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License fee legislation passes state Senate

Legislation that streamlines Michigan's hunting/fishing license fee structure—and provides approximately $19 million in funding for fish/wildlife habitat improvement and more conservation officers on the ground—has been approved by the state Senate on a vote of 24-14.

Despite some wrangling, House Bill 4668 passed with bipartisan support after an amendment was added to provide more transparency around how state fisheries officials will spend money from the fee increases. It then went back to the House, where it was expected to get final approval and be sent to Gov. Rick Snyder for signature.

On the assumption that the legislation would eventually pass, groups were built to reflect the increased revenue, restore funding to the Office of the Great Lakes and pay for 40 additional conservation officers across the state.

Some hunters and anglers have opposed the move to raise fees—the first significant increase in hunting and fishing license fees since 1997—and several have expressed their disappointment in online comments attached to Internet news stories.

“Sure, let’s drive hunter numbers even lower by raising prices,” said one. “Raise prices and lose more hunters and fishermen,” agreed another. “This won’t solve anything but more money being dumped into a system that will keep leaking right through it.”

A broad range of conservation and environmental groups, however—such as the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV)—have vocally supported the change.

“We always say that hunters, anglers and trappers fund conservation in Michigan, and we feel that we will expect to see greater returns on that investment,” the MUCC said in its analysis of the bill.

The MLCV called the vote “an important victory” for Michigan’s natural resources, while some critics say it just amounts to another tax increase.

MUCC officials said they supported the fee proposal because Michigan included these programs in the Natural Resources (DNR) “is being transparent with how they’ll invest it. “About $7 million is going to fish and wildlife habitat projects, $4.5 million for additional conservation officers, and more for fish hatchery maintenance, angler outreach and improving the license fee delivery system,” according to the MUCC.

DNR LAWSUIT: A legal hearing in a lawsuit filed by a Barry County citizen’s group against the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been postponed until July 26. Originally set for July 2, DNR attorneys are asking that the lawsuit be dismissed because they say it is based on “hypothetical future events” that may not even occur.

LAKE MICHIGAN SALMON: Anglers aren’t sure what to expect of the Lake Michigan salmon fishery this year. State and federal officials are reportedly worried about the forage base. The number of alewives and other prey fish are at an all-time low, they said.

BEAR HUNT LOTTERY: Results of the 2013 bear hunt license drawing have been posted at www.michigan.gov/hundrawings. A total of 7,906 bear licenses were available during the application period (May 1-1 June). An additional 267 leftover bear licenses are available in the Bergland Management Unit (Sept. 25-Oct. 26) and will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

ELK HUNT LOTTERY: Results of the 2013 elk hunting license drawing have also been posted at www.michigan.gov/huntdrawings. Two elk seasons will be held. The first will run from Aug. 27-30, Sept. 13-16 and Sept. 27-30. The second season will run from Dec. 7-15. An additional season may be held Jan. 15-19, if the Department of Natural Resources determines the harvest insufficient to meet management goals. A total of 60 any-elic and 140 antlerless-only elk licenses have been issued through the drawing.

GREAT LAKES DIVERSITY: Chicago’s John C. Shedd Aquar- ium has launched an interactive exhibit dedicated to Great Lakes wildlife and conservation. The exhibit—At Home on the Great Lakes—features more than 60 Great Lakes species that connect visitors to the living world through hands-on and up-close encounters with native and invasive animals. Helping people get to know and appreciate what is living world through hands-on and up-close encounters with native and invasive animals. Helping people get to know and appreciate what is living world through hands-on and up-close encounters with native and invasive animals.

FARM BILL: The U.S. Senate included key conservation provisions in its version of a new farm bill, linking conservation practices to crop insurance premium subsidies—rather than direct payments—and endorsing a sod-saver program to conserve native prairies. From there, the bill goes to the U.S. House, which had not included these programs in its version of the legislation. Conservationists were urging U.S. re- presentatives to support the Thompson-Fortenberry Act to include compliance with such conservation practices.

GREAT LAKES UNITED: One of the region’s strongest birational advocates for protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for the past 30 years ceased operations in both Canada and the United States July 1. Financial challenges were cited as one of the reasons.

SLEEPING BEAR WILDERNESS: For the second time, the U.S. Senate in June passed a bill to designate about 32, 557 acres of the 71,199-acre Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore as wilderness under the National Wilderness Preservation System. The bill, which this writing had not passed the U.S. House of Representatives, is the re- sult of 13 years of planning and discussions to update the park’s general management plan. The Senate passed a similar bill last year, but the House did not vote on it.

PETROLEUM COKE: U.S Rep. Gary Peters (D-Michigan) has re- portedly introduced legislation that demands answers and holds re- sponsible parties accountable for the petroleum coke piles near the banks of the Detroit River in southeastern Michigan. Environmentalists say that the three-story-high piles pose a threat to Michigan’s reputation as a “clean water leader” and are urging that something be done to clean up the waste and convert it into “something more productive.” The issue has sparked more calls for renewable energy alternatives to the continued pumping of oil sands by petroleum companies.

REST IN PEACE: C. Troy Yoder, retired director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ Region 2, died June 21 at the age of 93. There will be more about Mr. Yoder in the next North Woods Call.

Learn to fish

You can learn the basics of fishing this year at one of the “Hook, Line & Sinker” pro- grams being offered at more than 30 Michigan state parks and hatcheries.

• Knot-tying, casting, select- ing and using bait, and remov- ing the fish from the hook are among the topics covered.

• To find a program near you, visit Michigan.gov/lineandsinker. It’s free, but a Recreation Passport is required for each vehicle entering the park.

Snowshoe Priest

Roman Catholic Bishop Frederic Baraga (1797-1868) lived among the Native American tribes in the Upper Great Lakes region more than 150 years ago. Affectionately known as “Snowshoe Priest,” “Shepherd of the Wilderness” and “Apostle of the Lake- lands,” he is said to be buried in a snowshod 700 arduous miles be- tween villages each winter through frozen wilderness—sleeping without even a tent. Born in Slovenia and drawn to missionary work in North America, Baraga learned Indian languages and un- derstood the native’s desire to keep both their culture and their land. He helped protect them from being forced to relocate, and published a dictionary and a grammar book of the Ojibwa lan- guage still in use today. A 60-foot-high shrine (left)—near U.S. 41 between L’Anse and Baraga in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula— was erected in 1972. The four-ton brass figure by Lake Linden sculptor Jack Anderson and Arthur Chupat Jr. is made with copper from the White Pine mine. The snowshoes are 26 feet long and the cross is seven feet high.

Obama urges climate change action

President Obama added fuel to the already contentious climate change debate last week by ordering new curbs on carbon emissions from existing coal-fired power plants.

He also said he would not approve the Keystone XL pipeline unless it is shown that it won’t significantly increase carbon emissions.

Coupled with new efficiency standards for vehicles, appliances and buildings, the push is aimed at helping reduce carbon emissions by 17 billion metric tons over 17 years, and commits to cutting hydrofluoro- carbons emitted by refrigerators and air conditioning units. Permits will also be issued for wind & solar energy projects on public land.

That may be good news for environmentalists seeking for climate change action, but not for those who worry about jobs and aren’t convinced that man-made climate change is actually occurring. Obama also signaled he will sidestep the legislative branch as much as possible via executive orders and bureaucratic regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency will be asked to come up with a detailed draft proposal by June 2014 and a final version in 2015.

Summer break: A time to recharge

At the considerable risk of appearing like we take more vacations than Congress, it’s time for our annual summer pause to recharge the batteries.

But that doesn’t mean we’ll be lounging on the porch with a tall straw, sipping on a cool glass of sarsparilla. There’s much to do to prepare for The Call’s second year of operation since the publication was launched last September.

Among other things, we have some important marketing details on which to focus, including the design and printing of subscription renewal cards (Yes, it will be that time soon for many of you and we hope you will see fit to continue with us for another year).

We also want to consider whether to update the publication’s over- all design, without tampering too much with the elements so many of you have always enjoyed about The Call.

Oh, maybe we’ll get a little more needed outdoor exercise.

So, our next issue will be dated early August. See you soon!
Youth Conservation Council holds its first meeting
Members of the Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Commission’s (NRC) Youth Advisory Council met for the first time in June—one of several face-to-face and web-based meetings they will participate in this year.

The meeting at the Kettunen Conference Center in Traverse City was described as “en-thralling” and generated several new ideas for getting more youth involved in hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation activities, according to David Hustem, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Youth Council advisor.

“Since this was the first meeting of this group, team-building was an important aspect,” Hustem said. “There were plenty of activities that allowed the kids to interact with one another, learn some new skills and be familiar with their fellow council members.”

Among other things, participants learned more about the NRC and the DNR, and the national trend of declining participation in outdoor recreation activities.

“Now that they’ve begun to lay the groundwork, council members will spend the next several months working on developing their ideas into feasible, youth-centered programs and activities that can be implemented through the DNR,” Hustem said.

Council members of the Youth Council range in age from 14 to 18 and come from all parts of the state.
A report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) says that in 2012 the Great Lakes region had the highest percentage of water monitoring samples that exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) health standards.

Approximately one in every 10 samples taken in the region last year was more contaminated than the EPA’s standards allowed, the report says.

Monitoring Forests

Entire hillsides have been defoliated by the exotic, invasive gypsy moth, as illustrated by this scene in Barry County, Michigan. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forest health specialists have been monitoring these events and taking management actions, as appropriate, to conserve the resource. Here, DNR forest health specialist Roger Mech and DNR pilot Bill Green (inset) take aerial photographs to record and assess the severity of such impacts.

Checking the health of forest resources by air and land

NATIVE INSECTS AND DISEASES

In a woodlot, promote trees and long-range plans to keep Michigan’s forest ecosystems functioning sustainably and productively.

“We spend time flying over the forests looking for problems like defoliation, discolored leaves and tree mortality,” said DNR forest health specialist Dr. Robert Heyd. “We spend time evaluating the seriousness of problems detected from the air, or reported by forest resource managers and the public.”

Mostly what we see as we fly Michigan’s 20 million acres of forest land are healthy forests. Occasionally we have widespread outbreaks like the forest tent caterpillar and gypsy moth defoliation of hardwoods in the northern Lower Peninsula, which lasted for several years and ended in 2011.

Different tree species have different site requirements (e.g., soil, moisture and climate). Trees growing on suitable sites are healthier and less likely affected by native pests.

“When our forests are stressed by events like extended droughts, invertebrates causing root rots of hardwoods by bark beetles. Healthy pines produce pitch, such that when bark beetles try to chew through the bark they are ‘pitched-out.’ When pines are weakened, they produce less pitch, allowing bark beetles to successfully attack the tree. In hardwoods, healthy trees produce chemicals and stored energy such that root rots cannot invade roots. But stressed trees have less energy for such chemicals and are successfully invaded. It takes a few years of normal rainfall for trees to completely recover energy reserves and corresponding defenses to pest attacks. “Adding an inch of water to the rooting zone of yard trees during periods of drought is the single most important way to keep the trees healthy and resistant to native pests,” said Roger Mech, DNR forest health specialist.

“Of course, exotic pests like oak wilt and the emerald ash borer attack both healthy and weakened trees.”

The DNR also recommends keeping the following in mind: If planting a tree or thinning a woodland, it is important to match selected tree species to the planting site. Be sure that the tree selected actually grows in that area and that it is matched to the site in terms of soil and the availability of sunlight.

In a woodland, promote trees that are best adapted to the site, are growing vigorously and have no serious pest problems.

It is always best to seek the assistance of a consulting forester when managing a woodland.

In addition to native pests, people continue to import exotic insects, diseases and plants—some of which greatly influence the function and appearance of forest ecosystems.

When not surveying Michigan’s forests or evaluating the impact of a current pest situation, DNR forest health specialists work with state, federal, private and industrial resource managers. The DNR’s Forest Health program monitors the long-term health of Michigan’s forest resource by using a network of permanently established survey plots that are examined over time. This helps to detect more subtle changes in forest condition, growth and productivity.

Monitoring the health of Michigan’s forest resources has been and continues to be greatly enhanced by advances in computeraided data analysis, navigation, and image-processing technologies.

“All of these tools help us meet the Forest Health program goal of keeping forest ecosystems functioning well over long periods of time to provide resilience to short-term stress and adaptation to long-term change,” Heyd said. “The health and sustainability of Michigan’s forests are vital to ensuring this natural resource can be enjoyed and used by current and future generations.”

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/foresthealth.

—Michigan DNR report

Report: How clean are Great Lakes beaches?

Open houses will be held in Gladwin and Harrison to receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2015 in the Gladwin Management Unit.

Included are Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella and Midland counties, and the southern part of Iosco County.

The meetings will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. July 16 at the Gladwin Field Office, 801 N. Silverleaf Street in Gladwin and 3 to 5 p.m. July 17 at the Redding Township Hall, 8931 W. Temple Drive in Harrison.

The Department of Natural Resources will complete the formal review of plans for those areas at 9 a.m. July 31 at the Harrison Field Office, 2115 Sullivan Drive.

Partners in Conservation Award

Kalamazoo-area native John Woollam was honored with a Partners in Conservation Award at the Natural Resources Commission meeting in June.

Woollam, who has been active in land conservation and preservation since he was in high school, is an electrical engineering professor at the University of Nebraska.

He was nominated for the award by the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Forest Resources Division for contributing to the matching funds that enabled the DNR to purchase the 3,810-acre Crisp Point tract in Chippewa and Luce counties, which includes two miles of Lake Superior shoreline.

Without Woollam’s gift, the state would not have had the funds to acquire and protect that tract of land, which—in addition to the lakeshore—includes habitat for threatened and endangered species, and both game and non-game species. It also contributes more than 3,600 acres of previously unmanaged timber to the market,” said Kerry Weber, DNR forest land specialist.

Woollam has worked with numerous conservancies and agencies to acquire and preserve land in Michigan for many years.

“I love the outdoors,” said Woollam, who attended the meeting with his wife Cyndi to accept the award. “I lived on a lake as a youngster and I loved it. That’s why I got involved.”

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Michigan conservation officers do much more than measure fish and check hunting licenses. They are fully empowered peace officers who find themselves in many situations that require a cool head and lifesaving abilities. Four such woodland heroes were recently honored by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission for quick-thinking emergency actions that averted what could have been fatal consequences. Jeffery Ginn’s powers of observation helped him prevent a death from asphyxiation in Newayo County; Troy VanGelderen’s knowledge of the swamps in Oceana County helped him find and rescue a helicopter crash victim; Richard Nickols’ fast response to a medical emergency led to a complete recovery for a heart-attack victim; and Jason Weickland’s determination resulted in his finding a lost senior citizen at 3 a.m. during an Upper Peninsula snowstorm.

More forest plan input is invited

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To his beloved companion, Babe—a large, gregarious, hairy,łowelding lumberjack who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion, Babe. Paul Bunyan—an overgrown, ax-wielding monster who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion Babe the Blue Ox. A cute couple, to be sure, and one that I confess posing alongside a time or two when I was a child traveling between state parks with my parents and sister.

Large, inanimate bears and moose are also popular among the prodigious artisans who build these towering monuments to the north woods. Throw in some antique automobiles, and perhaps some stuffed deer hunter mannequins, and you have a recipe for upper Michigan intrigue.

When back I worked in Kalkaska during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the village seemed to be rich in candidates for the yet-to-be-established Monster Statue Hall of Fame. Anyone who drove through the village in those days was greeted by—in search of fake Indian-bead and trinket from Asia to help them remember the occasion. A camera and capture the special moment for posterity. Giddy pose for Dad, who will peer through the viewfinder of his camera and capture the special moment for posterity. As for me, I generally turn away with a feeling of unimportant unimportance. Without a doubt, one of the most popular northern creations is Paul Bunyan—an overgrown, wielding lumberjack who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion Babe the Blue Ox. A cute couple, to be sure, and one that I confess posing alongside a time or two when I was a child traveling between state parks with my parents and sister.

The vacationers have been coming to northern Michigan along with the annual influx of tourists looking for recreation and quality outdoor experiences. The vacationers have been greeted, once again—as they have for many decades—for legions of gargantuan figures that stand solemnly guard over many state highways. These figures are easy to spot, posing rigidly along the highways while waiting to accept star billing in somebody’s photo album, home video, or slide show. Inevitably, a road-tripping family from Flint, Detroit, or Grand Rapids will come along, career off the backstop in their mini-van and slide to a dusty halt amidst flying gravel. The kids will jump from the car and race to strike a giddy pose for Dad, who will peer through the viewfinder of his camera and capture the special moment for posterity.

There’s nothing quite like the joy of acceleration and the feel of a hot engine now than they did a few years ago. In fact, it’s just the opposite. Money is being tossed into the wind under the guise of energy independence now than they did a few years ago. In fact, it’s just the opposite. Yet, we’ve often been walking along a quiet roadway contemplating pleasant thoughts when one or more of these vibrating vehicles comes sailing by, breathing fire from their lungs and belching like medieval dragons on steroids. If only we did more careful thinking about such schemes before implementing them, we might all be better off. Fighting the good fight—as he did with his trusty bike and the Good Rider outreach program.

Born to be ... loud?

What we don’t understand, is why so many motorcycles—particularly the “street bikes” are so raucous. We’re guessing here, but it seems like the billions of dollars spent on windmill farms and other ‘energy smart’ alternatives to fossil fuels might better be spent retrofiting individual energy companies go belly up due to poor management and lack of sustainable markets.

As for me, I generally turn away from bearded folk heroes to giantic—beings long associated with tall tales and yarns. There are often brightly colored and magnified many times by dimensionally challenged craftsmen. If I didn’t know better, I’d think an army of jumbo knickknacks had invaded the northern wilderness. Without a doubt, one of the most popular northern creations is Paul Bunyan—an overgrown, wielding lumberjack who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion Babe the Blue Ox. A cute couple, to be sure, and one that I confess posing alongside a time or two when I was a child traveling between state parks with my parents and sister.

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Fighting the good fight

We got a slightly uncomfortable feeling in our gut a few weeks ago while driving from Mackinac City to Glen Sheppard’s former home near Charlevoix. As we passed through Petoskey and saw all the relatively new development along U.S. 31 south of town, we recalled Shep’s efforts to protect the Lake Michigan shoreline from such landscape-galvanizing activities.

Yet, there it was, despite numerous angry news stories and pointed editorials. As usual, the money interests and pressures of modern civilization seem to have won out.

Shep had successes, of course, and we know we must keep fighting the good fight—as he did with his North Woods Call—but from time-to-time it can be a bit discouraging just the same.
A tree that gives (even when you don’t want to)

A few years ago, while I was walking down the road, I encountered a tree that had been freshly planted. It was a beautiful tree, and I couldn’t help but admire its beauty. But as the years went by, I noticed that the tree was growing at an alarming rate. I was concerned that it would become too large and block my view of the road.

So, I decided to contact the city and ask them to remove the tree. But they refused, saying that it was too late to do anything. I was really shocked by this decision, and I couldn’t believe that they would allow such a beautiful tree to be destroyed.

But then I thought about it, and I realized that I was being too selfish. I didn’t want to lose my view of the road, but the tree was giving me so much more. It was providing shade, it was a home for many birds, and it was a symbol of the beauty of nature.

So, I decided to stop and think about it. I realized that I was being too selfish, and I was not giving the tree enough credit. I decided to stop and enjoy the beauty of the tree, and I realized that it was giving me so much more.

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Viewpoint

Living next door to a “horizontal fracking” well

(Continued from Page 5)

A jet engine drone takes off, constantly, night and day.

The Semkes described parts of the drilling process that made the ground around their house vibrate, the windows rattle and pictures shake on the walls. People living a mile away were bothered by the noise. Water coming from the rig was mixed with black mud and their pump often spluttered air from a drop in water pressure. Clouds of silica sand dust drifted over when the wind blew, or when trucks carrying it passed by. A house and tree next to the drilling site were covered in fine silica sand dust. Silica sand dust, when inhaled, can cause silicosis, similar to black lung disease.

What alternatives do people have?

One neighbor stated that most people in Kalkaska County do not own their mineral rights and worried that, if gas drilling companies wanted to drill on his property, he would be unable to stop them. As he put it, if you have no mineral rights to your land, you have no rights. He has been told by real estate agents that his house is worth 40 percent less on his property, he would be unable to stop them.

Incidentally, operations in Michigan are setting national records for water use and contamination. Excess Well 3-25 HD1 used and contaminated over 20 million gallons of water to frack a single well. Even the Westernmost Well was permitted by the DEQ [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality] to remove 8.6 million gallons from the aquifer. According to the DEQ’s Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool, 900 gallons per minute could be removed from the aquifer. However, after drilling eight other wells, they still didn’t have enough, so they sent trucks into Kalkaska to take water from the municipal well. (Information brought to public atten- tion through website www.respectmyplanet.org).

Highly industrialized fracking operations change the character and quality of life in our rural communi- ties. Most of the fracking in Michigan, how- ever, is occurring on state land. The DNR leaves state land at a cost of little as $30 per acre, and they give away the water.

Thousands of acres of our state forests are being cleared to build well pads, roads and pipelines. Noise, air pollution, massive water withdrawals which affect the vitality of our rivers and lakes, and damage wetlands and wildlife — will have a pro- found effect on our “Pure Michigan” tourist econ- omy. This damage, like the damage to rural communities, cannot be undone.

We need to end federal and state environmental exemptions and subsidies to gas and oil companies. There are alternatives to fossil fuels. By utilizing and developing them, we can save our environment, our health and our economy.

Anne Zakowski of Charlevoix is a board member of Don’t Frack Michigan, a group pushing for a ban on horizontal fracking in the state.

Michigan Loons: Northern symbol

The common loon has become the true symbol of the north woods. Who hasn’t been inspired by their night calls. A series of wails, howls, moans and yodels are given and are not soon forgotten. Many a novice camper has felt an attack of wolves was eminent.

There is no better feeling of being in the wild than sitting around a campfire and listening to the calls and songs of the loon, resonating against the forest. I maintain if you get a kid to experience this and take him or her fishing, you will have an outdoors person for life.

Historically, loons nested across Michigan, but as the human popu- lation grew and human disturbance along with it, the population receded north. Today, nesting occurs primarily in the upper peninsula and upper lower peninsula.

In 1987, the common loon was designated as a threatened species and a recovery plan was developed. It was determined at that time that only about 200 pairs were nesting in Michigan. The Michigan Loon Preservation Association was formed to educate [citizens] and help the loon population. The population has been neither increasing nor decreasing due to these educational efforts and allowing loons to nest without human intervention. Some attempts were made to create loon nest platforms, with limited success.

Common loons are very susceptible to human disturbance at nests, because of their inability to travel far on land — their legs being set so far back to make them remarkable swimmers. When people get too close, they often abandon the nests. Some evidence indicates that they have become more tolerant of human presence, but it is still unwise to ap- proach a nesting site. It is estimated that somewhere between 500 to more than 700 pairs of loons nest in Michigan, but many lakes still do not have repairs — hopefully meaning that this symbol of the north may yet expand.

The nest is very close to shore, often in a boggy mat or peninsula. If successful, the “mound” built up of vegetation and mud may be used to return to 30 days. Being precocial, the black chicks are able to swim within a day after hatching and drying. The first few weeks, they are attended diligently by both adults, often riding on their backs.

Much like sandhill cranes, sibling rivalry can ensue. This is the stronger (often first-hatched) chick tries to eliminate the second. This may go on for a day or two, but often the parents separate them and both will live.

Both parents, being good fishers, will feed the chicks. The adults eat any aquatic creatures, such as frogs, crayfish, leaches and insects, but the main diet is fish. Loons are great swimmers, and can dive to ex- tremely depths and catch most any fish. Some say they can dive several hundred feet and stay under for as long as five minutes. Most dives, however, are only about a minute in length.

Most bird species have hollow bones, but the loon does not. It has solid bones, which aids in its ability to dive. In about six- to eight-weeks, the chicks will be almost as large as the adults and will migrate with the parents to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Coast.

The young may not return the following spring, as it takes them two years to three years to be able to breed. Although we are increasing the num- ber of nesting common loons, we must be diligent about their nesting areas.

During migration, we may see thousands of loons migrating along the Great Lakes, as many nest further north into Canada. Today the common loon still faces obstacles, which include botulism, lead and pesticides, as well as commercial nets. Some of these, such as the netting, have been researched, but much progress is needed.

Richard Schinkel is a retired naturalist, educator and businessman living in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Letter to the Editor

An insider’s look at Michigan conservation history

Dear Mike,

Thank you so much for your very nice letter of several months ago. I hope The Call has had a suc- cessful start. You’ve been taken on a big challenge. I have been looking in my files, hoping to find something that would be of interest to you and your readers, but my ability to read and find good mate- rial is limited.

A history of the passage of the Michigan Envi- ronmental Protection Act and the Inland Lakes and Streams Act of long ago is something that might possibly interest you.

Dr. John Tanton asked me to write it sometime ago and he published many coies. I have only a few left, but I will go ahead and send it to you in case you are lacking material some time. Very best wishes,

Joan L. Wolfe

Frankfort, Michigan

Thanks for the history lesson, Joan. I will di- gest the report and perhaps include a summary in The Call.

— Mike
“Shiny objects,” turtle eggs, an X-large NFL player & a squatters’ camp

**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**
CO Marvin Gerlach, while on morning patrol on the Greenery waters of Lake Michigan, contacted a 52-foot cabin cruiser that was not displaying a registration device. The owner stated that he did not have to register his vessel because it was federally documented. The owner was informed that he needed to register his vessel because it was not within the boundaries of an “SFC” using the ORVs and a chain. The subjects were unsuccessful in their law enforcement attempt and the ORVs were interrupted by a group of campers. CO Gerlach is following up on information provided by the witnesses.

**CO Jason Wicklund** responded to a call by a concerned citizen when he observed two individuals near a non-motorized fishing camp shooting “hundreds” of rounds of ammunition. When the CO arrived at the scene he found several individuals sitting around a campfire. The CO also observed an AK-47, AR-15, shotgun and a handgun nearby. All of the individuals were sitting near the campfire and were at a shooting range, as well as an old campfire. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**
CO Duane Budreau and Sgt. Greg Drogoswki followed up on a complaint of a subject burning tires, a TV, and plastic drawers from a refrigerator. A ticket was issued for unlawful disposal of solid waste.

Sgt. Greg Drogoswki investigated a complaint of a large collection of diamond, gold, and silver jewelry, that he had seen some “shiny” items at the beach. The items were placed on a non-motorized fishing camp. Enforced action was taken.

**DISTRICT 4 (Cabin)**
CO Bill Webster contacted the operator of an ORV parked in a closed area, who was cutting trees with an ORV and a trail. The CO decided to take a look over the ORV, and the ORV was shooting a paint gun and a handgun nearby. The CO Webster explained why the trees were being cut and ticketed him for his violations.

**DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)**
CO Jon Warner assisted local and federal agencies in trying to locate a subject who was missing in the Au Sable River. The youth was recovered from the river, but unfortunately was not able to be revived. While checking anglers during “Free Fishing Weekend,” CO Steve Lockwood came across a subject who was fishing in Gladwin County. During the initial contact, the angler complained about how slow the fishing was, but added that it didn’t matter because he didn’t eat fish. During the conversation, CO Lockwood observed a stringer with at least two fish in it that he thought might be fish of interest. Enforcement action was taken.

**CO Warren MacNeill** was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department by a person with apprehension about communicating a complaint from a subject who had promised to kill the next deputy who attempted to access him, CO MacNeill, along with a U.S. Forest Service officer, was able to make contact with the subject and quickly apprehended him.

**DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)**
While on marine patrol, CO Joshua Wright found a muskrat trap that was set up from the previous trapping season. He followed up with the owner of the trap and issued him a ticket for trapping out of season. CO Wright had prior contact with the subject and has given him warnings on the same issue.

**CO Joshua Wright** was on patrol when he observed a motorcycle with an expired plate operating on a two-track. The operator did not possess a motorcycle endorsement and had no insurance for the bike. The female passenger had multiple outstanding warrants for her arrest. The subject was lodged in the Mason County Jail with enforcement action taken on the operator.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)**
CO BJ Goullette was patrolling southern Muskegon County when he observed a large plume of black smoke coming from behind a residence. Upon checking behind the residence, he found a subject burning tires and wood. The subject stated he believed the wood contained termites and was burning it up to kill the insects. The subject stated he was told by a friend he could legally use one tire to start the fire. CO Goullette then asked why there were at least two tires in the fire. CO Goullette also informed the subject that the wood was not termite, but rather a harmless beetle larva. The subject was ticketed for burning tires.

**DISTRICT 8 (Roscommon)**
CO Steve Lockwood assisted a marine patrol on the Green Bay waters of Lake Michigan, concerning six individuals who were at a beaten down trail, and would not offer for a ride to his dock. He attempted to ride with the male subject got on fine, but when the male subject got on board it. CO Bader pulled both subjects onto his boat. The female subject got on fine, but were unable to board onto the boat. CO Bader pulled both subjects onto his boat. The male subject got on fine, but were unable to board onto the boat.

**CO Brian Brosky** assisted a marine patrol on ORVs attempted to pull a pay pipe out of the ground at a beach. The enforcement action was taken.

**CO Rebecca Hopkins** assisted local police with a complaint that two subjects were operating on a two-track. The operator of the two-track was not displaying a registration device, and some personal items were stolen. Evidence was found in the trash which led to a subject. An interview with the suspect produced an admission and a ticket for littering. A clean-up of the site is also being provided by the department.

**CO Angela Greenway** was on patrol using a Cam Am Commander UTV and was able to locate a Jeep that had breached a detectable orange line in the road. The vehicle traversed through a stream and was in the act of destroying a wetland area. CO Greenway contacted the operator and took enforcement action on the numerous ORV violations.

**CO Britney Bader** was on patrol when he observed a motorcycle with an expired plate operating on a two-track. The operator did not possess a motorcycle endorsement and had no insurance for the bike. The female passenger had multiple outstanding warrants for her arrest. The subject was lodged in the Mason County Jail with enforcement action taken on the operator.

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Visitors Only
This frankly worded sign at Da Yoopers Tourist Trap on U.S. 41 near Ishpeming, Michigan, pretty much sums up the attitudes of many Upper Peninsula residents when it comes to tourism, which long has been the lifeblood of the north country’s economy. The sign, of course, is intended to be humorous, but one can understand the sentiment as the population and development in many areas continues to grow.

Talkin’ Turkey
Ken Johnson of Kingsley displays a turkey he bagged in northern Osceola County. Johnson’s success challenges the common belief that you have to go to southern Michigan for the best turkey hunting. Like Johnson, others who spent time hunting in the northern half of the state reported being satisfied with their experiences. “We took three birds in three days,” said Tony Snyder of the National Wild Turkey Federation. “We had awesome hunting and saw lots of birds in the area.” The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and its conservation partners have worked to create better wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities. The efforts seem to be paying dividends.

—Michigan DNR photo

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Fishers return to Lower Peninsula
Despite regular reports of fishers in the Lower Peninsula, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has not been able to confirm them below the Mackinac Bridge—until now.

Recently, Melissa and Nate Sayers of Onaway were out for a walk in North Algis Township, Presque Isle County, when they saw something odd. “We heard the neighbor’s dog barking at (the) base of a tree and we saw a ball of fur up in the tree,” said Melissa Sayers. “We initially thought it was a bear cub. Then it moved and we realized it wasn’t a cub.”

It was a fisher. “This is very exciting,” said Jennifer Kleitch, a DNR wildlife biologist who investigated the location and confirmed that photos of the fisher were legitimate. “We treat every rare animal sighting seriously and we must have evidence we can follow up on and investigate to make a definite identification.”

Historically, fishers were found throughout both the Upper and Lower peninsulas, although by 1936 deforestation and unlimited harvest resulted in the species vanishing from Michigan. Beginning in 1961, fishers were reintroduced to the Upper Peninsula and by 1989 the U.P. population had recovered enough to establish a limited trapping season in the western U.P. “It’s great to see another native species return to parts of its former range,” said DNR furbearer specialist Adam Bump. “Fishers are another species in Michigan that benefit from habitat management and science-based harvest regulations.”

Fishers are typically found in large forests, with a preference for areas dominated by coniferous trees. They have a diverse diet, mostly comprised of small- to medium-sized mammals—such as mice and rabbits, along with dead deer. They consume a fair amount of fruits and nuts, as well, and often are noted or being one of the few species that successfully prey on porcupines, although porcupines typically make up only a small portion of their diet.

Those who believe they have seen a fisher in the northern Lower Peninsula and have physical documentation (pictures, locations of tracks, etc.) are asked to call the DNR at (989) 732-3541, ext. 5901.
—Michigan DNR report

Woodcock viewing area dedicated
Dr. George (Andy) Ammann, a former grouse and woodcock biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was remembered June 6 with the dedication of the Andy Ammann Memorial Woodcock Viewing Area at the Rose Lake wildlife research facility in Clinton and Shiawassee counties.

Ammann, who died at age 98 in 2008, was a well-respected member of the DNR staff and an avid outdoorsman. He pioneered the modern method of woodcock banding—using pointing dogs to locate nests, where the chicks are then banded—and wrote a book about it. Several family members attended the dedication and shared stories about Ammann’s passion for hunting and the out-of-doors.

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