Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

Fish's Sense of Smell

The fish's sense of smell has a profound influence on its daily life:
- Odor perception is often used more than sight in directing it to its food. Sharks smell blood a long distance away and swim to the bait, chewing it off or eating it whole.
- Cut bait, chopped fish or fish blood is an effective way of attracting many game and food fishes to the net or hook.
- So highly developed is the American bull's sense of smell that it can detect greatly diluted substances, as low as one-billionth of a drop of B-phenyl ethyl alcohol in a liter swimming pool.
- Some fish, like the salmon, migrate to their breeding grounds guided by sense of smell.

Florida Wildlife Scrapbook • Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

The Cover
The largemouth bass has earned its reputation as one of America's great sport fishes. The species is fair game the year around in Florida. To boat trophy-sized bass with any degree of regularity requires know-how. A touch of luck doesn't do a bass fisherman any harm, either. See page 24.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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In This Issue
- The Chairman Comments
- Fishing
- Ivy — Look But Don't Touch
- Hunting
- Conservation Scene

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- The Chairman Comments
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- Ivy — Look But Don’t Touch
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EARLY IN LIFE, HAROLD MOELLER was introduced to the joys of outdoor Florida. By the time he was four, he had landed his first fish, under the guidance of his father, Bruce, a Tampa Electric Company public relations man and an outdoor enthusiast. Harold’s interest in outdoor matters grew with the years. When he took up drawing, during his early school days, it seemed only natural that wildlife should be the theme of most of his pencil and brush work. His later-developed interest in photography followed the same lead.

By MORRIS SHAW

In a relatively short period the art of wood engraving nearly passed from the scene. Harold Moeller, shown at work on a woodcut in his home studio, left, is striving to refine his technique in the old craft. Pulling a print from an inked woodcut, above, is final step in process.
Then there came a Christmas season a while back and Harold started thinking of a way to produce a Christmas card more personal than the mass-produced, store-bought variety. Linoleum block printing sounded like a good way to go.

From that beginning, his interest expanded into engraving and other aspects of the printer's trade, especially in the development of techniques in photo offset lithography. In that direction he is currently enrolled in the printing course at Lively Vocational-Technical School in Tallahassee.

In the meantime, he continues to develop his technique in the nearly-lost art of wood engraving. Up until the turn of the century, reproduction of newspaper and magazine illustrations was done with hand-engraved woodcuts. Booming technology in the printing field soon relegated the art of wood engraving to limbo.

But to a few dedicated artists, the craft is an art form deserving preservation. Harold agrees and devotes much time and effort toward developing his own abilities in the art. That he is progressing well in that direction is attested by his recent efforts, some samples of which are presented here.

RACCOON

BIRD DOG WITH QUAIL

AMERICAN COOT

LIMPKIN

LEAST BITTERN

BLOCK PRINTS BY HAROLD MOELLER

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

APRIL 1976
I. Fishing, or going fishing. Except for one group of people who are thinking about the 1976-77 hunting season, the personnel of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission...

Actually, work on the upcoming season begins before the present hunting season is even over. Around December, proposed guidelines for season dates and bag limits are being formulated by field personnel. Some regulations, such as for migratory birds, have to wait until August or September.

U.S. Forest and Fish, and Wildlife Service, which can mean a wait until August or September. This set of guidelines and suggestions goes to the staff of the Commission, where rule changes are discussed, along with trends in populations and harvest. When this set is finally agreed upon, it forms the basis for the proposals brought before the citizenry in February and March, when annual public hearings are held throughout the state.

At the 18 public hearings just past, the Commission went to the sportsmen to ask for their opinions and comments on the proposed regulations. What came out of these meetings is now being incorporated into the rules and regulations that will be considered by the Commission at its April meeting.

By adopting the hunting and fishing rules so far in advance, the Commission is providing a "people service," according to law, for a year begins July 1 and ends June 30. When new licenses go on sale June 1, it is only fair that the public knows then, not two months later, the rules are for that year.

To get these approved regulations in printed form by the first of June is always a race against the clock. Not only must the sportsmen have accurate regulations, but the printed summaries of rules, season dates and bag limits must be available for distribution by tax collectors and license agents.

The sportsmen and tax collectors preparing printed materials has become enormous and fraught with potential hang-ups—copy can be misplaced, dates can be wrong, and, horror of horrors, the presses can break down.

All this frantic worry is just to help out the sportsmen in Florida. At one time, the Commission did try to set fishing regulations early and wait until late summer to set hunting dates. This proved not only economically unfeasible—having to do two separate prints—but many times the hunting information was not back from the printers until the season had begun.

When you stop and think about it, there are some hunting seasons which do get under way as early as July in Florida. Fox, raccoon, and bobcat are among them. Archery and marsh hen seasons in September are really just around the corner.

Admittedly, the Commission does not have the total picture of wildlife production in April when the regulations are approved, so, from a wildlife standpoint, waiting until later in the year might be better.

But emergency orders can be issued to cover any given situation. This past year, for example, such an emergency order was necessary to open a fall turkey gobbler season in that portion of the state south of Alligator Alley. When the original regulations were approved, the status of the turkey in that part of the state was not clear enough to allow reopening of the single-sex season. As fall hunting season approached, the picture looked good and an emergency order was issued prior to the start of the season.

Once the general framework of hunting season has been approved, the wildlife management folks still have a large task ahead of them: wildlife management area regulations. The management area stamps go on sale along with hunting and fishing licenses in June, a necessary step prior to applications to apply in time for their quota hunt permits.

This year there are 43 wildlife management areas to work with. In March, wildlife management personnel begin compiling recommendations on regulations for each of these areas. Many of their proposed regulations are based on sportsmen's suggestions received at the series of public meetings.

These initial recommendations must go to each of the regions, where they are discussed, debated, added to, subtracted from, and then sent back to the Tallahassee office for more work. Sometimes the situation in a management area can change within one month's time. A landowner can ask for certain parts of the area to be taken out of the system, or perhaps add more land. Maps of the area need to be drawn accurately for the hunter, and regulations clearly defined.

These recommendations then go to the Commission, and at that meeting the public is again invited and urged to come forward just as they did at the earlier public hearings and discuss any proposed changes in the regulations.

Once these regulations are approved, they must go through the printing process so, hopefully, when the archery season opens, each and everyone concerned will have the regulations in hand.

When it all comes down, the real reason behind setting regulations early is the sportsmen of this state. The Commission endeavors each year to let people know in plenty of time what the upcoming season has in store for them. That way, a sportsman can make his plans for hunting far enough in advance to help insure an enjoyable trip.

Fisherman's Luck

When it comes to catching fish, maybe it really is a matter of holding your mouth right, like the old timers used to tell us as kids.

I am not an addict of cute stories about fishing luck, even though I know there's quite a bit of it around. I do not figure my luck through the years and have come to some conclusions you might bear with.

Day in and day out, I think I have been an unlucky fisherman—but before you chortle about my blaming luck when lack of skill is the culprit, I'd like to add that when it really matters, the "red gods" (don't hear much about them any more) have smiled benignly on my efforts. Before I tell of the unlucky days, I'll confess that when I've gone to distant and expensive waters to garner a story for publication and really needed a fish or two, the fish has invariably come forth.

Blugilis are good targets for light fly equipment.

By CHARLES WATERMAN

That happened when I went to British Columbia, found the rivers out of condition, and went fishless for a week, only to catch a 20-pound steelhead just before giving up. It happened when I went to Argen­ tina and seemed to be snake bit, unable to catch a trout big enough for pictures until the last few days when a 6-pounder finally grabbed my fly, probably out of sympathy. It has happened when I went off shore and the sailfish finally snarled my bait and posed for pictures just as the trip was ending. It also happened when I caught the two smallest sturgeon I've ever measured those incidents only to build up for some of the times when I simply couldn't win, break even, or even make a showing.

Last winter, my wife and I went down to Okeechobee to fish for bass. It was the right time of year for them to be on a rampage, but we had a little cold snap and things were pretty slow. Now Debbie fishes bass just as well as I do, but probably no better. Through the years, one of us will catch about as many as the other, and we don't compete; we never have. If Debbie is having a slow day, I try to help her, and she does the same thing for me.

We arrived in midafternoon and went out for a little while before dark. Debbie caught two bass on a spoon and a half a dozen strikes that were short. I tried the spoon and some other things and had no strikes at all. The next day we fished at another rate from morning to night, both using spoons and Debbie giving me first shot at everything as we drifted over the grass. She caught four nice bass, one small one, and had about a dozen strikes. That's typical of our experiences with spoons in the scrubbery—poor hooking ratios.

Well, while Debbie was catching her fish and grum­bling about missed strikes, I had one half-hearted plop and one strike which I didn't hook. On our last day of fishing was really poor. Debbie caught only one fish and having two missed strikes, I had nothing, ending with a zero score.

Assuming that we fish about the same, as past scores would indicate, that is a pretty hard trip to figure. Since they say a coin will come up heads very close to half the time if you toss it a thousand times, think I was being a bit unlucky.

Fellow named John Herrell lives over at Lake City, where he's now retired. Forty years ago, John and I both lived in Kansas and took a float trip on James River, down in the Ozark Mountains, about...
A hundred miles from our homes, John was a fine fly fisherman who had no experience at all with a baitcasting outfit, and that was what we decided to use on our all-day float. I promised he'd like it. We hired a kid to paddle the johnboat and went to it. Johnny will agree with me that he was a lousy fly caster and tiny lures don't do that very well.

We decided to use an all-day float. I promised proper eddies while John was lucky to get them into plug casting. His range was about 20 feet and a back-casting outfit, but had plenty of experience, getting the lures to the edges and to the proper eddies while John was lucky to get them into the water. I caught a string of smallmouths within 20 feet from the boat, and neither of us has any explanation to this day. I caught a fish when I imitated Johnny, which wasn't too hard. Then when we were transferring our gear from the boat to our car, somebody stole most of my tackle.

There's no doubt that unknown variables enter into such strange affairs, and it probably isn't luck as much as accident. Somebody does something with his lure and he doesn't know he's doing it. If he planned it, that's skill. If it just happens, it's a mixture of luck and accident, and both may be the same thing.

It's in shad fishing I've seen the wildest examples of lopsided fortunes. I once watched two men who had waded into the St. Johns River with spinning rods and they cast the same distance, they used the same lures, and one of them caught all the fish. He caught them in rapid succession. They changed positions and tackle and it was the same results before. At first it was a joke and then they were both trying to solve the problem. They never did, at least not that day.

It was at the same spot I had a traumatic experience with Ray Dooneeberger. We were experimenting with shad flies and he was catching all the fish. At first I couldn't understand it. We had our gear out and I decided to try shad flies, but we matched our gear to eliminate that variable. I mimicked each of his casts and we continually changed places. He missed a lot of strikes but he caught seven shad and I had one strike I think was a crappie. The following day, I was back at the same spot with the same equipment but no new ideas. I started casting back but things had changed. I quit when I had caught and released seven shad. Nothing had changed but my luck.

It makes you feel better if you talk about it.

**SMOOTH DRAGS ARE HIGHLY PRIZED in all kinds of reels, and I held the idea that a drag knot which a drag starts to turn is just as important as how evenly it delivers restraint after it is rolling. The initial inertia is bound to be the same water.

It varies greatly with individual reels, but I experimented the other day with what I thought was an especially smooth drag. I set it with scales and found that it paid off line steadily at a pull of 1½ pounds. But each time the slippage was started, the fish pulled up 20 feet or more without even making a run. I guess I'll have to get a better one.

But the strongest line you can get may not get a bass out of thick weeds if the rod is soft. By the time you've bent the stick enough to move him, he's already dug in. And a fish is easier to get headed toward the boat if you're using a fast-moving lure. The reason's simple: the fast lure already has your line tant and you may be able to keep the victim coming. With a surface lure you may have a lot of slack to take up and your fish is rolling up in the gun while you do it.

**THE NILE PERCH, a big African predator fish, is being considered for introduction to some Texas waters that have been abnormally warm by industrial use. Earliest reports state the fish cannot survive the winter temperatures of natural Texas lakes and is therefore a safe subject for experimentation. The perch is commonly known as a food fish. But perch 200 people can be produced in a day, and are said to reach 300. I see no record of their being caught on artificial lures, but plenty have been taken on bait with rod and reel.

**THE SILVERSides are the most frequently caught saltwater fish, according to a survey by the National Marine Fisheries Service. The survey, which covered both sport and commercial fishing, lists the 15 most frequent catches in this order: Striped seatrout, croakers, sea catfishes, flatfishes and flounders, mackerels, puffers, spot, jacks, bluefish, pogies, kingfishes, drum, perchs, snappers, and striped bass.

**THE BUSINESS OF FISHING OVER SPawning beds has been kicked around for so long it's hard to come up with a new argument for either side, especially when both arguments are concerned. I have been interested in similar disagreements about brown trout.

Fact is that in some localities a great many brown trout spawn in very small areas. It's a simple matter of their living in big rivers or deep lakes where there's no satisfactory spawning bottom and when the time comes, they crowd into what desirable area is available, tighter in a shallow stream where they're highly available to fishermen.

In this case the biologists are wondering if hook-and-line fishing applied to such congregations of ready takers isn't producing too much pressure. Brown trout in a spawning stream are in a striking mood too. Some such areas have been closed during spawning time, and there may be more of that. Like bass, brown trout produce a lot of eggs.

One female could stock a good piece of water if all of the fry matured, but fishing the beds removes a lot of the most desirable fish.

This is a little backlash from the theory that if you have the habitat you'll have the fish, regardless of what you do with rod and reel.

**THE BEST FLORIDA BLUEGILL fishing comes in the spring, especially when the fish are actually feeding. Having pursued them for a number of years with fly rods, and occasionally with light spinning gear, I'll make some observations that I think most bluegillers will agree with.

Although there are times when surface bugs will take many more fish, I have found a sunken nymph or 'woolly worm' the most consistent. Depth is important, and the sinking time should be noted carefully if you're going to score regularly. I think color is important in a sunken fly, and I've done best with yellow, dark green, and black. I think it's of minor importance with surface bugs and sponge-rubber spiders.

Rubber legs seem to be a big help in attracting bluegills by pepping them up so when the lure moved very slowly. Nearly all sponge-rubber lures have rubber legs.

Although bluegills will sometimes strike a few feet from a boat, they can be spooky in shallow water. In fishing beds, visible as light areas on the bottom, I've found the catch increased remarkably when I did my casting from a distance.

Some shorel ine casters for bluegills are fishing beds when they don't know it, especially in canals and creeks. A bluegill is often framed out on a steeply-sloping bank if it's the right kind of bottom.

On warm evenings, the best bluegill time tends to be about dusk. I've seen many bluegills in Florida begin their evening activities somewhat later than bass do. They operate on the surface then, and the same fish that you've caught during the day with deep flies or lures may be on top as evening comes on. Some of the most efficient panfishermen will use ultralight spinning lures for their deep fishing and will go to fly-rod bugs at dusk.

It's hard to find a fly that's too small for bluegills to take, but very small ones can be gulped so deeply they're hard to get out. Most of the bluegills I've caught have been from Number 8 and 10 hooks, large enough that they generally catch in the mouth rather than in the throat or gills.

Surface bugs on Number 4 or Number 6 hooks will serve for good-sized bluegills and bass at the same time.
A FLORIDA BASS ANGLER can catch, release, and stretch a 5-pound bass into a 10-pound hawg if given sufficient listeners, but if he brings that 5-pounder to the dock, he’s stuck with a recorded weight. A gleeful alternative is catching a lunker, releasing same, and returning later to rehook and enjoy the same fighting fish the next day.

In hopes of providing longer and more enjoyable hours of fish tales around campfires and fireplaces, it’s time to dispense the secrets of releasing alive those bass not destined for the frying pan or the trophy wall.

First, let’s break down our bass into three basic categories, with first place going to that bruiser you off it’s Lime to dispense the secrets of releasing alive those bass not destined for the frying pan or the trophy wall.

Second Chance Bass

up to two or three pounds. These make up the finest eating fish available to man or beast.

This puts the bassman in a position of fishing for big trophy bass for the wall mount, a mess of pan-fried filets to top off a platter of hushpuppies and grits, or the best of all possible bassin’ worlds, where the quarry is located, hooked, fought, released, and may be awaiting that first cast the next trip out.

Although reams of copy have been printed concerning the when, where, how, and why of actually catching that elusive Florida bucketmouth or some of his finny relatives, too few fishermen take the time to ask the right questions, both the how and the why, concerning handling, hook removal, and release of their fish back to that watery habitat.

The easiest way to begin a fish release program is simply to provide your hooked bass with a bit of slack line and let him do the releasing himself. Since most anglers have inadvertently done this (usually on the “biggest bass you ever saw . . .”), details on this method will be mercilessly deleted. Instead, we’ll speak of the good fish fancy bass above frying pan size that clamps down on a baited hook or lure, allows the angler to complete the job by driving a hook point well into the jaw, and eventually decide his battler has earned the right to fight another day.

Fisheries Biologist Frank Morello, of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, himself an avid bassman, detailed the biological makeup of the protective overcoat a bass wears. It consists of a mucous layer over the scales, secreted by the fish through his skin, which prevents bacterial organisms, skin parasites, internal parasites, fungi, and germs from reaching the skin and underside of the scales. This is, in effect, a buffer substance for protection.

The ease with which this coating can be disturbed is the direct problem involving the bass, and the bass fishermen who involve themselves in the ever-growing fish-on-the-worm-‘em-or-grow-em—turn-‘em-loose-school of thought.

In Florida’s warm waters, and the attendant pollution problems therein, the protective coat of a bass reacts to a breaching of the defenses in the same manner a human being reacts to an open cut on the skin. Without a form of protection, the possibility of infection is real and dangerous. It’s just a bit more difficult to put Band-Aids on a 7-pound bass and expect them to stick.

A situation often occurs where an angler leaves a largemouth clear of the water, flops him into the boat, then tries to put his rod away with one hand, move the bait bucket, the tackle box, and the cooler with another hand, and still pounce upon that flopper under his feet. Rather than being a Laurel and Hardy comedy skit, the event is likely to sound the death knell for that fish regardless of the angler’s intentions to release it.

Whether it’s rough wood, smooth glass, or artificial turf, the bouncing bass will jar and scrape off his skin, with the attendant release of that mucous from his body. And despite his battler has earned the right to fight another day.

By ROSS PARSONS

Second Chance Bass

here’s how you can get more mileage out of every bass you catch
The longer you battle that fish before releasing him, the more stress the fish is put under and the lower his survival chances. Assuming the bass is taken on tackle of sufficient strength, and is soon brought to the boat or beach, Morello warns, "A wet hand gently applied will do much less damage than a dry one, and could very well make the difference between survival or slow death to a fish."

One of the best methods of latching onto the bass you plan to release is to get him quickly to the boat, wet your hand, insert your thumb into his mouth, and lift straight up. The weight of the suspended bass will introduce a temporary paralysis, and the hook or lure can be removed with little difficulty. "Some folks have tried the 'belly lift' method, but it isn't too beneficial to the fish," Morello says. "It's fine if you want to do it to get the fish into the boat, since you just lift with the palm of your hand under the fish's stomach and push his internal organs against his back, which also induces paralysis. The problem comes back to putting too much of your skin against too much of the mucous covering, and once again you have removed his protection."

The thumb lift, coupled with keeping the fish out of the water for as short a time as possible, perhaps just long enough to snap a bragging picture, can contribute greatly to a satisfactory fish release program.

Tournament bass fishermen are discovering that the interest in releasing a catch after the weigh-in has produced several refinements in the technique. Most of the major bass tournament promoters have jumped on the bandwagon to return as many live fish to the water as possible. Aerated live wells are required on most boats, and the operators are scheduling the bulk of their tournaments during the cooler months of the year, which helps keep the fish alive during a long tournament day.

Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission biologists monitoring tournaments tested different chemical additives for use in the live wells to reduce infection and fungus problems. Weigh-in procedures at tournaments now include the use of plastic bags with aerated water, plus the grommeted containers, coupled with smooth and rapid transfer from live wells to scales to a return to the original waters. All this has greatly increased fish survival rates.

In March of 1972, Ray Scott's Bass Anglers Sportsman Society introduced a program called "Don't Kill Your Catch." Started at their national tournament on Lake Kissimmee, the program followed the ideals of Trout Unlimited with their creed of "Limit Your Kill, Don't Kill Your Limit."

The trout fishermen were well ahead of the bassmen as their lack of interest in tournament-style fishing, plus the use of single-hook lures and flies, permitted an angler to slide his hand down the leader, grip the hook, and often allow the trout to swim free without ever having been touched, and perhaps even before it knew it could have been somebody's dinner that day.

The Florida bassman, on the other hand, armed with 20-pound test line, rods with enough backbone to deal with tough grass and weeds, and as many as nine hook points on a single surface plug, would surely be asking for trouble should he run bare hands down the line to the gaping maw of a big largemouth and try to unhook four or five of those hook points. It could easily turn into a question of who was catching whom.

With the ever-increasing popularity of the plastic worm, many tournament anglers are utilizing the single hook, buried weedless in the plastic of the artificial lure. If the bass is lip hooked, the thumb lift permits the angler to ease out the hook. Too long a delay between feeling the tap-tap-tap of the bass picking up the worm and the actual strike to set the hook can result in a hook buried deep within the innards of the fish. Regardless of your feelings, intent, or desire, that hook cannot be removed without serious damage and probable death to the fish. This is a situation where you keep the fish regardless of size.

The in-between hooking where a 6/0 Sproat hook is driven into the hard cartilage of the upper jaw and out through the top of the mouth generally means you will take so long, and have so much trouble, removing the hook that you'll have a dead fish on your hands long before you could attempt to release him. He belongs on the stringer along with the small, gut-hooked one and those that managed to swallow the whole lure.

Manufacturers regularly come along with mechanical gadgets designed to hold a fish while releasing the hook. Catfishermen often use a clamp device to hold a fish while operating. Bream fishermen sometimes use towels, rags, and plastic gloves with gripping sections to immobilize the fish and avoid getting a spine stack deep into his or her own hide. The bass fisherman who uses one of these gadgets and then attempts to release the fish is generally wasting his time.

Grippers, with the added pressure and leverage of the mechanical tools, can injure internal organs without the angler realizing it, and the metal or plastic can easily remove a good portion of both mucous and skin from the bass.

Gaffs, nets, grabbers and the like are designed with the idea of putting a fish into the boat and keeping him there until he is iced down in a cooler or strung and flipped over the gunwale.

The bass angler will generally admit the chase is the best part of the game. Locating the fish, determining what lure or bait will attract its attention, and actually seeing a bigmouth bass or two churn a yard of lake surface into foam—that's what it all about. All his other time can be spent talking about the ones that got away.

Delicate handling can possibly give you a second chance to drive steel into a tough jaw, to pull a tail-walking largemouth try and pull you out of the boat, and perhaps to repeat the performance with the same fish the next trip out.

No biologist will guarantee that every fish you catch and release will return to your hook later, but if you want to increase the chances, try these tips on your next fishing outing.

The trout fishermen were well ahead of the bassmen as their lack of interest in tournament-style fish-
sometimes the population of the big, flat-tailed rodents gets out of hand

**BEAVER CONTROL**

By MORRIE NAGGIAR

The beaver is the largest of North American rodents and is among the best known of our native fur-bearing animals—at least by name and reputation. But few people have seen a live one, unless they made a special effort to do so, for beaver are active at night and in the late evening and early morning hours, especially where harassed by man.

There was a period not too many years ago when the beaver was generally considered a creature of the wilderness, mainly in the North Country. By the time the early thronos of modern wildlife management hit the scene, sometime around the early 1930's, the beaver was missing or at least a rarity over much of its original range—from north Florida and extreme northern Mexico northward to the limit of tree growth.

In the ensuing years, the animal has made a spectacular comeback, and in many parts of the country, beaver now make up an important part of the annual fur catch.

No longer a rarity in the northern part of Florida, (continued on next page)
The beaver uses a scent mound as a sign post to mark its territory. The mound consists of a pile of water-soaked leaves, mud, small twigs, and other debris - usually located at most any active colony site - or made an artificial one. The scent mound set is one of most effective for use with leg-hold trap. Always use drowning arrangement with conventional steel traps to prevent animal's escape. Get your beaver lure from trapper supply houses.

When beaver are working on farm or garden crops, they will sometimes come readily to baited cubby pen sets, such as the one being made on the side of a lodge in photo at right. This type of set lends itself well to leg-hold traps, but these traps should be used only if there is enough water at the site to assure a drowning arrangement, either the stake set-up shown in mound set illustration, or a sliding wire and drowning hook. Trail or blind sets - traps placed where the animals travel in their normal activities - are usually much more productive than bait sets, especially where there is an abundance of natural food available.

Few people would hesitate an instant to remove a mouse or rat from their own premises by poison, traps, gas or any other means available. Many of these same people throw up their hands in dismay over the thought of trapping any "wild" creature, no matter what the circumstances. There are some phases of practical wildlife management that are not especially "pretty." Control does occasionally become necessary, however, and trapping is the best, frequently the only, adequate means of handling the problem.

The conventional leg-hold steel trap and the Conibear trap are the most widely adaptable tools for beaver damage control work. The Bailey trap, a bulky "wire gate" live-catching device, is useful in more limited situations.

Beaver causing property damage may be taken by gun or live trap at any season of the year. They may also be taken, under permit, by use of leg-hold and Conibear-type traps. When, in the opinion of the Director, such action is warranted. Application for such permit is to be made through the regional office serving the area in which the problem occurs.

The number 4 longspring trap and the number 320 Conibear are good choices for beaver damage control work. Although not adaptable to as wide a variety of set sites as the leg-hold trap, nevertheless the Conibear is highly regarded by most experienced trappers. Both types should be in the trapper's outfit.

New traps have a shiny finish that can spook an especially wary beaver. Although the metallic glare will soon dull in use, many trappers prefer to color treat their new traps before they are put into use.

(continued from preceding page)

at least from the Suwannee River country westward, the busy rodent makes its presence known especially by its characteristic "logging" operations.

In many places, the activities of beavers are beneficial. Besides providing themselves with a suitable place in which to live, the dams put together by the traditionally busy animals have wrought some drastic changes in the immediate vicinity. Sometimes, for example, in areas that are seasonally dry, beaver dams have created a year-round aquatic habitat attractive to waterfowl as well as a variety of other creatures—furred, furred, and scaled. The beaver may play a role in water management, its works tempering the impact of heavy runoff and trickling out water to maintain stream flow during periods of short rainfall.

Despite these and other benefits, there are times when beaver activities are definitely at odds with man's use of the land. Flooding of roadways, interference with drainage of agricultural areas, destruction of timber and other crops, and cutting of shade and fruit trees are among the problems that beavers can create for landowners and wildlife managers.

To some of our citizens, removed by circumstances from the realities of rural living, it appears a simple matter to suggest toleration of the beaver's inroads or "moving the animals somewhere else where they won't cause any trouble." In practice, however, especially in the face of an expanding population of the animals, more drastic measures are frequently called for. Limited time, personnel, and funds, and the plain physical impracticability of kid-glove handling of the situation many times requires a more straightforward approach to the problem.

(continued on next page)
Although there are many others, a source of traps and other specialized equipment that has been a good one in my experience is Southeastern Outdoor Supply, Route 3, Box 505, Bassett, Virginia 24055. For 25¢ they'll send you a copy of their latest catalog.

Good beaver trapping information is available in an instructive little book, Trapping and Handling Beaver and Otter, by Dennis Hushey. The cost is $3.00 from Southeastern. Another publication, Trapping Beaver and Processing Their Fur, is put out by the Alabama Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Agricultural Experiment Station, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama 36830.

A source of general trapping information is Fur-First-Game magazine, 2878 E. Main St., Columbus, Ohio 43209. In addition to their trapping articles, much advertising offers information of interest and value to the trapper. •

A highly effective beaver set on narrow channel, ditch, or small creek uses a "diving log." The set is based on the fact that a beaver will pass under, rather than climb over, a log or other obstruction in the water. The crossed stakes go between the jaws as shown, both supporting the trap at the proper level and blocking passage beneath. If waterway is too wide to be closed effectively as shown, additional stakes should be placed picket fence style from the trap to bank, to guide the animal over the trap.

18

(continued from preceding page)

Here's one way to do it:

First, boil traps in clear water to remove the rust-inhibiting oil with which they are treated at the factory. Some traps have a few handfuls of wood ashes to the water, making a mild lye solution, inhibiting oil with which they are treated at the surface will recoat the metal, leaving you back where you started.

Leave the clean traps in the open for a few days, watering them down now and again, until a light coat of rust forms on them. Next, simmer the traps for about 20 minutes or so. Now pour the water off the traps—don’t lift them out of the water as the oil floating on the surface will recocat the metal, leaving you back where you started.

Surfaced by Wallace Hughes

LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH!

By LOIS ANDERSON

WANT TO BE SURE TO AVOID poison ivy and the misery it brings? Simply move to Nevada, the only state that has never reported a case. For the rest of us, however, the best defense against the troublemaker is to recognize and avoid it.

Poison ivy is native to North America. It was first reported by Captain John Smith, who wrote that it looked similar to English ivy but caused redness, itching, and blistering. The Indians of his day were also well aware of its effects. The Onondagas called it ko-hoon-tas, meaning "stick that makes you sore."

Poison ivy and its sister plant, poison oak, are common to Florida and are especially abundant in woodland habitat. They are so closely related and similar in appearance that botanists don’t entirely agree on their classification. It is important just to know that ivies, synonymous with oaks, are bad company and should be avoided.

Each year thousands of men, women, and children suffer different degrees of discomfort and misery from poison ivy. Hundreds of people are confined to hospitals, and according to an issue of Natural History, at least two children have been known to die from severe poisoning.

Most, but not all, people are sensitive to the sap, which causes the poisoning. But even those who consider themselves immune may, at one time or another, find themselves susceptible. The severity depends on the amount of sap deposited on the skin and a person’s degree of sensitivity. Just touching something that has touched the plant can lead to trouble.

Poison ivy is an occupational hazard among foresters, gardeners, and other outdoorsmen. They must always be on the lookout for the menace. A basic rule to remember is that the leaves always grow in clusters of three, and may vary in length from 1 to 4 inches. Their upper surfaces are glossy, but, depending on the season, their color may be green or a reddish brown. The plant also has white berries which look like mistletoe.

Poison ivy grows best when it has something like walls, fences, or trees on which to climb. Many people have suffered from severe ivy poisoning after pulling up vines from around their houses and yards.

It seems that only we humans are bothered by the effects of poison ivy. Cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs eat it without any visible harm at all, and the poison ivy berries are one of the main foods of wild birds in winter. For us, however, the symptoms can appear on any part of the body, and the greater the exposure, the sooner the rash appears.

The first symptom will be a burning and itching sensation. This can happen within just a few hours after contact or as late as a few days. The burning is usually followed by a rash and swelling, along with itching and ugly blisters. Depending on a person’s sensitivity and the amount of exposure, the reaction may last from a few days to as long as several weeks. In severe cases, and in every case involving the eyes, your doctor should be consulted.

Most people agree that if you suspect contact with ivy, you should wash the skin as soon as possible, especially with a harsh laundry soap. You should lather and rinse the affected area several times, to help lessen the effects of the oil which may not have penetrated the skin. Be careful about the clothing you wear when exposed. It should be washed in hot water and dried in the sun. Camping gear should also be cleaned, remembering that the sap can still cause poisoning.

Though the discomfort caused by poison ivy is widespread, no completely effective system of immunization has been found. Mass eradication of the plant is apparently as difficult as eliminating the rash that it causes. Since birds help to spread the seeds, the vines may be found springing up almost anywhere.

Many home remedies have been reported, but doctors seem to agree that once a person has been exposed to ivy, most remedies are without benefit and some may even be harmful. Calamine lotion does not restrain the rash, but usually helps to relieve the itching until the skin recovers by itself. Cortisone-like drugs are the only known treatment with clear-cut benefits.

Though over three-fourths of the American population suffer from poison ivy at one time or another in their lives, the main defense against "the three-fingered devil" is just this: Be able to recognize the enemy, and don’t touch. •

Drawing by Wallace Hughes

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

APRIL 1976
a Florida river with a difference is this panhandle stream

Fishing the Chipola

JAY FOLSOM CALLS MOST IMPONDMENTS "MUDHOLES," and thinks that fishermen who don't use the beautiful rivers of Florida are ready for the funny farm.

Jay, who runs a welding shop in the middle of Marianna, is a delightful man of definite opinions. He will bend a little on his fishing principles, but Marianna, is a delightful man of definite opinions.

volunteer guides for a conference of the Florida morning in Lake Seminole. He was one of the host not much. I first fished with him on a raw March shallows, and the water was orange and murky with casting, we had caught two small bass. Shivering in the frigid wind, Jay said, "nailing a river is fishing. The only time I fish this

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FLORIDA WILDLIFE

APRIL 1976

20

propeller blades, so it's a good idea to take it easy if you don't know the river. Even if you know all of the rocks and shoals, you can collide with a huge log. When the river floods, it adds new ones and moves around the old ones.

As a river specialist, Jay prefers a wooden boat, light with shallow draft and a tough 3/4-inch plywood bottom. His boat was built by H. V. McCullom, of Blountstown, one of the few old-timers still making special river boats. McCullom made it to Jay's specifications and then Jay put in his own adjustments, being a man who is handy with tools.

With a 20 h.p. motor, Jay can outrun many of the bass boats with twice the horsepower. The first time I fished with him, Jay told me to put on my life preserver and he'd show me what the boat could do. We didn't cruise around curves; we skimmed around them, a procedure not recommended for strangers to the Chipola or any other river.

Actually, a 10 h.p. motor would be enough for Jay's light skimmer. The main advantage of the larger motor is that the current, which may vary from a back-eddy to 20 miles per hour, pushes you downstream rather quickly. With the extra horses, you save time getting back upstream for another float, and when returning to the launching ramp. Also, the extra power comes in handy if you get in a jam in fast water.

Except for the rapids, Jay uses a trolling motor to maneuver the boat for casting. There are long, and sometimes deep, stretches of slow water between the shoals. For plug casters, there are roughly two types of fishing. Largemouth bass and pickerel are usually found in the slow water of the Chipola. The Coosa bass, known locally as the Chipola bass, nearly always uses fast current, such as rapids and shoals. In fact, this fairly rare fish is sometimes called the shoal bass.

The limestone bedrock, including the cliffs along the river, are honeycombed with springs, some of them unbelievably large and clear. The Coosa bass is often found in the springs or just below them.

In the larger Flint River of Georgia, not far north-east of the Chipola, the Coosa bass sometimes grows to 6 pounds, and 4-pounders are common. It is rare to catch one in the Chipola that weighs more than 2 pounds. However, the Coosa bass has the fighting qualities of the true smallmouth, and makes up in bulldogging what it lacks in weight, especially in fast current.

The Coosa bass has a red eye. It can also be identified by closing its mouth and checking to see how far back behind the eyes its lips extend. With a large mouth, the lip line goes past the eye; with the Chipola or Coosa bass, the jaw line ends about the center of the pupil. Also, once for once, the Coosa bass fights much harder than a largemouth.

At most places where bridges cross the Chipola, you can launch a boat, although some of the access is not exactly a formalized ramp. Jay's light rig pays off if there's any lifting to be done.

The first time I ran the Chipola with Jay, it was hot and we didn't get started until well in the morning. He was anxious to show me his pet river and produce a string of bass. As happens so many times when a host is trying to show his guest a good time, the fishing was slow.

For two or three hours we hit his favorite spots, but the fish were not striking, I didn't mind because I was lapping up the scenery, each turn of the river revealing a new spectacle. The river banks have not yet been smothered in civilization: you find long stretches that are still wilderness.

(continued on next page)
Jay, eager to catch bass, jumped 5 miles downstream. It was a show to watch him cast. As with river fishermen everywhere, he reads the water and picks the exact spot he wants to hit with his plug. Then he lays it in there, right on the money.

river fishermen everywhere, he reads the water and picks the exact spot he wants to hit with his plug.

Jay followed the bass with the current and finally began to gain some line. The fish jumped twice more and we could see it was firmly hooked with two treble hooks. Jay eased alongside the bass, quickly gaining line, and deftly netted it.

The bass had taken a Rebel plug, a good imitation of the minnows on which the bass feed. I obstinately stuck with my topwater lure, hoping to lure a bass through the surface. Jay had taken three bass hooked in a lake. They reason that the river bass is stronger because he gets more exercise fighting currents.

Upstream rains occasionally put some of south Georgia's soil into the otherwise clear waters of the Chipola, above, but it seldom stops the fishing—not for long, anyway. The Chipola looks like fishing water, and Jay Folsom displays a string of bass, in the photo at right, to give an idea of river's bounty.

I couldn't move him. As Jay eased the boat towards the pool, I popped the pressure and suddenly saw a creamy, yellow fish belly in the clear water. It was a mudfish!

He was a big one, all right. I tried to horse him and the line parted at the knot. Jay leaned my way and said, "If you're going to throw those plugs away, why don't you give them to me?"

We had floated to a long, dead stretch where the current seemed to disappear. Jay said it was a good place for pickeral, or snakes, as the locals call them. He put a red and white Dardevle spoon on and began casting next to the sunken logs and under the overhanging limbs shading the bank.

Jay always knows what he's doing on the river, I remarked. I always feel relieved when I can see a bass up to 10 inches long, it took me a few minutes to work him to the boat against the swift current.

Cocoa bass up to 4 pounds, and sometimes a little over, have been landed from the Chipola, but it wasn't our day for the big ones. For size, we had to stick with the largemouth.

Late in the afternoon, we went ashore to cook a steak. After we had moved the cooler to a limestone cliff overlooking the river, I remarked that it was a shame we didn't have a grill.

Jay grimmmed and walked a few feet to a huge pine tree. He hitched a rope to a limb and began to tie the other end to an iron grill. He takes no chances of being without one. He has more than a dozen of them stashed at favorite camping spots up and down the river.

As I lay in the sand with my head on a seat cushion after the huge meal, I felt as though I were in the midst of a huge wilderness. We had seen only two boats all day. I ignored the distant rumbling of a heavy truck crossing a bridge, and languished just above the lovely river I had fallen in love with. Jay said that if I would stand up I could see fish playing in the clear water across from us. I flicked a ladybug off of my shirt and told him to let the fish play, that I wanted to feel yet awhile and soak up the misty pleasure that comes only from a bounding stream or ocean waves.

As the sun settled into the best times to fish the Chipola. But something is always biting and available in the river. Besides the fish already mentioned, there are a few spotted bass and panfish such as bream, shelleback, and crappie; and in the lower river, just above the Apalachicola, the hickory shad and striped bass run in spring. Most of the river fishermen you see are relaxing comfortably on the shady banks, questing with a cane pole for panfish and catfish.

For plugging, Jay uses a light reel and rod, much lighter than most people use in lake fishing. In a day of casting on the river, weight becomes critical. If the wrist and arm get tired, accurate casting goes to pot.

In river plugging, reading the water and casting to likely spots is important. Jay automatically eliminates many spots, and even long stretches, knowing from the prevailing condition of the water, or from past experience, that a particular place is not likely to be productive.

If the river has had recent flooding or heavy rains, it may be too high or too murky to fish successfully. When it first starts to clear, there are narrow bands of clear water along the bank, from flowing springs.

The fish may hit if you drop your plug at the base of a limestone cliff an inch from the bank. You work it perhaps a foot before the plug is in murky water. If you get a strike, it will be in the clear ribbon. A few inches in your casting accuracy is the difference in whether or not you catch fish.

One of the greatest appeals of the Chipola River is that when you select a spot to cast to, it looks like a fish ought to be there. Each spot looks better than the one before. Even if you have a dry run for a while, you stay pepped up because you keep thinking the next cast is the one. The Chipola River makes an optimist of you. Fishing with Jay Folsom makes a believer out of you.
Glistening in the galaxy of states, Florida holds allure to people of greatly diverse inclinations. Mention the sunny peninsula to most any well-read rod and reel man, no matter where his native stomping grounds lie, and chances are he immediately starts tuning in on mental images of great heavy-bodied largemouth bass. For good reason, too, for his species certainly loads the popularity with Florida’s fish-for-fun clan. There’s no denying that bluegills, specks, catfish, and others come in for a pretty fair share of attention, especially with the cane polers as well as a good many light tackle fishermen. But for a year-around, more or less refined style of angling, the Florida largemouth wears the crown.

Flip open most any fish book and you will see that the largemouth belongs to the family Centrarchidae, that there are two groups of largemouth bass in Florida’s fish-for-fun clan. The northern largemouth, Micropterus salmoides, of the extreme northern part of the state and the panhandle; and the Florida largemouth, M. s. floridanus, found throughout the peninsula.

There has been a considerable amount of transporting of bass of the state. The result is that there are relatively few areas where a pure strain of either fish is available. But to most of us, it is a fine point having little to do with the pursuit of a braying-sized bass.

The rising water temperature of early spring triggers the spawning urge in the largemouth. Generally speaking, when the water temperature hits 63° F. and stays at that level for a few days, spawning activity starts. This means that in the central part of the state, spawning may begin as early as late January. The peak of the spring spawning period there is usually from mid-March to mid-April, dribbling out by early May, although later spawning is not unknown. In northern Florida the season may be three weeks or more later in getting under way, and in more southerly waters, it is correspondingly earlier.

The male bass prepares for the mating season, which is a bowl-shaped depression rooted and fanned out on the bottom. The female moves in and deposits the eggs, which are fertilized by the male during the process. The female then leaves the male to guard the eggs until they hatch. To the male also falls the chore of herding the newly-emerged fry about until they are large enough to fend for themselves, usually when they reach a total length of about 3/4-inch. By nature, the Florida largemouth is a voracious feeder. It takes a variety of items, notably other fishes, including members of its own species. Young bass are heavily dependent upon live food, starting with tiny organisms such as daphnia and moving to larger organisms as their size increases enough to handle bigger game.

So dependent are they on live food that most young bass kept under conditions, as in a hatchery trough, will starve to death even in the presence of an abundance of pelletized fish food, ground fish, or other hard fare. They can be taught to feed on "dead" food however. Hatchery-men at the Richloam station, in central Florida, have found that a few stripe or sunfish bass fry mixed in with the large ones, usually soon have the largemouths taking conventional hatchery food. The stripers and sunfishes have no qualms about hitting most any edible presented to them.

The rate of growth of the largemouth varies from north to south. Under average conditions, a Florida bass will reach a length of 10 to 12 inches and a weight of from 12 to 14 ounces during its first year. By the end of the second year, the same fish should measure some 15 to 16 inches in length and weigh somewhere between 2 and 3 pounds. In especially favored waters, the growth rate is considerably faster, and fish hitting 4 to 6 pounds by the end of their second year are not unknown. On the other hand, under less favorable conditions, a fish nearing the end of its second year may still weigh less than a pound.

There is no closed season on bass fishing in Florida. The fish are catchable during every month, but the most productive technique for putting a largemouth in the boat may vary with the time of year. Find the right combination and you’ll put yourself in for some real sport.

LARGOMOUTH BASS

By MORRIE NAGGIAR

Reloading Shotgun Shells

By EDMUND MCLAURIN

HOME RELOADING OF SHOTGUN SHELLS is now a practical and economic thing to do. Those who regularly shoot sporting targets are the principal users of reloading equipment. But many trap and skeet clubs now reload fired cases for club revenue. For good many light tackle fishermen. But for a year-around, more or less refined style of angling, the Florida largemouth wears the crown.

The public trap and skeet clubs now prohibit shooters from picking up their empties. If asked for the reason such a rule, officials usually mumble something about range safety. Seldom is any mention made of the fact that the club wishes to reload emptied empty cases for profit or sell empty cases to reloaders.

Fired shotgun cases do not have the salvage value of freshly fired center fire rifle brass, but once-fired shotgun cases in good condition are worth up to 4¢ each to most reloaders.

Target shooters who use autoloading shotguns and who wish to later reload a just-fired commercial shell loading usually equip their guns with a mechanical shell case catcher. This device attaches to the ejection port of the gun and stops a fired case from being ejected. The principle is simple: an extracted shell case from being completely ejected by normal mechanical action. Removal thereafter is manual. Models are available that catch single empty cases or that catch the empty casings of two fast-fired shotshells. The Morton mechanical shell catcher for the Model 1100 Remingtons is a specific example.

Twenty-five years ago, there were only about half a dozen brands of reloading tools on the American market, and names like Lyman, Pacific, C-H, and Frost were the leaders. There were also one or two tools so cheaply made that they failed to hold up in service.

Usually a shotshell reloading tool carrying Lyman, C-H, or Pacific, is a good buy. Today it is a different story. The list of brand names from which tool choice can be made is long — in some respects too long! Mixed among the makes of reloading tools that have proven their worth are a few new ones to watch. There is an assembled tool on display.

Lyman's Deluxe Tool Kit $17.95

Although various inexpensive Lee accessories are available to supplement a standard kit, a Lee kit's working components, especially the deluxe wad guide and the two star crimpers in 6- and 8-segment types, contribute to faster loading with the least lost motion.

I frequently use a Lee loader when I hold firearms educational clinics, to show how easy it is to safely reload quality ammunition.

In years long past, it was common for shotshells to absorb moisture and swell if they got damp. Many of these swollen paper tube shell cases would not chamber at all, and those that did invariably gave stubborn chamber feeding and extraction. Shell tube absorption of moisture has been licked by use of waterproof plastic for shell cases.

Few shotshell manufacturers now produce waxed paper tube shotshells in heavy quantity, and some (continued on next page)
no longer manufacture the paper tube type at all. Federal Cartridge Corporation is one of the few that do, but because a number of trap and skeet shooters still prefer the old paper tube.

The majority of modern shotshell reloading tools can be used to load either the modern plastics and shot collars or old-style paper tubes combined with over-powder and shot wads. Several available accessories add to basic tool versatility.

Once the original investment total is amortized (and the more you shoot and reload, the sooner it will be), by accruing small savings on home-produced lots of reloaded shotgun ammunition over the cost of commercial readymade, a reloading tool reaps offers economy. Thereafter, only the cost of expendable shotshell components need be viewed as debit.

Personally, I think it is a good idea to combine home reloading operations with opportunities to make advantageous purchases of advertised discounted factory loadings.

From time to time, discount houses advertise shotshell specials. On such occasions, one can purchase national brand name shells that are real bargains — like Remington, Winchester, and Federal. Only recently, I bought a box of 12-gauge field loads in my home city advertised a choice of Winchester or Federal brand 12 gauge field loads for $2.95 per box, a real bargain and "convenience purchase," considering the required shot components and operations time of home reloading.

Some ammunition retailers feature their own specially packaged brand. Mostly, these individual brands are from larger American manufacturers. Federal, for example, has long produced the "Western Field" line of ammunition Reloaded by Montgomery Ward stores.

Where advertised wares are foreign-made, the country of origin will invariably be found somewhere on the container. Shotshell imports packaged under RWS and CII brand names are frequently seen and used. I occasionally use a box or two, when testing the patterning performance of different brand shells fired from the same shotgun. However, my hunting and military ammunition preferences have run to American brands among the available commercial, when I do not use my own reloads.

How safe is home reloading of shotshells? Comfortably safe — provided you don't smoke during operations, and take other common sense precautions. It is also important that you explicitly follow the directions given in a good reloading guidance text. Of course, the over-all safety factor, the National Rifle Association's technical experts say, "The reloading and shooting of reloadable shotshells has proven remarkably free of reported accident. Special safety factors peculiar to shotshell reloading include the comparatively low pressures developed by shotshell ammunition; the built-in safety margin of modern shotshells and the fact that the load components fill the shell exactly, making irregularities noticeable at once."

Even so, keep in mind that shotshells have thin wall firing tubes, quite vulnerable to excessive powder gas pressure of overloaded ammunition.

If fired shotshells tend to stick in chamber on extraction, or if they show brass head cracks or case separation on ejection, then excessive firing pressure, or excessive breech-bolt lock-up headspace, can be suspected. Another sign of high firing pressure is repeated loose fit of fresh primers in shells being reloaded. Causes of such conditions should be given immediate correction.

The firing pressure safety margin of a shotgun is relatively low. A maximum internal powder gas pressure of 10,500 LPU is just about all the average modern shotgun can safely handle without coming apart in the wrong places. The average 12 gauge shotshell normally develops about 8,000 to 9,000 pounds of powder gas pressure on firing.

American ammunition manufacturers are aware of the necessity of maintaining lower-than-maximum shotshell firing pressures. By joint agreement they factory load shotshells to an adopted trade safety code that is based on laboratory-tested and approved formulas.

Reloading handbooks printed for the guidance of amateur reloaders reflect the established minimum and maximum powder charges and shot load weights, as found to be safe by research ballisticians of the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute.

The beginner who starts with quality reloading and shooting equipment and sticks closely to shell loading formulas recommended in his instruction manual, runs little chance of being endangered from the firing of products of his workmanship.

Recently while attending funeral services for a hunting companion of long time Putnam County residence, I was approached by a mourner who remembered me from a chance meeting during an upland bird hunting trip of years ago. He introduced himself and quickly added that I had once helped him overcome mechanical malfunctioning of his Browning autoloading shotgun.

On the particular hunting trip of long ago, he had not carried the troublesome shotgun, but after his description of its action jamming tendencies (unreliable extraction of fired shells), I had subsequently written him of exactly what mechanical inspections to make and how the component recoil system parts should be correctly assembled, to match the shotshell loads used.

The bird hunter explained that he just wanted to let me know that my advice was good, and that he had solved his autoloader's mechanical malfunctioning.

He urged me to repeat the technical information for the general guidance of other owners of autoloading shotguns made on the original Browning patent long-recoil system. (These include old humpback receiver-design Browning's, Remington Model 11 and "Sportsman" models, Savage 720, the Franchi semi-automatic, as well as other brands of autoloading shotguns of similar internal functioning.)

It may be well to repeat the instructions for correct assembly of braking system component parts, to match the recoil energy of the shotshells loads fired.

Simply, the order of assembly is the basic cause of, and also the secret of overcoming, shell case extraction trouble in many autoloading shotguns of the Browning design.

For example, if the brake system's components are assembled for use with heavy (express) shell loads, and light (field) loads are used, the gun will likely fail to completely extract a fired shell, or it might not eject an extracted shell case and then feed a fresh shell into the chamber.

Conversely, when an autoloading shotgun of Browning long-recoil system manages the bullet's shoulder just about every time he fires, chances are that the gun's friction brake component parts are not properly assembled for the shell load being used. Where brake system pressure is for light loads and heavy loads are fired instead, the gun's breechlock will slam back hard against receiver backplate and contribute substantially to the recoil the shooter feels. If long continued, this pounding can cause shotgun stock or receiver to crack.

Ordinarily, for heavy shell loads, owners of humpback receiver-design Browning, Remington Model 11 and Remington "Sportsman" shotguns, after gun takedown and cleaning, should reassemble the braking system's component parts in the following order: First, slip the long spiral spring into the fabricated receiver extension tube, follow it with the solid washer-like friction ring, its beveled side down, facing the shotgun's receiver. Finally, slip on the wide, split-collar friction piece (actually a split-band spring). This last component definitely must not have any rough spots, or bind itself on the extension tube.

For light loads, the solid friction ring is placed on the shotgun's extension tube next to the shotgun's receiver, beveled edge facing the muzzle. Install the long spiral spring on top of the solid friction ring. The split-collar friction piece takes final position on the extension tube, resting on the spring end that points towards muzzle. Again, parts must be clean, smooth, and lubricated.

If you prefer illustrations over written directions, consult page 291 of Gunsmithing by Roy Dunlap, of 1951 printing by Samworth, probably in your local library, or get hold of a copy or "Gunsmithing," a current publication of the National Rifle Association. On pages 30, 31, and 32 of the last named title, there are both illustrations and printed directions for correctly assembling braking system components of Browning, Remington Model 11 and "Sportsman," Savage 700 Series, early production Remington 11-48 and "Sportsman-48," and Breeds autoloading shotgun models.

Incidentally, the NRA's profusely Illustrated Shotshell Loading Manual ($8.00 to nonmembers, from National Rifle Association, 1000 North Capitol St., W., Washington, D.C. 20036) is one of the best technical reference books a shotgunner can own. Its content is such that a reader will go back to the handbook again and again, even after first reading from cover to cover. It is the text to own if you would like to have a basic understanding of the various types of shotguns and their expert use afield and on the range.

If you want a first-hand assembly demonstration and step-by-step instruction, take your long-recoil autoloading to a gunsmith and ask him to show you how to correctly assemble the braking system's component parts for both heavy and light recoil shotshell loads. Write down, or even diagram, his instructions, for future reference. ●
B

Before moving recently from the Florida east coast to the west coast, I had an experience with another man’s wife—much to his displeasure. (Nope, it was not his displeasure that caused me to move. I was merely trying to teach the eager lady to fish."

A dry September nor’easter was blowing. And, as was my habit during such weather, I had taken a stout spinning rod and walked to the nearby Atlantic shore to try my luck with bluefish. I knew from experience that often such fall storms will drive schools of fingerling mullet southward, little baitfish that hug the shore as they try desperately to escape the darting blues that feed upon them from below.

This day proved no exception. I could see several foot-high embankment in the sand. When my new- ness. I backed quickly to the dry sand and handed the jerking rod. The lady let out a throaty whoop as she felt the pull of the struggling blue.

"Hold his head up!" I cried as she let the rod tip drop carelessly.

She didn’t know what this meant. She did know, however, that she wanted to land that fish. So she began to backpedal furiously away from the water, meanwhile trying clumsily to reel in line.

The previous high tide had sliced away a three-foot-high embankment in the sand. When my new-friend backed into this unseen obstruction she sat down promptly in undaftlike fashion!

"Young man!" she wailed. "Help me!"

I grabbed the slack monofilament and pulled it in quickly, hand-over-hand, until we could see her fish—a nice 4-pounder. She let out another whoop at that.

I was offering the lady the unhooked fish, to take home, when her husband came hurrying up. He was bristling. And the tone of his voice, when he ad- dressed me, was hardly complimentary.

"Oh, shush, Rembert!" she snapped. "I’m having some fun for a change. O’mon, young man, show me how to catch another!"

I did. She beached several more. One big blue nearly got away when she permitted the mono to wrap itself about the rod tip. She was determined not to let the fish outwit her, however. She waded right out into the waves, clothes and all, and grabbed the fish on a short line. And that water was pretty cold.

Given time, my student likely would have become as proficient at catching fish as she apparently was at snagging husbands. Come to think of it, had one of her husbands taken her fishing, she likely would not have found need for so many of them.

I met a well-known psychiatrist later who claims there would be fewer divorces if more husbands would take their wives fishing. Not many do. A favorite excuse is that females, great companions though they may be otherwise, simply do not have the attributes to make good anglers.

Not true. Even a quick glance at the world records found friend backed into this unseen obstruction she sat down promptly in undaftlike fashion!

"Young man!" she wailed. "Help me!"

I grabbed the slack monofilament and pulled it in quickly, hand-over-hand, until we could see her fish—a nice 4-pounder. She let out another whoop at that.

I was offering the lady the unhooked fish, to take home, when her husband came hurrying up. He was bristling. And the tone of his voice, when he ad- dressed me, was hardly complimentary.

"Oh, shush, Rembert!" she snapped. "I’m having some fun for a change. O’mon, young man, show me how to catch another!"

I did. She beached several more. One big blue nearly got away when she permitted the mono to wrap itself about the rod tip. She was determined not to let the fish outwit her, however. She waded right out into the waves, clothes and all, and grabbed the fish on a short line. And that water was pretty cold.

Given time, my student likely would have become as proficient at catching fish as she apparently was at snagging husbands. Come to think of it, had one of her husbands taken her fishing, she likely would not have found need for so many of them.

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Not true. Even a quick glance at the world records (continued on next page)
Next morning, while the great horned owls were still hooting their melancholy farewell to the fading mist, my wife and I followed a sandy road into a remote portion of the Marion County piney country. Mist was still hanging over the small lake when we drove up. It was that hushed hour of the breaking day that refreshes and renews the human heart. We found ourselves inhaling deeply of the clean, pine-scented air. Without being aware why, we found ourselves speaking softly; making as little noise as possible in this still, woodland world.

Lou helped me lift our light canoe from atop the car. (Such participation should be included in the training course. Teach her to tie her own knots and take a fish off the hook by herself.) Soon I was padding quietly through the lily pads toward open water.

I watched as my wife secured the reel to the light spinning rod I had given her. Next, she pulled out one of the 12-pound test mono filament from the reel and proceeded to thread it upward through the line guides. She had nearly made it to the rod tip when the light line slipped from her fingers. It slid quickly back through the guides, to end up in a pile on the floor of the canoe.

"You forgot to double the line each time before pushing it through a guide," I reminded her gently.

That way, if the line is dropped, it will halt itself at the spot again. Fortunately, that hungry bassใจ that went try again.

"You finished stringing the rod. She tied the end of the line to a small Rebel floating plug, using an improved clinch knot. She let the plug hang down about 15 inches from the rod tip, as I had taught her, then seated herself in the bow of the canoe, ready to cast.

Casting will usually be the main problem in teaching your lady to fish. Lou and I had begun simply, at home, with her spinning outfit and easy overhead flip casts directed toward an old bike tire only a dozen yards distant. Later, as her coordination improved, we had increased that distance. You needn't be able to cast long distances to become a good fisherman.

We had made a game of the casting, giving her a suitable handicap to compensate for my longer experience, as we kept score. As a further incentive for her to drop the rubber casting plug accurately inside the target area, I had offered rewards. Believe me, nothing can sharpen the wildfly casting eye better than the promise of a new dress—not even a hand with the dinner dishes.

I had noticed several feeding bass swirls as we entered the lake. Now I called Lou's attention to the closest of these. She cast to the fish at once. The cast was good, close to a patch of flooded grass. But when Mr. Bigmouth came charging in pursuit, Lou struck too soon.

The frustrated bass whirled about to try again. Once more, my overanxious wife managed to pull the floating plug out of reach. By this time I was laughing.

Lou was frowning. She reeled in quickly and cast to the spot again. Fortunately, that hungry bass was still there. This time she had dubbed the plug with a vengeance, and proceeded to tear up the lake surface. The lily pads tipped on edge as the line smoked past. Recalling what I'd taught her, Lou dutifully held her rod up with both hands, to keep the line from fouling.

When I netted the fish, it proved to be but 2 pounds. But my wife's eyes were shining. "You were supposed to let me net it," she reminded. I guessed I'd gotten a hit excited myself.

I've found that the time I spent teaching Lou to fish was a good investment, indeed. I certainly find it more enjoyable to share a fishing camp with her than I do some male buddy who makes the cooking chore, and who probably snores at night. Granted, every man should have time by himself, or with other men. But I've never understood why a married man will repeatedly seek the company of "the boys"—often they are complete strangers—in preference to that of his wife. Surely, he is far more compatible with her, else he wouldn't have married her.

Feeding gulls shrilling above a surf alive with darting gamefish, the rise of a trout in a placid woodland pool at dusk, even the soothing sound of a gentle rain atop the parked rec vehicle—such sounds and sights and smells of the outdoors are famous for their ability to recharge drained human emotional batteries. And such restoration makes for a better marriage.

Your teaching should not be too rigid. Don't scare your pupil off at the outset. Sure, she should in time be taught truths like why the reel drag should be decreased as a strong fish pulls out a long line that is terminated with a light leader. To start, however, arouse her interest in the sport. (One way is to promise to take her along on fishing trips.)

After that, you can explain in simple terms, how a reel works. Take it apart and show her. Describe why a rod "loads" on the backswing, to make possible the cast. Show her how to aim the tip at the target area. Things like that. Remember, your goal should be to instill confidence, not destroy it. Keep in mind that she likely has learned equally difficult things—like how to drive a car, dance, knit, and sew.

The rest will come naturally.

Lou was still excited over her first fishing trip as we ate for dinner that night part of the nice string of bass she had caught. I knew from the stary look in my wife's eyes, as we relived her achievement, that she had discovered a new love. It would be one, however, that would never make me jealous.
Fish Tagging

A research program on the survival rate of hatchery-raised fingerling bass in an open system should get under way in May or June, says John W. Woods of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

Woods, director of the Fish Management Division, said 25,000 bass fingerlings are being produced now at the Commission's Richloam Hatchery. Prior to the release of these fish in the St. Johns River, each will be tagged by Commission personnel using a device owned by the Lake County Commission.

Woods said Lake County's $20,000 tagging machine is one of the most sophisticated devices available for this kind of research and is one of a very few which can be used successfully on small fish.

Each fingerling will be tagged with a tiny stainless steel wire placed in the cartilage of its head by use of a computer-controlled apparatus called an injector. The wire, already color-coded, is magnetized.

Along with the machine from Lake County, the Commission will make use of two electronic detectors donated by the Old Charter Company. These detectors will be used to identify the tagged fish in an effort to evaluate their rate of survival and catch by fishermen.

Hydrilla Controllers

The Lake County Commission will be tagging by Commission staff with a tiny stainless steel wire, already color-coded, fish that have been caught in Lake County with a machine called an injector. The field man who reported the matter commented, perhaps not too facetiously, that wing-clipped waterfowl may be better hydrilla controllers than the controversial grass carp.

Arrest Figures

The Law Enforcement Division reported a total of 603 arrests made by Commission wildlife officers during January 1975. During the same month last year, 757 cases were recorded. A significant increase in the number of gun and light cases was noted this year, 100 during the month compared with 78 during January 1975.

Fishing Waters

Fisheries biologists in the Northeast Region are making an all-out effort to locate borrow pits in the Jacksonville area to be developed for public fishing. Landowner agreements are being sought to allow public access to such waters, which result when earth is excavated for use as fill dirt in highway and other construction work. Cooperation is in the offing on the program from the recreation department in Jacksonville.

Survey Sponsored

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the request of the states, is sponsoring a mail survey on the activities of hunters and fishermen, according to Lynn A. Greenwalt, director.

In every state, 1,000 sportsmen will receive mail questionnaires requesting information about their hunting and/or fishing activities in 1975.

National Analysts, Inc., an opinion research company located in Philadelphia, is conducting the survey for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Mailing of the questionnaires was initiated in March and will continue through July.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S FISHING CITATION

is available without charge to subscribers to FLORIDA WILDLIFE Magazine and their immediate families who catch any of the listed freshwater fish of the prescribed minimum size. A citation for framing will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of the following application form properly filled out and signed. Only those applications received within 90 days of the date of catch will be honored.

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The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla. 32304

Please mail me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed date listed below:

Name (please print)__________________________
Address__________________________
City_________State_________Zip No.
Species __________Weight __________Length __________
Type of Tackle__________________________
Bait or Lure Used__________________________
Where Caught__________________________in__________County
Date Caught__________________________Catch Witnessed By__________________________
Registered, Weighed By__________________________At__________
Signature of Applicant__________________________