the vermilion sportsman

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VERMILION LOONS PART OF MIGRATION STUDY

Exciting News! Three Lake Vermilion loons now have implanted satellite transmitters as part of the loon migration study being conducted by the U. S. Geological Survey Upper Midwest Environmental Services Center (UMESC). Even more exciting is the fact that you can track the location of our Vermilion loons online from your computer at home. Our loons are designated as V1, V3, and V4 on the website shown in the following article. Click on any one of them and you can observe their whereabouts since they were captured and subsequently released with their new transmitters in late July. The SCLV role in this effort was to assist lead USGS Research Wildlife Biologist, Kevin Kenow in locating loons to be captured for the study. The results of our annual loon count completed in mid-July were invaluable for this purpose. In addition to the following USGS news release describing the study, the March, 2011 issue of our newsletter (page 7) contains a Minnesota Public Radio story about this loon research project.

Track Lake Vermilion Loon Migration via Satellites Online

Information from Tagged Birds Publically Available

Loon migratory movements from current and previous studies using satellite transmitters can be followed online at the U.S. Geological Survey Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center (UMESC) website (http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/terrestrial/migratory_birds/loons/migrations.html).

Several common loons breeding in the Upper Midwest are sporting satellite transmitters in order for researchers to study the migration of these fish-eating water birds through the Great Lakes toward their southern winter homes. By using satellite tracking devices implanted in the loons from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Michigan Upper Peninsula, USGS scientists expect to learn information about avian botulism essential for managers to develop loon conservation strategies.

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IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message...

Greetings friends and neighbors,

Have you ever pondered how our world has changed by the vast array of electronic inventions available to us today? Let's consider the electronic revolution as it applies to sport fishing as an example. When I was a kid one of our favorite walleye spots was a submerged rock pile located near the center of a medium sized lake in northern Wisconsin. To return to this spot we used a process of triangulation where we positioned our boat so it was lined up with three prominent landmarks along the shore and then we dropped the anchor a few times until we could hear it clank on the rocks. Once there, it was time to start fishing. Contrast this with today's technology where returning to this location is a simple matter of using a fish locator equipped with a satellite controlled Global Positioning System (GPS) to find this exact spot time after time. Fish locators used today contain a memory card showing bottom contours at two foot intervals and have other features such as side imaging, bottom imaging, satellite weather, and the high end units even control your electric trolling motor and/or downriggers. One of the latest developments is a wireless sending unit designed to be cast out to find fish, structure, and water temperature up to 100 feet away from your boat. Amazing!

Equally amazing is that we now have three Lake Vermilion loons equipped with internal satellite transmitters so that researchers can continuously track their locations as part of a federally sponsored loon migration study. This information is also available to the public online so that we, too, can monitor the locations of our Vermilion loons as they migrate to the Gulf of Mexico later this fall and again next spring when they return. The website for tracking loons is provided in the cover article of this newsletter.

This technological revolution is also readily apparent in the way we conduct our activities as a lake association. We have a state of the art website and fully computerized membership record system developed and maintained by Jeff and Kathy Lovgren. Nearly all of our historical records have been electronically scanned by board members Renee Aro, Sheri Sawatzky, and Walt Moe and member volunteer Terry Jones. The results of our water quality studies, loon counts, cormorant surveys, aquatic invasive species (AIS) boat checks, and rough fish sales are all stored electronically and much of this data is available on our website along with current and past issues of our quarterly newsletter. Board member Bob Wilson uses Power Point to deliver his AIS presentations to local units of government and non-profit groups. Many of our newsletter articles are submitted to Dale and Nan Lundblad in electronic format. And our monthly meeting agendas along with the secretary's minutes, treasurer's report, membership update, and other reports are all disseminated electronically to board members.

At our September meeting, without any new-fangled technological assistance aside from railroading, we elected officers for the next two year term as provided by the SCLV bylaws. The following were unanimously elected: Jeff Lovgren – Membership Coordinator, Bob Wilson – Treasurer, Sheri Sawatzky – Secretary, Dale Lundblad – Vice President, and Mel Hintz - President. We also welcomed newly elected board member Bill Rosner from the west end of the lake who replaces Jim Mueller. We wish to thank Jim for his service to our association and have been assured that he plans to continue to work with Gary Whitenack on water quality and other issues important to the lake.

Annual membership renewals will be sent out in the next few weeks. Our membership fees of $10 for an individual, $15 for a couple, and $20 for a family are among the lowest for any lake association in the state. Your membership fees are put to very good use in protecting and improving Lake Vermilion. So, as you renew your membership, I would encourage you to consider a tax-deductible contribution to the SCLV. It is, indeed, an investment in this great lake which we are privileged to use and enjoy. If desired, you may designate how your contribution should be used on the membership renewal form. Also, please include your email address and phone number on your renewal. This enables us to quickly reach you concerning seasonal address changes, volunteer opportunities, and key issues affecting our lake. You may be assured that we do not share this information with other organizations.

This past year, we enjoyed significant accomplishments in all of our program areas due to the combined efforts of our dedicated board members and a host of willing volunteers. Most of these accomplishments are noted in this and previous editions of our newsletter. Our volunteers are the life blood of our organization. Without you, we could not exist. So, on behalf of the Board, THANK YOU VERY MUCH for the contribution of

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Track Lake Vermilion Loon… *(Continued from front page)*

"This study will also help managers better understand how loons fare as they head to their wintering grounds along the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic coasts," said USGS scientist Kevin Kenow of UMESC in La Crosse, Wisc. "This is the second year of the study. Ten loons radiomarked in 2010 provided insight into use of the Great Lakes during fall and spring migration and revealed wintering sites. Another 21 loons were radiomarked this past July over a broader area of the Upper Midwest."

Common loons, large black-and-white waterbirds with haunting calls, are an iconic species in the Great Lakes states where they are abundant. Unlike most birds which have hollow bones, loon bones are dense, helping them to dive to depths of greater than 150 feet in their search for food.

In addition to satellite transmitter-marked loons, about 80 other loons were fitted with geolocator tags, which will record daily location, temperature, light levels, and pressure data used to log the foraging depths of these diving birds.

"This information will help shed light on how avian botulism may transfer in the Great Lakes food web," said Kenow, the leader of the migration project.

Botulism, which has caused more than 80,000 bird deaths on the Great Lakes since 1999, causes paralysis and death of vertebrates who ingest neurotoxin produced by the botulism bacterium. The USGS study on avian botulism on the Great Lakes, funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, will examine the pathways by which fish and birds acquire botulinum toxin from Great Lakes food webs and determine how avian botulism outbreaks are related to environmental variables such as water quality and food web structure. Avian botulism outbreaks have resulted in periodic and often huge die-offs of fish-eating birds since at least the 1960s, but outbreaks have become more common and widespread since 1999, particularly in Lakes Michigan and Erie.

"Understanding feeding patterns and exposure routes of waterbird species at high risk for botulism die-offs, such as the common loon, is central to understanding how botulism exposure happens in the aquatic food chains in the Great Lakes and to eventually identifying what drives botulism outbreaks," said Kenow. "Such information helps managers develop strategies to prevent or lessen such outbreaks."

In addition to the UMESC, the USGS Great Lakes Science Center, USGS National Wildlife Health Center, and USGS Michigan Water Science Center are involved in the Great Lakes botulism study. The University of Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine and Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided support to various aspects of the migration project.

President's Message

(Continued from page 2)

your time and talents to the many activities carried out by our association. Those contributing six or more volunteer hours have been sent a certificate of appreciation to receive one of the newly released SCLV caps as shown in this newsletter. Members interested in volunteering for next year are encouraged to contact Renee Aro or any of the board members. Contact information is provided in this newsletter.

The public comment period for the DNR's review of the walleye slot limit regulation on Lake Vermilion ended on October 14th. The public meeting held on this issue in late September in Tower attracted about 100 citizens with most favoring a change to allow the taking of some fish in the lower portion of the protected slot. The DNR will be reviewing the public input along with their recent annual gill net and electro fishing data to arrive at a decision by the end of this year. Any change to the current slot regulation would be effective for the 2012 season. The DNR's decision on this issue will be covered in the next edition of our newsletter and will also be posted on our website.

Soon the holiday season will be upon us. As you celebrate your family traditions, the SCLV board wishes you much happiness and safe traveling during this exciting season of the year.

Mel Hintz, President

"Invasive Species" by Bob Wilson

Chinese Mystery Snails and other related subjects!

Did we really need to have Chinese Mystery Snails planted in Lake Vermilion? The MN DNR public education programs as well as the Sportsmen's Club aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention publicity continually asks people to clean, drain and dry their boats when they have launched in other lakes, carefully throw leftover bait away and not in the lake, pull the transom plug when trailering a boat on the highway and just plain don't dump anything in the lake. Regardless, this summer, the DNR was asked to check out large snails that were observed around a private dock in Spring Bay. They collected a sample and sent it to their St. Paul lab. The report came back that they were Chinese Mystery Snails. The most likely possibility for this invasion was that someone emptied the contents of their aquarium either on land near the lake or directly into the lake. The snails are oftentimes used to keep aquariums clean. It's unlikely they arrived via boat and trailer as they don't stick to objects as zebra mussels do and screens on live wells would probably prevent them from entering the boats water system. So now, we may soon have another creature populating Vermilion's waters similar in numbers to Rusty Crayfish!

With permission from Doug Jensen, University of Minnesota, Sea Grant AIS Program Coordinator and friend of the SCLV, here is some history and general information about Vermilion's latest unwanted intruder.

"Pails of Snails" by Doug Jensen

You can call them Chinese, mystery, banded, or trapdoor snails. Whatever you call them, large golf ball-sized, olive colored or heavily banded Gastropods are washing up in droves on the shores of some Minnesota lakes. They can negatively impact shores and lakes in several ways, one of which is stinking up shore lands and beaches during summer.

Native to Asia, Chinese Mystery Snails (Bellamya chinensis) were shipped to California in 1892 for the Asia seafood market. They were discovered in the wild on the east coast in 1915, likely the result of release by someone with an aquarium. Banded mystery snails are common throughout the Mississippi River. Whether from the west, east or south, these aquatic snails are invading Minnesota lakes and rivers, causing noticeable changes. Currently, Chinese mystery snails are found in more than 90 bodies of water in Minnesota and banded mystery snails occupy 60. Both species can be found in lakes, ponds, rice paddies, irrigation and roadside ditches. In Minnesota, they are a regulated invasive species meaning they can be used for human consumption and in aquaria, but that may change if the MN DNR designates them as a prohibited species.

Mystery snails feed on zooplankton and benthic algae. They out compete native species for food and space. Chinese mystery snails can spread human intestinal flukes if improperly prepared for human consumption. They can also spread trematodes parasites found in native mussels. Shells can clog screens of water intake pipes.

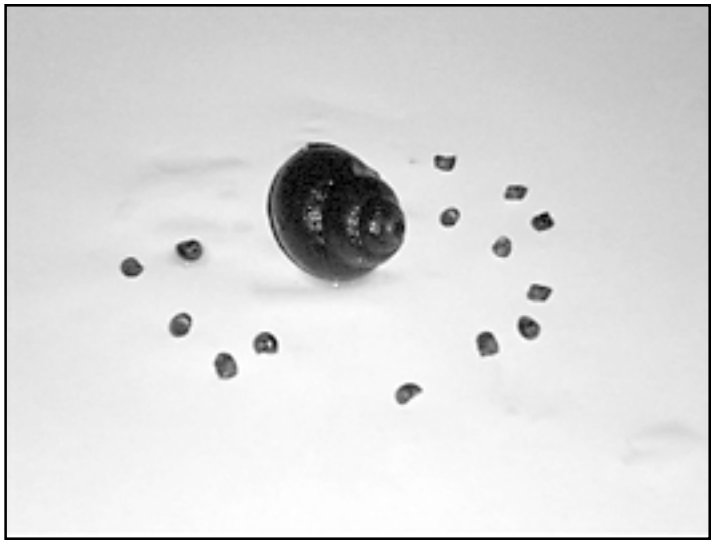
Curiously, mystery snails give birth to live young through a reproductive strategy known as ovoviviparity; the eggs are retained in the body of the female until they are ready to hatch. The little snails grow for four years, breed, then die, a lifecycle strategy called semelparity. The dead four year olds and others that have perished often wash up on shore.

The moniker "trapdoor snail" comes from their unique shell. Their shell home comes with a "door' that the snail can close to avoid unfavorable environmental conditions like desiccation (drying out) and chemical treatments. That means that they are nearly impossible to control once established.

How the mystery snails are spreading is a bit of a mystery (pardon the pun). Historically, they got into the wild via release by aquarists and consumers who purchased them from live food markets. It's possible that young snails are moved around in bait buckets and the bilges of watercraft; however, there is little evidence to support this. How can you help? Never move species from one body of water to another. Don't release them into the environment.

(End of D. Jensen's Article)

Two photos of mystery snails plucked directly from Spring Bay, Lake Vermilion are shown below. Thanks to John Zwieg on the west end of Vermilion for these pictures. One shows the size of the adult snail compared to a pop can, the other, a female with 14 babies. John placed the female snail in a bucket one evening and the next morning the babies were present. It has been suggested by a DNR biologist that the birth took place at this time because of increased stress on the female. Nevertheless, they were born as miniature snails complete with shell as they would have been in their natural habitat. This multiple birth may suggest how fast the snails might spread, but we don't know for sure. At this point, they can be found around Spring Bay, but not elsewhere to our knowledge. We are very interested in tracking their spread and whereabouts. If you have seen mystery snails in a location other than Spring Bay, please let me or another SCLV Board member know ASAP.



Water Access Ramp & Dock Inspections!

One of the activities the SCLV has undertaken this year is inspecting all the lake's water access ramps for Invasive Species. This activity is relatively new having just started last year and is in addition to the Boat Checks we conducted four times this summer. As you may know, Lake Vermilion has 41 water access ramps both public and private, far too many to be policed and secured (do we need them all?). We feel most invasive species are likely to start and be spotted at these ramps where numerous boats are in and out from spring to late fall. Five teams of people were involved in late September and early October to determine if any exotic, non-native weeds could be seen, if any spiny waterfleas could be identified in a net or if there were zebra mussels present on dock posts or shoreline rocks. We are happy to say that nothing significant was found. Below are the people & teams that participated in the activity. This is one of the public services the SCLV performs over the course of a summer to help "Protect Lake Vermilion" and all its property owners, visitors and businesses. Early identification is important. Say thanks to these folks when you see them.

West End

John Zwieg & Terry Grosshauser

Dale & Nan Lundblad

Gary Whitenack, Warren Anderson & Jim Mueller

East End

Ed Majerle & Dick Johnson

Walt Moe, Darryl Johnson & Paul Hanson

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Invasive Species... *Continued from Page 5*

Boat Inspections 2011

Forty Volunteer Boat Inspectors participated in checking boats for invasive species this summer. No invasive species were found at any of the public ramp sites where the inspections were conducted. The "fishing opener," Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day were the approximate time frames for the work. Below is the final count for the number of boats inspected and provides some indication of the number of people we engaged in an AIS prevention conversation usually averaging two or three persons per boat. Thanks to everyone who participated in keeping our lake as free from "invasives" as we possibly can!

---------- Ramp Locations ----------

	Timbuktu	The Landing	Hoodoo Point	Moccasin Pt. & Black Duck Bay	Everett Bay
Boats->	51	74	109	114	7

Total Boats Inspected - 355

MN DNR invasive species news you might have missed!

Starting in August of this past summer, the DNR purchased and deployed three self-contained portable decontamination units to clean boats of debris, mud, weeds and particularly zebra mussels. The units are capable of spraying high pressure water at temperatures of 160 degrees that will detach and kill zebra mussels and are typically staffed with a two person crew. The decontamination process is used when the boat and/or trailer fail a visual inspection, only a few boats receive an actual hot water cleaning. Boat owners haul their trailer and boat up onto a mat that collects the waste water for reuse after filtering and re-heating. Initially the units were stationed around the zebra mussel "super spreader" lakes like Minnetonka and Mille Lacs to help prevent AIS from being carried to other non-infested lakes. Early on it is thought that 80% of the unit's placement will be at zebra mussel lakes with 70% of that time at high use waters & 30% at medium to low use waters. The remaining 20% of inspection time would be at high use non-infested waters, perhaps including Vermilion. The expectation is a minimum of 20 additional decontamination units will be purchased and deployed prior to the 2012 open water season.

Two pictures are shown, one with a DNR inspector operating the spray gun and cleaning a boat in an initial trial run of the decontamination unit. The cameras are rolling to capture the event. For the more technically minded

among our readers, some of the general features and system specifications of the decontamination unit are listed below.

Cost Apx $15K. Weight fully loaded - 7000lbs. Pressure Wash - 4.7 GPM at 3500 PSI. Stores 400 gals/water on board. Vacuum/Waste Water Reclaim system with 50' of 2" vacuum hose. Multi-Stage waste water filtering system w/ 40 gal holding tank. 4000 watt Generator providing 120V AC to the burner and vacuum unit. Dual fuel tanks for the gasoline engine (17 gal) and diesel burner (17 gal). Improved fuel efficiency by capturing engine exhaust to preheat water. Spray water can be heated to 160 degrees, sufficient to kill invasive species.

Manufacturer is Landa. Specs for the next purchasing process round will likely change based on experience and current use. The DNR hopes to have multiple vendors who can supply the units in the future along with information available for other groups that may want to purchase them.

Two large Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention signs were posted by the DNR in late summer this year, one at the Hoodoo Point public boat ramp and the other at the Everett Bay public boat ramp. The Hoodoo Point ramp continues to be the busiest, high boat traffic, water access ramp on the lake and deserved to get a larger sign bringing attention to the necessity of cleaning and inspecting before launching the boat in Vermilion. Everett Bay has some Curly Leaf Pondweed at the public ramp entrance noticeable mostly from mid-May to mid-July. It is particularly important to have a large sign at this site to inform everyone to not only have a clean boat before launch, but to remove all weeds from boat and trailer while exiting. Curly Leaf Pondweed is an invasive species and can easily spread if transported to another lake or ramp on Vermilion. The new sign should act as a reminder of this need and help bring about the correct actions on the part of the boat owner. More large AIS signs for other Vermilion Public ramps will be requested from the DNR for 2012.

The Good Old Days on Lake Vermilion

by Frank Franson

In 1947 I started working at Grand View Resort on the north side of Smarts Bay, Lake Vermilion. I was 14 years old and was between ninth and tenth grades. There was no road to the resort and there still isn't today and very likely won't be for a long time. I rode on Aronson's Hackercraft inboard mail boat from Pike Bay to the resort. The pilot was Walt Aronson Jr. The Hackercraft was a few feet longer than the Chris-Crafts and Garwoods that were common at that time and could hold a few more people.

My salary was $30 per month, room and board and whatever tips I could get. I guess I was classified as a dock boy. I sold gas, minnows and ice to the tourists and took care of the fish they caught. The owner was Jesse Swanson, the cook Ann Trucano and the fishing guide was Tony Eicholz from Buyck. He was a big strong man in his 50s. He taught me how to fillet and gill and gut walleyes and how to splice the three strand rope that is still common today. I have used those skills all of my life.

Shortly after I got off the mail boat one day, I was helping Tony seine shiners in the boat slips. It was right after Memorial Day and the slips were packed with shiners. I had never seen or heard of minnows congregating like that. It was a completely new experience for me and it was a lot of fun. We would get a seine full of many dozen shiners at a time. We put them in a big screened-in box attached to the dock a few feet away.

There was a good spring at the end of a lowland field 100 yards from the lake. The year before Tony had dug a pond eight feet by 12 feet close to the spring. He lined it with 2 X 12-inch planks. He dug a ditch all the way to the lake and the pond had a continuous flow of cold fresh water. A screen was placed across the inlet and outlet so shiners couldn't get out of the pond.

After the box in the lake was full, we would fill the pond. There was a Model T Ford at the resort. It had been remodeled and had a flat bed made out of wood. We would fill the wash tub with shiners and haul it to the pond with the Model T. By the end of June the shiners in the lake box had been used up or had died. To get the shiners out of the pond I put one pole of the seine in the clay in a corner and walked around the pond with the other pole. I used a dip net to get the minnows that I wanted out of the seine pocket. That system worked very good!

The next year I put a dozen shiners right in the small spring pool to see what they would do. The ones in the pond would last until the end of July. I put a screen across the outlet so they couldn't get out of the pool. In the middle of August they were still healthy and they still had the spawn in them. I caught them with a dip net and put them in a minnow pail. As soon as the water warmed up, they spawned. I put them back in the lake and they swam away. When I was 15 years old, I knew from experience that shiners would not spawn in cold water.

To start the Model T, you turned a hand crank that was mounted just below the radiator. The first year I was at Grand View I wasn't strong enough to start it. The second year I had gained some weight and had gotten somewhat stronger. I was able to start the Model T, barely! There were levers mounted on the steering column where the shift and directional lights are today. One was the "gas pedal" and the other one was the spark advance. As the engine starts running faster, the spark plugs have to fire a little earlier. This has been done automatically, I think, since the Model A. The levers had to be in the right position when starting the car.

There were three pedals mounted on the floor. The left one you pushed and held it there to get moving in low gear. Then you let up on that one and pushed and held the middle one to be in second gear. There was a floor mounted lever similar to the old emergency brake that you pulled back to get in high gear. That you could lock so you didn't have to keep holding it. The right pedal was the brake. Your hands and your feet were kept very busy when driving a Model T! That was the first car I ever drove. I wonder if it is still there - back in the woods rusting away.

"A few days ago I walked along the edge of the lake and was treated to the crunch and rustle of leaves with each step I made. The acoustics of this season are different and all sounds, no matter how hushed, are as crisp as autumn air."

Author: Eric Sloane

CORMORANT SURVEY UPDATE

by Walt Moe

In 2010 The Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion (SCLV) conducted a Cormorant survey in conjunction with our annual Loon count. We intend to continue this activity each year because the DNR count of nests in cormorant colonies done every three years has shown significant increases since 2007. The year 2010 count on Potato Island in Big Bay showed the number of nests had increased from 128 in 2007 to 307 in 2010, confirming reports of increased cormorant presence on Lake Vermilion. Due to the increase noted in 2010 and the fact that Newcastle disease (deadly to cormorants) had been detected in the cormorant population, the DNR did another nest count on Potato Island on 5/31/2011. This showed 338 nests, which is an increase from 307 in 2010, which surprised everyone.

The Sportsmen's Club, the Resort Association, the Vermilion Guides League, the DNR and numerous individuals are all very concerned about this cormorant increase and the potential impact on Lake Vermilion fish populations. Cormorants are voracious feeders consuming on average one pound of fish each day. In the recent past, the Leech Lake walleye and perch population was decimated largely due to a huge build up of cormorants. Drastic measures were employed by the DNR and the US Fish and Wildlife to reduce the cormorant population under a special federal permit, that is allowing the Leech Lake fishery to recover.

To have a Leech Lake scenario occur on Lake Vermilion would be devastating. Though we are not to that stage yet, we do need to be watchful so we can be proactive in responding to the increased threats to our fish population from cormorants.

The cormorant survey was a trial in 2010 to determine if it can be done without interfering with the loon count. The results in 2011 showed that we can get good data. It would be greatly appreciated if everyone cruising Vermilion is extra observant and report to Walt Moe (or any SCLV board member) any concentration of cormorants seen. Thank you for all your efforts. The total cormorant count in 2011 was 691, for 2010 it was 495.

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(All phone numbers are Area Code 218)

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SCLV Board Meetings are held monthly on the second Wednesday, and are open to all SCLV members. Check with a board member for time and location.

Living with Eagles

by Mardy Jackson

About 30 feet from my backyard is a very tall white pine and near the top its boughs hold a huge eagle's nest. When my family was up for the Memorial Day weekend, my grandson Ben spied a baby eagle in the nest. Out came the binoculars and one by one we all took a turn. Then the baby eagle became very excited when one of the parents flew into the nest with a fish in its beak to feed him. After watching for a spell, we returned to what we were doing, all except my son-in-law Brian. He pulled a lawn chair to the side of the cabin and sat there most of the afternoon, recording on his long-range camera the activities of the eagles. At the end of my family's stay, they all took one last look at the nest before they headed home. It was an exciting weekend!

My bedroom is on the second floor of my cabin. My headboard is against the two front windows overlooking the lake. It was a hot night, so I had all the windows open. I was pulled from a deep, delicious sleep by continuous chirping. (It didn't even stop to take a breath, quite irritating!) With the windows open, it sounded like it was just outside my window. I glanced at the clock, the time was 5:45 a.m.! I'm a "nighthawk" and those who know me well graciously wait till 10 a.m. to call me. So I had many more hours yet to sleep. I put my head under the pillow and tried to go back to sleep.

The next morning, the same thing, same time — 5:45 a.m. What is that darn bird that chirps so incessantly? I sat up and opened the blinds. There sat the eaglet on a large white pine stump about 25 feet or so from the cabin. This stump sits just back from the top of a 6-ft. bank that goes down to the shore. About five feet back from the stump is a very large rock. He would go from the stump to the rock intermittently with that continuous, no-breath chirping. From time to time I would look out and he would have left the stump for the rock. I wondered how he could do this when he couldn't even fly. So I watched and waited. He would jump, flapping his wings just to the "elbow." He would do this frequently. My thought was he did this to strengthen his wings. He ventured over to the chaise lounge, then to the back of the lawn chair. This went on for about a week, making my yard his hangout. He was not bothered by my outdoor activities or friends who came to see him. We didn't go closer than about 15 feet. I'd come and go and he just ignored me. Because the nest was so close to the house, I think the eagles were used to the activity. The eaglet started walking around, elbows swinging back and forth. One elbow to the front while the other was back. Each day he ventured further, walking all

over the yard.

Next it was to the barbecue. The plastic cover was loaded with slits from his talons when jumping up on the pump house, which is attached to the cabin, then over to the patio table then back to the barbecue. Judging from all the slits on the cover, he made this circle frequently. It's my guess this was his form of exercise to strengthen his wings. One evening when all his chirping brought no reward, he'd had it! He very purposely strode to the side of the cabin through the woods to the base of the tree which held his nest. There was no chirping that night.

The next day, I was out at the side of the cabin and the eaglet was on the chaise lounge in the front yard when my phone rang. I ran around to the front of the cabin to answer it and, in so doing, I frightened him. He ran lickety-split, feet flying and wings flapping, to the other side of the cabin. A couple of minutes later, a gal carrying a ladder came around the back corner of the cabin. Another scare and he took off across the front yard, his legs running so fast they were a blur, heading for the stump. His momentum carried him to the bank and he couldn't stop in time. He unfurled his massive wings just at the brink and took off on his maiden flight. What a beautiful moment!

What a thrill it was when we saw another eaglet in the nest. The tale of the second funny eaglet will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.

Snowshoe Hare *Lepus americanus*

The snowshoe is slightly larger than the cottontail. It derives its name from the soles of its large feet which are well-furred, particularly in winter, enabling the hare to run on soft snow within sinking. The snowshoe hare is extremely fast and agile, reaching speeds of 30 mph and jumping 12 feet in a single bound. The large feet enable it to walk and run on top of soft, deep snow.

Identification

General description: A medium-sized member of the rabbit family whose coat is brown in summer and white in the winter. Snowshoe hares are typically found in young forests.

Length: About 20 inches long, with a two-inch tail.

Weight: About three pounds.

Color: Brown in summer and white in winter.

Sounds: None, except loud screams when it is attacked.

Reproduction

Snowshoe hares mate from February to July, with birth coming 36 days later. One female can have three or four litters of up to four young each year. Hares nest in small depressions in the ground. Hares are precocial -- they are born with eyes open and a furry hide and they can hop about soon after birth.

Food

In spring and summer, hares eat a variety of greens including grass, clover, ferns and garden plants. In fall and winter, they eat bark and the twigs of birch, aspen and conifers.In summer, the snowshoe eats succulent vegetation and in winter, slender twigs, buds and bark. It has also been known to nibble on the frozen carcasses of other animals and sometimes eat their own droppings, which provide them with extra nutrition.

Predators

Coyote, wolf, bobcat, lynx, fox, fisher, marten, and several hawk and owl species.

Habitat and range

The snowshoe hare is a northern species which thrives throughout much of Canada and even as far north as Alaska. In the upper half of Minnesota, it lives in dense woodlands and forest bogs. Hares spend their entire lives in an area of just a few acres.

Population and management

The snowshoe hare population can rapidly rise and fall on a 10-year cycle. During high population years, researchers estimate there are about 3,400 hares per square mile. For example, hunters in the winter of 1980-81 harvested 286,000, and just 12,000 five years later after the population crashed.

Fun facts

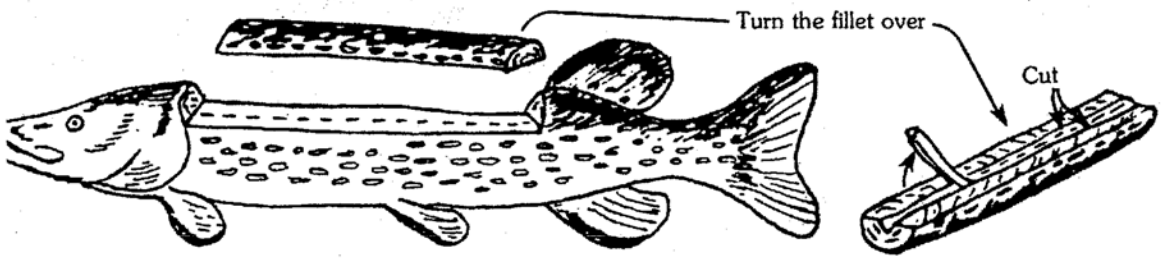
In Minnesota, the snowshoe is dark brown in summer, matching the deep shadows of damp northern thickets. But with the coming of winter, snowshoe hares grow an entirely new coat that is as white as the snow around it. This is called a leucistic phase.

How to prepare boneless northern pike fillets

1

Make vertical cut behind head down to, but NOT through, backbone.

Turn knife horizontally and cut backward along top of backbone. You should be able to feel the blade "clicking" along the top of the "Y" bones.

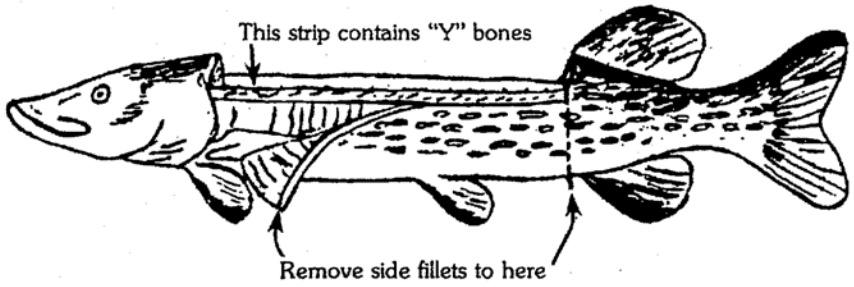


2

There is a row of small bones down the center of this fillet. Remove them with a V-shaped, lengthwise cut along each side of the center bones.

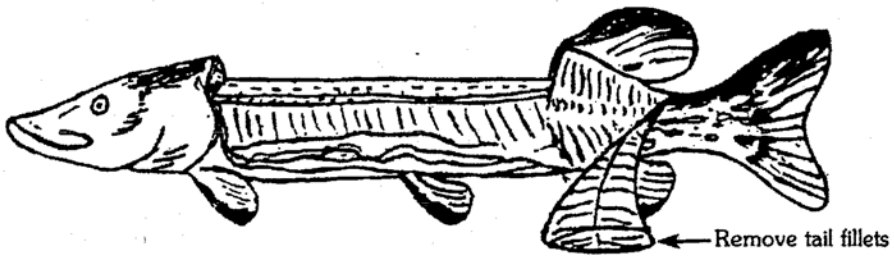
3

With the backbone exposed, a series of bones will be observed running parallel to it on either side. Make a cut down and slightly inward along the outer edge of these bones. Work down and over the ribs and remove the flank fillet. Repeat for other side.



4

Cut fillet free from each side of dorsal fin back to tail. There are no "Y" bones here.



5

Skin each fillet. You now have five **bone-free** fillets.

Drawings and narrative by Jerry Perkins
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection
Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
PUB-FH-504 2001

How to fillet northern pike to remove "Y" bones

1. Fillet the northern pike just as you would a walleye.
2. Place fillet on newspaper to keep it from slipping—with inside of fillet up.
3. Look for row of white "dots" which are the ends of the "Y" bones. (See Figure I.) These can be felt by running a finger over the fillet.
4. Using a sharp, short, flexible fillet knife, make cut along top of white "dots" and shown in Figures II and III. Note that "Y" bone curves slightly, so try to follow curvature of "Y" bone. Cut entirely through the fillet.
5. Make second cut along bottom side of white dots as shown in Figures II and III again following bone curvature as much as possible.
6. Make above two cuts toward the tail end of the fillet to the point where the "Y" bones stop. This is about to the vent of the fish.
7. Cut "Y" bone strip of flesh off and throw away.
8. Cook and eat the deboned fillet. It's finger-lickin' good.

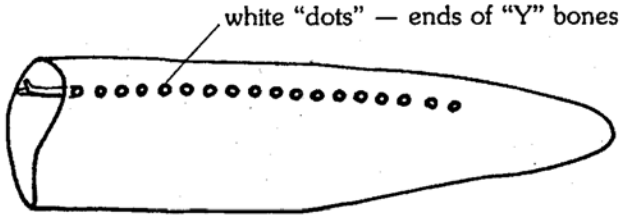


Figure I — top view

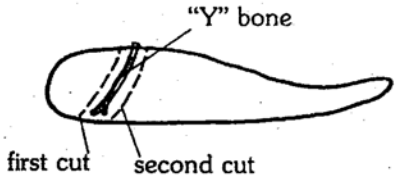


Figure II — end view showing cuts to remove "Y" bone strip

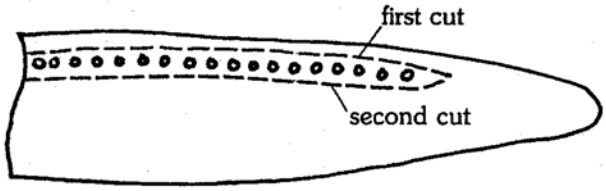


Figure III — top view showing cuts to remove "Y" bone strip

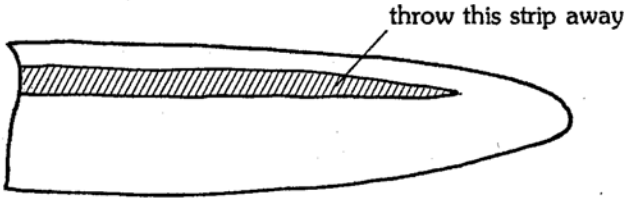
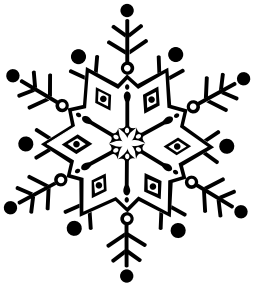


Figure IV — top view showing deboned fillet

Methods and narrative by Robert J. Becker

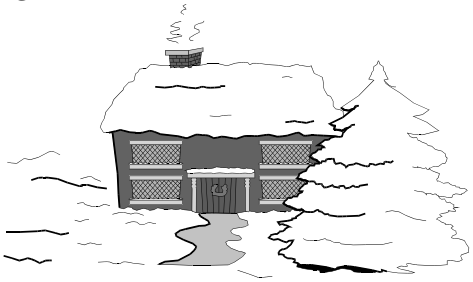
Printed on Recycled Paper

ICE OVER



The shimmering waters know naught what is coming
They know naught time of day
They care naught day of week
Like birds, carefree, they blithely dance in the sun
Watery feathers ruffled only by a gentle breeze
Unconcerned of the change soon upon them
But this, their last dance, is doomed

As the cold settles upon the land, the ice comes to life
The ice, like much of death, begins slowly,
Creeping.... by the inch, by the foot
Bringing a lingering death to the distant dancing waters
A death of smothered desire, a weary suffocation
Quietly, relentlessly, closing
Ice over all

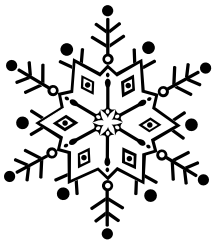


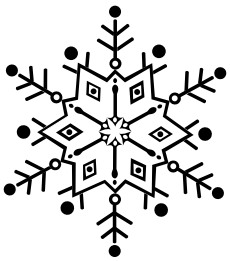
Below zero now.... the ice has surely won
All shimmer snuffed, the dancers gone
All that moved so gayly, stilled

Barren... grey... lifeless ice fills the horizon
The sky..... moody, grey, hanging low... sinks to the ice
The day's shadows grown long, but short of life
The ice? It groans a chilling sound, its grip hardens
Has all hope vanished?
Has the ice brought death to all?

NEVER! we shout..... but to our ears only
Because we know..... don't we?
That the shimmer will return?
The days will warm?... The ice will leave?... The dancers back?
Oh yes!.... Yes of course all will return
Yes, as it has through the ages

But..... our mystery remains
What of you?
What of me?
Oh Lord, what of we?





by Tom Aro
Winter 2011

Sportsmen's Club Caps Are Back!

Yes, it's been a long wait. After many requests from our members, we again have caps and visors for sale.

Since we have a number of styles, colors and sizes, it may be most convenient to pick one out in person by contacting:

West End: Nan or Dale Lundblad
218-666-2316
lundblad@accessmn.com

East End: Kathy or Jeff Lovgren
218-753-2413
lovgren@frontiernet.net

We can also send caps and visors by mail. An order form and pictures of our cap and visor selection are available on our website SportsmensClubLakeVermilion.org. Or contact Kathy or Jeff Lovgren to have one shipped to you.

The cost of the caps and visors are:

Cap	$12.00
Visor	$ 7.00
Shipping	$ 3.00 (up to 4 items)

Wear your caps and visors proudly to show your support for your lake association. Thanks for helping us protect and improve our great lake.

Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.
Jeff Lovgren, Member Records • P.O. Box 696 • Tower MN 55790
lovgren@frontiernet.net • (218) 753-2413

Membership year runs from Jan 1st through Dec 31st
☐ 2012 New Member ☐ 2012 Renewal

Membership level
☐ $10.00 Individual ☐ $20.00 Family
☐ $15.00 Couple ☐ $50.00 Business or Organization

Member Name _____

Spouse Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email (optional) _____

Phone (optional) _____

Please clip or copy this form and send to the address above.

Membership Renewal for 2012

It's that time again! In early December, you'll receive a letter requesting that you renew your membership for 2012.

Please check your dues status and contact information shown in that letter. Your dues status is also shown on this newsletter label. Please let us know of any errors.

Need a Christmas Stocking Stuffer?

If so, we've got a suggestion. A gift membership to the Sportsmen's Club for friends or family members is a great way to keep them in touch with Lake Vermilion year round.

Just send us the recipient's name, address and dues when you send in your own membership renewal for 2012. And we'll send you a certificate to stuff in that lucky friend or family member's stocking!

HELP US MAKE A BEAUTIFUL LAKE EVEN BETTER!

Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, Inc.
PO Box 696
Tower MN 55790-0696

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