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The Cover
From a painting by Robert Butler

Confrontation in a cypress swamp, is the climax of an exciting hunt at hand? Perhaps the quarry will break and go for another hour or two, or maybe escape to put another day. See page 2. For information on plates and original paintings by Robert Butler, contact the artist at L. O. Box 1464, Okeechobee, FL 33475.
The plan was to bag all legal Florida game—a black bear would complete a

**FLORIDA GRAND SLAM**

When my hunting friends are swapping stories, they talk most often in terms of out west, up north, or some far-distant exotic jungle. They speak of game I’ve never seen and am totally unfamiliar with. I’ve sometimes wondered about this state of affairs. I’m convinced my cronies are overlooking a good bet by not taking full advantage of what we have right here in our state.

With this in mind, awhile back, I set myself a sort of missionary goal: I would attempt to bag all legal Florida game and preserve representative trophies of each to display in my Okeechobee office. I began to think of the project as my Florida grand slam.

Folks talk about this goal resulted in a string of interesting hunting adventures, and after a year’s hard effort, I found the undertaking on the brink of fulfillment. All I needed was a black bear to realize my ambition.

Florida has a special bear season, in certain years only. My hunting buddies are convinced my state’s black bear hunting season offers the best of the state’s black bear stomping grounds.

It’s great country with vast reaches of flatwoods interspersed with swamps. Located at the southern edge of the famed Okefenokee Swamp, it offers everything a southern black bear could desire. I already knew the terrain pretty well, having grown up in that neck of the woods. I’d even put in a few years with the U.S. Forest Service on the Ochlockonee National Forest. Names like Impassable Bay, Big and Little Gum Swamps, and Ocean Bay were familiar to me and conjured up visions of wild country and wildlife aplenty.

Best of all, for the prospects of completing the big plan, I knew a pair of the state’s most successful bear hunters, Paul Crews of Glen St. Marys and Bobby Joe Houston of Lake City have close to a century of bear hunting between them, and they were willing to help me finish up my grand slam.

You could ram around the woods still-hunting for years on end and never lay eyes on an old bruin. A pack of good dogs is the key to the matter. I was in high cotton on this score. Tales of his high-powered-Plott hounds, reached me well before I ever met Paul. Bobby Joe was no slouch in the bear dog department either. He’d been training bear hounds before I was born.

So, on this particular fine October morn, I found myself in the Osceola, breathing deeply of the pine-scented air and taking in the sights and sounds of the big woods while we searched for a fresh bear track.

We’d been looking for sign for an hour or so with no luck. Then, from somewhere down along a muddy little run there came a loud whoop. One of the searchers had found what we were looking for, a fresh track.

There was a flurry of activity around the dog box as a number of trail dogs were turned out. Hopefully the festivities were about to begin.

Screened by the intervening brush, I could tell very little of what was going on. There were indistinct rustlings in the gallberry and palmetto thickets and yip or two from the dogs. Finally came an excited bawl from one of the hounds as he drew in a snootful of bear smell. Things picked up from there as the others hounds joined in with yips and barks.

(continued on page 4)
squalls at intervals. Before too long, the trail dogs jumped.

Back at the dog box, other dogs that had taste for running and baying the quarry were turned out. One of Bobby Joe's teenage boys and another fleet-footed member of the party, an unforgettable character nick-named Ding-a-ling, reached the tree first. Their shots rolled through the swamp, inspir-
ing the rest of us to push our exhausted bodies to reach the scene.

About two o'clock, the trail dogs seemed to gain a new note eagerness to their sounding off. The trail was definitely warming up.

Now the line fed into a briar patch some five miles square. It was so thick that even a rabbit would have needed a suit of armor to make any time in it. Thick entangling thorn vines with half-inch stickers laced a gallberry head so dense it cut out sunshine at ground level. Narrow animal trails were the only access. We had to crawl on hands and knees to make any amount of progress. There was virtually no place where a person could stand up.

The other members of the party scattered out along the grade that ran parallel to the rough, try-
ing to guess where a vantage point might be to best reach the scene of the action when the bear was brought to bay.

Dale Houston and I remained at the spot where the other dogs had been turned loose to aid the trail dogs. We could hear the race clearly.

After some 45 minutes, the dogs had the bear coming back in our direction. On hands and knees we crawled into the briar patch. Surely there has to be a place down in Satan's domain that para-
lels that horror of a thicket.

It took us 20 minutes to make 75 yards. Then the dogs bayed up only about 20 yards ahead of us. Visibility was but a few feet and the thought of coming eyeball to eyeball, especially while on my knees, with 200 pounds of Florida black bear did sort of tug at my gut.

Now we were only five yards from the baying hounds. The popping of the bear's teeth came through loud and clear. We hesitated momentarily.

The bear had backed up to a lonesome cypress tree. He was going to fight it out on the ground rather than climb out of the traffic. We still couldn't get a good look at what was going on.

There was a crashing in the underbrush. The clamor of hounds and bear was building to fever pitch. We caught an occasional fleeting glimpse of moving animal, whether dog or bear was hard to tell.

The bear finally made a break before either of us could get in a shot and the fracas pushed deeper into the thicket. We crashed after the combatants. Back out on the road, Bobby Joe and Paul turned out more dogs to bolster the three that were carrying the fight. Dale and I separated. I got down and found myself covering about 30 feet of animal trail.

I remember trying to guess how much time I'd have once I spotted the bear coming at me down that short stretch of briar-lined tunnel. I sat, arms on knees, both hands pointing my .45 pistol down the path. The racket became even louder as the set-to shifted ever closer to me.

A quick glimpse of black hair and an open mouth armed with a formidable set of ivories put my heart into a fast trip-hammer cadence. I squeezed off a shot, then another, and yet another. In a moment the blackie lay stretched out in the thicket, the dogs wailing the unresponsible carcass-it was all over but the shouting. I'd reached my goal—a Florida Grand Slam!

This was certainly one of the most exciting hunt-
ing adventures I'd yet experienced. The next time my buddies start with their exotic game stories, I'll just rear back and comment, "But have you hunted Florida black bear with dogs?"
In PURSUIT of the BASS

A community with good fishing waters nearby may profit by as much as a quarter of a million dollars from a six-day national bass tournament.

Never in the history of the sport has the interest in bass fishing been so obviously expressed as in recent years. Increasingly evident are the growing number of fishing clubs, competitive tournaments, and countless articles pertaining to improved techniques and productive areas. Equipment has rapidly improved from crude tackle and slow, awkward boats to efficient fishing systems designed to reduce the odds between the fisherman and the bass.

According to a national survey of outdoor recreational activity compiled in 1975 an estimated 1,066,000 Florida fishermen expend over 31,000,000 (4 hour) days in pursuit of largemouth bass annually. Freshwater fishing expenditures were estimated to exceed $272,000,000 on tackle, lodging, transportation, licenses, etc. for a one year period. This figure becomes even more impressive considering boat and motor purchases and maintenance costs are not included in the computations.

Bass tournaments have significant economic impact on local communities as the result of expenditures for lodging, meals, fuel, etc. Recently, economists estimated a national bass tournament may easily generate more than a quarter of a million dollars for a six day period.

Florida has long enjoyed a wealth of fishing resources but, like many states has found it necessary to take a serious look at unprecedented fishing pressure now directed at the largemouth bass. In an effort to document harvest of bass taken in fishing tournaments, Florida was one of the first states to implement a fishing tournament permit system in mid-1975. The permit system was designed to identify intensively fished areas and determine the need, if any, to regulate such tournaments. Catch data provide valuable information for directing future research and management efforts aimed at sustaining bass fisheries at desirable levels.

To identify major "tournaments" from less significant "fishing contests", an arbitrary set of guidelines was established. Fishing competition is defined as a "tournament" requiring a permit issued by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, providing any of the following criteria are met:

1. 50 or more fishermen charged $25.00 or more entry fee
2. 25 or more boats used during the competition
3. Prizes exceeding $1,000 in value are awarded.

By Phil Chapman

Tournament applicants are required to submit preliminary information 60 days prior to the event and voluntary catch results are requested within 30 days after completion. In addition to facilitating collection of valuable catch data, regulation of fishing tournaments also provides a means to exercise control over major fishing competition in the interest of the general public. Permit requests are considered with regard to public safety and welfare, possible impairment of recreational rights of others using tournament water bodies, and proper conservation of fishery resources. Through the permit system, overlap of major tournaments on the same body of water can be avoided and if necessary organized fishing pressure directed away from areas in which overharvest may result. Essentially, the permit system has (continued on next page)
Florida Wildlife

BASS AND THE SPORTSMAN SOCIETY PROGRAM

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FLORIDA WILDLIFE

(discussed from preceding page)

...trend were evident to indicate that generally heavier fish were caught during any particular time of year.

Tournament Mortality

Live release programs have expanded rapidly during the last several years. As the result of improved handling techniques, more efficient live well systems, and responsible attitudes on the part of fishermen, tournament mortality is significantly reduced. Live releases are practiced during most Florida tournaments. Of 11,610 bass caught in 1977, 7,831 were released after weighing, representing 67 percent. Numbers of released fish typically ranged from 40 to 80 percent of the total catch for individual tournaments. On several occasions reports indicated 100 percent return of smaller numbers of bass and a release figure of 97 percent for 1,597 fish was reported.

Live release figures do not necessarily reflect survival rates, due to delayed mortality of many tournament fish. Secondary infections are often en...
Standards practiced by all participants should be enforced to avoid potential problems, tournament controversy and shadiness. Many fishermen we interviewed considered tournament fishing in Citrus County to have occurred. A localized effort has been evidenced in Florida, but several isolated instances have occurred. A localized effort to ban tournament fishing in Citrus County was initiated during the summer of 1977 despite attempts to convince concerned fishermen that tournament fishing was not significantly depleting bass stocks in the lake. Complaints were also voiced regarding litter problems, excessive boat speed, disregard for property and other boaters and blocking of public boat ramps by tournament participants.

Many fishermen were of the opinion that tournaments generally consisted of unregulated fishing activity and were basically unaware of live release programs. Misinformation and exaggeration were the basis for many complaints, but others were apparently justified.

Tournament sponsors should be aware of anti-tournament controversy and should consider potential problems on all water bodies. Strict self-enforcement of tournament rules and courtesy standards practiced by all participants should be encouraged if future conflicts commonly experienced in other states are to be avoided.

Tournament Impact
Until recently, little information was available to determine the impact of tournament fishing in Florida. As a result of the permit system, some insight relating to catch rates, annual yields, and relative sizes of fish harvested from various areas is now possible. Eventually, this information may become an invaluable aid for defining needed areas of research, determining the success of management programs and identifying potential management problems.

Tournament reports indicate that competitive fishermen in general are not significantly more successful than the average fisherman. Since tournaments represent only a minor percentage of total bass fishing effort, any claim that tournaments are responsible for overfishing in Florida are unfounded.

Tournament Sponsor Cooperation
Cooperation from tournament sponsors as well as other bass fishing interests has been favorable. Tournament reports indicate that competitive fishermen could be of more benefit to management programs than accurate catch statistics. Continued support from fishermen in this respect will greatly assist our efforts to maintain the quality of bass fishing in Florida for years to come.

Fishermen and spectators study the scoreboard at the Lake Okeechobee Open Bass Tournament.

Florida’s deer herd will be at a record high when the season opens November 11. Close to 60,000 bucks will be taken.

Most hunters won’t bag one. Some hunters will kill two or three. What makes the difference?

The answer is usually a combination of a lot of small things. One key factor is whether you’re a sitter or a walker. Most of us have a better chance of killing a buck by sitting put rather than rambling.

There are not many hunters who are good enough woodsmen to sneak up on deer. The bucks have the edge on us with their keener sense of smell, sharper hearing and the ability to instantly see motion.

The sitter should choose his spot in relation to the wind. If he sits still, he won’t be heard by an approaching buck. If he does a little moving as he can, a deer is not likely to see him.

Remaining in one spot, still and quiet, is the way to get the edge on a deer. Whether you sit on the ground or in a tree stand, the principle is the same. You have a better chance of detecting the deer before he detects you.

I do not know if the ability to sit quietly for long hours is a talent, art or matter of self discipline. Whatever it is, I’m not very good at it. After 30 minutes of waiting, I become impatient, lonely and begin to have doubts about there being any deer in the woods I’m hunting.

I’m better at sitting and waiting than I used to be. Maybe age has something to do with it. By summoning all of my inner strength, I can now last two hours or so. Yet I know hunters who can sit in a small tree stand, with no sanitary arrangements, for eight or 10 hours straight.

To have any chance of remaining quiet and motionless for long vigils, one must be comfortable. There’s not much chance of anyone being able to stand motionless for hours. It has to be done from a comfortable sitting position.

To sit for long hours, you must have a comfortable back rest of some sort. Pines are called “soft.”
woods” by timbermen, but not by anyone who has ever had his neck impinged with gite back. But there’s not much choice in the woods for a backtrail except a tree trunk.

It’s ideal to pick your sitting spot in daylight, say the dawn before you hunt. I seem to wind up on a lot of hunts where the first time I get a look at the area is an hour before daylight. Pumbling around in the dark to choose a sitting spot, one learns the hard way to check for fire ant nests. If the weather is warm, it pays to investigate snake possibilities, such as gopher snake holes. You’re not likely to sit quietly if a rattlesnake comes out of its den a few feet away.

Because I am forever forgetting to carry a cushion or stool, I usually wind up sitting on the ground. If there’s a choice, and its the best type of soil to sit in. It gives and forms a natural mold to meet the specifications of your posterior. The seat should be tested until it feels comfortable. I often use my boot toe and a cutting knife to dig out a spot.

Before sitting down for the long wait, I rake out all of the leaves and twigs where my feet will be. I know that I will have to move and twitch a bit and I don’t want to rustle and snap when raising my rifle to shoot.

I also leave no weeds or brush which might interfere with my gun swing. Although it is often still at daylight, I keep the prevailing wind in mind when choosing a site.

If I have scoured the area, I have some idea of the direction of deer movement. I try to guess from which direction a buck is most likely to approach. This has bearing on my positioning when I sit. It has to do with the physics of the body. In a sitting position, a right-handed shooter can swing a rifle mounted to his cheek to the left in an arc of 100 to 120 degrees, but he cannot swing more than 15 or 20 degrees to the right and still keep the rifle cheeked. If the buck is farther to the right, the shooter must change positions to shoot. The movement may spook the deer.

One can sit and wait for a buck much longer if he has scoured the area and found fresh sign and other information. If he has reasons for picking that particular spot, he will have hope and his backides will endure better.

The best sign you can find is a buck scrape, a sexual and territorial advertisement that the buck makes in a small clearing beneath overhanging limbs. The buck paws out the earth in a rough circle the diameter of a basketball or peach basket. He may gouge it with his antlers. Then he urinates in it, deliberately spraying his hocks with urine and rubbing them together.

The scrape warns other bucks that this is staked courting territory. It is a secret message to any doe in heat, or about to be, that the buck will be glad to be of help. A buck may make one scrape or several, but not usually far apart.

If an urgent doe comes to a scrape, the but is not around, she will urinate in the scrape, spray some on her hocks, rub them together and wander off. When the buck returns, he immediately smells the scrape. He has no trouble in tracking the doe by scent. After the mating, the buck may stay with the doe for a few hours but he soon returns to his scrapes. He’s ready for a new romance.

During the rutting season, the buck frequently checks his scrapes. If you find one, you don’t set up and wait right at the scrape for the buck. It’s better to take a stand 30 or so yards away with a clear shot, no brush in the way. Then the buck is not as likely to see you as he approaches his scrape.

The buck will continue to freshen his scrape by pawing and urinating in it. He will also nibble at the sprigs above his scrape. When you find a fresh scrape, stick with it. The odds are that you’ll get a shot if you’re patient enough.

The second best place to sit and wait is just off main deer runways or travel lanes. They tend to use the same ones year after year. You can check a runway for current use by looking for fresh dropings, tracks, hair or browse marks near the run.

On public lands, you cannot always hunt under conditions you prefer because of other hunters. But even if the woods are full of hunters, your best bet is to sit and wait. Let them push the buck towards you.

Deer do much of their moving around dawn and dusk. Bucks and does trying to fall in love stay almost constantly on the move. Deer often move throughout the day ahead of an approaching cold front.

A lot of hunters mine out on shots because they go back to camp at 9 or 10 o’clock in the morning.

A good pattern of hunting for me is to go on stand 30 minutes before daylight and sit for as long as I can take it. I scout and jamble the woods through the middle of the day, always with the chance that I might get a jump shot. Two hours before dusk, I go back on stand and try to sit as patiently as I can.

Jim Baker, who manufactures a series of tree stands at Valdosta, Georgia, has introduced a new line of scents to use in deer hunting. Some of the Baker Buck Bait have doe urine bases designed to attract bucks. Other baits are to cover up or camouflage hunter or hunter-associated odors.

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The cover-ups come in nut and fruit flavors. There’s an acorn bait which could mask human odor and be used at the same time appeal to a deer hunger for acorns. I suppose you could also use it as a lure about the apple lure. Since Florida is well below the apple-growing belt, I don’t know how a deer would react to this strange odor.

A deer’s sense of smell is a positive identifier. A deer may not be able to identify a human from the sound of a snapping twig or a distant hunter moving in poor light. These sounds and sights may warn but not necessarily spook him. But when a deer gets a sniffing knap edge on an impede positive identification which shouts “Enemy!”

I haven’t had a chance to try Jim’s lures yet for hunting. I did spill a drop of the grape lure and my office has smelled like grape juice for a week. It’s mighty pleasant.

Browning has put bolt-action rifles back into its line. They’ve been without one since 1974 when they discontinued the ones made in Belgium. The BBR is offered in calibers of 7 mm Remington, 30-06 Springfield, 270 Winchester and 25-06 Remington. Capacity of the magazine and chamber is four rounds in magnum and five rounds in the standard caliber.

The BBR is reasonably priced and should become a favorite with hunters who prefer the strength and accuracy of magnum calibers. The .270 Winchester is ideal for much Florida deer hunting and could be used on western hunting trips.

The BBR has hammer-forged rifling for accuracy. The magazine features a new, patented scissors follower spring which eliminates tipping or binding of the cartridges or follower. The magazine can be reloaded from the hinged floorplate for fast and convenient loading. A spare magazine can be carried for quick reloading.

For faster shooting, the bolt rotates only 60 degrees rather than the more common 90 degrees. When the bolt is closed, nine locking lugs insure strong lockup.

The BBR safety is on top of the tang for quick thumb operation. The rifle also has a red serrated cocking indicator which quickly show that the action is locked. An adjustable rear sight eliminates warpage and keeps the barrel true floating, the way it was designed. If you need a new rifle, take a look at the BBR.
Collecting aged fishing lures is more than a pastime to

**BASSMAN CLYDE**

A Heddon 200 sits in a widening ring of water and being a leaping cypress. An explosive burst of the surface and the lure is no longer there. No time to muse over the disappearance for already the little steel Temprite resembles a buck. It seems like an hour but surely it is only moments before the largemouth—all five pounds of him—beats a SO-pounder was likely to overcome the unbridled enthusiasm of a 12-year-old with his first bass hook up. Now a battered wooden plug riding the quiet waters of Otter Creek is every bit as fresh as the recollection of last week’s fishing adventure.

It seems like an hour but surely it is only moments before the largemouth—all five pounds of him—beats a Sou’wester For to reverend A. Harbin, Sr., 1105 Martin Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38116. A copy of his book could be the key to an interesting new hobby for you and, as he says, “The price of the publication is nothing compared with the loss to you of letting a rare collector’s gem slip through your fingers from lack of knowing what you had.”

Just how much is one of those old plugs worth? Clyde won’t say what he’s paid for those he’s bought. Like most others in the field, he prefers to trade but will come across with the cash if that’s what’s called for. In a manner befitting the best tradition of the old-time horse trader, Clyde reminds the would-be collector and seller alike that “Nothing ain’t worth nothin’ unless somebody wants it.”

**By Morrie Naggiar**

What do you do with 6,000 fishing lures? For one thing, you rearrange your house to make room for displaying your treasures, says the Bassman.

In manner typical of his charge-ahead approach, Clyde began a time-consuming project of putting together a book that would help solve some of the problems of identifying fishing plugs. The result has been the publication of a 326-page volume reproducing 24 James Heddon's Sons catalogues from 1903 to 1953. The words of wisdom from an experienced collector, details of lure identification, and the like, make this a major contribution to the hobby. Also typical, Clyde goes ahead with a project to put together similar reference works covering other major lure producers.

If you find your interest has been piqued by the possibilities of the lure-collecting hobby, you might want to contact Clyde regarding his Heddon publication. He can be reached as follows: Clyde A. Harbin, Sr., 1105 Martin Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38116. A copy of his book could be the key to an interesting new hobby for you and, as he says, “The price of the publication is nothing compared with the loss to you of letting a rare collector’s gem slip through your fingers from lack of knowing what you had.”

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mudhens, bonnet-walkers & blue-petes

Scientists lump them into the family Rallidae, a group that includes rails, gallinules and coots. They’re a prominent part of the birdlife about most every Florida marsh of any size, both fresh and salt water.

Rails—or marsh hens—make themselves known more by loud, raucous calling from the semi-impenetrable depths of their needtbrush strongholds rather than from an occasional and often fleeting personal appearance.

On the other hand, other members of the family, the gallinules and coots, are a common sight about the marshlands. Two gallinules are commonly encountered by Florida outdoorsmen—the purple and the common or Florida species. Both are called bonnet walkers for the obvious reason that they walk with ease on the floating water lily leaves or “bonnets” from which they gather a good part of the insect food they favor. Long widespread toes distribute the birds’ weight over a relatively large area enabling them to ride the floating lily pads.

There is a practical reason for being able to properly identify the two species, if you plan on trying a bonnet-walker or two as table fare. There is an open season on the common or Florida gallinule, but the purple gallinule is protected year-round. In full winter plumage, the male purple is readily identified by the metallic sheen of its purplish-blue and green feathers. The females and younger males are drab in color and lack the white line on the side which marks the common gallinule.

An even more conspicuous part of the marshland scene are the coots, also called mud hens or blue petes. One time a few years back, in an effort to popularize their hunting, the name “white-bill” was pushed for the species. But no matter what the name, once on the table the result is the same—the bird tastes excellent from some places, and can be next to inedible from others. It is the food plant that predominates in their diet at the time that appears to be the deciding factor in regard to table quality.

by morris h. shaw
The clapper rail is the bird most hunters mean when they use the term marsh hen. The rail’s habitat—the salt marshes of both coasts—makes hunting them afoot a tough show. Now and again, especially on the northeast coast, a high tide with an inshore wind floods the marsh enough to reduce cover to the minimum. It’s then that poling a boat through the marsh is a productive way to hunt rails. Traditionally opening early in September, rail hunting ushers in the season for many Florida shotgunners.

Quail

You have but to go afield in most any part of Florida, especially during spring and early summer, to be convinced by the cheery call from every quarter that here is a widely distributed game bird. But where are all those birds when hunting season comes? The feathered bombshells have a way of becoming highly elusive once the coveys are shot over a bit. In numbers of individuals taken each season the bobwhite ranks second, exceeded only by the highly migratory mourning dove. Some birds are walked up, a few are bagged incidental to other hunting, but the largest share of the nearly 1½ million average kill per season goes to the hunter using pointing dogs.

Deer

From the pine woods and ti-ti thickets of northwest Florida to the wide open sawgrass of the Everglades, the white-tailed deer is an abundant resident of the state. Under careful management and protection, Florida’s whitetail population has increased from a low point in the mid-1930s to the present high level. Currently some of the ranges of various deer herds here and there about the state are showing definite symptoms of overuse. This could spell trouble if steps are not taken to crop the surplus animals. Deer on over-browsed ranges are subject to various ills associated with malnutrition. Parasites and diseases flourish in such a herd and reproduction and fawn survival fall off drastically. For the past two seasons, the deer kill has been around 61,000. In addition to hunting deer with dogs, long a traditional method in Florida as elsewhere in the south, special archery and muzzleloading gun seasons, and still hunt only sections on some management areas are provided to give more hunters an opportunity to hunt in their chosen manner.
Dove

Held in the highest esteem by thousands of the nation's shotgunners, the mourning dove ranks high in the upper brackets as a game bird. No slouch swinging, the streamlined speedster, when it decides to open the throttle, is capable of scorching the ether at something like 60 miles an hour. Also, the dove has the disconcerting habit of side-slipping and dodging at the most inopportune moment, to the joy of the manufacturers of sporting ammunition. The Florida dove kill, averaging 2.3 million for the three seasons of 1974-76, ranks it well in the lead of all game species in number brought to bag.

Waterfowl

Leading the yearly south-bound parade of waterfowl to the Florida wintering grounds is the blue-winged teal. By late August, these little ducks are already showing up on the state's marshes. At the other extreme, some of the divers—the canvasback and the bufflehead among them—may not arrive in Florida until mid-November or later. A favorite with gunners here as well as elsewhere throughout the country is the pintail, a trio of which are shown in the photo at left. By midwinter, something close to half of the waterfowl of the Atlantic flyway, along with a fair representation of Mississippi flyway birds, will be visitors to the state. The annual kill in Florida during recent seasons has averaged about 414,000 birds, ranking it in the top three duck hunting states in the flyway.

Snipe

The "jacksnipe" holds a special place on the program of the well-rounded shotgunner. Never a cinch to bag, a snipe at full throttle, boosted along by a brisk wind will readily separate the expert wing shot from those who only think they qualify. The long bill, golden tail coverts, erratic flight pattern and the raspy, scalpel call of the bird as it flushes from the bog readily identifies this gamester. Boggy pastures and lake margins with sparse cover are ideal places to look for snipe.

Turkey

The ultimate hunting experience for many is the bagging of a wild turkey. Two seasons, one in the fall and the other during the spring, present distinctly different challenges. The bulk of the annual harvest is in the fall when the population is at its highest point of the year. The spring gobblers hunt presents a special challenge for it is then that the hunter has a chance to exercise his skill in talking a tom up to within shooting range. During the three most recent seasons for which complete figures are available, the state's turkey kill averaged 17,300.
Wild Hog

Hogs have been a part of the Florida scene for so long that many people assume they are native to this part of the country. Actually the first swine to set forth in the New World came with the early European settlers. Our wild hogs are simply domestic animals that have adapted to life in the woods. In ancestry, they were derived from two basic wild stocks, the European wild boar, Sus scrofa, and the East Indian pig, Sus vittatus. Domestic hogs turned into the wilds are remarkably well able to fend for themselves under Florida conditions. Although the reddish-hued hogs and those with various amounts of white and gray are encountered, black is the predominant color in the usual feral hog population. During the 1976-77 season Florida hunters took more than 77,000 wild hogs.

Rabbit

Not as widely acclaimed here in Florida as in some other parts of the country, the cottontail is nonetheless a popular species. Still hunting along the edges of the brambly cover they prefer is one way of putting rabbit meat in the pot. Running rabbits with beagles is an especially exciting way to hunt. Two species are well distributed throughout Florida. The cottontail is grayish-brown in body coloration, with a white tail. The aquatic-minded marsh rabbit is grayish-brown with grayish undersides and tail. Rabbits may be hunted year-round. Bag limit is 10 a day.

Bear

In those parts of Florida where suitable reaches of isolated forest and swamp lands exist, the black bear is yet to be found. No longer present in the numbers of earlier years, inroads on the habitat by development is undoubtedly a major reason for the species' decrease. Coming out on the short end of the conflict with beekeepers because of the bear's fondness for honey has, over the years, been another reason for reduction in some bear populations. In various locales, however, a sufficient number of bears hold forth to allow carefully controlled hunting. The heavy-set beast, black or brownish-black in color, usually shows tan markings about the nose and face and sometimes a white spot or patch on the breast. The animal has a remarkably varied diet which includes such items as turtle and gator eggs, ants, grapes, blackberries, sparkleberries, blueberries, persimmons, fruits of sambas, sweet bay, black gum and palmetto, acorns and most any sort of animal matter it can come by. Florida hunters kill a dozen or so bear a year during the controlled hunts.

Squirrel

The gray squirrel is one of the traditional standbys of the southern hunter. The easy pickings the squirrel hunter sometimes finds during the early part of the season, usually give way to sparse returns for the effort later in the year after the bushytails have been educated by exposure to a succession of hunters. The animal is commonly called "cat" squirrel in Florida, a name based on the cat-like calling sounds it gives, in addition to loud husky barking noise it makes when irritated. One squirrel per acre is considered a good population, with peaks sometimes reaching an average of two per acre. The annual harvest for Florida during recent years has been around a million animals.
A novice angler gains experience in the bream-packed waters of Lake Ocheesee.

BY TRISHA SPILLAN

The whole idea had started so easily. Back at the office, Cherry had been talking about her latest fishing experience, complete with a discourse on the size of the one that got away, when I had blurted out, "I would like to learn how to fish.

Without batting an eye, Cherry had consented to teach me the finer points of a pastime she had learned literally at her grandfather's knee. Realizing how important it is for a newcomer to be successful, she had selected a surefire spot for my maiden attempt.

Situated off a dirt road in north Florida, Lake Ocheesee resembles Okefenokee Swamp. The 15,000-acre impoundment was a labyrinth of flooded cypress trees and as we entered the watery jungle of Big Gum Swamp that morning, I was glad I wasn't the navigator.

Morning sun filtered through the cypress reflecting off brown water which was deceptively deep. Not even the sound of another boat could be heard and I hadn't seen a human soul for hours. This had to be heaven, even if I didn't catch a fish.

"HO BULL!"

My heart stopped as I jumped and turned around to the source of the sound that still echoed. Smiling, R.D. Sapp calmly flicked his wrist and moved his line to another spot near a half-submerged log.

"I NEED A BIG UN!' he hollered, apparently trying to talk the bream to his bait since it seemed they weren't finding it on their own.

Sapp was another reason Cherry had been pretty sure that, after this trip, I would be hooked on fishing. If anyone could put you on a bream bed in Ocheesee, Sapp and his nose could.

(continued on next page)

For what seemed like the hundredth time, Cherry Maloy put down her pole and reached over to take the one out of my hands. Wordlessly, she began the task once again of unsnaring fishing line from a branch overhead.

At this point I wouldn't have blamed the girl if she had hollered and demanded I turn in my cane pole. Instead, within seconds she handed me back the 12-foot pole and straightened line.

"You're getting better," she smiled. "Look, the shrimp is still on the hook. Now, how about trying it again. See that spot over there? Okay, watch out overhead, and use your wrist."

As my head swam trying to remember the myriad instructions I had been hearing all morning, I took aim and my hook landed almost exactly where I wanted it to.

From her spot in the boat behind me, Cherry picked up her pole and with a deftness I envied, cast and placed her bobber in a likely spot among the trees.

I wondered to myself why Cherry was putting up with me. I mean, after all, here she was, a dedicated bream fisherman (fisherperson?) right smack dab in the middle of the hottest spot for miles and saddled with a neophyte who had never even held a cane pole in her hands.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1978
Jf her, he had first started sniffing the air as he
pulled the boat among the trees. I had thought he had
a cold, but he was smelling for a bed.

"Smells kinda like new mown hay," he had ex­
plained. "Once you smell it you won't forget it."

Following his sniffer and relying heavily on his 20
years of fishing the lake, Sapp had built up quite a
reputation. They say that when the moon is right, he
can put you on a bed filled with big bull bream and
you can't pull them in fast enough.

I wasn't interested so much in bull bream, I just
wanted to catch a fish. Anything would do. Just so I
could say I caught it.

Now Cherry, however, had visions of pulling in a
big one. We had seen a mounted one back at Lake
Ocheesee Lodge, our headquarters, when we had
checked in the night before.

As soon as she found out that it weighed 18 ounces
and that recently some close to two pounds had been
pulled from the lake, I thought she would have to be
physically restrained from heading out right then and
there.

Instead, our host, Bill Pfeiffer, had arranged for us

PHOTO BY MARIE NAGLAR

Bold splash of yellow-orange to red is bedding-time
mark of male bluegill, as shown in photo at left. It's show
and do time at the cleaning table. Author Trish Spillan,
above right, gets the word from Cherry Maloy.

to start out first thing in the morning with Sapp at the
helm and guaranteed we would come in with some
big ones.

"Really?" Cherry had said, her eyes dancing.
"How big?"

"Well, last week my boy brought in a couple of
two-pounders," Pfeiffer grinned.

It was then I realized just how dedicated Cherry
was. As I tried to get some sleep that night, the light
shone on as she went over her tackle box again and
again. When our wake-up call (Pfeiffer knocking at
the door) came, she was dressed and out to the lake
before I had opened my eyes.

Consequently, I felt badly when, after she had pa­tiently
untangled my line all morning, showed me
how to put the grass shrimp on the hook and how not
to put the hook into my partner's body, Sapp's bob­
ter sank first below the water.

"This here's a keeper," Sapp said as his net
plunked a bream bigger than both my hands into the
bottom of the boat. A bright orange breast gleamed
in the sunlight before it was whooshed into the live
well.

Time to tighten up and get serious. With delib­
eration, both Cherry and I cast our lines in the
general vicinity of the bream's former home. No rep­
eetions this time of Sapp's strike, so he carefully ma­
neuvered to another spot where he had hit paydirt
before.

"Wait, what was that Cherry said? Watch your bob­
der... I think mine is going under... Oh, good
grief, it is. Yeah, it's not an illusion.

"Cherry, what now?" I ho­ledered.

"Calm down, raise your pole, keep the fish in the
water and bring it alongside the boat," Cherry re­
cited patienty as she put her pole down again and
this time picked up the net.

I have to admit I felt good at the tug at the end of
my line was really an honest-to-goodness bream. Not
up to Sapp's strike, but to me, a truly gorgeous one.
It took two hands to get the hook out of his mouth.

"Well, how does it feel?" inquired a smug Cherry.

"Fantastic! Hand me another shrimp."

It didn't take long for Cherry to show the stuff she
was made of. Regularly her line would hum as a
bream hit. Soon the live well filled with a lot of good
size keepers and mine. Although Sapp chortled as I
put each of the puny piscatorial fighters in, pride
made me keep them.

In a twinkling, it was time to head in to the lodge
where Pfeiffer stood waiting for a report. In his years
of operating the lodge, he must have heard a
thousand tales of successful fishing, but his face lit
up at our obvious delight.

A nap during the rainy afternoon and then back to
the lake for another shot at it. This time, I almost
beat Cherry to the boat. Out in Big Gum Swamp only
once did I break a line and somehow I managed to
untangle most of the snarls myself.

It was dark, and standing at the fish cleaning table,
unloading the cooler, it didn't seem possible
the pair of us had landed that many bream. The ob­
ligatory pictures were made to record this historic
event, and smiles flashed brighter than a neon light.
Cherry's biggest was an 18-ouncer, while I crowed
over my seven-ouncer.

Then I learned the oldest adage about fishing...

"You catch them, you clean them."
It is as jungle-like an Eden as you will ever see in the United States.

The FAHKAHATCHEE STRAND

The Big Cypress Swamp is a huge saucerlike tract of forest, marsh, swamp, and prairie in southwest Florida, most of it in Collier county. It is composed of many forest "strands" including the Fahkahatchee. In South Florida vernacular, "strand" refers to a forested slough, usually a narrow band of sodden woodland that stands apart from its surroundings.

Unlike the Everglades to the south and east, the Big Cypress is almost totally dependent on rainfall for its water supply. It has thinner soil and a greater diversity of plant communities than the "Glades."

The Big Cypress lies between two shallow coastal ridges, so it is a natural reservoir, extremely important as a source of water for both people and animals. Its overflow, when unimpeded by canals and ditches, supplies water to Everglades National Park, coastal towns, and the delicate brackish ecosystem of the mangrove fringe on the southwest Gulf coast.

The Fahkahatchee Strand occupies a north-south corridor, some 20 miles long and three to five miles across, in the western section of the Big Cypress. Its large size, as well as its location near the coast, make it particularly important. It is at once a major reservoir within a reservoir and a natural drainage channel through which surface water travels southward to Chokoloskee Bay. There, fresh water from the strand forms an alliance with tide-water. This brackish zone plays a key role in the production, protection, and development of many shellfish and game fish, including snook, redfish, tarpon, and sea trout.

The Fahkahatchee is not strictly a swamp forest. Like the Big Cypress itself, the Strand embraces several habitats, including hammock, pond, lake, pine forest, mixed pine and cypress forest, mixed hardwood-cypress forest, cypress forest, dry prairie, wet prairie, and coastal prairie. An elevation difference of only a few inches means a difference in water and soil conditions and a resultant variation in the habitat.

The wondrous plant life of the Fahkahatchee is due in no small part to southern Florida's climate, as well as to topographic and hydrological factors. Located south of 25 degrees north latitude, South Florida is blessed with a subtropical climate—temperatures that vary only about 15 degrees (F.) between the extremes of summer and winter. "Summer" and "winter" here are more accurately a dry season and a wet season. The wet forested areas maintain a mild micro-climate with high relative humidity and frost-free temperature, like an outdoor greenhouse. No wonder that a remarkable flora has developed in the Fahkahatchee.

Although the largest of the great cypress trees are gone—logged off in the 1940s and 50s—the area retains healthy stands of smaller cypress, the largest number of wild royal palms in the state, and a few clumps of the rare, shaggy paurotis (continued on page 30)

Story and photographs by Lynn Stone

Plant life of the Fahkahatchee includes the largest stand of wild royal palms, above, left, in the state. The Strand's many quiet pools, above right, teem with aquatic life, and its jungle-like flora includes many species of orchids and ferns. A big bull alligator, right, rests in a bed of water lettuce.
A little blue heron, top photo, stalks through a thick stand of water lettuce in search of a fish or frog. The night-roaming Barred owl, a Fahkahatchee resident, is more often heard than seen.

(continued from page 28)

palm. Also in the strand, hammocks of laurel oak, red maple, willow, and sabal palm are understories of West Indian plants: lancewood, wild coffee, marlberry, Simpson's stopper among them. The hidden chains of lakes are wreathed by custard apple, pop ash, and young cypresses. One of the area's greatest claims to botanical fame, however, comes from its amazing wealth and variety of orchids. Forty-four species of orchids have been identified in and around the Strand, and 10 of those are endemic—found nowhere else in the country. Most of the orchids are epiphytic, having adapted to a life in trees, above soil and ground water. These orchids root themselves to branches and trunks and take most of their nourishment from the sun, wind, and rain. Unlike parasites, epiphytes are harmless to their hosts.

A few Fahkahatchee orchids are semi-epiphytic, managing to attach themselves to and eke out a living from the debris collected on stumps. Others are terrestrial, rooting themselves in humus or prairie muck.

Fahkahatchee orchids are easily overlooked. They tend to have small blossoms, and many are so rare that they are seen only by botanists. *Lepanthopsis melanantha*, for example, is extremely difficult to find. Not only is it scarce, but a large specimen is no more than two inches high and its maroon flowers are described as microscopic.

Air plants are another feature of the Strand. Eleven species of bromeliads, commonly known as air plants, are found here. The small catopsis (*Catopsis nutans*) is endemic. Guzmania or strap-leaved bromeliad (*Guzmania monostachia*) has a restricted range in South Florida, but in some parts of the Fahkahatchee it grows in profusion. In addition, the Fahkahatchee is a storehouse for 20 species of ferns, three peperomias, an endemic club moss, *Lycopodium dichotomum*, blue water lilies (*Nymphaea elegans*) and numerous fungi and lichens.

A swamp so rich in plant life should also be a haven for abundant animal life. It is. Partial to hidden lakes are the white ibis, wood duck, green heron, and wood stork. Barred owls and pileated woodpeckers, more often heard than seen, favor the heavily-forested areas, where migratory warblers flit through the canopy each spring and fall. Florida sandhill cranes regularly visit the Fahkahatchee Prairies.

Just south of the Fahkahatchee proper lies the mangrove ecosystem which is dependent on a seasonal flow of fresh water from the Strand. That system of bays, estuaries, tidal creeks, and coastal prairie provides breeding areas for the small (continued on next page)
The white ibis, above, is representative of the many kinds of beautiful birds of the Strand as well as the bays, estuaries, tidal creeks and coastal prairies of the Big Cypress. The cladeshell orchid, right, is one of 44 species found there.

(continued from preceding page)

marine animals that attract such high-order avian consumers as roseate spoonbills, redshank egrets, ospreys, bald eagles, and brown pelicans along with several more common birds.

Mammals of the Strand are characteristically secretive. Many are nocturnal. Deer, squirrels, raccoons, and possums are plentiful, although not always easily seen. Otters and bobcats are common but not readily sighted nor are the bears, Everglades mink, and panther.

The reptiles and amphibians of the Strand are a mixed lot, ranging in size from the green tree frogs to alligators. Somewhere in between is a potpourri of frogs, toads, salamanders, lizards, turtles, and snakes.

The fish of Fahkahatchee include several that are popular with sportsmen: spotted sunfish, redear sunfish, warmouth, largemouth bass, yellow bullhead, and brown bullhead. There are countless "lower animals" in the Strand. Among the most intriguing are the palm-sized wolf spider, the freshwater sponge, and the apple snail, the latter a golf ball-sized morsel that's a favorite of the Strand's limpkins.

The Fahkahatchee has always discouraged easy access. The inner Strand, the central slough, is as jungle-like an Eden as you will ever see in the United States. You walk carefully, making each step count lest you wind up on your backside, in waist-deep water, or nose-to-nose with a cottonmouth. But that's the nature of the place—wild, stumpy, crusty with limestone solution holes, glutted with vines, low-bridge limbs, and submerged logs.

The Strand is nothing to be afraid of, but give it due respect. It's not a place to go some Sunday afternoon because the TV doesn't work. To find a walk-in point, take the Janes Scenic Drive out of Copeland—and take a friend. A compass and a map wouldn't hurt either. There are no boardwalks, only game trails and overgrown logging trams.

If you're lucky, you'll come upon a chain of pools. These are singular places, where the lushness of the Fahkahatchee seems to have reached its fullest. The limbs of pop ash and custard apple are almost hidden by the air plants roosting on them. As if bent by the weight of attendant bromeliads, ferns, and orchids, the branches form leafy archways that cast weird reflections on the water. Here, on a summer day, the world is green. Find such a place and you'll never forget it.

The Fahkahatchee seems to have reached its fullest. The limbs of pop ash and custard apple are almost hidden by the air plants roosting on them. As if bent by the weight of attendant bromeliads, ferns, and orchids, the branches form leafy archways that cast weird reflections on the water. Here, on a summer day, the world is green. Find such a place and you'll never forget it.

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Every so often, Lt. Malcolm McCoy of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission revisits the past. Thirty years back in time he goes and it's not hard to do.

For long ago lives in the north of Escambia County, at the corner of Sokomis and Pineville roads, and goes by the name of Bill Lee. Although he had, perhaps, been presumed dead or otherwise departed from the scene by those who don't know any better, "Old Man Bill" is alive and well. Indeed, how can a legend be any other way? But now chance is added. For some unexplained reason revisits the past. Thirty years back in time he goes and it's not hard to do.

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The best years of Bill Lee's life were spent in the service of the Commission. It's easy to tell because his blue eyes sparkle and his laughter comes easy when he recalls the tales of the old river fishermen and woodsman: Willie Wayne Hall and Paul Lee, Ruby Bowman and John Miles, Mack McCoy and Avis Tennon. The great black hunter, Henry Watson, and Gordon Lovett, who was bushwacked and killed a quinette in Lee's running days.

Bill Lee started working for the Commission in 1945 for the salary of $100 a month. Some say the Commission hired him because they couldn't catch him. Whatever the reason, they hired an officer who became the most respected and liked among all the wardens in the Panhandle.

They said Billy Lee could tell whether dogs were running fox or deer as soon as they struck; he could tell the weight of a deer by its track and had a name for every wild turkey that was ever raised up in the woods. He knew where all the fish baskets were in the Escambia River and who owned them according to how they were set out. He never wasted time chasing violators unless there was no way to make them come to him.

Bill's heyday came in the era when the Commission first began trying to convince outdoorsmen of the peculiar notions that there must be certain times of the year when wildlife should not be disturbed, that there must be certain limits to how much game could be killed, and that there are certain methods that mustn't be employed when one goes fishing.

After all, in the late '40s and early '50s, North-West Florida men put meat on the everyday table with squirrel and turkey, bream and wood ducks—spring, summer, fall and winter. If there is one accomplishment Bill Lee would like to be remembered for, it is that he used a gentle hand to persuade his neighbors to harken to the new game laws. Often the same laws that meant an end to activities in which Lee engaged.

"I always tried to use common sense when it came to enforcing the laws," says Lee, "because a lot of folks couldn't understand what we were trying to do would help everybody in the long run. I always tried to give a man the benefit of the doubt. On little things, like not having a line preserver or a fishing where he wasn't supposed to be, I would always give a man one chance to mend his ways. The next time I caught him doing the same thing, I would make a case against him."

And I never thought twice about making a case against a man who knew better when it came to hunting out of season or shooting without license."

Lee and young McCoy would patrol the Escambia and, in those days, their main occupation was catching the men who illegally trapped fish with baskets on the bottom of the river. He and McCoy would ride the Escambia in a skiff powered by a five-horsepower motor. On a routine patrol starting at the State Road 4 bridge near Century, it would take them three days and two nights to make a trip to Ferry Pass and back. It was a journey of 60 miles.

"I always liked to ride the river with Mac (McCoy)," says Lee. "I would always get him to scull the boat and, I declare, that boy could smell fish cooking for miles off. I know he still can. We would stop along the river at somebody's camp and visit with them for a spell. We worked hard and stayed out days on end, but we always made some good times and we made a lot of friends."

It is said, by those who knew him, that Lee never took advantage of his position by "farting it over everybody."

How could he? It was even hard to tell that he was a state officer. Summer and winter, hot and cold, he wore an old World War I soldier's overcoat and a decrepit felt hat with the wide brim bent in every direction. Underneath were khaki pants and a shirt. He wore boxers, under his coat, and never carried a gun. Later in his career, he compromised with the Commission and, occasionally, abandoned McCoy, wearing uniform striped pants with his regular garlic.

But if he did not appear to be an officer, he certainly acted like one. Although he joked and "carried on" with his civilian friends, he was all business when it came to performing the directives of the Commission.

When I signed on with the Commission, we were allowed one day off a year," said Lee. "The rest of the 364 days, we were on call, but we were on our own on Christmas Day. Still and all, though, I worked many a Christmas Day because I could always count on finding a few illegal deer hunters in the Blackwater River Forest. I never did care too much for people who made a habit of poaching deer. In all the years I've been out there, I never heard of poachers getting started here—or people that would dynamite fish. I got a lot of poachers, but I had the pleasure of catching fish dynamiters only twice.

Nowadays, Bill Lee's biggest pleasure is derived from the visits by old friends like McCoy.

"A man as old as I am is bound to have seen a lot of things change," says Lee, "but the things change for the worse. And the older we get, the faster the changes seem to come. Sometimes I like to sit back and let everything ride and just remember the way things were once upon a time."

The Best Years of Bill Lee's Life Were Spent in the Service of the Game. He Came From A Background Of Guns And His Daughter Comes Easy As He Recalls the Old Times. 

OLD MAN BILL

BY COLIN MOORE

GIANNI WILDER PHOTOGRAPHY

Tell me what you say to your children that you hope they will remember.

JAMES D. TRUITT

2001 WILDLIFE

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1979

BILL LEE

FLORIDA WILDLIFE
No question about it, fishing is still America's number one participant sport and a casual survey will reveal more fishing rods than Fribbeses, tennis rackets or golf clubs tucked away in the closet of the average household. Sport fishing's universal appeal provides a true equal opportunity for employment of leisure time and a recreational outlet for both sexes, all ages and all races. Ask any of America's 64 million anglers and you will learn that fishermen prefer a part of the action over watching the doings of others in regard to their hook and line pursuits.

To quote the country store league, "When fishermen ain't out fishing, they will be gathered round to talk about fishing." Along this line, nowhere is there a better opportunity to talk, listen and learn about fishing than at the Big Bass Seminar scheduled for December 8-10, 1978 in Orlando.

The program for the '78 Seminar is again coordinated by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and sponsored by the Florida BASS Chapter Federation, the National Bass Association, the United Bass Fishermen and the American Bass Fishermen.

The three-day gathering of bassin' buffs will be held at the Sheraton Twin Towers Hotel and Convention Center and again will focus attention on the Florida black bass as the nation's number one game fish.

The '78 Big Bass Seminar will provide an arena for an exchange of ideas so anglers might become familiar with bass research and management programs, and biologists will have the opportunity to receive direct input from fishermen.

Spokesmen for the sponsoring organizations report that the largemouth bass is much too valuable a resource, from both the recreation and economic points of view, not to receive the direct attention and support of sportmen and resource managers. "Only when there is a total exchange of ideas will there be total understanding and this is the real reason for the Big Bass Seminar," said Jim Floyd, Seminar coordinator for the Commission. At the first Big Bass Seminar last December, 1,800 anglers representing 20 states were registered. Indications were that attendance at the '78 Seminar will substantially exceed that number.

It's difficult to provide something for everybody but the Big Bass Seminar comes close to filling the bill for fishermen. The three-day event will include lectures, learning sessions, discussion and demonstrations. There will be continual showing of fishing films, a magnificent display of tackle, fishing equipment and bass boats, a chance to wet a hook and cast for prize-winning tagged bass, a big bass banquet and other activities.

A new feature scheduled for the '78 Seminar is a session for rising young fishermen. Active participation is limited to boys and girls ages six to 14. These sessions will be conducted by America's champion fishermen and casting experts.

"We don't plan to lecture or hold classroom discussions, but will actually introduce the young people to the art of angling and the simple pleasures of fishing," said Floyd.

"The future of fishing rests in the hands of tomorrow's fishermen and, excluding a fishing trip, the anglers have the opportunity to talk about fishing," said Floyd. "When the final curtain falls on the '78 Seminar, each fisherman landing a tagged bass will be rewarded with a handsome trophy as well as a valuable prize which may be a rod, reel, lure, tackle box, or some other useful fishing article."

The Seminar sponsors said, "Anyone who can cut up a chicken can filet a fish, and frying fish without creating a mess is much simpler than preparing a spaghetti dinner."

The Big Bass Seminar is a non-profit program and any revenue generated over and above actual expenses will be awarded as a grant to the Bass Research Foundation for continuing research studies.

Full registration for the event is $5 per person. Registration for the Big Bass Banquet is $15. General admission to the Big Bass Exhibit and Display Center, the Big Bass Theater and Christmas party is $1 per person.

The $5 registration will admit an angler to all '78 Seminar activities except the Big Bass Banquet and the fishing tournament in the Big Bass Bayou adjacent to the convention center.

Entries are being accepted for the Big Bass Bayou fishing tournament has been established at $1 per person and will allow an angler to cast for tagged bass during specified periods from noon Friday, December 8, to sunset on Saturday, December 9. A total of 24 tagged bass will be released in the bayou two weeks prior to the '78 Seminar. Each fisherman landing a tagged bass will be rewarded with a handsome trophy as well as a valuable prize which may be a rod, reel, lure, tackle box, or some other useful fishing article.

When the conservation gospel is spread and 'born again' bass anglers take up the crusade for care and concern for the environment, there will be a brighter future for all fishing and all fishermen," Floyd concluded.

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When the conservation gospel is spread and 'born again' bass anglers take up the crusade for care and concern for the environment, there will be a brighter future for all fishing and all fishermen," Floyd concluded.

While the Big Bass Seminar is loaded with action and fun, the real nitty-gritty of the '78 Seminar will take place in the 2,500-seat auditorium of the Sheraton Twin Towers Convention Center. The auditorium session is scheduled to get under way at 7 p.m. Friday from casting demonstrations, entertainment and the preview of fishing fashions. A full program on Saturday will include presentations by leading anglers and fish biologists. On the schedule is a point-counterpoint discussion of fishing for bedding bass, size limits and closed fishing seasons.

One of the many highlights of the '78 Seminar will be the big bass roundtable review featuring fishery biologists from Florida and other states. Biologists will review research and management programs and progress. The review will be followed by a general audience question and answer session.

"The '78 Seminar planning committee is setting the stage for maximum audience participation platforms, tied into the public address system, at strategic locations throughout the auditorium," Floyd said. "The committee wants no question to go unasked or unanswered and wants to be sure all anglers have the opportunity to present their point of view."

When the final curtain falls on the '78 Seminar, the sponsoring organizations want to be able to say that anglers attending the three-day event departed with a better understanding and appreciation of America's number one game fish, the Florida largemouth bass.

"When the conservation gospel is spread and 'born again' bass anglers take up the crusade for care and concern for the environment, there will be a brighter future for all fishing and all fishermen," Floyd concluded.

BIG BASS SEMINAR REGISTRATION FORM

( ) BIG BASS SEMINAR AT $5 PER PERSON ( ) SEND ADDITIONAL REGISTRATION FORMS

( ) BIG BASS BANQUET AT $15 PER PERSON ( ) PLEASE SEND HOTEL RESERVATION FORMS

**Attach check or money order payable to Big Bass Seminar and mail to P. O. Box 15692, Orlando, Fla. 32807. Upon receipt of your registration fee, acknowledgment will be forwarded to you.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1978
THE CHAIRMAN COMMENTS

By BERNIE PARRISH
Chairman, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

This is the first of several occasions I'll be talking with you about the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's programs and goals. I'll also explore some of the problems the Commission is facing and ask for your help in solving them. I appreciate the honor Governor Askew bestowed on me with my appointment to the Commission and the trust my fellow Commissioners are affording me as chairman for 1978-79 fiscal year. It has been a lifetime dream of mine to serve on the Commission. I pledge to you, the sportsmen of Florida, my best efforts in helping manage our wildlife resources.

Joining me as vice chairman this year will be a good friend, devoted sportman, and conservationist, George Matthews of Palm Beach. I'm particularly proud of being able to hunt and fish in Florida all my life. I have had the privilege of being able to hunt and fish in Florida all my life as chairman of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission at its July meeting in Punta Gorda. One of the youngest chairmen to ever lead the Commission, the Titusville native is an avid sportsman committed to managing Florida's wildlife heritage for future generations to enjoy. "I have had the privilege of being able to hunt and fish in Florida all my life," he said.

I'm really delighted George Matthews will be joining me as vice chairman. His counsel and personal experience have always been invaluable to both the Commission and the staff. I'm looking forward to working with these two leaders along with our new commissioners Cecil Bailey and Nelson Italiano. Let me say that I'm particularly proud of Executive Director Brantly and his staff's dedication to their jobs as resource managers and protectors.

I'd also like to thank my dad and former senator, Bernard Parrish, Sr., the late Converse Brady and Buddy Wilson for introducing me to the enjoyment of hunting and fishing.

The five-member Commission is charged with the responsibility of carrying out wildlife conservation programs for the people of Florida. In order for our job to be a successful one, we must rely on the sportsmen of Florida to tell us what they want. The people we serve aren't only hunters and fishermen, but hikers, campers, picnickers and nature lovers as well.

And it is important that your views become known. There's only one way to do that and that is to get involved in the natural resources public policy-making process. And the easiest way to get involved is to attend the next meeting of the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The Commission attempts to meet in all five of its regions some time during each year.

Our meetings and workshops are always open to the public, and we seek your comment on the policy questions before us. If you can't attend one of our meetings and workshops, you can write to the nearest Commission office or the Executive Director's office. If you can't attend one of our meetings and would like to comment on a public issue involving our state's wildlife or freshwater aquatic resources, please write me in care of the Executive Director's office.

As with many problems arising in our daily lives, I know we are not always going to agree on the solutions—but at least we will have exchanged ideas and that's the important thing.

WILDLIFE TIP OF THE MONTH

Do something with your child this hunting season. Enroll in the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Hunting and Firearms Safety Training Program.

Bernie Parrish, Sr., the late Converse Brady and Buddy Wilson for introducing me to the enjoyment of hunting and fishing.

Fishing

Details Make It Happen

By CHARLES WATERMAN

Hook size for plugs, enticing bluegills, and other facets of the rod and reel sport.

Spinnerbaits, certainly nothing new in the bass-fishing business, gain more and more in reputation. The explanation is that their users have developed more ways of using them and the builders have given them a lot of extra twists that don't show unless you examine them carefully.

Now the bass like current spinnerbaits and they liked the old Shannon Twin Spinner, which may have been the first of the tribe, but the old Shannon was fished pretty much as it came off the card and we don't recall many changes anyone ever made in it. Not all of the spinnerbait's popularity comes from the fish. When something appeals to fishermen they start tinkering with it and learn a lot of subtle things never thought of when the baits were first stamped out.

What happens is that the expert with some particular type like the spinnerbait learns to make it do the work of several other lures. He can fish it on top over grass so that the spinners do a sputter, he can fish it with uneven retrieves at middle depths, and he can bump it gently along the bottom. Since it's generally fairly weedless, he can yank it through pretty thick cover. He has confidence in it and he may have a whole boxful.

They still make "cluckers" although that name isn't used much any more. Some of the Arbogast wigglers such as the Sputterfuss would fit the description if worked on top. A generation or two ago the "cluckers" were carefully tuned to make just the right sound as they moved along. I never saw a real clucker jockey who was ever satisfied with the sound of a factory bait. He had to bend it, flatten it or paint it.

Some of these guys got wonderful results and

(continued on next page)
The size of hooks on a plug, especially a surface plug, is more important than we realize. If you want to be persnickety, you could say the hooks have to be suited to the rod and line. Generally speaking, the smaller hooks are the sharpest ones. Even if you work on the points of heavy hooks you can’t get the sticking efficiency of something smaller.

I have hooked a veteran who missed a few strikes on a new plug, then announced he had to change the treble on its tail. His rod was too soft for the big hooks his fish seemed to be bouncing away from. The bigger the hook, the more sure the backbone it takes. Most of us decide on the lure size and leave the hooks up to the manufacturer. He doesn’t know what kind of rod we’re going to use and refilling process.

A few users of surface lures get a really hard sock and the lightest the rod the lighter the touch you give him. It’s a little different with underwater baiting being moved under tension, but some of the element is present here too.

Some of the more humorous incidents in fishing occur when a fish follows a bait and won’t take it. Chuck Schilling’s old recommendation was to use a still line and ram it down his throat. I haven’t done that but I have hooked a few fish after the bait was so near the rod tip I had to stop my retrieve and do a figure eight with the lure. The first time I did it was years ago when a northern pike chased my bait to the boat and then lay there glaring at me. I stuck the rod tip and spoon in front of his nose and shook it back and forth. Blooie! I have done it since with black bass although the maneuver is more likely to scare them away. I shall describe a method that isn’t guaranteed but is better than nothing. I’ve seen it worked several times.

When you’re using a plugging or spinning rod and a fish is following your lure attentively but won’t take, your first effort is to speed it up, after which you slow it down. If he hasn’t done anything about it by that time chances are that you have the bait pretty close to the boat. Instead of winding it all the way to the tip, have about two or three feet of line out, submerge the tip (for an underwater bait) and work the rod in a wide swing. At least it keeps the thing in the water longer and you’re less likely to scare him with the rod.

Not only does this extend your retrieve, but it can send the bait at a completely different angle, and can make it appear to head for the bottom. Send complaints care of the magazine.

The keeps return coming in. More catch-and-release fishing, more size limits, smaller bag limits and more closed seasons are on the way for the country’s anglers. Some of these things are creeping into black bass management with more to come. There’s no disgrace in being wrong. For a long time I accepted the theory that hook-and-line fishing could not damage a bass population. Now the concept has been proven wrong in a number of impoundments, a hint that large lakes and rivers will also require a new look in management.

As we’ve busted the ice in another direction, I judge that there’s a whole new field of research opening. After preaching that we couldn’t hurt the population by catching reasonable limits, it’s a little painful to add, “Well, maybe.” Of course it depends upon the individual lake or stream.

Incidentally, there are some new restrictive regulations on some western trout waters and some new catch-and-release waters out there. The trout fishermen got too clever. So did the bass anglers.

Most of the bad things that can happen to fishing waters are at least partly offset by high water. Plenty of rain flushes out the rivers, getting rid of pollutants and encouraging fish activity. In lakes we know that up-and-down levels improve the fishing and we’ve taken advantage of that in impoundments through the deliberate drawdown and refillling process.

The bad part of high water flow in Florida is that it can be a temporary blessing and lull fishermen into false security. Many a push toward improved water quality has faded out when heavy rains reversed the trend—temporarily. In a year or two the old problems are back.

High water also fool us on noxious weeds, sometimes hiding them when they’re in business as usual. Then, when the level drops, the old tangle is still there. Over the long haul, public use of water in Florida has increased, making these laps and downs especially tricky. It takes a couple of years or more to judge the progress of a body of water.

One of the biggest trends in fishing today is that toward longer fly rods, partly as a result of the weight of graphics. We’ve gone from one extreme to the other in this. I can recall when a typical bass-bugger’s rod would be made of bamboo up to 10 feet long, weigh the same and either make you a man or break your wrist.

That came the move to shorter ones and it was considered a sign of expertise to use something around 7 feet. A few went down to 5 feet, which would work, although not so handily. All of this time the experts agreed that the ideal length for medium-weight rods was around 8 feet and most bait fishermen chose that length for No. 8 or 8 lines. After graphite had been with us for a time there was a push for longer stacks and about 3 years ago I found myself trying one a full 10 feet long. That’s too long to suit me although it did cast pretty well. However, I think some of those 9 feet long do an exceptional job.

I have been using an Orvis Hf footer for an 8 line. Advantages are that a longer rod keeps more line out of the water, it makes it harder to drop your cast too low, it protects other people in the vicinity, and when some rods and some lines it adds to your distance. The disadvantages are that it’s a little less handy to carry in a boat or elsewhere and by putting the line’s weight that much farther up there it will take a little more wrist to handle it. This latter will be disputed by some who say a little motion at the grip brings a lot of motion isn’t true.

I won’t take sides but you might like to try a long one.

Bluegills are especially sensitive to depth and sometimes refuse to come up or go down very far for anything. This has made the reputation of many lures when sometimes success or failure has been depth rather than action or form. I have heard it stated flatly that the big bluegills take underwater lures and the little ones can be caught off the surface. That’s true part of the time, and sometimes it’s the reverse. Fact is that sometimes all of the small ones are near the top and all of the large ones are farther down—or vice versa. I’ve had both work ways.

Very slow operation is generally the rule for any bluegill lure. Part of this may be that it gives them time to chomp. Many a push toward the use of smaller lures has worked. For in any shallow water I’ve known them to take rapidly-reeled little spinnerbaits or plug. No chance to try it slowly because it would hit bottom.

I once found bluegills thick in a thin shoreline indentation to more than 9 inches deep. They were feeding busily and their dorsal fin showed sometimes. They would take anything, and the hungry but wouldn’t touch the same one when I sank it. Someone has suggested they were looking up and couldn’t see the wet one but I don’t think their eyes are made for that kind of problem. I don’t think they were feeding primarily on floaters.
In learning hunting techniques, there's no substitute for doing!

A couple of dozen years or so ago, as a budding outdoorsman, at least in my part of the world, you picked up your hunting and fishing education in fits and starts. If you were lucky, a dad, granddad, an uncle or a family friend took you in tow and tried to introduce some woodsman smarts to you. But mostly you picked up what you could by trial and error. Frequently it was weighted heavily toward the latter.

The wear and tear method has some drawbacks to it. For one, you could keep making the same mistakes season after season and likely never catch on to what was going wrong. The dropout rate was pretty high in the T&E school. It takes a certain brand of stubbornness to keep going back for more when results seem to add up a mite short for the effort expended.

But then, finally, perhaps, you start to come on a little stronger in rod and gun matters when whammo! it's off to another part of the country to work, or go to college, or whatever. New country, different species and unfamiliar hunting conditions—you're faced with starting almost from scratch again.

Then, too, experienced hunters who can pass on the word aren't so common in some families as they once were, or they live so far away that the value of their expertise is frequently all but lost to the ensuing generation.

Even opportunities to learn the hard way aren't as common as they once were. More of us live in cities and towns now rather than out in the boondocks where wildlife encounters are everyday fare. So what can be done about the situation?

Reading on the subject helps. There is an abundance of magazines and books available dealing with most all aspects of outdoor pursuits. There is a lot of good information available—in fact, sometimes it seems there is almost too much for the beginner who has trouble separating the wheat from the chaff. But even at best, reading and doing are a fair piece apart; there's just no substitute for actually going through the drill. Fortunately, there's a pretty fair answer. I came to find out.

Sometimes in the newspapers and on TV, and fairly frequently in the outdoor magazines over the past several years, I've noted pitches for various types of outdoor school programs. I'm sure you've seen them. For some time I'd paid hardly more than fleeting attention to them. But then, like the saying goes, if you pound even the most stubborn mule over the head often enough, you're eventually going to get its attention. So it was I started to wonder just what could be learned at one of those courses directed at a particular phase of outdoor knowledge.

A casual conversation with FW hunting columnist Charley Dickey last winter got things rolling. Almost before I realized what was happening, I found myself signed up for Westervelt Lodge's wild turkey hunting school scheduled for mid-March. Charley had gone through their archery hunting course the preceding fall. I figured if a gun hunter of such long standing could learn to arrow a buck by a course of instruction, the teachers must know what they're doing. They do, I was to find out.

The pines alongside the road were throwing long, late-afternoon shadows by the time I turned off Alabama Highway 14, north of Aliceville. The first dirt road past a certain landmark I turned left, crossed a railroad track and wound off through a stretch of timberland.

The welcoming sign in front of the long, low building nestled in a clearing confirmed I'd arrived at Westervelt Lodge. J. Wayne Fears, honcho of Gulf States Paper's outdoor recreation activities, greeted me at the door. (continued on next page)
From the moment I crossed the threshold, I felt I was a welcome guest. I noted the other turkey hunting hopefuls were treated the same way by the entire Westervelt staff. It made for a great atmosphere—friendly, informal, and relaxing.

The schedule went something like this. Check in time was from 10 o'clock until noon on Friday. Lunch was a hint of things to come—it was no place for a dieter. Like the rest of the operation, I'd rate the culinary department A+.

Then the group settled down to the nitty gritty. We piled into three or four vehicles and headed out into the woods to listen, discuss, and see firsthand some of the elements that make up the world of the wild turkey. We looked at various types of habitat, examining it closely to discover just what makes up turkey country. Turkey sign—scratchings, tracks, shed feathers, and the rest were considered right on the scene so, by the time that session ended, most of us felt we could identify a gobbler's trick and other signs, knew where to look for turkeys during hunting season, what was likely turkey roosting country and why, and a host of other fine points of related lore.

After dinner that evening we gathered in the satellite lodge nearby for movies on turkeys and turkey hunting. A company biologist and a number of other staff specialists pointed out pertinent facts—"See the white top on that gobbler's head as he comes walking up through the brush. You know by that he's a gobbler long before you can see the rest of the bird clearly enough to tell anything else about him." The film was stopped and run back over the scene two or three times to emphasize the point.

"Watch how this gobbler stops on the edge of the woods and looks around before he comes out into the open."

Again, a roll back and replay and more discussion so the point is driven home. So it went for a good couple of hours.

Among the next day's activities was an interesting session at the shotgun patterning board to give all hands a chance to see how their favorite turkey gun patterns. It was a revelation to some who had never checked out their guns with their usual turkey hunting load.

The clay pigeon shoot on the trap field was a blast in more ways than one, with shooters taking their shots from sitting and kneeling positions, unstrung for trap shooting but certainly more the rule than otherwise for a turkey shooter. There were sessions of turkey calling, lead by world champion caller Ben Lee. Distance judging sessions, with realistic silhouettes placed at various distances in a wooded area were also very revealing. Introduction to special turkey hunting equipment drew a lot of interest.

One evening the students were paired off and assigned to blinds in widely scattered parts of the big Westervelt reserve. I felt fortunate in drawing a solo spot. A couple of big gobblers cared the field I was watching. They finally decided those clucking sounds, if not actually to work, Ben started out by demonstrating how he locates a gobbler. We stand in a woods road winding out through a likely looking stretch of country. Ben drew back and gave out an ear-rending call of a barred owl. In the first locations the owls high up in the tree were sure to be an alert gobbler. "Tye for in work," was Ben's verdict. I'd heard the sound but have to admit, I wouldn't have recognized it as a turkey, it was so garbled by distance.

In a surprisingly short time the gobbler came up through the timber at a fast trot, passing now and again to look around. He was talking practically every step of the way. The bird was within easy shotgun range before he finally settled something wasn't quite right. I'm sure the three of us peering intently at him and jiggling about in the excitement of the situation were enough to spooky him. He finally ducked and cut out of that neck of the woods.

So now I'd had a firsthand look at one kind of outdoor school. Was it worth it? Yes, this one at least definitely was. Not that I put any more meat in the pot when I got back to our own spring turkey hunting but, like a well-versed weatherman, I could now at least explain my failures with a bit more class than previously.

Photo by Laurence Wallace

The climax of the course came when, for the润less hunt with various instructors, I drew Ben Lee. Three of us went into the woods, just as it was starting to light up in the east. We watched entranced as a real master went from a fellow bird were at least not threatening and came on into the field directly in front of me, I misplaced the gobbler of my call, but ended up getting some close range photos of the two gobblers before they finally strutted off into the timber.

Two hunting stops later, Ben had a response loud and clear from the swamp. "Come on quick and wait quietly. Watch those sticks," he warned. He set a lively clip for about a quarter-mile down through a planing of young pines and into a hardwood hammock.

We sat on the ground as Ben's signal, backed up against trees to break up the body outline. With face masks in place and with a warning not to move no matter what, we settled in to watch an expert get through his stations.

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HUNTING SEASON INFORMATION 1978-79

Waterfowl-Ducks and Coots

Sometime, November 22 through December 10 and December 21 through January 20.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

The Daily Bag Limit of ducks and mergansers is from one to ten, singly or in the aggregate, depending on the species and sex of the birds. The Daily Bag Limit of coots is three.

Point credit is assigned as follows:

100 points—Mergus ducks and canvasbacks
70 points—canvasback, black duck, Florida duck, wood duck and hooded merganser,
25 points—drake mallard, ring-necked duck, natty duck, buffle, head and golden plover,
10 points—ring-necked pheasant, blue-winged and green-winged teal, Gadwall, shoveler, widgeon, American and red-breasted mergansers and all sea ducks.

All other species and areas of ducks count 25 points each.

The possession limit of ducks and mergansers is two legal daily bag limits. Costs have no assigned point value: daily limit-15, possession limit-30.

There will be no hunting of brant or geese in 1978-79.

Swan Shot—In that portion of Braden County east of 1-95, Osceola County, Leon County (exclusive of Lake Talquin and the Ochlockonee River) and Lake Miccosukee in Leon and Jefferson counties, shot must be used when hunting waterfowl with a 12-gauge shotgun. Lead shot may be used in all areas in shotguns of legal gauge either smaller or larger than 12-gauge.

Leon County and Lake Miccosukee waterfowl hunting on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays and on November 21-22, 23-25, and January 18-20. Lake Talquin in Okaloosa and Leon counties and the Ochlockonee River open to hunting every day during the regular waterfowl season. The use of outboard motors is prohibited on Lake Talquin and the north portion of Lake Jackson (Carr Lake) during Sundays and on November 23-24, December 21-22, 25, and January 1.

Coots have no assigned point value; daily limit-15, possession limit-30 (singly or in aggregate).

Resident Hunters Only:

Series AK—Statewide Hunting-Fishing Combination

Series K—Statewide Weekly Hunting Pass

Series J—Other than Home County

Series RS (Regular)

Series Y—Statewide Hunting

Series K-Statewide Hunting-Fishing

Series J—Other than Home County

Resident Senior Citizens Certificate

No Charge

Compulsory Hunting License

Wildlife Management Area Permit

Series RA

Series AB (unspecified)

Archery Season Permit

Muzzleloader Season Permit

Recreational Permit

State, 3 Day Continuous, required in lieu of Wildlife Management Area Permit for entry only specified management areas for hunting purposes.

Hunting Placed on License

Hunting Preserve:

Series 

Guide (Required for guiding hunting parties): Series

Alien Hunting

LICENSE AND PERMIT FEES

Resident

Series AK—Statewide Hunting-Fishing Combination

Series K—Statewide Weekly Hunting Pass

Series J—Other than Home County

Nonresident:

Series L—Statewide Annual

Series M—Statewide, 10-Day Continuous

Resident Senior Citizens Certificate

No Charge

Compulsory Hunting License

Wildlife Management Area Permit

Series RA

Series AB (unspecified)

Archery Season Permit

Muzzleloader Season Permit

Recreational Permit

State, 3 Day Continuous, required in lieu of Wildlife Management Area Permit for entry only specified management areas for hunting purposes.

Hunting Placed on License

Hunting Preserve:

Series 

Guide (Required for guiding hunting parties): Series

Alien Hunting

When you bag a bringgin size buck—

JOIN THE BIG BUCK CLUB

Mak sur difficult shots which have to count is nothing new to 20-year-old Jimmy Jordan of Tallahassee. Last year, as the protective walls of his offensive line crumpled in the face of a charging Wildcat horde from Kansas State University, he fired Florida State University's longest touchdown pass of the season.

Another 1977 shot—this time from the limb of an oak tree—won the lanky (6'1") Seminole quarterback his first buck.

The buck carried an 18-point rack and weighed in at more than 200 pounds. It was the FSU junior's first organized deer hunt.

"This is the only deer at which I ever had a shot. I'd been hunting for about a year and had seen does before but no bucks," he said.

It is slated for public display with the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's Bryant Building at Tallahassee. The imposing white-tail is to be one of the centerpieces of a special trophy exhibit highlighting Florida's fall hunting season.

"Young hunters like Jimmy form the vital link in the future of Florida's wildlife resources. These young adults are going to play an increasingly important role in conservation as our state moves toward the 21st Century," said Colonel Robert M. Brantly, Commission executive director.

Jordan said he regrets not having his trophy certified for the Commission's Big Buck Club.

"I wish I had thought of it then. I'd really like to earn a Big Buck certificate and patch," he explained.

The Commission recognizes big bucks taken anywhere in the state by either resident or nonresident hunters who comply with Commission game regulations. To qualify, the buck must weigh a minimum of 130 pounds field-dressed and that weight must be certified by a wildlife officer, check station operator, game technician, county tax collector or notary public.

Hunters aiming for membership in the club should contact Fred Stanberry, director, Division of Wildlife, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32304, for application forms and information.

"I hope I can have this kind of luck again in the 78 season," Jordan said. "If I do, I'm certain I'll go to apply for Big Buck Club membership. I'd really hate to have another such season and not be able to do it myself."

The young hunter almost misnamed his trophy.

"I had been invited to hunt on a farm in Leon County and had been in my stand for about two hours. It was cold that morning and the other members of my hunting party were scheduled to pick me up very shortly. But then I heard something come out of the woods.

"I could tell right away he was a good-sized buck, but I didn't know how big until afterwards," he said. "He was coming towards me but then he turned away and I couldn't change position in the stand without making some noise.

"So I decided to let him go by. But he stopped 75 yards to my left and started pawing the ground. When he did, I brought him down with my 30-30 Marlin."

—Mike Godwin

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1978

JIMMY JORDAN AND 18-POINT BUCK

Photo by Mike Godwin
OFF-ROAD VEHICLE REGISTRATION

Off-road vehicles operated on the state's public lands must now be registered with the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The new law covers most off-road vehicles which aren't currently licensed for highway use. Exceptions include vehicles used in timber harvesting and reforestation. The registration fee is $10 per vehicle.

The law is designed to aid in the regulation of specialized recreational vehicles which have, in some instances, caused access and traffic control problems as well as habitat damage on wildlife management areas.

Applicants will receive a registration certificate and decal plus a validation sticker which is renewed annually. The decal is to be applied to the center of the left wheel fork on two- and three-wheel vehicles. It is to be prominently displayed on the left front of the body on other vehicles.

The owner's registration certificate must be available at all times for inspection upon request of any law enforcement officer. Registration application forms are available from the Commission's regional offices and the main office in Tallahassee.