This Florida Wildlife Magazine Digital Preservation Project is developed with financial assistance provided by the:
William H. Flowers, Jr. Foundation
and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida, Inc. through the Conserve Wildlife Tag grant program.
How High Do Birds Fly?

National Audubon Society research reveals that most birds apparently do not fly at great heights—the air there is thin, with less buoyancy and less oxygen. The usual flight altitude is over 3,000 feet. The Bearded Vulture is one of the rare birds, witnessed by aircraft pilots, that fly at altitudes of over 15,000 feet.

Florida Wildlife Scrapbook

A Western Airlines Electra pilot at 21,000 feet over Nevada felt a bump. Photos taken from the plane were those of a Mallard Duck.

An evening Grosbeak, at 12,000 ft, crashed through the windscreen of a Piper airplane aircraft over the mountains of Colorado to become champion high flyer among small birds.

Swans (Anh), and Cranes (Grus) have been observed at 8,000 ft. up.

Florida Wildlife

January 1976

In This Issue

Hunting the Snipe
Guana River Wildlife Management Area
Woodcock—the "Ain't There" Bird
Waste and Wildlife
Bass Boat in Salt Water
Bradwell Bay—Till Wilderness
Water Survival

Departments

Fishing
The Chairman Comments
Hunting
Conservation Scene

The Cover

Want to test your eyes and your reflexes? Go hunting woodcock. Over 4,000 sportsmen went after timberdoodles in Florida woods last season, but not all of them saw birds—although that doesn't mean the birds weren't there. See page 11.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

Florida WILDLIFE is published monthly by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, P.O. Box 205, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. Single copy price, $0.75; subscription price, $3.00 per year. Copyright 1976 by Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Florida 32304.
Hunting the Snipe

MANY GOOD SHOTGUNNERS don't even know what a snipe is, and I am glad of it—even though I'd like to see one of my favorite game birds get a little more recognition as long as they don't shoot at it. The snipe lost much of its gunning popularity when shorebird seasons were closed way back there, and when shooting on that one bird was reopened it didn't make much of a ripple. A generation of hunters had skipped the snipe business.

As are other gamebirds, snipe are sometimes pretty easy to bag, sometimes pretty difficult, and sometimes impossible. Anybody who has slogged a few miles across short-grassed bog and watched swarms of the danged things going up just out of range is likely to think of hunting ibex or elephants instead.

A British author once told how to hit snipe. After reading his prescription four times, I concluded he didn't feel that much of a ripple. A...
at any other time. Either he's just clowning or he's along with a flock of teal, and more observant hunters say—
or jacksnipe, also known by a lot of other names—
in both fresh and brackish water marshes but mostly both complimentary and otherwise. They're found smaller bodies and usually want more moisture for
found in the same areas and both leave the same sort blance to the woodcock, they have longer legs and
coup le of inches of water, and sometimes feeds where one of his das. I've done it occasionally, but such
too far away before he's sighted. Most jumping snipe call out, "Scap!" but some don't, and despite state-
ments that they do it only after it's too late to shoot, I find that there's no definite pattern in the instant
when they announce their leave-taking.
It's best to walk downwind whenever possible. That's because the birds take off into it, giving you
some extra time to shoot, and even more important, displaying their light-colored undersides at the instant
they jump. That's big news to a sweaty-handed gunner who finds most of his shots are too long.
Range estimation becomes both difficult and essential when you walk through short grass with
snipe jumping up in all directions. It isn't that you can't guess pretty close to a bird's distance if you
take your time, but when he fires off fast, it's a split-second decision since he's stretching the distance
fast. If there are plenty of birds, I think your best bet is to watch only the area immediately ahead of you and
ignore birds leaving far to one side. I do it this way:
I miss a bird that's too far away, then tell myself I'll insist on their being in good range. The next bird
goes away because I take too much time mentally measuring the range. After he's cheeped derivatively
from a safe distance, I realize he had been close enough. I'll be ready for the next one, I tell myself and I am—too ready. I shoot at the next bird that flashes and find he's a full 45 yards away.
There is no such thing as typical snipe shooting, because no two situations are exactly alike. For that
matter, there's probably considerable difference in
the individual birds. If there wasn't, we wouldn't have the sleepers that get up after their friends have
and we wouldn't have the extra-wild ones that disappear like bees on the horizon. I was interested in
the comments of Adam Bogardus, one of the greatest shooters of the old days, who was willing to bet that he
could bag 100 flying snipe with that many shells in a limited shooting session. Of course, the snipe
were plentiful when he hunted, and it may be that he intended to make up for an occasional miss by get-
tting a brace with one shot. But the best part was that he insisted on making his play in the spring of the
year (spring hunting was legal in those days), because he said that the snipe were fat and slow then. Since
reading the great shooter's treatise on the subject, I believe I have detected that the spring snipe do go slower.
Snipe were once shot over decoys along with other shorebirds, but I've never seen that done. Those who
have tell me that you must find a grassless area where visibility is good, preferably on the shores of a
watercourse used as a flight route. I suppose decoys in the grass wouldn't be seen by many passing flights.
There is some blind shooting that works well once you have located a spot the birds like particularly well. The drill is to scare them off and then wait for their return, using a blind. When doing this I find that cost of goods as long as you stay quiet. A camouflaged coat and a few palmetto fronds or some willow cuttings will work fine. If you
locate a place where they spend the night, late evening is highly productive. You are allowed to
shoot until sunset. I believe (unscientifically) that each bird or loose flock of birds has several places
(continued on next page)
(continued from preceding page)
they like. Scare them off their Number One choice and they fly to another, but evidently want to return before long. You may have to wait only a few minutes. If they just fly away and don't come back, you can write me nasty letters.

One of the very good things about snipe is that they are fairly delicate birds, unlikely to escape when hit. A couple of well-placed small shot will bring one down.

Finding a downed bird in a marsh without a dog is a simple matter of concentration in most cases, but if you plan to shoot a second bird before finding your first, you'll need a good dog. My kills are so hard to lay a red handkerchief down as a marker and hunt either finding or flushing. A well-trained retriever don't lose many birds, and I ignore any others that it didn't work out too well. Most of them took off while I'm searching.

I have tried hunting snipe with a pointing dog but it didn't work out too well. Most of them took off wild, the dog didn't seem to be able to hold them, and after an hour or so he was having psychological problems. In most cases you don't need a dog for either finding or flushing. A well-trained retriever that will stay at heel until he's needed is something else.

I suppose a modified choke comes pretty close to being an all-around snipe barrel. When they're jumping close, a snipe bored is deadly—but remember the target is small and past 25 yards your skoot gun might let you down pretty frequently. With such an open bored I think you should stick to No. 9 shot. I've killed more snipe with an improved cylinder bore than anything else, that being a little tighter than skoot, and use either nines or eights with it. Some shooters use 7½ shot, but I think that's for modified or full choke. I believe it takes a good shot to score consistently with a full-choke gun, although that seems most practical for birds that flush way out there. If you're good, you can wait out most of the close risers, as there's seldom much brush to worry about. Occasionally, they're found in scattered willows where all of the shooting is close in, the willows making it easy to walk up to them, same as the scattered clumps of tall grass.

You'll do better most of the time if you stay away from ultralight loads. With a 12-gauge I think you should use 1-1/8-ounces of shot, and with a 20 a full ounce is better than 7/8-ounce. A .410 isn't suitable except for very close risers.

Snipe have a reputation for being some of the finest table fare of all birds. If I had to come up with a description I'd say they taste a little like wild duck. Personally, although I think a meal of snipe is gourmet stuff, I wouldn't care for them as a steady diet.

Water level is the control factor. Where the snipe were crowding each other last year there may be hard ground or ankle-deep water today, neither of which Please the busy-eyed little worm hunters. On the other hand, there are wet flats which are good year after year. Suck and ye shall find.

Walking up snipe, Buddy Nordmann keeps his retriever at heel until a bird is downed. Dogs are seldom of much help in the actual hunting of quack.

(continued from preceding page)

Old Problem—New Look

when formerly good fishing takes a downward turn, it seems

that some experimental efforts may be in order.

PROPOSALS FOR PLANTING small bass in the St. Johns River are in conflict with recommendations made by fisheries biologists in the past. So are proposals for closing the season during the height of spawning operations and plans for reduced bag limits where smaller fish are concerned.

Is this a matter of a complete change of policy on the part of fisheries people? I don't think so. What we have is a matter of poor fishing in some sections of the river and a willingness to experiment a little.

When fishing falls off in a river such as the St. Johns the problem is faced guardedly. People whose livelihood is tied to bass fishing are not eager to announce that things aren't going so well. Having given a pessimistic view of the prospects many years ago, I was put on the griddle by reporters who produced all sorts of quotes about how fishing was as good as ever, complete with pictures of big bass. It was years later when the word got out from other sources that things weren't quite as they should be.

There are plenty of reasons why fishing can't be expected to be what it was in the good old days, among them, hyacinth treatment, more channelization and increased pollution—plus boat traffic which can muddy the shores on weekends. There is also fishing pressure, a factor we're loath to admit can actually affect the total population but which can definitely skim off the easily-caught fish from a given area. Some fish strike readily and some never do take anything with a hook in it or on it.

I believe now that the old saw about 10 percent of the fishermen catching 90 percent of the fish is true, never. Bass fishing techniques have come so far in recent years that an expert from 1940 or even 1955 wouldn't even know what is going on. This makes it difficult to compare today's catches with those of years back. Those old methods would be skotchy at best under current conditions, and when a contest fishermen comes in here and takes a heavy limit we must remember that he's a long way from the average angler. He proves there are fish present, even big ones, but, although he presents a challenge for less productive casters, his string is hardly representative.

Now it is fashionable to present definite cures for poor or mediocre fishing, but I have none. I am inclined to feel that experimentation is called for, even fairly expensive experimentation. I am not confident that reduced limits, introduced fry or closed spawning seasons will help, and I have poo-pooed all of these plans in the past, but I say now that they probably won't hurt anything and may be worth a try. That they may be good public relations for the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission is incidental.

We have been on a habitat kick for some years now—the theory being that if you provide the proper conditions and areas, hunters or fishermen won't hurt the population, and may help it through a healthy harvest that can prevent overcrowding. Of course, habitat is most important of all; you won't have hunting and fishing without it, and, in all fairness, pollution, channelization, and heavy boat traffic can be considered part of habitat.

It may be, however, that we have oversimplified the habitat thing a little. Some years back, I was viewed as a bucolic throwback when I said that in some northern pleasant areas the rule should be (continued on next page)
roosters only and that hens should not be shot. The law said two roosters and one hen for a limit, and I didn't object to that ratio. But since pleasant shooting in that area had become rather poor, that wasn't the true ratio of the kill. Since the hens were easier to come by, and since most hunters figured they wouldn't get a limit anyway, many a gunner came in with a hen and no rooster. In fact, I judge that the true kill in that little area was about three hens to one rooster. In that marginal area the population was virtually wiped out. Admittedly, the habitat wasn't good enough to support a heavy population, but my point is that in this case at least, the hunter was killing the hen that laid the golden eggs.

And although it is widely conceded that fishing black bass on the spawning areas seldom hurts the population, I am convinced that in marginal areas where fishing has slumped you can danged well take too many big females. One 10-pound bass eaten is one 10-pound bass less, and we don't have enough that size to play fast and loose with them. It takes a while for a big fish to grow. So we kill a fish of a size few others will ever attain, no matter how many there are.

I understand that smaller fish are the most productive spawners, and there are those who feel a really big one eats more than it contributes. Not many fishermen would agree, for the extra-big bass is one of the things that keeps them coming back. Then there is the matter of spawning bed destruction by motorboat or wader. No question that some beds can be destroyed and that their destruction or silting prevents the release of bass eggs from hatching, but we know that if all of them hatched and survived we'd soon be up to our ears in bass. Nature provides for losses of most of the fry, and the case is the same in most Florida bass lakes and rivers.

Most fishermen realize that it may take years to learn the value or uselessness of any program and an upturn or downturn of the fishing may have nothing at all to do with what has been done by law or planting programs. Of the things that keep them coming back is the introduction of fingerling bass could help, but many fishermen feel the egg and the first few inches of growth? The question is: at what stage do we lose the bass that might have grown large? It is on the beds. If so, the closed season might be good. Is it between the egg and the first few inches of growth? If so, the introduction of fingerling bass could help, providing they had passed the age of highest mortality.

There is, of course, the theory that it would be important to fish only the young bass that natural mortality would clear out the surplus and prevent overcrowding, and we'd be certain of a maximum crop with the addition of hatchery fish to the supply of naturally grown bass.

Another matter haunts me a bit in this connection, a possibility that's unproved with bass but which has been seen in freshwater fishing. In the case of freshwater trout, there have been cases in which the introduction of planters has not only failed to improve fishing but has caused some of the native fish to disappear and led to a smaller overall population.

The biologists who first indicated that situation earned the ardent disapproval of those who had boasted hatchery fish for years in the theory that even if hatchery fish didn't survive for long, they would provide a welcome addition to the supply.

Such a thing as interference with "native" fish may never occur with black bass, a fish that's very different from trout, but we can't be sure it won't under some conditions.

No biologist can definitely state a policy about introduction of hatchery bass, simply because no two lakes or rivers are exactly the same. We don't know if hatchery fish will survive in some waters, perhaps falling victim to the conditions that made it necessary to introduce them in the first place. What kept the natives scarce might do away with the hatchery fish, which are of necessity raised under somewhat different conditions.

All of this is conjecture but points up the complexity of the situation. The St. Johns River is no farm pond where all of the bad things can be removed and all of the good things added, and even farm ponds can acquire poorly balanced populations to be poisoned out and started over. The size of the water involved makes complete control impossible, and although we speak primarily of the St. Johns, the case is the same in most Florida bass lakes and rivers.

Most fishermen realize that it may take years to learn the value or uselessness of any program and an upturn or downturn of the fishing may have nothing at all to do with what has been done by law or planting programs.

We know lack of oxygen can cause fish kills, but between the condition at which a fish gets sick and the condition at which he strikes best, there is a lot of middle ground that the new instruments can probe.

In the last couple of years there's been a big change in bass basins, the "high-performance" models taking over from those that pretty well split the difference between the johnboat and the family runabout. The high-performance bass is wider and carries the vee back to the stern. It comes out shorter for its capacity. The newer boat will carry a lot of power, right up to the 200 horses advertised by two of the big manufacturers. Until recently, some of the longer and more slender bass boats were flagrantly overpowered. They'd take the power on the straightaway but were a little tricky on the turns since the flat-bottom part didn't grip the water too well.

Like some other fishermen, I was surprised at the demand for hotter bass boats, since I thought gasoline costs and possible scarcity would indicate smaller motors instead of larger ones. I have long re¬ cited in ancient and quavering tones that 30 miles an hour is fast enough for nearly any kind of bass fishing, but the bulk of anglers apparently feel otherwise. The new boats not only handle big motors—they demand them if you're to get top performance. Their advantages in easy riding, high speed, and safety are obvious.

Disadvantages? A few, likely to be ignored by the big-ticket market. A narrow boat is a bit handier for fishing and a flat bottom will cross very thin water when poled. I suspect that most boats with a lot of vee will need more power from an electric motor and are just about out of the question if you like to row. For the benefit of younger bass fishermen, rowing is the propulsion of a boat using long sticks shaped for the purpose.

**GRAPHITE. The material that is cutting such a swath in the fishing rod business, and has moved in for many other uses, is now being tried in fishing reels. The first one I examined was a fly reel introduced by Cortland. The material is tough and extremely light, a few ounces and many fly fishermen. I've always been a bit skeptical about ultralight fly reels, feeling that some weight is needed to balance the rod tips, but many casters disagree with that, saying they can feel the rod's action much better with a light reel. With the lighter rods, they're undoubtedly right.

Anyway, the precision fly reels in light weights, mostly produced in England, have been pretty fragile. Drop one on a rock and the straightening process becomes a highly technical task. I'm betting that graphite will solve that problem. The graphite reel I examined was less expensive than the traditional English ultralights. There is no reason why graphite won't be applied to other types of reels where light weight and toughness are important. It's probably in the works now. As a relatively new material, I hear graphite gives about the same problems to each new firm entering the field, but things have a way of working out.
Management

I

tine in St. Johns County. It is border-

land game hunting that suits your taste, you can find

and Lake Ponte

is located approximately

River, and the northern boundary is a fence separating

accurity helps make this

a popular spot

Guana

River

Wildlife

Management

Area

If it's freshwater fishing, saltwater fishing, crabbing, waterfowl hunting, bird watching or

land game hunting that suits your taste, you can find it all on the Guana River Wildlife Management

Area and Lake Ponte Vedra Fish Management Area.

This very small (12.280 acres) management area is located approximately 10 miles north of St. Augus-
tine in St. Johns County. It is bordered on the west by North River, which is also the Intracoastal Water-
way, and on the east by Highway A1A. The southern boundary is the joining of Guana River and North
River, and the northern boundary is a fence separating the management area from Ponte Vedra Club property.

Originally, Guana River was a narrow, twisting stream that meandered through oyster bars and

marshes. The headwaters were a group of spring-fed freshwater lakes on the golf course at Ponte Vedra.
The water flowed south to join North River. As the river progressed southward, the water

became brackish and finally sea water. Because of this, both freshwater and saltwater species of fish

were present.

The river and marsh have always provided good waterfowl hunting. Many species of ducks and a few

geese wintered there. The area was also famous for its rail hunting. A waterfowl specialist for the Game

and Fresh Water Fish Commission thought the area could be improved to provide more hunting. The

Game and Fish Commission and the landowner, State Investment Company of Jacksonville, entered

into an agreement to establish the wildlife management area in 1957. The main purpose was to make it

into a waterfowl hunting area.

According to the agreement, State Investment Company would construct an earthen dam across the

Guana River, from the tree line on the west to the palmetto and scrub oak dunes on the east, adjacent to

A1A. They would also install a water control structure in the dam, to regulate water levels and salinity. The
total cost of the project was $120,060. The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission agreed to pay this sum
of money back to State Investment on a yearly payment contract.

Upon completion of the project, the area was flooded from tree line to dune line, making an impound-
ment of approximately 2,200 acres. The depth of water ranged up to about 6 feet. Most of the area

was covered with about 1 to 2 feet of water—ideal for dabbling ducks. The impoundment was named Guana
Lake, but was later changed to Lake Ponte Vedra, because of the headwaters coming from the City of
Ponte Vedra. Lake Ponte Vedra is approximately 10 miles long and 1700 feet wide.

Increased numbers of waterfowl took to the area the first winter, but the lake had already become

popular for its fishing and crabbing. People from Jacksonville and surrounding areas came to Guana
WMA in great numbers to enjoy their sport. Ample parking was available on the dam. Fishermen gathered
around the spillway for their fishing, and the crabs used the southeast end of the dam, where they could
wade out about knee-deep and set their crab lines.

Upland game hunting became a bonus, as did fishing and crabbing. The 10,000 acres of flatwood

scrub and live oak hammock provided good hunting for both archers and gun hunters. Wild hogs have been
the most popular game animal on the upland, but deer, squirrels, and rabbits are also present. A few quail
are found on the area, but most of the habitat is not conducive to good quail hunting. Wild turkeys
are found on Guana, but the relatively small size of the area precludes large populations of either turkey
or deer.

Fishing and crabbing are spotlighted year-round, but during the hunting season, hunters invade the
lake and the uplands after the game of their choice.

The land west of Guana River and Lake Ponte Vedra is closed to public access except during the
hunting season. There are several freshwater ponds in that portion. They cover about 45 acres and are

(continued on next page)

By JIM REED

Water control structures allow manip-

ulation of the water on the man-

agement area. This has long been a

favored waterfowl area and it still

attracts numbers of duck hunters
each season. As the entrance sign
attests, the area is open to the pub-

clic under the terms of an agree-

ment between the Commission and

the State Investment Corporation.

Fishing and crappie are popular pur-

suits here at all times of the year.

This is No. 18 in a series of articles on

Florida Wildlife Management Areas.

Maps and regulations on individual

areas are available from regional of-

fices and from the Florida Game and

Fresh Water Fish Commission, 620 S.

Meridian St., Tallahassee, FL 32304.
This wonderful area attracts great numbers of people and has not been without its troubles. Litter has been a major problem since Guana was established. Litter barrels are strategically placed along the dam, and they are emptied frequently, but litter is still strewn in the water and on the dam. Drink cans and bottles, food containers, and bait wrappers make up most of the litter.

Vandalism has also been a problem. Wildfires, cut fences, broken locks, and spiked roads plague the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's efforts to keep this area for everyone to enjoy. The problems are caused by a very few people, but they affect everyone who uses the management area.

The Guana Area has been offered for sale to the State of Florida in past years and has slid up and down the priority scale. Certainly as money becomes available, this area should be considered for purchase. It is relatively wild and undeveloped. Recreational opportunities are available in many forms which include swimming, surfing and sunning on the beach, just across A1A on the east.

The long-term contract with State Investment Company has expired. The area is kept open on a day-to-day, year-to-year agreement with them. This kind of operation borders on being satisfactory, but the land is extremely valuable for homes, businesses, or apartments. The public is very fortunate to have use of this unique land and water area. It could become a city instead of a wildlfe and fish management utopia.

Some of the preliminary findings of a three-year study of four ponds stocked with grass carp were recently presented to the Commission. The results point out some of the problems that need to be resolved before a decision on the fish is made.

Two of the ponds, Suwannee and Pasco, were evaluated for the effect of the fish on the sport fish populations. In both, bass populations were hurt. In the 30-acre Suwannee, 38 harvestable-size bass per acre were present before introduction of the grass carp, yet the total was down to 10 per acre after the grass carp was introduced. In the 7-acre Pasco Pond, the ratio went from 12 before introduction to none after, based on block net samples.

Bream were also adversely affected, with the warm-mouth population good in Pasco before grass carp and virtually eliminated after; 19 pounds per acre down to 3.6 pounds per acre, an 81 per cent decline. Bluegill showed a reduction in average size of harvestable fish, from a 9-inch dominant size in Suwannee to 7 inches, with symptoms of stunting and overcrowding among young fish.

Several species of shallow water fishes were eventually eliminated after the grass carp was added, with rough fishes increasing dramatically, especially chub bream and bluegill. Among the young fish.

Water quality also apparently declined, the report to the Commission said, after the introduction of the weed-eating fish from Siberia. Nutrient pollution occurred in all ponds and in one, oxygen content was reduced to critical levels for aquatic life. Virtually all submerged vegetation was eliminated in three of the four ponds, but feeding was indiscriminately on both noxious and desirable plants.

Why did the sport fish populations decline? And what caused the water quality decline? Answers to these questions are still unknown, indicating that more research is needed into the working of this fish. Is the grass carp doing what it is supposed to, or is it proving to be a potential problem for our state's waters? These and other questions need to be answered.

News of the fish's activities in other research lakes is beginning to come in, pointing out more areas of concern. In Lake Killarney, which was stocked almost a year ago, at the rate of 20 fish per acre, it appears the fish is not effective against small outbreaks of hydrilla, even when stocked at such a high rate. When grass carp were first introduced, three acres of the lake were infected. Now, 117 acres are in hydrilla. And the same thing appears to be happening in Lake Wales, also stocked a year ago, at 34 fish per acre, the expected control of hydrilla is not happening.

Analyzing the mountains of data pouring in from our research programs is a tremendous task. In cooperation with North Carolina State University, the Commission is working on a computer program to evaluate the results of the four-pond study, which should be ready in a few months.

By letting the researchers do their work thoroughly and in-depth, the way it should be, the answers to the long-range effects of the grass carp in Florida's aquatic ecosystem should be forthcoming. Without this kind of information, any decision now on further stocking of the fish in our public waters would be premature and in violation of the trust vested in the Commission.
you remember the tough hunts, so the old saying goes . . .

**Woodcock—The "Ain't There" Bird**

SUPERSTITION DOESN'T HAVE anything to do with the matter at all, but, without stretching a point too much, I could lay the whole thing on a black cat. It's sort of odd, when you come to think of it, how you get shunted here and there by the fickle flittings of chance.

For years I'd busted palmetto thickets, fought the catbriars, squished the swamps, sweated and fought the chills in most every kind of game country Florida has to offer. Like a good many hunters with a few seasons in the field, I thought I had at least a nodding acquaintance with most everything the state has to offer in the hunting line.

Then comes along this Saturday afternoon back there a ways. A cold snap had settled in up the line. It sent a new batch of northern snipe cutting out for the more compatible climes of Florida. Boggy pastures and lake margins that had held only a scattering of skittish long bills the day before now hosted goodly numbers of not-so-wild birds. They were thick enough that, even with a late start and mediocre shooting, my partner and I were finished up by midday. This is how I happened to be coming in the back door on a balmy winter afternoon, arms loaded with the impedimenta of a boat-borne bird hunting expedition.

I paused momentarily to glance at the small feathered form I'd nearly mashed underfoot. It had a long bill and mottled back feathering. Dusty, the family cat, apparently had been on a snipe hunt of her own, I thought.

Struggling through the back door, I managed to get the gear deposited in its allotted storage space, then, like the exaggerated double take in one of those old time movie comedies, it hit me. "Say, that didn't really look just like a snipe at that. I wonder . . . " It was, sure enough, a woodcock. Even when you mark the spot carefully, a downed bird is sometimes difficult to find. The broken pattern of subdued hues is fine camouflage for elusive woodcock, right.

By MORRIE NAGGIAR

A little additional research revealed that not only is the woodcock found in proper habitat during the winter throughout most of Florida, it is also known as a nester in these parts. How come, then, with all the thumping around in the boodocks I'd done, I'd never had one in hand before?

With the wheels starting to click, I recalled a number of times over the years when I'd jumped a bird I thought at the time sort of fit the description of a flushing woodcock. The trouble was, they had always got up without warning and were gone before I could register the fact that it might be a legal game bird. Usually, it was while catfooting around in some wet stretch of squirrel timber in a river swamp that I'd caught glimpses of the bird.

With interest piqued and the trail starting to warm up, one thing led to another. The upshot was that one clear, cool winter morning, a couple of hunting cronies and I were cruising the back roads looking for possible woodcock cover. The others had a bit of an edge on me. Dave knew a guy who knew a guy who had hunted the birds in the state. Gene had talked with a hunter who regularly pursued them, but wouldn't say just where, when, or how. Better than that, Gene's young son, Scott, had actually bagged one of the elusive critters with his trusty .410 recently while squirrel hunting. The sum total of this left us with mighty little to go on as far as getting in some woodcock gunning ourselves. Finally, we decided that we were going to bag (continued on next page)
very few birds riding around in the car talking about it. "Over there's a spot that looks like one of those alder thickets the magazine stories always show," Gene commented. "Probably as close as we'll find here, even if it's sweet gum instead of alder," Dave pointed out. "Let's do it," I seconded.

If tough going was a requirement of good woodcock cover, this one had all the appearances of a real winner—close-growing sweet gum whips, interwoven with pokers. Not infrequently, a stretch of cover that had been good a week—or a day—before would be devoid of birds. "Ain't there," was a painfully frequent comment at the end of a drive through a brush and timber bog. But that's what you've got to expect from bureaucracy, some of the badly needed time and money that should have been spent on the land itself.

Exactly where and when in Florida to find this type of birds, we'd managed to put some tough mileage on our waterlogged footgear, in addition to rousing out a few more birds. It had been a session of tough hunting, no denying that. But, you know, I was beginning to understand all the fuss those up-North hunting writers make over the timberdoodle. My hunting partners apparently felt the same way. In the time left of the hunting season, we spent a fair number of hours looking for the big-eyed mud polers. Not infrequently, a stretch of cover that had been good a week—or a day—before would be devoid of birds. "Ain't there," was a painfully frequent comment at the end of a drive through a brush and timber bog. But that's what you've got to expect with woodcock. With a touch of bullheaded persistence, you'll sooner or later find them where they ought to be. As with most things, the fat tends to more than make up for the slim ones.

We tried another brush patch, this one along a little trickly of a creek. Bingo! Within a few yards of the place where I had touched one off just as the bird ducked behind a shrubbery wax myrtle. The bush took the full brunt of the charge. "Nice shot," Dave commented. I didn't even know I had cut a feather until Dave took the bird from Rip's mouth and handed it to me. "It wasn't nothin'," I admitted modestly. Five minutes later, I shredded brush a good two feet under an easy, rising bird. I managed to cap that performance by blowing three holes in the air behind a bird that swung away from the brush and barreled up a clear strip between the creek bank cover and the pines. "Twamn't nothin'," Dave observed. "Yeah," I had to admit. By the time it was starting to dusky up good in the thickets, we'd managed to put some tough mileage on our waterlogged footgear, in addition to rousing out a few more birds. It had been a session of tough hunting, no denying that. But, you know, I was beginning to understand all the fuss those up-North hunting writers make over the timberdoodle. My hunting partners apparently felt the same way. In the time left of the hunting season, we spent a fair number of hours looking for the big-eyed mud polers. Not infrequently, a stretch of cover that had been good a week—or a day—before would be devoid of birds. "Ain't there," was a painfully frequent comment at the end of a drive through a brush and timber bog. But that's what you've got to expect with woodcock. With a touch of bullheaded persistence, you'll sooner or later find them where they ought to be. As with most things, the fat tends to more than make up for the slim ones.

We spread out and attacked the jungle. In the time left of the hunting season, we spent a fair number of hours looking for the big-eyed mud polers. Not infrequently, a stretch of cover that had been good a week—or a day—before would be devoid of birds. "Ain't there," was a painfully frequent comment at the end of a drive through a brush and timber bog. But that's what you've got to expect with woodcock. With a touch of bullheaded persistence, you'll sooner or later find them where they ought to be. As with most things, the fat tends to more than make up for the slim ones.

A prime example is the 1974 court injunction that was sought by a coalition of New Jersey antihunters who wished to halt migratory bird hunting. The case was settled out of court when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to develop an environmental impact statement on waterfowl hunting. The 900-page study cost at least $125,000 and thousands of man-hours that should have been spent on the land itself. It was a threefold waste. For one thing, annual assessment of the economic, environmental, and harvest have been made for many years. These annual studies of hunter harvest, and breeding and wintering grounds of waterfowl, are essentially environmental impact statements in themselves. Second, there was that actual cost of time and money. Plus the fact that some of the material contained in the environmental impact statement is providing lawyers of the antihunting coalition with biological facts that are being misused to continue court actions and publicity that are directed to one major goal: the discontinuance of sport hunting. In 1975, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is again back in court in both New Jersey and the District of Columbia, defending its right to regulate migratory bird seasons. Ironically, these court actions are wasting federal wildlife funds at the very time that the Senate Subcommittee on Environment is conducting hearings on the deplorable condition of our National Wildlife Refuge System.

There's no doubt that there is already waste within state and federal conservation agencies—waste that results from bureaucracy, partisan politics, inadequate leadership and certain reorganization schemes in the interest of "efficiency.

Still, that waste is largely offset by actual, productive wildlife management. The waste that's fomented by antihunters is not offset, even partially, by any positive productive programs. On the contrary, action by anti-hunters is negative and nonproductive.

The efforts of dedicated wildlife professionals are being challenged by antihunters whose stock in trade is emotional recrimination—and who know nothing about either sport hunting or wildlife biology. They are having a field day in their attempts to discredit professional wildlife management as a means of ending hunting, and are avoiding the real need: the development of habitat to enhance and protect wildlife resources.

The third, and greatest, waste in this rising conflict between hunters and antihunters is the loss of strength that might be achieved if they joined in the common defense of wildlife and its environments. Instead of wasting our efforts on the propriety of hunting, we should be working together with all types of wildlife and joining forces against the despoilers of natural environments. There is no better way of putting this than by paraphrasing one of Aldo Leopold's closing comments in his 1939 classic, Game Management: There is, in short, a fundamental unity of purpose and method between hunters and antihunters. Their common task of teaching the public how to modify economic activities for conservation purposes is of infinitely greater importance, and difficulty, than their current differences of opinion over hunting. Unless and until the common task of wildlife conservation is accomplished, the question of hunting is, in the long run, irrelevant.
you're bound to turn a few heads when you use a...

Bass Boat in Salt Water

By GEORGE X. SAND

LIKE MOST YOUNG LOVERS, my wife, Lou, and I don't enjoy being stared at. We've sort of gotten used to it, however, since we started using our fresh water bass boat in salt water.

The ogling usually begins at the launching ramp. Often it is accompanied by grins, head shaking, and comments like these:

"What is that thing you got there, Captain?"

"This here's a new kind of boat that was developed especially for sneaking up on bass."

"It looks like something a Yankee would try to use."

"Fact is, it was originally developed in the South. Since then, they must have sold a million of them— all over the U.S."

"Sho' ruff? How's she work?"

At this point I feel obliged to explain that our 18-foot MonArk Marauder bass boat. Marauder provides two live bait wells, a 7-foot rod storage box, plus storage space for folding beach chairs and other items inside the motor hatch. Only one of the boat's two fishing chairs is shown in use. Sand, at left, displays a string of reciprocal hybrid striped bass taken on a lake in central Florida. A good boat adds a great deal to any fishing excursion, and it frequently makes the difference between a good catch and a blank. George takes his Marauder, below, through Stump Pass near Englewood. He says that the boat is a highly satisfactory miniature offshore sport fisherman—provided it is operated in the safe, estuarine waters for which it is best suited.
boats has boomed in recent years, and it is surprising — I suspect “frightening” would be a better word — how many new captains don’t take time to check out their craft to learn how they handle. A classic example would be the proud young Miami father I and several others watched launch his new cruiser. After assisting his wife and two children aboard, this man followed them, carrying the gas tanks for the outboard engine. The tank was still inside its cardboard shipping container — and obviously devoid of gasoline, since he handled it so easily.

You guessed it: he cast off his lines, then drifted helplessly. One of us had to go out and tow the embarrassed man back to dock.

If you’re a new boater, you should attend the free instruction classes that are provided by both the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the U.S. Power Squadron. Learn how to read the channel markers, and how to handle other situations you will encounter in salt water. You should know the markers, the channels and shoals, in the area where you intend to use your boat. If you do not, sectional charts for both coasts of Florida are available, for a small fee, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D. C.

Always tell someone where you are going and when you intend to be back.

The average bass boat is designed to accommodate two anglers comfortably. There is a swivel seat forward, with a second aft, the latter position to allow for direct or console steering of the single outboard motor. Standard equipment includes one or more live bait wells, box (or other) convenient storage for assembled rods, carpeted flooring, and additional storage beneath casting platforms. Battery terminals are usually provided forward, for use of an electric trolling motor.

Our Marauder goes a bit farther. It has an 18’ 2” length, 71’ beam, a 34” molded dry, and a load capacity of 1,638 pounds. The two padded fishing seats, with arm rests, can be moved to any of three different positions, one of which is aft, atop the carpeted motor housing casting platform. The instrument panel offers everything from tachometer to chart light, and we enjoy such cruising conveniences as power tilt and trim and an automatic bilge pump. You might say we have a miniature offshore sportfisherman — provided it is operated in the safe, estuarine waters for which it is suited.

Many freshwater bassboaters use float-on trailers. Should the metal be other than corrodable, this type trailer invites rust when used in the salt. It is a good idea to keep all moving parts well-lubricated, especially the wheel hubs. (We use “Bearing Buddy” wheel bearing protectors on our Tri-Lakes float-on trailer. This hand-winch trailer has a 3,000-pound axle capacity.) Don’t delay in touching up painted metal surfaces when these become scratched or chipped. In fact, I’ve found that it helps to rub a light coating of oil over all metal surfaces of a steel trailer to be used in salt water.

Float-on trailers usually have elevated stop-and-turn lights. Unfortunately, the elevation often is insufficient to keep these lights from submerging while the boat is being launched. This seems to be particularly true when salt water ramps are used. A flooded light housing can corrode quickly and result in a blown car fuse, even a burned-out flasher unit. Even if you manage to keep the elevated lights above the surface, the license tag light and running lights on the frame have no alternative but to submerge whenever the boat is launched. So check these frequently for corrosion.

If you use a tilt-frame trailer, you can avoid wheel bearing problems by allowing only the tires to submerge while launching.

Hull insurance will cost you somewhat more when you use your boat in salt water.

Like any small craft, the bass boat can provide sport in addition to fishing. It is ideally suited for water skiiing, provided the kicker is large enough. The ample storage space encourages multi-purpose trips that include swimming, exploration, even overnight camping on some convenient shore or island beach.

Lou and I have used our boat to explore the Gulf coast from Sarasota County southward. We intend to make trailered visits this summer to the east coast to enjoy similar fun there. We live in Fort Myers and like to visit the many islands and abandoned fishing shanties in Pine Island Sound. We find especially fascinating the fine ocean beaches of Cayo Costa and north Captiva, remote barrier islands that can be reached only by boat. Legend has it that the pirate Gasparilla used to keep the faithful of his lady captives on Captiva Island, hence the name.

Sometimes we have available only a few hours, beginning in mid-afternoon. Even then, we manage to combine several different boating sports. We launch at the Punta Rassa ramp, then troll or drift fish a while in nearby San Carlos Bay. After that, we swing out into the Gulf (when it is calm), near the Sanibel lighthouse. There we anchor just beyond the breakers, to shell a bit and enjoy a swim in the Sanibel Island surf. We conclude the day by speeding back inside to enjoy a cookout on “our” island in the bay, using a portable Coleman 2-burner propane stove to prepare the food.

Then, with the lighthouse winking white in the distance, and our own red and green running lights glowing softly at the bow, we head for home through the settling dusk ... recharged and ready to tackle another tomorrow.
a 22,000-acre block of wild land is preserved in west Florida

Bradwell Bay—Titi Wilderness

"IT'S A MEAN ANDUGLY CHUNK OF COUNTRY," J. E. said, nodding in the direction of a wall of titi. From his point of view there was no argument. To a hunter hoping to work his deer dogs in the vicinity, the huge, soggy, roadless thicket that comprises the heart of the Bradwell Bay Wilderness Area is a formidable obstacle.

For others, the Bay has different implications. To the beekeeper those thousands of acres of Cliftonia, the buckwheat tree, or titi, is the source of a well-regarded variety of honey. The wildlife enthusiast sees in the tangled thickets escape cover second to none for bear, deer, and other creatures of the wild, both furred and feathered. To the ecologist and other natural scientists, this recent addition to the national wilderness system represents the preservation of a segment of a rapidly-dwindling type of habitat with its unique association of plant and animal life.

The value we put on wilderness has greatly changed since the early days of settlement. In pioneer times, wilderness was conceived as that vast, ill-defined, seemingly limitless stretch of country beyond the frontier. To the contemporary politician it was an obstacle to be overcome in fulfilling the obligations
In its early throes, wilderness preservation centered mainly on the western half of the country. The reason was obvious, for here remained sizable tracts of land bearing but minor scars, if any, of European intrusion. But there also existed, it was soon brought to public attention, lands in the eastern states that could provide a wilderness-type experience, even though they had early been exploited for timber or other resources.

In 1964, Congress put on the books Public Law 88-577, known as The Wilderness Act. In its statement of policy on the matter, the Congress said, "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. For this purpose there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally-owned areas designated by Congress as wilderness areas, and those shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

In defining the interpretation of wilderness, the Bill further states, "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. It is further defined to mean, in this Act, an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primordial character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

The immediate result of the Wilderness Act was to place 9 million acres within the national forests under the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other outstanding areas within the national park, national forest, and national wildlife refuge system were to be reviewed for inclusion in the wilderness system.

At the same time, the Act required that, "by 1974, the Secretary of the Interior must evaluate the wilderness potential of every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more within his jurisdiction."

In the swamp mud, a roving black bear left unmistakable signs of its presence. The tangled thickets of this new west Florida wilderness area offer refuge for a wide variety of wild creatures. Hunters say that when quarry runs deep into the tangled mass of brush, they can expect them to take at least a couple of days to work their way out. The titi swamp habitat was once much more common feature of the west Florida landscape, but the drainage and other encroachments by man threaten to destroy what remains.

Photo By Larry Martin

Pitcher plants are interesting part of shrub bog flora. In earlier days logging removed larger trees from some lands on rim of the swamp. With those trees removed, the water which would have been passed off into atmosphere through life processes (which is called evapotranspiration), remained on the ground and raised ground water level, resulting in acid bog habitat type, now too wet for pines to re-establish themselves. Alligator nest, above, consists of a mass of moist vegetation. Chemical breakdown of plant material provides heat to incubate the eggs. Vastness of Bradwell Bay provides some good alligator habitat.

Florida State Novus Bureau Photo

PHOTO BY WALLACE HUGHES

U.S. Forest Service Photo

PHOTO BY WALLACE HUGHES

CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE

support over the years, to protect permanently at least a vestige of American back country.

"In support over the years, to protect permanently a at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

In 1964, Congress put on the books Public Law 88-577, known as The Wilderness Act. In its statement of policy on the matter, the Congress said, "In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. For this purpose there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally-owned areas designated by Congress as wilderness areas, and those shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

In defining the interpretation of wilderness, the Bill further states, "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. It is further defined to mean, in this Act, an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primordial character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and may also contain ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

The immediate result of the Wilderness Act was to place 9 million acres within the national forests under the National Wilderness Preservation System. Other outstanding areas within the national park, national forest, and national wildlife refuge system were to be reviewed for inclusion in the wilderness system.

At the same time, the Act required that, "by 1974, the Secretary of the Interior must evaluate the wilderness potential of every roadless area of 5,000 acres or more within his jurisdiction."

The 5,000 acres is not a mandatory minimum; wilderness areas can be small-

(continued on next page)
er. The Act describes a wilderness area as having at least 5,000 acres "or being of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpair ed condition."

In January 1974, under terms of the Act, 22,000 acres Bradwell Bay, located in the Apalachicola National Forest, southwest of Tallahassee, was formally recognized as part of the national wilderness system. Not outstanding in the sense of spectacular beauty as some of the mountain wilderness areas in other parts of the country, Bradwell Bay's claim to fame rests on parts of the country, Bradwell Bay's claim to fame comes closer to the situation here, however, is ogist, was among other broadleaf trees, giving way on the surrounding high ground to typical pine-palmetto flatwoods.

Dr. Andre Clewell, Florida State University ecologist, was among those concerned individuals who pushed for recognition of Bradwell Bay as worthy of protection under the Wilderness Act. Dr. Clewell states, "I have just made a trip through west Florida and am aghast at the amount of clearing and chopping of the native forest. Even I, in Florida's back country, Bradwell Bay and perhaps a few other spots will be all that is left of this magnificent north Florida swamp country in a few years if the present rate of destruction continues."

To most of us rather casual observers of the natural scene, the Bradwell Wilderness is a rather confusing jumble of trees, dense brush, and water. To Dr. Clewell and other observers trained in such matters, it's a case of knowledge resulting in understanding and understanding opening the way for appreciation. An oak stand in the northeast edge of the wilderness, for example, may merely be a good place to look for a buck or a turkey to many of us, but to the trained eye it is much more. As Dr. Clewell puts it, "There is the sand ridge supporting a mixed growth of turkey oak, sand live oak, myrtle, and Chapman oak in association with very sad little pine. The unusual thing is that this condition almost always is found on the coast rather than well inland like this."

It is his conclusion that this association is a relic of the former Pleistocene seashore, when Bradwell Bay was indeed a bay in the usual sense of an indentation of the coastline.

During a recent discussion of the Bradwell Bay area and the wilderness idea in general, Don Hughes, assistant supervisor of planning in the U.S. Forest Service's Tallahassee office, commented, "It is generally recognized that publicity is the antithesis of the wilderness concept. You encourage large numbers of people to visit one of these ecologically fragile places and you destroy the nature and character of the area you're trying to preserve."

What Don pointed out is true, of course. Then I thought of a story I had heard and quite honestly. Its mechanical action was slow-lock type, and its adjustable rear peep sight, furnished in combination with an undersized blade front sight, looked much like the rear sight on the standard U.S. Springfield Model 1903 .30 caliber bolt action rifle, also folding down when not in use. Its main virtues were the heavy, precisely rifled, 28-inch barrel and chambering for the very accurate .22 long rifle cartridge.

The original Model 32 was soon superseded by one featuring a new cocking mechanism, an improvement that quickly made the Winchester 52 No. 1 among then-available smallbore target rifles. Only serious rivals of the time were the U.S. Spring field Model 1922 M1, a .22 caliber target version of the then-standard Model 1903 Springfield .30 caliber bolt-action service rifle, and the Stevens Model 417-1 "Walnut" target action single shot.

Contemporaneously, the Savage Model 19 NRA and Stevens 416-2 bolt actions also became fairly popular, primarily with local shooting clubs maintaining short-distance indoor ranges, but neither was ever a serious threat to the Winchester Model 52 and Springfield Model 1922M1 bolt actions. Not until Remington introduced its Model 37, in 1937, did the Winchester Model 52 face any real marked range performance competition. The Winchester Model 52 established numerous national and international smallbore competitive shooting records before the Remington Model 37 came along and did likewise. My Winchester Model 57 was succeeded by one of the first Model 52's, with fold-down leaf rear peep sight. Subsequently, this original was replaced with an improved model, featuring "Speed-Lock" action and superior Lyman 482 micrometer- click rear peep sight and Lyman 77 hooded front sight.

Another revelation! With this last combination, I began to truly appreciate the potential accuracy of the highly developed .22 long rifle cartridge teamed with a rifle of equal capabilities.

As I developed into state rifle team material, and ultimately experienced national and international activity. I encouraged others to try formal .22 caliber target shooting.

A good friend, who shared my side interests in plinking and squirrel hunting with a .22, was an excellent smallbore shot. Quite naturally, I attempted to get him interested in the various target shooting courses and scheduled competitions of the National Rifle Association.

Although he scored well on paper targets, my friend refused to take up formal target shooting as a sport. "I just don't want to see something break or fall!" he told me.

I didn't realize it then, but he had put a finger directly on the weakness of formal paper target shooting at 50 yards, 50 meters, and 100 yards. Simply, there is little visual action to maintain participant and spectator interest.

This is true; that the smallbore tournament competitor can keep aware of his shooting accuracy by glassing his distant paper target hits through conventional 20X spotting scope, and can also swing his scope for look-see as to what other shooters in his relay are scoring on their targets, but the results of a match usually are never definitely known until scores are posted on the range bulletin boards.

Consequently, only the dyed-in-the-wool type of competitive smallbore rifleman tends to remain active in formal target shooting decades after decade. My active participation lasted 34 years—much

(continued from preceding page)

One of a number of potholes in the heart of the trackless swamplands. An earlier day resident of this area, Bradwell Bay, by name, wandered for several days in the vastness of the big thicket. He lost his gun there before he fin ally made his way out, but his memory is preserved in the name of this unique segment of the national wilderness area system.

U.S. Forest Service Photo

FRoIIoNd WILDLIFE

JANUARY 1978

27
The setup consists of a square, below-ground-level cement block or corrugated metal-sided pit just large enough to contain a swiveling clay pigeon thrower, with attached seat for its operator, and opened curtains of clay pigeons. The latter are arranged within easy reach around the outer perimeter of the revolving trap. Both seated operator and trap revolve as a single unit.

The operator is entirely concealed, is well below ground level, and is perfectly safe from accidental shotgun shells and trap shots. Under given circumstances does he ever leave the trap pit until all firing has been completed and he has been given, and has acknowledged a clear! signal by the supervising rangemaster. (Some Crazy Quail setups use interchanged whistle signals or electronic communication for safety purposes.)

Firing is normally done from a point 22 yards from the concealed trap, although handicaps anywhere between that distance and 30 yards can be decreed, where contestants are known to vary markedly in shooting knowledge and gun handling skill.

The shooter stands at one spot, and at his command, a single clay pigeon target is thrown from the pit, in any direction chosen by the operator. From the moment the shooter calls for release of target he must not move his feet. This means that his shooting stance must be natural and balanced, and that his gun handling must incorporate the smooth body and arm swing that successful upland game shot. Besides dependable performance, another reason for the .30-06's steady popularity has been the variety of commercial loadings available in the caliber. Shooters have had their choice of 110, 125, 150, 165, and 200-grain ready-made boattail bullets. In assembling the new cartridge loading, Federal combines a 165-grain Sierra soft-point boattail bullet with a powder formula that gives a muzzle velocity of 2,800 feet per second. Ballistically, this particular cartridge loading is probably the most ideal .30-caliber hunting load ever produced specifically for medium and large North American game species.

Now the .30-06 caliber has been given an additional reason for continued shooter popularity. Federal Cartridge Corporation is now loading the 30-06 in 155-grain bullet weight, heretofore unavailable in commercial form.

DESPITE ITS RELATIVE OLD AGE and repeated challenges by periodically popular rival calibers, including a 50-year big game hunting performance test with the 270 Winchester caliber, the .30-06 caliber continues to hold high popularity with shooters.

For almost three score and ten, the .30-06 has proved itself a reliable performer in the big game hunting field. Teddy Roosevelt used that caliber in an early sporting rifle adaptation, the Winchester Model 95 lever action, and later, Stewart Edward White, big game hunter and writer, successfully used this writer, on African safari, was forced to shoot a 600-yard shot at a lion with a .30-06 Winchester Magnum caliber loaded with 155-grain boattail bullets. Colonel Townsend Whelen, until his death probably the most widely acknowledged authority and writer on sporting firearms, is with his .30-06 and 165-grain ready-made boattail bullets.
WATER SURVIVAL
By DARRELL HOLT

Each year thousands of hunters take to the water. Since hunting with a boat takes one to fairly remote places, with little chance of assistance in the event of an emergency, hunters should be extra cautious. Caution can be tempered by having a plan to survive.

If using an open boat, remember to carry a U.S. Coast Guard-approved seat, cushion or life preserver for each person aboard. In a small boat always remain seated and if you are caught in a big body of water in bad weather, where you shouldn't be in the first place, keep a low center of gravity by having everyone lie down in the bottom of the boat.

If an accident should happen, stay with the boat if at all possible. Exposure to low temperature water, which you will usually find during hunting season, causes subnormal body temperature (hypothermia). The following chart indicates the effect of exposure on an unprotected body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Temp. (°F)</th>
<th>Time Under Min.</th>
<th>Time Under Min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32.5-40.0</td>
<td>15-30 Min.</td>
<td>30-90 Min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>30-60 Min.</td>
<td>1-3 Hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
<td>1-2 Hr.</td>
<td>1-6 Hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-70</td>
<td>2-7 Hr.</td>
<td>2-40 Hr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80</td>
<td>3-12 Hr.</td>
<td>1-3 Indef.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 80</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-3 Indef.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, if you become separated from your boat or floating devices, remember that your life is more valuable than the gun or ammunition you are carrying, so drop them—you might recover them later. Then relax, for the air trapped in your hunting clothing may bring you to the surface.

If you are wearing hip boots, keep the tops under the water. The air possibly trapped in the boots will cause them to float at the knees. Turn on your head, face up and use a backstroke to paddle to shore. This will even work with knee boots. Just turn on your stomach and allow your legs to bend upward.

If duck hunting, grab any floating decoys within your reach and push them inside your jacket to help stay afloat. If necessary, free the anchor lines. Arms will also help. If you have only a single oar, put it under your chin and spread your arms along its length. If you have two, roll on your back and put one oar under your knees and the other under the back of your neck, with your arms stretched along its length.

Upon arriving ashore, immediately build a fire. Stay by the fire until someone comes for you, or you are thoroughly dry and rested.

In another instance, you may not be able to swim to shore because the water is too rough or the distance is too far. This is the time to practice the "drownproofing" method.

The first step is to take a deep breath, lay your head forward in the water and relax your whole body, while your arms dangle at your sides. As your body hangs vertically in the water, rest.

Before you need a breath, get ready for the change by leisurely crossing your arms (keeping forearms together) in front of your head and one knee toward your chest. Then extend the other foot behind you.

As you raise your head smoothly but swiftly, exhale through your nose as it emerges from the water. Stop with your chin still in the water.

When you are through exhaling, you can inhale through the mouth. To keep your mouth above water while inhaling, gently sweep your palms outward and step downward on the water with both feet.

After you have inhaled, close your mouth and drop your head again, remembering to relax as before. When you feel you are ready for another breath, repeat the procedure.

Courtesy of Texas Parks & Wildlife

Drownproofing Method:

1. Take a deep breath, lay head forward.
2. Cross arms with hands together.
3. Bend one knee toward chest.
4. Extend other foot behind.
5. Exhale through nose.
6. Inhale through mouth.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE
JANUARY 1976

CONSERVATION SCENE

GUIDELINES FOR DREDGE AND FILL and development projects are now available from the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission.

The 16-page document is designed to familiarize development agencies and the public with criteria used by the Commission's Environmental Protection Bureau in assessing projects affecting fish and wildlife.

Commission Deputy Director Gene Wallace said the guidelines are encouraged for all developments planned for both wetland and upland areas.

The guidelines stress maintenance of wetlands vegetation within a development project and assess the vegetation's role in shoreline stabilization, water quality enhancement and wildlife habitat values.

Look for Limpkins

The GAME AND FISH COMMISSION is asking fishermen and boaters to be on the lookout for color-marked limpiniks. Approximately 100 of these wading birds have been marked with a colored wing streamer and released in the Okla­wha-Rodman area.

Stephen Nesbit, a Commission wildlife biologist, said the release is part of the research being done on the environmental impact of the Cross-Florida Barge Canal. The area has some of the best limpinik habitat available, and the research should show the dispersal of the bird in that locale.

The limpkin is a large, brownish wading bird, with a slightly upturned bill. As an adult, the neck is streaked with white and the back and legs are spangled in the same color. Both neck and beak are rather long, and the beak has a slight downward droop. The bird's call is easily identified as a loud shriek and is usually startled the first time it is heard.

Nesbit said the birds involved in the project are marked with several different colors of plastic wing streamers, about 3 inches long and 1½ inches wide. Anyone observing a marked limpkin is urged to report the sighting to the Commission's Wildlife Research Office, 4005 South Main Street, Gainesville, or call 904-376-6481.

Biologists Recognized

FOR THE THIRD YEAR in succession, fisheries biologists of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission have received recognition for outstanding technical papers presented at annual meetings of the Southeastern Association of Game and Fish Regulation.

The 1972 paper on the economic value of the Lake Tohopekaliga fishery took first place in competition with other technical reports presented at the 26th annual conference of the Association. The work was coauthored by biologists William Wegener and Dennis Holcomb, with Wegener making the presentation. In the same competition, Commission biologist Bruce May received an honorable mention for his report on mortality of bass caught during fishing tournaments.

At the 1973 conference, a technical paper on sampling shallow water fish populations, co-authored by Wegener, Holcomb, and Vin...
(continued from preceding page)

cent Williams, took a second place award, with Williams making the presentation.

For their 1974 presentation, recognized at the 1975 meeting, co-authors Wegener and Williams' efforts garnered another second place in the prestigious competition, this time for a report on the response of a fish population following an extreme lake drawdown. Biologist Forrest Ware was given an honorable mention for a paper he presented on hybrid striped bass.

Wegener is project leader on the highly successful Lake Tohockalin restoration project, with Williams and Holcomb also assigned there. The 25,700-acre Osceola County lake is one of the largest in the Kissimmee chain, and is a major source of water for Lake Okeechobee and southern Florida.

**Eagle Is Stable**

The southern bald eagle, placed on the endangered species list in 1966, appears to be holding its own in Florida, a study team reports.

The team, composed of biologists from the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, U.S. National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Audubon Society, has just completed a 3-year study of the eagle's status in Florida.

Stephen Nesbitt, the Commission's representative on the team, said the survey showed a bald eagle population of between 800 and 1,000 birds.

Two aerial surveys were made each year over nesting sites, the first survey during the first phase of nesting season, December to late January, and the second in late March to April or May.

A total of 274 successful eagle nests were found, producing 402 young during the survey period, or approximately 1.47 young per successful pair.

The bald eagles were discovered to prefer pine trees, then cypress and mangrove trees for their homes. Nests were generally discovered in close proximity to the coast or near large inland bodies of water. All were in fairly open areas, preferably with shade over the nesting site.

Nesbitt said the eagle nesting success has remained fairly constant in recent years. The largest number of successful nests were discovered in the Central Florida region.

**Report Violations**

GAME COMMISSION offices throughout the state are getting an increasing number of complaints from concerned sportmen about violations of Florida's wildlife code. The contacts range from anonymous tips to the late citizen who is willing to sign a sworn statement and testify in court.

These contacts indicate most sportmen are becoming more concerned about their favorite pastime and want to help the wildlife officers all they can. Lt. Col. Brantley Goodson, chief of the Law Enforcement Division, has a few suggestions for the concerned sportsmen.

First, when a violation is seen, don't attempt any physical action such as making a citizen's arrest. There are so many legal technicalities involved that an arrest is best made by a trained officer.

Do, however, be an astute observer. Record as many facts as possible, such as vehicle description, tag number, number of persons involved, their descriptions, etc., then, get to a phone and call one of the five toll-free numbers of the Commission, which can be reached 24 hours a day. They are: Lake City 1-800-342-8105, Lakeland 1-800-252-8002, Orlando 1-800-342-9209, Panama City 1-800-342-1676, West Palm Beach 1-800-432-2046. Sometimes only the slightest bit of information, when passed on to a wildlife officer, can result in an arrest of one or more persons for a major violation, Goodson said.

**Commission law enforcement division chief, Lt. Col. Brantley Goodson, center, examines one of the collection of trophies garnered by the division’s two-man police combat pistol team, Sgt. Don E. Barber, left, and Capt. E. W. “Larry” Lawrence. The team, picked recently on the basis of division competition, won the trophies at two shoots, an NRA Police Combat League Match at Pensacola Beach and the National Police Combat Championships at Jackson, Mississippi. The team is hoping for the Governor’s 20 Competition, which is scheduled for this coming spring.**

**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 may be mailed to the recipient 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.

**APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION**

The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla. 32304
Please send me the Florida Fishing Citation with the enclosed data listed below:

Name (please print)
Address
City State Zip No.
Species Length
Type of Tackle
Boat or Lure Used
Where Caught
County
Date Caught
Catcher Witnessed By
Registered, Weighed By At
Signature of Applicant

CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK
I

RECEIVED

JAN 6 1976

MARINE RESEARCH LAB. LIB
FLA. DEPT. NATURAL RES.
100 8TH AVE SE
ST. PETERSBURG, FL.

Screech Owl

Photo by Leonard Lee Rue III

Attachment

Check one

□ CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Paste recent magazine label into space indicated, show change on form and mail.

□ NEW SUBSCRIPTION
Fill out form at right and mail with payment.

□ RENEWAL
Paste your last magazine address label into space indicated and mail with payment.

□ GIFT SUBSCRIPTION
Show recipient's name and address in form, indicate gift signature, and mail with payment.

Attach recent magazine address label here for renewal or change of address.

please print or type

Name

Address

City

State

Zip Code

Sign Gift Card

Donor Name & Address

SUBSCRIBE NOW

Send check or money order to:
FLORIDA WILDLIFE Magazine
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission
Tallahassee, Florida 32304

CHECK

☐ 12 Issues $3.00

☐ 24 Issues $5.50

☐ 36 Issues $7.50