Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

How much do they weigh?

Wood Duck
1 to 1 1/2 lbs.

Mallard
2 to 3 1/2 lbs.

Pintail
1 1/2 to 2 1/4 lbs.

Green-Winged Teal
10 to 14 ozs.

Coot
1 to 1 1/2 lbs.

Florida Wildlife Scrapbook • Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

NOVEMBER 1973

In This Issue

Field Trial
Florida Wild Turkey
New Look at the Gar
Hunter’s Wife Blues
Happily Ever After

Departments

Fishing
Wildlife Officer Notes
Hunting
Conservation Scene

The Cover

King of the flatwoods—lord of the river swamps—that describes the all-American big game bird, the wild turkey—more than a match for the average hunter. See page 10.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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ROSE TALLAHASSEE

NOVEMBER 1973
FIELD TRIAL. To many, the term conjures up a picture of formality; of judges in tweeds; of participants in well-cut clothes, sporting jaunty English-made hats spangled with silver award buttons. In many respects, this is a true image, and a lot of dog folks are frightened away by this frills and formalities. Not so Florida fox hunters, whose field trials are hung on dogs and short on frills and formalities. Aside from basic and established rules on procedure and courtesy, most fox hunt field trials are like a good old family outing and picnic.

The Sunshine State fairly bristles with fox hunters, and if you'd like, and don't mind a drive, you can find at least one field trial somewhere in the state every weekend. Fox hunting is most prevalent in north and central Florida, with the highest percentage of hunters being in the middle part of the state. But in almost every section except the two or three counties in the Everglades country, a drive along a country road any Friday or Saturday night will reveal at least one pickup truck and dog box.

Field trials begin about midday Friday, when the judging ring and entry tables are set up. By early afternoon, contestants are arriving in anticipation of the evening's fish fry or chicken pilau (per-low) dinner, and the bench show that will follow. Most of the hunters arrive with the wife and family in tow, and are ready to socialize till the wee hours. Old friends are greeted, coffee brewed, dogs remembered, lies swapped, unofficial bets made, pups made over, and politikers cussed.

A visitor would probably find no semblance of order. In one area, late arrivers are registering dogs. Across the way, the bench show is in progress, with eight separate awards to be made.

(A rule of the hunt is that to be eligible for a bench prize, a dog must be cast in the hunt.) In another area, entrants are busily painting registration numbers on their dogs in high visibility orange paint, while around, through, to, and from all this organized confusion swirls a tide of people, old and young. Most are participants, but some are folks who just like dogs. Some are old-timers who have had to quit their active hunting. A larger number are young folks who are just being attracted to this growing sport.

By 11:00 p.m., the crowd is thin. All but a few officials and host club members are back in motels or in one of a caravan of tents, trailers, and fold-out campers scattered helter-skelter over a couple of acres. At last, the judges and other officials drift off, and, save for an occasional disagreement between kennel dogs, all is quiet—till about four in the morning, that is!

Traditionally, the hounds are cast at dawn. Before that time, breakfast must be had, dogs gathered and penned, and the trek to the casting ground, where the hunt will begin, must be made. There, the hounds are inspected by the Master of Hounds to ascertain that each dog registered is, in fact, present.

By 10 minutes of "time," the dogs and handlers are in a line abreast and facing the woods. Judges aboo are patrolling the line to assure that no eager participant gives hishound a jump on the others or casts his dog before the official signal. Further out in front of the line, judges on horseback wait to follow the pack in order to score individual dogs.

The Master of Hounds gives his last-minute instructions over the bullhorn . . . the countdown begins . . . the word is given: "Cast your dogs!

Instantly, the still, predawn woods are split with the scent of a fox, owners stand anxiously by their hounds will travel miles to compete for them. A noon meal is served, dogs remembered, lies swapped, unofficial bets made, pups made over, and politikers cussed.

By JERRY GIRVIN

Numbered dogs at left are scored by judges on the quality of each one's performance in an actual race. Trophies are awarded in eight different categories, and owners of good hounds will travel miles to compete for them. A noon meal plus warm sun naturally calls for a saucy dog stew. Below.

By JERRY GIRVIN

(Wheeeooooooooo! Get 'em, Dixie!) Now, as dogs cover the countryside seeking the scent of a fox, owners stand anxiously by their assorted wigs rigs, waiting for the first "trail" back to indicate a possible chase. Soon, a tentative belling note is heard . . . of Dixie has struck . . . the cry is taken up by other front-runners . . . and at the casting ground, hunters calculate where the race is likely to lead. Within moments, the caravan explodes like a convoy of quail. Trucks, jeeps, dune buggies, and luxury station wagons speed away, each driver intent on getting at least within good earshot of the hounds, and, at best, hoping for a sight of the fox and pack crossing a road or powerline right-of-way.

Morning wears on. At one point, there may have been a half-dozen good races in progress at once, each lasting from 15 minutes to several hours. By midmorning, the enthusiasm of dog and hunter alike is diminished. Heat and dryness make trailing difficult. Dogs wander from one trailing pack to another. Some drift back to the casting ground or meander down the road looking for a familiar truck and a friendly face.

For many of these dogs, the field trial is over. Under the rules of the hunt, a dog may be graded (Continued on next page)
They say that 10 per cent of the fishermen catch 90 per cent of the fish. In some places, it's more like one per cent of the fishermen.

It takes a lot of things to make an angling expert, and a lot more things to make a real master. Most of us fall a little below these classifications, even those of us who fish a great deal. However, this is about the poor souls who talk fishing, read fishing, and go fishing but don't catch many fish—maybe no fish at all. To be brutally frank, most of them are seeking a magic formula, and haven't bothered with the fundamentals to begin with.

I don't write to hurt anybody's feelings, but I'll give you an example or two. I know one man who has traveled all over the world, generally with uniformly poor results. He's looking for things: magic lures and magic places. After many years, he still thinks there's something nobody will tell him, and that if he learns this it will be just one series of trips to the taxidermist and awards banquet.

This man is not blessed with special skills, his mechanical aptitude is pretty ordinary, and his physical reactions may be slower than average. I wouldn't know too much about these things, but I do know he thinks he'll become a master angler if he associated with famous fishermen, pays professionals to help him, and studies lures and flies constantly.

For example, he learns of a custom tyer of trout flies who produces artistic creations that deserve the premium prices they bring. He comes up with a C note and gathers in a box of these beauties, and after a lot of experience I found him on the short end of this many times and have, on occasion, been on the other side of the ledger.

Years ago, I used to fish small tarpon with casting plugs, and after a lot of experience I found that I could catch many more of them than a better caster who lacked experience. I couldn't help the old guy enough, but I do know he thinks he'll become a master angler if he associates with famous fishermen, pays professionals to help him, and studies lures and flies constantly.

Fishing is a lot of little things. Learn the basics well and study the fish you're after. There are refinements in fishing but few really new things.

No question about the black bass being the most popular game fish of the country, but few bass chasers realize that the present range of bass has been largely established by man. The bass is adaptable, can survive in a wide variety of waters, and has been hauled almost everywhere in containers ranging from modern tank trucks to wooden buckets. Most of this planting happened so long ago that the specializations are forgotten and unrecorded. That has put them in all of the adjoining states, even into some lakes and streams where they aren't appreciated.

Another funny thing about bass. Although bass...
(Continued from preceding page)

fishing is considered a relatively crude pursuit by many freshwater trout fishermen, the biologists think the bass (really a sunfish) is the most intelligent of all inland game fish.

From time to time, I get letters from fishing boat users fuming over the bad manners of those who throw wakes in close quarters. For several reasons, the solution is not always new regulations, or even tighter law enforcement.

For one thing, regulations often consist of speed limits, and some of the boaters who obey the law to the letter completely ignore the spirit of the whole thing. I have lived on a small houseboat, have watched dishes hop about the shelves, have clutched frantically for a handhold while trying to sleep in a bunk, have learned my wife's cake had fallen, and have almost gone overboard.

Some of the boaters who obey the law may be delinquents. The judge should sentence each one to three nights aboard a small houseboat with no shore support. I once accosted a fellow with a speedboat and asked him if he could take it a little easier and he was offended. "This is a luxury boat," he said. "I can't run it slow enough to stop that wake. You just don't understand this business."

I was on the point of suggesting a pushpole or a paddle but realized I might as well be yelling down a gopher hole. Besides, he might have given me a fat ear. He was pretty young and awfully big.

However, I have a good suggestion for wake delinquents. The judge should sentence each one to three nights aboard a small houseboat with narrow bunks, and it should be anchored in a well-traveled waterway. There should be narrow shelves across the overhead with rotten eggs balanced along them. There should also be shelves below to come up with all sorts of reasons why they fish, and they are probably as long as anyone, and although I've had a split or two, nothing ever actually let go. The splits, I am arguing for common sense. A boat that would hardly cause a ripple at two miles an hour might sink a skiff at four, and vice versa.

Good manners are about all that can solve this. I once accosted a fellow with a speedboat and asked him if he could take it a little easier and he was offended. "This is a luxury boat," he said. "I can't run it slow enough to stop that wake. You just don't understand this business."

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Government agencies take notice.

Fishermen are supposed to be philosophers. If you get a bunch of them together they're likely to come up with all sorts of reasons why they fish, the reasons ranging from nature study to meat on the table.

At such a session the other day, I ran into a real rebel who, incidentally, is a pretty good angler. "I don't want to be a scientific fisherman," he complained. "I don't want electronic aid. I'm not interested in computerized bass. I'd rather go fishing and see what happens."

He isn't going to change the world, but his attitude is interesting. He says the experts are taking all out of the fun. Okay, okay.

Polarized eyeglasses are important fishing aids, and well-nigh essential in some of the Keys flats fishing. Like many other fishermen, I wear them constantly when the sun is bright. Some of them are built with visual correction put in. Polarized lenses don't bother me, and I have never had headaches or eye problems, but they tell me it's simply a matter of my eyes not being sensitive to certain rays such glasses do not filter out. Others have had a great deal of trouble with polarized lenses—and sometimes haven't isolated the trouble.

There's no question that polarized shades cut surface and sun glare. They're a host to sport fishermen. But not all eyes can tolerate them for constant wear. Try before you buy!

The story is this: Such lenses are "dark" glasses and they are "sun" glasses. They do not filter out some of the rays that other "sunglasses" do. If you have trouble with them, they just may not be satisfactory for constant wear, so think twice before spending a lot of money for correction glasses with common polarization.

Talk to an eye man. I'm not going to get over my head in this.

And now on the glass ferrules of recent years. If there was any doubt of their efficiency it's pretty well gone now. I find that some of the big-fish anglers who used to insist on one-pieces and the transportation problems be damned, are now happily wrestling the same fish with rods jointed by glass ferrules. I think I've been using them almost as long as anyone, and although I've had a split or two, nothing ever actually let go. The splits in each case were held together by rod wrappings. And lately I haven't even had those little breaks.

I'm not much of a cook—and it has been said I could starve to death locked in a supermarket—but from time to time someone comes up with a tip about fish cookery and I pass it on.

Robert N. Frickey, of South Pasadena, Fla., says he has found "the mosty taste of bluegills and small bass can be overcome by adding a teaspoon of sugar to the corn meal in which the fish are shaken."

Mr. Frickey also suggests that the fish can be better coated with salt and pepper if those are applied an hour before shaking them in the "moss bag." He explains this brings out a sticky substance which holds the corn meal on the fish.

It's no secret that small nymph flies (looking much like small wooly worms) are excellent panfish lures. The real nymph is a phase of insects which transform into flying creatures, and the little "flies" which imitate them also appear much like various subsurface creatures which don't turn into flies at all. For example, tiny freshwater shrimp can be imitated by ties that are usually called "nymphs." The term is more common among freshwater trout fishermen.

I've frequently mentioned a little green item produced by Al Klemack as being my favorite underwater bluegill fly. Its worst trouble is that it hasn't a catchy name, but it's been called a "greenie." I've had a number of letters about it. You can get it from Klemack. His address is: Al Klemack, Calusa Lodge, Inc., Route 2, Highway 78, Moore Haven, Fla. 33471.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

NOVEMBER, 1973
The undisputed king of game birds in these parts is the wild turkey, still available in good numbers throughout much of Florida's woods, riverbottoms, and farmlands. It has even been successfully reintroduced in areas from which it long ago disappeared. The most useful tool for managing wild turkeys is imitation of the natural cover conditions that existed in the old days, before the state's population build-up. Other factors that aid turkeys are protection of local flocks from overhunting, and preservation of pure blood lines by refraining from releasing game farm birds into the wild. All turkeys used in restocking good habitat in Florida are captured in the woods—the only source of true wild turkeys. The use of anesthetic drugs to collect them was pioneered by Florida research biologists.

Florida Wild Turkey

by Gene Smith

A prize 20-pound gobbler, left, begins life as an egg weighing just under 2 ounces, on the average. Turkey life history research by Commission biologists has revealed that the average clutch is 9.6 eggs per nest, that half the hens whose nests are lost to predators will nest again, and that turkey hens are picky about the type of cover in which they nest. They have similar tastes, however, so if a preferred vegetative type amounts to only 5% of the range, that's where the nesting will be heavily concentrated—a disadvantage in many respects. Ways may be found to scatter the nesters by enhancing nesting cover over larger portions of the range. Incubation usually requires less than 26 days for Florida turkeys, not 28, the accepted figure for many years.

Turkey Hunters study turkey habits. They know good habitat when they see it, and learn that flocks make feeding circuits, appearing in the same vicinity periodically. Favorite roosting sites are known also—an excellent place to be when the birds fly down. Other hunting methods are calling, or yelping, to fool scattered birds into approaching; and spring gobbler hunting, when the calling is designed to appeal to a mature male bird's mating instinct—the only time the old boy gets reckless.
people are learning from a long misunderstood and wasted species

New Look at the Gar

It has taken centuries, but at last the ugly, unwanted longnose garfish seems to be coming into its own. Biological scientists Dr. Dexter M. Easton and Dr. Gunther Gross at Florida State University are using the beak of the longnose gar (Lepisosteus osseus) for important research that may eventually have considerable application for medicine.

Sport fishermen like FSU's Dr. Harris Goldstein are enthusiastic about fishing for gar in Florida's lakes and rivers, especially in the summer months when other fresh water fish are somewhat quiescent.

The neurobiologists find the length of the gar's olfactory nerve (about 12 inches) of great advantage in studying the nerve impulse and the molecular support required by the nerve fiber (axon) to carry out its functions.

This vital nerve system, beginning in the receptor cells at the tip of the gar's nose, connects with its brain. Its function may not be unlike that of the human nervous system. Electrical impulses flash from the sensory organs along this amazing nervous system to the brain, which, in turn, sends messages to the muscles to react, if that's what the message requires.

"In addition to the length of the olfactory nerve, it is homogeneous and unbranched, containing relatively few satellite cells, which interfere with biochemical and biophysical investigation," explains Dr. Gross.

A nerve, like the rest of the body, is made up of a special arrangement of protein, fat, carbohydrates and other substances less familiar to the layman. How these substances are organized in a nerve, and what is happening in the molecules when electrical impulses travel along the nerve, is what this basic research is all about.

Dr. Gross points out that most injured nerve cells in humans can regenerate axons, or nerve fibers, but if one is cut in the spinal column, it does not. He hopes that, in time, the basic information on the molecular level—for which the gar is proving so helpful—will enable scientists to find some treatment or mechanism that can be used to regenerate the axons in the human spinal column. What a boon to mankind that would be! How many hopeless cripples perhaps could walk and work and play again.

To continue such research, the supply of longnose gar must be constant, but Dr. Easton worries about this.

"The way the gar population appears to have declined in some lakes and streams is not good. The fish not only is useful for research but is instrumental in maintaining a balanced fish population in the waters in which it lives," he says, and urges fishermen who catch gar to throw them back into the water instead of leaving them on the bank to die.

One fisherman who does just that is Dr. Goldstein. "I like the gar," he says with enthusiasm. "They are nearly always available. In the summer, when nothing else is around, you can always catch garfish."

Fisherman Goldstein finds the Ochlockonee River, west of Tallahassee, an excellent place to fish for longnose and spotted gar. Just below the dam there is a pool where he fishes for them frequently.

For sport fishermen like himself, he suggests using a long line with no weight or sinker, and using a small bream, or a piece of one, as bait. They can be caught with worms in the shallows.

(Continued on next page)
Hook the thread through the back, throw out the line, and let the bait sink to the bottom. Eight or nine inches of water in the channel is about right, as gar won’t bite when the river is high. It’s important that the amount of water coming through the dam be small, as a swift current will carry the bait downstream and it won’t stay on the bottom.

"See that the line remains free to run off the reel," Dr. Goldstein points out. "You should have a strike in a minute or two. When the fish picks up the bait, he continues, "let the line move off the reel slowly. Don’t jerk as you would with other fish. Let the fish go until he swallows the bait. Spit out the line, and let the bait sink to the bottom. Eight or nine inches of water in the channel is about right, as gar won’t bite when the river is high. It’s important that the amount of water coming through the dam be small, as a swift current will carry the bait downstream and it won’t stay on the bottom."

"The making of a dandy gar snare, above, one on 18-inch nylon salt nylon cord and a wire brush. Knot the end on shown, separate strands, then brush until ends resemble floss. A 4- to 8-pound quillfish is usually ready to give up within 10 minutes, reports Goldstein. He is shown at right playing a bass that had made a few runs!"

Dr. Goldstein, who learned this trick from Ed Lane, who runs Ed and Bernice’s Fishing Camp, below the Talquin Dam, recommends taking a soft nylon cord an eighth of an inch in diameter, cutting off a piece 14 to 18 inches long, doubling it, and tying a loose knot in one end. Fight him like you would a conventionally hooked fish.

"In most fishes, the air bladder is usually ready to give up within 10 minutes, reports Goldstein. He is shown at right playing a bass that had made a few runs!"

Dr. Branley Allan Brannon, of Eastern Kentucky University, writing in the Kentucky Happy Hunter-Grouse (July 1960), waxed poetic as he described an archaeological theory:

"Back in the dawn of time, nearly two hundred million years ago, a long time before man began to worry over what he was going to do with such hazards as fire, the seas were worried by some strange and curious bony fishes. The rains were falling on the land, and the seas were becoming saltier because of the salt eroded from the hills and mountains by streams and rivers that formed on every continent. These, they oddly formed fishes with long heads and insatiable hunger, were no longer fit to remain in oceanic habitats. Their prey and habitat gone, small groups of them found their way into estuaries, and there they encountered the mouths of freshwater streams. They went on gradually changing over the millenia."

Gar lives only in the panhandle, but the other five species are widespread throughout the state. These grotesque fish have in common a thin, lanky body, razor-sharp teeth and long noses—some longer than others—and are protected by thick, diamond-shaped (ganoid) scales not unlike armorplate. On a large gar, the tough protective covering is nearly impenetrable.

An unusual physical characteristic of the species is the extension of a lunglike air bladder, in addition to seemingly inefficient gills, enabling the gar to rise to the surface for gulps of air.

A well-known theory claims that fishes living in the geologic periods when the waters in which they lived were without dissolved gases—especially oxygen, necessary for life—all had lungs before they were transformed into the present air bladders.

Dr. Brannon writes, "In most fishes, the air bladder is a simple sac. However, in the bowfin, and in

(Continued on next page)
The eggs, being sticky, adhere to weeds and stones, hatching in about eight days. In a season, one female gar may lay 25 to 40 thousand yellowish eggs—which are highly toxic and should not be eaten under any circumstances.

For seven to 12 days, the larval gar, with a glob of yolk in its gut, remains motionless, attached by what is sometimes called a "cement gland," located at the tip of its snout, to weeds and other objects. It looks for all the world like a small floating stick.

After about two weeks, the small sticklike creature begins to look like a baby gar, as it works down mosquito larvae and other aquatic insects. By the end of the summer, the young fish are four to six inches long and their diet has changed to crayfish and other small fishes. Between three and five years, the gar achieves sexual maturity.

In 1969, scientists at the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Fisheries Research Laboratory at Eustis collected garfish from five central Florida lakes and made a study of the food habits of the adult gar.

Contrary to many fishermen's belief, it was found that gar eat mostly nongame forage fish—shad, catfish, various minnows and the like. Curiously enough, one half of the 988 gar stomachs examined proved to be empty, causing some to think that perhaps garfish are neither as aggressive nor as voracious as is generally thought.

Since researchers are beginning to agree that the gar has an important place in the environment, and that someday it may provide the clue to how a human axon can be regenerated in the spinal column, and since fishermen are beginning to find that catching gar year round is good sport, perhaps the ugly duckling will yet turn into a swan.

Let's hear it for the gar!

Garfishers Goldstein and Kettie, left to right, show off catch of largemouth spotted gar from the Ochlockonee River. A 12-pounder on a 4 pound test line could put up a 25-minute battle, they say. Goldstein once brought in 60-pound garfish on ultralight spinning tackle with 4 pound test line. It took him 35 minutes to catch that one! Photo by Wallace Hughes

WILDFLIFE OFFICER NOTES

OFFICER E. F. (EDDIE) REYNOLDS, 28, of Perry, was selected Wildlife Officer of the Year at the September meeting of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, held at Miami Beach. He was employed by the Commission in May 1967 and assigned to enforcement duty in Union County, where he served for a year before being transferred to his current assignment in Taylor County.

"Wildlife Officer Reynolds' selection for this honor was made on the basis of a number of factors, among them his consistently high employee performance evaluation," said Lt. Col. Brantley Goodson, chief of the Commission's law enforcement bureau, Tallahassee. "He has also played a major role in promoting and maintaining good relations between the Game and Fish Commission and sportmen, landowners, and the courts in his area," Goodson stated.

Before announcing the name of this year's outstanding officer, Commission Chairman Howard Odum recognized each of the regional candidates and commended them publicly for exemplary service to the Commission and the state, and for maintaining high standards of professionalism in the performance of their duties. The others were Jessie Carter, Northwest Region; Bill Lane, Everglades Region; David Albury, Central Region; and Jiminy Philpps, South Florida Region.

Officer Reynolds represented the Commission at the 27th Annual Conference of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Commissioners, which met at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in October. There, officer-of-the-year selectees from all 16 member states were recognized and further honored during the Law Enforcement Section meetings.

Reynolds is a native of Bonifay, Florida, and is married to the former Beth Dobbs, of Raiford.

The 1972 ALLIGATOR STATUS SURVEY has projected an increase of approximately 94% in the state's gator population since last year, according to a report compiled by Lt. Col. Brantley Goodson, chief of law enforcement. The 1972 estimate was 251,569, while the new total shows 337,708 alligators.

"This population trend is somewhat supported by other data submitted by our officers as a part of the survey," Goodson says. "For example, last year wildlife officers responded to 4,873 complaints about alligators. This year, the number totalled 6,438—an increase of 33%.

"Similarly, the previous survey figures showed there were 1,387 alligators killed by private individuals last year, as compared to 1,854 this year—a 34% increase. Also, wildlife officers cap-
Looking slowly around the small open field of winter rye, I scanned as much of the scenery as possible without turning my head. I was searching instead for wriggling my frosty toes inside three pairs of woolen socks inside my boots where the movement wouldn’t show.

Although I’d never been hunting before this year, my husband, Alan, has been an outdoorsman all his life and knows the ways of wildlife better than most hunters. From listening to his conversations, I developed a strong appreciation for the wise, sensitive whitetail, and I felt certain more hunters would bag deer if they’d only sit very still, watch closely, and listen attentively while in the forest.

Therefore, I struggled with my tired, cold body to be patient. I’d been sitting on a portable chair beneath a longleaf pine long before the first rays of sunlight had peeked over the winter-bare trees to melt the frost which covered this section of North Florida. My sandwiches and snacks were gone now, the sun shining on my left shoulder. I just knew I’d see something, but nothing moved.

I murmured softly to myself. “I told myself, and I’ve probably never get another chance at a buck. I’ve already missed two this season...”

I held my breath and concentrated all my attention to the end of a fruitless hunting season! I wish you see a buck. I’ve always thought it'd be neat to have a bobcat beneath a longleaf pine since long before the first leaves rustling in front of me. Looking in that direction, again trying desperately to see through the gathering dusk, I still saw only trees.

“Face it, Kathie. Even if there is a buck out there, you’re so nearsighted you couldn’t see it anyway! And just suppose that by some miracle you do see one,” I argued with myself. “Without the sun shining on its head, you won’t be able to tell whether it has horns or not!”

Halfheartedly, I forced myself to continue the slow, sweeping search with my eyes. I heard more rustlings but refused to get excited or change the pace of my search, trying to see as much as possible in the last few seconds before dusk settled completely.

Suddenly, as if from nowhere, I saw him! He looked like an elk, antlers seemingly everywhere, only about 50 yards downwind from me and partially hidden behind a pine sapling. His body was angled slightly away from me, and he was feeding nervously, dropping his head to the ground only long enough to grab a mouthful of the sweet rye, then jerking his head back up and turning it toward me and twisting it slightly as if to figure out what was wrong. It was obvious he knew I was there, but my outline was broken by the blind, making it difficult for him to pinpoint my location.

My heart hammered in my chest and my body quivered violently as I raised my Remington .243 quickly, but cautiously, to my shoulder and looked through the scope.

He’d glimpsed my movement!
and turkey. Opening day was full of excitement and apprehension. We were up before the roosters and on our way. The stars looked very chilly in the dark morning sky, and it seemed a great adventure being alone on the normally busy highway, passing only another vehicle or two full of hunters like ourselves along the way, everyone rushing to beat the sun to their private piece of woods.

Alan, as usual, had taken great pains to see that I was comfortable. He’d built me a special tree stand with foam rubber seats, wall-to-wall carpeting, and a broad gun rest overhanging a much-needed deer crossing. Bundled me up like a child, in long underwear, three pairs of socks, two sweaters, two pairs of slacks, a sweatshirt, and my parka. We also packed plenty of hot chocolate, sandwich cookies, and candy. It was obvious he didn’t want to take any chances on discomfort bringing about the end of my hunting career.

The stars were still twinkling as I watched Alan’s dark outline grow indistinct and finally blend into the darkness. I was all alone. Not a sound broke the wintry silence; even the breezes seemed to be asleep. At first, I strained through my sleepy eyes through the shrouded world, but no shadows moved, and gradually I sank into a state of calm contemplation—shivering, shushing, 25 feet in the air, breathing in the dewy dampness of the stately oak.

The first light of dawn crept silently across the treetops, and the leaves trembled gently before the awakening breeze. I was calm enough not to be spectator to the rebirth of the outdoor world. A flock of ducks flew formation overhead, unseen birds whistled and chirped at the dawn, and, to my delight, I watched a red-headed woodpecker, in his black and white tuxedo, hanging precariously from the side of a tree, and all the while, my mind was racing with thoughts of the morning and how soon it would be over for me.

I was about 9:30 when I saw, for the first time in my life, a wild deer. There were three of them. At first, I thought they were dogs, so little did they look from my lofty perch, and I cursed them miserably for scaring away any deer in the area. But something about the way they moved made me take a second look, and I seemed to have never before known what it was to be excited. My heart fairly stopped and my hands shook almost uncontrollably as I raised Alan’s 270 to my shoulder and looked through the scope. They were merely crossing the grassy road, but took their time, feeding as they meandered beneath me. I strained until my eyes hurt, but I could grow no horns on any of them. With a rush of disappointment, I laid the rifle back across my lap, careful not to bump it or make any noise, and watched the silent dogs and yearling until they slipped phantomlike into the woods at my right and out of sight.

Although I saw a total of 18 deer that first weekend, not one appeared to be a legal buck. Then, on the following Sunday afternoon, from off to my far left, a large, six-point buck trotted carelessly up the grassy road toward my stand. Excitedly, I watched with approach, and in all but one, he stopped almost directly in front of me, about 100 yards away. Trembling, I raised Alan’s rifle to my shoulder, rested it gently on the board across the front of my stand, placed the crosshairs just behind the deer’s right shoulder, and squeezed the trigger. The shot blistered the air, and in an instant the deer leaped over the fence and disappeared. My ears rang from the shot as I stared in astonishment at the empty place where a buck should have been lying. Evidently, I had flinched, or perhaps the deer had heard the shot 20 seconds before I fired. At any rate, he was gone.

(Continued on next page)
So it was impossible to hide my failure. In spite of my hidden excitement over the new rifle’s report and expected to see...
Learning some basics and using good tackle are two of the keys to becoming a successful angling partner, but having a genuine interest is the prime requisite.

Happily Ever After

Why more men take their wives fishing?

Ask Micki Henson this question and you'll get an emphatic lecture. She recently returned from a fishing trip to Panama with her husband, Ted, and 15-year-old son, Teddy. She's not staying home when there are fish to be caught! More important, her menfolk always want her to go. When there are fish to be caught! More important, her menfolk always want her to go.

Thousands of sportsmen's wives miss out on fishing fun and interesting trips, Micki says, simply because they don't learn a few fundamentals. Further, they fail to develop a relationship which strengthens family ties. They range far and wide with light tackle, or spend a few hours together in the afternoons on local ponds.

Family outings have so enriched her life that Micki tries to convert other wives. One of the first hurdles is for the prospective fishing female to understand the relationship between two male fishermen.

Let's take a practical example. Suppose two bass fishermen, one from Pensacola and the other from Miami, who had never seen each other before, happened to meet in Orlando and went fishing. With mutual understanding and no words exchanged, each would do his share of the work, or a little more. If one took the motor from the car to the dock, the other would take the gas tank and other gear. Each would try to see that the boat was kept in position so the other had favorable casting opportunities.

If Pensacola tied into a lunker bass, Miami would rush his lure in to prevent a tangle, pull up the anchor, grab the net and maneuver the boat to help Pensacola land the fish. It would be done automatically with no verbal communication necessary.

The two anglers, although they had just met, would operate as a team, each doing his own rigging, taking his own fish off the line, and always being solicitous of the other's welfare. Most females are unaware of this relationship, and if they are aware of it, they don't understand it.

Let's compare this with what would happen if Pensacola decided to take his wife on her first fishing trip. To begin with, he would have to load all the equipment at their home. His wife would insist on taking twice as much clothing and personal gear as necessary. When they arrived at the dock, he would have to do the launching and stow everything aboard while she either looked helpless or like a queen waiting patiently for her lackey to "note that barge, lift that bale."

It would be even worse when they reached the fishing grounds. She wouldn't know how to tie a swivel to her line, which plug to put on, or how to cast it. If she caught a fish, she'd be afraid

(Continued on next page)

By CHARLES DICKEY

Every outdoorsman's wife can use a little refresher course on techniques and the new fishing equipment from time to time. Here Micki Henson tells how to tie a snapper or permit, or understand the relationship between two male fishermen.

Every outdoorsman's wife can use a little refresher course on techniques and the new fishing equipment from time to time. Here Micki Henson tells how to tie a snapper or permit, or understand the relationship between two male fishermen.

(Continued on next page)
to take it off the hook, fearful of getting her clothes dirty, and on the next cast would nearly take Pensacola's head off. She wouldn't know how to string a fish and would show little interest in learning. He'd not be sure whether he was fishing or being trained as his wife's personal servant.

Please remember he is used to fishing with buddies who do their share of the work. If he asked his wife to bait her hook with a worm, she'd set femininity and coyness. When he suggested another lure, she'd probably refuse, wanting to keep the "cute" one on. It wouldn't be long until they'd be screaming at each other and headed for the dock. The noble experiment would've ended in failure, and both would be losers. There'd be no more trips together. He wouldn't ask her to go again, and she wouldn't go if he did.

Of course, Pensacola would have to share part of the blame along with his wife. The problem would never have happened if she had taken a few simple steps, Micki says.

Any woman with enough coordination to scratch her knee can learn to cast with a spinning reel in simple steps, Micki says. Her equipment as fine as her husband's, not some junk tackle picked up at a dime store, tackle the husband wouldn't dream of using. Micki prefers Cardinal models of open-faced reels for simplicity and ruggedness.

But who is to teach her? Ah, there's the rub. In most cases, it should not be her spouse. Husbands, notoriously impatient teaching wives mechanical skills such as driving, are likely to crash the project before it gets to the end of the runway. If possible, the wife should find an expert female angler to coach her. In lieu of this, perhaps she can find a neighborhood adult or teenager. The husband should be kept away from training sessions as he will contribute little other than sarcastic remarks.

Micki believes in giving a beginner the basics in safety. The students are shown how to handle hooks safely, and impressed with the danger of a treble hook. If the wife pops hubby in the head with a 1-ounce jig later on, the new togetherness may be shattered.

Micki prefers to start her students casting on dry land with a practice plug. There are several reasons. First, the backyard is convenient for lessons and frequent practice by the housewife when the husband is at work. There are few distractions, other than perhaps another housewife peeking through the fence. There are obstacles such as trees and shrubbery, and the value of accuracy is quickly learned.

There are several reasons not to start at a lake. Micki contends. The rest is applying the basics through serious practice. Both "wet" and "dry." A sound rule: practice in short sessions. Quit before you lose.

Many students are not taking their casting practice seriously, she says. They don't understand the importance of spending an hour or two each day practicing, just to keep their hands in condition. After a few weeks, the student is taken fishing. Micki says, "They should keep working on the basics until they feel comfortable and confident. In the meantime, they should learn some nomenclature for lures and accessories. They should learn to take rods apart and to put reels on. If they can work an electric washer, this is a snap."

Before the first fishing trip, Micki gives her students a talk on clothing. She believes in dressing for fishing, not for a style show. "You can't take a fish off the hook if you're worried about getting slime and scales on your clothes," she laughs.

Micki leaves home with clean clothes when she goes fishing, but they're clothes she is not worried about ruining. She prefers slacks or blue jeans and sneakers—practical clothing and footwear. For long trips on open water in brilliant sun, she frequently wears a sunbonnet. Ted kids her about this, calling her "Sunbonnet Sue with a cigarette holder." Micki could care less. She's more interested in not getting sunburned than "trying to dress like Vogue."

It's important that the student catch a fish on the first trip, and Micki plans it with care, always trying to go at a favorable time of day when the best signs are out that the fish are hitting. Nothing gives the student-wife more confidence than catching a fish on her own, and nothing is as likely to excite her into a lifelong case of fishing fever.

If the fishing happens to be slow, Micki does her best to land one to keep spirits up. She also keeps a wary eye on her student's casting. The novice might get so anxious to catch a fish that she begins to fling the plug rather than cast it. When this happens, Micki says, "Hold everything!" and the student is given a refresher in basic casting.

A critical moment comes when the student must remove a plug from a largemouth bass or some other fish. It's a squeamish job to most female students.
If she is on unusually good terms, she might say, "James, dear, why are so many of your bass plugs blue or white when bass are more attracted to red, or even yellow?" This is guaranteed to let hubby know something has been going on.

But, you might say, "how does the wife get the invitation to go fishing with her husband?" If you ask that question you are not a married man. Wives have their own sneaky ways.

Micki Henson, a lovely feminine angler, doesn't need to ask her husband's help. Maybe she can even show him some better ways to tie knots. Or, if she had to tell him in order to get his tackle, he may have brushed it off as another passing fancy and forgotten about it.

There are several ways of getting hubby's attention, once the wife is approaching graduation. At dinner she might casually open the conversation by asking, "James, dear, could you please clarify for me the relative merits of the drag systems of bait, closed-faced, and open-faced spinning reels?" This should not be said while hubby has a mouthful of meat—he might choke.

If conditions permit, Micki tries to go fishing two or three more times with the student, using a boat or casting from the bank. She continues to check the student on basic technique of casting, or three more times with the student, using a spine in the hand, and give them a pair of pliers he may have brushed it off as another passing activity she might not be aware of his wife's secret activities.

This might not be recommended procedure with all husbands. •

The wisely pursued art of angling knowledge should include lessons about the different types of artificial lures and not necessarily brand names. Bunt y inquired at the right source, judging from looks of Micki's well-stocked tackle box. The short session on simple lures should be a map for one interested in learning!

The professionally pursued art of gunning knowledge should include lessons about the basic types of firearms triggers. One can be sure you will find such simple trigger mechanisms in many shotguns, and autoloading rifles.
of triggers, they may be of single or double trigger mechanism. Where double set-triggers are used, the triggers are operated by other, with the rear trigger usually being the one that is pushed forward to "set" the mechanism. Once the setting trigger has cocked a spring-powered lever, only light pressure is needed to release the sear and cause firing. The light touch the shooter gives the front trigger causes the rear one to let go and cause firing. The light touch the shooter gives the sensitive sear.

In some firearms with set-triggers the forward trigger is the one that is set. Again, there are fire-arms in which only one set-trigger is incorporated. To adjust any type of set-trigger calls for knowledge of the different types and their working principles. Gun owners should leave all such work to a professional gunsmith, preferably one who has done considerable work on European firearms, particularly German and Austrian competitive-type target rifles.

The fifth class of triggers consists of those used in auto-loading pistols. Most are complex mechanisms, with sears, links, intermediate sears, and other parts that must be precisely adjusted and honed where a lighter, smoother trigger pull is the gunsmith's objective. It's easy to make the trigger pull on an automatic pistol too light. Too much play in pivots, levers, and various models of Colt automatics are apt to give even a careful gunsmith a headache before satisfying results are achieved. I prefer to leave needed work on such triggers to master gunsmith Frank Pachmayr of Pachmayr Gun Works, 1610 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90015. Any federally licensed firearms dealer can arrange to ship and receive any firearm sent through the mail for repair, and understand the cost is charged to his customer. Besides, the cost of actual gunsmithing and shipping charges.

Similarly, it is better to replace a worn or faulty trigger assembly instead of attempting to rejuvenate it. Complete, ready-made, improved assemblies are available for a variety of models of military and competitive type military sporting rifles and shotguns. Quite popular are the Timney and Canjar precision triggers, made for specific models.

The Timney triggers, available direct from Timney Manufacturing Company, 5624 Imperial Highway, South Gate, California 90280, come in models that can be fitted to all .30 caliber Springfield rifles, 12 and 16-gauge shotguns, and late series M1919 98 actions. Of single-stage type, they are fully adjustable for crisp trigger pull, and have long, useful lives. Timney triggers fit any model of your choice, whether a single internal assembly. Because of fewer component parts, the average monocular is more compact and generally lighter in weight than binoculars, and it costs less.

The latest style in monocular is the straight housing version made by Bushnell and by Bausch & Lomb. The Bushnell monoculars come in 7 x 25, 8 x 25, and 10 x 25 models, and the Bausch & Lomb units in comparable designs.

Prior to marketing its straight-style monocular, Bushnell made several models with the old "dog leg," offset-style housing, as did B & L. The introduction of the modern straight-barreled compacts, with light, strong magnesium bodies, has pushed the "dog leg" off the market, but there are a lot of them still in service. They were made to last.

HANDGUN GRIP FIT is as important to the handgunner as correct stock fit to the rifleman and shotgunner. A handgun grip that has such grip length and shape that it tends to mold itself to the contours of the shooter's hand will greatly in­crease shooting skill.

Unfortunately, handgrips on some auto-loading pistols are substantially short. To a shooter who has a large hand, such grips invariably feel uncomfortable short. Usual solution is to replace the factory handgun grips with custom grips that fill the hollow handle of an autoloading handgun, but often due to bent clip lips or faulty clip magazine springs, the tightest clip can be given a starting pull by slipping a hook through the screweye.

When the change is made, the new pistol-grip side panels extend below the handgun's metal frame, making the cartridge clip slow or hard to remove for loading. But this annoyance is minor compared to the enhanced performance that will accrue from having handgun grips that truly fit the hand.

Custom grips can be accurately tailored by any competent professional supplier, or by the shooter himself if he takes time to first make a working model by removing side panels and putting a large lump of pliable dental wax or modeling clay on each side of the metal frame, then grasping the handgun firmly as in shooting.

Custom grips are carefully removed from the handgun's frame and used as models for sculptured creations in walnut, stag­horn, plastic and other suitable handgun grip materials. If you don't want to tackle the job yourself, Steve Herrett, Box 741, Twin Falls, Idaho 83301, can custom make grips for you. If you are buying a completely new handgun, or if your eyes don't work together as a team, then binoculars—even the best—may not give full performance. A gun that is purchased in part through mail by you by a competent supplier, or a single barrel viewing instrument, is recommended.

Physically and structurally, a monocular is simply half a binocular. It has a single objective lens, single erecting system, a single ocular lens, and a single stage eye piece. Because of fewer component parts, the average monocular is more compact and generally lighter in weight than binoculars, and it costs less.

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Ranger Loses Life

The killing of a National Park Service ranger who was on patrol looking for poachers in Point Reyes National Seashore in California recalls the long struggle to conserve and protect wildlife and lands against law violators, notes Ronald H. Walker, director of the National Park Service.

Kenneth C. Patrick, 49-year-old father of four, was found dead near his truck on a remote, windswept stretch of the park's sandy beaches and lagoons, its Douglas firs and the great plumed birds of the wetlands. Staffers who had heard Patrick call out to a passing motorist to help him deal with poaching (although the gators there are no longer a problem) were surprised by his absence in such a remote place.

Patrick was one of the 3,400 park rangers who work in the 350 national parks and monuments of the United States. He had worked on Park Service payroll since 1959 and was employed on the Point Reyes Unit since its establishment in 1968. He had been making a predawn patrol in his pickup truck, which still sat empty in the sand today, when a passerby noticed a blanket and saw the note he had left:

"I will be one hour. Do not come this way. Patrick.

"I love you family and friends."

"Test сахолони навукоў.

"G.L.

"12:05 a.m."

"Take care of your son."

"Rattlesnake Roundups"

Concern over the increasing numbers of "rattlesnake roundups" in Florida has prompted the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to remind sponsors and participants of the laws regarding such activities.

According to Dr. O. E. Frye, director of the Commission, Florida law requires that the sponsor of such an event be bonded and have a permit to display poisonous snakes, and that each participant in the hunt have a permit to possess or collect poisonous snakes.

Frye expressed concern for the safety not only of the participants in such "roundups," but also for the safety and well-being of the reptiles. "Rattlesnakes are the most timid of all snakes and do not react well to unfamiliar surroundings," he said.

On another front, "poisonous snakes" are not the only danger to wildlife in Florida. The state is also grappling with the problem of "rattlesnake poisoning." Dr. A. E. Ogden, of St. Petersburg, chief medical consultant for the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, has seen a number of cases of poisoning in recent months. "The victims are generally young children who have been bitten by rattlesnakes," he said. "The symptoms include fever, vomiting, and potentially death."

"The commission is currently studying the problem and will issue a formal report in the near future," he added.

"Shooting for Disabled"

The Disabled in our nation have participated in many sports, such as archery, fishing, bowling, fishing, and camping. But one sport suited for the physically handicapped person has been largely overlooked: the sport of shooting.

"Programs are being developed by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services to provide recreational shooting for disabled citizens," notes Harry Beasley, of Tallahassee, program supervisor for the DIHRS. "With little or no modification of facilities or equipment most any person, regardless of the disability, can participate in this sport. Even the paraplegic and gunshot victim, as Beasley observes, can serve as a volunteer instructor.

"Park Visitors Increase"

More than 10 million people visited Florida state recreation areas, and historic sites during fiscal 1972-73, reports Randolph Hodes, executive director of the state Park Commission. The number of campers staying at state parks increased by 2.25 percent, with 1,448,055 overnight visitors reported.
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White-tailed Buck

Photo By Leonard Lee Rue III