camp adventure.

Got a letter from an avid reader of FLORIDA WILDLIFE up in Nashville, Tennessee Tuesday day showing a great deal of interest in our recent discussion about cruising the Chipola River. He wants to bring his 18' Glasspar with a 90 h.p. Johnson to cruise that lovely stream.

I wrote him back with an emphatic “UH UH!” and that same goes for others who might be considering such a cruise. Lovely as this stream is, you simply cannot take a large outboard on it. You’ll have trouble with a small one trying to run the rapids around Clarksville, so my advice is to forget it. For the more adventurous and hardy ones amongst us, however, a small boat trip (preferably in a canoe) on the Chipola is an ideal outing. It is especially so after you get into the Dead Lakes. Canoeists can really have a great adventure running these waters. There is a good tidal movement, and you have to use a lot of elbow grease in the Dead Lakes, but to a canoeist this is nothing.

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When the St. Johns River portion of the Cross Florida Barge Canal is completed, boaters will again be able to cruise through the beautiful waters of Ocklawaha Lakes. However, unless there is a real thermal tuber to be tossed around. A “thermal tuber,” by the way, is an expression used by the Outdoor Writers Association of America to describe a hot potato.

There are some important items affecting every boater in the state on agenda at these public meetings, but the boater, I suppose, figures that someone else will be there to represent his interests and let it go at that. Fortunately, this is the case, but one of these days some measures are going to be discussed that might not be very popular, and unless a good representation of the public is there, you’re going to be left out. Think about it.

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We have made plans to run the new St. Johns River lock section of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal if not, better get with it. The lock on the St. Johns portion of the Canal opened back in December and the Rodman pool has been filled and is navigable.

The canal itself is really a beauty. The landscaping is already underway and the Rodman pool has now formed into a good-sized lake. Several outstanding recreational camping areas are being constructed around the lake and you can bet the family outing that in another two-three years this is going to be one of the finest boating areas, not to mention the fantastic fishing and camping.

I know there were (and still are, by gum) a lot of folks who fretted, fussed and fumed about the destruction of the old Ocklawaha River when the canal construction began. Well, they had a point, perhaps, and the last run I made on the Ocklawaha before the St. Johns lock of the canal was opened was an unpleasant one. The river was almost impassable in spots with floating logs, fallen trees blocking passage, and a veritable sea of hyacinths. There is no one county or no one agency going to keep the Ocklawaha cleared of all this debris. As it got worse, boat traffic lessened, and it got to the point (before the lock was opened) where boating was impossible.

So where did that leave us? We had a beautiful, twisting river full of floating logs, hyacinths and no boats. Even fishermen were going elsewhere. But with the construction of the canal this debris will be eliminated, and the water of the Ocklawaha south of the canal leading to the central Florida Chain O’ Lakes will be stabilized to a degree where we will once again be able to traverse the Moss Bluff Locks and resume those magnificent boating cruises to Lakes Griffin, Dora, Harris and the unforgettable Dora Canal.
Cooperative Black Crappie

By ART HUTT

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

To my way of thinking, the black crappie (pre-
nounced with a broad "a") is as aristocratic in color
and shape as you can get in the fresh-water fish
world. The silvery sheen broken up by irregular,
dark splotchings, the milky white belly, huge dorsal
and anal fins, deep body, and upturned mouth add
up to a generally striking appearance.

And, by the way, if a wise guy gives you any
static about his "white" crappie, squelch him with
these few profound observations (if you aren't too
close to the Georgia border, that is):

Point to the dorsal fin. It is made up of a series
of stout spines followed by a series of soft rays. A
white crappie has six or less of these spines, a black
crappie has seven or eight. You can further impress
your tormentor by pointing out the upturned mouth,
the deeper body, the irregular markings, and the
relatively long dorsal fin as compared to the white's
less oblique mouth, shallower body, dark vertical
bars, and shorter dorsal fin.

At first glance, you might even say that the white
crappie looks like an anemic, sickly version of
the black crappie.

Black crappies lurk in deep water, moving into
shallow waters to spawn as the cooling water tem-
perature—somewhere in the mid-sixties—dictates.
Some spawning may start as early as September
and last through spring but the peak months are
January and February. The male selects and clears
with his tail a saucer-shaped site near vegetation
(this is the fish with the bruised or frayed tail),
then entices a female to lay her eggs therein, while
it busily enters into the job of fertilizing them. A
huge female may produce as many as 158,000 eggs
but a more normal effort from a half-pound fish hits
between 20,000 to 60,000 eggs. It takes them about
two weeks to hatch.

Once the egg sac is used up, the tiny crappies
nibble on anything in sight that will fit into their
mouths—other fish, crustaceans, insects. When
they're about 4 inches long, they change to a fish
status. A 3-pound black crappie is

Lake Okeechobee but now has worked into Dade
County.

A black crappie, on about 3/4 pound, has 7 or 8 stout spines
in total count of gill barbels. A white crappie, that is rare
in Florida, has 6 or fewer. King of panfish, black crappie is
an ideal family fish.—Bruce Smith holds his world lake prize.

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Another favored crappie catcher is the barrel-bodied spinning lure with the fluted blade and feather decoration on the treble hook. White or yellow, it seems to make no difference to the incautious crappie. Use a slow retrieve or troll with these or some of the small-bodied, slant-headed, vibrating plugs.

In fact, many anglers troll to locate the perch, then settle down in the area to throw out some live bait.

There is no getting around it—the basic and best all around crappie bait is a small minnow. Artificial may have their moments, true. But minnows will lead to consistently fuller and heavier stringers.

Years ago we had to net or fish for our bait in shallow drainage canals or ponds. Collecting was part of the fun. We used the smallest hook possible, piercing a thread-like length of worm onto it. Put a half of the lot in the bucket bound before they could—or would—let go.

In likely waters, the gluttonous little minnows would follow and be caught on a hook, usually smaller and an ungraded mixture of sizes.

Of the several ways to hook minnows (through the back or lips), I use the through-the-eyes technique. If you run the barb of the hook into the eye-socket and out the other, taking minimum care to avoid piercing the eye-ball itself, your minnow will stay lively and on the hook longer because of the stronger supporting skull structure which surrounds the hook.

Don't panic if you run out of live bait. A dead, even headless, minnow can be as good as a live one if you keep it moving. Where minnows are very small, try two on a hook. A small sliver of pork rod kept in motion will fool a crappie; or, if desperate, cut a narrow minnow-length strip from a crappie's belly. Freshwater shrimp, if you have a net along, can be plucked from a weedy shoreline for a crappie come-on. And you can always try one of those little artificial.

On the question of hooks, use a No. 1 or 2 0.108 in gold or silver. A crappie's mouth is relatively large and a hook of that size is not amiss. A fine wire hook works to advantage. If you get fouled on a lily pad root, a steady pull will bend the hook and free your rig. It beats tying a new hook on all the time.

Once your hook is back in the boat, you can reshape it with a little finger pressure. There are two techniques for taking crappies with live bait—drifting and "still-fishing." Depending upon water depth, ... for drifting in open water if they have enough line. A spinning outfit is an ideal choice, however. With a small split-shot or two (depending upon the breeze) with this rig you have the ability to keep your bait close to the bottom where it should be.

A bleach bottle with a piece of line and heavy sinker makes a readily-available marker to toss out where you catch a crappie or two. Drift through the area again for more action.

Some anglers will turn the first open-water crappie they catch into an unknowing trailer. They take a thread and a small balloon, tie it to the unsuspecting fish, and throw it back into the water. As the Judas crappie swims around with its school, the angler—opportunist fish near it.

Frankly, this has never worked for me and may merely be of value because of its novelty.

Since these socially exclusive fish are always in the lake somewhere, it has aroused my curiosity why they are not fished for on a year around basis. They have to eat and therefore should be catchable. Seems like a waste unless perhaps the fish are less attractive eating-wise when they come out of the warm summer water.

Nothing works better for crappies when they are in a spawning mood and moving into the inshore vegetation—lily pads, bulrushes, maidencane—to spawn than a simple cane pole. While you may not agree with my selection of line and sinker, here's what I use—and why I use it.

First, nonfluorocarbon line (no argument there!), but in twenty-pound test, especially if you are fishing around vegetation or snags. When your hook gets wrapped around something it shouldn't be, a stout line to haul on plus that bendable wire hook, is a practical pleasure.

Secondly, I like a relatively heavy sinker that will plummet my bait down through the small space I usually allow for it. Also, on windy days, there is nothing more frustrating than a wildly gyrating minnow circling above a small hole in thick pads, trying to come in for a landing. The heavy sinker helps immeasurably in such circumstances.

Of course, the float should be of a slim design to cut down on water resistance which could alert the crappie that something is amiss and cause it to spit the minnow out.

You'll catch more crappies if you keep your boat and your lure moving. If a crappie is around, it will take your bait within a minute (that's the way I figure it, anyhow). So fish out the holes within reach of your cane pole and move ahead to a set of new ones. Also, most people let their minnow do all the work. Thus is all wrong. Jigging your bait through the longer holes will keep your catches well above average. Move your float ahead about four inches, then let it settle back. Repeat until you run out of room or the bobber disappears. I have the feeling the heavier sinker imparts a more definite action to the bait and works to advantage here also.

Always give the crappie a little free line, only enough to stay lively and on your hook. Nothing more frustrating than a wildly gyrating crappie on your hook which may be more than half your line. If things seem uncommonly quiet, vary the depth at which you fish. Normally, a crappie will be close to the bottom with spawning activities in mind but frequently a shallow-set bobber will catch more. But don't ask me why.

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in the water. Minnows will slowly collect. Watching a bobber bounce in the light’s glare is a fascinating and rewarding way to spend a few hours at night. While you may see crappie-lights hanging from Lake Okeechobee on up through the state, the most night fishing I have run across is done at the Howey Bridge, a half-mile concrete span between Tavares and Howey-in-the-Hills on State Route 19. On a warm, late-winter night, enough lanterns hang there to make it look like a Miami Causeway. Coffee brewing on camp stoves, metal braces holding lanterns out from the bridge, sleepy-eyed but interested youngsters, a silvery fish flopping in the lantern’s glare—these are a part of the scene.

Admittedly, this handsome handful isn’t the fight­ingest fish you’ll find in Florida. Its struggle is adequate, but that’s about all you can say for it. This shortcoming is largely overshadowed by its willingness to bite, however.

One caution, though. A crappie’s mouth is some­what tender so don’t yank your fish aboard too forcibly. The hook will rip out.

Smallish crappies can be scaled and left unsplit for cooking, but on the bigger ones, I like to cut a steak off each side, then skin the slab by pulling a sharp knife blade down between the flesh and the skin.

I think there are fish that will beat a dipped-in­barter-and-fried crappie but I’ve not yet been known to turn my nose up at such an offering.

The appeal of the black crappie is that it is plen­tiful, cooperative at all hours, fairly easy to catch, will suffer through noise, dead minnows, and awk­wardly presented offerings, and you need only a minimum investment in tackle. This regal rover is turning out to be an ideal family fish. Long live the panfish king! □

Who Owns The Game?

Part 2

By ERNEST SWIFT

Managing Wildlife Editor

Can the Federal government, as a landowner, now assume (in the face of tradition and prev­ious legal opinions) jurisdiction over resident game and fish within the boundaries of the lands owned by the Federal government in the several states?

2. If this assumption is given legal status by the U. S. Supreme Court in review of the pending case of the State of New Mexico vs. the U. S. Department of the Interior, will it eventually lead to all land­owners, private or otherwise, being given title to the game-­and fish residing on their lands as is now the prevailing doctrine in Europe?

3. What powers would the States have left with which to carry on recreational and other types of resource programs which are subsidiary to the man­agement of fish and wildlife?

4. What would be the impact on the present tourism industries which has been developed on the traditions of public ownership of wildlife and, in many states, public ownership of water?

History records a long discussion of these matters. A convention to protect the fur seal on the high seas was called in 1911, and a treaty was signed by the United States, Great Britain, Japan and Russia. Similar treaties have followed, some of them rather recently, to provide protection for whales, halibut, salmon and other deep sea life.

An early U. S. Supreme Court case—Lacoste vs. Department of Conservation of the State of Louisi­ana, states: “By right of ownership, and in the exercise of police powers, a state may regulate the taking of wild animals within its borders, their sub­sequent use, and the property rights that may be acquired in them.”

One of the first, if not the first, attempts by the Federal government to control wildlife within the boundaries of the U. S. was the passage of the Weeks-McLean Act of 1913. This Act declared: “All migratory game and insectivorous birds to be within the custody and protection of the government of the United States and forbade their destruction or cap­ture contrary to regulations prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture.” This Act was declared unconstitutional by the U. S. Supreme Court as an invasion of the rights of the States.

As a result there followed the Convention of 1916 between the United States and Great Britain pro­vid­ing for the protection by the U. S. and Canada of migratory game birds. migratory insectivorous and migratory non-game birds. This treaty was carried out as in the case of oceanic fishing under the powers of the U. S. Constitution.

In 1918, with the Treaty duly signed, the U. S. Congress proceeded to pass the Migratory Bird Treaty Act which authorized the Secretary of Agri­culture, subject to the approval of the President, to promulgate regulations for the protection of all migratory birds covered by the Convention. Mexico signed a similar treaty in 1926.

Again the authority of the Federal government was challenged in the case of Missouri vs. Holland but, on the basis of the Constitutional Treaty powers, the U. S. Supreme Court confirmed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

In 1919 a movement was started by H. S. Graves, Chief of the U. S. Forest Service, along with F. E. Osmundt and Gifford Pinchot, to bring about, under the jurisdiction of the Federal government, the con­trol of timber cutting on private lands. This led to a bitter fight, with forest industry on one side and the Forest Service and some private backers on the other. The proposal never became law, and there were members of the Senate and House who were not in sympathy with the idea. This caused some deep rifts within the Service. However, it ultimately brought about vastly better forest fire protection through the Clayton Antitrust Act and improved forest management as a result thereof. Although this inci­dent is not closely allied with the game manage­ment, it shows a trend of thinking that has periodically cropped up.

Hunt vs. United States (1928), more commonly

(Continued on next page)
To some people all this may sound like legal and technical niceties but, nevertheless, it preserved the integrity of the state in the general management of game, the instance of hunting licenses, etc. Crop and tree damage still is something of a moot question even at the state level on private lands. Some state pays for crop damage by wildlife, and some state courts have gone so far as to say that when there is no recourse the landowner can protect his property from wildlife damage.

Nor can the Federal government gain much come from citing the Pisgah National Forest Case in North Carolina. When that National Forest was established, the State of North Carolina ceded all rights and title to the land, as well as complete jurisdiction of the wildlife to the Federal government.

Presumably on the basis of the Court's decision in the Pisgah case and during the general era of expanding government activity along with the CCC camps, the then Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, attempted to impose similar regulations on all national forests under general order G-20-A. This caused a general uprising among the states and was one of the main reasons which caused the states to forget petty differences and combine their strength in the International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners. Seth Gordon, then President of the International, led the fight, and a good one it was.

The order was subsequently withdrawn and for the time being Federal powers, so far as an imposition of the state's rights to manage their own wildlife resources, was dropped. But it has never completely died.

Good management of resident fish and game for the benefit of all people requires public support and awareness of all Program needs. Intensity of state-owned fish, clean water and bottomlands—public ownership facts—must be preserved.

**HUNTING... Fair or Foul?**

There is a ground swell of opposition to lawful hunting in Florida. Protectionists, or preservationists, those who claim to detect all killing, would have you believe it is evil to shoot a deer but not to butcher a beef; to bag a wild duck but not to kill a chicken; to take squirrels with a rifle but not to kill a farm pig for winter meat—with the same rifle.

Some among the protectionists' ranks even deny that hunting constitutes a sport. They vilify hunters, usually without qualification, at every opportunity, classing them as little more than sadistic idiots loose in the woods and hurting for blood—except, possibly, for "government hunters," those paid guns who are to keep the deer herds in balance with their food supplies after all public hunting is outlawed, accorded to one protectionist writer. (This tack, incidentally, clearly contradicts another part of the protectionists' own catechism. They usually deny, or ignore, the existence of a harvestable surplus in any wildlife species.)

Protectionists, who, despite the accepted definition of the word, persist in labeling themselves conservationists, come in at least two varieties.

The first is typified by the poison-penned author/crusader whose paranoid prose appears in national non-sporting magazines from time to time. A prime example appeared in The Saturday Evening Post of October 21, 1967, under the forthright title, "Hunting is a Dirty Business." Samples:

> ... Beyond the fact that sport hunters are, as a rule, reprehensible, the most obvious complaint against them is that they are destructive of wildlife... And... The results of our national wildlife policy, almost totally dominated by hunters, have been disastrous... And... Hunters are noisy, belligerent and the dirtiest of all outdoor users, littering the landscape with bottles, corn plasters and aspirin tins... And... hunters all must be skinned of the right to use the forests (Continued on next page)
Another kind of protectionist is the milder, well-meaning person, male or female, who, though not acrimonious, is no less convinced than the writer in Post that hunting is evil. An example of this type’s thinking recently came to Florinda Wilkerson’s attention in the form of a well-written, unessential, signed letter from a subscriber to the editor. It read: “After reading the recent issue of Florida Wildlife, received in the mail today, I note the greater part of your magazine this month is devoted to hunting (November-December 1968 issue) “As a resident of the State of Florida for 23 years, I have become increasingly concerned and interested in the preservation of the wildlife and natural resources in our State, and I am finding you magazine less and less attractive to a conservation-minded reader.

“Rather, it is disheartening to the rings of means you set forth for the hunter for a more successful kill. It all serves to further confirm my belief that hunting is no ‘sport’ at all. The hunt is given little chance of escape, and it merely serves a few at the expense of others.

“We subscribed to your magazine some years ago hoping to familiarize ourselves with the wildlife in Florida and expecting to receive informative articles on the subject. I find little in your magazine to satisfy this.

“I regret that I recently renewed my subscription, and after its expiration, will discontinue.”

Florida Wildlife appreciates hearing from readers, even those who are registering dissatisfaction with the publication. Everyone is entitled to his opinion—and who among us would have it any other way? So, what we offer by way of comments—about the hunting, education, and about the magazine—is not intended as an assault upon anybody’s personal convictions about the immorality of killing certain wild animals and birds with a gun or bow. We only wish to speak our piece, too.

First, we would point out the difference between "reservation" and "conservation," two terms the letter writer used almost synonymously in the same sentence.

The modern concept of true conservation of any renewable natural resource includes use of that resource by man. Wildlife is such a resource. Conservation of wildlife, therefore, not only allows for, but calls for, a regulated harvest of some wildlife species. For example, deer benefit when annual surpluses are removed from the range by sportsmen. This is a demonstrable fact of biological life. Since hunting is indeed an enjoyable form of recreation for thousands of Floridians; and since the modern firearm is the most efficient tool for reducing over-crowded deer herds, we must ask ourselves this question: Why not permit and encourage hunting? But aside from the clinical aspects of population dynamics, it is important to realize that almost invariably there are annual harvestable surpluses of the wildlife species commonly thought of as game. By application of the use-concept, we’d be foolish not to take some for our sport and enjoyment—and for our tables! None of the living things of nature can be preserved, nor should they be. Floridians should work to preserve wilderness areas and other wildlife habitat, but the creatures produced therein cannot be preserved like pickles! Their populations are continuously coming and going, rising and falling. If we don’t use them, we lose them. That’s why we say preservation is not conservation.

Now, preservation and protection both have parts in the conservation picture as we see it. We mention protection of non-game wildlife. We add that protection of wildlife is vital, too. That’s why we have laws and law enforcement; closed seasons and bird sanctuaries; fully protected species and limited harvests of those that are trapped or hunted. But protection isn’t the whole show. After protecting our wildlife and its habitat, after managing and manipulating both for maximum production, simple logic calls for a reasonable harvest to be enjoyed. Hunting constitutes the third side of the wildlife conservation triangle.

The growing protectionist/conservationist movement in America amounts to quasi-conservation. It is usually based on sheer sentimentality, a phony “reverence for life,” disenchantment with some particular hunter or group of hunters (and there are hundreds of outdoors-users), or plain old ignorance—or some of all four. In any event, it is a hollow, do-little crusade whose devotees pay few of the country’s mounting wildlife conservation bills.

The letter writer’s statement that hunting “... is no sport at all...” and “that... it merely serves a few at the expense of others...” appears from here to be precisely turned around!

Hunters, who are the few, have long supported nearly the entire wildlife conservation movement in this country, to the obvious benefit of all others. The quasi-conservationists have had a free ride!

Let’s consider Florida. Not only have all our people profited from the hunter and fisherman-supported work of the Game and Fish Water Commission, but we have non-hunted species of wildlife. Sportmen’s dollars pay for pelican and alligator research and protection as well as for deer and wild turkey research and management. Wildlife officers are paid to protect meadows and robins and a few hundred other songsters as well as to check the hunter’s bag for quail, duck and dove kills.

There are more deer and turkey in Florida today than at any other time in our history—both because we chose not to kill anything, but because of changing land use practices and because hunters spent their money for hunting licenses and stamps so that modern wildlife management could come up with some answers to balance, nutrition, harvest and distribution problems.

If hunters are ever pressured into quitting their sport in great numbers—due to unduly restrictive firearms laws and/or the protectionist movement—which true conservation of our wildlife resources remains will have to be paid for from general revenue and not from hunting and fishing license dollars as now. This will mean the increasing of everybody’s taxes by substantial amounts. But the sad part will be that the quality of conservation will decline. Public apathy will then probably kill the grand movement hunters started and have supported through their care—and eventually, protectionists might find themselves with very little to protect.

So, Florida Wildlife makes no apologies for writing about such the fall and winter issues. The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, which is the publisher, is charged by law with conserving, managing, restoring and regulating all wildlife and fresh water aquatic life for the people of Florida. But the agency is supported by the hunter and fisherman, the sportsmen of the state. It should not be surprising, therefore, that the agency’s official publication seeks to serve the sportsmen first and then the general readership.

Over a 12-month period the magazine attempts to give its readers general conservation, natural history, camping, hunting, fish and game management, law enforcement AND hunting and fishing articles. If the balance of the contents does not please everyone, then who can honestly be surprised? No publication can meet that test.

Finally, Florida Wildlife welcomes all comments: conservationists and preservationists; hunters and non-hunters; oldsters and youngsters. And we agree with the National Wildlife Federation’s stand on the question of "protectionism," as stated by Executive Director Thomas L. Kimball in National Wildlife Magazine, October-November 1968, who said, in part, "... we do believe that if we perpetuate an optimum environment, there will always be maximum wildlife populations, with enough variety and numbers for everyone to see, enjoy and harvest as well. We firmly believe that the hunter and the protectionist should work together toward that goal..."
Science of Guiding

It takes considerable research for continuous fishing success

By CHARLES WATERMAN

A n energetic young fishing guide on the St. Johns River for many years, Joe Kenner quit that job to work as a naturalist with the State Park Service. Now Joe’s change of employment is interesting to his friends but it doesn’t rate a full length Florida Wildlife article. The article will be about his fishing observations. He has taken to the guiding and fishing catching business with a more scientific approach than most, and that’s why a longer guide takes us off the hook where we would be for advertising him.

With a degree in agriculture and numerous courses in subjects that relate closely to wildlife, this character is a unique combination of practical fishing and learned observation. He’s not competing with any fish biologists but he has enough background in biology to apply it to the rugged business of making tourists catch black bass, a business at which he’s been successful. He’s done a lot more research on hook and line fishing than one fellow I know who got his master’s degree on the subject. It’s none of my business but I understand he went into the Park Service because his guiding season was too short.

For some time he has kept a small, private pond of big bass back of his house for observation purposes. That’s like taking all your books home from school.

Kenner’s work was with live bait, the means by which 99 per cent of the guides satisfy their clients on the St. Johns. For those who say it isn’t the sportiest way to fish I might point out that a guy on a short vacation in a strange land (in this case, Florida) may not be capable of stringing them up with plugs or bugs, or he may be after big fish only and I sadly confess that whopper bass are inclined to bite most readily on the real thing.

Being a sorry bait fisherman myself, I nevertheless have real admiration for the scientific experts at the hatchery who can make me a reliable 5-footer. Joe Kenner says he has no distinct preference then for time of day and that at that time he’s not much of a moon watchers. Neither does he pay a great deal of attention to tide tables during the big bass months.

But he keeps a close watch on water temperatures. He lists 68 to 72 degrees as optimum, and says that when the thermometer reads anything below 55 degrees you “might as well stay home by the fire.”

Remember that these are central Florida temperatures; no one will doubt that bass strike when it’s much colder in some other area. I am sure there are isolated occasions when individual central Florida fish will take a lure in colder water but don’t count on it. For the most part I’ll go with Joe.

On the other end of the thermometer is midsummer heat that sometimes brings the water up to 86 degrees. When that happens fishing is erratic although fish can sometimes go on feeding binges as short as 30 minutes. At other times it’s hard to tell the old St. Johns isn’t devoid of— not even a gar seems to be moving.

In hot weather Kenner tries to make a two-stage trip each day. He wants to be on the water between first daylight and sunup, his Number One choice for fishing time, and he wants to get out there between 4:30 p.m. and dusk.

“A feeding period in early morning is no guar-
tee you’ll have a repetition in the evening,” Kenner says. “Morning is the most reliable. In hot weather I generally quit fishing about 10:30 or 11 a.m. and get out again from about 4:30 to dark.”

This rough schedule is what separates the dedicated, fish hungry guide from the rest. Nine-to-four schedule may work during the top fishing months but will net a lot of fishless days in warm weather, and that’s one reason why consistently productive guides aren’t too plentiful.

Most St. Johns fishermen know that menhaden are good bass bait, but few realize just how good, and the fact is that when they’re running in good supply bass are likely to swim scornfully away from their old staple, the shiner. Menhaden first show up from about mid-March to early April, and are present in the river until about the middle of June. Kenner has long been a specialist in using menhaden as bait and employs a system of chumming. I’ve seen work brilliantly. He collects his menhaden with a cast net when they’re working in toward shore in quiet water between dawn and when the sunlight hits them. When the sun gets over the shoreline trees the menhaden show off so a dawn patrol is almost the only successful method. The easiest used for bait catching has a fine mesh and a good one (Kenner uses a 3-footer) will cost more than $75.

Kenner loads the fragile menhaden into his live well and takes his clients to a fishy spot, generally with considerable current, where he’s been chumming. There he sweetens things up by chucking several double handfuls of menhaden backward, and then puts over a couple with hooks in them. He says that the fishing will gradually improve if he has the spot to himself for a few days, new bass moving in faster than he and his parties catch them out. But comes a rainy day or no fishing for some other reason and the fish may forsake the lunch counter.

This menhaden business isn’t understood by many of the “guide chasers” who follow the pros feeling that’s a sure road to success. Few of the chasers (that’s an accepted term on the river) have menhaden, and they seldom figure why their hatchery shiners won’t produce while Joe’s customers are catching big bass practically every time they boats. Stolen fishing boats fall apart immediately when the menhaden run out, and sometimes artificial’s won’t score on the menhaden schooner.

The menhaden used run from three-to-five inches long and Kenner keeps them through the nostril from inside the mouth. Single lip hooking will tear out and hooking through both lips will kill the bait. No float (bobber) is used with menhaden as they’ll twist the line. They’re weak swimmers and are fish unwatered with Eagle Claw Extra Light Wire hooks, Abercrombie & Fitch 214.

(Continued on next page)

FLORIDA WILDFlE

FEBRUARY, 1969

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When it comes to fishing, the small ones are caught with 2½-light Aberdeen or Sproat hooks and the big ones with 7½ Sproats. A small shiner is probably four to six inches long and a big one is right up to 10 inches. The big shiner is frequently fished with a float about 1½ inches in diameter and the small shiner with one about half as big.

Even the limits are set with the bait used. Small shiners get 10-pound test line on the spinning rods Joe uses. Big shiners are fished with 18-pound line and menhaden on six or eight. In each case, the line is tied directly to the monofilament with no swivels or snaps, and only light split-shot sinkers when absolutely necessary.

"The less junk he has to pull around with him, the more active your bait becomes," says Kenner. "Many people buy tens of dollars worth of shiners and then beat them to death casting them, sometimes with heavy sinkers. I don't cast big shiners, just put them out and row away from you. You can cast the lighter baits with spinning tackle.

Most of his fishing is what he calls "trolling." It's slow rowing and perhaps "feathering" the baits would be a more appropriate term. If he has two clients they sit amidships in Joe's skiff, facing the bow. He puts out about 30 to 35 feet of line in most cases. The right hand bag (facing toward the stern) is hooked through the nose from the opposite side and the left hand bag through the left nostril. This they swing apart, rather than tangle. If there's cover on one side of the boat's route, Joe will sometimes put both baits to swim close to it, his hooks both baits on the proper side and lets one line out an extra 15 feet so that one bait follows the other.

Now the fishermen have the baits off on their spinning reels and are simply holding their lines in their fingers, just enough tension to restrain the shiner. Unless they've had much experience they get blow by blow instructions in hooking from the guide who has carefully adjusted the drags, and takes a dim view of customer meddling in that department. Of course when a bait is hooked, a fish all bets are off concerning which way they'll go.

"Anyway, when he has a strike, anything the fisherman does nowadays letting go of the line is wrong," says Joe.

Then there are roughly three things the fish will do. He'll take off fast, he'll swim slowly away (the most normal procedure), or he'll drop down and lie almost still for a time before leaving with his prize. Regardless of what the fish does the fisherman keeps his line barely taut until time to set the hook. The most frequent fate of all fish losses are slack line at hook setting time, and again when the fish is being played.

If the fish moves away slowly on schedule, the hook is generally set within 12 or 15 seconds. If he heads for cover he can hang up on, the strike is made sooner. If he drops down and stays almost completely still Joe says you might as well light up a cigarette and wait until he decides to swim off. If the fish hits quickly and leaves fast you'll have to play it by ear. It's sometimes hard to keep a fisherman from yanking when there's a lot of bolting and splashing around the bait. Too much tension on the line while the baits has hold of the shiner but hasn't really taken it is most likely to drive him away.

Once the fish is hooked anglers tend to be too easy with them, Kenner explains and that's a surprise to me. The fish must be worked with a tight line for three reasons, to tire him out, to keep the hook from coming loose and to keep him out of cover that might tangle the line.

A man rowing alone with the slow trolling method can employ an ordinary paper clip taped to his rod in holding enough tension to control the bait and this "mini outrigger" releases the line when a fish takes.

Although he thinks hyacinth control is necessary, Kenner feels that the constant tinkering of dead plants builds up such a soft mass on the bottom that baits will seek other spawning areas. During the spawning periods Kenner works upstream to areas he feels are less affected by the hyacinth problem.

The edges of hyacinth blocks, he says, are especially productive fishing, and he thinks the hyacinths provide an essential part of the food chain as well as protection for the small shrimps. Hyacinths may have proven a blessing in disguise when most of the alligators were killed off many years ago as a disappearance of alligators allowed rough fish to increase, and small fry need hyacinth protection from predators.

"If you want to see all of the things that live in hyacinths," says Kenner, "just pick up a handful and shake the roots over your boat. You may get anything from bloodworms to eels." When a big bass strikes during spawning season and is missed, Kenner is right back there at the first opportunity, feeling sure the fish is still present. On one such occasion he was slow trolling in an area where a big fish had been encountered and lost, and had made a number of circles around the spot when the fish came out and struck his gently moving odd blade.

"I wouldn't tell that," he says, "but I have a good witness."

On another occasion a fisherman set the hook on a big bass and reeled in a very dead catfish. In fact, part of the catfish was already digested. It had been in the bass' stomach and the hook had snagged the catfish instead of the bass.

There's quite a black bass laboratory at the Kenner residence, a whole batch of whopping fish carted to a small pond for observation. I watched him hook one on a plug but the big fish broke the hook from the lure so Joe had to net him to get it out.

When menhaden are available they are fed to the big bass regularly. The fish will strike single menhaden without hesitation, even if the bait is lively, but they won't go after groups of menhaden that tools around the pond constantly. In fact, they think they can't catch one out of the school," Kenner says. "When they move toward the school the menhaden are startled very easily. A single is easier to catch, I suppose. I have no other explanation."

There was one bass that he kept so long it became something of a pet, eating out of his hand and almost lying beside him when he walked around the pond, but somehow the fish knew Kenner from other visitors. In a test he approached the pond with several other men and all of them separated and approached the edge at different points. The bass unerringly came to Kenner and it worked even when the men wore similar clothing. Here again there are witnesses.

There is generally a little vegetation in the laboratory pond and the bass run around 18 pounds apiece. The way they can disappear in the little patches of vegetation is a surprise to most viewers. At times they appear to bunch up and at other times they scatter out, but the observations as to the persistence of activity have been disappointing. They don't show the group spurs of activity generally attributed to fish; certainly they aren't as concentrated in their activities as the squirlers in nearby oaks.

Of course, well-fed bass don't quite show the same as wild fish in the river a few yards away.

On the day Joe demonstrated a surface lure for me, and hooked one of the larger fish, there was an interesting reaction on the part of the rest. He'd have a couple of strikes before hooking one and the first fish he had to two of the eleven whoopers had been stuck before the session ended. Then he tossed a castnet over the fish that had pulled a hook loose.

Two hours later there was no sign of activity in the pond. During the netting episode all of the fish had disappeared. Generally they'd come out immediately with the appearance of menhaden being thrown into their pond, but after two hours to contemplate the disturbing events they didn't make an appearance when Joe was going to cast. Only when he walked away from the pond did they start sliding out of their hiding places to inspect the menhaden suspiciously. Finally they began feeding.

That kind of performance doesn't beat out the stories of fish that could be caught on lures several times the same day but, after all, these are old and wise bass matrons. They'd have to be to get to 10 pounds in a busy river visited by innumerable scheming fishermen.
I was late June on the Delta Marsh, and the warm sun shown upon three Cree Indians beating through the grassy meadow, searching for duck nests and the treasured eggs they contained. Their ancestors must have similarly worked the shores of this same Southern Manitoba marsh for thousands of years. But this is June 1968, the search is primarily for gadwall eggs rather than any eggs available, and the immediate destination of the eggs is an incubator at the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, rather than a buffalo-skinned lodge in a nearby Indian village.

For their labors, the Indians are paid in rather commonplace money. The paper and coins, in turn, provide the same kind of groceries eaten by your family. It is all disappointingly civilized when we pause to realize that less than a century ago, the duck eggs were sought as a beginning of food abundance after the long winter fast. All this would appear to have little relevance to Florida Wildlife and followers of Florida waterfowl, except that the Cree Indians were the first in a long train of events that would culminate with nearly two-hundred gadwall ducklings arriving in Florida, in late August, via Northwest-Orient Airlines, long before the rest of their kind were ready for the long migration South.

These particular gadwall, hopefully, were earmarked for bigger things in life because of an introduction experiment jointly planned for Florida by the Wildlife Ecology Laboratory at the University of Florida; the Southeastern Region, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Department of Interior; and the Delta Waterfowl Research Station, Delta, Manitoba, Canada.

For reasons to be explained later, the gadwall was selected as one of the North American waterfowl species most likely to fit into the Florida environment as a nesting species. Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, on Florida’s Gulf Coast about forty miles north of Clearwater, was selected as an ideal site for the experimental release.

Trouble-shooting the operation at Delta was a University of Florida graduate student, Mr. Bruce Batt. Bruce is a native Manitobian who, for several reasons, found himself earning a Master of Science degree in waterfowl ecology at Gainesville. Since his research project involved mallards in Manitoba, Bruce agreed to take charge of the gadwall eggs and shepherd them through 3 to 4 weeks of incubation and four to six weeks in the Delta hatchery. Very few of us will ever know the amount of work involved in caring for several hundred ducklings, but it must be considerable.

Bruce’s involvement in the project ended with his placing the ducklings in cardboard cartons, trucking them to Winnipeg, and consigning them to Northwest-Orient Airlines. The gadwall took jet travel as though it were the pond back home. They arrived at Tampa International Airport with the usual amount of paper work and trucked them north to Chassahowitzka, rather than just going out in early winter and live trapping migratory gadwall.

Why interfere with nature at all? This is a good question asked by many professional wildlife biologists. If it was in the “nature of things” that gadwall should breed at Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, they would do so naturally. One of man’s favorite activities appears to be moving wildlife from one place to another. While usually done with the best (or worst?) of motives, that of improving upon nature, it sometimes works out well, more often doesn’t work at all, and too often ends in disaster.

Those people interested in Florida’s outdoors realise that breeding waterfowl are in short supply. We have a small population of Florida ducks, or wood ducks in undetermined numbers, and a few oddities such as Muscovy (Royal Ducks) and fowl of several species, introduced or “seeding” as it is sometimes called, has shown that young birds must be introduced to the marsh on which it is hoped they will breed, prior to learning how to fly. Apparently, a duckling in some unknown manner recognises the marsh it grows up on as home. The females, at least, will usually return to their home marsh, or “natal marsh” as it’s often called, to breed. So this is why it was important to bring ducklings to Chassahowitzka, rather than just going out in early winter and live trapping migratory gadwall.

As luck would have it, we were in the midst of a heat wave in mid-August and the ducklings were over-heated, thirsty and hungry by the time they reached the Refuge. Since they had a long ride ahead of them by boat and airboat, we first watered and fed them. Then, as it often is the case with man-planned projects, disaster struck. Ducklings began to die almost immediately and about fifty of the original one hundred and eighty were dead at the end of the first week. We think mortality was caused by a combination of mishandling, both during shipment and immediately after their arrival, and stress from shipment.

Experts at rearing gadwall tell us this species is one of the most difficult to rear in captivity because it just doesn’t adjust well to handling and disturbance. In any event, by the end of September, the ducklings stopped dying and their numbers have stabilized at approximately fifty pairs. We believe we know how to reduce the mortality next year, if more ducklings are imported.

If you’ve read this far, you’re probably beginning to wonder why we went to all the trouble. If we waited until November, there would be several thousand gadwall wintering on and near the Refuge which flew to Florida under their own power. Ironcally, a few of them may have originated on the Delta Marsh. Prior experience with waterfowl introduction, or “seeding” as it is sometimes called, has shown that young birds must be introduced to the marsh on which it is hoped they will breed, prior to learning how to fly. Apparently, a duckling in some unknown manner recognises the marsh it grows up on as home. The females, at least, will usually return to their home marsh, or “natal marsh” as it’s often called, to breed.

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At the end of October, the birds were doing well. Hurricane Gladys passed overhead without causing any appreciable damage. Based on our observations, the gadwall are feeding in part on natural food available in the enclosures. They are beginning to show a healthy sexual interest in each other, what we hope to be the beginning of pair formation, nesting, and rearing of young. If the penned gadwall are successful in reproducing on the refuge, we hope the young will learn to fly out of their pens and colonize the surrounding marshlands, remaining there to breed rather than joining the migratory gadwall in their return to Canada. Of course, our experiment will fail if they fly north rather than stay on their adopted natal marsh to reproduce.

Predation is another major concern. Most Florida Wildlife readers are well aware of the high density of raccoons in our coastal marshes. These raccoons probably would delight in a supply of gadwall eggs on their dinner table. We learned in September that a cottontail moccasin could eat nearly grown gadwall. Vultures and crows may be a problem as well. It's expecting a great deal for prize ducks from Manitoba to become permanent residents of Florida. But man continues to experiment and seek environmental improvement, at least as he views improvement. While our coastal marshes are a highly valuable resource unto themselves, I can only help but believe they would be even more treasured as producers of waterfowl of value to hunters and naturalists. After all, enough people have moved to Florida from the north to make me think ducks might be willing to give it a try.

On one study of ducks nesting on islands, gadwall were found at a density of 200 pairs per square mile. This density factor is important because our initial experiments are in fenced enclosures a few acres in size. These are some of the reasons why we think the gadwall is a good bet and at least worth a major effort.

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One of my most frequent requests is for specific recommendations of make and model, for a contemplated shotgun purchase. Usually, the inquirer expects me to name a particular model and extol its virtues above all others.

I never make any kind of shotgun purchase recommendation without knowing individual preference of shotgun action, how the shotgun will be used, and at gun club, the age and physique of the gun's user, and his shooting experience and planned financial investment.

Usually the highest priced makes and models of shotguns are better finished, smoother of action, have ventilated rib sighting plane and are more desired than a low-priced make and model.

But price alone is not assurance of good shotgun performance. What counts is how well the gun fits its owner, how it balances, how it quickly shoulders and naturally points, the uniform quality of its delivered shot pattern, and, very important—where it consistently places its shot charge in relation to point of aim.

It is quite possible for a gun owner to smooth or otherwise modify an inexpensive, but mechanically sound, shotgun so that it gives excellent performance. This usually entails some stock alteration (to acquire perfect length of pull and shoulder fit and obtain correct length of pull).

But the barrel boring and shot patternning qualities of the inexpensive shotgun may be even better than the equal of the finest, most expensive American-made gun or import. Performance-wise.

An example was the recent use of a single-shot smokebearer costing around $50, in an informal local trap shoot in which shotguns up to $375 value were represented.

The owner had made careful study of the fit of his $50 gun, and had made easy, inexpensive changes in comb height, drop at heel and length of pull. He had patterned the altered gun at various stages of gunstock physical change until he knew what results the different changes were producing, and finally, just where his altered shotgun essentially centered its shot pattern in relation to point of aim, at average shooting distances. He further smoothed rough spots in stock and iced it. He shot average scores comparable to those made by owners of the finest of over-and-under. The fact that he was using an inexpensive single-shot gun, and had to manually cock a hammer for each shot bothered him not at all. The important thing was that he had his fired-at targets.

He was just as happy—even happier—than some less successful owners of shotgun selling for six times or more the price of his single shotgun. For the recreational, non-ambitious competitive shoot­ing he was doing, his shotgun was perfectly satisfactory.

I do have shotgun preferences. . . in the old days I swore by the old Winchester Model 97 and the Remington Model 12 and the Ithaca Model 37, which I have to alter only slightly— if at all—to achieve perfect fit.

To me, gun fit and performance are what count most in a shotgun. Any needed mechanical smoothing I can make myself, or get a competent gunsmith to do. Price alone is not the criteria; neither should be for you.

Fortunately, you have the spring and summer months to shop around for exactly what you want you best for the next fall's hunting. Just don't make the mistake of waiting too long before you start looking, as happens to countless hunters every year.

Acquire that new shotgun early and get used to it.

Expecially noticeable during the last deer hunting season were the many 30-30 Carbine rifles carried by hunters. Obviously, hunters—Florida hunters, at least—like the light, fast-firing weapon of the military.

During the years of World War II, several million U.S. 30-30 Carbine rifles were manufactured for our armed services. Winchester turned them out by the thousands to sell other munition makers, as (Continued on next page)
A shotgun has qualities more important than a price tag, including how it handles and the way it throws the shot. A proper fit is important, as is the proper height, can be recommended.

As with the shooting of any center fire rifle heavy recoil forces are considered acceptable by many hunters. Many gun models are fast becoming obsolete as they are replaced by new versions and chambers. As models are discontinued, it is practice of manufacturers to drop old model component part listings from catalogs featuring latest models.

Likewise, the firearms manufacturers, like Remington, Winchester, Browning, Ithaca, High Standard, Colt, Smith & Wesson, Ruger and Savage issue special parts and publications for the gunsmith trade. These publications are not expensive. The NRA also publishes an exploded drawing type of firearms assembly book; it costs $3.50.

Replacement parts are available for just about any gun on the market. There are sources of supply for original, factory-made parts, as well as gunsmiths specializing in supplying repair parts and guns. Consult the pages of THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN and THE SHOTGUN NEWS.

For the .30M1 Carbine owners of the .30M1 Carbine sooner or later wish to have a scope of look-a-like to the military .30M1 Carbine: an identical twin, even to the sights. As with the shooting of any center fire rifle heavy recoil forces are considered acceptable by many hunters. Many gun models are fast becoming obsolete as they are replaced by new versions and chambers. As models are discontinued, it is practice of manufacturers to drop old model component part listings from catalogs featuring latest models.
A pilot Wildlife Reserve has been organized by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in Orange, Brevard and Seminole counties, according to Dr. H. E. E. Fyge, Jr., director, who addressed the first Reserve meeting and training session held December 7, 1968 at the Junior Chamber of Commerce building in Orlando.

Fifteen reservists were accepted for membership from about 50 applicants. All are 25 years of age or over and residents of one of the three central Florida counties. They are receiving training in the principles of wildlife conservation, game and fish management, wildlife law enforcement and public relations.

Qualified reservists in this pilot project assist Commission information, education officers, wildlife officers and management personnel with exhibits and special promotions, with school and conservation club programs, and as qualified firearms instructors in addition. In addition, reservists, who wear a special uniform and shoulder insignia, help with actual game and fish management work.

Reservists have no arrest powers and are not authorized to carry sidearms. While on duty they are responsible to the Commission in much the same manner as public utility employees.

At their own expense they attend a 3-hour training session each month.

"We are quite impressed with the caliber of men the Reserve has attracted," says Commission Personnel Officer Capt. Don Small, who is in charge of training. "The reservists are well-rounded individuals who appear to be conscientious in seeking ways to serve the wildlife conservation cause."

Other Commission personnel taking part in the December 7th session were Central Region Commissioner Harold W. Ashley of Melrose, who also addressed the reservists, Maj. J. W. Bickerstaff, regional manager, Capt. of Law Enforcement Roscoe Hamilton, and Lt. Jim Reed, regional information-education officer, all of Ocala, and Lt. E. G. Pierce, DeLand, Area 24 law enforcement supervisor.

**Chemicals Wipe Out Birds**

University of Wisconsin wildlife scientists have concluded that the chemical DDT, used in plant and wildlife control operations, is wiping out large populations of predatory birds located at the tops of food chains in contaminated ecosystems, the Wildlife Management Institute reports. In tests sponsored by the U.S. government, the scientists have established that shell thickness begins in 1947, one year after DDT was used. According to the scientists, DDT or DDE stimulates the liver to produce enzymes that break down sex hormones in the blood. Lowered levels of the hormones keep birds from laying normal eggs. The resulting thin-shelled eggs and their contents are eaten by winds, and return to earth by rain drops or direct fallout. DDE now is considered the most abundant synthetic compound present as a pollutant in the environment.

**Hunters Learn Field Sports**

A group of hunters from a southern state announced not too long ago that they had discovered the secret to successful hunting, that is, getting out of the annual hunts because they had discovered a new sport—a game of skill. The authors of this hunting technique said the newly-acquired property which their group was able to secure for public use was the completion of a beautiful garden development under the grounds surrounding the mansion.

The mansion is set in the canopy of huge moss-draped oaks on a 16-acre estate east of Destin, off U. S. 98 and Choctawhatchee Bay. The double-verandahed, many-columned Greek Revival facade of the house is reflected in a large poool graced by valuable statuary.

Miss Maxon completely restored the house in the style reminiscent of the 18th-and 19th-century Gulf South, when she came to Point Washington from New York several years ago for reasons of health. She had found the mansion in an extremely dilapidated condition and set about returning it to its original gracious grandeur.

Miss Maxon had begun landscape planning around the surroundings, and this development was included in this exhibit by the Park Board with assigned personnel who will live in a smaller three-bedroom house on the premises.

Miss Maxon has offered to additions to the house and grounds in her property at expense if approved. The deed will contain the condition that the property will revert to Miss Maxon or her estate if not used as a public park and historic memorial.

**Nature Notes**

**Chochatchee Bay Park**

The State Cabinet has accepted "Eden," a 234-acre 19th century mansion at Point Washington in Walton County, as a donation from national G. Maxon to the Florida Park Board. State Parks Director Bill Miller signed the agreement.

**Commercial Forest Lands**

More than nine out of every ten acres of commercial forestland owned, leased, or harvested by major forest-products industries are open to public hunting with or without charge, according to the Wildlife Management Institute.

A survey covering 65,688,333 acres of commercial forests involving 234 major firms shows that the largest acreage, 69.2 million, is open without charge to hunters and there is no requirement that sportsmen include hunting, fishing, or camping be permitted beforehand on the land. Nearly 7 million acres more also are open for free hunting, but sportsmen are required to apply for a company permit.

Commercial forest lands open to hunting for a fee involve 2.1 million acres. Another 3 million acres of company lands are leased and 1.63 million may be hunted by employees of the companies owning the land. Of the survey, 93.3 percent of the industry-owned and leased land available for one or more public recreational activities, including hunting, fishing, boating, picnicking, and trapping. More than 95 percent of the company-owned and leased lands open for the public to use and enjoy.

In providing this public recreational opportunity, the companies reported they incurred expenses of $7,058,850. Vandalism and theft of company equipment, property, and roads, dumping garbage, and starting forest fires are problems that have arisen. A survey of 1968 reports received by the American Forest Institute, 37 commercial forest companies have 5,066 professionals or wildlife management managers on their staffs.
Severe spring flooding was part of the answer. That prime turkey habitat is limited to the creek.

The transmitter-toting turkeys were the stars of the Commission’s most recent wildlife telemetry show, an unprecedented study of crippling losses of gun-shot wild turkeys. (See Game Notes, Florida Wildlife, November 1968.)

Each of the 16 successful turkey hunters—one doubled, taking two of the study birds, on separate hunts—was interviewed by the biologists. Their completed questionnaires have become a part of the research record.

The researchers got a bonus when 12 turkey hens, still wearing their “dead” radios from last spring’s nesting and pooh mortality investigation in the same area, were also turned in by hunters. (See the June 1968 issue of FW.) These came from among 23 birds used in that segment of the study—another 12 were released and monitored through the nesting season in the closed, refuge study area.

The total number of surviving turkeys from the spring study cannot be accurately determined since their sets long since stopped transmitting. Maximum useful battery life is about five months and the 35 hens were instrumented last March.

All 28 turkey hunters returning telemetry equipment to the project biologists and cooperating with the interviews received free 3-year subscriptions to Florida Wildlife.

According to Austin, only two of the returned units were damaged by shot, and one of these was possibly resuable. Each set costs around $55 complete with mercury batteries.

Questioned about the type of hunter making the kills, Austin said, “Of the 28 I’d say only four or five are really good turkey hunters. The rest were just hunting in general, not actually hunting turkeys.”

Another factor in the high kill of the telemetered birds was probably their reaction at having been released into completely new surroundings just a few days before the season opened,” said Williams. “Their social bonds were upset from the capture and transplant process, which undoubtedly caused the turkeys to be unsettled, less familiar with available cover, and, therefore, more vulnerable to hunters.”

There is no evidence, say the biologists, that the wearing of the tiny radios and soft harnesses in any way contributed to the high hunter success in this study. They point to a comparable harvest rate of Fisheating Creek turkeys wearing only leg bands.

Another “first” for Florida and the Commission’s Wildlife Research Project, a Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration study (P-R), is an experimental model of a solar cell-powered radio placed into service on a wild turkey in late December. Like space vehicles and satellites, the wildlife radio’s solar cell converts power the transmitter!

SPACE-age strides in wildlife research have enabled biologists to keep in touch with wary wild turkeys electronically. This hamstrung hen is wearing a complete radio transmitter with a mercury battery power source. Note antenna attached to back.

Also mentioned was the easily overlooked fact that prime turkey habitat is limited to the creek swamp, which therefore reduces the population’s normal range to roughly 15 sections—10 to 15 per cent of the land area open to hunting, approximately 65,000 acres.

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