Michigan Bow Hunters NEWS

VOLUMN 3 - NUMBER 7 JUNE 1968

'Nockin' 'Round The North

by Liz Gall

We spent part of May not only shootin' suckers but canning those fish we didn't wish to eat right away. Canned suckers sure do make nice "salmon" patties during the winter months. To can, we simply clean the fish, cut into chunks, and simmer in clear water until almost done. Pack into sterilized pint jars and process eighty minues at ten pounds pressure in pressure cooker. You add the seasonings when you open for use. This recipe may be used to can any type of fish and the process will soften any bones and make the meat nice and flaky—just like a can of salmon.

Though we had some rain to relieve the fire danger, and things have greened up—also helping, the frosty nights and windy days have made those things which were dried and brown, just more dry than before. It's been a spring of many fires—some of them very bad.

Reading more in the fish digest, we find that in Great Lakes and connecting waters, carp may be taken with bow and arrow at any time, unless the waters are specifically closed to spearing. You may want to check this with your local conservation office.

The Northern Bowhunters had a field shoot May 5th on the Boyne Bowmen range near Boyne City. Other dates scheduled for NBA shoots are
June 9 - Petoskey Bowmen
July 14 - Onaway Bowhunters
August 11 - Jordan Valley
Sept. 15 - Petoskey (silhouette)
This bunch of bowmen get together to shoot at what ever type of targets the host club decides to put up—and exchange palaver about bowhunting.

The green leaves unfurled, blossoms burst open and petals fell to the ground, deer fawned, partridge sat on very full nests and hatched small balls of fluff. But the people of our north country mumbled and grumbled about some of the other things happening around us. At Rogers City, Herring Gulls carcasses were washed ashore—the suspect "1080," a potent poison sometimes used in community dumps for clean up; folks around Onaway wanted part of the Black River open to fishing of suckers —conservation field men argued that violators would move in on the spawning sturgeon; vandals moved into state parks and left wrecked tables and messes behind them. In spite of all this trouble, the deer and small game prospects for fall look good. Not sure about the acorn crop as yet—only time will tell.

Good shooting to you—it's only 125 days till the Big Day!

V.P.'s Message

Now is the time of year that most of us are thinking about where we are going to shoot that big carp that will win the $25.00 first prize in the annual Michigan Bow Hunter's "Mail Carp Contest." We have had a fairly good spring so far and the carp should be running well by now. The contest runs from April 1 to August 15.

If you lack a contest blank, drop a card to the secretary or to contest chairman, Deuaine Lake, Route 2, Box 844, Buchanan, Michigan 49107, requesting the number you need. Remember, the contest ends August 15th and entries must be postmarked no later than August 16th midnight, to be eligible for awards.

This contest is another part of your membership in the MBH and we hope that all members will participate. There are trophies for first and second place Junior Boys and Girls (under 17 years). The cash prizes in both the men's and women's division are: 1st —$25.00, 2nd—$15.00, 3rd—$10.00, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th—$5.00 and 8th—$2.50. Every entry turned in makes you eligible for cash door prizes—so turn in a good many. Door prizes are: 1st—$20.00, 2nd and 3rd—$10.00, 4th and 5th—$5.00 and 6th and 7th—$2.50. A cash award of $5.00 is also given for the largest rough fish other than carp.

Each entry is eligible for a "MBH" Carp Shooter Emblem for weight of carp entered—10, 20, 30, 40, or 50 pounds. Send $.25 with your entry blank for your emblem.

Let's all send in our applications for our fifty pounders?. ? ? ?

Douglas L. Bartrem
Vice-President
Michigan Bow Hunters

Hunting With Michigan Slim

by Kenneth R. Hoffman

Chapter III - Now I am a Hunter

It was a long time, maybe as much as three years before I really came to know how fortunate I had been to shoot that nice spike buck during my first hunting season. At the time I did wonder how it came to pass. At any rate, ignorance is bliss and one becomes the archery elite when they bring home the venison. You're accepted among and as a hunter.

Well, be that as it may, I was thrilled and ready to take on anything that came my way. One of the more ardent local hunters organized a few of the fellows to do some hunting during the winter. Gail had hunted a lot in the lower part of Michigan around Allegan when he was in school. He'd a couple of deer to his credit and was a real wild man when it came to running around the woods. Gail would take off through the woods with no compass, no matches, nothing except a nose to smell out game. This time he put on a set of snow shoes and said, "follow me."

The scene was my first trip to Deadstream Swamp after snowshoe rabbits. There was about three feet of snow on the ground and you'd be surprised how that levels off the swamp and makes the going look easy. We started in at the Haymarsh

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Michigan Slim

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and after about an hour I was really bushed but had managed to keep close. All at once Gail began to stalk, but I couldn't imagine what prompted it. There were a lot of rabbit tracks among the cedars but I hadn't seen anything move. Gail was about thirty yards ahead of me and kept motioning me away in some other direction every time I tried to ask what the heck was going on. Finally, I just stopped and watched him circle off to the left. I stood there and my feet seemed almost warm where the rear strap on my snow shoe harness had rubbed a blister. All at once I noticed something move about 30 feet ahead of me. I looked, and looked and looked again; then I saw a black tipped ear wiggle toward the left where Gail was moving quietly along. There sat the quarry!

The snowshoe hare is really a jack rabbit with great big rear feet that fill over with hair so that he makes a track like a snow shoe. He's red brown during the summer and then turns mostly white during the winter, all except his ear tips that are black. It is a good cammouflage for both seasons. It was a now you see him, now you don't situation. I was sure I knew where he was sitting, then I'd look again and he was gone. Just when I thought he'd moved when I wasn't looking, he'd wiggle those big ears again. The rabbit was watching Gail. He wasn't really scared and had circled around to see what was going on. I was so fascinated that I didn't even think about shooting but just watched the game of hide and seek for several minutes. Then I came to life, lifted my bow and released my arrow. At the ZING of the bow string the rabbit turned to look in my direction and the arrow whistled between his ears.

This is the way for a bowhunter to go after the snowshoe. I hunted later with dogs and you see lots of rabbits but they are always moving fast. To stalk, the hunter locates an area where there are some rabbits, then goes out and follows a fresh track which almost always ends up having a rabbit sitting at the other end. To find the fresh tracks its good to start early after sun up. If not scared too bad the snowshoe will only trot about 30 yards at a time. He will back track his trail too! If you can look out about 15 feet in front of you and the trail ends, Stop! Off to the left or right there he'll be sitting just staring at his hunter. This was the way it went most of the day and I learned to stalk and track. I got lots of practice. When we got back to the car in the afternoon Gail had two nice snowshoes. The other two fellows who had driven up with us had three. For four hunters, five snowshoes isn't bad. We hadn't hurt the rabbit population (there are 200,000 to 600,000 taken per year) and in addition to about 5 shots I'd learned what fresh tracks looked like. I'd also learned about traveling on snow shoes but was to find later that 4 or 5 miles is just getting started. Stalking all game is very similar and for a novice deer hunter this was good practice.

We hunted this general area quite a bit that winter. I was lucky because we had good shooting and there was game on the table every once in a while. The snowshoe hare is a cyclical animal, as are so many others like the partridge. This was a big year with lots of rabbits. We had successful hunts but I found that I wasn't quite good enough and I always seemed to get to excited. Along with lots of rabbits came lots of predators like fox and bob-cat. We went out twice that winter for bob-cat. The fellows running the dogs had never been out with archers so didn't know exactly what to expect. There is always fear with dog men, that an archer will hit a cat and not kill it immediately—then when the dogs attacked the cat they will be hurt by the arrow. This is possible but doesn't happen often.

The method was just to take off into the swamp and let the dogs go for a fresh cat track. These were the two trips where I really found out how to use snow shoes. The best snow shoe for this type of hunting is the Maine or Michigan shoe. I'm going to hear lots of people hollering "what about the bear paw?" The bear paw is the round shoe that is recommended for swamps. The Maine and Michigan are pointed toes a little wide with a tapered back. The Alaskan shoe is the long skinny one. I like the Michigan shoe because it's good and stable and easier to handle. In that swamp area you just wont get any shoe through the trees and brush easily. What is really important for snow shoeing is the binding and the footwear. Buy good bindings. Have both the toe and the heel adjustable. After the fifth mile you regret the $2 you saved if you got the wrong binding. The best

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and most comfortable shoe is the Muckluk or rubber sole and leather top boot. This is water proof, gives a good anchor on the heel and you can put on a multiple layer of sox.

I was really learning a lesson here, just like I did the night I tried to camp out my first hunting season with a blanket and a tarp. There is some vitally important equipment which makes hunting a go or a no go situation. Well lets go back to the first cat hunt in these parts with the gang from Houghton Lake. The bobcat is really a cat. He'll weigh from 12 to 14 pounds to about 35 pounds. He's wary and quite cunning—a real trophy if you don't shoot him out of the top of a tree. We like to call him Michigan Little Lion and today he's getting some of the protection he deserves as a game animal.

The dogs were not well trained and the owners hardly knew what a bow hunter was. At the end of the day on our first hunt, as we sat in the local diner with a cup of coffee the dog leader said to Gail, "you fellas are different than anyone we ever hunted with." If we were sitting here with typical gun hunters after an unsuccessful day they'd be bitching and griping. You guys sit here and laugh about how Jim fell in the drink, and have laughed and kidded all day long no matter what happened. "If this is bow hunting, I'm all for it." In later years when the cat had been almost removed from the Dead Stream with bounty, Hal had become a bowhunter and ran his dogs week after week on the same cat when no one else had anything to chase.

After this dry run we made a deal with Hal that he would give us a call if conditions looked right. There was one more dry run, and then on a Friday afternoon in February, Gail was called away from his desk at work for an emergency phone call. The weather had been terrible all week with cold, snow, sleet and every thing that would keep animals holed up. Hal was on the phone after hearing a weather forecast, a bright moonlit night with warming breezes. By the way, a warming breeze meant it might get up to 20 degrees. If they were going to move for us this winer, the weekend coming up would be it.

By 8 o'clock on Saturday morning we were on snowshoes and attacking the tag alders at the edge of the Deadsream. When it has been cold for a good period with the temperature around 10 degrees the frozen snow has a bright chirp every time you take a step. When all the animals have have done without food, waiting for the storm to abate, they are really out. The chickadees singing their de-de-de-de-de and the squirrels digging around in 4 feet of snow looking for the nuts they hid last fall, then dashing up a barren branch scolding the intruders every inch of the way. The branches of the cedars were laden with snow so that the slightest bump would send a cascade down the neck of your parka. And the dogs were just as energetic as all the rest of the animals. When they were first released they seemed to be trying to run all directions at once. They finally calmed a bit and we were off. I had heard stories about the early frontiersmen who fell off or lost their snow shoes when they were in snow over their head. Well, I took off with the same enthusiasm as the dogs and got about 100 feet into the brush, caught my right foot on a snag and down I went. This was learning how to sit on one snow shoe, put on the other, get up and relace the one you'd been sitting on. The only trouble was I couldn't find the one shoe that had plowed into the soft snow. When I finally found the shoe and got myself put back together, I had stomped flat an area at least 12 feet by 12 feet and I could hear the hounds faintly off to the west. I was at least 20 minutes behind the chase. That's where I remained most of the day. The dogs finally got a hot track and so when they circled I would almost be able to close in but never quite made it. Oh, I'd see the dogs or one of the fellows every once in a while or we would stop to rest and listen to the dogs, but when everyone took off I just couldn't keep up. This cat we were running did not want to tree and after about two and a half hours he was getting pretty tired. I heard a terrible racket back of me and ran the quarter

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FIRST CLASS

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mile toward the sound—but I was too late. Gail wasn't, however. The dogs had cornered the cat against a rock outcropping with Gail close behind. His first shot had missed and demolished the arrow against the rock, the cat had tried to run through and Gail's second shot got the trophy. He had been trying to shoot one of the Little Lions for 10 years, refusing to shoot a treed animal and finally success! The cat weighed about 20 pounds, which is light but for the few people who have had this thrill, you don't add.

We were all so excited that it took about 10 minutes to realize that we were no more than a few hundred yards from the car where we'd started five hours earlier. My own successful bob-cat hunt—which comes later, was so different from this hunt—partly I am sure I did not know all that was happening and my eyes were not woodsman eyes yet.

This was about my last hunting with Gail, as we drifted apart. We went together on a spring bear hunt and Gail really introduced me, to one of the most interesting and enjoyable animals I have ever known—the Michigan Black Bear. It was after this bear hunt that I was invited to hunt with Michigan Slim.

Editors Note: This series is getting more interesting with each chapter and is filled with hunting tips for the novice. We hope our members are enjoying it too.

Coho Film Now On Free Loan

LANSING—"Coho," the Conservation Department's new color-sound movie which chronicles one of the greatest fish stories ever told in Michigan, is now available free from the agency's film loan section in Lansing.

Because of the heavy demand for the 28-minute film, sportsmen's clubs and other organizations must make their loan reservations three weeks in advance. They are also urged to list an alternate showing date in case a booking cannot be made for their first choice.

News Flash

As we were ready to go to press with the June issue we received word that Jack White of Riverdale passed away suddenly, May 11, 1968 of an apparent heart attack while on a fishing trip. Jack was a long time member of M.B.H. and an ardent hunter and fisherman. Our sympathy goes out to his family.

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