OCTOBER 1970

Fishing · Hunting
• Conservation • Outdoor Recreation

The Florida Magazine for all Sportsmen
25 CENTS
HOW TO IDENTIFY DIVING DUCKS

WING PATCH OR "SPECULUM" NOT BRIGHTLY COLORED

LOBE ON HIND TOE

REDHEAD
TYPICAL DIVING DUCK

GENERAL INHABIT SALT WATER BAYS, RIVERS, SEACOASTS, AND LARGE INLAND LAKES

LEGS TOWARD REAR OF BODY • WALKS CLUMSILY ON LAND

DIVES UNDERWATER OFTEN TO CONSIDERABLE DEPTHS TO FEED

RUNS ACROSS SURFACE OF WATER BEFORE FLIGHT

DIVING DUCKS FOUND IN FLORIDA - REDHEAD, RING-NECKED DUCK, GREATER SCAUP DUCK, LARGER SCAUP DUCK, CANVIBACK, AMERICAN GOLDEN-EYE, BUFFLEHEAD, SURF SCOTER, Ruddy DUCK, HOODED MERGANSER, AMERICAN MERGANSER & RED-NECKED MERGANSER

FLORIDA WILDLIFE MAGAZINE • FLORIDA GAME AND FRESH WATER FISH COMMISSION

OCTOBER 1970

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Known as a fast flying "heavily weighted," the Canvasback can be easily recognized with its wedge-shaped head and whitish body. The female, above, has a more brownish head than the "redheaded" drakes. See page 12.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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ROSE TALLAHASSEE
clown of the waterways

There's no mistaking a coot. Color, voice, shape, and unusual mannerisms all combine to set this chattering busybody apart from the rest of the feathered class which trudge on top of, under, or at the edge of the water.

My boyhood recollections of this bird are pleasant. I remember it as a joyful comedian. Wherever my dad and I fished there were coots involved among the bushes.

Almost every time we committed a fishing boo resulting in a bass getting away, from somewhere nearby a mocking cackle would resound across the water announcing our incompetence to the coot for what it was—a harmless comedian.

when, as it is equally well known, is a migratory game bird. It belongs to the rail family but steps over into the world of waterfowl to do most of its breeding and feeding. Unlike ducks, which usually "spook" to parts unknown when they take wing, the coot travels a few hundred yards or around the first corner then settles down again to resume its nenchanting feeding routine.

The coot is also a cornball swimmer, jerking its head forward with each stroke of its feet—much like a child's mechanical pull-toy duck. One astute observer says it looks to him as though the bird is walking on solid bottom even when it is in deep water. Despite the awkward motion and wasted effort, the coot always seems to get where it wants to go.

Chuckles, wails, coos, squawks, and whistles are part of the coot's vocal repertoire, but the most consistent call note is a "kruck, kruck, kruck," repeated sometimes in longer series.

Having observed the bird for many years, I (Continued on next page)

plump body is slate gray, darkening toward the neck and head. The bill is conspicuously white and there is a touch of white under the tail and also on the trailing edges of the wings—best seen in flight. The coot's legs are greenish-black.

Unlike the webbed feet of ducks and geese, the mudhen's toes are equipped with leathery, lobed surfaces which enable it to pad about the marsh without sinking up to its tail coverts. When a coot is airborne, the lobed feet are extended to the rear and serve as a rudder in place of the short, useless tail.

The other birds with which the mudhen could be confused are the Florida and purple gallinules. While both have other distinguishing characteristics, the most apparent are the reddish bills, which contrast strongly with the white bill of the mudhen.

Watching a coot take flight is an unforgettable, and sometimes involved, experience; involved because you find yourself mentally "helping" the poor creature into the air. Unable to launch its dumpy little self directly, the coot combines rapid wing strokes with a frantice downfield running play, noiselessly splattering and sputtering across the water on its lobed feet until laboring liftoff occurs—many yards from the starting point. On a quiet day particularly the sound of the patterting feet is quite audible.

Once in the air, and once the landing gear are retracted, the funny little flyer is capable of mostest speed.

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from its amused expression, simple appearance, and its clumsy mannerisms. "Mudhens" suggests—and rightfully so—the coot's chickenlike qualities. The bobbing motion of the head, its activities on land as a seedeater, and the simple barnyard quality of its raspy voice all relate to the chicken group. In addition, it has an unusually large, chickenlike gizzard.

Nesting takes place in the spring. Six to 12 tan, black-speckled eggs are laid in a rough nest. Incubation, which takes 21 or 22 days, begins when the first egg is laid, so as the young hatch, papa mudhen irrigates them about while mama sits around to finish the job. The young are quick to learn how to dive, swim, and forage.

Coots eat grass, pondweeds, and algae, but won't pass up tadpoles, insects, snails, fishes, worms, and an occasional mouse or small snake. A coot will even waddle well up on land, hopping at roots, bulbs, buds, blossoms, and seeds of any plants available.

I remember a misty morning last spring when my neighbor called in excitement to ask if those were guinea hens on her lakefront lawn. A glance confirmed a flock of 32 mudhens happily browsing in the yard. Eventually they found the corn under her yard. Eventually they found the corn under my birdfeeder and for about a month they made a daily pilgrimage to our lawns. Mudhens are efficient divers. They bound into the air slightly, then head straight down. I've seen them work spots in our lake that I know are 20 feet deep. They commonly bob to the surface with boards of weeds hanging from their beaks.

Too easy a target to be highly regarded as sport—except by bored duck hunters—coots are poorly regarded as game—or food—except in localized areas. In Florida, they don't appear to be eaten to any great extent, although I'm told there are reci­pes that render them quite palatable. Some hunters bag them only to make a meal of the large gizzards.

In the Cajun Country of Louisiana, residents will gladly trade ducks for coots and figure they are getting the better of the bargain.

My coot-eating experience has been limited—in fact, even singular. Many years ago on a high school boat-camping trip to Silver Springs from Rustis, a chum bagged a galloping coot. Our only cooking utensil was a small coffee pot already. Unable to launch themselves directly,
system adopted by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, proper duck identification, particularly after a duck is in hand, will be the factor determining point value of different species and sexes. After a duck is in hand, will be the factor determining point value of different species and sexes.

Similarly, he noted that a hunter who first shot a 90-point duck would still be entitled to one more bird of any point value before he would be through hunting for that day.

The point system is a form of species management, designed to reduce the harvest of ducks that may have encountered low reproduction while at the same time allowing sporters a more liberal harvest of those species in good supply in the flyway.

Frye said, “A hunter will be able to tabulate his points only if he can identify the ducks in his bag. We recognize the difficulty in identifying ducks in flight, but feel that waterfowl hunters should be able to recognize the bird in hand and know its point value.”

A special waterfowl identification pamphlet has been prepared by the Commission to aid duck hunters in learning both the birds and their assigned point values.

Duck hunting activity will be restricted this season in the Citrus Wildlife Management Area in Citrus County, according to James A. Powell, chief of the Game Management Division who reported a reduction of the deer herd this year.

Bowhunters were limited to a buck-only archery season in the Citrus area—from September 12 through October 2.

Gun hunters may hunt by special permit, as usual, but only on the weekend of November 14-15. The number of hunters will be limited to 1200, as previously announced.

The action to reduce hunting pressure in the Citrus area was taken by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission in its August business meeting, held at Tallahassee, after annual deer censusing showed a reduction from an estimated population of 1800 deer a year ago to a current estimate of 900.

Powell indicated there was no evidence of a natural die off and noted that the Citrus area has received extensive patrol by wildlife officers during the year, which reduced the chances of heavy poaching activity there. He further pointed out that the harvest of an estimated 300 deer from the area during the last hunting season was in line with recommended harvest rates intended to decrease the chances of overpopulation on the area.

“We feel the herd was reduced to a healthy level as the result of legal hunting activity and find no evidence of a die off. However, we will not rule out the possibility until completion of a thorough pre-season investigation of the Citrus deer situation,” said Powell.

Smallmouth bass fishing in streams is one of the sports fishing from the scene these days. The “in-between” waters of the smallmouth rivers are especially susceptible to pollution and fishing pressures. They’re classified as “warm” waters as opposed to the cold waters of fresh water trout.

When compared to the southern largemouth waters, smallmouth are pretty cool but still “warm” by biological standards. Both large and smallmouth bass are found in the same waters in many areas, the smallmouths found almost as far south as Florida (it’s now pretty well decided they don’t live here), and the largemouths being found as far north as Maine—where they play second fiddle to the smallmouth.

But, neither is in the front row for Maine anglers, who tend to consider all bass as tourist fish at best and as trash fish at worst. Few Maine residents will fish for them in the same way that a few Florida residents fish for tarpon or jack crevalle. There’s a difference, of course, because the bass are very good to eat.

I fished in Maine last June, which is one of the top months for bass, generally spawning time. I stayed at two different camps on the Belgrade chain of lakes—Bear Spring Camp on Great Lake and Alden Camp on East Lake. The typical Maine fishing camps are a cluster of rustic cottages near a big farm house type of headquarters, where you overeat excellent food, American style. Both of the camps I visited were built in 1910, a few years before I began reading about Maine fishing. You can get by with a small motor on most of the waters, using a canoe if you like. Most of the cottages have a little dock where your rented boat stays.

In the early part of June, fishing is restricted to single-hooked artificial baits. Later you can fish with bait or treble hooks. Last June I caught a lot of smallmouths in surroundings that reminded me of the Ozarks of my youth. Maine has stream fishing as well as lake fishing but the surroundings are quite similar, the fish coming up from chunk rock and big boulders, through clear water.

The fish came best to small popping bugs and streamers that could be fished with fairly light tackle. A two-pounder was a big one, but you could get plenty of smaller fish and the whole thing is completely fascinating for anyone who is not obsessed with big fish fever. There were some large-mouth black bass, too.

And the fellow who fished with me, Paul Fournier, a public information consultant for the Maine Department of Economic Development, a former camp operator and guide and an expert canoeist—admitted he hadn’t been bass fishing for years. Like most Maine residents he’s a trout and salmon man and he canoed to some nice brook trout, after I’d had several days of bass. Trout fishing was fine but I can’t say it was better than the bass. Got a letter from Paul later and he said he’d been bass fishing since I left. It took a missionary from Florida to reconvert him, I guess.

And let me slip back to Maine for something else. Since I’ve spent a lot of hours in canoes from time to time but come a long way from being a canoeist, I asked some questions up in New England where canoes are a big part of the outdoor scene.

If you took a quick look at the streets of northern Maine—transported land of lakes—the natives generally take dim view of bass as gamefish.
Orvis has a thing they call a “Year-rounder” helmet that is somewhat like those little hats but has a rounded crown and a somewhat wider brim. I put one on and nobody laughed at all; hardly. It’s made of poplin and should last a long time.

A while back we ran an article about fishing for rough fish and unusual fish in which I related some experiences of Eugene W. Miller of Dayton, Ohio. He’d caught some big mudfish at Dunnellon. After reading the article, Miller made a comment in justification of his sport. Other fishermen, he says, often make fun of him and ask why he fishes with rough fish when more exotic sport is available. His answer is a question as to how they’ve been doing. Often they say they haven’t had a bite and he leaves it like that. Makes you think, doesn’t it?

A “RAPAROUND” fishing line sinker, offered by Worth Fishing Tackle, Stevens Point, Wis., 54481, seems to solve a problem of those who want to add just a little weight to a small lure or bait. It’s simply a strip of soft lead that can be wrapped around any kind of line without damage and weighs about 1/4 ounce, and comes in a waisttight plastic tube. The lead wrapping business isn’t new, and I’ve used it for a long time with considerable convenience. Strip lead is often used for weighting fly bodies. It’s handier than lead wire unless you want to build up a pretty heavy weight.

I had a letter from Dane Terrill, Route 1, Box 168, Bitley, Mich. 49006. Terrill mentions the use of the little twisters that come on bread and freerace packages, etc. He twists them around the ends of lines to keep the line tips from going clear into the reel when there’s no lure attached.

Another nice gadget for similar uses are ordinary pipe cleaners although somewhat more bulky than the twisters. Both types of dingus can be used for securing fly lines in rolls, when you don’t have a reel spool left over for an extra line.

One of the big mysteries about striking fish is the fact they’ll eat a lure hard on one day and take it like a pickpocket the next. This business isn’t completely regulated by time either for there are certain waters noted for hard strikes and others for weak nibbles. The loudest, hardest bass strikes I’ve ever experienced came on surface lures down on the lower Gulf Coast last June. The fish weren’t especially large, almost all of them being less than two pounds, but they blasted like tarpon. The year before, on a canal just a few miles away, I’d had bigger fish that could take a lure under with scarcely a ripple, performing like understated panfish until you tightened up. All of the fish were fat, sassy and in good shape.

The common theories about this are that competition from other fish will cause hard strikes, and a suspicious customer is more likely to take it gently. Nobody has proved either one and nobody’s likely to prove it any time soon, either.

Aluminum landing nets haven’t been kind to me. Most of those I’ve had simply crumpled where the handle meets the hoop after a little use, especially if there was a little grass in with my bass as I scooped. I recently got one that seemed strong enough for anything, but when the mesh part gave out and I tried to unfasten the screens that hold the hoop to the handle I found they were completely rusted and corroded. Have to drill them out and put in bigger ones, I guess. I complained to a dealer.

“They’re all like that,” he said with little sympathy.

I have four busted ones hanging in the back room.

I’ve heard a lot about schooling bass during the past summer, something that I predicted pretty confidently. Any time you have a lot of rain and plenty of moving water you’ll have bait that grows healthy and runs in surface schools. That’s when school bass, bar bass, or whatever you want to call them, are going to be active. The schooling black bass is fading from the scene, but he still shows up from time to time.

A fisherman showed me a 2-inch thing the other day and asked what it was. Like many other casual viewers, I simply called it a “water dog,” which it wasn’t. It’s the thing with a frog-like face, an eel-like body and two legs in front that you’ll sometimes see coming to the surface for a quick gulp of air. The correct name is the greater siren and it lives mostly on aquatic insects and crustaceans, my tolerant biologist friends tell me.

There’s a boom in a special kind of outboard fishing boat—the big, fast open-water job, laid out for pure fishing. They run from 13 to about 22 feet long and most of them are equipped with a center console for steering. I don’t know just how many have reached the market but Florida has quite a number of them, most of them made from fiber glass. I have seen none that were specifically designed for use with oars but several that could be adapted to rowing.

I guess the first one of these jobs was the Benton Whaler, which seemed to have that end of the market pretty well to itself for a while. The center steering and all controls has caught on strongly. One of the nicest of the newer models I’ve seen is a Hewes from Miami—a “Vee” rather than a tri-ball.

And in a final blow to the dying oarlock there’s a whole rash of “bass boats” made to be driven from the bow, often with a stick instead of a wheel, and easily adapted for operation with a foot-steering electric motor.

Foot-steering takes a little practice, mostly because the beginner tends to over-control. I did that on my first effort and found that my wife Debie had the same trouble when she tried it, going down a canal like one of those little bumping cars they have in the amusement parks.

The electric motors have been improved rapidly. They’re here to stay.

Swim and waders are hard on my lips and I have frequent cold sores when fishing. The other day I groped in the medicine cabinet without my glasses, latched on to a little plastic bottle and doped a huge cold sore thoroughly. It dried up very quickly and I reported to my wife that she’d finally found an ointment that did the job. She demanded to see the bottle.

“That,” she said, “is for athlete’s foot.”

From now on it’s for cold sores, too.
The Canvasback
strong and fast—and heavy—it is a waterfowler's favorite

Given just ten words and five seconds to describe the canvasback, I'd say it's a big, white-bodied, red-headed diving duck that's hard to find. "Cans" are still in short supply—though things are looking up a bit—and there's some irony in the fact of their scarcity. Looking up a bit—and there's some irony in the fact of their scarcity. Therefore, the greatest odds have the most exacting nesting requirements, and, therefore, the greatest odds against year-after-year hatching success? That's the canvasback! And that's life, I guess.

Canvasbacks are among the first and most severely hit when adverse water conditions prevail on the waterfowl nesting grounds. That's because they require a foot or so of water over which to build their nests. When periods of low water come and the potholes and ponds dry up, whether from drought, drainage, or both, the ducking crop suffers. It's an ancient—and a simple—relationship.

Weighing in at an average 3 pounds per bird, the can is larger than either the mallard or pintail, two other popular "big ducks." So, a brace of canvasbacks in the bottom of the boat should represent a fine morning of duck hunting for the fellow who can manage to put them there this season.

Cans are early nesters—and late migrants from the breeding grounds. They sometimes hang back too long. Early winter storms catch many on the ice of frozen nesting ponds, lakes, and potholes, and they perish. But most of them move into migration lanes, sweeping east-southeastward almost clear across the continent from the Dakotas, Minnesota, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, through the Great Lakes region, to enter the Atlantic Flyway by way of New York and Pennsylvania. They cut "across the grain" of the Central and Mississippi flyways to reach the duck food-rich coasts of the Atlantic seaboard states. The main canvasback nesting grounds are the wide bays and sounds of Maryland and Virginia—Chesapeake Bay country—where great, shimmering rafts of cans and redheads resemble so many thousands of bleach bottles bobbing in the waves.

In migration flights these ducks form great V formations high in the sky, a sight practically guaranteed to hold the upturned eye for as long as the trailing duck remains in sight.

Canvasbacks visit large lakes, rivers, and some ponds, but mostly they are found in the "big water" of coastal bays. They raft far offshore at night but move closer to shore to feed during the day, taking wide "constitutional" flights to and fro over the feeding grounds for their health, I suppose.

In Florida they winter all along the northern coastal areas, mostly on the Gulf coast, though a few are taken in southern parts of the state. Some cans migrate southward to the northern West Indies and to Guatemala before returning northward in early spring. They arrive back on the nesting grounds on the heels of the last snows.

This species is fairly easily identified by two good characters: (1) their colors and color pattern—dark head, light body, dark tail, and (2) the distinctly wedge-shaped head and bill. The wedge is formed by a continuously sloping line from the forehead to the end of the bill. (Redheads, while quite similar to cans in coloration, have rounded heads and shorter bills. The difference in the profiles of the two is quite noticeable.)

Canvasbacks are superb divers and underwater swimmers in addition to being the strongest, fastest flyers of all the ducks. They use feet and wings for propulsion while submerged, and can feed in depths up to 30 feet.

Their diet consists primarily of plant material—wild celery and other weeds and grasses pulled from the bottom and carried to the surface to be eaten. Cans are gourmets. They often appear to be choking to death on great strands of grass or roots of water lilies. The rush to "get it down" is probably spurred by the thirsting tendencies of some of their neighbors, who, being less qualified as divers, wait for the cans to pop to the surface and rob them of their hard-earned food. Baldpates are particularly noted for this freeloading practice.

One aspect of the king canvasback's eating habits is not to its credit. It is written that, on occasion, he will gorge himself on the rotting flesh of dead salmon out on the Pacific coast rivers. This would naturally eliminate those particular canvasbacks from the "top table duck" status they enjoy generally.

Call it a quirk or a contradiction of nature, but the wily canvasback is also curious. Literature records they can be "trolled" into gun range from far offshore by unusual noises or sights. One such means that seems to have worked was to run a small, yapping dog up and down the shore in front of a blind with a handkerchief tied to its collar. Cans and redheads have beenenticed into range in this manner, being simply unable to resist investigating the strange goings on. Once in too far, the gunners had the advantage because of the necessary running takeoff these divers employ to get on the wing.

There are better, more sporting ways to hunt ducks. Just-arriving cans decoy quite readily. After they've been around on a good feeding area a few days, however, they get wise to decoys and thundersticks, carefully avoiding even the best of spreads at times. But when they face the wind and come pitching in, feet and legs extended, mighty wings cupped to "brake" their speed, all the cold waiting and lost sleep suddenly are worth it . . . if you remember to push off your safety. 

Illustrations By Wallace Hughes

By GENE SMITH

The drake canvasback is whiter and a little larger than his mate. Both have the telltale wedge-shaped head, or can be seen in photo, above left, and in artwork below, showing male at bottom: female above. Cans one again on the source side this season, but things are looking up.

OCTOBER, 1970

FLORIDA WILDLIFE
Sorrowful experiences—depending on the fickle sort of spirit that goes around smiling on some and endeavors. It is as though she really exists as some success or failure of most of their activities and will accumulate memories of such experiences all (or her) own, some of which evoke grins; others, groans.

For example, a lot of grins have been produced by the imaginative use of building materials by deer hunters in erecting tree stands from which to hunt. I have seen the use of old doors, barrels, kitchen table tops, old overstuffed living room chairs, and even toilet seats, complete with lids. All seemed to be serving the purpose pretty well.

About was noise, and a group of bowhunters that Lady Luck plays a definite role in the success or failure of most of their activities.

The idea worked like a charm for a couple of deer hunters. The idea was to build a row of tree stands, and pick them up at noon. For those unlucky men it had been a long, precariously scraping slide down the rough tree trunk. A brief tug on the gear and the hunter would disappear into the green depths of the Gulf of Mexico.

Most of them elected to sit tight until a rescue party arrived. No shed a tear for the guys, and others like him, who built a turkey hunting blind so well camouflaged he could never find it again! It has happened time and again, partly because things just don’t look the same in broad daylight and when you’re entering the same woods in the darkness of early morning.

Much the same thing can happen when one leaves his gun or a garment at a spot while making a short, exploratory walk. Numerous hunters have left guns, garments, and camp stocks, and were never able to find them again. Their fault? Maybe so. Go ahead and grin, but keep in mind that it could happen to you.

Share the groans and anger of the Florida bowhun­ter who killed a nice buck only to have it stolen from him.

The hunter made a lethal hit, but the buck ran 80 yards or so in the direction of a road before falling. Just as he stumbled and fell dead in the road, a truck appeared. The driver and another man hurriedly scrambled out, hoisted the deer over the tailgate, and drove away, leaving a shouting, angry bowhun­ter only yards behind. (Who, unfortunately, was unable to get their tag number.) All tree stands who build their own platforms and then have to contend with trespassers who beat them into the woods will growl with the Florida hunter who went forth in a hard rain to build his stand, only to find a stand jumper in it the next morning. It has happened too many times.

Rightful owners now are becoming more defensive. There is something they can do about the problem. Once on the scene, and if the interloper is cooperative, the owner conspicuously and resolutely remains by the stand until the unauthorized occupant ends. Usually, the guy will realize no deer is going to come around as long as the coughing and movement continue down below.

There need be no argument; not even any discussion after the initial polite request for him to move on. The choice is the trespasser’s. The smarter he is, the quicker he will move off and hunt elsewhere without wasting any more precious hunting time—his or yours.

Share a grin over this true incident. The War Between the States is now more than a century past, but some descendants of the Southern forces evidently still hold some good humored animosity toward their Northern counterparts. It was noon, and a group of hunters had met on a woods road to eat lunch and talk over the morning’s hunt. At the spot, the sandy road branched into a “Y.” One road led directly to a Game and Fish Commission check station; the other meandered hither and yon through the woods but also led, eventually, to the area of the check station.

A lone hunter approached the group and asked, “Which of these roads leads to the check station by the highway?”

A southerner in the group, sitting by a tree eating a can of pork and beans, replied—by way of a cautious question, “Are you a Yankee or a Rebel?”

“What difference does that make?” the puzzled hunter inquired.

“About three miles!” was the reply.

On another tack, here’s a grin you may have shared with many another angler. Did you ever go fishing with a brand new outfit only to lose it overboard on the first or second cast? Or have you ever lost prescription eyeglasses, sunglasses, or even false teeth overboard? It happens with knives, pipes, lighters, and fishing pliers, too.

But a worse loss occurred recently when a St. Petersburg party boat fisherman, while fighting a hooked shark, had his rod-holding hand banged sharply against the rail on the boat. The jolt loosened a one-carat diamond from his ring. All he could do was groan as he watched the glistening stone disappear into the green depths of the Gulf of Mexico.

Most deer hunters are prosaic personalities, most­likely inclined to dress traditionally and for comfort. A few—a very few—add a clownish personal touch that sometimes borders on the bizarre.

One Florida deer hunter makes it a practice to annually go into the woods outfitted in attire mark­edly incongruous with the sport of deer hunting. He isn’t considered “squirrel food”; he’s just a nonconformist who likes to hunt deer with added zest and in sortirial splendor above and beyond the ordinary.

Once he hunted dressed in diplomat’s striped (Continued on next page)
(Continued from preceding page)
pants, long-tailed coat and a top hat! (After the
brush had knocked the hat off several times, he
punched holes in the brim and tied it to his ears.)

Another scene was the hunter in a pair of oversize
red flannel long drawers—complete with drop
seat—worn over his other hunting clothing. The
conspicuous outfit was fashionably and impressively
enhanced by the addition of a black derby hat and
a long, tilted cigar held jauntily in the mouth.

Unless you’ve seen it yourself, you can’t imagine
how startled and amused you can be to see a fellow
hunter wearing red flannel drawers, a derby, and
an unlighted cigar cautiously stalking through the
woods! You may not want to laugh, but chances are
you’ll be unable to avoid it.

Shed real tears for the unfortunate Florida hunter
who gave up many assorted pleasures to save for
an expensive Weatherby big game rifle and a hunt­
ing trip to Canada.

After many years of denial, he had the money.
His first step was to buy the Weatherby. Soon after­
ward, he completed negotiations with a professional
Canadian outfitter for his trip.

The night before he was to fly to Canada, he
took his new rifle to his garage workshop and
carefully checked it for smooth operation. He next
inspected the bore, then gave the metal surfaces
a final protective coating. Fondly—almost reverent­
ly—he slipped the readied rifle into its case and
set it with his other gear and baggage.

Two days later he was happily camped deep in
the Canadian woods, after a tiring pack horse trip
from civilization.

After the evening meal, the Floridian began mak­
ing preparations for his first hunt. Personal items
were assembled and checked, then the rifle was
removed from its case. He was dumbfounded. The
bolt was missing! He had left it on his workbench
when he cleaned the rifle.

His first step was to buy the Weatherby.

Two duck hunters were preparing to shove off
in separate skiffs to reach their blinds before the
first flights. Each had the usual assortment of duck
hunting gear. The weather was really cold, and
there was a biting wind to constantly serve as a
reminder.

One hunter carefully stowed his gun and gear in
his skiff, not only grouping items according to re­
lation and need, but balancing the load and wisely
checking his shotgun a final time to make sure it
was unloaded.

The other man merely dumped his equipment
into his boat. He next took time to load a new,
unused, unfamiliar autoloading shotgun—and he
thought he put the safety "on." He didn’t want to
miss getting a shot at any duck that might put in
an appearance immediately after legal shooting
hour, perhaps catching him still tossing out decoys
or paddling toward his blind. The loaded gun was
placed in the boat with the muzzle downward and
pointed toward the stern.

He shoved off, and in the darkness, while fumb­
ing under his gear for a paddle, something poked
through the trigger guard of the shotgun and . . .
you guessed it! The gun was not on "safety," as
supposed. The blast literally blew out the transom
of the skiff. Within seconds, icy-cold water filled
the shallow craft. Heavily loaded, it quickly went
down in eight feet of water-gun, gear, hunter
and all.

If there is a moral here, and there is, it is never
transport a loaded gun in boat or car—even if you
believe the safety mechanism is "on." Otherwise
you may have reason to groan, too, if lucky enough
to still be alive, with all your companions.

Finally, smile as you share the story of the eager
deer hunter who visited a promising area late on
the afternoon before opening day of the season,
and, while looking around, spotted a certain tree
crotch for occupancy the next morning.

An hour before daylight, the hunter was silently
hunched down in his stand, rather pleased with
his choice of a spot with such a good view of the
der woods below.

But when the sun came up, he discovered the
tree he had chosen was also the home of a swarm
of bees.

When several of them buzzed him and lit on
his clothing, the hunter did not wait to find out
their intentions. He slapped at them savagely, figur­
ing—erroneously—that inaction would result in
being stung. His aggression only served to make
the insects truly angry, of course.

As if rallying to the battle cry, they poured out
of the hollow and gave the desperate fellow several
points and warm remembrances before he could
climb down and flee the scene.

And so it goes—wherever hunters and fishermens
pursue their sports. Quite likely you have had one
or more experiences that, in grins or groans, equal
or top the ones you have just read.

Let’s hope your grins have outnumbered your
groans—and I hope they always will.
RARELY has a Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission wildlife research biologist been handed a more exciting and exotic assignment than R. Dale Crider. For 18 months Dale and his family lived in Argentina and combed the marshes and wetlands studying several species of South American waterfowl. The purpose of the trip—and the project—was to determine the suitability of certain ducks for possible introduction into the United States, including weighing the risk of ecological damage that might be associated with introduction.

The Division of Wildlife Research, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Department of the Interior, sponsored the South American Exotic Waterfowl Project. They temporarily "borrowed" Dale for the Argentine assignment. For many years he has been project leader of the Commission’s waterfowl research program.

I had the great good fortune of spending three months in Argentina with Dale during the fall of 1969. I am a waterfowl ecologist with a research interest in the program as chairman of the Southern Exotic Waterfowl Committee, which consists of three representatives from the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, waterfowl biologists from Louisiana, Tennessee, Florida, and myself. Our mission as a committee is to assemble and screen the available knowledge on the species which are candidates for introduction, to weigh the ecological risks, encourage the needed research—in both Argentina and the Southeastern United States—prior to release, and eventually to make recommendations to the participating states and the BSF&W as to whether we should attempt introduction.

In addition to the work Dale performed in Argentina, experimental programs are underway to see if the Argentine waterfowl can be encouraged to breed in captivity. This work is being carried on at the Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, and at the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission’s cooperative facilities with The Wildlife Conservancy, Inc., in Naples, Florida, where some modest nesting is underway. (One of the ground rules in the project is that birds brought from Argentina will not be released in the wild. Rather, it is planned to do field experiments with the young produced in captivity from the imported stock.)

A first step in the screening of candidates for introduction into unoccupied habitats is to identify those waterfowl living in a place that is climatically similar to where they will be introduced. These bio-climatographic comparisons were made by Dr. Gardiner Bump, the well-known leader of the BSF&W’s Foreign Game Investigation Program.

Dr. Bump, with the assistance of another noted waterfowl biologist, Dr. Milton Weller of Iowa State University, selected the Argentine waterfowl species Dale has been studying: the Rosy-billed Pochard, the Bahama Pintail, the Muscovy, the Yellow-billed Pintail, and the Brazilian Teal. Every one of these species has a high aesthetic appeal and is very popular among South American hunters, who place the highest trophy value on the Rosy-billed Pochard, Brazilian Teal, and Muscovy—in that order.

After designating the candidate species, the second step in the screening process was to obtain as much information as possible about the birds in their native habitat. This was Dale Crider’s assignment.

During the course of his studies he and his family not only roamed the diverse habitats of Argentina but also worked in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia. His project included duck trapping and handling, color marking to determine local movements, aerial surveys, nesting studies, breeding biology, brood survival, behavior, and a host of similar details involving techniques familiar to all waterfowl researchers.

Dale’s wife, Mary Virginia, and their three children all traveled into the field when the work permitted a family team approach, but they had their home base in a thick-walled stucco house in Gualta, a suburb of Santa Fe in Buenos Aires Province, near the center of Argentina.

The two of them, incidentally, had a strong "Mutt" (Continued on next page)
The Rosybills are frequently seen in the company of Fulvous Whistling Ducks. Dale thinks it is possible that some of the damage to the rice crops is done by the Whistling Ducks and blamed on the Rosybilled Pochards. The Rosbybill nests over water, so this might help it survive the predation which appears to be so heavy in our Southern marshes.

Another species being worked with was the Yellow-billed Pintail. This bird is also called Chilean Pintail and Brown Pintail. It is the most numerous of South American waterfowl, and greatly outnumbers the other species in Argentina. It prefers open marsh and shallow lake habitat in association with upland pastures and croplands. It is quick to move into marshes that are temporarily filled by heavy rains. Indeed, this bird, like some of the Australian ducks studied by other researchers, appears to be more regulated in its reproduction by rainfall than day length or other possible environmental stimuli to breeding.

Much of the range of the Yellowbill is arid for most of the year and sometimes for several years in a row. Through some undetermined mechanism the birds appear able to sense heavy rains hundreds of miles away and move into the area with the rain—to an ample water supply to sustain nesting.

Dale was fortunate enough to work with a dense breeding population of Yellow-billed Pintails in southern Santa Fe Province. He had hundreds of nesting pairs in the San Eduardo marshes. As a result, he was able to monitor the eggs of nesting birds to study incubation temperatures, nesting attentiveness, and other interesting phenomena related to waterfowl nesting biology.

The nesting behavior of the Yellowbill is particularly intriguing in that unlike the Pintail of North America, this species seems to remain paired for the entire year. The male attends the female throughout the nesting and assists in caring for the brood. The pair bond seems unusually strong in this species.

I am convinced that Dale's research report, when published, will become a classic among the monographs written on waterfowl biology.

Unfortunately, the world of science will never know all the colorful details of how a Florida waterfowl biologist—and a transplanted Kentucky "Bluegrass" musician at that—turned gaucho on the pampas. That is another story entirely—and one that, perhaps, Mary Virginia will someday write.

Man, both intentionally and accidentally, has moved much of the world's fauna from its original habitat. We have had outstanding successes in North America with such game birds as the pheasant, the Hungarian Partridge, and the Chukar Partridge. Dr. Bump's study team, in addition, has many other foreign game birds and hybrids under study with field tests in the United States. Several show exceptional promise.

For example, the Spotted Tinamou, which has sporting characteristics intermediate to the Bobwhite Quail and the Ruffed Grouse, would seem to be a highly favored candidate for Florida's improved pastures.

There have been sufficient successes to lend encouragement to the idea that we may someday find a new waterfowl species that can successfully live and reproduce in the marshes of the South. If we do this, it will take a great deal of harvest pressure off the migratory North American species of ducks.

We should discover why our Southern marshes now are lacking in significant numbers of breeding waterfowl. Why haven't such species as the Mallard, Blue-winged Teal, and Gadwall successfully occupied them?

I'm sure most wildlife managers believe it unwise to introduce exotic wildlife that will be harmful to native populations. This possibility is precisely what wildlife research with exotics hopes to avoid.

Whatever the final decision on the introduction and ultimate release of Rosybills, Bahama Pintails, and the rest, the data gathered by our Pampas Biocanecor, E. Dale Crider, will be treasured new knowledge about some of the world's most interesting, and least studied waterfowl.
Standing high on a bluff in Torreya State Park, looking across the Apalachicola River at a tapestry of lush forest, could make even some native Floridians reach for a road map and exclaim, "This can't be Florida!"

But it is Florida—north Liberty County—a rugged topography in miniature of the mountains of north Georgia, Virginia, or western North Carolina.

From the summit of the park's Neals Bluff spreads a panorama of wild growth including not only pines, wild cherries, poplars, beeches, elms, and magnolias, all so characteristic of Southern mountain areas, but also mysterious trees and plants to be found in their natural growth nowhere else in the world. Many legends and beliefs have arisen around these.

Although Torreya is a unique state park, it is little visited, for tourists must travel somewhat off the beaten path to reach it. Motorists can take State Road 12 southward from U.S. Highway 90, passing through the town of Greenboro, or they may drive northward from Tallahassee on State Road 20. The familiar white-on-blue Florida State Park signs guide travelers along the way. Once there, the feast of natural beauty weaves its spell, and campers, picnickers, fishermen, botanists, and history buffs can represent both the subtropic and temperate climates.

Bible lore resounds through these woods. Old-timers in the vicinity will tell you nearly every one of the 30-odd trees mentioned in the Good Book are found here. There are pines, hickories, oaks, sweet gums, maples, birches, lindens—the list goes on and on.

The perfect time to view these trees is in the fall, when the Northwest Florida hardwoods can rival the autumnal coloration of northern forests. The gum and persimmon leaves turn red and purple; oaks, dogwood, sumac, and sourwoods are scarlet; hickory, tulip, and cherry leaves are yellow; and the sycamore, elm, and beech are russet. All these colors against a rich background of evergreens really have to be seen to be appreciated.

But the tree of trees, the one most people come to see in this wooded wonderland, is the rare and ill-fated Florida torreya (Torreya taxifolia), which is native to no other region in the world but a strip several miles wide and 20 miles long on the east bank of the Apalachicola River.

Later discoveries have brought to light similar, yet distinctly different, members of the yew family in California (T. californica) and in the Orient (T. grandis and T. wutchera), a distribution which leads experts to believe that at one time the torreya tree was common all over the North Temperate Zone.

The torreya may be one of the world's rarest

(Continued on next page)

By VIRGINIA NEWMAN

The quiet and serenity of the steeply wooded park, with its rare trees, is especially appealing to a park visitor who prefers to avoid crowds. Minute marker, right, gives the story of the torreya tree discovered in 1835 by Hardy E. Croom, Tallahassee.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

OCTOBER, 1970
The wood of the torreya is yellow and has a distinctive close grain. Although light in weight, it is hard and durable—and, like redwood, does not rot in the ground. Because of these practical attributes, farmers in the region sought it out for fenceposts, resulting in considerable destruction of the original growth.

The area where the torreya established itself was last under water about 600,000 years ago, say geologists. Wherever the trees occurred, they were few and little more than trails. Bridges were nonexistent on the larger streams.

Today, this living fossil is making a desperate last stand for its life. Prentiss all the torreya trees within the park are sick—struck by a mysterious blight that threatens to blot this genus from the Florida landscape and the botany books altogether. None of the park’s torreyas are large, although one of the seedlings transplanted from Florida by Capt. Fred Ferrell, superintendent of Maclay Gardens State Park near Tallahassee, to his park in the early 30s has grown to a height of about 50 feet and is considered the champion torreya tree in the state.

The decline in the trees was first noted in the mid-1940s. Plant pathologists of the Florida Department of Agriculture have been studying the situation ever since. They suspect the cause of the disease to be a fungus which was found on dying and dead needles and on twigs and infected trees, as well as on the ground debris from the affected trees. "Feathery" leaves and orange bloom are shown at right.

"Today, this living fossil is making a desperate last stand for its life. Practically all the torreya trees within the park are sick—struck by a mysterious blight that threatens to blot this genus from the Florida landscape and the botany books altogether. None of the park’s torreyas are large, although one of the seedlings transplanted from Florida by Capt. Fred Ferrell, superintendent of Maclay Gardens State Park near Tallahassee, to his park in the early 30s has grown to a height of about 50 feet and is considered the champion torreya tree in the state."

Dr. Alvin Wentworth Chapman of Marianna, a famous botanist and the author of a treatise on the Florida yew, was one of the first noted historians to point out that this is one reason to believe in this area's Biblical connections. Indeed, the 1867 Florida Legislature passed an act authorizing the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce to cooperate with the Florida State Parks agency in planning and establishing a "...relic of Noah's Ark in Torreya State Park," recognizing the presumption that Torreya State Park is the probable location in the Apalachicola valley where the prophet Noah constructed his ark and saved the remnants of humanity at the time of the Great Flood recorded in the Bible.

Unfortunately, the act appropriated no funds with which to build such a relic. It only authorized the planning bodies to "receive such help as may be possible from the Florida State Museum and from other public and private sources of assistance..."

To date, no financing has been made available, and there is no replica to be seen there.

The torreya was discovered about 1835 by Dr. Torrey, reported back that the tree was a totally new genus—one never before described in botanical literature. At Croton's request, the newly-discovered tree was given Dr. Torrey's name. The theory has been discounted, however, since none of the seeds from Florida ever reached the area. The area where the torreya established itself was last under water

The decline in the trees was first noted in the mid-1940s. Plant pathologists of the Florida Department of Agriculture have been studying the situation ever since. They suspect the cause of the disease to be a fungus which was found on dying and dead needles and on twigs and infected trees, as well as on the ground debris from the affected trees. The pathologists suggested that any seeds to be distributed to botanical centers in answer to requests—such as to the University of California—be treated first with mercury bichloride.

Despite studies by the U.S. Forest Service, the University of Florida, and others, there still has been no definite diagnosis of just what is killing the trees. A breakthrough may be near, however.

From specimens grown in Capt. Ferrell's research center at Maclay Gardens, the U.S. National Arboretum Washington, D.C. studied the blight. Dr. Frederick M. Meyer, research botanist in charge there visited Maclay and took soil samples from beneath both living and dead torreyas for the purpose of soil analysis. He found a difference in the pH factor of the samples—the hydrogen content. Now, studies are being made to see if the delicate pH factor can be adjusted to keep the trees healthy.

Although the torreya is the most famous rare tree in Torreya State Park, there are other unique species to be found there. The Florida yew is estimated to be 40 times rarer than the torreya. Florida yew differs from torreya principally in its bark and needles. The yew's bark is smooth, its leaves soft, and its odor mild. Florida yew is a low, bushy evergreen, although some botanists say at one time it grew to be a large tree.

Hardy Bryan Croom—who was later to lose his life, along with all his family, in a shipwreck off Cape Hatteras, N.C.—discovered other plants in what is now park land. Under the torreya he found a low-growing, flowering herb which was named in his honor by Dr. Torrey. "Crocus pacifica." He also discovered a gorgeous pitcher plant Sarrecenia drummondii.

Dr. Alvin Wentworth Chapman of Marianna, a famous botanist and the author of a treatise on the flora of the Southern states, was a friend of Croom's, and one of his discoveries, the Chapman oak (Quercus Chapmani), is in the park.

Perhaps all these rare and beautiful trees and plants inspired the interesting-but-controversial theory expounded by Judge Calloway. He is a well-known Bible scholar and theologian and believes his Biblical interpretation proves that the land now encompassed by the park was the site of the Garden of Eden. Calloway points, among other things, to the "river..."
of four heads” mentioned in Genesis 2:11-12 and says there is no other river in the world that fits this description as does the Apalachicola. He lists minerals in the area encompassed by the first river, Pison, as the gold, beryl, and onyx stone, or minerals in the area encompassed by the course, he mentions marble, for which south Georgia is famous. And, of course, he mentions “every tree pleasant to the sight,” including the gopherwood trees, which God specified for the building of the ark. He points out that in the limestone formations of the area, the fossilized bones of every animal known to have lived on earth may be found.

Calloway’s is, to say the least, a fascinating theory, and anyone who has visited Torreys State Park may find it hard to doubt.

Wildlife is abundant in the park, which teems with rare warblers and other migrants in the spring and fall. And probably every native mammal could be found there. Most beautiful aspects is the Gregory House, where an overhanging balcony provides a spectacular view of Ocheese Landing.

Built by Jason Gregory of North Carolina in the 1830’s, the house is a two-story, white-columned plantation manor. At that time, the Apalachicola River was the main thoroughfare from Georgia and Alabama through Florida to the Gulf of Mexico. By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, the town of Apalachicola on the Gulf had become the third largest cotton port in the U.S. Fourteen million dollars worth of shipping was passing up and down the river by 1850.

The Gregory House was in the thick of the comings and goings on the river, but life there was abruptly altered by the War Between the States. Although Federal troops never came down the river, but life there was fully dismantled, floated across the river in sections, and reassembled on the high stands. Great effort was made to retain the original lumber, even to the wooden pegs in the flooring.

In recent years, the Gregory House has been authentically furnished in the prevailing fashion of the 1850-60 period—the height of plantation prosperity in the Old South.

The house is open to tourists from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, and from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. The entrance fee is $1 per person, with children under 12, accompanied by parents, free.

Outdoor recreational facilities are not forgotten at Torreys State Park, naturally. Campers find the large, shady campites uncrowded even during the summer months. It’s an ideal park for the camper who likes to “get away from it all.”

For the fishing enthusiast, the Apalachicola often results in a good catch of channel catfish, bass, and redbreast bream. Boating is superb in the park area although there is no launching ramp at Torreys.

Grab your camera, your bird and botany books, your fishing gear, pack the family camper, and take a look. Torreys State Park, Garden, Eden or not, is beautiful at every season, but fall finds it at its finest.

(Continued from preceding page)

For information about Florida State Parks, write: Division of Florida State Parks Department of Natural Resources Tallahassee, Florida 32304

Muzzle Flashes
there is a variety of “entrees” for the hunter whose gun care interest equals actual field trips. Including sight changes and portable reloading kits

By EDMUND McLAURIN

SCOPE SIGHTS are “in” this year. Practically every rifle purchaser will have a telescopic sight. Even hunters who have used metallic sight combinations successfully for years are changing over to the scope. The background of the changeover makes good sense.

A scope sight gives greatly improved view of the target, especially under poor lighting conditions, which, if too poor, make iron sights virtually useless. Furthermore, with a scope sight a hunter becomes a better hunter because he can place his shots more accurately.

Hunting safety is greatly enhanced, too, by use of a scope because target identification is more positive.

Telescopic sights are not 20th Century creations. Crude models were successfully used in warfare as long ago as the period of The War Between the States, and by buffalo hunters.

But as a sporting firearm accessory, they had relatively slow acceptance. Only after World War I did scopes begin to find favor with sportmen. The best instruments were usually imported models, mostly Zeiss and Hensoldt manufactures, used on American-made Griffin & Howe and Belding & Mull mounts. Two American firms, Lyman and Peckert, brought out their own models. Winchester had a simple instrument, the A-5. Adoption of scope sights was slowed only because of initial scarcity of practical, dependable scope mounts. In fact, there were numerous earlier makers of optically good scopes, but only a low ratio of pioneers in the field of manufacturing practical scope mounts to fit a variety of rifle models. American ingenuity eventually solved the problem.

Really widespread adoption of the scope sight began to take place when Bill Weaver, now the world’s largest maker of scopes, introduced good—but-inexpensive models, complete with mounts, back in 1930.

Today there are more than 30 brands of scope sights—and just about as many manufacturers of scope mounts.

As with any other merchandise, there are good scopes and bad ones. Most of the good ones are fairly expensive, simply because it takes costly labor and maintenance of high manufacturing standards to produce a truly fine scope.

It is true, as a budget-minded shooter recently pointed out to me, that some makers of low cost scopes guarantee their products and give free servicing when defects develop. But a faulty scope must be removed from the rifle to be returned to the factory, and sighted in again when it comes back reconditioned.

Where center fire ammunition is used, the ultimate in a field of a faulty, low-priced scope—even with free servicing—can be considered to an already inconvenienced owner. That’s why I use only the best brands. Simply, I save until the day I can purchase a good one.

So evident is the interest of sportmen in scope sights that some of the old, well-known firms are discontinuing manufacture of metallic sights.

Redfield, for example, is dropping its many different models of receiver peep sights to concentrate on making sporter scopes. This trend is extended for competitive shooting. Their 1970 bid for the scope buyer’s dollar is the new “Widefield” line. Weaver, not to be outdone, has a new line of aluminum alloy tube scope models they call the “Classic” line. These will supplement the already familiar Weaver “K” models with steel tubes.

(Continued on next page)

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The kit consists of a few dies and a soft mallet for resizing and bullet seating. A powder charge cup takes care of accurate powder measurement. In essence, the Lee Loader makes the basic reloading steps of volume production reloading tools. Any shooter who first uses a Lee Loader will get a pretty good idea of what reloading is all about.

Reloading is fun, practical, and, in the long run, economical. Furthermore, reloading ammunition is often more economical than buying the loads. Too, a small outfit like the Lee Loader can be carried in the pocket into field or camp for reloading ammunition as it is used.

That’s the closest anybody can come to defying that old adage that says you can’t have your cake and eat it, too.

As military weapons go, most of the Swiss-produced shoulder arms have had good mechanical design and careful manufacture, which has resulted in accuracy and dependability ad infinitum.

Evidently, the Swiss, long a nation of riflemen, know that only practical, rugged military rifles are of value to an army for national defense.

One such firearm is the now-obsolete Swiss Model 1911 bolt-action rifle, known otherwise as the Schmidt Rubin. It was one of finest military weapons of its day, and for a bolt-action could be fired at a very rapid rate. It has long had a reputation for fine accuracy.

The breech of these Swiss rifles have been declared surplus and released to commercial outlets. American sportsmen, attracted by the advertisements of various dealers, have lost little time before trying them out.

The fun of reloading began when you undertook your first reloading session, but, frankly, how soon the economy of reloading enters into the picture depends on how much shooting you do. This must balance in relation to the necessary investment in reloading tools and ammunition components.

Eventually, if one does enough of it, reloading pays off, whether one shoots rifles, shotguns, pistol, or all three.

The reloading hobby was strong when the New Lee Loader was brought along and dealt it a hard blow. The Act didn’t make home reloading of ammunition illegal, but the required red tape connected with acquisition and possession of powder and primers has tended to discourage some shooters from continuing or taking up the hobby.

The average reloader keeps very little powder on hand, you know, by comparison with numerous national, state and local regulations. Sometimes these laws and their accompanying administrative regulations take absurd form, and result in much inconvenience and time-wasting for experienced reloaders before they are rescinded or modified.

For example, a few years ago the State of Florida declared that powder purchased for reloading be stored in "an approved powder magazine." For a time, such storage was made a condition of retail sale of rifle and pistol powders.

Now a "powder magazine," in Underwriter terms, is quite an elaborate and costly affair! It is also unnecessary from the standpoint of safety, at least with modern smokeless powders and/or the small quantities of volatile black powder the average sporting goods store and home reloader normally keep on hand.

When shooters and reloading equipment retailers pointed out these truths to Tallahassee, the red tape was quickly unwound and discarded. Today, purchasing reloading components in Florida is no more restrictive to the responsible sportsman than is his purchase of a new firearm in accordance with the provisions of the Gun Control Act of 1968.

Even so, many shooters who should be reloading costly brass cases now being discarded hesitate to get into the reloading game. Most say they don’t want to make the mistake of investing in expensive reloading equipment when their active interest may be only temporary.

For these, I recommend purchase of a popular, simple, and inexpensive reloading kit known as the Lee Loader, manufactured by Lee Custom Engineering, Inc., Hartford, Wisconsin 53027. It is available for almost any popular rifle or pistol caliber or shotgun gauge. The investment will be only $10, plus the cost of components, of course.

Despite its simplicity, the Lee Loader does a good job for the shooter who has only two or three boxes of empty cases to reload at a time and has a little time on his hands. For the average user, the tool will turn out a completely reload shell or cartridge per minute.

For your local sporting goods dealer can get these 7.5’s for you if he hasn’t already stocked them.

More good news: For 7.5mm owners who prefer to load their own, check with such companies as 33 WCF, 35 WCF, 40 WCF, .38-72 WCF, .40/82 WCF, .45/90 WCF, .45/85, .38-36, and .45-110 Sharps straight. These all-new cases will withstand many, many reloadings.

In the same vein, many Schmidt-Rubins have been standing in the rack awaiting suitable ammunition, so have many old Winchester, Marlines, and Sharps—long discontinued models and chambered for ammunition no longer available commercially.

To help the reloading enthusiast, RG International, P.O. Box 702, Hermosa Beach, California 90254, manufactures various brass cases, unprimed. Many of these cases require the sized cases. (If you haven’t, Fred Huntington of RCBS, Oviedo, California 95065, can make a set of reloading dies for you and advise on the proper powder charges for each particular rifle caliber.)

Available for reloading are new, unpainted cases for such calibers as 33 WCF, 35 WCF, 40 WCF, .38-72 WCF, .40/82 WCF, .45/90 WCF, .45/85, .38-36, and .45-110 Sharps straight. These all-new cases will withstand many, many reloadings. If these cases injure your or your Underschneider rifle will pass a gunsmith’s safety check, it can be made useful again—as well as ornamental.
Dealers must be licensed to sell these pesticides; buyers must have permits from the Department of Agriculture to use them; manufacturers must comply with strict labeling and other laws, both federal and state, before they can market their products legally.

At last report, the Department of Agriculture was investigating the case further.

The infamous walking catfish from Asia (Clarias batrachus), which was discovered in Palm Beach County in 1967 and had become a breeding species by the following year, was discovered in Hillsborough County waters in September.

According to Regional Fishery Biologist Jon Buntz of Lakeland, the presence of the exotic fish in the Gibsonton-Riverview area south of Tampa was confirmed by fish population samples taken after a single specimen was taken from an irrigation canal there.

Buntz said the walking catfish has apparently extended its range northward in Florida and spawned successfully.

Non-native fish specialist Vernon Ogilvie of West Palm Beach, who heads an exotic fish research facility being built at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, confirmed that a number of potentially harmful exotic species were taken in the Hillsborough samples along with the air-breathing catfish. All are considered potential competitors of native species of fresh water fish.

The walking catfish grows to approximately 20 inches maximum length and can wriggle over dry land for considerable distances.

Lake native catfishes, the walking variety is most active at night. Mass movements have been observed in Palm Beach and Broward counties as the hikers sought new homes and feeding waters.

A permit is required to possess a live walking catfish in Florida.

Plans are complete for construction of a new sport fishing lake in the Blackwater River State Forest in northwest Florida, according to John W. Woods, chief of Fisheries Division, Tallahassee.

The lake will be located in Okaloosa County—about 25 miles northwest of Crestview on Hurricane Creek. It will cover approximately 493 acres, which will make it the largest of three fish management area lakes built by the Commission in the Blackwater Forest in cooperation with the Division of Forestry, Florida Department of Agriculture. (Bear Lake in Santa Rosa County covers 197 acres; Karick Lake in Okaloosa, 76 acres.)

Commission Chairman William M. Blake of Tampa said, "This new lake is being built with funds which resulted from passage of the uniform fresh water fishing license bill by the 1970 Legislature."

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

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The Editor, Florida WILDLIFE

Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.

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