Michigan’s Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

Lower tax for carbon dioxide-injected wells

Michigan legislators are looking at reducing the severance tax on oil and gas that is produced by using carbon dioxide as a way to tap into hard-to-reach reserves. The process involves injecting compressed carbon dioxide near an existing well to recover more oil from it. According to proponents of the method, it protects the environment by keeping greenhouse gas from the atmosphere and helps the economy through increased oil production. The legislation—sponsored by Rep. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) and Rep. Thomas Stalworth III (D-Detroit)—would allow carbon dioxide pipelines and specify that eminient domain could be used to site the pipelines in the same manner as oil and natural gas lines. The severance tax would be lowered from 4 percent to 2 percent for oil and from 5 percent to 4 percent for gas extracted through the carbon dioxide process. A lower tax is necessary given the higher costs of the labor-intensive method, said Nesbitt. “This is an opportunity to take advantage of emerging technologies to do a much better job of protecting our environment by capturing the carbon dioxide versus expelling it into the environment,” said Stalworth.

‘Slip-Sliding Away’

Two cross-country skiers make their way through a snow-covered woodland at the Greenwood Foundation, a privately owned property near Wolverine, Michigan. There is a conservation easement on the property and Greenwood recently hosted a public event to allow exploration of the 1,400-acre parcel.

Review of Rexton mine proposal continues

More than 40 people reportedly showed up at a public meeting Jan. 30 to learn more about a potential limestone project near the Upper Peninsula community of Rexton. The meeting at the BayLiss Public Library in Sault Ste. Marie—hosted by the League of Women Voters of the Eastern Upper Peninsula—included representatives from Graymont Inc. and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The meeting focused on a proposed land acquisition application submitted by Graymont to obtain some 13,000 acres to set up several surface mining areas and perhaps one underground limestone mine.

As previously discussed in The North Woods Call, the company—a leading producer of limestone in the United States—approached the DNR in 2012 about the land transaction and the DNR approved the company’s request to explore the area. Company officials have said that the area contains “the quantity and quality of limestone that the firm is seeking and the proposed transaction has been under review by the DNR, the Mackinac County Planning Commission and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission. If the proposal is accepted and all required permits are obtained, there would be six jobs created by the surface mining operation, they said. If a processing plant is constructed, there could be as many as 25 or 30 jobs.

According to a late January article in the Sault Ste. Marie Evening News, the State of Michigan would be compensated for the limestone as it is mined during the next 100 years through a royalty interest on each ton of limestone removed. The state would also retain an easement right on the surface of the underground mine area, the newspaper said, which would allow timber management and public recreational use.

Once work in the underground mine is completed, the state reportedly would be offered the underground mine for one dollar and the surface land would be sold back at market value. Approval of the land transaction would not necessarily mean approval of mining operation. Those plans would still need to go through regulatory review by the Department of Environmental Quality, officials said. A citizen’s group opposing the planned mine—the Coalition Against Strip Mining—recently filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain a document containing DNR staff reviews of the land acquisition proposal.

(Continued on Page 2)
Our 61st Year: Looking Back to Feb. 24, 1971

Magnitude and an archeological site.

such as original as the fish division's salmon program. But they are as
daring as that which the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR)
fishery program has had.

Pete Petoskey: Wildlife chief sees changing times

By Glen Sheppard

Michigan’s new wildlife chief can’t buy a ranch, and raise and re-
lease a herd of bison. Under the 1930s Conservation Act, he doesn’t have a forest that he can manage to protect plants, employees and the public. DNR has no right to prohibit the public from accessing the forest. Therefore, the public has a right to access the forest. Therefore, the public has a right to access the forest.

Pete Petoskey, president of the Michigan Deer Hunters Association— the arch critic of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) deer program—after reading last week’s North Woods Call, said Petoskey’s ideas “sound good.”

Musolf, who, like Pete Petoskey, is really a good guy, wasn’t endorsing any wildlife chief’s monogram. He isn’t sold on a license increase. The DNR and legislature, he says, should prove that they will give hunters their money’s worth—which they’ve never done—before they get more money. Musolf says that there should be a longer buck season in the Upper Peninsula.

But he does agree that the number of hunters in the woods at one time should be controlled. He is also convinced that other hunters are awakening to the fact that they must live with some loss of free-
dom due to the burgeoning population.

“There’s only so much room for people [in the woods],” Musolf said. “We are going to have to do something. Hunters have to real-
ize we have to live with some changes.”

Petoskey, his biologists in the field and those who surround him in the Mason Building in Lansing are hunters since boyhood. Like so many others, he will be among those who try to tell the others where they can hunt and that they have to take turns running to several generations of heritage deep-seated in the north woods.

But Petoskey is now saying just that. The number of hunters in a given area has a given time must be limited. Deer hunting is the chief problem. Due largely to lack of targets, small-game hunters are sel-
dom crowded.

How can Petoskey limit the number of hunters in any specific area? There are two of ways. Habitat can be improved, so that
derry suddenly become over-abundant everywhere. [And] deer li-
censes can be sold on a permit basis.

* * *

Pete Petoskey doesn’t have the answer. And he recognizes he won’t know what the reaction will be until he sticks his chin out.

That, apparently, is why his handsome jaw is spouting such revolu-
tionary new ideas.

Petoskey has said Michigan can double the size of its deer popula-
tion and of its annual deer harvest. This, he says, will cost millions of dollars a year. But, at the same time, other questions are being raised. Should Michigan pay for and promote increased deer hunting? Or even the present level of deer hunting?

Game and forest managers are starting to wonder. Maybe the forests should be managed for grouse and rabbits, instead of deer.

* * *

The fish division more than a decade ago decided that opportunity, not blood, is the measuring stick, but in the last six years has gone back to quotas. The picks of the season, in stead of quality, became the pick of the season, Petoskey has no leader to follow. And people who have known him since he joined the department more than 20 years ago say his best qualities have been exhibited when he was leading, not following.

* * *

It is interesting to note that back in the earn-a-buck, beg-a-buck days of the Great Depression, Pete Petoskey’s family owned the small grocery store in Otsego, where Wayne Todd’s family traded. Since then, Todd has captured the admiration of the fisheries world with his Great Lakes program.

Petoskey may, in the next few months, gain as broad respect for his ideas in making Michigan hunters face up to the realities of in-
creasing people pressures on declining wildlife habitat.
DNR unveils new grant programs to improve wildlife/aquatic habitat

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced two new grant programs to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat.

Both programs will be funded with a portion of the increased revenue expected from hunting and fishing licenses sold each year, DNR officials said.

The Wildlife Habitat Grant Program (WHGP) is aimed at enhancing habitat for game species. Goals include managing the habitat for sustainable wildlife populations in a changing environment, increasing public participation and support of hunting and trapping, and increasing participation in “non-consumptive wildlife-related recreation.”

“This is an exciting opportunity to partner with others in the state to increase the habitat for the benefit of hunters, trappers and wildlife viewers,” said Russ Mason, chief of the DNR’s Wildlife Division.

WHGP funding is available—through an open competition—philanthropic foundations, for-profit and nonprofit groups, and individuals. Minimum grant amounts will be set at $15,000, with the maximum amount of funds available for that grant cycle. The 2014 overall available grant amount is $650,000.

The WHGP application period began Feb. 1 and will run through the close of business on March 1. Successful grant applications will be announced by April 1. A detailed WHGP handbook and application are available at www.michigan.gov/wildlife, or www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants.

The $1 million Aquatic Habitat Grant Program (AHGP) will emphasize protecting intact and rehabilitating degraded aquatic resources throughout the state; developing self-sustaining aquatic communities that provide for continuing recreational opportunities and natural resource-based economies; and encouraging strong relationships and partnerships—along with new expertise—for aquatic habitat protection and recovery.

“This program will work to increase fish and aquatic wildlife populations statewide by ensuring our best waters remain so and improving aquatic habitat that is currently degraded,” said Gary Whelan, DNR Fisheries Division program manager. “It will also serve to increase direct public involvement in watershed issues and increase availability of high-quality, self-sustaining aquatic resources.”

AHGP funding is available—also through an open competitive process—for eligible single- and multiple-project efforts by local, state, federal and tribal governments, nonprofit groups and individuals. Minimum grant amounts will be set at $5,000, with a maximum grant amount of $25,000, with the maximum amount of funds available for that grant cycle.

AHGP projects can address issues on rivers, lakes, or the Great Lakes. Smaller projects within the same watershed that address similar issues and system processes can be bundled into a single grant proposal package in order to reach minimum grant amount requirements.

“This is a very exciting program that will continue to enhance Michigan’s world-class fisheries—which you can’t have without great aquatic habitat,” said DNR Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter. “We look forward to seeing projects various scope and size that will impact all types of aquatic habitat.”

The AHGP application period began Feb. 1 and will end at the close of business on March 15. Successful grant applications will be announced by April 15.

A detailed AHGP program handbook and application are available at www.michigan.gov/fishing, or www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants.

Gun laws cause Beretta to move

U.S. manufacturer Beretta announced in early February that it would become the latest gun maker to expand beyond the borders of its home state due to tougher gun laws.

Instead of building in Maryland, which adopted stiff new regulations last year, Beretta is putting up a new manufacturing and research facility in Gallatin, Tennessee.

The company had earlier telegraphed the decision, saying any expansion would occur somewhere that has “shown consistent, strong support for Second Amendment rights.”

Now Riverside Remington Arms is also looking at expanding into Tennessee. Other pre-gun states—from Texas to Wyoming—are seeing an influx of gun makers who feel they’re now unwanted in places they’ve operated for decades.

Ruger and Colt Manufacturing, for example, are expanding from Connecticut into North Carolina, and Mappi Industries pulled up stakes in Colorado and headed to Texas.

In addition, most gun manufacturers have seen an explosion in sales since new anti-gun laws have been adopted. Smith & Wesson, for example, reportedly saw firearm sales rise from $80.4 million in 2003 to $857.5 million in 2013.

Forest plans OKd

Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), has approved the agency’s final regional state forest management plans.

The three plans—covering the eastern Upper Peninsula, the western Upper Peninsula and the northern Lower Peninsula—are aimed at helping the DNR sustainably manage four million acres of state forest lands.

They were developed with input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including citizens.

For more information, contact Scott Jones, DNR forest management planning specialist at (517) 284-5873, or visit www.michigan.gov/regionalforestplans.

Huron Pines group presents the 2014 O.B. Eustis awards

The Gaylord-based Huron Pines conservation organization has presented its annual O.B. Eustis Awards, which honor the late industrialist, environmentalist and natural columnist.

The awards, which recognize environmental improvement and outdoor improvement projects in the Tundra Bay and Black River watersheds, and has contributed more than $113,000 in equipment and labor to various projects.

NMSG, meanwhile, has empowered young people through student-driven educational projects and creative opportunities to learn about natural and cultural landscapes.

The organization facilitates place-based school-community partnerships to improve the quality of local water and habitat. During the past two years, MCRC was instrumental in completing five road/stream crossing improvement projects in the Tundra Bay and Black River watersheds, and has contributed more than $113,000 in equipment and labor to various projects.

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Spending those fee increases

Changes in Michigan’s hunting and fishing license fee structure—effective March 1—are expected to bring in additional revenue to fund Department of Natural Resources (DNR) programs. In addition to putting more conservation officer boots on the ground, and more aquatic habitat improvement have already been announced (see story on Page 3).

That’s all fine and dandy, and we’re sure that such efforts will help the DNR secure partners to manage these important resources and projects. But a landowner friend of ours has asked why DNR officials seem to be spending this anticipated money before they know for sure how much the changes to hunting and fishing license fees will yield in additional revenue. We think that’s a good question.

What happens if the money doesn’t come in as planned? Are Michigan hunters and anglers going to buy licenses and special endorsement fees for as many numbers as they normally have? Will the money still be there if some borderliners hunters and anglers decide they don’t like the new fee structure and stop participating?

Maybe we should wait until we know how much money is actually available before we go about spending it. Just a thought.

What about artificial baiting?

While reading John Gunnel’s viewpoint article in this edition of The Call (see Page 5), we were reminded that we have never quite understood the practice of artificially baiting game animals.

We suppose it has something to do with making the hunt successful for more hunters, selling more licenses and generating revenue for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). And, in some cases, it’s probably a fairly effective way to reduce the number of certain game animals.

Yet we often wonder if hunters should rely more on their own knowledge and skills to seek and outwit their prey, rather than violating the natural design by tricking hungry deer, bear and other wildlife into becoming sitting targets for those already armed with tree stands, high-tech weapons and miscellaneous other 21st Century gadgets.

We recognize that baiting may be the only way some hunters could get a bear, which often hang out in dense thickets and can be difficult to find. Maybe some folks aren’t proficient enough to even bag a deer without it. But is that reason enough to do it?

There may be a need for some apple cider coconuts or stand of oak trees rife with acorns. It’s quite another enough to purchase food and spread it on the ground to invite animals to a competition for the food. Many of us—farmers and retailers appreciate the boost to their economies.

But how does this practice ultimately affect the ecology of the forest and the natural balance of those creatures—that targeted and untargeted—who come to feed at the sleigh of hand bait?

It seems to us—at minimum—that baiting creates an unfair advantage and takes some of the sport away. Many hunters, of course, will disagree with that assessment—especially those who don’t like to run dogs, or corner their prey in some other way.

Still, this may be one of those issues that DNR brass and members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission should spend some time reconsidering, instead of constantly building on myriad existing rules and regulations to police citizens and gather more revenue for state coffers.

Praise for snowplows & blowers

We don’t know about you, but we’ve been singing the praises of internal combustion engines and fossil fuel this winter. Without them, we’d probably have permanently disabled backs, significantly thinner bank accounts, and maybe a broken ankle.

There has been more snow than usual this year at The North Woods Call office and our lengthy, up-hill driveway has required almost daily cleanings with both our 21-year-old simplicity snow blower and much newer Kubota snow plow, which we purchased this season.

Environmental purists might say that we shouldn’t be using such machines when responding to nature’s winter onslaught, but this year we wonder how we would manage without them. For many years, we were satisfied with just the snowblower and even in the cold we were quite effective in clearing snow when powered by younger bodies.

But, regretfully, we’ve been losing some of our comph of late and appreciate having the extra assistance that man-made and gasoline-powered snow removal equipment can provide.
**Viewpoint (Part I)**

**The price of baiting: Calling a spade a spade**

By John Gannell

The 2013 regular deer season is now history in Michigan. Driving home downtown from the Upper Peninsula allowed me time to reflect anew on a subject that lingers in my mind for a practice that flummoxes all reason.

Real hunters bemoan the monster the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has allowed to be created and perpetuated by legalizing the baiting of deer and bear.

In their appointed capacity, our [natural resources] commissioners sanctioned such practice and conveniently “buried their heads in the sand” in accepting the consequences.

Just saying “no” to such a multi-destructive scheme by those so anointed to protect nature’s uniqueness and delicate balance from man’s self-serving influence could have once been easily rejected.

Today, DNR leadership—like sheep—are cajoled by subterfuge, resulting in political appeasement. They still dismiss being held accountable for being out of balance with nature, and remain committed to saying “yes” to economic tampering of both “snake oil salesmen” who ignore long-range environmental consequences.

Just saying “no” to baiting was too old-fashioned and removed the drama sought to feed small men’s egos. The proverbial cat remains out of the bag and nature still bears the consequences.

Leadership avoided ever answering to anyone or anything. Theirs has become a “parlor game,” relying upon political correctness to cover up their transgressions.

I recently had the opportunity to interview the very sage and much-revered elder statesman from Michigan’s DNR of the past—Merril “Pete” Petoskey. He, too, rue the day when baiting of wild animals was sanctioned, amounting to their current neutral existence.

The insidious effect on altering deer and bear patterns of existence by way of unnatural feeding renews the self-reliance and caution once they possessed to protect their very existence.

Some of our leaders—who once still held lingering regrets for being party to legalizing deer and bear baiting—had hoped for a re-demption, in a “left-handed way,” when chronic wasting disease (CWD) surfaced. Those who silently wished in retrospect that they would have had the courage to originally say “no” once again failed—likePontius Pilate—and washed their hands of this outdoor sin. Unfortunately, we again saw a lack of courage by enough of our leaders who could have seized a face-saving CWD outbreak just to say “no.”

Hunters who believe in the notion of nature unlathered long for the day when deer and bear will once again be sighted in their natural meanderings, relying again on their innate instincts. Seeing deer and the occasional bear in the woods, the absence of man-placed food for the purpose of the ambush, could return the woods and its creatures back to the mysteries that once lured us all in the beginning.

Older men, like myself, have long memories of the [natural resources] commissioners who first gave their approval for deer and bear baiting. Having the courage to reverse earlier decisions, today’s commissioners would initially create a firestorm of opposition by those who would manipulate nature for their own selfish purposes. The anger demonstrated by those who profit most—if unsucceful in swaying DNR leadership from a higher calling—would then revert to threats, scare tactics and other devious practices.

I am reminded of Marc Anthony’s funeral address on behalf of his good friend Julius Caesar, when he spoke of honorable men behaving like “brutish beasts” and having “lost their reason.”

John Gannell is a writer and out-doorsman living in Rockford, Michigan. Part II of his Viewpoint article will appear in the next edition of The North Woods Call.

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**Angling humor**

Getting back to ice fishing

Each winter around this time of year, I feel compelled to usher in the new ice fishing season by sending my annual letter to 15 of my fellow ice fisherman. These men are a mixed bag by vocation, yet are inevitably interconnected by their shared passion and curiosity about the wide array of circumstances in their pursuit of ice fishing utopia. Such men represent a culture driven with a passion for self-induced pain, fatigue and disappointment beyond explanation—ever and over in order to find for themselves the “truest...trickest...bestest” Cedar Springs ice fisherman as Harry Jones and Mike Ritchie (both now deceased) come to mind to set the standards for fellowships like me. Here is my 2014 letter sent to the aforementioned fisherman ice fishers:

Dear...

Forgive me for my tardiness in writing you concerning the 2013-2014 ice fishing season. I trust that you are still upright and taking nourishment.

Preparing my fishing poles and related paraphernalia, I am reminded of just how much our sport has changed over the years. No longer do we convert car aerials into fish poles, or use axes to cut Our fish holes.

While still within the inventive stage of fishing tackle (ie. J. Hubbard’s teardrops, spring bobbers, etc.), a new multi-phased ice fishing reel will soon render all of us obsolete. The new reel—only about $100 each—will have a built-in fish finder, automatic hooking sensor and an impetus that sends a signal through your new line and lure to release the fish once on the ice (for only an additional $35.95 per pole). While these devices may seem absurd to a seasoned angler with unlimited resources like yourself, I believe such trendy gadgets are but the tip of the iceberg.

Realizing that most ice fishermen tend to be older men who are experiencing urinary complications, a new device (now on the drawing boards) will eventually recycle and hold urine once needing immediate exit through several layers of ice fishing clothing. Extraction containers with spigots would hold a day’s urine collection for a mere $95 and make it necessary to spend two hours in the bathroom emptying it upon returning home.

I hope this information is useful in planning your future ice fishing. I look forward to seeing you out on the Big Wabasis.

Fond personal regards,

John Gannell

Rockford, Michigan

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**Rocker Ted Nugent lauds the “real conservationists”**

Michigan’s so-called Motor City Mudmud says hunters, fishemen and trappers are America’s real conservationists and environmentalists.

“Rocker Ted”—legendary guitarist, rock-and-roll performer, passionate hunter and Detroit native—said such outdoor men and women were among the first barometers for quality air, soil and water.

In an opinion column posted earlier this month online at World Net Daily, Nugent said sportsmen and women were among the first to respond to water pollution problems in Lake Erie and they got organized to change the situation.

“We simply refused to accept the status quo of the industrial revolution mistakes and knew instinctively that industrial productivity and clean air, soil and water were not mutually exclusive. So we went to work and raised adequate hell to reverse the situation.”

It wasn’t long thereafter that Lake Erie got cleaned up so well that it once again became one of the world’s top walleye and small-mouth bass fisheries, Nugent said.

“The wild celery and biodiversity returned and with this natural eco-cleansing system came the magnificent flights of wild fowl, as well as fish and fur-bearing,” he said.

With characteristically blunt language, Nugent said the efforts and financial support of sportsmen and women have inextricably intertwined by their penchant for taking on all types of low curmudgeons. These men are a mixed bag by vocation, yet are simultaneously successful heritage of hunting and fishing carries on—guaranteeing a healthy future for wildlife and the critical support network of habitat that just so happen to assure a healthy environment for all living things.

If you are serious about a healthy environment, Nugent said, “the best thing you can do is pursue the liberal/license and a trapping license. Join Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, the National Wild Turkey Federation ... Pheasants Forever, Safari Club International, the mighty [National Rifle Association] and any number of hunting organizations that are solely dedicated to conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat. We put our money where our mouth is...”

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**Annual Trout Unlimited meeting held in Grayling**

The 2014 annual meeting of Trout Unlimited’s Mason-Griffiths Chapter was held Feb. 1 at the Mainstream Steak and Rib restaurant in Grayling.

A capacity crowd of fifty-five members attended the social hour — followed by dinner, a brief business meeting, a presentation and awards.

Jim Anderson (Grayling), Boyd Dillon (Mio), Karen Harrison (Grayling) and Mark Hendricks (Grayling) were re-elected to the chapter's board of directors.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forester Patrick Mahoney presented chapter Advisor Howard Johnson (Saginaw) an Outstanding Project Award from the DNR’s Forest Resources Division for his work with the Cedars for the Au Sable project. The project seeks to bring young northern white-cedars back to the banks of the Au Sable and Manistee rivers.

Steve Sendek (Grayling) gave a talk with pictures about the Chapter’s Au Sable River habitat improvement project in the William’s Tract above Grayling and the structure repair project below Grayling. The presentation included work in 2011 and 2012 that was done in preparation for the 2013 projects.

President Karen Harrison presented the chapter’s Rainbow Trout Award for Organization of the Year to Northpoint Fisheries Management, a company owned by Sendek, a retired DNR Fisheries Biologist who is providing oversight for various river projects.

Paul Mesack presented the chapter’s Brown Trout Award for Volunteer of the Year to Mark Rais (Grayling) for his ten years of selfless service as chapter treasurer.

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Winter is fun and is actually quite alive, so get out there and enjoy it.

As a young lad, we would have to find corn borers to go ice fishing. We lived on a farm where the corn fields didn’t get tilled under as they do today and the corn shocks wouldn’t have the genetic treatments to combat insects. As we got older, we had to switch to sweet corn stalks and eventually couldn’t find enough of these to have to purchase ice fishing bait.

Two places we did find grubs with fair consistency was in gold-ened ball galls and burdock seed heads. Of the three gold-ened galls, the ball gall is the only one that overwinters a grub. The other two galls of the gold-ened are the bunch gall and el-lipical gall. If you cut partly through the ball gall and then break it apart, you should find a small white grub, about the right size for a small jılıg hook.

The burdock seed head isn’t quite as reliable, but you should find a fair number of white grubs on a plant of seed heads. This grub is smaller and it may take a few to put on a hook. I don’t know what the grub from the bur-dock turns into, but from past exp-erience with gold-ened ball galls, they pupate into flies, simi-lar in looks to a deer-fly.

Other galls you may try are oak galls. Oaks have a number of galls, with the oak apple gall of-fering the best chance of getting a grub. There are a good number of oak apple galls and the ones formed in the late summer are most likely to have a grub, usually a wasp grub.

The willow pine cone gall overwinters a grub, but I have never had much luck in getting a sufficient number to truly try it out.

If you’re ambitious, you could also get a good number of aquatic insects, because they overwinter in immature stages in streams and lakes. In this case, you will have to be active out of streams on nice days. Flying stone flies make good winter protein for many birds and you may see active feeding along streams on mild days.

Another insect quite dar-ing during winter is the “snow flea,” or springtail. These small insects live in forest litter and number in the thousands over a small area. When the weather gets mild, es-pecially on sunny days, they will migrate to the surface and can be found on tree trunks and the sur-rounding snow. They are called springtails because at the end of the abdomen are two modified legs that fold up under the body so that they can flip and propel them-selves a few inches away.

If you do a fair amount of cross-country skiing or snow-shoeing, you may find them in your tracks, because they often can’t seem to flip high enough to get out of the tracks. The snow literally gets a gray cast where these little guys are found.

There are numerous species of snow fleas, some live on the sur-face of water and are called “water fleas.” I guess the flea part comes from the ability to “jump,” as the common pet flea does. Of course, they are found in the forest litter all year and I have had experience with them when camping with kids. At lunch we put out the fixings for sandwiches and the kids put together what they want to eat. Once, while get-ting ready to put away a roll of cheese, it appeared to have a gray cast. It was literally covered with snow fleas that migrated over three feet of canvas to get to the cheese in less than a half hour.

There is this shady guy, the preying mantis. Now, there are no live man-tises in the winter, but the egg masses are in the fields on shrubs and tall weeds. When cross-coun-try skiing, snowshoeing, or hunt-ing, I keep my eyes open and “pick” a few of these egg masses to put in my yard and garden.

You can purchase egg masses from catalogs, or garden centers, but why do so when you have a ready supply in nature? Each frothy egg mass will contain from about 50 to over 200 eggs. They are attached to stems and look like egg-shaped brown styrofoam, about an inch long, with a blunt end where the female stopped lay-ing eggs. It is best to break the twigg off below the egg mass, then take the whole twig and put it in your garden area. You should keep it somewhat hidden, because woodpeckers and other birds will peck the eggs out. It is best to twist tie them to other branches and let nature hatch them out in spring.

The egg mass may be on other objects, even the side of buildings. These you need to remove, because the integrity of the mass will be damaged.

The egg mass of the preying mantis is called an ootheca. Even though you may collect a good number of ootheca, the number of mantises will be limited, as they are voracious eaters and the first thing they see upon hatching is brother and sister, which are mighty tasty.

Don’t make the mistake of tak-ing them inside for very long, or you will have a hoard of tiny jumping mantises migrating across your home.

Winter is fun and is actually quite alive, so get out there and enjoy it.

Finding winter insects and invertebrates

2014 Farm Bill—North Woods Call photo

Finding winter insects and invertebrates

As Michigan’s reigning champion, it certainly merits a pilgrim-age. On the first warm Sunday in May, perhaps, when dandelions have bloomed, you may notice it. As Michigan’s reigning champion, it certainly merits a pilgrim-age. On the first warm Sunday in May, perhaps, when dandelions have bloomed, you may notice it.
CO Mike Hammill received a complaint about a coyote being illegally shot in Mequon. The Coyote is conducting a thorough investigation, which revealed evidence of a coyote, and a 15-inch leg bone was recovered. After thorough investigation and interviews with assisting officers and detectives, the investigation continues. Further investigation revealed parts of the animal which were seized and are being tested in the lab. Charges are pending.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)
While observing a trail intersecting the North Central Snowmobile Trail (25 mph speed limit), CO Mike Fragan watched four snowmobilers race up to a stop sign. One of the snowmobilers hit the sign, and the other three circles around it. The subjects were unable to locate the deer, and they were ticketed for excessive speed.

CO Bill Webster had received complaints of stolen tree stands on state land over a period of three years. CO Webster, CO Warren MacNeill, and a detective with the Wildlife Resource Protection Section (WRPS) investigated. A suspicious fawn was spotted near the tree stand, and the fawn was captured. The investigation is ongoing.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)
CO Mike Wells conducted an investigation of a retail sales district, distributor importing military licenses to non-military personnel. The investigation resulted in multiple license sales issued by one individual. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Wells received a RAP complaint of an individual shooting at a flock of wild turkeys with a loaded gun within 150 yards of a zone of a residence. CO Wells responded to the scene and was able to locate the vehicle that directed him toward a suspect. CO Wells conducted several follow-up interviews and located the shooter, who at first stated he was just trying to scare them off the roadway when he jumped out of his vehicle and shot at the large flock. Warrants have been requested through the prosecutor's office.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)
CO John Huspen was patrolling Hansom State Wildlife Management Area. He observed three subjects cutting standing timber. Unfortunately for them, cutting standing timber is not legal, and the subjects were asked to cease. The hunter became nervous and said, "You're not going to like what you find." Upon arrival at the deer, the hunter confessed he had illegally shot the deer, and he was ticketed for the charge.

CO Jason McCullough located a vehicle parked on the road near a beaver dam and found a subject walking down the road. The subject was asked why he had been shot with the deer. The subject was shot with the deer. The subject and his grandfather to discuss the proper guidelines for the tag-taking requirements and warnings were given.

CO Greg Patten was called to investigate a trespassing situation in Muskegon County where he established further investigation revealed a bobcat tag was being misused. As the investigation continued, the subject confessed to the bobcat trapping. Further investigation revealed parts of the animal which were seized and are being tested in the lab. Charges are pending.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)
CO Jeff Goss investigated a complaint of a possible captive deer. The deer was inside the shed, where he identified the fawn as the fawn that had been found in the woods. The deer was able to recover the deer and take it outside the shed, where he identified the identity for the fawn. The subject was asked if he had shot the deer, but he refused to admit it. The investigation is ongoing.

CO Jerry Payne made a complaint of a possible captive deer on the Pine River in Alma, where six hunters were arrested. The total fine and restitution was $6,000. The hunters also had their shotguns confiscated and lost their hunting privileges for two years.

On New Year’s Eve CO Jerry Payne took a RAP complaint of a buck shot out of season. The complainant advised that the buck was shot in the safety zone. The complainant was out hunting and had just shot a doe. He told the subject in the vehicle to dress up the doe and draw the trees to the tree stand. The subject was out of the vehicle and he began to yell at the subject. After 15 minutes of yelling, the subject was asked if he had shot the deer, but he refused to admit it. The investigation is ongoing.

CO Shane Webster worked an internet-based complaint of an individual who had posted pictures of a nine-point whitetail he had taken. The subject had not purchased any buck tags for the year. Upon contact with the subject, he denied having taken the buck himself and claimed his son had shot the deer. The antlers were found and indeed a Mentored Youth License was found on the deer. CO Webster questioned the individual and found why only the subject’s name was on his entry online and not the youth’s. The subject claimed that the youth was the one who explained his entry, but apparently it had gotten messed up. CO Webster asked him if the buck was still resident, and he was not convinced by the subject’s story. CO Webster did some more online research and found a posting on a social media site, a picture of a young child and the nine-point deer with the statement "Daddy’s big buck." CO Webster re-contacted the subject and presented him the evidence. The subject broke down and confessed that he had taken the deer and that he had broken several laws, and it was a way to go and he had not purchased a buck license for himself. A warrant is pending.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)
CO Todd Stetska received a complaint from an anonymous caller that a subject was over-limiting on panfish at Harbor Club North Maclay. CO Stetska received several anonymous calls, but the suspect was already gone upon arrival. One angler who was checked was happy to show his limit of bluegill; however, the angler had not had a fishing license since 2010. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Ken Kovach reports on a trial of a subject he arrested on New Year’s Eve for a RAP complaint during the 2016 hunting season for an antlerless deer without a valid license. The subject was found guilty and fined with costs. CO Kovach had been working with the complainant, who stated he heard two shots and, when he came out, he saw the deer still alive just off his property. He stated that the hunter approached the deer and he began to yell at him and he took off. CO Shively dispatched the doe and yearling, and began to search the area for the hunter’s footprints. After 15 minutes of searching, CO Shively located two additional does that had been shot. CO Shively made a RAP complaint during the season returning to the deer. When asked why he had left the scene, the hunter explained that his family had had issues with the complainant and he was trying to avoid a confrontation. CO Shively asked if he had shot all four deer. The hunter stated that he had only shot three times and had only shot three deer. CO Shively showed the hunter the deer and determined that the yearling was standing behind the third doe when he shot. The hunter stated he had not shot the doe, but the doe was a doe. CO Shively asked to see the licenses to cover the four deer. The hunter stated he had half of the licenses. CO Shively questioned the individual on why only the subject’s name was on his entry online and not the youth’s. The subject claimed that the youth was the one who explained his entry, but apparently it had gotten messed up. CO Webster asked him if the buck was still resident, and he was not convinced by the subject’s story. CO Webster did some more online research and found a posting on a social media site, a picture of a young child and the nine-point deer with the statement "Daddy’s big buck." CO Webster re-contacted the subject and presented him the evidence. The subject broke down and confessed that he had taken the deer and that he had broken several laws, and it was a way to go and he had not purchased a buck license for himself. A warrant is pending.

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New Michigan laws to deter poaching of antlered bucks—especially those with trophy-sized racks—and to reduce recreational trespasses are now in effect.

The new laws make several changes to fines and restitution payments for poaching deer, including a progressive penalty system:

* For any deer with or without antlers, the base restitution will be $1,000;
* For any antlered deer, there will be an additional restitution of $1,000 plus;
* For antlered deer with 8 to 10 points, an additional $500 will be assessed for each point; and
* For antlered deer with 11 or more points, an additional $750 will be assessed for each point. A “point” is defined in the bill as being at least one inch long as measured from its tip to the nearest edge of the antler beam. As an example, illegally killing a 10-point buck in Michigan will now result in a $7,000 restitution, plus fines and court costs.

Poachers also now face stronger penalties related to hunting privileges. Under previous law, poachers would lose their hunting privileges in Michigan for the remainder of the year of the conviction, plus three years. Those who kill an antlered buck will lose their hunting privileges for an additional two years on their first offense (potentially six years in total) and an additional seven years on second and subsequent offenses (potentially 11 years in total).

In addition, the new laws address recreational trespass by increasing the civil damage award that a landowner may recover. Previously under the law, the maximum amount a landowner could recover from someone who trespasses on his or her land to hunt or engage in other recreational activity was $250, or actual property damages. Under the new law, the civil action increases to $750 or actual property damages. Additionally, if someone kills any protected animal, game, or fish while trespassing, the new law creates a new misdemeanor offense.

New poaching, trespass fines

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Past snow days
If you think this winter has been tough, you might give some thought to a couple of other doozies that occurred in recent memory.

January 1967 — This blizzard fell on January 26 and 27, and dumped twenty-four inches of snow on Lansing alone and similar amounts elsewhere in the state. Lansing State Journal articles from the days after the storm tell stories of stranded bus passengers, a mother who picked her children up on horseback, and neighbors who built a human-sized Snoopy snow sculpture.

January 1978 — Snowstorms with 50- to 70-mile-per-hour winds pummeled much of Michigan. Snowfall totals ranged from eighteen inches in Lansing to an incredible fifty-one inches in Traverse City. More than 100,000 cars were abandoned on roads and highways, and travel was impossible for days. Governor William G. Milliken declared a state of emergency on January 26 and activated the National Guard to assist with the cleanup. The governor also requested financial assistance from the federal government and estimated damage totals to be more than $25 million—not including lost productivity from workers who were unable to get to their jobs.