**Naturally reproducing grass carp in Lake Erie basin**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been getting more reports of grass carp being captured by commercial fishermen in the Sandusky River—a tributary of Lake Erie. These fishermen have also reported seeing more of the species, as well as specimens of varying age and size, which DNR officials say indicates that there may be a naturally reproducing population in the lake. This assumption has been confirmed by a recently released U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) report.

The USGS has determined grass carp, a species of Asian carp, are naturally reproducing within the Lake Erie basin. While grass carp do not present the same ecological risk to Michigan’s waters as bighead or silver carp, they are a concern because they feed on aquatic plants and can significantly alter habitat requirements for native sports.

Grass carp previously captured in Michigan waters were thought to be the result of fish movements from other states where stocking of genetically altered fish for aquatic vegetation control is allowed. Those fish are sterilized through a heat-treating process when their eggs are developing, which may not be 100 percent effective.

Michigan has prohibited live possession of grass carp since the 1980s and continues to enforce the ban in public or private waters in other states with connections to the Great Lakes.

The DNR Fisheries Division has been actively working with commercial anglers in Lake Erie to remove and report any grass carp they capture in their nets. Fish that appear to be fertile are analyzed to determine reproductive development. The DNR is also involved with the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, which has representation from all of the Great Lakes states. The committee’s goal is to inform and carry out the Asian Carp Action Plan and to prevent the introduction of an Asian Carp.

In the meantime, calls to separate the Great Lakes from carp-infested waterways are increasing.

**New Michigan “fracking” rules proposed**

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has proposed new rules that would require more monitoring and reporting of high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

Regulators said they are responding to the public’s growing concern about the controversial oil and gas exploration process with the updated regulatory regulations.

“Michigan citizens want assurances that our regulatory program will be protective of the public health and the environment,” said DEQ Director Dan Wyant, “so we ... feel it’s important to update our hydraulic fracturing regulations to strengthen the environment.”

The new regulations—which could be in place within six to nine months—would require hydraulic fracturing operations using more than 100,000 gallons of fluid to use the state’s water withdrawal assessment tool, disclose chemicals used in fracturing fluid in an online registry and conduct baseline water quality testing.

DEQ policy already requires use of the water withdrawal assessment tool, which uses computer modeling to predict the impact a proposed water withdrawal would have on nearby water resource volumes. The proposed regulation would formalize existing department policy to deny permits which would cause an adverse impact to a nearby river or stream.

The rules would also require companies to publicly disclose chemicals used in hydrofracturing fluid on the website FracFocus. Chemical family names would have to be disclosed if the exact recipes are protected by trade secrets.

The proposed updates must first go through the regulatory process and get approval from the Michigan Legislature’s Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

DEQ officials also said they plan to make the agency’s list of permit applications more user-friendly.

**Graymont mine pushes ahead**

Graymont Inc. has asked the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for an OK to acquire 10,000 acres of state-managed forest in northern Mackinac County near the village of Rexton. The proposal includes approximately 7,820 acres for an underground mine, 1,780 acres for two separate surface mines and an option to purchase the balance for the potential development of a limestone processing plant.

It also includes the DNR retaining a state-managed surface easement on the underground mine portion (with the exception of 1,590 acres that would be transferred to other public use for mine support infrastructure) so that the property continues to be managed for timber resources and open for public recreational use.

“In the coming weeks,” the DNR will process the application and it will be reviewed following standard DNR policy and procedures,” said Kerry Weiber, the agency’s forest land administrator.

The application will be reviewed by the DNR’s Minerals Management Unit. Recommendations will be made to DNR Director Keith Creagh, who will make the final decision on the proposal and reveal it at a future meeting.

**Searchin’ for Powder**

Ski lodges across the northland are preparing for what they hope to be a successful winter sports season. This giant downhill run is year-round outside the entrance to Big Powderhorn Mountain near Bessemer in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Dubbed by promoters as “The Ski Capital of the Midwest,” the resort has been recognized by OnTheSnow.com as having the “best downhill terrain” in the region. The area reportedly gets an average of 17 feet of natural snowfall each year and offers great views of the western U.P.’s surrounding forest lands.

(Continued on Page 2)
North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

FISHERIES INFORMATION: The DNR is offering an online publication that highlights its work on inland lakes and streams. "Reel in Michigan's Fisheries" was developed for anglers and is shared quarterly. The October edition covers several inland lakes, including Mullett, Upper Bohman and Nawakwa. Current and past issues can be found at www.michigan.gov/fishing.

TRAPPER EDUCATION: Three trapper education field days will be held in southern Michigan Dec. 7-8. The events—at the Lloyd A. Lett, Upper Bushman and Nawakwa. Current and past issues can be obtained by calling the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The number of persons who hunt for deer and the number of persons who kill deer is of no major significance. What counts is that there is still a quiet, unspoiled forest for them to sit and walk in. A clean stream for them to rest beside. A chickadee in a cedar tree. An absence of oil well clang and stench. A place where Kirtland's warblers will continue to nest. They've all gone home—what few of them there are left. But in the other areas we visited, there were barely any hunters around to come out late and try their luck on guided trips. The DNR field men and local businessmen we talked to Saturday and Monday all said about the same thing. You could hardly tell it was deer season. One guy said he sat in the woods east of Gaylord four hours Sunday morning and heard only three shots.

DEQ proposes new rules on hydraulic fracturing

By Glen Sheppard

(Continued from Page 1)

By Glen Sheppard

If—as some environmentalists claim—deer business is the biggest, most important business the DNR is in, it is just about out of business. Deer business is important business—even if it isn’t as big a business as Dave Arnold thinks it is. It is but it is nowhere near the department’s, or the game division’s, most important business. The number of persons who hunt deer and the number of persons who kill deer is of no major significance. What counts is that there is still a quiet, unspoiled forest for them to sit and walk in. A clean stream for them to rest beside. A chickadee in a cedar tree. An absence of oil well clang and stench. A place where Kirtland’s warblers will continue to nest. They’ve all gone home—what few of them there are left. But in the other areas we visited, there were barely any hunters around to come out late and try their luck on guided trips. The DNR field men and local businessmen we talked to Saturday and Monday all said about the same thing. You could hardly tell it was deer season. One guy said he sat in the woods east of Gaylord four hours Sunday morning and heard only three shots.

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Stories in the sand: Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

No visit to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula is complete without a stop at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore between Munising and Grand Marais.

The sandstone cliffs hugging the southern shore of Lake Supe-
ri\nor for nearly 40 miles, tower 50 to 200 feet above the deep blue
\water. They reflect colors of ocher, tan and brown—sand
\wiched with layers of white and green—and are surrounded by
dep deep forests of emerald, black, and gold.

This fine palette of tones, shapes and textures testify to an
\rtistic force behind nature, which is
\hibited throughout the 72,000
\res of shoreline, cliffs, beaches and
dunes.

The formations are the result of
\ssive glaciers inching back-
\ard and forth across the land—scour-
ing and molding the volcanic and
\edimentary rock of previous eras
\o into rubble and slowly enlarging
\er river valleys into the wide basins
\at would become the Great Lakes.

The last glacier began its re-
treat about 11,000 years ago.
\ater. From this, a most vigorous
\ier and scattered rubble on upland
\ains and into crevasses. The
\ater scooped out basins and
\annels that harbor the wetlands
\ound in the park today.

Eventually, according to geol-
\ists, the weight of the glacier
\ lessen, and the land rose to ex-
\pose bedrock to lake erosion. It
\as this onslaught by the lake—
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Grass & other invasives

Now that naturally reproducing grass carp have been found in a Lake Erie tributary, we’re wondering whether we’re close to losing the battle to keep their biological cousins—bighead and silver carp—from making it into the Great Lakes. While we hope not, although these threatening invasives have also been documented in the Chicago Area Waterway System. Grass carp, which have reportedly been seen in the region on various occasion since the late 1970s, is a species of Asian carp that Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials says do not present the same ecological risk to the state’s waters. They are, however, concerned, because they feed on aquatic plants and can significantly alter habitat required by native fish. Because of this, we support the DNR’s efforts to address the grass carp issue via law enforcement, research and education. DNR conservation officers should be encouraged to continue inspecting wholesale fish and bait dealers to make sure live grass carp are not being imported into the state. And the agency’s Fish- ealth program—especially their continuing efforts to actively seek out such fish for euthanization and study—should not be cut back.

But that’s not all. We should ramp up discussions about the potential for separating carp-infested waterways from the Great Lakes and other bodies of water going on these days and immediately. Indications are that the Caribbean and southern U.S., Latin America, and the outdoors—especially during the winter months—might be where we want to be when we decide to go. And, if not, we’d better—at least for the purpose of planning—be ready to act quickly when conditions are right.

Perhaps by working together—and encouraging those in the trenches—we can keep these invaders out of Michigan waters and preserve the ecology and habitat for native species.

But that’s not all. While we’re looking at the grass carp, we should be looking at other invasive species. More and more, invasive species are altering the ecosystem of the Great Lakes and elsewhere. Invasive species are a natural phenomenon, and we are not going to be able to stop their advance. But we can do a better job of managing them.

New Kellogg Foundation CEO

Some Michigan conservationists have been asking whether the selection of a new president and chief executive officer at the Battle Creek-based W.K. Kellogg Foundation signals a return to more targeted grantmaking in the areas of agriculture and natural resources.

Don’t let your breath.

Although agriculture and natural resources are part of the Kellogg Foundation’s 83-year legacy of philanthropy, in recent years has shifted its focus more directly toward improving the lives of vulnerable children—which was also was one of Mr. Kellogg’s personal concerns—and away from some of the historically programmatic priorities.

It’s true that the cereal industry pioneer gave us the Kellogg Forest, Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Kellogg Biological Station and a series of outdoor education camps for youth. And the Kellogg Foundation has funded many noteworthy agricultural and natural resource stewardship efforts throughout the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Southern Africa.

But there’s much less of that going on these days and immediate indications are that the foundation will stay the course with its current program priorities.

Like many of you, we’d like to see more permanence in sustainable agriculture and the outdoors—especially from one of the nation’s premier private philanthropists.

We should have known that the rain wouldn’t stop.

All the weather reports said it wouldn’t. And the deep gray clouds that hung over much of Michigan for the last couple of days had already been spotting rain for the better part of 24 hours. But on we drove—a former college notebook on the sand-covered eastern shore of Lake Michigan to the northern forests of Roscommon County. We thought we were in for the precipitation if we traveled far enough—past the blanket of drizzle drizzling down to make us thankful we wound not welcome ponds beneath our sleeping bags.

It was more than we needed, but at least we were out of the nasty weather. My friend and I had been making these annual pilgrimages for at least 38 years now and many times have attempted to solve the world’s intransigent problems over late night fires. Our animated conversations have typically lasted well into the early morning hours—sometimes past daylight.

This was no exception, except that this time the influence of dancing flames and smoldering wood coals. That may where we went wrong. But the point I’m trying to seem to agree on potential solutions much more than we disagreed. But not so much anymore. My friend took a sharp left turn somewhere along the way and ended up in places I don’t fully appreciate. He would probably say the same about me, albeit our philosophical destinations vary.

A cold, rainy night in northern Michigan only seemed to exacerbate the differences in our viewpoints.

Still, I have great respect for this political opponent—a smart bubbling oven who could speak intelligently about many subjects. He is good-hearted and curious to others, too. And he has been a major encouraging and supporter over the years. Friends like that are hard to come by and something to be treasured. So it’s particularly troubling when we butt heads like a couple of stubborn bighead carp on a steep mountainside.

Our disagreement over domestic affairs has seldom been as contentious as it was during this outing. I blame a malfunctioning and extra-constitutional government for many of our nation’s political problems—all along with unapologetic, unbridled propaganda-spewing demagogues of all stripes. He says I’m such too much in the middle of my criticism and should give more respect for public office holders. Perhaps, but they must earn that respect.

My friend seems blissfully satisfied that we our elected and appointed public servants are honorable individuals with good intentions and sufficient integrity. He points to corporate and banking interests as the real culprits. And that’s not what this tale is really about. The point to be made, as we have often said, is that opposing viewpoints offer new perspectives and opportunities to learn.

Such debates certainly have made intellectuals gear up for the occasion and now I’m told that “a little socialism” is better than unbridled capitalism.

Hmm. Liberty seems to be an increasingly tough sell in the land of the free. But the underlying idea is well-taken. Not all business had been models of ethical behavior. Then again, neither had government officials.

Regardless—from what I’ve seen—government doesn’t create wealth. It only consumes and “re-distributes” it. Like it or not, free enterprise (within reasonable boundaries that protect the rights of individuals) is what pays the bills, feed the jobs and generates tax revenue.

And, despite a handful of so-called “robber barons” that may have been out of fashion throughout our history, most businesses and industries have made significant positive contributions to society. Among other things, they have provided employment, helped build personal security, funded schools and hospitals, and supported numerous other institutions and programs that benefit each of us. And they’re responsible for many of the recreation programs and public park lands that we now enjoy.

In Michigan alone, much of the state’s philanthropic history is tied to the land. Many of our state parks—including Pines, Brimley, P. Hoef and Warren Dunes—exist because of gifts from private philanthropists. The same is true for national parks and historic sites, such as Acadia in Maine, Grand Teton in Wyoming and Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee.

Private other donations have contributed significantly to park overviews, development, management and interpretation.

But there’s no need to debate these points here—near the end our Houghton Lake carp had ended and tempers cooled.

By the following morning, the rain had mostly stopped, so we traveled back across the state to the Northhouse Dunes Wilderness Area in the Manistee National Forest. There we finally pitched our tents, had a blazing campfire and engaged in a far more amiable conversation.

We’ll probably always argue the fine points of self-government, but hopefully we’ll each learn something from the other and embrace the truth where we find it.

While a little rain may fall on us from time-to-time, we can’t let the storms of life wash our common sense—or friendships—away.

Book Review

Edward Abbey: A Life

Ever since we read Desert Solitaire and The Monkey Wrench Gang and became inspired by the writings of Edward Abbey (1927-1989), his rebellious spirit and irreverent humor are always entertaining, even more so during the political and behavioral insights that leave us scratching our heads.

This 2001 biography from the University of Arizona Press offers a definitive look at the life and writings of “Cactus Ed,” who has been called the “Cape Hatteras of the American West.” Author Mike VanBuren, along with deep Caba- halaan separates fact from fiction—which is important for understanding the feisty author—and paints a much more human portrait of the man than we have seen elsewhere.

This book carefully examines the contradictions in Abbey’s persona, and correctly makes misperceptions are surrounding his life. It is at once an engaging and inspiring read.
**Viewpoint**

**Ban horizontal hydraulic fracturing now**

"If future generations are to re-member us with gratitude, rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not after we got through with it."

— Lyndon B. Johnson

Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council (NMEAC) has concluded that horizontal hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, should be banned. It poses a threat to the global environment and should be stopped immediately, everywhere.

All methods of mining the earth for fossil fuels cause damage to the environment. However, fracking is one of the most damaging of all. Currently, the state of Michigan endorses fracking “if it is done right.” But more regulations with other enforcement only pushes us further toward reliance on dirty fossil fuels that threaten our environment and human health.

Technologies such as fracking, tar sand processing and off-shore drilling are some of the more risky methods that have been de-vised to deceive us into believing that fossil fuels are inexhaustible. Fracking facilitates this deception.

A popular idea is that natural gas can serve as a bridge to cleaner sources of energy in the future. However, this ignores the economic reality that as long as natural gas and oil can be pro-due—-at a lower cost than clean energy, through exploitation of natural resources at no cost to the fracking industry—the incentive to develop clean energy is se-verely challenged.

How can we justify to future generations the squandering of millions of gallons of water for each well drilled when pure un-contaminated water is becoming ever more scarce? Currently, fracking is not even subject to EPA's clean water regulations. And fracking, by adding to current CO2 levels, actually contributes to one of the greatest problems facing the continued existence of life on our planet—global warm-ing. If fracking had to pay for the natural resources it damages, gas would not be cheap.

We cannot allow horizontal fracking to further devastate our vital natural resources. Water and air are held in common and be-long to all people. It is in our com-mon interest to vigilantly protect them.

To that end, NMEAC supports an immediate ban on fracking so that our world can move as swiftly as possible from depend-ence on dirty fossil fuels to a clean energy environment.

**EDITOR’S NOTE: This posi-tion paper was published by the Traverse City based Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, which is the Grand Traver-se region’s oldest grassroots environmental advocacy organi-zation.**

Viewpoint

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**Deer Camp Humor**

**In the last North Woods Call we featured Oz: Warhach’s amusing illustration “Michigan Hunting Lodge.” If you’ve traveled along U.S. 41 near Ishpeming, Michigan, you may have discovered another version at Da Yooper’s Tourist Trap (above). Those who have experienced an Upper Peninsula deer hunt with all its trappings will undoubtedly recognize some familiar activities and pastimes.**

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**Top 10 safe hunting tips from Michigan COs**

With Michigan’s firearm deer season now under way, conserva-tion officers at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are of-fering their top 10 tips for a safe outdoor experience.

"Hunting in Michigan is a time-honored activity, rich in tradition, when families and friends come together to enjoy our great out-doors," said Lt. Andrew Turner, who leads the DNR’s Recreation, Safety and Enforcement Section for the Law Enforcement Divi-sion. "Making your hunt a safe way to together to enjoy our great out-doors will be an important step in making sure we are able to pass along a love of hunting and the outdoors to future generations."**

1) Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
2) Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
3) Be certain of your target, and what’s beyond it, before firing.
4) Know the identifying features of the game you hunt. Make sure you have an adequate backstop; don’t shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.
5) Keep your finger outside the trigger guard and off the trigger until ready to shoot.
6) Don’t run, jump or climb with a loaded firearm. Unload a firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.
7) Avoid alcoholic beverages be-fore or during hunting. Also avoid mind- or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.
8) All firearm deer hunters on any land during daylight hunting hours must wear a hat, cap, vest, jacket, rainwear or other outer garment of "hunter orange," visi-ble from all sides. All hunters, in-cluding archers, must comply during gun season.
9) Be cautious. Hunter orange is legal, provided 50 percent of the surface area is solid hunter or-an. (Exceptions: waterfowl, crow and wild turkey hunters, and bow hunters for deer during bow season).
10) Always let someone know where you are hunting and when you plan on returning. This infor-mation helps conservation officers and others locate you if you get lost.

(Continued from Page 1)

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**The Wild Nearby**

By Tom Springer

Local man, 54, kills first turkey

I didn’t know that a 25-pound turkey could be so strong. But this one had about enough flap to carry us both airborne across the barnyard.

Even with his two wings held fast in a bear hug, I couldn’t scarcely contain his fury. He was three, four-inch claws tore a foot-long gash in my left side, and four-inch talons cracked the knuckles of my right hand. It was an advantage, I suppose, when I knew where I was going to the bloody funeral nailed on a fence post 75 feet away. The day of reckoning had come.

Of course, by modern standards, none of this carnage was neces-sary—let alone desirable.

Come November, vast flocks of stationary, indoor turkeys roost in supermarket freezers across the land. They’re conveniently dead.

They’ve been hygienically frozen, shrink-wraped into culinary sub-merged-at-a-lower-cost-than-clean-energy environment.

The status quo was unquestioned until last Thanksgiving, when we decided to make some gravy for the family dinner. It seemed simple enough. According to my mother-in-law—raised barefoot in a Blue Ridge Mountain holler where drinking water came from a spring—you just need some good “pan drippins” and flour to make gravy.

I’m not sure what you’d call the gray synthetic slime that oozed from our store-bought turkey. But it surely wasn’t drippings. At least not in the good-earth, backwoods Virginia sense of the word. Forget the gravy; this crud made the whole entrée suspect.

As for my songbird, “I told my brother that we are about to eat the turkey that this vile seepage just came from.”

We did eat it, but I vowed that next year would be different. So I convinced my brother, who already raises chickens for meat and eggs, that he should add a small flock of turkeys to his repertoire.

We bought 13 chicks—only one of which died over the summer. They were a hearty, traditional variety with bronze-black feathers that made them resemble wild turkeys. In fact, one September day my sis-ter-in-law looked out to see a wild flock gathered curiously outside the domestic turkeys’ pen. Not unlike visiting hour at the county jail.

By mid-October, the birds were ready to harvest. They’d lived out-side since June in a grassy paddock. They’d fattened themselves on milled grain, earthworms, grasshoppers and excess garden cucumbers.

They’d felt the cool breeze of morning, taken dust baths on sunny af-ternoons and roosted at night in a humble, but raccoon-proof coop made of particle board. We had kept our end of the bargain (although techni-cally my brother, Jeff, did all the work). Now it was time for them to keep theirs.

"Get em’ over here quick,” Jeff commanded, as big brothers are wont to do. “Don’t let him fight much.”

Then he told me, for the 86th time, about the day when he came home to find that a red-tailed hawk had preyed on two hens in his chicken yard. Ever the pragmatist, he’d butchered one of the flock’s birds and made soup out of it. It was famously inedible. The flesh was tough, tasteless and rubbery as an old tractor tire.

“It’s all the adenalin that does it,” he said. “Once they get scared, their muscles are piled full of adrenalin."

I folded the turkey’s wings and stuck it head first into the funnel. With the bird’s head and neck pulled firmly out the bottom, the butcher knife did its work with grim efficiency. The now brainless carcass flopped into the funnel in 20 seconds or so—a phantom attempt at escape —and then went forever still.

“I must’ve killed 1,000 chickens over the years, but I never used to get scared,” said Jeff, as a crimson spatula snatched up the bucket. “I do it quickly because I never want them to suffer.”

Compassion can show up in the strangest places. Even in a barn-yard abattoir. If that sounds hypocritical, consider how a wild turkey meets its end: either the slow agony of sickness and starvation, or an ambush by coyotes that probably aren’t morally opposed to eating a live animal one wing, or one drumstick, at a time.

We dipped the limp turkey into a cauldron of boiling water, plucked its feathers and then gutted it out. At the least it felt that truly natural —and pleasurable—to warm one’s stiff fingers inside a steaming body cavity.

On Thanksgiving, I’m hoping that our humane dispatch of the turkey will beget tender breast meat. And, instead of a factory-farm ole-sack, pinnies for gravy that will run like a golden river down mashed-potato mountains into a cranberry sea.

But I can’t wait until our local farm’s turkey farm a 100 yards down the road. The best food chains (like the best brothers) are closely linked, just as nature intended them to be.

Graymont mine proposal moves ahead

(Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting)

DNR officials said that ap-proval of the application will not necessarily mean approval of min-ing, because the proposal would then have to go through regulatory review by the Department of En-vIRONMENTAL QUALITY. Graymont will host a future public meeting on the proposal. Citizens can also comment at an upcoming NRC meeting and on-lineline at DNREngagementProposal. Comments@Michigan.gov.

Graymont was host to a public meeting in Nauvoo Nov. 12.
At least once each year, in early spring or late fall, the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area beckons me northward. The “Dunes” are actually 3,400-plus acres of blissfully undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline—sandy beaches, high and low dunes, reed beds, swamps, small creeks, and an inland lake. Ludington State Park, another beautiful shoreline gem, borders the south. The Lake Michigan Recreation Area is on the northern boundary, a unit with several rustic campground loops, all of which seem to be well taken care of, and aren’t overly used during the off season.

Native American family groups frequented the creek mouths during the non-winter months, probably for thousands of years, according to verbal histories and careful archaeological research. A way of life that had habitat and food sources supplied most of their needs. Easy canoe travel up and down the shoreline was also frequented the creek mouths during the off season. Our supply of firewood was due to the brush, and our supply of forage available is due to the distribution of forage available is due to the thrives in the area.

Some seed and food production will cause the movement of critters. We may have an influx of winter birds because of the local seed and food sources. The birds are more sophisticated and more acclimated to the changes in the environment. The black bear is a nocturnal animal, moving and apparently dull-witted. They didn’t leave when I stood to watch them. They didn’t leave when I stood to watch them. They didn’t leave when I stood to watch them.

I’ve backpacked deeper into the wilderness area on my own on a couple of occasions. If the weather’s clear, a tent isn’t needed. Relaxing in your sleep bag under the stars within a cathedral of trees is a treat to experience. It’s a little scary at first, but you quickly get used to the solitude, to the hooting of owls and the scurryings of small animals. Without any motorized vehicles to be heard, it’s like stepping back in time with the land’s first inhabitants. Turn your cell phone off—you really don’t need it. Save your batteries. On one solo expedition, I slept beside a bog with a rivulet running by. An amazing amount of wildlife showed up early the next morning for a drink. Had I been hunting, I wouldn’t have fired a shot. The scene was too rare and tranquil to disturb.

Another night expedition took me to a hilltop clearing where the night sky was dramatically vivid with stars. A unexpected windstorm brought off the hilltop just after midnight, and didn’t cease until dawn. Tree limbs were snapping and thudding to the ground, causing a case of nerves that night. I slept. I slept. I slept. I slept.

I awoke to the sight of two white-tailed does eying me curiously from the nearby tree line. They didn’t leave when I stood to watch them. The deer seem an overly frightened of the slow-moving and apparently dull-witted creature that had temporarily invaded their realm. They moved off quietly in the opposite direction.

The Nordhouse Dunes and surrounding lands are managed by us through federal and state governments—are precious. In some ways, they’re comparable to the larger and more famous Sleeping Bear Dunes to the north. I hope that we, as citizens, will continue to provide protection for these natural areas, and for so many others. The benefits to average yokels like me are beyond measurement.
people, equipment and dogs, had overloaded their vessel with CO Evink arrived on scene he to a call of an overturned vessel Further investigation revealed that there were any more weapons in the passenger seat of the truck. CO Papineau was able to provide a receipt from the blind. CO Panich responded to a report-all-poaching (RAP) complaint where a person had shot a deer with a bow and arrow without a license. The deer hunter stated that he was hunting from a ground blind when he stepped on a barbed wire fence. The subject had no idea what kind of ducks he was shooting at; he thought he was shooting at a waterfowl. The investigation is ongoing.

CO Ben Phillip contacted a group of waterfowl hunters. After educating the youth about hunting from a ground blind when he stepped on a barbed wire fence. The subject had no idea what kind of ducks he was shooting at; he thought he was shooting at a waterfowl. The investigation is ongoing.

CO Phil Crisp contacted two people piling fuel on a two-track in the AuTrain area. Upon making contact, CO Crisp observed an uncased crossbow on the passenger seat of the truck. The passenger stated that he had just purchased the crossbow and was able to provide a receipt from the local hardware store. The subject stated that he had purchased the crossbow for his son.

CO Jeff Ginn was contacted regarding a hunter harassment complaint. CO Ginn decided to pose as a hunter on a stand in the area where the harassment had been taking place. Within minutes of being on stand, the subject experienced harassment in the form of the neighboring property owner driving his vehicle along the property line waving and smiling at him. The subject was also observed transporting a loaded, uncased firearm, which was later discovered to be a .9 mm pistol. Upon contact with the suspect, CO Ginn was able to obtain a confession from the subject who explained he was trying to prevent the complainant from harvesting any deer. Enforcement action was taken.

CO John Hupsen received a hunter harassment complaint where a hunter had complained to the subject that his crossbow was not stationary, and shooting cormorants. The subject stated that the subject had no idea what kind of ducks he was shooting at; he thought he was shooting at a waterfowl. The investigation is ongoing.

CO John Hupsen received a hunter harassment complaint where a hunter had contacted the hunter who had his crossbow off the golf cart but was holding a beer in his hand. When asked for his hunting license, the hunter did not have one. Further investigation also revealed marijuana in the golf cart. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Chris Simpson investigated an anonymous complaint phoned into the RAP line reporting a subject had several deer in his possession and hunting illegally. CO Simpson went to the residence and conducted an interview of the suspect while examing the four illegally taken deer tags. During the interview, the suspect denied taking any deer yet this fall until CO Simpson presented him with the tags of his truck. Further discussion led to an admission of taking a doe and failing to tag the animal even though he possessed a valid license. Noting a smell of marijuana, CO Simpson continued to question the subject and eventually seized a lock box containing a quantity of marijuana. The suspect was ticketed for failing to immediately tag his deer. The investigation continues.

CO Kris Kiel received a complaint of a boat blind chasing after another boat. The boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck decoys. CO Kiel met with the complainant and observed an abandoned vehicle. The hunter was located deceased on the Rose Lake Wildlife Area. The hunter apparently fell about 20 feet while climbing down from his tree stand.

CO Scott Weinert worked a complaint of sub-jects hunting in an area closed to hunting. After a long foot patrol, the COs located several hunting points, along with trail cameras and a building. The individuals were big fans of the game and were certain locations, dates and times on the permits and that waterfowl season definitely isn’t the time to participate.
Black Lake’s juvenile sturgeon

Black Lake is unique among Michigan’s inland waters in one significant way: it is the only lake that maintains a remnant population of native lake sturgeon large enough to support a recreational fishery.

The February spearing season on Black Lake is one of Michigan’s most unusual (and festive) fishing opportunities. But just how large that sturgeon population is—and how much help it needs to continue to support that recreational fishery—was the focus of a recent three-week survey effort by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries Division this August.

In short, DNR fisheries managers wanted to figure out what’s going on with the sturgeon population in the 10,000-acre Lake Huron watershed lake. Fisheries biologists wanted to know how the thousands of sturgeon stocked in the lake over the course of the last dozen years had fared.

“We caught 281 unique lake sturgeon,” Baker said. “The majority of those were juvenile fish. The smallest fish we caught was around 22 inches; we guess that’s a three-year-old fish. The fish in that size range were stocked in 2010 or 2011. They’re really growing quite rapidly.”

Many of the juvenile fish had coded-wire tags in their snouts, but DNR staff cannot gather any data from those tags without removing them. Fish captured in the survey were also marked with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags so that, in the future, any fish handled can have that information collected electronically.

The largest fish caught in the survey measured 73 inches. The largest captured with a coded-wire tag was a 52-inch, Baker said.

Of the fish that measured 52 inches or less—252 total—about half had coded-wire tags. Still, the DNR will be able to tell whether the untagged fish came from hatchery stock or were naturally produced, Baker said.

It will take some time to analyze all the data, Baker said. Part of the assessment is designed to make sure the DNR isn’t stocking too many for the lake to support.

Overall, Baker said he was pleased with the survey. Two sturgeon died during the activity—there is almost always some mortality associated with gill nets—but the large mesh used allowed the lake’s smaller fish to escape unharmed.

Black Lake is part of the Cheboygan River Watershed (which includes Burt Lake and Mullet Lake), but is isolated from the rest of the watershed by the dam on the lower Black River. The dam, built around the turn of the 20th century, trapped the sturgeon that were upstream of the watershed by the dam on the lower Black River. The dam, built around the turn of the 20th century, trapped the sturgeon that were upstream of the watershed by the dam on the lower Black River. The dam, built around the turn of the 20th century, trapped the sturgeon that were upstream of the watershed by the dam on the lower Black River.

The DNR dispatched three crews of fisheries technicians to survey the lake with gill nets. Each crew fished a 1.25-foot gill net—600 feet of six-inch mesh and 600 feet of eight-inch mesh—for four days a week. They set nets, let them fish for an hour, and then returned to them to check and see what showed up.

“Up in Michigan,” Baker said, “the majority of the fish to escape unharmed.”

European frog-bit: DNR battles new invasive species

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Division is leading response efforts to control a new aquatic invasive plant—European frog-bit (Hydrocharis morsus-ranae). Until recently, this free-floating plant had only been reported in a few localized sites in the south-eastern Lower Peninsula. Through recent statewide monitoring efforts, this species has been detected in Saginaw Bay, Alpena and Munuscong Bay in Chippewa County.

This new invasive was detected as a result of an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) pilot project funded through a federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant. The project relies on collaboration with partners, including Michigan State University and Cooperative Weed Management Area groups.

Using the new state of Michigan’s Rapid Response Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species—developed jointly by the DNR, DEQ and MDARD—these new reports were verified, an on-site assessment was conducted and a response plan was formulated. Control measures are under way, including physical removal (1,500 pounds removed beginning in mid-September) and trial treatments with herbicides.

“Responding quickly to a new invasive species is critical to increasing our chances of success, and it requires a well-organized, collaborative effort between multiple agencies and other partners,” said Wildlife Division chief Russ Mason.

Education, outreach and future control activities are being planned with local stakeholders and partner groups.

European frog-bit—which resemles a miniature water lily (lilly pad), with leaves about the size of a quarter or half-dollar—was accidentally released into Canadian waters between 1932 and 1939, and has since spread throughout Ontario, New York, Vermont and other eastern states. It forms extremely dense vegetative mats that cover the available open water surface. Frog-bit shades out submerged native plants, reducing invertebrate and plant biodiversity, disrupts natural water flow, inhibits watercraft movement and may adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat.