Sniffin’ Out Springtime
Toby the Beagle—an adopted member of The North Woods Call family—checks out the melting snow and fresh scents of the changing season.

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SS Badger Gets Two-Year Reprieve
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Another Trust Fund Raid?
Page 3

www.mynorthwoodscall.com
It’s time, once again, for the traditional North Woods Call spring break.

That means we will not publish in late April and the next issue of the newspaper will be the early May edition.

No big plans here, other than to relax, regroup and generally catch up on things around home that have not gotten enough attention lately.

There’s also a good chance we’ll be wandering around the north country sometime during the next two weeks, taking photographs, watching spring unfold and looking for new story ideas.

As longtime readers know, The Call for many years has scheduled regular quarterly breaks in the editorial production schedule—usually in January, April, July and October.

The next few weeks should bring warmer weather (hopefully), spring wildflowers and a welcome greening of the landscape.

Enjoy. We’ll be back in early May.

Slicing & dicing the proposed DNR budget

As support continued to build among conservation groups for a proposed restructuring of Michigan hunting and fishing license fees, the state House of Representatives was slicing and dicing the governor’s Fiscal Year 2013-14 budget proposal to eliminate other desired strategic reinvestments in natural resources programs.

In late March, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources approved a package that included changes to license fees that are consistent with those supported by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), but which exclude General Fund support for some other proposals.

Eliminated was $3.5 million in ongoing funding to support the hiring of 25 new conservation officers and $600,000 in one-time funding for the academy; an additional $150,000 for aquatic invasive species prevention and control; $9.7 million from the state Waterways Fund for emergency dredging and other boating-related projects; $3.7 million in ongoing funding to operate Detroit’s Belle Isle as a state park; and $2 million to replace the Chinook, a 66-year-old Great Lakes research vessel.

The adjustments—part of the targeted General Fund cuts that are occurring in most departments—represent a $2.5 million reduction from current budget levels and a nearly $59 million reduction from Gov. Rick Snyder’s original budget proposal, according to analysts.

Changes can still be made and there is some hope for restoring certain line items—such as funding for a new Great Lakes research vessel—but citizens still need to make their concerns known to their senators and representatives.

Yet another version of the bill was expected to emerge soon from the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources. Both bills will then go through their respective chambers and probably land in a conference committee to reconcile differences.

Wolf hunting recommendation expected April 11

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been asked to prepare a formal recommendation regarding wolf hunting in the state by April 11.

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) is urging the agency to prepare a request for a wolf hunting recommendation—the first time in more than a year that such a request has been made to the NRC.

TRUST FUND GRANTS: Gov. Rick Snyder has signed legislation approving $23,348,700 in Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants, funding 76 recreation development projects and land acquisitions in 41 Michigan counties—66 to local units of government and 10 to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

KALAMAZOO RIVER DREDGING: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has ordered Enbridge Inc. to do additional dredging in the Kalamazoo River to clean up oil from a massive 2010 spill. The company will dredge sections of the river above Ceresco Dam near Battle Creek & Morrow Lake in Kalamazoo County’s Comstock Township. (Continued on Page 2)
SS Badger Gets Temporary Reprieve

The coal-fired SS Badger—seen here moored in Manitowoc, Wisconsin last summer—would be allowed to continue dumping tons of toxic ash into Lake Michigan for at least two more years under a proposed consent decree between the owners and federal authorities. The agreement—announced in late March and subject to a 30-day public comment period—is a compromise hammered out by Lake Michigan Car Ferry Inc., the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Justice. The ship reportedly flushes nearly four tons of coal ash into Lake Michigan each day during a shipping season that runs from May 6 to Oct. 13. Under intense fire from conservation groups and others, the company had sought to continue dumping coal ash until 2017, but would now have to begin reducing the pollution during the 2013 and 2014 seasons. The owners would also have to pay a $25,000 civil penalty for violating water quality standards for mercury in 2012. The ferry has been authorized by a 2008 permit to dump coal ash into the lake, but the permit expired Dec. 19, 2012. While the proposed agreement doesn’t specify how the Badger will stop future pollution, the owners say used ash will be stored on board during the crossings and is exploring the possibility of using compressed natural or liquidified natural gas as fuel.

Arbor Day events are scheduled at Michigan parks

A full schedule of Arbor Day programs is planned across the state for April 26-27.

The public is invited to join state park and visitor center staff for family-friendly outdoor programs that celebrate the many benefits of trees.

Programs will be held at the Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center at Cadillac’s Mitchell State Park (3 p.m. April 26 and 1 p.m. April 27); the Eddy Discovery Center at Chelsea’s Waterloo Recreation Area (2 p.m. April 27); the Huron Pines State Park Visitor Center at Grayling (all day); Ludington State Park (10 a.m. to 10 p.m. April 27); the P Pere Marquette Wilderness State Park near Ontonagon (1 p.m. April 27); the Saginaw Bay Visitor Center at the Bay City State Recreation Area (9 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 27); Tahquamenon Falls State Park near Paradise (5 p.m. April 27); and the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Visitor Center near Mut- tawaa (11 a.m. April 27).

There is no cost for these events, but a Michigan Recreation Passport is required for entry into state parks and recreation areas.

Specific details about each program can be found at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ Celebrate Arbor Day With the DNR website.

Assault rifle ban stalls in U.S. Senate

The proposed ban of so-called “assault weapons” and high-capacity magazines failed to clear a U.S. Senate committee in late March and was dropped from a larger package of new gun laws slated to be considered by the legislature this month.

“Obviously, I’m very disappointed,” said Sen. Diane Feinstein, the California Democrat who proposed the legislation. “The enemies of this are very powerful.”

Congress passed an assault weapons ban in 1994, but it was allowed to expire when lawmakers didn’t renew it a decade later.

The Senate still planned to vote on the ban, officials said, but only as an amendment to the larger gun bill. Not including it in the larger package all but guarantees that it will not pass, observers say.

The move is a setback for the Obama administration’s push for broad gun control laws, but welcome news for dedicated proponents of Second Amendment rights...

Our 60th Year: Looking Back to April 7, 1954

—Excerpts from The North Woods Call

Minute Man of Today

By Marguerite Gahagan

A desire to organize a rifle and pistol club in Osceo County is expressed by William Bankov (of Gaylord) in a story in this issue of The North Woods Call. As an expert marksman and member of the historic National Rifle Association (NRA), he expressed the opinion that such a club would especially benefit the younger people in this area.

In this month’s issue of The American Rifleman appears an editorial by the executive director of the (NRA) asking “is the riflemen outmoded?” This editorial points to the proposed national budget for 1955 with some $34 billion allotted for national security.

Of that sum, one item for $100,000 is earmarked for the “National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice.” In accordance with the Act of 1916, the money is (to be) used for “the instruction of citizens in marksmanship and promotion of rifle practice.”

The editorial writer anticipates the arguments against added instruction of citizens in marksmanship, because of the atomic age ...

“The very nature of the new weapons of war will enhance, rather than diminish, the value of the rifle,” says the editorial, pointing out that in future wars there will be greater dispersion on the battlefield and ‘safe’ rear installations of former days will face a constant threat.

“Subversive groups, fifth columnists and just plain cut-throats will thrive in the confusion resulting from a thermo-nuclear attack on any one of our major cities.

“More than ever before, the individual soldier and individual civilian will be forced to rely upon the weapon with which he is armed and his own ability to use it effectively if he is to survive.”

“It is equally important, therefore, that the civilians who stay at home employed in industry, or trade—and those who shall be trained in the use of personal firearms,” the editorial continues, pointing out that wives, sisters, or daughters, too, might find such training may mean the difference between life and death.

“Subversive groups, fifth columnists and just plain cut-throats will face a constant threat. The thinking of the quoted editorial should not be ignored for the more pleasant one of getting one’s game limit.

Help compile The North Woods Call history

If you have stories to share about The North Woods Call, or photos and background information about the newspaper’s role in Michigan conservation history, please contact us at:

editor@mynorthwoods.com

Just who were Maggie and Shop?

Help us put together a thorough profile of these two legendary publishers of The North Woods Call for an upcoming history book and “reader” focusing on the newspaper and its role in Michigan conservation history. Send personal stories to:

5411 East DE Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004

Or contact us at:

editor@mynorthwoods.com

Also follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Blogger

For updates, t-shirts & caps, visit our website at:

www.mynorthwoods.com
The North Woods Call legacy lives on at Gahagan Nature Preserve

The Gahagan cabin has become a classroom for area school children—nearly five thousand students each year. “We came within days of not having the preserve,” he said. Marguerite Gahagan—a nov-elist and early Michigan conser-vation journalist—founded The North Woods Call in 1953, fol-lowing news with the Toledo Morning News, Detroit Mirror, Detroit Times and, finally, the Detroit News, which she joined in 1934. She was known as a hard-driving reporter who made weekly visits to northern field sta-tions of the Department of Natural Resources, which was known as the Michigan Conser-vation Department. Gahagan lived in the Roscom-mon cabin for the last ten years that she published the Call. “The cabin is the center of everything we do,” said Dale. In addition to educational programming, it is available for rent to groups and indi-viduals, he said. Other than the structure itself, the only piece of Gahagan’s per-sonal property that remains is her typewriter, he said. Gahagan sold the Call in 1969 to Glen Sheppard, who continued publishing the newspaper until his death in early 1971. Dale said the publication has always been very well respected. Both Gahagan and Sheppard made huge contri-butions in the fight to protect Michigan’s natural resources, he said, although in different ways. “Marguerite had a much larger contribu-tion. She died without ever knowing that the preserve was established. The Department of Natural Resources was days away from selling the property when a group managed to grab onto it and—through legislative action—got it transferred to the Roscommon Metropolitan Recreational Au-thority.”

This occurred largely through the efforts of John Rosczyk and Pat Demers—then chair and vice chair of the Roscommon Metro-politan Recreational Authority, he said. They recognized the prop-erty’s value and made significant effort to acquire the land for fu-ture generations, according to Dale. “We primarily serve the Roscommon Area Public Schools and they pay us to use the pre-serve,” he said.

The public can help by getting involved. Dale said the board would like to grow the preserve—add acreage on its perimeter—but funding is minimal and they need more. He also would like to have a young naturalist educator on a full-time basis.

The North Woods Call

Early April 2013

Page 3
Conservatives and conservation: Why not?

North Woods Journal
By Mike VanBuren

I’m one of those people who believe in saving energy, preserving wild areas, and treating the earth as a finite resource that should be handled with care. I get alerted when I hear about crop pollution, “fracking,” food contamination, and open-pit strip mining in the hills of the state. Rush seems to hate this. He likes me to a Nazi extremist. He says I don’t understand the value of free enterprise, the simple principles of supply and demand. Worse yet, he’s convinced I’m one of those “conservatives” who use environmental scare-tactics to push big government.

The funny thing is—in most areas of life—I’m a fairly conservative guy.

As an independent thinker, I believe that pure conservation—based not on respect for the uniquely American ideals of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—is so nuanced it’s clearly impossible. I believe freedom and responsibility makes much more sense than the frequently deceptive, often ineffective policies espoused by the major political parties. Some may dispute the accuracy of this, but many of those organizations are populated largely by inflexible ideologues who see the world through their own selfish ambitions and greed.

As some Call readers have discovered, I have particular difficulty with the dry-as-dust definition of a “green thing” or so-called “progressive” thought. It seems to run counter to how most people live their daily lives. Nevertheless, I have often found myself wishing hand-in-hand with left-leaning Democrats in battles to protect our natural resources and our natural beauty.

I wonder why that is?

Shouldn’t more conservatives be concerned with protecting our natural resources—conservationists be conservatives?

After all, there are few things more “conservative” than protecting our natural resources, rather than fighting against those liberals who argue. If ever there was a bipartisan issue, this is it.

Few modern social concerns are more polarizing today, more divisive than conservation and economic prosperity. Human progress should not be measured solely on the basis of economic performance, but also on what we have preserved and protected.

Rush Limbaugh, of course, will always have disagreements as to how best to go about this work and far too often we’ve seen that professors concerned for the environment are just smoke screens for more sinister political agendas.

In an ideal world, we could simply educate people about environmental issues and trust them to do what’s right. Isn’t that what personal responsibility in a free society is all about?

Sadly, the reality is that individuals and corporations don’t always do what they should, and there’s an ongoing need for some kind of regulation and enforcement action.

Liberals and Democrats are not any more selfless and trustworthy than individuals and corporations, so there are all kinds of pitfalls on the path to good stewardship.

Republican Theodore Roosevelt defined environmentalism as a great moral issue, for it involves the patriotic duty of ensuring safety and conservation for future generations.

Roosevelt, of course, may have been the first “environmental wacko” to be elected President of the United States. Maybe it’s time to put another one in the Oval Office—along with several others at all levels of government and in industry.

And there’s no reason they couldn’t be conservative in thought and deed.

Farley’s World: True or false?

In our last issue, we quoted popular Canadian writer and environmentalist Farley Mowat in an editorial about wolves. A reader has since pointed out that for many years we have been heavily criticed for playing loose with the facts during his prolific literary career.

That’s true. We first heard this criticism years ago and had considered not using the chosen quote for that very reason. Most of Mowat’s work is ostensibly biographical, but he is said to have never let the facts get in the way of a good story. Even his defenders have acknowledged he does not necessarily strive for absolute reality, because his primary passion is to communicate more universal truths.

That is why, we may yet respond. It’s Mowat’s writing because it captured our imagination during our formative years and—with the clearly fictional works of American novelist Jack London—inspired us to learn more about the subjects covered in his books, most notably those described in “Never Cry Wolf” and “People of the Deer.”

Mowat himself is a compelling character and a fine storyteller. He may well be flawed and deserving of some criticism, but it is also equally true that as a naturalist he has often been dead-on accurate. So—for now at least—we’re willing to shrug off his factual meanderings as “artistic license.”

A note to letter writers
All letters must be signed. Please include your name and mailing address (e-mail address, too, if you don’t mind). We won’t publish addresses or phone numbers, but we must have them to verify that letters are authentic. Nonsigned letters will be used. It’s OK for your signature to be electronic.
**The North Woods Call: An editorial view from the Northern Michigan Conservation Network**

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** As background for the 2013 North Woods Call Reader Survey (see inside front cover and response form on Page 8), we thought it might be helpful to share the following editorial published last September on the Northern Michigan Conservation Network website.

"We don’t take to this—we’re still building our own contacts and online sources—but we’re only just discovering what is impressed by what we have seen and read there."

As with much of the material found on the website, we feel this take on the challenges of resurrecting The Call is quite balanced, informative and on-target.

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As many of you likely know by now, the publication of The Call has resumed after a one-and-a-half year suspension, following the passing of conservation legend Glen Sheppard.

This news comes at an especially good time for those of us who have struggled in our attempt to at least partially fill this huge conservation news and information void. If one even quickly peruses the archived posts assembled on this site, it also becomes clear that long ago & not even quickly peruses the archived posts assembled on this site, it also becomes clear that long ago &

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**THE NORTHERN MICHIGAN CONSERVATION NETWORK IS a Web-based news and information source dedicated to connecting diverse, concerned citizens and others and outdoor enthusiasts to the issues facing Michigan’s forests, waters and wildlife.” Content comes from a variety of contributors.**
Youth Conservation Council named

The first 18 members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission’s Youth Conservation Council—whose mission is to promote, preserve and protect Michigan’s natural resources—have been named and are ready to help.

Mike Hammill, a dedicated officer who is well-respected by his peers, received the Shikar-Safari Club’s 2012 Wildlife Officer of the Year and the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Conservation Officer of the Year for his tremendous work in the field.

The Council will hold its first meeting in June, with recommendations expected by year’s end.

Expanded Michigan’s bottle bill

Volunteers are currently seeking to promote the collection of 250,000 signatures on a petition aimed at expanding Michigan’s existing bottle bill.

A new grassroots organization known as Expand Michigan’s Bottle Bill is spearheading the effort to add sealed drink containers such as water, juice, sports drinks, energy drinks and alcoholic beverages to the state’s deposit law.

They are hoping to get the issue on the ballot for the 2014 general election. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/expandM-bottlebill.

Outdoor values: Lessons from Grandpa Roy

My grandfather grew up on a farm in Arenac County, one of a half-dozen brothers and sisters. Besides working hard on the farm, he naturally turned into an avid outdoorsman—no doubt inspired by his grandad, a passionate angler and hunter.

More importantly, he was a sportsman in the best sense of the word. A bit of a purist, even. When we kids visited the classic old family home in Stan- dish, the author, a retired Upp­­­­­ğon Company vice president who regu­­­­­­­­­­lously spends time in the house, is a prolific writer who has written his share of book and readers get a solid flavor of some daily duties performed by a state’s “woods cops” and criminal investigators.

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Deer hunter uses heavy equipment to clear shooting lanes on state land

A NOTE TO READERS:
These are brief excerpts from the CO’s bi-monthly field reports. To conserve space, we have excluded the more routine activities in favor of what we think are the most unusual and interesting.

If you want a more complete log than we are able to provide, you can find complete coverage of them under the Law Enforcement tab on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website.

DISTRICT 1
CO Marvin Gerlach investigated a complaint of illegal cutting of trees on state land in early March. He located an elevated blind currently under construction on the north side of the subject building the blind had brought in heavy equipment off his private property in order to build the blind. The subject was contacted and investigated. The next day the subject was contacted by the conservation officer. The enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2
CO Brett Gustafson investigated a fatal snowmobile accident on Mackinac Island. The subject, who wasn’t wearing a helmet, reportedly lost control and hit a tree. The passenger was thrown from the sled, narrowly missing several trees. The subject died on the scene with only bumps and bruises.

COs Jared Ferguson and Michael Wrobleski, with the Michigan State Police (MSP) on the Garden Peninsula with the recovery of human bones found by an angler. The ice angler had gone to shore and had come across a femur bone. He reported the find to COs. Soon after, the COs were notified a group of citizens in the area who had contacted the troopers to and from the scene.

DISTRICT 3
While on patrol, CO Duane Budreau observed and followed a column of black smoke to a fire where several pieces of wood and material were burning. Three 17-year-olds were in a bed of a pickup truck in reclining chairs watching the fire. Considering the age of the children, CO Budreau gave them a warning and advised them to put the fire out, thus avoiding any injuries. They immediately kicked snow on the fire. CO Budreau left and came back to check about 20 minutes later and found the fire still burning and that the subjects were sitting in their reclining chairs once again. This time a ticket was issued for disposal of solid waste was issued.

During a routine patrol of Lake Charlevoix, CO Andrea Erratt checked ice shanties still left on the ice and anglers fishing for walleye. Upon contacting an angler at dusk, the subject stated he had no license and asked for a Band-Aid while supplying him with a Band-Aid, CO Erratt contacted another subject and he was fishing with too many lines. He was issued a Band-Aid and a ticket.

CO Bill Webster received a complaint of an ice shanty frozen on the ice and left out past the March 15th. He located an elevated blind currently under construction on the north side of the subject building the blind had brought in heavy equipment off his private property in order to build the blind. The subject was contacted and investigated. The enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 4
CO Rebecca Hopkins investigated a complaint of an ice shanty that had been set on fire in Leelanau County. The shanty owners stated they poured gas on the blind to chase the birds so they wouldn’t: feel like dragging it off the ice, as required, by the March 15th deadline. A ticket was issued for illegal disposal of solid waste.

While following up on a complaint of a possible limit of steelhead on Manistee Lake, CO Sara Soper contacted two possible suspect boats, each containing two subjects. A check of one that of the vessels contained no life jackets, was not registered and their boat trailer was displaying an invalid plate. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Angela Greenway responded to a Report-All-Poaching (RAP) complaint of a subject who allegedly used his vehicle to intentionally run over several turkeys in the roadway and then take several of the birds. A lengthy investigation revealed the location of possible suspects. When CO Greenway contacted the suspects at their residence, she observed a garbage bag on the porch overflowing with wild turkey feathers, tails and parts. CO Greenway obtained a full confession from the subjects and arrest warrants will be sought through the prosecutor’s office.

DISTRICT 5
CO Jason McCullough was checking ice anglers when he observed one of the subjects had over 35 bluegill lying on the ice. The subject claimed that he would sort the fish at the end of the day and throw the extra back in the water. The obvious problem was that all the “extra” fish would be dead from lying on the ice. CO McCullough informed the subject for taking an over-limit of bluegill.

CO Warren MacNeill responded to a complaint of illegal fishing in a local lake. Upon arrival, CO MacNeill found what was left of the completely burned snowmobile lying on the ice. There were no injuries and it is believed a mouse nest may have caused the fire.

DISTRICT 6
While investigating a complaint of a deer shot at dusk, CO Larn Strawn stopped a suspicious vehicle that left from the suspect’s residence and was approaching the deer kill site. After stopping the vehicle and speaking with the driver, the CO detected an overwhelming smell of marijuana coming from the driver and the vehicle. The CO confirmed his suspicion of marijuana and drug paraphernalia in the vehicle. The subsequent investigation led the CO to a local residence where he and a trooper with the MSP contacted two additional suspects and made a possession of marijuana, amphetamines and cash from the sale of the drugs. Felony warrants were issued and the subjects were arrested.

CO Chad Foerster was patrolling the Saginaw Bay when he contacted two anglers who were proud to show off their limit of 10 walleye. Unfortunately for them, they forgot to measure their walleye and had to go back on the ice to do so.

DISTRICT 7
CO Mike Mihar responded to a complaint of a subject attempting to swag walleye at the Agawam Dam along the Kalamazoo River. CO Mihar conducted an undercover capture, fishing alongside the subject and witnessed the violation. The subject was ticketed and it was discovered that he had 13 violations prior to the violations, with many related to snagging and illegal taking of walleye. The subject’s equipment was also confiscated.

CO Cary Foster observed an ice angler on Morrison Lake who appeared to have panfish on the ice near the holes he was fishing. CO Foster moved to another vantage point to monitor the angler’s activity and eventually contacted him as he left the lake. The angler initially advised CO Foster that he had no fish and only a lantern in his bucket. When questioned on the second bucket he responded that he might have a few fish. A check of his two buckets revealed 51 bluegills, 26 fish over his limit. As CO Foster took enforcement action, a second citizen walking by was determined to know if there was any way they could assist the angler by posting bond as he is the most law-abiding citizen they know.

CO Kris Bader observed an angler walking on the ice with a full-size fishing pole. The angler sent a few casts into the open water while walking towards the edge of the ice, within three feet of the open water. Just as CO Bader was thinking “this guy is going to go through the ice,” he did. As CO Bader got his rescue disk from the back of the truck, the angler was able to touch the bottom (the water was only three to four feet deep) and get himself back onto the ice. When the angler made dry land, CO Bader asked for a fishing license. He didn’t have his fishing license or ID on his person. The angler supplied a social security number to CO Bader while his girlfriend verified the alias. The alias did not have a fishing license, or an ID. When CO Bader obtained his real name, the angler had three outstanding warrants. He did have a fishing license through proper action was taken.

After observing anglers at a local dam, CO Rich Nickols investigated two subjects fishing from the entrance to a fish ladder. One of the subjects had tossed his fishing pole into the river while the other was too low and the pole could be observed sticking out of the water. The subject admitted to fishing and said he usually fished with his license every year on his birthday but he didn’t get one for the current season because he did not have a valid ID. The subject also had a warrant for failing to appear on a nuisance charge. The police was retrieved from the river and the subject was issued a ticket for fishing without a license and given a notice to appear for the warrant.

CO Jeff Goss investigated a suspected illegal deer case found at a taxidermist. The subject had purchased two archery deer tags during the 2012 deer season. It was discovered the subject had filled his original archery tag early in the season, and was then left with only an antlerless tag. While the subject was early November, the biggest buck of his life “forced” him to make an unethical and expensive decision. Unfortunately the subject made the wrong decision and shot the buck without a valid license. After two citizens contacted the conservation officer to chase another archery tag and then took the deer to a taxidermist. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 8
CO Kris Bader observed an angler fish in the open water while walking towards the edge of the ice, within three feet of the open water. Just as CO Bader was thinking “this guy is going to go through the ice,” he did. As CO Bader got his rescue disk from the back of the truck, the angler was able to touch the bottom (the water was only three to four feet deep) and get himself back onto the ice. When the angler made dry land, CO Bader asked for a fishing license. He didn’t have his fishing license or ID on his person. The angler supplied a social security number to CO Bader while his girlfriend verified the alias. The alias did not have a fishing license, or an ID. When CO Bader obtained his real name, the angler had three outstanding warrants. He did have a fishing license through proper action was taken.

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DISTRICT 9
A lengthy investigation revealed the suspect at their residence, she obtained his real name, the angler had three outstanding warrants. He did have a fishing license through proper action was taken.

After observing anglers at a local dam, CO Rich Nickols investigated two subjects fishing from the entrance to a fish ladder. One of the subjects had tossed his fishing pole into the river while the other was too low and the pole could be observed sticking out of the water. The subject admitted to fishing and said he usually fished with his license every year on his birthday but he didn’t get one for the current season because he did not have a valid ID. The subject also had a warrant for failing to appear on a nuisance charge. The police was retrieved from the river and the subject was issued a ticket for fishing without a license and given a notice to appear for the warrant.

CO Jeff Goss investigated a suspected illegal deer case found at a taxidermist. The subject had purchased two archery deer tags during the 2012 deer season. It was discovered the subject had filled his original archery tag early in the season, and was then left with only an antlerless tag. While the subject was early November, the biggest buck of his life “forced” him to make an unethical and expensive decision. Unfortunately the subject made the wrong decision and shot the buck without a valid license. After two citizens contacted the conservation officer to chase another archery tag and then took the deer to a taxidermist. Enforcement action was taken.

A NOTE TO READERS:
These are brief excerpts from the CO’s bi-monthly field reports. To conserve space, we have excluded the more routine activities in favor of what we think are the most unusual and interesting.

If you want a more complete log than we are able to provide, you can find complete coverage of them under the Law Enforcement tab on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website.

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Boosting northern Michigan wild turkeys

Allegan County was ground zero when Michigan began rebuilding its wild turkey population in the 1950s.

Birds were shipped from Pennsylvania and released there, but as the population grew and expanded, a possibility of transplanting birds to other areas began to look promising.

“A long time ago, it was thought that turkeys needed 10,000 acres of contiguous woods with oak trees as large as you could put your arms around,” said Al Stewart, upland game bird program leader with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “At that time—short of the Allegan area—northern Michigan showed a lot of promise.”

Areas such as Baldwin and Mio were selected as potential release sites, he said, because they had big blocks of lands with mast-bearing trees.

“When we put birds up there in the sixties, those were the sites that were considered the best,” Stewart said. “Over time, we realized that turkeys were more resilient to habitat types such as we had in southern Michigan—more open lands.”

It wasn’t until the 1980s that the DNR decided to expand turkey populations across the state, he said.

Today, southern Michigan is where the bulk of Michigan’s wild turkey population lives. Birds farther north have not fared as well, due to poor nesting success and other factors.

Over the past two years, the DNR has been on a mission to rebuild the northern wild turkey populations, trapping and transferring birds from thriving southern Michigan populations to the northern areas of the state.

“There are still good numbers of birds in northern Michigan,” Stewart said, “but from our hunter survey information we’ve seen some decline in hunter satisfaction and hunter success.”

DNR staff in the Barry State Game Area recently moved 25 birds—22 hens and three toms—onto the Baldwin area. Another six, trapped within the city limits of Norton Shores, were also relocated.

Stewart said that, since the releases were primarily hens, they hope they’ll add to a bit of genetic diversity to the turkey populations. Combined with crabapple plantings and additional habitat improvements in the areas where the turkeys were released, he’s optimistic that the transplanted birds will thrive.

Turkeys are most easily trapped during the winter, he said, when they are in big flocks and attracted to corn bait. The latest trapping was done in March, when it was still winter, but there was less snow up north and more favorable ground conditions.

With spring already here, it is unlikely that more turkeys will be transplanted this year, according to the DNR, but as long as there are robust populations in southern Michigan and landowners are willing to share them, the opportunity exists to continue relocating birds.

—Michigan DNR

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