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The Cover

One of the more attractive small game animals, the Fox Squirrel is easily identified with its silvery white almost three times greater than the common gray. They are mostly found in mixed pine and oak upland habitat. See page 5.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

Herons Fly with Their Necks Drawn In and Their Legs Extended

Although a young Cottontail Rabbit has only one change in twenty of reaching its first birthday — it is one of our most common animals

Crane, Stork, Ibis, Hands, and Necks in Flight

The Beaver's lips are designed to close in back of its incisors or cutting teeth — enabling it to gnaw and cut logs and branches while submerged — without getting water in its mouth

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WILDLIFE OFFICER Notes

Dick Bryant, St. Petersburg, has been named Outstanding Officer of the Year 1969 by the Game and Fish Commission. The honor was announced by Dr. Richard H. Schulz, chairman, at the Commission’s July business meeting at Ft. Lauderdale. Bryant, 61, was employed by the Game and Fish Commission as a special investigator in 1949. He became a uniformed wildlife officer, assigned to Pinellas County, in 1951.

Among his proudest achievements is his work with young people regarding conservation education. Dick is credited with having helped organize the first youth conservation club in Pinellas County in 1951. But he is best known for his work in schools. He has taught an estimated 30,000 children at annual school workshops and other programs during his 20 years’ service.

Keenly aware of the value of good public relations in conservation work, Bryant has been a familiar figure at various Commission fair exhibits, public meetings and similar functions. Additionally, it can be said that his courteousness and firmness while enforcing Florida’s wildlife laws have effectively reduced the law violations in his patrol area. In 1959, he was named Outstanding Wildlife Officer in Pinellas County.

Dick is credited with having helped organize the Pinellas County Conservation Club, the first youth conservation club in Pinellas County. He has been active in it ever since that time.

In August 1947 he was again employed and served in Hendry County but has lived in Fort Pierce since his retirement in June after 15 years service. He has been retired from duty after 30 years service, but is still employed by the Commission in a volunteer capacity. Dick is a veteran of 25 years in the service of Fort Pierce, 65, a veteran of 25 years in the service of the U.S. Coast Guard, and has been a member of several political and civic organizations for many years. He has been a member of the Masonic Lodge and a member of the American Legion.

On a monthly basis, Northwest Region officers check 2,919 fishing licenses, 2,371 hunting licenses, and travelled 53,486 miles on patrol. They averaged 87 arrests monthly, or approximately three cases per day for the year, which ended June 30. Arrests by county were: Bay-67, Calhoun-115, Escambia-53, Franklin-18, Gadsden-85, Gulf-46, Holmes-8, Jackson-81, Jefferson-78, Leon-107, Liberty-25, Okaloosa-103, Santa Rosa-93, Wakulla-26, Walton-120, and Washington-12.

Wildlife officers of the 16-county Northwest Region made 1,049 arrests for violations of Florida’s game, fish and boating laws during fiscal 1968-69, records show.

Fishing without a license was, as usual, the most common offense. There were 343 such cases made. Other fishing violations included use of illegal fishing devices, fishing in closed waters, and exceeding the legal bag limit, for a total of 398 arrests. Hunting violations totaled 441, with hunting in closed areas accounting for 149 arrests. Migratory bird violations (dove and waterfowl) stood at 169. Eighty-six persons were detected hunting without a license.

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The best organized fishermen I have ever watched were on salt-water—trout fishermen trolling with five poles. The rig looks like an enormous water spider to begin with. When the fish start biting, it looks as if the spider has started to walk. That’s almost as much dexterity as displayed by a commercial fisherman, who can pull himself along a trot line, take off fish so fast you can hardly count them, and end up with his line neatly stowed. The average citizen couldn’t even carry a trot line home without getting hopelessly tangled.

The worst mess I ever got into with a fish was when plugging for snook and bass in a mangrove creek. A big snook got me as I was drifting along on a fast tide, tided me into the brush and peeled off my line as he ran downstream back of the third row of shoreline snags. As a wet, mossy mangrove root spattered me in the mouth, I swore never to try that alone again. My rod tip was in the water on the side of the boat, wrapped underneath the keel, and the snook was in a different direction from where the line disappeared under a leg. I could bear him splashing downstream around a bend. The creek was only twenty feet wide. The snook finally whipped himself, hung on a springy branch, and I landed him; then cut my line and pulled it back through, telling myself how clever I was. It’s a wonder he didn’t drown me, I guess.

Experienced fishermen de develop unusual skills, as does anyone else. After commenting to myself on how difficult it was to teach some people how to cast a fly, I announced to myself: ‘I’d teach myself to do it left-handed in a few minutes. Ambidextrous I am not. Anyway, I found I could do a fair job waving the rod but couldn’t handle the loose line with my right hand. Since I have known about how it should be done...’

By CHARLES WATERMAN

Lone Angler

The thoughtful “solo” fisherman will have proper plans plus his boat.

Rigged for the job, he was still using his “solo” angle.

There are a few three-handled citizens who can, somehow, maneuver a small outboard motor with their feet, hold a net in one hand and the rod and reel in the other two, and land a fish with aplomb. At least, that’s the way it looks to me.

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learning failures of all time. Humility all over the work for 45 years, this has to be one of the great places now.

Anyway, I left deep fingerprints on a book the other day when I read that a white-tailed deer can swim a clocked thirteen miles an hour. Like most other Florida fishermen, I’ve seen a few deer in the water and know they do a good job—but thirteen miles an hour? That’s about the estimated top speed for a black bass so I hope our deer don’t become fish eaters.

In truth, I never chased a white-tailed deer in a boat. I’ve been about as fast as possible when they leave an island after being startled by fishermen. Many years ago, I chased a number of black-tailed deer in a California lake. They went fast but not that fast. But, as usual, I have no proof the white-tailed didn’t do thirteen.

Ray Ovington, who has been a fishing writer for many years, has done a book on fresh water trout fishing, calling it TACTICS ON TROUT, a subject hardly fitting for a general Florida audience but doggoned well worth attention since it is something new in fishing books.

Mr. Ovington, who used to do radio shows in Florida, has written a book on how to fish for trout, cast by cast. In other words, he tells exactly where to throw the fly if there are two rocks; then midstream rock as cover in a trout stream. Then, he tells you how to cover it if there are two rocks; then three. You could take his book with you and log every cast as per instruction.

If this is what the trout fisherman wants in a fishing manual, perhaps the bass fisherman wants the same thing. Who knows? Of course, most bass fishing books may show a few diagrams of where to cast to the fish; they certainly don’t go into this kind of detail. However. The book is published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, distributed by Random House, Inc., New York.

In a way, Mr. Ovington’s book is a joke on the author himself, since it deals wholly with fly fishing. Some years ago, he wrote a book on spinning and, somehow, happened to interview me on radio. He asked if, somehow, he could get permission to use my rods and plug casting tackle. I, of course, rose to the lure and answered that spinning could never replace fly fishing in my books. He then turned on me even stronger when he asked me just how much experience I’d had with spinning tackle and implied that if I’d learn to use it, I’d junk the fly rods. I’d bought the second spinning rod I ever saw, so I was ready to eat the microphone by that time. But then, maybe I never did learn to use that spinning rod correctly. Don’t know whether Ray had junked his fly tackle or not.

FEW FISHERMEN or resort operators listen carefully enough to fish biologists where impoundments are concerned. Most man-made lakes have a future that can be accurately predicted by businessmen. There are many things in fishing that can’t be foretold, but the impoundment is about as nearly a controlled situation as you can have on a large scale.

Remember that the biologist can fall back on many years of impoundment experience for his forecasts. Remember, also, that he can know just exactly what is covered by the rising waters and how that flooded terrain will react. No longer are impoundments alike.” Each can be forecast individually.

In my experience, the first example of a man who took the biologist’s promises literally was one I met in Nevada when one of the Colorado River dams was new. He ran a small resort.

“There be here seven years,” he said. “I just want to take advantage of the best of the fishing. Then I’m getting out.”

The TVA dams have furnished tremendous data on impoundment progress. There are comparatively few impoundments in Florida. More will come, even if they’re only canals.

Not only can the future of impoundments be accurately forecast, but they’re coming up with some good dope on rivers and natural lakes. Serious fish-ermen, looking for places to make their homes next to productive waters, would do well to pay attention. Many a home or summer cottage has been built on the shores of super fishing that pooped out with time. Many a home or summer cottage has been built on the shores of super fishing that pooped out with time.

I HAVE READ another article on snakebite treatment, announcing that all of the formerly recommended methods are worse than nothing, and making rather uncertain recommendation of serum kits available through prescription.

I have been guilty of writing snakebite stuff myself, confidently accepting advice from people with what I considered good background in the subject. If my stuff didn’t sound vague, it was a mistake, because I didn’t want to be too definite. I am still looking for good snakebite dope.

You know what I think? I think there isn’t much being done on snakebite research. Understandable because there are very few deaths in this country.

There is currently a big demand for expensive knives. A lot of fishermen I know are carrying knives that cost upward of $15, mainly because they’re expensive. A few who are really ‘way out on the subject, are paying forty or fifty bucks for special numbers (not antiques, just carefully built current knives).

Generally, these expensive knives are made of good steel, pretty hard to work, but capable of presenting a very good edge when sharpened correctly.

There are two schools of thought on knives. One is that the hard steel which holds the edge is less trouble; the other is that easily sharpened soft steel will make it possible to keep the knife sharp with just a few whacks of the stone. The latter may have some merit for the fellow awkward with sharpening. If he makes a mistake, he can start over.

Read a knife article by a fellow who discussed models running up toward a hundred bucks and listed all of the famous knife makers with descriptions of their work. He says he uses all of the best knives.

Huh?

I HAVE A LETTER from a guy who says heavy tackle is often more fun; says you can thus get a feel of your fish. I agree with him to some extent, especially in the field of wild fish antics. Light tackle doesn’t bring out the jumps that something stiffer will get.

A war of sorts plagued rods once told me that spinning or fly tackle wasn’t so exciting. It was impossible, he said, to feel the individual tugs of the fish, the less exciting. The principle is, of course, that the softer stick soaks up the individual movements rather than telegraphing them to your nervous system.

With pollution and littering getting into the news more and more, there is a lot of public consciousness about trash tossing. Throwing trash is the one kind of pollution that is easily seen and shows instantly.

For example, I recently watched what was supposed to be the trash from a motel being dumped from a bridge into a river. For complex reasons, I guess it was legal under the circumstances, and I won’t go into that, but it certainly shook me. While being irate about it, I discovered the same river is receiving raw sewage, probably considerably more harmful than the floating trash, but invisible from boat or shore.

My point is that although empty beer cans are disagreeable eyesores, they are superficial indications of carelessness or laziness. Other waste disposals, carefully planned and not obvious from the surface, can ruin a body of water in short order.

Henry takes tackle like this gets a fisherman right into hand-to-hand sport with big fish. The empty Champagne bottle was one of August Moon's out at Fort Pierce.
The Fox Squirrel

BY GENE SMITH

ONE OF THE MOST strikingly beautiful small mammals in Florida is the Eastern Fox Squirrel, Sciurus niger, a species whose numbers have been greatly reduced over much of its North American range in recent years.

Although still quite common in Florida, the fox squirrel is not nearly as plentiful as the familiar gray squirrel, the species most often bagged by American hunters in recent years.

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smaller, more agile relatives. They are found in the size of the average gray squirrel.

Fox squirrels are not fond of the deep swamps and the high hardwood trees favored by their smaller, more agile relatives. They are found in smaller, more agile relatives. They are found...

Reasonably aigile, a fox squirrel is most likely to "tree" only if chased—he much prefers to run for it.

Colors vary greatly in fox squirrels. Most Florida specimens are mixed black and gray, with black faces, white muzzles and white-striped ears. Some color phases are nearly totally black, however. Other individuals have reddish sides. Almost all have dirty yellow undersides and feet. Regardless of coloration, all are of the same species.

A variety of plant foods comprise the fox squirrel's diet: acorns, seeds, berries, pine mast, flower buds, green shoots, and, occasionally, corn.

Their nests are large, well-made structures of leaves and twigs, sometimes made in a hollow, sometimes more in a sturdy crotch of a tree. The big nest may be reused for several winter seasons. A smaller leaf nest may be constructed in the tree trunk. This maneuver has left the tree trunk tightly all the way.

Unusual trees, however, fox squirrels are more likely to reject their escape on the ground—perhaps after a feinting leap onto, and immediately off the edge. Not particularly agile, a fox squirrel is most likely to "tree" only if chased—he much prefers to run for it.

The possibility of constructing another fishing lake in Okaloosa County—some 360-plus acres in size—was being considered by the Game and Fish Commission. However, failure of additional funds to materialize, because proposed changes in the state's resident fishing license fee did not pass during the 1969 legislative session, forced deferment of the project.

AIRCRAFT PLAY an unusually versatile role in game and fish management, as shown in veteran Commission pilot George Langford's report for July.

"Fishing pressure check—Lake Okesheeboe— with Clayton Phillippy, fishery biologist. (Counting the boats on the lake.)—Ed.

"Aquatic weed survey—Martin County—also with biologist Phillippy.

"Search for missing fisherman—upper Kissimmee River chain of lakes.

"Checked water pollution complaint—Withlacoochee River and Lake Panasoffkee.

(Continued on next page)
This is in part of a cooperative brown pelican study aimed at learning, if possible, what caused the disappearance of the big fish-eating birds as a nesting species along the northern Gulf coast.

Six adult pelicans were also collected for pesticide analysis.

In case you missed the announcement, Mr. Dove Hunter, the daily bag limit has been increased from 12 to 18 birds in Florida this season. The increase is part of a federal-state study to determine the effect, if any, of allowing a greater hunter harvest of the speedy game birds, which have a tremendously high natural population turnover annually.

The three-phase season this year is: October 4; November 2; November 15—November 30; and December 15—January 5. Shooting hours, as usual, are from 12:00 noon until sunset.

Managed public dove fields will operate at various localities around the state. Check with the nearest regional office of the Fresh Water Fish Commission (listed on page 3) for details.

The Game and Fish Commission went on record as favoring two identical bills in the U. S. Congress, S. 679 and H. R. 1048, which would withdraw the 50% tax on handguns from general revenue to the U. S. Department of the Interior. The action came at the July Commission meeting, held at Ft. Lauderdale.

Under the proposed legislation, half of the total estimated funds of $5- to $5.5 million would go to the states, on a 50-50 matching basis, for hunter safety programs and the other half would be used in wildlife restoration work under the existing Pittman-Robertson program—which, incidentally, has been hunter-shooter supported since 1937.

Commission Director Dr. O. E. Frye, Jr., informed Florida's congressional delegation of the Commission's official endorsement of the proposed handgun tax legislation.

This report, while disturbing, should be of interest to Florida's duck hunters.

Winter surveys conducted by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife have shown that the black duck population in Florida has declined since 1955 and is now at the lowest level recorded during the past 20 years, according to W. L. Reichel and C. E. Addy of the Bureau's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland.

"I don't think there is anything more important than the proposition of human survival... and the two are so closely interrelated that it is hard to separate one from the other."—Charles Lindbergh to the Alaskan Legislature, 1968.
Probably the most widely held misconception about St. Vincent Island history has to do with her foreign game species, past and present—or, more specifically, about who put which ones there, and when.

Many talespinners, including some writers in recent memory, erroneously credit Dr. Ray V. Pierce with all the exotic animal importations—zebra, eland, black buck and the great Sambar deer. The fact is, Pierce’s only introductions of record were the four Sambars mentioned in Part I of our story. He might have experimented with a few of the spotted Axis deer of southern Asia. We know he planned to, at least, from William T. Hornaday’s writings. In any event the Sambar was the only successful Pierce import.

It was the St. Vincent Company—brothers Alfred and Henry Loomis and their wives, of New York City and Middleburg, Va., respectively—who added the real African flavor to the island, with zebras and elands, toosing in the Indian antelopes known as black bucks for good measure. That was in 1961. (More about this later.)

Bouncing back now to the early forties in the chronological history of the island, just prior to the passing of Dr. V. Mott Pierce, in California, we note the first commercialization involving St. Vincent products since island-grown beef cattle were sold to Apalachicola markets in the 1920’s.

In 1940, the State of Florida granted an oyster lease to Dewey Miller, which was the first legal outside access to the fine oysters of Big Bayou, the narrow, sheltered bay within the perimeter of the island on the north side.

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Later that year the Pierce Estate, represented by the aging Mott, sold pine saw timber to the St. Joe Lumber and Export Company of Perry, now out of business. This was the first timber cutting to be done on St. Vincent, except for the limited clearing done by Dr. Ray V. Pierce in building the first roads and erecting his lodge and other buildings, in 1908-9, at the site of George Hatch’s island home on the southeast corner of the island.

St. Joe Lumber and Export obtained a five-year contract to remove 20,000,000 board feet for the sum of $125,000, with any excess to be paid for at the rate of $5.00 per thousand.

A temporary bridge was built from the mainland to the island for hauling the timber out. Some of the pilings are still visible, as are signs of this and subsequent timbering done on the island in the early sixties, when the Loomises sold pulpwood and timber to Buckeye Cellulose Corporation.

In 1942, the year Mott Pierce died, in Passadena, the estate granted the U.S. Coast Guard permission to erect a range marker on the south shore of the island, designating 50 square feet for this purpose.

Three final events closed out the 41-year tenure of the Pierces on St. Vincent Island (1907-48).

In 1944, the estate granted oil exploration rights to Ohio Oil Company (now Marathon Oil Company), Findlay, Ohio. The arrangement called for Ohio Oil to pay $3,625 annually for 10 years, and one-eighth royalty on any oil found. Ohio cancelled their lease in 1949, never having drilled, so far as we can learn.

Also in 1944, the State leased the bottom of St. Vincent Sound, the area between the island and...
The hunting leases were terminated when, in June 1948, the Pierce Estate sold St. Vincent Island, for $140,000.00, to the Loomis family, which used the island as a private playground and hunting area for the next 20 years. They were especially fond of waterfowl hunting.

Says Henry Loomis, formerly Deputy Director of Education and Director of Voice of America, now Deputy Director of the U. S. Information Agency, Washington, "My brother and I were looking for property for hunting and recreation. We didn't even know about St. Vincent Island then. A friend brought it to our attention. We were delighted with it from the start. We liked the fact that it was an island, that it had good waterfowl marshes—and we had in mind property that had been timbered. St. Vincent had everything."

The Loomises bought many, many additional miles of sand roads, both for travel and to serve as firebreaks, thereby making practically every part of the island accessible by vehicle, albeit 4-wheel drive is necessary in most places. All vehicles were ferried across Indian Pass by private barge, after which there was a nine-mile drive eastward almost the entire length of the island to the hunting lodge. (Dr. Pierce approached from Apalachicola by motor launch, of course, having built a landing at his doorstep.)

The brothers had the old dam built by Dr. Pierce blown out and replaced with a more serviceable structure in order to enhance the waterfowl habitat in the series of fresh water ponds, according to Apalachicola attorney Jay Shuler, who was in charge of St. Vincent Island during the 20 years of the Loomis ownership, and who gracefully made his knowledge and some of his files available to this writer.

Shuler says three of the big, ox-like elands, two females and a male, were purchased by the Loomises from the Catskill Game Farm in New York for $3,000.00 per head and the first zebras, again two females and a male, were purchased from a south Florida animal broker, Alton Freemaa, at $200.00 each. The male died and was replaced the following year, 1962. Two years later, another pair of zebras of a different variety were purchased for $3,900.00 each.

"Neither of these two species adapted well to the wild, as did the Sambar deer," says Henry Loomis. "They were more like farm animals—never very far from the feeding stations maintained by the resident caretakers."

The elands and zebras all were corned and released from St. Vincent Island in 1968. Most were bought back by Freeman, says Shuler, but a few zebras were transferred to Hull Island, located off the lower South Carolina coast, near Savannah, Georgia, and owned by Alfred Loomis.

But the extremely wary black bucks fared differently, if not very successfully. They were reported the wildfowlers of the island's exotic animals, including the fairly approachable Sambar deer. The black bucks were rarely seen at close range, Henry Loomis recalls.

There were originally six head of black bucks—four females and two males. One female died in favoring; another female and both bucks disappeared, either having left the island, been killed by poachers, or simply having died. Nobody knows for sure.

Only two female black bucks remain on St. Vincent today. They still are as shy as ever. Biologist Williams reports having seen them in recent months.
Pure wild turkeys were subsequently stocked on the island and hatching success has been good each spring since. Williams estimates that about 150 turkeys comprise the St. Vincent flock today, which he considers about the average population the island will support. Efforts are currently under way to capture the first Sambars with a dart gun that delivers an anesthetic drug in a radically new radio-equipped dart. The development of the equipment is almost complete. Portable radio receivers will be used to locate the harmlessly disabled animals in the thick undergrowth of the St. Vincent marshes. But all this is another story.

The St. Vincent Company decided to sell the island in 1967. But the Loomises were concerned that the unique and beautiful St. Vincent, with its wealth of wildlife resources, both native and introduced, would be lost to conservationists if sold to private developers. According to Henry Loomis, he and his brother first approached The Conservation Foundation, and organization which promotes the improvement of environmental quality and conservation research, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., to make it known that the island was available. The Conservation Foundation, in turn, brought St. Vincent to the attention of The Nature Conservancy, a privately endowed foundation for the preservation of natural areas for scientific, educational and other purposes. It, too, has its headquarters in Washington. After an inspection trip to the island with all parties concerned, including the Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy purchased the island from the St. Vincent Company for the sum of $2.2 million dollars. The BSFW had accepted the island for addition to the national wildlife refuge system and had arranged for the repayment of the Conservancy with funds from the sale of migratory waterfowl hunting stamps. The Nature Conservancy received the deed from the Loomises in January 1968, and the title was officially transferred to the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, on July 9, 1968.

Charles F. Noble, formerly at Chincoteague Refuge in Virginia, was named first refuge manager of St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. His office is located at Apalachicola. In addition to the refuge status of the island, state archaeologists are interested in digging to learn more about its early Indian inhabitants. Smithsonian Institution may be conducting, or sponsoring, ecological studies there in the future, and, as was mentioned in Part I of this story, the Game and Fish Commission declared St. Vincent Island a wildlife management area, where limited hunting will be permitted in accordance with BSFW regulations.

And for the hiker, birdwatcher, wildlife photographer, and nature lover-at-large, there are scores of species of wildlife to be seen, studied and enjoyed on St. Vincent Island. On a single March weekend, a party of four visitors to the island, including the writer, compiled the following list of wildlife observed-without really trying: Sambar deer, white-tailed deer, bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, raccoon, opossum, gray squirrel, marsh rabbit, wild turkey, box turtle, softshell turtle, common snapping turtle, feral hog, osprey, a lone brown pelican, a black vulture, and assorted songbirds, wading birds and waterfowl. Interestingly, nobody observed an alligator, although they are quite common in the island's ponds and ditches. Likewise, no one spotted any quail. All four of us, however, saw signs of two wild steers that still have the run of the place—fading reminders, we might say, of the days when Dr. Ray Pierce and William Hornaday enjoyed the thrilling wild cattle hunts on the island back in the winter of 1909. St. Vincent Island has a colorful past, we think you'll agree. But what about the future? Refuge Manager Noble provides us with a glimpse of what is being proposed for the island, all of which, he emphasizes, is still in the "concept planning" stage. He says negotiations are proceeding with St. Joe Paper Company officials for the purchase of a small piece of property for a mainland site, which would include a refuge office and public "contact station" and a boat launching ramp. The site would be approximately 14 miles west of Apalachicola off U.S. Highway 98 and State Road 39 opposite the western end of the island.

Directly across Indian Pass on the island would be the main recreation area, where nature trails and the shelling beaches will be the feature of public attractions. He says some interpretive signs and markers might be installed there for the benefit of visitors.

According to Noble, all island-side operating facilities, including structures such as restrooms and a small information office, would be located at the western end of the island. Only a simple landing is planned for the eastern end at St. Vincent Point.

The unused cottages and the old dwelling house built by Dr. Pierce on the southeast corner of the island have been razed. Only two of the interconnected cabsins have been retained—to serve as overnight quarters for state and federal personnel working or patrolling on the island, and for emergency shelter. (The last resident caretakers, John Spalding, John Oden, and Robert Gay, all of Apalachicola, who worked for the Loomises, vacated the island dwellings in early 1968.) As for future waterfowl habitat improvement—and it was the possibilities of St. Vincent as a waterfowl area that most impressed the Bureau in the first place—the broad marshes and ponds of the eastern half of the island, or portions thereof, one day likely be endowed with bevel dikes—to retain suitable water levels seasonally for migratory ducks. Again, Noble emphasizes, this is extremely long-range planning.

Finally, on the subject of island visitors, Noble and his associates state that while they must preserve the integrity and primitive quality of St. Vincent Island—hence, no bridges and no asphalt drives—people are not being kept off the island. They point out that with their limited staff they cannot conduct island tours. St. Vincent is not a park. Nor can they go on search and rescue missions looking for lost or stranded visitors every day. However, those who are willing to venture onto the island at their own risk, to arrange their own transportation, and who will check in with the refuge office in Apalachicola before going—and if they will abide by the rules governing entry—these are welcome to have a look at St. Vincent now in reasonable planning.

St. Vincent Island is a quiet place. Sava for the occasional jet or helicopter that passes in the distance, standing on the beach there today, or back on one of the island roads in the pine woods, must be about the same as it was at the turn of the century or earlier.

The island refuge is wild and beautiful, rich in history, and still brimming with the romance that was frontier northwest Florida. Now that it's ours, it will be interesting to see how we treat this priceless earthen jewel.
The Cottonmouth Moccasin

The Cottonmouth Moccasin is sometimes difficult to identify because it closely resembles several harmless water snakes. Too, it changes color as it grows older. The young resemble a related Copperhead, but adults lose much of their crossbanding and appear nearly solid black or olive. Look for vertical eye pupil and white on face, with a brown bar through the eye.

It attains length up to six feet, but averages about three. It will give birth up to 18. It is an aquatic snake, but sometimes found away from water. Too, when thoroughly aroused, it shows its "cotton" mouth, which is held wide open in fair warning—but don't depend on it.

Danger

The deep, centuries-old enmity between man and serpent has lessened little in spite of today's fairly well-publicized fact that bee stings and household falls cause more deaths and injury than do the bites of poisonous snakes.

About 7,000 persons are bitten by venomous reptiles yearly in the United States, but only about 15 or so cases result in fatalities—not a bad average for a nation of 200 million souls.

Nonetheless, there is very real personal danger in "treating unawares" on the likes of the two familiar snakes pictured on these pages, the Cottonmouth Moccasin, left, and the Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnake, right, both of which are found throughout Florida.

Both are pit vipers; both give live birth to their fully-equipped young; both are heavy-bodied, thin-necked and broad-headed snakes; both have retractable fangs; both have mean dispositions when crowded.

Neither of these reptiles are aggressive—but, then, neither are they very willing to give ground. The Cottonmouth particularly, in our experience, seems most sure of its ability to defend itself. Rarely will it retreat. The Diamondback, on the other hand, will normally sound his celebrated warning buzzer and attempt to avoid a direct encounter with a larger creature. He does not always rattle before striking, however.

Both of these snakes use their poison to subdue their food. The Cottonmouth feeds on fish, frogs, lizards, rats, birds, and other snakes. These are struck and injected, clutched until they cease struggling, and then swallowed whole—head first.

The Diamondback feeds in the same fashion on rabbits, rats, shrews, gophers, moles, squirrels, and a few birds.

Best way to avoid snakebite? Avoid the snake. Watch your step in the field. Add insurance by wearing protective boots or leggings.

Afield

The Eastern Diamondback

The Eastern Diamondback is said to be the heaviest poisonous snake in the world. It reaches lengths of 6 feet plus; the record now listed as an 8-foot, 9-incher. The rattler can strike out in any direction—up to two-thirds the length of its body. It can also strike out without coiling. The young may number 25 or more. Each is armed with both its venom and fangs at birth; is independent, goes its own way. A rattle is added at each shedding—3 to 5 per year. This huge snake is a good swimmer; found in every Florida type habitat—but loves palmetto-pine flatwoods.

Photos by Wallace Hughes
Feathered Fun

from late summer on into the New Year, hunters can enjoy a variety of winged targets

If you're still putting off getting ready for the 1969-70 hunting season, it is already passing you by!
The feathered fun began September 1st with the traditional marsh hen hunts, timed to coincide with the seasonal flood tides of September along the Atlantic coastal marshes.

Hunting the tasty rails is an excellent shotgunning sport in itself. But more than that, it is a fine warmup for waterfowl shooting later on—out to mention the other furred and feathered gamesters that will be open to hunting in the long season ahead.

Marsh hens are not hard to hit—if you don't wait too long to shoot. They flush without advance warning and wing low over marsh, seemingly with intented long flight but suddenly cut short by an abrupt dive into concealing marsh grass.

A gun bored improved cylinder or modified, firing No. 7½ loads, will kill birds cleanly. Having a companion slowly pole you through tidal marshes in a shallow-draft skiff, with you in the bow ready to shoot, saves much tiresome legwork and helps cover more rail habitat. A dog also helps in retrieving kills and creating marsh disturbance that frightens birds into flight.

Next, let's look at a really top-notch game bird that doesn't have to be disturbed into flight—the mourning dove.

Besides the planted Game Commission public dove hunting fields located throughout the state, almost any accessible dairy or grain-growing farm will have its own complement of feeding doves.

By all means, go dove hunting for feathered fun.

The split season observed in Florida for shooting mourning doves assures you of added opportunity should, for some unforeseen circumstances, you miss out on first phase hunting.

There are plenty of targets on which you can develop dove-hunting skill. Each season millions of doves are shot in states allowing legal hunting, without affecting succeeding populations at all. (In fact, many more doves are lost to natural causes than fall in front of sportsmen.) Nature quickly replaces annual losses; a pair of doves will nest several times a year. Every hunting season there is a surplus of several million birds that can be safely harvested without depleting basic breeding stock.

Florida has a large year-round resident population of doves, and with the closing of Old Man Winter's icy fingers around northern states, migratory flocks come into Florida. These numerous cooing cousins of the resident doves create a heavy rural dove population increase, and provides sport shooting.

By EDMUND McLAURIN

The clipper rail, below, is a prime target during the early marsh hen season for hunters who like to get in “warm-ups.” Mourning dove, above—second scheduled migratory game bird season—can be classed as plentiful difficult “wild” targets.

Mourning doves are game birds of excellent eyesight, reaction and deception. They can dodge, dip, twist and hit up to 50 mph flight speed, once cognizant of any serious threat to their safety.

The weaknesses of the species are natural restlessness and the habit of circling a small area when flushed from ground or perch, or forced to change a planned course of flight.

Physically, the dove is a bird of tremendous energy, for which considerable food intake is required.

This, in part, accounts for movements during other than midday siesta hours.

Any 12 or 16 gauge shotgun with barrel bored modified choke will make a good dove gun, by providing the dense shot killing pattern that assures at least two or three shot striking vitals.

Mourning doves are shot doves is to shoot without affecting succeeding populations at all.

Any 12 or 16 gauge shotgun with barrel bored modified choke will make a good dove gun, by providing the dense shot killing pattern that assures at least two or three shot striking vitals.

A shotgun with installed selective choke attachment would be even better than one of fixed choke boring, as choke could be quickly changed to improved cylinder for birds flying close to gun, and as easily changed to full choke for targets flying high or at respectful low-level distance.

There is nothing wrong with a 20 gauge, when used by a good shot. Countless thousands of doves have been downed by charges of shot released from a 20 gauge. The drawback, if any, is that the 20 gauge shell contains fewer potentially lethal pellets than the large diameter 12 and 16 gauge shotshells.

Size No. 7½ shot is always a good choice, whether fired from a 12 or 20 gauge gun.

In your approach to the sport of dove shooting, be realistic.

Doves are hard to hit. It is no disgrace to miss these tricky targets. Not even Skeet champions average 100%, or even 99%, in results every time out.

You, too, will have good days and poor ones. Accept the inescapable fact that you are going to miss some of your birds.

There is no book or magazine text on dove shooting that will make a good dove hunter faster than experience. It is truly said, “The way to learn to shoot doves is to shoot doves.” This is also true of becoming an expert on quail or ducks—or any other game.

A good average dove kill is three birds for every five shots. Many hunters do not do that well, but have a grand time trying.

The prairies of the Dakotas and the fields of the states in the Corn Belt are considered best bets for pheasants—but you can enjoy hunting the smart, colorful birds right here in Florida, thanks to well-managed commercial shooting preserves. There are

(Continued on next page)
(Continued from preceding page)

a number that stock and release pheasants for paying

guests.

In the aggregate, most shots will be reasonably

close. Preferably, use a 12 gauge bored no tighter

than modified, and use No. 6 shot for surer kills.

You'll need a fast pointing and swinging gun, some­

thing you get in short-barrel version. Don't use a

gun with barrel longer than 28 inches; preferably, it

should be 26 inches for improved handling.

If hunting on a pay-as-you-go shooting preserve,
your guide will put you in the most promising spots.
The rest is up to you.

Where there are two or more birds close at hand,

the first flush is reasonably sure to be a hen; the

cock bird has no qualms about letting a hen first

face open flight danger. If a lone hen flushes, keep a

sharp eye out for the unannounced get-away of a cock

bird that may very well be hidden nearby, or

running on the ground ahead of the gun.

Also, try to keep in mind the fact that pheasants

usually flush into the wind. Make your field sweeps

across the wind; preferably, it should be 26 inches for

easy flushing of the birds.

Characteristically, pheasants in the wild are up

and about in early morning, seeking food in corn

fields and among growths of weed seeds and alfalfa

not far from vacated roost, the named foods being

preferences.

If hunting of mid-morning look for birds close
to patches of dense underbrush.

In later afternoon, you're more or less on your

own. Free roaming birds will again be feeding, but

exactly where will be guesswork, and they won't be

flying to selected roost until appetites are satisfied.

You have to hunt hard, and shoot straight when you

get unpredictable flushes.

There is a native, fist-size game bird, though,

that sometimes flushes as unpredictably as the

pheasant—the explosive bobwhite quail. Many

hunters in Florida annually go afield in quest of

the fair sized covey's being good of late season,

to be a hen; the


not realize it. (Biologists claim that many
coveys in the wild are never found at all)

A good, hard-working dog is necessary for “limiting

out” on quail, and teamwork is demanded of
dog, man and gun for consistent success.

Targets invariably prove challenging. Most quail

targets are missed because the hunter either shoots

too soon or fails to select and concentrate on a sin-
gele bird when a covey flushes.

To overcome these faults, make it a practice to

take just one more step forward when either a sin-
gle bird or covey is flushed, before shoulderi­
g the gun and shooting. By that time the birds in a
covey will have separated into individual flight lanes; if

a single bird it will have established a selected flight
course. Also, the hunter can better concentrate on

chosen single target and stay with it until it either
drops or escapes from gunfire.

The gun may be of any legal gauge, so long as it is

light, short-barreled, nicely balanced and fairly

open bored. Improved cylinder boring is a fine

choice. Guns made for competitive Skeet shooting

can also be used advantageously, as Skeet barrels
closely approximate improved cylinder designation.

Shot sizes from 7 1/2 to as small as No. 9 can be

used; the larger 7 1/2's being good of late season,
when birds are apt to be unduly nervous and at-

tempting early escape flight, before a hunter can get

within usual close proximity.

Florida quail hunting is perennially good, despite

the fact that much formerly productive quail habitat

has been lost to land clearing operations connected

with living and industrial expansion. As natural

quail environment is lost, so, too, is its complement

of wild growing quail foods.

It is axiomatic that remaining territorial sections

of suitable quail habitat will support just so many

birds, and that future quail populations will be

largely determined by how well that habitat is pro-

tected.

A big turkey gobbler or tender hen won't be as

easy to find and bag as some of the other equally
delicious wild game bird courses that a roaming

shooter can bag for the table, but there are plenty of

Florida turkeys to be hunted if you seek them in

known habitat.

The Florida hunter who wants to bring home a

wild turkey should thoroughly familiarize himself

with the area he plans to hunt. He should take care

to locate favorite routes of flock travel and feeding

spots of the big birds.

In turkey territory there will be plenty of “sign”

for a trained eye. Scratches in soft earth, dust wal-

kows, clearly defined tracks made during cautious

travel through the woods and shed feathers all in

sizable coveys.

Although a wounded hunting turkey, the quail is more a ground
dweller and will seldom explode into flight unless disturbed.

(Continued on next page)
Snipe feed on a variety of subterranean insects and larvae that make home in the soft mud of our countless lakes and ponds. The snipe’s persistent long hill misses few intended victims.

The birds flush abruptly and silently, often seemingly from nowhere, and after letting you get into gun range, then, flight is fast and purposeful; not until well underway will a bird usually emit the challenging “scape, scape” cry. By then, the eventual outcome of the attempted escape likely has been decided—a miss if you have shot at the rising target at moment of one of its zig when you should have taken advantage of an exhibited zag.

Usually, the characteristic twisting is not changed to straight-away course until the bird is convinced that sufficient distance exists between it and hunter. If there is any advice to be given for shooting the erratic snipe it is: Snap-shoot. You will almost surely miss if you try to deliberately aim.

You’ll need an open bored gun loaded with shotshell that throws a large pattern of small shot at close range; targets are small. The gun should be one that comes naturally to shoulder—and fast.

Snipe aren’t hard to kill—just hard to hit. A dog won’t be of much use to you for snipe hunting, because most dogs don’t like the scent of these downed kills and refuse to retrieve.

Instead, depend on your feet to cover snipe-frequented wetlands and muddy shorelines while you keep a sharp eye and unrelaxed control of shooting reflexes.

Where you find and flush one snipe, very likely there will be others—going or coming.

Shooting, whether it’s hitting or missing, will be great sport.

Then there’s duck hunting! Those who take their waterfowling seriously maintain that duck hunting—good duck hunting—is cold weather sport. Success, they know, often depends on the weather. It takes cold weather up north to bring birds winging down the Atlantic flyway to Florida, to augment resident duck populations.

If the season opens with warm weather, Florida hunters may be forced to content with interim hunting of resident birds.

Fortunately, the native, mallard-size, Florida Duck is fairly abundant and well distributed across central and south Florida. On wing, it greatly resembles the migratory black duck.

Along with the colorful wood duck, the Florida Duck helps swell game bags until the migratory blacks, pintails, mallards and other Northern visitors come south to winter.

The 12 gauge is universal favorite of waterfowlers. A barrel length of 28 inches bored either full choke (for pass shooting) or modified (for decoy and “jump” shooting of pond feeding ducks) is preferred. A raised sighting rib is a definite aid to accurate gun pointing and better shooting.

Use small shot size No. 5 or No. 6, for ducks within ordinary range; save the larger No. 4’s for long-range pass shooting.

Usually you will kill more ducks over well planned decoy sets, especially if you anchor boundary decoys at maximum effective killing range and then take only those birds that come on your side of the boundary markers. Other types of boundary markers may be preferable under certain conditions. You should conceal yourself and your duck boat in some sort of natural blind, wear camouflage clothing and make sure that blind and surroundings do not have any shiny objects to cast warning light reflections.

If you are inexperienced in duck hunting, or don’t know where to hunt in Florida, team up with some experienced resident waterfowler. Whether personal preference is to hunt one game bird species or several, there are plenty of chances for good hunting of winged targets. It all adds up to feathered fun.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

During the summer, pet Flipper wondered on to the street, and no longer exists.

House Divided

By ART HUTT

In obvious good health, this galloping gopher tortoise flourishes in two shells, its split-level existence curtailing neither activity nor appetite.

But what happened? What could have created that deep valley across its back? A birth defect? Or was the young and trusting tortoise caught browsing in a vegetable patch and whacked with the wrong end of a hoe?

Phil Edwards, chemist at the Rustis Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission Fisheries Laboratory, took a second look when he saw this camed-backed curiosity double-timing it across a city street last November.

“Flipper,” now an Edwards’ family pet, freely roams their enclosed screen porch and contentedly munches a nourishing diet of boiled carrots and sliced apples. On his carapace, Flipper frequently sports a hippy flower plastered there by the Edwards’ children.

The injury is puzzling. The plastron (bottom shell) except for a pronounced jut on one of the forward edges, has apparently been unaffected by the cause of the deformity above.

“It’s as though a sawed-off horseshoe had been clamped over the carapace,” says Edwards.

A letter and photographs to world-famous turtle-expert Dr. Archie Carr, Graduate Research Professor at Gainesville’s University of Florida, prompted the response that “... it must have had a restricting band around its middle at some early stage of the development. A chop across the back would have severed the spinal cord, and simply being squashed into that shape would have done the same. Why the constriction didn’t deform the plastron more severely I can’t quite see.”

Meanwhile, eleven-inch, seven-pound Flipper ambles unconcernedly on his unique and aristocratic way, the possible envy of all the common gophers possessed of only one normally shaped shell.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

OCTOBER, 1969
Before going further, let's face the fact that fishing writers make a living by writing about good fishing, whether it's in Florida or Kamchatka. If the fishing is poor, the writer has nothing much to say. Oh, there's an occasional tale of misfortune but, by and large, an account of a trip in which no fish were caught is seldom printed. Now, stop and think. However honest, do you like to read about how somebody failed to catch fish? The real catch here is that it takes just as much time and money for a fishing writer to take an unsuccessful trip as a successful one. For that matter, who wants to read about a trip in which fishing was only fair? Thus, the most successful fishing writers tell only of trips in which fishing was tremendous.

Have you ever wondered how the same writers always have tremendous fishing? Well, it is just possible that a mediocre, or even an unsuccessful fishing trip, begins to appear tremendous to a writer when there's a house payment due and he needs to sell a story. Maybe he can be excused for photographing a stuffed fish under the circumstances. And, remember, he's in competition with other writers who must have tremendous fishing frequently or starve.

Editors are in competition, too. If fishing writer A lands a 6-pound bass and publishes an account in magazine X, it is to the interest of magazine Y to have their writer (B) catch a 6-pound bass, and he is likely to do it, even if he has to do it with his typewriter. I recall an instance in which a fine writer showed me a letter from a magazine which has always proclaimed its honesty.

"The story is fine," went the letter, "and we'll buy it if you'll up the weight of the fish about five pounds across the board. We aren't concerned whether it actually happened, only whether it could have happened." That interpretation of honesty sure lets the bars down. When I think of the things that could have happened to me on fishing trips, I get all the twitters. But most of the wilder fishing stories are not exactly lies; just flights of fancy. I once read a stirring account of a fishing trip, written by an acquaintance of mine, and in which the name of the principal character didn't appear early in the script. I was pretty excited until I got to the name of the fisherman. It had been written about me but the action had blossomed out until I didn't recognize it. After all, I did go fishing that day and I suppose it might have happened.

How does this help you interpret outdoor writing? Stick around. We ain't there yet.

I'll admit that fishing stories sound pretty much alike much more of the time. Why don't they try something different? Because the fishermen have been eating up the old routine and there's no sense in quitting when you're winning. Take Horatio Alger, who wrote a great shelf of books many years ago, all of them the same story but with different names and different locales. It was what the public wanted and he wasn't about to change the recipe. They used to like their heroes to have white hats and white horses, too.

Of course the most colorful fishing stories and pictures come from people who don't fish much. If they were fishing, they wouldn't have time for all that photography and pretty writing.

Phony? Yeah, they're phony fishermen. They're not phony writers.

Let me straighten that one out. A guy I know wrote one of the best fishing books I ever read. It was a technical thing on a subject I won't reveal as I don't want to give him away.

When I got hold of the book, I started laughing.

Here was a fat volume by a guy hardly capable of putting line on his reel. I, personally, knew he was a novice fisherman and the butt of a thousand bad jokes because he posed as an outdoorsman, which he wasn't. Then I started reading and sobered up a little. After all, he had some pretty good dope there. Finally, I realized he had done a tremendous job of research and turned out a beautiful work on something I had a shallow knowledge of. The book became a valued reference and I have dug into it many times.

I don't know of any authorities on ancient civilization who actually lived in it.
to get radical ideas of his own; he will get far out especially dangerous fellow where tackle is con­
clusive. He pulls into his own little world of the resultant equipment was pretty bad. I know of one vigorous fishing writer who spent most people can’t learn to use. I know of a couple of examples where such a fellow’s ideas were lapped up as gospel by tackle companies. Some of the resultant equipment was pretty bad. I think the worst thing a writer can do is send his readers on a wild goose chase to a specific spot. I know of one vigorous fishing writer who spent a week fishing in a place that was hard and expen­sive to get to. The resultant story was one in which I could read between the lines. He hadn’t exactly said the fish in the picture were caught at the late mentioned. He actually hadn’t said how big the fish were. He had implied all of these things, interspersed with description of the beautiful scenery. In one spot, he had described a place where a huge bass was bound to be waiting, told how he approached it and how he made his bullseye cast (this fellow always hits them right on the nose with any kind of tackle). After dragging his readers to the edges of their rocker, he came up with the statement: “I lightened up, there was an explosion, and I was in business.”

He was in business (the writing business) but he didn’t catch any fish. Another guy squashed on

him. The payoff was when another outdoor writer fought his way to the same spot, figuring such a wonderful place should be good for another story. He caught nothing and came away squalling like a bear cub chewing a peedle. I told him to read the story again. He did, more carefully this time, and figured as I had, that no one caught any worthwhile fish. But he’s still mad at the writer who sucked him in.

One northern editor I know has been buying from a certain writer for many years, firmly be­
lieving what the guy puts out is fiction. Well, most of it is, but it’s written in such a way that it harms no one, sends no one to a fishless fishing hole, and furnishes entertainment. Its only dishonesty is that it appears in a magazine purportedly dealing in true outdoor articles.

Through the stories goes an interesting character (we’ll call him Big John). Big John has had a prominent part in nearly all of the writer’s output. A while back, I talked to the editor. He was round-eyed and amazed.

“Do you know,” he said, “there really is a Big John. He (the writer) introduced me to him. Do you suppose some of that stuff is actually true?”

It is nice to see an editor guessing once in a while.

One of the difficulties of an outdoor writer is the duty, real or implied, to be helpful to those who aid him when he gets his story. Suppose he goes with a guide who doesn’t charge him, or he stays at a resort at a reduced rate—or something. The guy who takes care of a writer or photographer is not likely to be called a slob in the story, and it would be an unfriendly gesture to say he didn’t know his business. Many a writer who has an­

ounced his independence and determination to pay his own way has weakened a bit when he finds the expenses will eat up the income.

But, aside from the desirability of getting some kind of a fish story on every trip, the outdoor writer has a way of deceiving readers through omission. After describing an area or a specific trip, he is often very vague about the time of year to go. This is sometimes a favor to the resort owner or guide, as there are some times when business is slow; others, when there are turn-away crowds. It is customary to lump off a certain kind of fishing as “year around” in Florida. There is black bass fishing year around in most of Florida, but the quality varies greatly.

For example, the big bass period generally comes just before or during spawning in late winter and early spring. Fish caught at these times are likely to be much larger than those picked up late in the spring, during summer, or in the fall. It is sometimes convenient to show those big bass in pictures, along with a story about summer fishing. Not that there aren’t large bass to be caught in the summer; but they aren’t generally so plentiful. A majority of national black bass stories about Florida, however, are run during the late winter at the time most bass fishermen think about Florida. Fair enough.

But Florida’s fall fishing, for example, is seldom covered, is it? There are a whole batch of reasons, chief of all being the hunting season. Fishing is pretty well crowded out of most magazines in the fall, hunting having much more appeal for most readers. Most writers plan to do their fishing stories when the hunting is being done; not much time for fishing. Those who write exclusively about angling on a national basis are usually preoccupied with northern fall fishing. After all, it’s late winter before the tourist rush to Florida. Thus, most of the Floridians don’t hear much about fall fishing in the national magazines. Columnists may review events of the past spring or winter.

Florida’s fall fishing in fresh water is likely to be pretty good. This is generally the time of high water and many fishermen feel that the fish, although scattered through areas that ordinarily might be dry or nearly so, are apt to be on the prowl and willing to strike. Fall is also the time of tricky weather, even offshore hurricanes having a great bearing on fresh water fishing. The violent barometric changes that accompany storms often make very good—and very bad fishing. I know one angler who says he catches more small and me­
dium-sized bass in the fall than at any other time. Another chooses the fall as Number One time for panfish on surface lures.

Because so few fishermen are busy during the fall, local fishing reports are likely to be sketchy. There’s simply a shortage of information.

(Continued on next page)
There are fair numbers of both fishermen and outdoor writers reluctant to tell exact locations of good fish catches, and will merely tell about "somewhere" on such-and-such a river.

 fotograf by Gene Smith

(Continued from preceding page)

Newspaper accounts may keep you up to date on fall fishing developments, as will radio and TV programs. I recommend them for up-to-date information because many magazines stories are one year or two old before seeing print, and things could have changed greatly in that length of time. This is not true of Florida Wildlife, incidentally, the timely material appearing something like three months after it is written. Something with no time element might be held longer. Even three months quick turnover of newspaper stuff.

One area I wrote about but there are circumstances in which I know, the conditions have not changed in the run it at the time.

I have grumbled a little about fishing stories which run at the exact same time of year, a year after they happened. If the fishing requires a long trip, that makes it two years before the reader could take advantage of information given. For example, a fishing story I wrote about Alaska ran in an August issue of a national magazine the following year. The section happened in August. That is the accepted way of doing it, and evidently that the readers want. However, if it could have run in spring, for example, the information in it could have been used the current year by anyone going to Alaska. Am I right? Editors might say a guy who picks up an August issue wants to learn what is going on in August.

However, reading habits are better known by editors than they are by writers, in most cases. One of the facts of that a photographer is more interested in reading about an area he already knows than about a strange place, in most cases. The exception is the armchair fisherman who is actually reading to enjoy the adventures of others. Now, occasionally, I find fishermen following an outdoor writer to a spot, and being disappointed because they had no intentions of hiring a guide, when it was pretty obvious that the writer's success was due to the guidance of someone else. If they count on duplicating his trip, they'd better do so exactly.

Now, about local news (catch reports), especially where black bass are concerned:

The best reporters give the method of catching the fish as much as possible. It isn't much help for a worm fisherman to learn what was done with a fly rod, and anyone who is following a fishing column or vocal report soon learns just how vague or exact the reports are.

The locations of good catches are often disguised by both the fisherman who turns them in and the announce or writer who gives them to the public. It is supposed to be very rare to say "somewhere on the such-and-such river," the implication being that you're a real cagy operator and possessed of much special knowledge. This is a fine thing because it makes the fisherman feel very important, and that's why he turned in the catch in the first place, unless he's a resort owner or guide.

If this is really sophisticated, it's even more exciting to lie shyly about where the catch came from. A lot of people do that, telling the newspaper, TV or radio man just where they caught the fish. Then, when the announcement is made or the article read, they can go into gales of laughter. That's a real leg-slapper; since somebody may believe it and make a useless trip somewhere. I warn you that a great deal of that goes on.

This may not make fishing better, but it could help somebody make a better assessment of what he's reading about the subject.
for easy access, placement and attention to the food cured in an operating period of from 4 to 12 hours, depending on the nature and quantity of the food being smoked.

Smoker flavor pan has a handle that permits easy removal and refilling.

The removable flavor pan that is placed just over the electrical element holds enough hickory chips for one or two hours of controlled smoking.

The flavor pan has a handle that permits easy removal and refilling.

Pure hickory fuel, in chip or pulverized form, is available, ready to use.

This might add that the manufacturer (Outiers Laboratories, Inc., Oconomowoc, Wisconsin 53067) is the world's largest supplier of gun cleaning kits and related accessories.

Failure to remove rust preventative oil from chamber of rifle or shotgun that has not recently been used will result in an oil film deposit on the hot brass of the chambered and fired cartridge or shotted shell, with further resulting delivery of a jolting blow to the gun's breech-bolt. Much the same thing happens when an oily case is inserted in gun breech.

The accumulative effect of these individual jolt­ ling blows can gradually create excessive (and frequently dangerous) headspace condition.

This occurs because the oil film in chamber, or on an inserted round of ammunition, prevents the brass from normally and momentarily gripping the chamber's walls during the incredibly fast moments of case expansion, and subsequent contraction on firing.

While excessive headspace in a shotgun is not nearly as dangerous as the same condition in a high power centerfire rifle, both types of firearms should be given a headspace safety check every so often. Bulged primers, case cracks and leaking gas are danger warnings.

There are special headspace gauges that make testing easy. Forster-Appelt, Inc., manufacturing gunsmiths, Lanark, Illinois 61046, stock gauge sets in most popular calibers, and make orders on special order.

I recommend, if you plan to do your own periodic headspace checking.

If not, take a questionable rifle to a gunsmith who has a set of headspace gauges for the caliber of your rifle. The service charge is usually quite nominal.

After starting to prepare this particular column, I received a phone call from a shooter-friend greatly disturbed by the implications of a front page newspaper headline, "Confiscate Guns, Violence Study Urges."

His concern stemmed from popular advocacy by the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence that nearly all privately owned handguns be surrendered to designated authorities under a recommended new Federal gun law.

Any handguns not voluntarily turned in to the authorities by private owners within a specified grace period after passage would be subject to later legal confiscation and owner prosecution.

Those owners willingly surrendering personally owned handguns would be compensated therefor, the article—which I also read—stated.

My friend claimed he owns only one firearm, a deluxe model large caliber handgun that he uses for both competitive target shooting and legal hunting.

He said that the handgun in original form costs him $160; that he spent an extra $35 for a set of genuine ivory, hand-carved grips; $18 for special Micro target sights, and $30 for a hand-crafted, fancy leather holster. An additional investment of $35 has also been made in ammunition reloading equipment.

He was considerably perturbed about the possibility of Federal gun law forcing him to terminate his innocuous shooting pleasure. Also, he expressed interest in knowing whether or not I felt that any proposed "compensation" would really be adequate. The idea of a sky-rocketing total financial investment should a national handgun confiscation law be enacted.

I told him that, in my opinion, his case is simply typical of thousands of others and that, like others, he can never expect proposed "compensation" to anywhere near equal his handgun's true value, because, in all probability, a law "used gun value" would be adopted payment rate.

I am not against practical firearms legislation. But the new proposal, like many of the more than 30,000 restrictive firearms laws in this country, will not achieve its object of markedly reducing armed crime and violence.

Thunder in the Grassroots

BY JOHN MADSON

Washington-Western Conservation

ECHOES THOUSANDS of angry sportsmen, the Illinois legislature has voted to repeal the state's 1968 gun owners' registration law. The repeal bill now awaits Governor Richard Ogilvie's signature.

The bill has been strongly backed by legislators from all parts of Illinois, but especially from the southern and western "hunting counties."

Sponsor of the bill was Representative Gale Williams of Murphysho, whose district in southern Illinois lies in the heart of the Shawnee Hills between the Ohio and Mississippi, and includes some of the state's angriest citizens.

During his campaign last fall, Williams found that people in his district bitterly resented the new gun owners' registration law, which had become effective September 1, 1969, and requires a $5 permit to own or purchase guns and ammunition.

Williams told us: "Last fall, gubernatorial candi­ date Ogilvie and I were in Jacob, a little Mississippi River town. About 2,000 people turned out for that meeting, which was pretty good, considering that the town has only forty residents. During my speech I told them that I would fight to repeal the gun owners' registration law, and they almost tore the place down in their excitement."

"Shortly before the legislature convened, a news­

The result would be simply further disarm the honest citizen.

Passing additional gun laws will not have much beneficial effect on crime statistics, or civil strife. Only by enforcing existing firearms laws and making penalties for misuse of firearms more severe can any truly beneficial effect be felt.

There are sure to be some gun owners, by letters and personal contact, who let the lawmakers know that practical, rather than emotional approach, should be made to penalizing misuse of firearms, without disarming homeowner and sportsman.

For many persons, writing letters isn't easy—but if we are to keep our sporting firearms—letters must be written. A personal letter carries far more weight than a petition or form letter. Voicing opinion is up to us.

By John Madison

Washington-Western Conservation

Florida Wildlife

October, 1969
Gadsden Park and Highway

Col. James Gadsden, who became famous for negotiating the Gadsden Purchase but is remembered in Florida for his fort on the Apalachicola River, now has a state road named in his honor. Ranger R. J. Nesmith, in charge of Port Gadsden State Park near Sunnata, announced the bill enacted by the 1969 Legislature dedicating S. R. 65 as the James Gadsden Highway now has become law. S. R. 65 runs from the Gulf of Mexico at Green Point to the Georgia line above Quincy. Col. Gadsden is best remembered nationally for his negotiations while minister to Mexico in which Mexican territory were purchased by the United States government in Florida.

Actually, Col. Gadsden had a long and distinguished career in many fields. He was a soldier, diplomat, president, promoter of Southern nationalism, and a man dedicated to the idea of helping the South in general and Florida in particular in realizing the full potential of its resources.

He served in the War of 1812 as a lieutenant of engineers and, after its close, he aided Andrew Jackson in inspection of the military defenses of the Southwest and the Gulf Coast. In 1818, Gen. Jackson commanded the young army and saw the site of an old British fort over looking the Apalachicola River 24 miles upstream from the town of the same name.

Impressed with the lieutenant's zeal, Jackson named the fortification in Gadsden's honor. Today, the vestiges of the fort are inside Fort Gadsden State Park.

For information about Florida Parks, write to Division of Recreation and Parks, Latrobe Bldg., Tallahassee, Fla. 32304.

Florida Migratory Game Bird Regulations 1969-1970

Waterfowl—Ducks and Goose

Season: November 27, 1969 through January 12, 1970

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Bag Limits: Daily Limit: 6; Possession Limit 10

There will be NO hunting of Geese in Florida during the 1969-70 waterfowl season.

The daily bag limit on ducks, other than mergansers, may not include more of the following species than: (a) 2 wood ducks; (b) 1 black duck; (c) one only of either the canvasback or redhead.

The possession limit on ducks, other than mergansers, may not include more of the following species than: (a) 1 wood ducks; (b) 2 black ducks; (c) one only of either the canvasback or redhead.

The limits on American, red-breasted and hooded mergansers, in the aggregate, of these species, one daily and 10 in possession, of which not more than one daily and 2 in possession may be hooded mergansers.

Leon County and Lake Miccosukee County: Waterfowl hunting permitted only on opening day, Nov. 28, Dec. 5 & 26, Jan. 1 & 2, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The use of outboard motors is prohibited on Lake Iamonia and portions of Lake Jackson during the open season for waterfowl hunting.

There will be a special scoup-only hunting season in certain areas of the state from January 16 through January 31 (after the regular waterfowl hunting season). During the special 16-day season, only seapick ducks, also called "bluebill" and "loonsbill," may be taken. The daily bag limit is 8; possession limit 10. No shooting will be permitted within 200 yards of any main shoreline during the scoup-only season. Florida's delineated scoup-only hunting areas are: All open waters of Charlotte Harbor from the Florida Power and Light power line 4 miles east of the U.S. Highway 41 bridge on the Peace River and from El Jebban Bridge (State Road 716) on the Manatee River to a line running from Boca Grande Pass east through Boca del Rio to the mainland. All open waters of Tampa Bay. All open waters of Sarasota Bay south to the Albee Road Bridge. All open waters of Estero Bay. All open waters of Lido Bay. All open waters of the Indian River from the Melbourne bridge (State Road 516) south. All open waters of Biscayne Bay lying south of an east-west line through the center of Featherbed Banks to and including Barren Sound.

Waterfowl hunters must have a 1969-70 Federal Migratory Waterfowl Hunting Stump before hunting waterfowl (ducks). The stamp is not required for hunting geese. Goose hunting not permitted in Florida. Available from any U.S. Post Office at a cost of $0.00, the "duck stamp" is required of all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older.

 Mourning Dove

Mourning Dove (three phase) October 4 through November 2* November 15 through November 30 December 13 through January 5

*During the Oct. 4 to Nov. 2 phase, in the Northwest Region, that portion of Franklin County lying east and south of U.S. Highway 98, including Alligator Point, will be closed to dove hunting.

Shooting Hours: From 12-morn to sunset

Bag Limits: Daily Limit 15; Possession Limit 36

Woodcock

November 15 through January 18

November 27 through January 15

Bag Limits: Daily Limit 5; Possession Limit 10

Shooting Hours for Woodcock and Snipe: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Marsh Hen hunting information appeared last month, September 1969 Issue, on page 28

For that BIG ONE that didn't get away

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Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citations with the inscription data listed below:

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City State Zip No.

Type of Tackle

Bait or Lure Used

Where Caught

County

Date Caught

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