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Adul t SANDHILL CRANE

Long-legged wading bird. Gray coloration - adults with red cap. Commonly seen in prairies, fields and marshes. Immature


State and Federal laws prohibit the taking or molesting of non-game birds which are a beneficial and enjoyable part of our natural environment.

Adult

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The Cover

The Eastern Bluebird (male above, female below) is one of our most beautiful and most useful bird species. It is a good songster, too, especially at nesting time, in the spring. Bluebirds nest in hollows, and accept bird houses. They need our help. See page 6.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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FISH IDENTIFICATION
RECORD FISH PROGRAM—PART 1

As the ballpark hucksters put it, “You can’t tell the players without a program.” And so it is, at least sometimes, with some of the look-alike Florida fishes. The many-membered sunfish tribe is a good case in point. With a full two dozen different species finning Florida waters, there is plenty of room for miscues in identification. Admittedly, a good part of those sunfishes are unimportant as far as the fisherman is concerned. But even among the half dozen or so that are commonly caught on hook and line, identification can sometimes be confusing. There are others—the various gars and the shad, to mention a couple—that are not always readily separated by species, at least by most of us more or less casual rod and reelers.

To help you identify the 23 species covered by the Commission’s recently initiated record fish recognition program (see June 1976 issue, page 22), Florida Wildlife is presenting a two-part fish identification series, of which this is the first.

Color is not always a reliable identification characteristic. Color patterns and hues vary greatly within species, and depending on the nature of the water, the type of bottom, and perhaps other factors having a bearing on the matter. But there are definite features to look for. In this series of drawings by Wallace Hughes, the readily-seen identification characteristics are pointed out.

With a little practice, you can learn to tell the “players” without a program.

(continued on next page)
(continued from preceding page)

Bluegill
*Lepomis macrochirus*

Black or reddish spots on each scale

Redear (shellcracker)
*Lepomis microlophus*

Spotted sunfish (stumpknocker)
*Lepomis punctatus*

Spotted body (stumpknocker)

Black crappie (speckled perch)
*Pomoxis nigromaculatus*

Drawings by Wallace Hughes

August 1976

Florida Wildlife
The bluebird is a member of the same scientific family as the robin, the wood thrush, hermit thrush, form and habits. Two other bluebirds, the western around resident, with a southward winter movement the Florida population. and the mountain varieties, are members of the same ranges didn't separate them. would be little chance for confusion, even sters within the group, and the eastern bluebird ling song is a common sound of the forest edge and standing, to provide the nesting cavities they holds up its share of the collective musical would be little chance for confusion, even if their ranges didn't separate them. The thrush-bluebird family is noted for the songstorms within the group, and the eastern bluebird holds up its share of the collective musical reputation. During the nesting season the rich, warbling, presents a common sound of the forest edge and field margins. The fall and winter call is a mellow, rather plaintive whistle. Noted most frequently about fields, roadsides, and the edges of woodlands, bluebirds appear partial to open lands where there are dead snags yet standing, to provide the nesting cavities they require. Lacking a suitable tree hole, they sometimes utilize a fence post in which woodpeckers and rot have provided a suitable hollow. They also readily accept nesting boxes. A few summers back, a number of bluebirds occupied a group of hollow gourds erected in a futile attempt to attract a nesting colony of purple martins near our central Florida home. The colonial nesting of bluebirds is not often encountered, but the lack of other suitable sites in an otherwise ideal situation probably accounted for this variation in their usual behavior—or it could simply be that conditions do not often lend themselves to group nesting.

The nest consists of a lining of grasses and weed stalks assembled in a natural cavity or bird box. The four to six eggs are white or of slightly bluish cast, and unmarked. Nesting in central Florida usually starts soon after mid-March, and perhaps somewhat later in more northerly parts of the state. April and May are the most active nesting months here, and by the end of June most of the season's crop of young has been hatched. The young birds are heavily spotted, in this respect closely resembling other members of the thrush family. The hunched posture of the perched bird, and the conspicuous eye ring, readily identify the juveniles as bluebirds. The bluebird does much of its foraging on the ground. Typically a bird surveys its surroundings from a fence post or other high point. It drops to the ground to pick up an insect or other item it finds. The diet of this species leans toward animal items as spiders, grasshoppers, crickets, katydids, beetles, caterpillars, moths, ants, wasps, bees, flies and the like. Wild fruit is important in the winter diet, when insects are of limited availability. The fruits of dogwood, holly, Virginia creeper, and poison ivy are among those commonly eaten by the species. With but little effort on our part, the species can be with us long into the future. It is worth making the few minor concessions to preserve its habitat. The bluebird is one of those feathered gems that demands little but gives much.
The one we used was a Weedless Sally. I have always been partial to the big pork frog, because it helps "strike." Simply because the lure makes so much disturbance as thoroughly as you would some other cover, a considerable distance. Much of the time, the one is actually on top of a pad.

I hook a very small percentage of my bonnet "spitball" and I use it to the weedless arrangements, which won't help in the hooking business. Part of it is that many of the commotions aren't strikes at all, simply fish tugging up to a look and making a fuss by running through the vegetation. Part of it may be that the fish misses, even when he's serious, because his charge is deflected by some of the obstacles. And remember that visibility must be lousy from his viewpoint, especially on a sunny day when the surface has to be a complex pattern of glare and shadow.

I've had the best luck with a fairly stiff plugging outfit and line that will test 15 pounds or more. Spinning devotees will generally do better with their stiffer sticks and heavier lines, not only for working a lure through a sort of pile carpet of greenery but for setting a hook and keeping a fish coming. In most bonnet fishing you can tighten the drag until you won't give nothing to nobody.

I fish the bonnets and grass, not by breaking off fish but by throwing the lure away after the line has been weakened through constant sawing against leaves and stalks. I don't chock my line much, but you'd be silly if you don't.

The word "playing" is poorly applied to what happens when you get a fish hooked, under these circumstances. You just give him a heave-ho and hope the hook is in a perfect spot, which it seldom is. And setting the hook is a tour de force in which I can very nearly upset a canoe.

Some of the bonnets are thin. They are truly weedless but most of the other things are dragged across the surface anyway. I use a fly rod with weedless popping bugs for some of my thick bonnet fishing but I won't fish the bonnet with a hook on the stubb. If, in that case, the main thing is to lay your line in the right place on each cast so it will pick up again. The fly outfit I use is just what I'd carry for big saltwater fish.

Remember that, as in other cases, the bass are most likely to be along the edge of things. Bonnets are best choices when they're near deep water and/or a different kind of cover.

Probably the simplest appearing casting plugs in the world are the Heddon Zaragoza and its descendants. It is a streamlined cigar of plastic now (formerly wood), and it would take a physicist to tell why it has the provocative action it produces when retrieved, especially with a little rod whip. The old Zaras users say they "walk it" and that's as good a term as any. The "walk" is interspersed with periods of quiet and occasional twitches for bass. In saltwater fishing, they generally keep it walking nearly all of the time.

When worn away to plastic, the Zaragoza became the Zara Spook. Now, there's a brand new one called the Zara II. This one has a "clicker" inside, a concession to the custom of putting bulkier lures in rattles in a lure, and a sliding, under-water lure, for that matter. The Zara II is considerably shorter than the regular Zara Spook, with a slightly different silhouette. The one I have weighs 5/8 ounce.

There have been many sizes of the original Zara design. Balance is a touchy business with these things, and shortly after the plug lures appeared years ago, some old-timers went around buying up the old wooden ones. Of course there have been grumblings that the later models aren't as durable as the early ones, and from time to time that may have been true.

A "walked" Zara gives forth an attractive gurgle on the surface, and makes short, bobbing sweeps from side to side. Most of the earlier plugs had a light, black bass, except in school fishing. It was the ideal plug for attaching a short piece of mono-filament and a small trailer fly, bug or spin. The "Marm," a little Zara II, has been a favorite for that. The Zara, which furnishes the casting weight, is an especially good choice here because its size is desirable and it casts accurately—whereas many other plugs take erratic courses in the wind—and its walking action makes the trailer act up. Then, if a bass is especially hungry, he might forgo the trailer, which matches what he has been feeding on, and blast the Zara. But when the fish and schooling bass run quite small, some fishermen take the hooks off the Zara to keep them from tangling in the trailer.

Saltwater trout take the Zaras well, and some mackerel and tarpon fishermen prefer it. It has one disadvantage in saltwater fishing in that you can't make it dive after working it on top.

Plastic worms LOOK LESS like worms these days with the addition of all sorts of things to make them swim better. The "jointed" worms have been around for some time in larger sizes, as have the "paddle tails." Flattened or three-dimensional wiggle on the retrieve. Such helping features are especially valuable to those of us who tend to retrieve worms without much action.

Many of the latest models are round and earthworm-shaped at the front end, with the back part flattened in an eel contour. Such baits may not be very wormy, but they sure are wiggly. Some of these

Early model plastic baits are shaped for maximum wiggle.

worn tails have more action than standard pork-rind on spoons and spinner baits, and I've amputated a few to cast as streamer flies with just a little hair or feather ahead of the wiggle part. Colors run through the tints and shades from staid black to "pearl."

The pearl finish, which comes in a Creme model called the Pink Pearl Scally Wog, has caught some fish for me, and although I don't know of any pearl-finished natural worms, the artificial has a wriggling, gleaming motion that comes from few other lures, especially soft ones. The Creme people were pioneers in the plastic worm business, having been at it for more than 25 years.

Generally speaking, there's more and more use of the soft plastic baits in fairly rapid retrieves, especially where there are obstructions that keep them from being lowered hardly to the bottom. The shorter lures with the kinky tails lend themselves to prompt hook setting, whereas outsized worms may require a little more time for a bass to get things fooled up and stacked in his jaw.

Most of us tend to chuckle gleefully when wildlife defeats some complex human project. Vari­ous electronic devices have recorded strange things when they have aroused the curiosity of fish. The "Sonobouy" is a submarine warfare device that is launched from aircraft, descends to the sea, and releases a microphone which records the activities of submarines in the vicinity. The microphone, or "hydrophone," is a cylindrical object three inches in diameter on one model and has a pretty rough time down there, since curious sharks bite it off on occasion. That means an expensive Sonobouy is useless and that any foreign submarines in the vicinity got a free pass.

But it's seldom that a fish eats the hydrophone. It happened when a 12-18 pound sea bass tried to digest one some while back. When they planted the rig there was no detection of fish in the immediate area, and the gadget was working. When it was pulled up, there was the bass splashing and trying to get rid of his unfortunate meal. The devices frequently record the activities of whales and porpoises.

Now that a fish's strike is recognized as one of the hazards, the builders of the detection devices are thinking toward a microphone color that won't be attractive to fish—such as the "clicker" which was thought the mike would be less attractive if colored black instead of silver, but that theory was not accepted. Then it was advocated that bright orange would be least attractive to fish—a shock to those who have long dotted on lures of that color. But no decision has been reached in that area.

A year or two ago I bellyached in this column about the effect of salt and brackish water on an electric fishing motor obviously intended for use in sweet water only. The pin that held the prop on simply disintegrated, and the prop fell off, surprising my local dealer not in the least. It was common with that model, he said.

Now, using another make of motor, I found I needed some repair work done. I used it for about a week before he would delve into the innards of this. I soon learned one easy way to get a new propeller as the original one was corroded to the shaft and would have to be drilled off.

Most of these motors are of good quality, but any old plastic "boat" can lose plenty of lures if you don't take care of them correctly. Before I would delve into the innards of this particular motor, I determined that I would try to buy a new propeller as the original one was corroded to the shaft and would have to be drilled off.

There's a rash of fly fishing schools over the North, mainly for trout fishermen. For a single price you can get several days of fishing at a good resort town and receive instruction from some of the best in the game. Such seminars were almost unheard of until 10 years ago. Now you'll find them operating somewhere all summer.

How useful are they? They're excellent, without exception, as far as I can see, and I've watched several in progress, having mumbled a few incoherent observations at a couple of them. But we need to keep one thing in mind: Before going to such a school you should have some of the basics of casting. Instruction will, of course, cover every thing, and the students who get the most out of a fishing school take some background in with them. Read a book on the subject, learn elementary casting before you go, and you'll get your money's worth. You don't need to pay those prices for the very beginnings, but once you have a start it's a good investment.
Although you'll probably never need the knowledge, now is the time to decide about

**FIRST AID for SNAKEBITE**

Among those who haven't thumped the off-the-pavement parts of Florida much, there is a tendency to imagine most every palmetto thicket or grassy clearing as being carpeted with rattlesnakes and other noxious creatures. Sure enough, we do have a pretty fair population of snakes of various kinds. In a good many years of brush popping and swamp wallowing, however, the number of unsolicited striking-distance encounters I've had with potentially lethal serpents could be counted on the fingers on one hand, with at least a couple of digits left over.

This isn't to belittle the fact that there exists the possibility of coming out on the short end of a chance meeting with a venomous reptile. There does seem to be a notable lack of any volume of snakebite statistics available, however. One way to look at the situation is that if there aren't enough cases to make a showing on the health department's annual tabulations, snakebite must not be too great a hazard. Well, yes and no. Your chances are excellent of never having to deal with a snake bite, as the dearth of figures indicates.

On the other hand, a statistical table is not much comfort to a person who has beaten the odds and managed to get struck by a poisonous snake.

In the 7 years from 1969 through 1975, Florida averaged one snake bite fatality a year, according to the State Department of Health and Rehabilitation Services. The actual number of snakebites treated by Florida physicians during those years is unknown, since nonfatal bites are not reported to the Health Department.

As an indication, however, the U.S. Public Health Service reported that, in 1969, approximately 6,680 persons were treated for snakebite in the United States. There were 14 fatalities in this group. Consider that there is quite a bit of snake handling going on around the country and at least part of these bites were suffered by people who were in close contact with poisonous snakes by choice.

In a recent news release, Amerex Laboratories, of San Antonio, Texas, quoting the July 1975 _Journal of the American Medical Association_, says "almost 8,000 venomous snake bites are inflicted each year in the United States. During the past five years, the number of deaths from snake venom poisoning in this country has not exceeded 12 each year." The same source says that approximately 20 percent of all bites by venomous snakes in the U.S. show no evidence of envenomation; that is, the offending reptile bites but does not inject venom— or ejects it onto the skin during a superficial strike. The percentage is even higher with elapids (cobras and corals, among others), and there is no doubt that many of the "cures" described in the literature can be ascribed to the fact that no envenomation took place during the biting.

Dr. Lodewyk Van Mierop, in the March 1976 issue of the _Journal of the Florida Medical Association_, on the same subject says that from one-third to one-half of the individuals who have been bitten by poisonous snakes will have little or no evidence of envenomation. He also indicates that, because cases of snakebite are uncommon, very few physicians in this country have the opportunity to carry out controlled studies on well-documented cases encountered in their own practice.

By MORRIE NAGGIAR

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**Poisonous (pit vipers)**

- Nostril
- Elliptical pupil
- Fangs
- Teeth

**Harless (except Coral)**

- Nostril
- Round pupil

---

Diamondback Rattlesnake (opposite page)

Yellow-bordered, diamond-shaped markings are trademarks of this largest and most dangerous of our native snakes. Found throughout Florida in most habitat types, but most common in palmetto flatwoods, brushty pastures, and old fields.

Coral Snake (Below)

Red bands touching yellow marks dangerous coral snake. Red bands touching black is pattern of harmless king snake. Coral has round eye-pupil and lacks facial pit characteristic of rattler and moccasin.

Accepting the fact that, despite the odds against it, there exists the possibility of getting nailed by a poisonous snake, it makes good sense to be prepared to deal with a snakebite emergency.

First off, there is the matter of identification. All snakes that bite are not necessarily poisonous. As a case in point, recently a couple of us were afiel attempting to photograph snakes of various sorts. Snake photography requires some close attention to details, since the subject is not always fully cooperative, making it difficult to get that elongated body framed properly and in focus. In this instance, the photographer, absorbed with the details of picture making, moved in for a tight close-up of a lively young blacksnake. The snake took exception to the proceedings and struck, drawing blood from a finger. The wound required but minor first aid treatment. But under some circumstances, it would be possible for a snake to "hit and run" before it could be identified.

That appropriate attention to a snakebite depends on whether the snake is a poisonous one or not hardly needs stating. If you are not positive of the species involved, make every effort to collect the snake for later identification, being fully aware that... (continued on next page)
PYGMY RATTLE SNAKE (Above)
Also called ground rattler, the pygmy is stocky-bodied, wide-headed snake common throughout Florida. Body is grayish, marked heavily with dusky spots. Bite produces pain and swelling which subsides in a few days. A potentially lethal snake, but no deaths have been attributed to this species here.

CANEBRAKE RATTLE SNAKE (Right)
Range is restricted to northern part of state, reported as far south as Alachua County. Snakes pinkish or tan with reddish-brown crossbands, sometimes confused with copperhead. The bite is painful, but only occasionally is it fatal.

COTTONMOUTH (Left, Adult; Left below, Immature)
The stout body form, abruptly tapering tail, and broad head are distinctive. The drooped mouth line and protective shield overlapping the eye give the cottonmouth a sullen appearance. Young are strongly marked with reddish-brown crossbands, sometimes confused with copperhead. The bite is painful, but only occasionally is it fatal.

COPPERHEAD (Below)
Ranges only into northwest counties of Florida. Usually pinkish or tan with reddish-brown crossbands. Wide head. Copperhead’s bite produces severe pain and swelling but is seldom fatal.

Current ideas on snakebite are here summarized. It would be advisable to plan a course of action now in the unlikely event you should become a snakebite victim. As with any “rainy-day” insurance, it’s a good idea to be prepared for the worst, but hope for the best.

Dr. L. H. S. Van Mierop:
1. Immobilize bitten limb if at all possible, and keep below heart level but not hanging unsupported.
2. Apply mildly constricting tourniquet within 4 inches of bite, or just above first joint above bite. Release every 30 minutes for 60 to 90 seconds.
3. Wipe or wash off skin over fang marks.
4. Make incision just through skin, not more than 1/2-inch long cut, and apply suction—by mouth only if no other means is available. Don’t start cutting and suction method if more than 30 minutes have passed since bite.
5. If medical facility can be reached within a reasonably short time, do not waste valuable time on first aid measures.
6. Do not give victim alcohol.

Dr. Thomas G. Glass, Jr.:
1. Immediately after bite, tie snug, not tight, constricting band above the bite on arm or leg.
2. Wash area with soap and hot water, if possible.
3. Carefully enlarge fang puncture with small lance (as in Cutter kit) to keep tiny wound from closing up. Do not make cross cuts or go deeper than just through the skin.
4. Apply suction continuously for the first 30 minutes. Suction during that period can withdraw some venom.

Boy Scouts of America:
1. Have the victim lie down and stay quiet. Pat the part that was bitten lower than the rest of the body.

(continued on next page)
In desperate cases, where medical help will be long delayed:

1. Treat as above.
2. Make shallow cuts on the fang marks, just over an inch long and running up and down the limb, not across.
3. Apply ice packs or cold cloths to the bite. This will slow the spread of the poison.

1. Immobilize the arm or leg in a low position, keeping the bitten area below the level of the heart.
2. On arm or leg, apply a constricting band from 2 to 4 inches above the bite, between the wound and the victim's heart.
3. Make a short incision through the skin only and just below the fang marks. Make cuts not over 1/4-inch long with long axis of the limb or body, to minimize chances of cutting nerves and muscles.
4. Apply suction. Continue for 30 to 60 minutes. If swelling extends up to the constricting band, apply another band a few inches above the first, but leave the first in place.
5. A cold wet cloth or ice wrapped in a cloth may be placed over the wound to slow absorption, but do not pack the wound in ice.
6. Do not give alcohol in any form.

If you did nothing in all the cases, the article quotes Dr. Arnold, “probably 99 percent would recover.”

In desperate cases, where medical help will be long delayed:

1. Treat as above.
2. Make shallow cuts on the fang marks, just through the skin, about 1/4-inch long and running up and down the limb, not across.
3. Apply ice packs or suction cup for about an hour.

Ameris Laboratories (Snakebite Freeze Kit):

1. Apply latex constriction bands lightly about 4 inches above and below the bite. You should be able to put two or three fingers between the skin and the constriction band. (Any tighter and you’re helping the snake venom, not the victim.)
2. Activate only one instant Cold Pack at a time by squeezing the inner bug and shaking vigorously for ten seconds. When the Pack is cold, apply bag directly to wound.
3. Hold cold pack in place by wrapping with insulated neoprene wrap. Any additional wrapping such as towel or clothing will help prolong the cold.

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At Home with the Mourning Dove

By MORRIS SHAW

That the mourning dove ranks high on the list of the country's game species is no surprise to Florida sportsmen. In the Eastern Dove Management Unit—essentially those states east of the Mississippi—the harvest of doves averages about 21 million birds a year.

Among the interesting items that have turned up in detailed studies of the mourning dove is the fact that somewhere around 75 percent of the birds hatched never survive to one year of age. Hunting does not alter the situation to any measurable degree, either, for even where there is no hunting, the natural factors always at work on wildlife populations still exact a heavy annual levy.

Yet the mourning dove remains one of the most numerous of migratory birds, nesting throughout the 48 contiguous states, maintaining and even increasing their numbers as agricultural development makes even more quality dove habitat available. But the species is not dependent altogether on farm and countryside, for the adaptable mourner can and does exist in numbers about towns and cities, nesting in shady trees and shrubbery and finding good foraging about weed-grown lots and on back yard bird feeders as well.

During January there usually comes a stretch of warm, springlike weather. This preview of the coming vernal season is enough to stir amorous feelings in the dove population. The most noticeable sign is the mournful cooing call which announces that courtship and mating have started.

Courtship is a simple affair among the mourners. It consists of billing and cooing, the birds rubbing bills and uttering low cooing sounds. This courting behavior is continued at intervals throughout the long nesting season.

There is a definite breeding season, but it extends over so long a time that it almost gives the impression it continues year around. A small percentage of the doves begin breeding activities as early as January, although even December nesting is not unknown here in Florida. The pace picks up slowly into mid-February. From then on, nesting activities increase rapidly, so that by May the season is in full swing and continues so until September, when it dwindles to nearly nothing.

With such a drawn out nesting period, there is plenty of time for a pair to bring off three or four broods during a season. Early hatched young may even bring off a brood of their own before the autumn break ends the nesting action for a few weeks.

(continued on next page)

(1) Male mourning dove shares incubation duties with mate. With long nesting season there's time for pair to raise five or six broods a season, but about half of the nesting attempts end in failure. (2) Two eggs is the usual clutch. (3) At 2 days of age, eyes closed, head and body are covered with cream-colored down, and the primary wing feathers are just emerging. (4) Eyes partly open, sheathed primary feathers are prominent, sheathed tail feathers are showing. (5) Mortality has removed one bird, feathers developing rapidly. (6) Feather development far advanced, bird can leave nest at 12-14 days of age.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

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Immature mourning dove, above, shows white-tipped wing coverts which are readily apparent even on the bird standing with wings folded. Adult plumage, as displayed by dove in photo below, lacks white-tipped wing coverts. The full adult plumage is attained from 3 to 5 months of age. Doves are primarily seed eaters, with hardly more than a trace of insects and other animal matter taken. Gravel and water are essential to doves, and they frequently have favored spots they visit to obtain these.

The Eastern Coachwhip is a long, slender, fast-moving snake. It normally travels at about the speed of a walking man, but is capable of remarkably sudden takeoffs, and often appears as only a blur in the grass as it dashes away. Found from North Carolina to south Florida and west to Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, the coachwhip is rarely abundant locally in any part of its range. But it does occupy a rather broad range, and seems equally at home in both dry, sandy flatwoods and swampy terrain.

The coachwhip is relatively easy to recognize—if you can find one standing still. It is black to dark brown "forward" and light brown "aft," and has unusually large, round eyes, and smooth scales. Some specimens have only a dark head and neck, but others are predominantly dark along the greater portion of their length with only a light-colored tail. Whatever the proportion of dark to light coloration, though, the Coachwhip's tail is always a good field mark: the pattern of scales strongly resembles a braided whip, and may well be the basis for the snake's common name.

Normally 42 to 60 inches in length, the coachwhip can grow to be much longer. One specimen stretched out 8½ feet, making it one of the longest snakes ever recorded in North America.

Active during daylight hours, the coachwhip is a predator, and often prowls with its head raised well above the ground as it searches for prey. Small rodents, birds, birds' eggs, lizards, frogs, a variety of insects, and smaller snakes are all readily taken. And although not technically a constrictor, the coachwhip sometimes loops its body over a victim in order to help subdue it.

If pursued, this snake usually attempts to escape with a burst of speed, but it will take refuge in a gopher turtle's burrow or some other hole if one is available. When cornered, however, the slender coachwhip will fight savagely. Typically, an agitated coachwhip vibrates its tail rapidly on the ground, and weaves back and forth with its mouth wide open, watching for an opportunity to strike. An angry coachwhip can inflict a painful bite; it imbeds its teeth in the antagonist's flesh and then yanks away, producing a series of lacerations rather than a puncture wound. (And if that were not bad enough, in dry weeds or leaves, the coachwhip's rapidly vibrating tail produces a buzzing sound disconcertingly similar to that made by an angry rattlesnake!)

Because of its nervous temperament, the coachwhip makes a poor pet. It does not endure confinement well, and may strike repeatedly at the sides of its cage. But undisturbed in its natural environment, the coachwhip is an extremely interesting, superbly adapted creature. It is in no way harmful to man's interests, and, if given the opportunity, will go out of its way to avoid a confrontation. •

Wing photo by Lovett Williams; dove photos by Wallace Hughes

Photos by Dave Norris

The COACHWHIP

By DAVE NORRIS

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

AUGUST 1976
Of course, the early 19th century white settlers weren’t the first to roam the river banks. Indian artifacts dating back as far as the 15th century have been uncovered from time to time, and even today some of the shell mounds along the river’s banks yield Indian relics.

Fishing has attracted sportsmen since the founding of Homosassa. After Yulee died, his heirs sold his Homosassa holdings to a group of New York and New England financiers. A group of influential men, including five governors, formed a company to develop a sportsman’s paradise on the river. The town of Homosassa was laid out, a railroad built from Ocala, and a hotel planned.

When a storm destroyed ships bringing mahogany for the hotel, the manager resourcefully turned a huge warehouse into a makeshift hotel. This was used until a fine cottage belonging to the company’s Ocala agent could be enlarged to accommodate guests. This became the famous Homosassa Inn. Today, the Sugarmill Villas and the Yardarm Docks provide modern facilities for 20th century sportsmen, in keeping with the area’s fishing tradition.

The present 6-acre park site, with the ruins of the old sugar mill, was presented to the Citrus County Federation of Women’s Clubs in 1923 by Claude Root. Thirty years later, the little park was deeded to the State of Florida and has been a part of the state park system since.

(continued on next page)

The Homosassa area offers good cruising water, both river and Gulf. A memorial to an early day Floridian is this ruin, far left, of Yulee sugar mill located in a six-acre tree shaded park in Old Homosassa. Gne Lechler, veteran guide, left, displays a largemouth taken on the river. The Sugarmill Woods Villas and the Yardarm Docks, below, add modern note to waterfront of Old Homosassa.
(continued from preceding page)

You have two options in cruising the Homosassa. If you're arriving via the Gulf—and many boaters do—you pick up the first channel marker 8 miles southwest of the river's mouth. Be careful to stay in the channel. There are numerous flats on either hand (in this part of the Gulf, the depth only increases at the rate of a foot a mile) and they're deadly on live bait. Some can be trouble even on high water.

At the river's mouth you encounter a boating surprise: Crow's Nest, where you can dock, eat, and bend an elbow. It is located on an island, and appropriately, has a crow's nest from which you can study the panorama of the Gulf. On a sunny day, with cotton candy clouds dotting the horizon, it's a spectacular seascape.

Approaching from the sea, you naturally cruise from salt to fresh water as far as you want to go. The channel is marked to the limits of the hamlet of Old Homosassa. If you're planning on the seaward approach, you should carry Chart No. 1258 (Anclote Keys to Crystal River), now listed as No. 11120 under the new numbering system.

However, more boaters undoubtedly begin their Homosassa cruise from the freshwater end of the river. If you're trailering your boat, you can begin your cruise on the upper third of the river. There's a free public ramp in picturesque Old Homosassa. It is located at the end of the street between Sugarhill Villas and McRae's Bait and Boat Livery. There are several otherlaunching sites at various resorts. Fees are moderate, or in the case of guests, nonexistent.

It's a toss-up whether you first go upstream or downstream from Old Homosassa. Many prefer to go upstream first, cruising to the landing dock at the Homosassa Springs attraction. The attraction centers around the huge springs, which really are "nature's giant fish bowl." You agree the name is appropriate after viewing the piscatorial parade from a below-the-surface viewing gallery.

It's an amazing sight to see thousands of fish—both freshwater and saltwater species—swimming in the crystal-clear waters. If you're a dedicated angler, you can't help but drool at the sight of a hefty largemouth bass cruising about, big snook stacked like cordwood, and freshwater catfish and bream mingling with sheepshead, spotted sea trout, jack crevalle, and other saltwater denizens. Why the saltwater fish congregate in the freshwater springs is unknown, but they do and in tremendous numbers, particularly during the winter. Possibly the even water temperature is part of the attraction. Perhaps there are other reasons. The springs flow at the rate of 100 million gallons daily, quite a natural water spigot.

The attraction is also noted for its jumping alligators. The huge creatures have learned that a loud clanging of a bell means a free meal, and many have become adept at leaping 6 and 8 feet out of the water for a mullet tidbit. Too, the gators have a sweet tooth for marshmallow.

Naturally, fishing upstream from Old Homosassa is in strictly fresh water—Florida license required—although sometimes you do catch saltwater fish. Downstream you need a license until you enter what is considered saltwater territory. Oddly, you catch freshwater fish even in slightly brackish water. It's confusing fishing to catch a speckled sea trout on one cast and a black bass on the next. Black bass up to 10 pounds are frequently caught in the Homosassa River. While bass fishing is good with artificial lures, the bigger bass are most often caught with live shiners.

Cruising down the river is entirely different, and spectacularly so, particularly if you're making a dawn departure. With the sun peeking over the towering trees of Old Homosassa, you clear the slow speed zone, climb up on plane, and zoom off.

In the pastel shades of early morning, the shoreline rapidly loses its evidences of civilization. In only a few minutes, you are cruising down the deep, twisting, and sometimes not overly-wide river. On either side cabbage palm hammocks dot the marsh lands, while here and there palms are bolstered by oaks on higher islands. The river's banks are rocky in many places, and the current swift on a falling tide. But there's little danger as long as you don't try any short cuts, for the twisting channel is well marked.

Each turn of your boat's prop carries you farther and farther from civilization as the sun begins to shine brilliantly or poking through early morning clouds.

Shortly after leaving Old Homosassa, you pass the mouth of Salt River, which weaves a treacherous course northward to link up with the Crystal River. If you've been over the route before, it's not wise to attempt to cruise Salt River without a local boating guide. Markers? They're privately maintained, if at all.

Farther downstream you pass the entrances to Petty's Creek, Sam's Bayou, and False Channel. These are shallow and not for deep draft boats, under normal conditions. In a fast boat, you can reach the mouth of the river and be heading for the fishing flats or cruising the Gulf in half an hour.

The offshore flats are famous for their fishing. You name the fish and, more than likely, at some time of the year, you can catch it off Homosassa. Speckled sea trout and redfish (channel bass) are regularly caught on the flats. During the winter the reds and trout move into the deep holes in the river, sometimes into fresh water. After the first real cold snap, the fishing can become fantastic.

Such famous leaping fish as tarpon, ladyfish, and houndfish cruise the flats during the warm months. Grouper are caught around the numerous rock piles in the shallows. The migratory fish—bluefish, king mackerel, and Spanish mackerel—usually put in an appearance, although often during the spring and fall migrations, they pass at great distances offshore. Cobia, too, wander into the waters and are often caught around the navigation markers. And you can always find bottom fish such as sheepshead (particularly large ones during the winter), small black sea bass, and mangrove snappers.

One cruise on the Homosassa River will convince any boater that this picturesque stream is indeed one for cruisin' and fishin' in the Florida sun.

During the winter, saltwater fish move into the Homosassa River and fantastic catches are made, left. Snook and sheepshead, above, mingle with freshwater fish in the boil at Homosassa Springs. The spring boil is truly nature's giant fish bowl, with fresh and saltwater fish mingling in the clear water, right.

Photos by Kit and Max Hunt
**Old-Timers Call It Farmington Wildlife Management Area, but the real name is Farmton Wildlife Management Area. The name came from the little settlement of Farmton, which is now known as Gobbler Lodge. The area is located in Volusia and Brevard counties. The northern tip is about 20 miles south of Daytona Beach, west of I-95 and east of the St. Johns River.**

By the early 1940s, a decade before it became a management area, wildfires had reduced the area to worthless wasteland. Scrub palmetto and wire grass survived the fires and took over. Range cows had to hustle to stay alive on the meager rations. Wildlife was almost nonexistent, and what was on the area was vigorously pursued by the local hunters. The land was so poor it escaped the eyes of real estate developers and commercial interests.

Miami Corporation is a group of business people who saw an opportunity to acquire the land and develop it into a timber and cattle area. They fenced the area and initiated a program to clear portions of it for planting pine trees. They also let cattle graze the plantations. The first public hunt was held during the 1951-52 season. An estimated 1,767 man-days of hunting resulted in a harvest of 23 legal deer and 25 turkeys.

Over the years the landowners have continued their timber planting and timber harvest. The harvest of timber and controlled burning have been the best management practices for wildlife. Miami Corporation also constructed the many miles of firebreaks that crisscross the area. The firebreaks are used as roads, and make vehicular travel simple with two-wheel drive vehicles.

The Commission has maintained planted wildlife food plots, and periodically stocks deer and turkeys. The area is now about 80% planted pine plantation. The remainder is cypress ponds and cypress bay hammocks. Palmettos and scrub oaks grow in the pines and on newly-prepared sites. The pine plantations have matured now so that portions can be cut every year and still have trees of all ages coming along.

Deer have done well on Farmton. The herd leveled out about 10 years ago, and an annual harvest of around 100 legal bucks has been reported since that time.

Turkeys haven’t done so well. The turkey population was excellent until someone released tame birds on the area and the tame birds introduced disease to the wild flock. Many wild turkeys died during the epidemic. Now the turkey population is again on the increase and should continue until the normal carrying capacity is reached. Hunters are allowed to take turkey gobblers during the regular fall hunting season, but there is no spring gobble season on the area.

Wild hogs are hunted, but the population is static. Quail, squirrel, armadillo, rabbits and wood ducks are also available for the small game hunter.

Hunters can enter the area from the Maytown Road that runs from Osteen to Oak Hill, or from the Hog Valley Road in the south end. Maytown Road is a county grade, and the management area is on either side of the grade.

There are two public camp grounds on the area. One is located off the power line in the south end; the other is off the Maytown grade at the intersection of Cow Creek and the old railroad bed. Portable toilet facilities are available, and so is water for washing dishes, etc., but the water is not certified for drinking. Several landowners with holdings inside the management area lease lots for camps also.

**Farmland Wildlife Management Area**

By JIM REED

**FLORIDA WILDLIFE**

A familiar scene, opposite page, on Farmton Area, where over three-quarters of the land is in planted pines. Earlier planted tracts are now of harvestable size. Cropping the timber will open up plantations and assure improved conditions for wildlife production. Whitetail buck, above, is object of most hunters’ attention. Deer have fared well under management plan on Farmton. Not especially noted as a fish producer, The Deep Creek-Cow Creek system, right, does offer the usual warmwater species common throughout state.
Scoop on Scopes

Two popular variable power scope sights are compared feature for feature with one getting the nod by just a slight margin

By EDMUND MCLAURIN

A THROUGH LOW-POWER SCOPE SIGHT magnification, preferably 2X, is best for use on fast-moving game in Florida's thick brush, there are times when switchover to a higher power can be advantageous. This is especially true where a deer is seen standing in partially concealing brush, or glimpsed slipping through thick cover, with existence of antlers questionable.

The answer, of course, is a scope sight of variable power, that can be switched from low to high magnification in an instant.

Because they match each other in magnification rating, I became intrigued with the idea of making a comparison test of the current Bushnell 2X-8X Scopeschief IV and the Bausch & Lomb 2X-8X Balvar 8B models, and borrowed one of each from a cooperating Florida trade source, for tests.

Both brands of scope sight can be had with the excellent Multi-X, Dual-Line or Dual-X style reticule design that combines coarse crosshairs with finer center ones. In the Bushnell model, optional choice of Command Post style of reticle can be had. This unique reticule combines conventional crosshairs with manual pop-up of lower vertical half superimposed bold post segment, for use when poor light conditions make the regular crosshairs difficult to see and accurately align. In the B&L 2X-8X Balvar 8B, additional choice of either conventional crosshairs or tapered crosshairs can be had in reticle style.

The two scopes of personal test were furnished with requested Multi-X or Dual-Line reticle style. In both brands, change of magnification from low to high causes automatic change in magnification of seen reticule, thickness of reticule segments decreasing as power is increased.

To the casually examining eye, the rival brands appear to have close kin. Each possesses the large, flared eye and objective (exit) lens housings characteristic of variable power scopes. Each has revolving focusing eyepiece and locking ring, and revolving, graduated power-changing ring. Both feature internal elevation and windage adjustments, by manually activated, calibrated dials incorporated in the elevation and windage turrets, with protective screw-on caps. Both optical systems give a wide field of view, depending on the magnification used, along with excellent light-gathering efficiency. The Bushnell gives the widest field of view at all magnification settings, the difference being as much as 6 feet more at 100 yards when using 2X magnification.

Eye relief—important in using a scope sight on a hunting rifle of heavy recoil—is relatively comparable, being adequate in both brands for any user who takes care to position the scope tube on rifle at location that gives maximum obtainable eye relief at all powers when rifle is shouldered and aim taken. Eye relief is described in the catalog as being 4 inches for the Bushnell Scopeschief IV at 2X, and 3 inches at full 8X, while the Bausch & Lomb Balvar 8B's catalog technical data claims 3 inches of safe margin eye relief for all powers. In testing, I found the B&L's eye relief to vary slightly with the power used.

Without instrument breakdown, which I am not equipped to do under manufacturer conditions, I cannot say which of the scopes has the best internal assembly of optical system components. However, both are guaranteed against defects.

The B&L is the longer scope, measuring 11 3/16 inches overall, compared to the Bushnell's 11 11/16 inches. It is also heavier, weighing 12 1/4 ounces (without ring mounts) against 11 1/4 ounces for the Bushnell.

But more careful comparison will show other differences.

The power change collar of the Bushnell 2X-8X Scopeschief IV has a thumb spur that makes it easier to quickly change to higher or lower magnification while wearing gloves. The rival Bausch & Lomb 2X-8X Balvar 8B does not have this commendable feature, and the shallow notches molded into the power change ring, or collar, do not give much hold to the gloved hand or oily fingers.

Also, the scope caps furnished with the Bushnell scope are far superior to those that come with the B&L. The first are of thick-walled plastic, with deep cups, connected by elastic cord. The B&L's protective lens caps, in comparison, are made of thin gauge plastic, with very shallow rims, and are not connected by elastic cord. Any hunter who has known the field annoyance of trying to keep track of individual, shallow-rimmed scope or binocular lens caps will likely steer shy of the B&L for that reason, or else, after acquisition, replace the original caps with better ones.

Why B&L failed to provide better quality protec-
tive caps werestated on the side for a scope sight selling at a substantial retail price, is something I cannot understand! Actually, both Bushnell’s and Bausch & Lomb’s scope sight caps could be greatly improved by making them out of the same durable, flexible plastic that the Tupperware people use in making their covered food containers.

Size designations of various scope sights should be focused to the individual eyesight of its user. Within certain limitations, a scope’s optics can be made to compensate for slight impairment in a shooter’s vision. It depends on the nature of visual correction needed.

In properly focusing a new scope sight, nothing beats adjusting in conjunction with distant commercial signs having bold, black lettering, until clarity of field of view and lettering resolution are strikingly obvious.

Fortunately for me, there are corner gas stations, with a variety of sign sizes and colors, some 130 yards from my home. Several displayed signs have black lettering on notably white background; others have deep black lettering on orange background, providing two highly visible and contrasting color combinations.

After loosening a scope sight’s eyepiece locking ring and unscrewing the eyepiece until both reticle and distant objects are seen blurred through hand­ held scope, I cradle tube top and stand forth in the iron grillwork of my front porch, give the revolving focusing eyepiece a half turn right (inward) and immediately take a quick look through the scope.

Quite likely at first experimental look, the aiming reticle and distant objects still appear somewhat blurred. I deliberately look away from eyepiece—to prevent my eyes from adjusting to a sight picture still out of focus—and give the focusing eyepiece another half turn, followed by another quick look through scope tube. The procedure is continued until both reticle and focusing of distant object appear critically sharp.

No attempt is made to obtain critical focus past the point of obvious clarity and resolution. Instead, the eyepiece’s locking ring is very carefully and firmly tightened, while taking care not to disturb its position.

Thereafter, that particular scope is focused for my eyesight, until age or illness brings vision impairment or my eyeglass prescription changes.

I focused the two scope sights under test. On further testing, both proved exceptionally clear and sharp throughout field of view at all power settings. Later, at a rifle range, a companion commented on that fact, although presumably his prescription glasses differ from mine.

As power is increased, the encompassing field of view seems through a variable power scope is decreased. The reason is that the apparent size of every­ thing seen is proportionately increased, yet what is seen with greater magnification still must be viewed through the same size scope tube. Consequently, the field of view seen at full 8X (power) will be much narrower than at 4X magnification setting. In tests, this held true of both the Bushnell and the Bausch & Lomb.

Since a scope sight’s shooting bench performance can be衡量 on the basis of quality and proper installation of its mount. I fitted each test scope with quality Redfield, Jr. split ring mounts. This permitted inter­ change on a .308 caliber Remington Model 700 bolt action rifle already fitted with Redfield, Jr. scope base, and on any other rifle similarly base fitted.

Due to the large, flared lens housing ends of both scopes, I had to use “high” mount rings, to obtain scope tube clearance with barrel and also get sufficient bolt operation clearance. The higher rings raise center plane of aim only slightly. With rifle already factory-stocked for scope use, there was no need to add a lace-on comb height pad.

The internal-type windage and adjustments of both current Bausch & Lomb & 2.5-8X Bausch & Lomb and Bushnell 2.5-8X Scopeschief IV models gave positive and consistent changes during sighting-in sessions. Single click changes on each model are evaluated at ½-inch bullet impact change per click at 100 yards, proportionately less per-click change under 100 yards and proportionately greater value change beyond 100.

Both scopes proved comparatively easy to sight-in from bench rest, probably because I took care to first make sure that each scope was positioned correctly for maximum and comfortable eye relief, and because of checking to see that mounting assembly was tight—scope sight base on rifle, and snugged-up sight screws tight.

Properly mounted on rifle and sighted-in, each gun sight allows satisfactory appearance. The finish on the one is black, and probably equally durable on the other. In places that I knew would be covered by mount­ ing rings, I attempted to induce small scratches to tube finish. The respective finishes proved remarkably resistant to scratching, and should wear well in service, provided the owner exercises a little care in installing and removing tube holding rings.

Which one of the two is best? For the undecided hunter, a coin toss decision, either way, can promise good scope sight performance. Undeniably, both brands are good. Both are fully guaranteed. Since Bushau & Lomb now owns Bushnell Optical Company, you might say that the rival variable power scope models are kissing cousins, and a lot alike.

However, they differed in a few compared features, and considering the slight difference in optical performance—if there truly is any, my vote is for the Bushnell 2.5-8X Scopeschief IV over the Bausch & Lomb 2.5-8X Varubis B&L.

ANYONE WHOSE HOBBY IS GUNS, or whose busi­ ness involves frequent handling and bore inspection of guns, should possess a gun bore gauge. Otherwise, a large end or brought to a gunsmith for repair may have been rechambered and re­ barreled, without a new bore size identification stamping being put on the substituted barrel. This

holds particularly true of foreign rifles, originally manufactured to one of the standard European milli­ meter designation barrel bores that, in time, has been replaced with a custom-made, but unmarked, barrel of American calibre designation.

The average gun bore gauge is nothing more than an elongated, thin wedge, slightly rounded at small end and at top. Along one side, or on both sides, size designation, gauge barrel calibers and shotgun gauges are shown.

This type of bore gauge should not be confused with the star-style bore gauge long used at Spring­ field Armory and other United States arsenals to accurately measure arsenal-manufactured Service rifles for evenness of a rifle bore along its length. In those days, Springfield Model 1903 .30 caliber bolt action rifles that passed this test were given a star-shaped identification stamping at muzzle end, and were regarded as superior in the eyes of users. Actually, many untested and unmarked companion Service rifles were just as good, accuracy-wise.

The star-gauge barrel stamp merely indicated that the particular rifle had been chosen for testing for uniform bore measurement throughout barrel length and had passed the test. Several of the Springfield Model 1903 bolt action rifles I purchased after Government-issue to a state rifle team, with subse­ quent individual purchase order, carried the star gauge muzzle stamp identification. All fired shots from the straight-groove rifle were accurate with both slow and rapid fire paper target competition.

The common type of gun bore gauge is merely inserted at the muzzle, and is used to measure caliber only at muzzle, the measurement being the gauge reading that matches inserted gauge bore contact and stopping point.

Some gauges are made of plastic with short-lived flat surface impressions; others are of more durable brass and aluminum stamping. Bore gauges made of aluminum have long been advertised in leading gun magazines. The main fault of an aluminum gauge is that it is soft, and, consequently, a gauge is easily nicked on thin, critical measurement edges. New on the market is a gun bore gauge made from lifetime stainless steel material, that sells for only $1.00, from Federal Certified Stainless Gauge Company, P. O. Box 15105, Gibsonton, Florida.

One side of the virtually indestructible, nick-proof gauge is marked with European millimeter designa­ tions (along one bordering edge of the gauge) and with shotgun gauge sizes—410 through big 10 gauge—all along other edge, and American rifle calibers, from the smallest made through the massive .50 caliber, on the opposite side. All markings are deeply stamped into the stainless steel and are sharply visible and easily read. A small hole is pro­ vided for cord attachment or for hanging on a nail.

An inexpensive gun accessory well worth having. •
MEXICANS develop skin cancer each year. It's the most common cancer in the world. Suntanned people are at greatest risk: basal and squamous cell carcinoma, at least, are due to the ultraviolet rays which produce in mice 100 per cent of the time by using ultraviolet light.

Aside from the dangers of cancer, prolonged exposure usually results in leathery skin, wrinkles, skin folds, and the sagging skin of a much older person. The suntanned teenager blond may drip with healthy beauty, but when she's 40 years old she may look like 50.

Years of overexposure to the sun destroy the elastic fibers of healthy tissue. In fact, the cumulative effect of sun is probably the number one cosmetic problem in people looking older than they are.

Suntanned people may have a feeling of well-being but it's mostly psychological. The chief benefit of sun exposure is the production of vitamin D, although most doctors believe we get an ample supply in normal diets.

Too much sun is big trouble. About one of the major factors in causing skin cancer.

How much you tan or burn depends mainly on how much ultraviolet radiation reaches your skin. It's one of the major factors in causing skin cancer. The medical profession knows that it can't keep Americans indoors. Millions of us swim to the beaches, lakes, and golf courses at every opportunity. But the public should realize the damage that too much sunlight causes, and take practical precautions. Millions of Americans work outside, and their health and longevity may depend on what they do about protection from sunlight.

When you are outdoors, much of your skin area can be protected by clothing and a wide-brimmed hat. And you'll probably wear sunglasses. But some of your skin will not be covered or protected, so your best bet is frequent applications of a lotion or ointment containing a sunscreen. This gets real confusing. There are oceans of lotions on the market but most do not contain sunscreen chemicals. According to the AMA, the most effective sunscreens are para-aminobenzoic acid and its derivatives, the salicylates, and the newer benzophenone compounds. (A new one contains flecks of mica as a screen.) If you're not good at reading labels, ask a pharmacist, not a clerk, for help. Better yet, check with a dermatologist, not only for a sunscreen but to see how much cumulative damage you may have suffered already. It's up to you to save your own skin.

By CHARLES DICKEY

MOST PEOPLE LOOK HEALTHIER with a suntan. To some, it's a status symbol, implying they have the money and leisure to lie around swimming pools or go fishing.

"Too much sun is big trouble. About one of the major factors in causing skin cancer. The medical profession knows that it can't keep Americans indoors. Millions of us swim to the beaches, lakes, and golf courses at every opportunity. But the public should realize the damage that too much sunlight causes, and take practical precautions. Millions of Americans work outside, and their health and longevity may depend on what they do about protection from sunlight."

When you are outdoors, much of your skin area can be protected by clothing and a wide-brimmed hat. And you'll probably wear sunglasses. But some of your skin will not be covered or protected, so your best bet is frequent applications of a lotion or ointment containing a sunscreen. This gets real confusing. There are oceans of lotions on the market but most do not contain sunscreen chemicals. According to the AMA, the most effective sunscreens are para-aminobenzoic acid and its derivatives, the salicylates, and the newer benzophenone compounds. (A new one contains flecks of mica as a screen.) If you're not good at reading labels, ask a pharmacist, not a clerk, for help. Better yet, check with a dermatologist, not only for a sunscreen but to see how much cumulative damage you may have suffered already. It's up to you to save your own skin.

"Good thing better" is available from NHF Day, 1075 Post Road, Riverside, Connecticut 06878.

Award Presented

THE FACE, FLORIDA, PLANT of Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., has received a special commenda-
tion from the Audubon Society. The 1975 Francis M. Weston Me-
merit Award was presented for "Outstanding Achievement in Con-
ervation and Environmental Pro-
tection."

The 1400-acre Air Products site has been officially recognized by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission as a wildlife sanctuary since 1973. The wildlife area includes several public dove fields, located on the perimeter of the site, plus a sanctuary centered around the 99-acre biological pond system. The area terrain includes fields, grasslands, pine woods, hardwood swamps, wetlands and marshes, several fresh water ponds, and the estuarine shoreline of Escambia Bay.

Roy Duggan, manager of environmental services, is primarily responsible for developing and maintaining the wildlife management area and sanctuary. Duggan praised the local Weston Chapter for its assistance in interest and in fund raising, and with the mis-
appropriation of over $100,000 in charitable assets. The complaint further charges that notwith-
standing advertising claims to the con-	rary, A.P.I. provides no sub-
stantive services for animal pro-
tection, but rather expended 90% of the funds raised by advertising for such services, administrative ex-
penses, and fund raising appeals.

Deputy Attorney General Carole Kornblum was quoted in a national news publication of January 13: "People sending money to the A.P.I. in response to their slick advertising campaign are influen-
ted by the pictures of animals in distress, and the plea to send money to end the animals' suf-
fing. They assume this agency is doing something more direct to the Air Products conservation ef-
fort over the past several years. The bird population has been in-
ventoried quarterly by the Audu-
bday group, in order to provide a yardstick of the results and suc-
cess of the program. Recent counts have included the painted bunting, osprey, blue grosbeak, russet-sided towhee, piliated woodpecker, and other species. Normally 40 to 55 species of song birds and waterfowl are sighted on a half-day field trip at Air Products.

No Protection

THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY General has filed suit against the Animal Protection Institute (A.P.I.) and its officers and direc-
tors, in the Superior Court of the State of California, reports the Legal Defense Fund, Game Con-
servation International, San An-
tonio, Texas.

The complaint charges the A.P.I. and its president, Benoit Mouras, with misrepresentations in fund raising, and with the mis-
appropriation of over $100,000 in charitable assets. The complaint further charges that notwith-
standing advertising claims to the con-	rary, A.P.I. provides no sub-
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tection, but rather expended 90% of the funds raised by advertising for such services, administrative ex-
penses, and fund raising appeals.
Save Tiger Creek

A GROUP OF CONSERVATIONISTS, chaired by Ken Morrison, of Lake Wales, has formed the Tiger Creek Committee within the Nature Conservancy. They are hoping, with the help of other concerned volunteer conservationists, to head off the seemingly inevitable bulldozer blitz that has devastated, under the guise of progress, so many other Florida beauty spots.

"The Nature Conservancy has an option to purchase 1,720 acres of 'Tiger Creek' for $300 per acre," Morrison says. "This will save, for all time, a broad belt along both sides of the central Florida creek, from its headwaters southward along more than 6 miles of the winding course that leads through forests of oak, maple, bay, tulip, and pine. An additional 2 miles of the creek are safeguarded by previous purchases of 900 acres by the Conservancy.

Tiger Creek is valued for its varied vegetation and wildlife, as well as its geological significance; it is the site of ancient sand dunes representing a Pleistocene shoreline. Among other benefits, preservation of the Tiger Creek lands would safeguard habitat important to the survival of the Scrub-Jay, a species that occurs nowhere else in the eastern United States but in peninsula Florida and in threatened by man's takeover of its living space.

At one time there was a prospect that the State of Florida might acquire Tiger Creek, but Morrison says it is now clear that remaining funds for environmentally endangered lands have been committed, and that the only hope to protect Tiger Creek is through the Nature Conservancy.

"Donations to the Tiger Creek fund have been mounting," says Morrison, "but we still have a long way to go to reach our $800,000 goal. Gifts thus far received have ranged from $10 to $1,000, and have come in from points as distant as California and Maine.

If you would like to contribute to this cause—saving a portion of Florida's natural beauty for all time, address your tax deductible contribution to Ken Morrison, Tiger Creek Committee, P.O. Box 508, Lake Wales, Florida 33853.

Sales Seem

A RECORD 44 MILLION AMERICANS spent close to $300 million on state hunting and fishing licenses last year, according to the state license sales figures released recently by Director Lynn A. Greenwalt of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Both figures are record highs," said Greenwalt, "and they show that Americans continue to find hunting and fishing major pastimes." One of every five Americans enjoys the outdoors this way. The figures represent an increase of $26 million in state sales and 100 thousand in license holders over 1974.

Florida reported 280,634 licensed hunters (96% of them residents) and 819,610 licensed fishermen (78% residents), who paid a total of $5.4 million for their licenses and permits.

Since Florida does not require licenses of resident senior citizens, children under 10, or for ocean fishing, the total number of participants in sport hunting and fishing in the state is unknown.

Help Offered

FLORIDA COUNTIES AND COMMUNITIES needing assistance in recreational planning are being reminded that the Department of Natural Resources has trained personnel available.

The Recreational Services Section of the Department's Division of Recreation and Parks has mailed notices to the state's communities advising them of technical assistance offered.

"Although we have assisted more than 100 Florida communities since the section was established not quite two years ago, we feel many other towns and cities are not aware of the state program," said Ney Landrum, Recreation and Parks director.

Landrum pointed out that by July, 1979, every local government in Florida is required to have a comprehensive plan for recreation and open space, according to the Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act of 1975.

"Even though the deadline is nearly 3 years away, it is not too early for local communities to start planning," he said.

A variety of services are offered by the Recreational Services Section. Pete McPhie and Collier Clark, recreation specialists, are available to assist communities at every level of planning. Their services include assistance in the setting up of park and recreation departments, financing and recreation planning, and facility designing.

For information, contact: Recreational Services Section, Division of Recreation and Parks, Department of Natural Resources, 204, Brickyard Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32304. Telephone: (904) 488-7860 or 488-7896.
Unicorn Beetle (Female)

Photo by Wallace Hughes

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