

The Blade

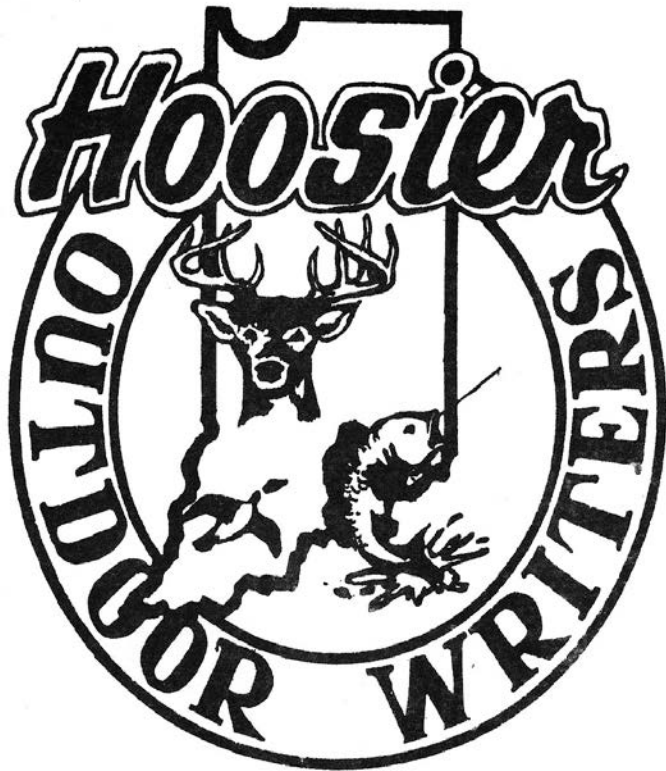
2024 Pre-Conference Issue

January - February 2024

The Official Publication of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers



"Winter Home for the Eastern Screech Owl", photo by Tom Berg



Hoosier Outdoor Writers

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

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Phil Bloom – 2025
Mike Schoonveld – 2025
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On the cover: A red morph or rufous-colored eastern screech owl watches for danger and for food from inside the safety of a wood duck nesting box. This particular screech owl has been visiting HOW member Mike Schoonveld's wood duck box every winter for the past few years. Photo by Tom Berg.



President's Message

by Jarrett Manek

Pass on those Outdoor Traditions

Greetings! It has been a pleasure sending out these presidential reports over the past year. I hope they have been encouraging for everyone to get outside and experience some aspect of nature. I wish good tidings to all for 2024. As for me, I still want to send out a message of passing it on to the next generations.

It is important to get in touch with someone new to the outdoors, take our youth with you on your next adventure, and/or mentor everyone you can with the passions which drive you outside. I do not necessarily mean to hunt or fish, but even something as simple as walking, hiking, biking, photographing or camping. Any aspect of getting outdoors will do. Demographics are changing. Public land seems to be getting smaller. Costs to do some things we used to do

are rising. There can be a lot of discouragement if you look for it. However, it is up to us to find those ways and share it in a positive way so that our next generations will want to take our place.

Some of my favorite seasons are coming to a close, while others are on the horizon. Deer season for us was challenging. I am just glad my daughter had the luck this year – not so much for everyone else in our family. Duck season has been extremely lacking with no significant bad weather to bring them down from the north. I also found out “after the fact” that a special high dollar, out of circulation duck decoy floated away to never be found again. Our western trip ended without any meat being brought back. Out of state tags never taste good unfilled! If it is sounding depressing, it is not. I remind myself that I am truly blessed to have been able to get out.

The older I get, I find my kids being a driving force for not sleeping in on the cold days. I find enjoyment watching them make the decisions for which deer stand to go to by reading the wind and not just flipping a coin. I appreciate the fact that they were listening to what I said in regards to reading signs and looking at trails. I get a smirk knowing that my kids are thinking and planning ahead of time before they go out. I am finding the silver lining in a year that has not necessarily bagged a bunch of future recipes for the table, but instead continued with the memories created simply by being outdoors.

We all have to be thankful regardless of the filled tags or the lack there of. The misses, the wrong stand, the spooked trophy, a malfunctioning gun are all part of it. The same goes true for shooting straight and hitting your mark. This is the time and the kind of year that I reminisce more from old photos. I look in a freezer full of successful times. With fish, turkey, ducks, geese and venison vacuum packed, the previous years will bring back memories where things may have been easier than this one.

It is not as easy as it sounds, but taking the effort to mentor just one individual can pay big dividends. Sometimes success does not always happen overnight, but with determination you can always find a silver lining.

Thanks for allowing me to be your president this year and I hope to see you all at the conference!

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers

New Members, Past Presidents and Memorial Section

HOW Extends a Warm Welcome to our Growing Ranks of Outdoor Communicators:

Marcus Montes (Associate)
Chicago, IL
Sponsor: Bill Keaton

George Verrusio (Associate)
Danville, IN
Sponsor: Don Cranfill

Memorial to Deceased HOW Members Those Who Have Gone Before Us:

Jack Alkire – HOW President 1979
Bill Beeman – Executive Director Emeritus
Don Bickel
Ed Blann
Charlie Brown
Gary Carden
Jim “Moose” Carden – HOW President 1982-83
George Carey
John Case
Bill Church – HOW President 1972
Gene Clifford
Jack “Big Jake” Cooper
Mark Cottingham
Larry Crecelius – HOW President 2003
Jerry Criss
Gary “Dox” Doxtater
Dick Forbes
Tom Glancy – HOW President 1977
Dale Griffith
Phil Hawkins
Fred Heckman
Marty Jaranowski – HOW President 1996
Jack Kerins
Mike Lyle – HOW President 1981
Ralph “Cork” McHargue – HOW President 1976
Dick Mercier
Bob Nesbit
Hellen Ochs
Jack Parry
Harry Renfro
“Bayou” Bill Scifres – HOW President – **6 Terms**
George Seketa
Hal Shymkus
Al Spiers
Robert “Doc” Stunkard
Butch Tackett
John Trout, Jr.
Joe West

Past Presidents of HOW

“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1969
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1970
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1971
Bill Church	1972
Rick Bramwell	1973
Jack Ennis	1974
Phil Junker	1975
Ralph McHargue	1976
Tom Glancy	1977
Bob Rubin	1978
Jack Alkire	1979
Louie Stout	1980
Mike Lyle	1981
Jim “Moose” Carden	1982
Jim “Moose” Carden	1983
John Davis	1984
John Davis	1985
Ray Harper	1986
Ray Harper	1987
Ray Dickerson	1988
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1989
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1990
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	1991
Jack Spaulding	1992
Jack Spaulding	1993
John Rawlings	1994
Phil Bloom	1995
Marty Jaranowski	1996
John Martino	1997
Mike Schoonveld	1998
Jack Spaulding	1999
Jack Spaulding	2000
Sharon Wiggins	2001
Phil Junker	2002
Larry Crecelius	2003
Bryan Poynter	2004
Phil Bloom	2005
Brian Smith	2006
Brian Smith	2007
Brent Wheat	2008
Bryan Poynter	2009
John Maxwell	2010
Brandon Butler	2011
Josh Lantz	2012
Ben Shadley	2013
Bob Sawtelle	2014
Alan Garbers	2015
Ken McBroom	2016
Don Cranfill	2017
Troy McCormick	2018
Mike Schoonveld	2019
Kenny Bayless	2020
Kenny Bayless	2021
Phil Seng	2022

It's Time to Renew Your HOW Membership

This is a friendly reminder that dues renewal notices were sent out to HOW members in mid-December. If you have not sent in your renewal yet, you are already late! Don't forget to update your Directory listing and send it in with your dues check. If you did not get a renewal notice by email, please contact me ASAP (thomas.berg@comcast.net).

We all hope 2024 will be a great year. We have had a fairly mild winter so far with the exception of one particularly nasty cold snap, and let's keep it that way! We are busily planning and preparing for the 2024 HOW conference at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, and we hope everyone can attend. There is more information about this year's conference and meeting inside this issue of *The Blade*, so keep reading.

Membership in the Hoosier Outdoor Writers provides a long list of benefits, including this full-color bi-monthly newsletter, *The Blade*. It is sent out via email and is also posted online. Other benefits include our annual Awards-in-Craft contests, the HOW Facebook page, a special "Nature Photo" contest with prizes inside each issue of the newsletter, our annual conference (including seminars and guest speakers), our annual HOW Fun Shoot (sporting clays, trap or skeet), an official HOW membership card which provides product discounts and allows entry to outdoor shows and similar functions, an online membership directory which lists all Individual members and Supporting members, and members-only access to the HOW website.

Of course, HOW membership also provides the opportunity for networking, the chance to learn new things, improve your craft and make new friends. Friendships formed at HOW functions can last a lifetime!

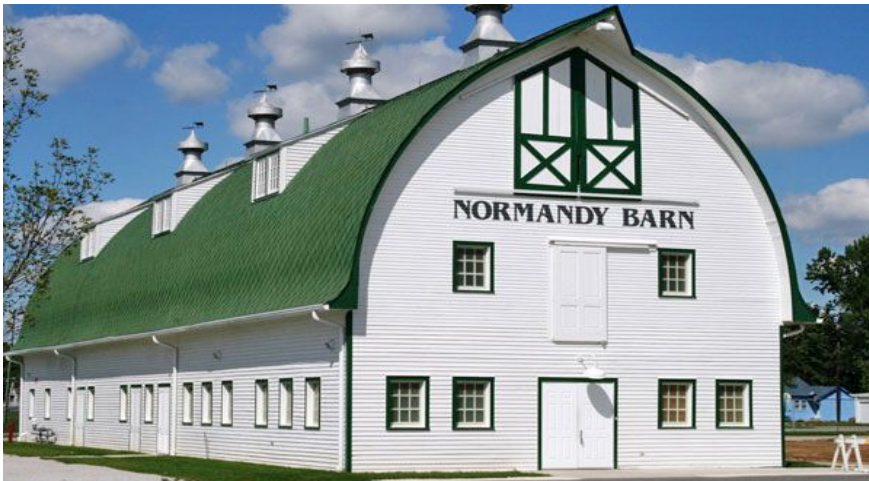
Dues for Active members is still only \$30 and dues for Associate members remains \$25. We are happy to accept personal checks or money orders. Please make all checks payable to HOW. We also accept credit cards and Paypal on the HOW website – simply click on the Dues & Donations tab on our home page (www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org). Then you can click on the proper membership level and pay right there. We prefer that payment be made by check, though, because Paypal does charge us a fee for the service.

The officers and executive committee at the Hoosier Outdoor Writers are looking forward to a fun-filled 2024 and we hope you will join us. Thank you for your continued support – we could not do what we do without you!

Don't forget to send in your 2024 HOW membership renewal!

**RENEWAL
REMINDER**

2024 HOW Conference Preview



HOW Members Will Gather at the Indiana Fairgrounds!

The 55th meeting of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will take place on the weekend of February 16-17, 2024 (Friday and Saturday) at the **Indiana State Fairgrounds** in downtown Indianapolis. The fairgrounds is centrally located in Indy, so it will be easy to get to and easy to find. Have you been to a HOW conference lately? This is shaping-up to be another great conference, and since it has been four years since we had a conference at the fairgrounds in

HOW members and guests will gather in the Indiana State Fairgrounds at the Normandy Barn on Saturday, February 17 for the annual HOW meeting. The doors will open promptly at 8:00am (Indy time).

conjunction with the **Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show**, so you won't want to miss it.

The weekend conference activities will begin with the annual HOW Fun Shoot on Friday, February 16. All HOW members who enjoy the shooting sports should consider joining us this year! If you have never shot a clay target, this would be a great opportunity for you to learn. Our shooters are always willing to help newcomers discover and enjoy the sport. Fun Shoot coordinator Mike Schoonveld has contacted the Indiana Gun Club (Fortville, IN) and we will meet there at 12:30pm (local time). The gun club is about a half hour drive from the fairgrounds. A special thank-you goes out to our friends at **Winchester Ammunition** for sponsoring the event and supplying the shotshells for all of the Fun Shoot participants.

We won't be having a Friday night press reception this year, but since this will be the opening weekend of the Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show, HOW members might want to spend Friday evening at the show. Renfro Productions has graciously supplied all HOW conference attendees with parking passes and press passes for the show, so spend some time exploring and talking with the exhibitors. There is a lot to see! The passes are good for each day of the show, so please feel free to use them more than once.

On Saturday morning, the main HOW meeting will take place at the historic Normandy Barn near the north end of the fairgrounds. The meeting will open at 8:00am with registration and a continental breakfast/coffee hour. Mingle with other HOW members and greet old friends.

The main meeting will begin at 9:00am as Justus O'Neil from Visit Indiana and the Indiana Destination Development Corporation will greet all conference attendees. He will talk about tourism in Indiana and what is happening in 2024. He will also have some travel guides and press kits available if they are back from the printer in time.



Here is a brief preview of the seminar speakers who will make presentations at this year's conference:

- **Mounds State Park and Indiana's Pre-history**

Kelley Morgan is the interpretive naturalist at Mounds State Park. She will talk about this interesting state park, but she will also include fascinating information on Indiana's history, especially in this area.

Mounds State Park, located in Anderson Indiana, is one of the best preserved Adena and Hopewell archaeological sites in the state. Interpretive Naturalist Kelley Morgan will guide us through pre-history from the peopling of the Americas to the cultures that began earthwork creation, and how Mounds State Park fits into that landscape. She also discuss the fall of the Native American civilization just prior to European contact.

- **Fire on the Landscape – Friend or Foe?**

Stephen Creech retired from the Indiana Division of Forestry, and during his tenure he held many titles, including state fire coordinator and countless other fire-related jobs. When it comes to fire on the landscape, he is a real expert. In his presentation, he will describe how for nearly 200-years Americans have treated landscape fire as evil and something to be controlled/suppressed at all costs. Applying this logic has been successful on one hand, but detrimental on

the other. Most of the ecosystems in this country developed from and are maintained with fire. These "fire dependent" ecosystems include America's giant sequoia groves, ponderosa and lodgepole pine stands, southern pine forests, native grasslands, desert shrub and lake states white and red pine forests. Closer to home, here in Indiana, it includes our oak and hickory forests, glades, fens, prairies and barrens. These ecosystems are not only born of fire, but need fire to maintain their status and composition.

Ecosystems are truly systems. Everything is linked and removing or changing one part of that system, changes the whole. This presentation will look at the historical significance of fire and discuss where we go from here. Indiana is losing its oak/hickory forests at an alarming rate. These forests, perhaps more than any other ecosystem, are home to some unique and now endangered plants and animals. We have lost a lot during the last two centuries and we will not get it back overnight. Reintroducing fire to the landscape will not be popular or easy, but it is a must!



Naturalist Kelley Morgan from Mounds State Park will talk about the park, the land and the early inhabitants of the area.



Fire expert Stephen Creech will discuss the facts about fire and its important role in our Indiana ecosystems.

- **What's New in the DNR Division of Communications**

Holly Lawson is the communications director for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). She joined the IDNR in December of 2022. In her presentation, she will discuss priority initiatives and updates from the Indiana DNR, as well as provide tips on how to best access information from the Indiana DNR through its website, smartphone app, and staff members.

HOW members who report on DNR topics and/or deal with fisheries biologists and other DNR experts will want to hear what she has to say.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources Communications Director Holly Lawson (right) will tell us what's new at the DNR and how our members can access the info that we need in a timely fashion.



- **Creating A New Generation of Bat Advocates**

Brad Westrich is the state mammalogist for the Indiana DNR, Division of Fish & Wildlife. He will help us learn about the different species of bats that live throughout Indiana's varied habitats. Find out

what bats are doing across Indiana's different environments and how they are helping everyday Hoosiers.



Westrich will help us explore ongoing research and bat monitoring programs that DNR and a handful of dedicated Hoosiers have participated in, and get the scoop on future monitoring programs state-wide.

Through this presentation, the state mammalogist hopes HOW members will find something interesting to share with our readers about Indiana's bats and their habits, because it is up to all of us to help generate positive opinions towards bats.

Indiana State Mammalogist Brad Westrich (left) will talk to the HOW membership about one of our state's most mis-understood mammals: bats. Many bat populations are on the decline, and bats are a very important part of Indiana's varied ecosystems. Make sure you sit in on this presentation to learn more about Indiana's many species of bats!

In addition to the speakers and seminars on Saturday, a slate of new officers will be presented to the membership and the volunteers will be elected. After the business meeting, we will all enjoy a buffet lunch prepared by the fairgrounds caterer. A big thank-you goes to the **National Shooting Sports Foundation** for sponsoring the lunch again this year at the HOW conference.

After lunch (and our third seminar), there will be an awards presentation sponsored by the **Turn in a Poacher (TIP) Citizen's Advisory Board** for this year's TIP Writing Contest. Through this contest, HOW members

help promote the TIP mission. HOW Board Chairman Phil Seng and Lt. Col. Terry Hyndman will present the TIP awards. The TIP presentation will then be followed by the awards for the annual HOW Awards-in-Craft contests (AIC). **Toyota Motor Sales** is the AIC sponsor again this year and they have our sincere thanks.

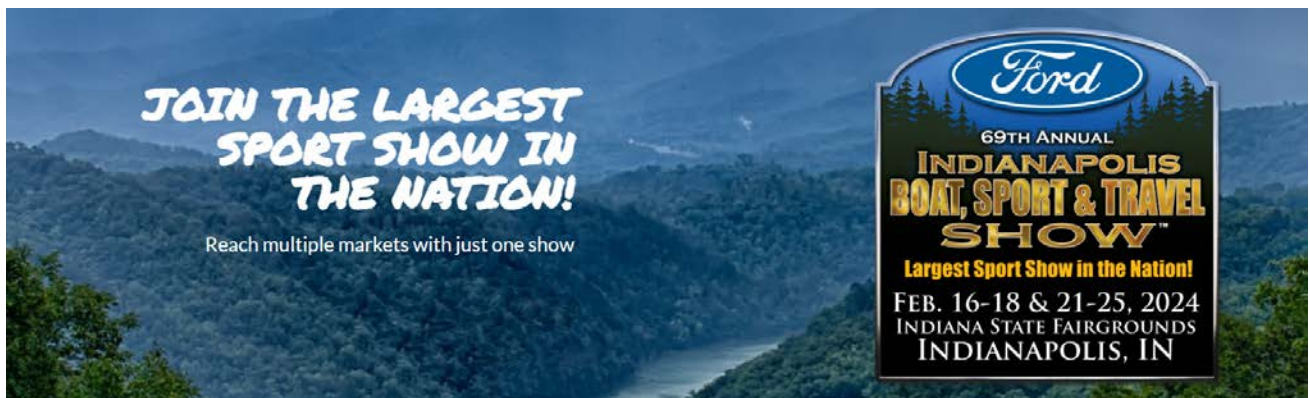
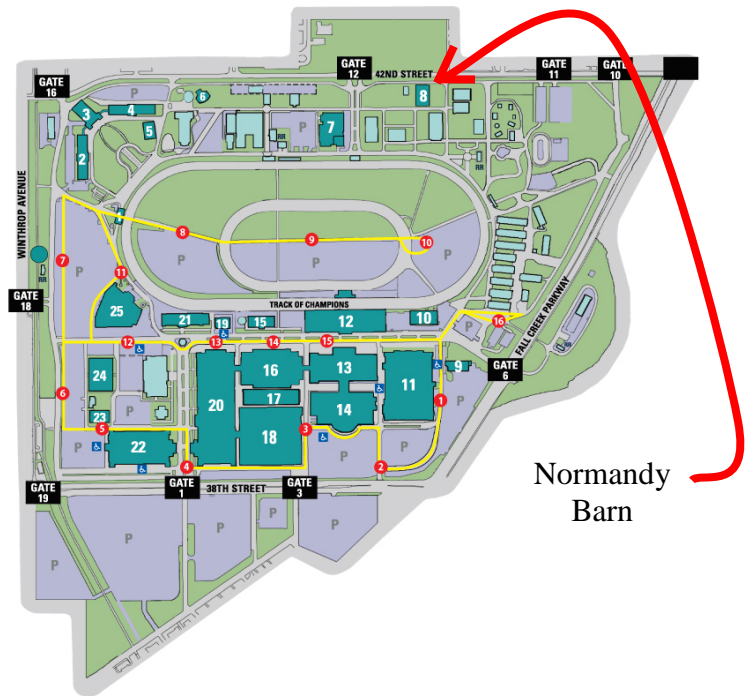
Of course, we are planning another excellent HOW Raffle this year, too! The raffle at the 2023 meeting at McCormick’s Creek State Park was a great one, and this year’s raffle will be pretty good, too, just not quite as big.

Another Amazing HOW Raffle!

We have received a great variety of exceptional outdoors products for this year’s raffle, including a beautiful Henry .22 caliber Golden Boy lever-action rifle, a great Ruger American Rifle Generation II in 6.5 Creedmoor, an excellent Mossberg Patriot rifle chambered in .243 WIN, a beautiful CVA .50 caliber muzzleloader, Daisy BB guns, a high-powered Vexilar Fish Scout underwater camera, a Boat US membership, premium sunglasses, high-end backpacks, fishing rods and reels, fishing tackle, fishing lures, shooting and hunting gear, an MEC reloading press, optics, books, electronics, knives, ammunition, gun cleaning products, hiking boots, archery gear, camping gear and much more. A few more items are still coming in, too, so start saving your money for tickets now. You must be present to win, so don’t miss it!

Don’t miss the 2024 HOW Conference!

Indiana State Fairgrounds



Hoosier Outdoor Writers Annual Conference Registration



Where/When: The Normandy Barn located inside the Indiana State Fairgrounds, Indianapolis, IN. Conference dates: February 16-17, 2024.

This registration form is for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, February 17th (8:00am – 4:30pm)

Information to appear on name badge:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Spouse's Name (if attending): _____

Contact information:

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Are you a first-time HOW conference attendee? _____

Conference Registration Fees:

HOW Members (and spouses): \$40.00 each (\$40 X number attending) = _____

Non-HOW Members: \$45.00 each (\$45 X number attending) = _____

The conference fee at the door will be \$50.00 (so be sure to register before the conference!)

Conference fee includes continental breakfast and buffet lunch on February 17, 2024.

Please print this application and mail it along with your check for each person attending (make check payable to "Hoosier Outdoor Writers") to:

**Tom Berg
2142 Nondorf Street
Dyer, IN 46311-1829**

Questions? Email all conference questions to Tom Berg: thomas.berg@comcast.net

The Annual HOW Fun Shoot

The 2024 HOW Conference will begin (as usual) with the HOW Fun Shoot. It has become a tradition for the shooters in our membership to get together and break a few clay targets, have some fun and renew old friendships on the Friday before the Annual Meeting. We



HOW member Bill Keaton takes aim at the Indiana Gun Club during the 2020 HOW Fun Shoot. Photo by Tom Berg.

usually have all levels of shooters participating, from beginners to near-expert, so don't think you are not good enough to join us. All skill levels are welcome.

Since the 2024 HOW Conference will be held at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in Indianapolis, we will be returning to the **Indiana Gun Club** where we have held this event many times in the past. Last year we enjoyed some trapshooting at the Spencer Conservation Club near Spencer, Indiana. This year we will either shoot sporting clays or skeet. The weather will likely be cold, so the shooters may opt for a couple rounds of skeet instead of a full round of sporting clays. After all, the skeet range is much closer to the clubhouse and we can warm up between rounds! Either way, it should be a lot of fun.

This year's shoot will take place on Friday, February 16 at 12:30pm (Indy time) and start shooting at 1:00pm. That should give us plenty of time to finish shooting and clean up before heading to the Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show for an evening of shopping and perusing outdoor gear and great destinations at the show.

The cost will be whatever the gun club normally charges (we are getting their normal member rate). Sporting clays (100 targets) will cost more than skeet since skeet is just 25 targets per round. You can pay the club's cashier when we arrive. If you need a shotgun, the club even has loaners that we can use. As always, we will be shooting rain or shine (or snow), so be sure to dress properly.

The gun club is located northeast of the park at 14926 E 113th St, Fortville, IN. To get to the gun club, take I465 to I69 and head northeast to E. 116th Street in Fishers. Turn right (east) and go about five miles until you reach Olio Road. Turn right and then make a quick left onto 113th Street. Follow this road for a mile and the gun club will be on your left.

Happily, we already have a Fun Shoot sponsor this year – **Winchester Ammunition**. Last year we did not have a sponsor, so we are happy that Winchester has graciously agreed to donate the ammunition to all HOW members who would like to shoot.



So if you plan to attend, please send me an email ASAP at thomas.berg@comcast.net (if you have not already done so) to let me know you are coming and what gauge of shotgun you plan to use (12GA or 20GA). I need to make sure I have enough shotshell ammunition for everyone.

2024 HOW Conference

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers would like to thank the following conference sponsors:



HOOSIER OUTDOOR WRITERS

Annual Meeting on February 17, 2024

Indiana State Fairgrounds

Normandy Barn, Indianapolis, IN

MEETING SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00am

Registration, continental breakfast.

9:00-9:05am

Opening remarks by President Jarrett Manek; briefing on the day's schedule.

9:05-9:10am

Justus O'Neil from Visit Indiana will greet the HOW members and talk briefly about tourism trends in Indiana during 2024.

9:10-10:10am

Seminar #1: **“Mounds State Park and Indiana’s Pre-History.”** DNR Interpretive Naturalist Kelley Morgan from Mounds State Park will give a presentation on the state’s pre-history, from the peopling of the Americas to the cultures that began earthwork creation – and how Mounds State Park fits into that landscape. She will also discuss Native American civilizations.

10:10-10:15am

Short break.

10:15-11:15am

Seminar #2: **“Fire on the Landscape – Friend or Foe?”** Steve Creech, retired fire expert from the Indiana Division of Forestry, will talk about fire on the American landscape and how people have tried to suppress it for the past two centuries. He will discuss “fire dependent” ecosystems and how they need fire to thrive. These ecosystems are home to many endangered plants and animals.

11:15-11:30am

Business meeting, Slate of new officers, election of new officers for 2024/2025.

11:30-12:30pm

Buffet lunch and social time for members, sponsored by the NSSF.

12:30-1:15pm

Seminar #3: **“What’s New in the DNR Division of Communications.”** DNR Director of Communications Holly Lawson will talk about priority initiatives and updates from the Indiana DNR, as well as provide tips on how to best access information from the Indiana DNR through its website, smartphone app, and staff members.

1:15-1:45pm

TIP Awards-In-Craft presentation.
HOW Awards-In-Craft presentation (Sponsored by Toyota Motor Sales).

1:45-2:15pm

Break. Raffle tickets go on sale!

2:15-3:15pm

Seminar #4: **“Creating A New Generation of Bat Advocates.”** DNR State Mammalogist Brad Westrich will help us learn about the different species of bats that live throughout Indiana’s varied habitats. He will also help us explore ongoing research and bat monitoring programs. Find out what bats are doing across Indiana’s different environments and see how they are helping everyday Hoosiers.

3:15-3:30pm

Break. Last chance to buy raffle tickets!

3:30pm

Annual HOW Outdoor Writer’s Raffle.

4:30pm

Meeting adjourns.

HOW Raffle Donors - 2024

This list of raffle donors was compiled shortly before the conference. Additional raffle donations may come in after press time, and they will be acknowledged in the next issue.

Alps Brands	Mister Twister
Archery Trade Association	National Shooting Sports Foundation
B'n'M Poles	National Wild Turkey Federation
Black River Tools	Nesco Vacuum Sealers
BoatUS	Norsemen Outdoors
BOLT Locks	Nosler
Bow Spider	O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.
BPI Outdoors	Old Salt Angling
Cauldryn	Outdoor Edge
Church Tackle	Otis Technology
Cocoons Eyewear	Pheasants Forever
Costa	Pro-Cure Bait Scents
Daisy Outdoor Products	Rapala VMC
Danner Boots	Seaguar Fishing
Dardevle Lures	Shooter's Choice
Egret Baits	SKRE Gear
Finn Tackle Company	Smith's Products
Flying Fisherman	Snag Proof Lures
The Gapen Company	Speedhook Specialists
Hawke Sport Optics	Sporting Classics
Henry Repeating Arms	St. Croix Rods
HHA Sports	Sturm, Ruger & Co.
Hi-Mountain Seasonings	Swab-Its
Hornady Manufacturing	Target Communications Outdoor Books
L&S Bait Company	Toyota North America
LaCrosse Footwear	TTI-Blakemore
Mack's Lure	Vexilar, Inc.
MEC Outdoors	Whitetails Unlimited
Mepps	WildTech Inc.
MirroLure	Winchester Ammunition



Interesting Bird Sightings in the Great Outdoors

We have been asking HOW members to submit photos and reports about interesting or unusual birds that they have seen during their outdoor adventures. The sightings do not have to take place in Indiana; anywhere in the world is fair game. All photos on these pages were submitted by those reporting.

We hope this page will not only interest bird enthusiasts, but all HOW members who enjoy spending time in the great outdoors (i.e. everybody). You may just learn something new, too!

Report from Mike Lunsford:

HOW board member Mike Lunsford knew the minute he heard that a rare **Vermilion Flycatcher** (*Pyrocephalus obscurus*) had been spotted in Indiana at Vigo County's JI Case Wetlands in late December that he would have to try to find it for himself. He did, and his January 2nd column in the Terre Haute Tribune-Star details the experience.



“Vermilion flycatchers are actually tropical birds,” Lunsford said, “and the one that was seen near Terre Haute (a male) is only the 7th time one has been recorded in Indiana, regardless of the season. To have it here is rare enough; to see it in December after a number of nights well below freezing is extraordinary.”

Lunsford regularly visits the wetlands just east of Terre Haute, and as a member of the Wabash Valley Audubon Society he knew just about where to look for the bird after a few members of the WVAS had seen it during the annual Christmas Bird Count. “It was seen in two places in the wetlands, one being a mudflat that was a good 100 to 200 yards from any area where you can stand with a camera. But, I was patient and willing to wait, and eventually got a very decent photo of the bird as it perched near some cattails. I may go the rest of my life and never see a vermilion again; they usually travel no farther north than southern Texas,” Lunsford said.

A brightly-colored male vermilion flycatcher made a rare visit to Indiana in December. Lunsford was lucky enough to photograph this rare bird at the JI Case Wetlands east of Terre Haute. Photo by Mike Lunsford.

This vermilion flycatcher, a relative of the eastern phoebe, catches its prey in midair, is often seen in desert regions, and has a diet that consists solely of insects. “We don't know

what he was eating, and we had no idea when he was headed farther south, but it was worth standing in the cold and mud to see him,” Lunsford added.

HOW members are encouraged to send their interesting bird photos to newsletter editor and bird enthusiast Tom Berg via email (thomas.berg@comcast.net) for use in future editions of the “Interesting Bird Sightings” page. Don't worry, it does not need to be a rare bird. Your fellow HOW members would love to see your bird pictures.

Did you take a cool bird photo while exploring afield recently? Did you see the bird in your backyard? While traveling far from home? Send the photo in for others to enjoy!

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: December 11, 2023

Brown, Rainbow Trout Stocked at 17 Bodies of Water

A total of 7,250 brown trout and 1,955 rainbow trout have been stocked in 17 bodies of water across Indiana.

“The demand from trout anglers for brown trout has been increasing over the past several years,” said Matt Horsley, fisheries biologist for northeast Indiana. “Stocking brown trout into our northern lakes and streams has the potential to extend trout fishing opportunities from just a month or so to several months, possibly even the entire year.” The stocked brown trout averaged 8.25 inches in length.

Brown trout stocking locations include:

- Fancher Lake, Lake County, 200 trout
- Harbor Lake, Porter County, 240 trout
- Little Kankakee River, LaPorte County, 250 trout
- Potato Creek, St. Joseph County, 150 trout
- Pinhook, St. Joseph County, 200 trout
- Lawrence Lake, Marshall County, 1,380 trout
- Myers Lake, Marshall County, 1,920 trout
- Sand Lake, Noble County, 400 trout
- Fairfield Northeast Lake, Tippecanoe County, 350 trout
- Boones Pond, Boone County, 550 trout
- Brookville Lake Tailwater, Franklin County, 1,610 trout



Rainbow trout stocking locations include:

- Pinhook Lake, St. Joseph County, 200 trout
- Shoaff Park Pond, Allen County, 300 trout
- Memorial Park Pond, Huntington County, 200 trout
- Johnson Lake, Jefferson County, 300 trout
- Oak Lake, Clark County, 405 trout
- Garvin Park Lake, Vanderburgh County, 550 trout



Anglers 18 and older will need an Indiana fishing license and a trout/salmon stamp to fish for trout. The bag limit for trout is five. This includes any combination of brook, rainbow, or brown trout, but no more than one may be a brown trout. There is no minimum size limit for lakes except for the 18-inch minimum size limit for brown trout at Oliver, Olin, and Martin lakes in LaGrange County, and the Brookville Lake tailwater in Franklin County. Streams have a 7-inch minimum size limit. There is no closed season for taking trout from inland lakes. Streams close to trout fishing from Dec. 31 to the last Saturday in April.

For more information on DNR fish stockings, visit on.IN.gov/fish-stocking. For more info about inland trout regulations, visit www.eregulations.com/indiana/fishing/inland-trout-regulations/.

Media contact: District 3 Fisheries Biologist Tyler Delauder, DNR Fish & Wildlife, phone: 260-244-7049, or email: tdelauder@dnr.IN.gov.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: January 11, 2024

New Burbot State Record Set Again

Anthony Burke of Cedar Lake was fishing for perch in Lake Michigan on January 6 when he landed a burbot that was 37.25 inches long and weighed 14 pounds, 3.6 ounces. Burke's catch bested the previous record held by Phillip Duracz by nearly three pounds.

This makes the third time the burbot state record has been broken in the last 13 months. Prior to the burbot record caught in December of 2022, the state record burbot had stood for 32 years.

Burbot are native to Lake Michigan. They typically spend most of their time offshore in deep, cold water in Illinois or Michigan's jurisdictional waters. During late fall and winter, burbot move into shallower Indiana waters to feed and spawn.



“Unseasonably warm weather and light winds on Lake Michigan the last several winters have provided boaters with a longer open-water fishing season and more opportunities to catch fish that are usually not in our waters, like burbot,” said DNR Lake Michigan Fisheries Research Biologist Ben Dickinson.

Burbot are good to eat. They are in the cod family and have firm, white flesh. Find more information about Lake Michigan fishing at on.IN.gov/lake-michigan-fishing and learn more about purchasing a fishing license at on.IN.gov/huntfishlicenseretailers.

Learn more about Indiana's other state record fish at on.IN.gov/recordfish.

Media contact: Lake Michigan Fisheries Research Biologist Ben Dickinson, DNR Fish & Wildlife, phone: 219-874-8219, or email: bdickinson@dnr.IN.gov.

Unintentionally Reliving the Past

by Jarrett Manek

I believe just about every state requires some sort of hunter education program and if they do not, they should. If you have ever mentored anyone in the sport of hunting, then you know the importance of stressing gun safety. From the time you put that gun in your hand or anyone else's, the number one rule is gun safety. Between excitement, awe, adrenaline or just not thinking of the consequences, sometimes accidents occur. From bow hunter education, trapper education, tree stand safety and more, every year in our outdoors, mishaps are inevitable. However, most of them could be prevented.

There are ten basic rules to consider when venturing outside on your hunt:

1. Know your limitations. Do not push yourself further than what you can physically or mentally handle. If you are not awake or too exhausted, you will not be thinking clearly!
2. Know your weapon. Be cautious borrowing a weapon and know its range and your capabilities for using that weapon. Just because the weapon can shoot that far, does not mean you can. Also, have your weapon inspected and practice with it. If it is not safe, do not use it.
3. Know your surroundings. It is important to think of where others could be. More than likely, you are not the only one in the woods. Make clear and precise shots.
4. Properly use all your recommended safety gear: harness, fluorescent orange clothing, etc. Safety gear is not just a recommendation. Most folks who have accidents say "They did not think it would happen to them." Or they say, "Yes, I have it, but I left it at home."
5. Choose your hunting partners wisely. Sometimes it is the other person who is unsafe!
6. Use the proper equipment and it should never have "home-made" modifications. There are reasons for manufacturer's warranties being voided if not installed or used according to specifications.
7. Never point a weapon at someone or something that is not the intended target. This should not need any explanation.
8. Never put your finger on the trigger or release until you are ready to shoot. Again, no explanation needed here.
9. Always be prepared. You never know what situation you will find yourself in. You can never be too prepared.
10. Use common sense. This is one of the most important rules. If you look back on most accidents, a little bit of common sense could have prevented many bad situations.



A painful powder burn might have been prevented. Photo by Jarrett Manek.

These ten rules are not the only things to consider for preventing an accident. The truth is accidents do happen and sometimes they cannot be prevented. If you look back at our early settlers, they had primitive traditional weapons. Some were very simple and basic. Over time, technology has advanced us tremendously, but the same rules still apply today as they did early in our outdoor endeavors. Today though, we literally have the education at our fingertips.

I am an advocate for traditional equipment and use it as my preference for a "fair chase" challenge. However, I was recently reminded of these simple rules as I sat in a tree stand. While using a borrowed, custom-made flintlock 54 caliber rifle (with which I have never harvested a deer), I found myself reflecting on the early mountain men and wondering how many mishaps, malfunctions, and accidents occurred early in history with our beloved activities of hunting and trapping.

During the last thirty minutes of my evening hunt, I found myself looking at third degree powder burns from a flintlock hammer that mysteriously dropped. The flint drew a nice spark, igniting a full pan of powder and the gun went off prematurely into the air. Where did the bullet go? Shaken up and in shock, I gathered my composure for the final thirty minutes of my hunt. I said my prayers and gave thanks thinking about the "what ifs". Thankfully, no one else was hurt.

A lot of questions are still going through my mind, some of which will never be answered. One question is "How often did that happen to the early pioneers?" Maybe not very often if they had thought about these 10 basic rules. Needless to say, always think safety first!



British Research Shows Fishing Improves Mental Health

by Larry LaGrange

We fishermen knew it all along – a fishing trip is often the ticket to a better mindset. An article in *Men's Journal* cites a British study that shows fishing is tied to a lower risk of mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts. Three prestigious colleges collaborated in an online survey of 1,752 male participants, asking them about their participation in recreational angling, physical activity levels, any diagnoses of psychiatric disorders, and overall mental health and wellbeing. Why females were not included was not mentioned, but most likely results would be the same.

To us fishermen and women, results were not surprising. Regular anglers were about 17 percent less likely to have mental health issues than those who fished less often. Those who fished more frequently received an even greater positive impact. The study's authors say the numbers could suggest that the dual benefits would be relaxation as well as an increased level of physical activity. After seeing some success in pilot programs, UK doctors can now refer some non-angler patients to local fishing clubs that offer support along with basic equipment.

A British tackle shop owner wasn't surprised. "Being in the great outdoors is good for the soul," he said. "You are not designed to be locked up in cooped-up spaces. You are designed to be an animal of the world. You can feel calm and at one with nature. It's not just about the fishing. It's about conservation, and it's satisfying since your mind blanks-out because all you're worried about is what you're fishing for and what your target is."

There's just something about fishing that's hard to explain as to why it's so appealing. Since I grew up in a small town, fishing and hunting were my hobbies, along with most other guys in Perry County, it seemed. Most rural kids get to know the outdoors, and what a blessing that was for me. I've got company. Statistics say around 44 million people in the US identify as anglers. It's second only to jogging in popularity. When the pandemic hit, there was an upsurge in outdoor interest, as it was perceived as safer than being inside. One study showed that four out of five anglers fished about as much as they always did, but one in five increased their outings. That seems small, but that one extra trip for thousands means food, gas, equipment, and so on. The effect on the economy was significant. If you fish, you are spending money, but most fishermen perceive their hobby as relatively low-cost. I fished recently at a local lake. It took about ten minutes to get there, I used very little outboard gas, and I brought along a water and a snack. The fish mangled three of my best plastic worms, so that's some cost, but it's a small price to pay for a safe, stress-relieving activity.

The other side of the fishing-is-peaceful coin is the high-pressure professional tour, like the Bassmaster and Bass Pro events. I enjoy watching both on TV, especially in the winter when getting out myself is tough. Recently I observed how one older fishing pro reacted as victory slipped from his grasp in the last seconds. With a starting field of 80 pros this past February, the final ten bass experts were competing in the Bass Pro tour on famous Lake Kissimmee in Florida. I'd guess the average age of the ten was maybe 35. When \$100,000 for first place is on the line, nerves get pretty raw. A missed fish could cost an angler thousands of dollars.

Sixty-year-old veteran Mark Davis, by far the oldest competitor, had a 12-pound lead on the final day of a grueling four days of fishing. Mark has been there before, as his 35 years of professional angling show several wins, including winning the Bassmaster Classic and Angler of the Year in 1995. He is only one of two anglers to accomplish that feat in the same year. Mark needed one more decent fish to cement the deal, but with 40 seconds left in the last period of fishing, Chris Lane landed a 5lb, 5oz bass to overtake Mark by nine ounces. I have watched several of the younger guns on the tournament trail and how they react to lost fish, broken lines, and all the heartbreak that can go with angling for bass. Sometimes it's not pretty, as adult temper tantrums can go. But Mark calmly accepted that he had been bested. He smiled and said, "Well, dang it. Guess it just wasn't meant to be. Good for Chris." The second-place award of \$45,000 was a nice prize too. From Mount Ida, Arkansas, Mark's a family man with wife Tilly and three sons. Those boys, now men with the appropriate names James, Hunter, and Fisher, have a good role model to follow. I have a feeling that being on the water with their dad for a guide is stress-free and good for everyone's overall health. It's like fishing should be.



In Search of Badlands Mule Deer

by Jarrett Manek



Ten years ago, I had my first opportunity to travel to South Dakota for a new experience: chasing mule deer near the Badlands of the Dakotas. Just thirty miles or so east of Badlands National Park and Wall, there is a ranch covering more than twenty thousand acres. It provides the opportunity to lease some prime deer hunting land “by invitation only”. For me, the price was right, the mule deer were plentiful, and the invitation was accepted. Bow hunting only gave a greater challenge to the pursuit.

With a stick bow in hand and wind in my face, that first time provided me with three opportunities for a shot. Unfortunately I did not connect. The excitement of spot and stalk with traditional archery equipment gave me a



less than optimum advantage over the far-shooting compound bow hunters who were practicing 70 yard shots. I had a great time, learned a lot and was proud that I was light-footed enough to get within 15 yards of a nice bedded down buck. The cedar tree between us was the only problem with getting a quality shot. When I repositioned and popped up over the hill, he had vanished like a ghost.

Ten years later, this year, I was excited to get an invitation to venture once again to the Badlands region, but this time it was with my son. Both of us were practicing traditional archery shots up to thirty yards and were ready. However, as a backup, I will admit that a compound bow was taken along for emergencies as well as a crossbow due to my recent back issues. The crossbow required a permit, which is free to apply. We heard stories of the hundreds of mule deer seen last year and years past. We were told we could take our pick of some big 140-160 class mule deer. They even talked about seeing some 180-190 class mule deer. Things were sounding too good to be true and the anticipation started to feel like a fairy tale hunt and if we were patient, we might harvest a “Giant”!

Every hunter knows why it is called hunting. For the first few days, there seemed to be a mysterious absence of deer. We were seeing some, but unfortunately for us, they were not on the ranch we could hunt. Things with this hunt kept getting slowly worse as the days proceeded. The rancher finally admitted that the deer were just not there. They suspected that a lot had died over the winter during a few prolonged bad snowstorms. Secondly, we found out the rancher had not planted any crops which would attract them as the other surrounding ranches had done. Third, we kept hearing a lot of hype about what it used to be like in years past.

(continued next page)



Wyatt Manek glasses the Badlands countryside in search of mule deer sign.

Finally, it was extremely dry when we arrived, with no wind forecasted. If you have looked closely at a picture of a mule deer, their ears are larger than our whitetail around here and they act like monstrous radar dishes. Any deer in the area knew we were there long before we could get close enough to get a glimpse of them.

This put me in a very frustrating situation of having the option to sit in a ground blind over a water hole or a well-worn trail. As for me, I did not plan to travel for 18 hours and sit in a beautiful countryside and stare at the inside of a blind and look out a couple little windows. That is just not appealing to me, personally. I did, however, take that option for as long as I could stand it for a few sits. I saw some deer but did not have a good opportunity to shoot.

Of course, the hunting was hard, and we made the best of it. We got a lot of needed exercise, and we did finally see some deer. We even saw one of the biggest deer of the trip literally sniffing where we had been sitting. Nothing is as poetic as deciding to move, then looking back and seeing a deer standing where you were from across the valley. After making the best of it, my son did get two nice stalks on quality mule deer and missed, TWICE. He also performed a similar stalk on a bedded buck like I had previously done on my first trip. When he repositioned just as I had, it was gone as well.

All in all, you make out of a trip what you want. Whether it is fishing, hunting, backpacking or just a family vacation, we all can remember that if it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is. Do not always get caught up in the hype of the past, because you are in the now. You can always look at the glass either full, half full or half empty or totally empty. We decided to make the best of it. We created some great memories and a new adventure together as father and son. We saw prairie dog towns and golden eagles. We found dinosaur bones. We had some unexplained rocks thrown on top of the cabin during the night. This happened more than once! Was it Sasquatch? We also had an unusual sounding growl in very close proximity to us on the edge of a rock ledge and some dark timber. Was it a mountain lion? We'll never know.



Jarrett Manek and his son Wyatt, enjoying the outdoors on their recent Badlands mule deer hunt. Photos by Jarrett Manek.

Thankfully, we made it back in one piece with no accidents or mishaps. Unfortunately, we came back without any deer meat, either. We've all heard the expression, "All's well that ends well". But I am not sure if I can honestly say the stress level was better than when we left.

HOW Member News

Phil Seng Says “Deer Coolers are...Cool!”

HOW Board Chairman Phil Seng from South Bend is a serious deer hunter, and he looks forward to the fall deer seasons with great anticipation every year. This year was no different.

“I had a great archery season this year,” said Seng. “A dandy 10-pointer came into my food plot in the peak of the rut, looking for action. He stood rock-still behind some neck-high vegetation for a full FORTY-FIVE MINUTES while I stewed in my own juices, expecting that at any minute he would bolt. But the wind was in my favor. He finally stepped into the open and turned broadside, and I was able to do my part.”



“Then, after notching and attaching my transportation tag, I got the joy of taking him to my state-of-the-art, walk-in deer cooler, which I built in my new pole barn last year. I backed my pickup truck up to the overhead barn door, rolled a cart over to the truck, slid the buck onto the cart, and rolled the cart to the cooler. An electric hoist lifted him effortlessly up to the overhead rail/trolley system that sent him rolling to the back of the cooler.”

“By the end of muzzleloading season, my son, two buddies and I had 10 deer resting comfortably in the cooler, dry-aging like fine wine. Over the years, I’ve had to butcher many deer within 24 hours of harvest because the temperature was too warm to wait. I can tell you from experience that the butchering process, and most importantly the *tenderness* and *deliciousity* (it’s a word—look it up) of venison after a couple weeks in a cooler is nearly miraculous in comparison. So this year I got the full temperature extreme – the buck was hot and the cooler was cool!”

Phil Seng smiles after adding more venison to his new cooler. And that’s a great-looking buck, too. Congrats!



Rick Bramwell Loves Rabbit Hunting With Dogs

HOW Past President Rick Bramwell is partial to dogs, and especially beagles. He has had beagles for many years and absolutely loves to hunt rabbits with them. Here is one of his stories from early January.

“Hunting rabbits on your own and with a beagle might seem similar, but they are two different sports,” commented Bramwell. “Without a dog, there are no second chances. There can be multiple opportunities with a good dog like my beagle Tramp. However, one must acquire knowledge about hunting with a dog.”

“My New Year’s afternoon was spent rabbit hunting with three young men in their early 20s. Jonathan Schlabach, David Schlabach, and Adam Grbic are all cousins and related to my good friend Dave Schlabach. As the afternoon progressed, the hunt became a teaching experience. “

“Anyone who has not hunted with a hound wants to follow the dog. I explained the dog’s location is where the rabbit is. Look ahead and also behind. Rabbits will often make a U-turn to throw off the dog.”

“Unlike deer hunting, rabbit hunting involves talking and is more of a social endeavor. However, there is a time to be quiet when the dog is bawling on the trail. Rabbits usually run in a circle, or a hound would not be needed. If the rabbit hears you, it will break off its intended route. You must also stand still until you realize the rabbit is making a different circle.”

“On one occasion, everyone was spread out and in contention for a good shot, but when Tramp kept barking in one location, I knew the cottontail had holed-up. When this happens, leash the dog and take him away from the area.”

“I instructed these young men to yell excitedly when they jumped a rabbit, ‘Right here, right here, right here!’ This lets Tramp know you have a bunny for him to run. However, I soon realized there had to be more of an explanation. While Tramp was barking on the trail, one of the guys would see that rabbit running well ahead of the dog or see another rabbit and begin yelling, ‘Right here!’ I never call Tramp off a hot trail just to get on another.”



“When I was these fellows’ age, one of my mentors was Jack Baker. He did not mince words. He said, ‘Son, you kill all your rabbits on the second shot. Just put one shell in your pump shotgun; that will keep you from hurrying the first shot.’ Taking a little more time means more distance and a wider pattern with your pellets. The size of those pellets is important, too. I like #5 or #6 shot. Anything smaller will hide in the meat. Biting down on a lead pellet is painful.”

“Each young man harvested a rabbit. For David and Adam, it was their first. All agreed hunting rabbits with a dog is much more fun than deer hunting.”

“The next day, I received this text: ‘Hey Rick, this is Adam Grbic. I was hunting with you, Jonathon, and David. I wanted to thank you again for taking the time to help us bag some rabbits. We couldn’t have done it without you. That was something I had never done before, and I loved it. I am always looking for a mentor to teach me new stuff. It would mean the world to me to go out and learn some things with you. Sadly, I don’t have any grandpas left. To have an opportunity like this is amazing.’”

“You can make a difference by taking a young person hunting or fishing.”

HOW Members Invited to Attend the 2024 POMA Meeting

HOW member Kevin Paulson has forwarded the following note for all HOW members:

I would like to take this opportunity to offer to all members of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers the opportunity to attend the POMA Annual Meetings in Pineland, SC in May. We are offering all media organizations a \$50.00 discount on registration and we are not requiring those attending to become a member of POMA. It is our hope that those individuals attending will see the value of POMA but joining our organization is not a requirement for attending. This conference will be a tremendous event and will be filled with learning opportunities.

You're invited to the ultimate outdoor media extravaganza! The [Professional Outdoor Media Association's](#) Annual Meeting is a must-attend event for top outdoor media, content creators, photographers and corporate wizards alike! Join forces to test the latest gear, learn cutting-edge skills and create authentic content for the coming year. Whether you're a brand or a media guru, this is your chance to share your story and make lasting connections that'll take your business to new heights.

The 2024 Annual Meeting will be three full days – May 6-8 – in Pinewood, South Carolina, at the South Carolina Waterfowl Association.

This year's keynote speaker, Bud Johnson, will tackle "The Ai (re)Evolution: Transforming Outdoor Media from Survival to Revival."

Other event highlights include:

- Choice of field trip including: guided fishing, kayak trip, airboat tour and more!
- Speed Meeting (bring lots of business cards)
- Product Showcase
- Range Day
- Content Creation Sessions (bring your cameras and video equipment)
- Educational Breakout Sessions
- Free Weekend Pass to BirdFest Bluegrass Music Festival (weekend prior to the Annual Meeting)
- Meals by on-site gourmet chef
- Wild game cooking demo
- Awards ceremony
- Silent and live auctions
- Nightly networking sessions
- Beer tasting from local breweries

The cost is \$250 per person. POMA is offering a \$50 discount to anyone who signs up from your organization. Use code SCMEDIA24 in the "Coupon" section when registration for the Annual Meeting. Here is a link for registration: [POMA Annual Meeting Registration](#)

Registration cut off is 4/22/24. If you have any questions about attending or the registration process, please email Britney at Info@ProfessionalOutdoorMedia.org or myself. Thank you.

Kevin Paulson
HuntingLife Media
202-744-5806
Kevin@HuntingLife.com
<https://HuntingLife.com>



In the bird world I believe that the Bobwhite quail has done more to corrupt man's truce with fact than any other feathered friend, although a duck liar and a wild turkey liar enjoy certain phases of the moon when they take an adverse view of temperance and truth.

Robert Ruark The Old Man's Boy Grows Older

Membership Changes and Member Contact Info

The following names represent our newest HOW members. Please make a note of their contact info:

Marcus Montes: 2047 North Humboldt Blvd., Chicago, IL 60647, phone: 773-750-6094,
Email: marcusmontes922@gmail.com

George Verrusio: 452 Crestwood Ct., Danville, IN 46122, phone: 317-590-6811,
Email: george@buygeorge.com

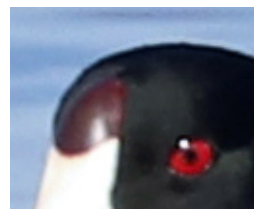
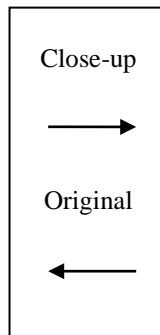
The following HOW member has updated contact information:

John Martino: Old phone numbers are gone. Please use cell phone: 765-437-0268,

If your email address, phone number or other contact info changes, please notify HOW Executive Director Tom Berg at thomas.berg@comcast.net or by mail at 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311.

Unusual Nature Photos from the Hoosier Outdoors Sponsored by Cocoons Eyewear

The American Coot, Or “Mud Duck”, Is Not a Duck At All



The “What is it?” photo from the last issue was a bit harder than the last one, since it

was correctly identified by only eight (8) HOW members. Mike Schoonveld, Mike Lunsford, Troy McCormick, Bill Keaton, Alan Garbers, Phil Cox, Phil Seng and John Maxwell were all able to identify it. When we drew a name at random for the **Cauldryn** Coffee Pro, Troy McCormick was the lucky winner. Congrats, Troy! We will deliver the prize to you.

As can be seen in the photo above and to the left, the mystery creature for this issue was an

American Coot (*Fulica americana*). About the size of a small duck, the American coot is black or a very dark charcoal gray color, with a white bill and a bright red eye. They also have a small dark red patch on their forehead. Their large, awkward-looking feet are an unusual whitish-green color.

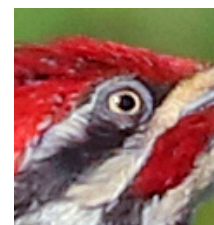
Actually, American coots are not ducks at all. They are in the same family as rails and gallinules. They do not have webbed feet like ducks, either. Their feet have very long toes which help them walk on aquatic vegetation, but the toes also have broad lobes of skin that spread out and help them paddle through the water. Although coots are mostly vegetarian, they also eat aquatic insects, snails and crustaceans. But their favorite foods are duckweed, cattails, rushes, water lilies, wild rice, and other aquatic weeds.

For this issue, our friends at **Cocoons Eyewear** have donated a nice prize for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issue’s “What Is It?” question. This time the prize will be a pair of Cocoons FitOver sunglasses. See below for more info and this issue’s nature question.



Berg Poses Another Nature Photo “What Is It?” Question

Tom Berg has posed another Nature Photo mystery. The photo shown at right is part of a close-up of a creature that can be found throughout most of Indiana year-round. You might even see it in your own back yard if you are lucky. Does it look familiar? Have you ever seen this color pattern when spending time outdoors?



This creature may be easy for some people to identify, and harder for others. But we’ll see. Do you know of any creatures that look like this? This time you will have to identify the exact species. If you think it’s a species of lizard, for example, go ahead and guess “broadhead skink” (of course, it’s not a lizard). If you think you know the answer, send an email to me at thomas.berg@comcast.net. If you’re right, you will be entered in this issue’s prize drawing!



As mentioned, **Cocoons Eyewear** (www.cocoons.com) has donated a very nice pair of Cocoons Slim Line polarized FitOver sunglasses with Polare’ lens technology for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issue’s “What Is It?” nature question. If multiple people guess correctly, we’ll draw a winner at random from the pool of correct entries. All nature photos on this page were taken by Tom Berg.

HOW Supporting Member News

These pages are devoted to the loyal supporting members of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers. Brief descriptions of new products, award-winning products and press releases are listed here. HOW members interested in reading more can visit the supporting member websites or call or email the media contact for more information.

MEC Outdoors Has A Great Solution For Today's Ammunition Shortages

Mayville, WI: MEC Outdoors, the maker of high quality shotshell reloaders, has a wide range of reloading presses for hunters, target shooters and recreational shooters. One of their most popular presses is the 600 Jr. Mark V. "I would suggest the 600 Jr. Mark V as it is an inexpensive press and it is very easy to use," said MEC Outdoors Manager Shawn Wozniak. All of MEC's products are made in the USA, too.

600 JR. MARK V

WORLD'S #1 SHOTSHELL RELOADER

The MEC 600 Jr. Mark V is our most popular model and includes features found on our more expensive models. Novice and seasoned gunners appreciate these features along with the time-tested excellence this single-stage reloader has provided over the years with quick, simple operation with minimal effort. The cam-action crimp die ensures that each shell is returned to its original condition. Positioning wads is quick and easy. The one-piece Spindex Crimp Starter swivels to align itself correctly with original shell creases, giving a perfect crimp every time. The MEC 600 Jr. Mark V can load 4 to 6 boxes per hour, and can be upgraded at a later date with the 285CA primer feed which would eliminate the need to handle each primer individually.

FEATURES:

- Available in 10, 12, 16, 20, 28 gauge and .410 bore.
- Die sets are available to convert your existing 600 Jr. Mark V to another gauge.
- The press is also adjustable for 3" shells.



It starts with high-quality manufacturing right here in the United States. Our products are hand assembled by highly skilled craftsmen and women that all take pride in their work. Most of them are shooting enthusiasts, just like you, and expect a high standard of quality. MEC specializes in the design, engineering, metal fabrication, tube forming, coatings, and assembly. These are key ingredients that go into the manufacturing of the products we make for you.

Media Contact: For more information, HOW members may go online to www.mecoutdoors.com or contact: MEC Outdoors Manager Shawn Wozniak, email: swozniak@mecoutdoors.com, phone: 920-387-6980.

HOW's Supporting Member Websites

Al's Goldfish Company - www.alsgoldfish.com
Alps Brands - www.alpsbrands.com
Ankor Fishing Gear - www.ankorfishing.com
Archery Trade Association - www.archerytrade.org
Arctic Ice - www.arctic-ice.com
Artrip Float Company - www.artripfloatcompany.com
B'n'M Pole Company - www.bnmpoles.com
Black River Tools - www.blackrivertools.com
BoatUS - www.boatus.com
BOLT Locks - www.boltlock.com
Bow Spider - www.bowspider.com
BPI Outdoors - www.BPIguns.com
Cauldryn - www.cauldryn.com
Church Tackle Company - www.churchtackle.com
Cocoons Eyewear - www.cocoons.com
Costa - www.costadelmar.com
Daisy Outdoor Products - www.daisy.com
Daiwa - www.daiwa.com
Dardevle by Eppinger - www.dardevle.com
Ducks Unlimited - www.ducks.org
Egret Baits - www.egretbaits.com
Falcon Guides - www.falcon.com
Finn Tackle Company - www.finnspoons.com
Flying Fisherman - www.flyingfisherman.com
Hawke Sport Optics - www.hawkeoptics.com
Henry Repeating Arms Co. - www.henryUSA.com
HHA Sports - www.HHASports.com
Hi Mountain Seasonings - www.himtnjerky.com
Hornady Manufacturing - www.hornady.com
Indiana Destination Development Corporation - www.visitindiana.com
Kehrer Fish Company - www.kehrerfishcompany.com
L&S Bait Company - www.shopmirrolure.com
Lawrence County Tourism - limestonecountry.com
LensPen - www.lenspen.com
LiveTarget Lures - www.livetargetlures.com
Mack's Lure - www.mackslure.com
MEC Outdoors - www.mecoutdoors.com
Mepps by Sheldons', Inc - www.mepps.com
Mister Twister - www.mistertwister.com
Mongo Attachments - www.mongoattachments.com
Mustad - www.mustad-fishing.com
National Shooting Sports Foundation - www.nssf.org
National Wild Turkey Federation - www.nwtf.org
Nesco Vacuum Sealers - www.nesco.com
Nikko Fishing - www.nikko-fishing.com
Norsemen Outdoors - www.norsemenoutdoors.com
Nosler - www.nosler.com
Nothead Tackle - www.notheadtackle.com
O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. - www.mossberg.com
Old Salt Angling - www.oldsaltangling.com
Otis Technology - www.otistec.com
Outdoor Edge - www.outdooredge.com
Pheasants Forever - www.pheasantsforever.org
Pro-Cure Bait Scents - www.pro-cure.com
Rapala VMC - www.rapala.com
Renfro Productions - www.renfroproductions.com
Seaguar Fishing Lines - www.seaguar.com
Shooter's Choice - www.shooters-choice.com
Smith's Products - www.smithsproducts.com
Speedhook Specialists - www.speedhook.com
Sporting Classics - www.sportingclassics.com
Spypoint Trail Cameras - www.spypoint.com
St. Croix Rods - www.stcroixrods.com
Sturm, Ruger & Co. - www.ruger.com
Swab-Its - www.swab-its.com
Sweet Owen CVB - www.sweetowencvb.org
Tales End Tackle - www.talesendtackle.com
Target Communications Outdoor Books - www.targetcommbooks.com
Toyota Motor Sales - www.toyotaneewsroom.com
Traditions Media - www.traditionsmedia.com
Traveler's Guide to Firearms Laws of 50 States - www.bookvalueusa.com
TTI-Blakemore Fishing - www.ttiblakemore.com
Vexilar, Inc. - www.vexilar.com
Whitetails Unlimited - www.whitetailsunlimited.com
WildTech - www.wildtechgear.com
Winchester Ammunition - www.winchester.com
WOOX - www.wooxstore.com
W.R. Case - www.wrcase.com
Z-Man Fishing - www.zmanfishing.com

HOW members are encouraged to check these websites for general info and answers to product and service questions.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers

Application For New Membership

(Check Desired Classification below)

- \$30 _____ Active
- \$25 _____ Associate
- \$50 _____ Supporting
- \$15 _____ Active Student
- \$10 _____ Associate Student

Personal Information:

Name: _____
Company (Supporting members only): _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Professional Information:

Employer (if outdoor-related): _____ Position: _____
Business Address: _____
Business Phone: _____

1. Describe your work in the outdoor field: Full Time _____ Part Time _____

2. Check your field(s) of outdoor work:

_____ Newspapers	_____ Magazine	_____ Radio	_____ Artist
_____ Books	_____ Photography	_____ Lectures	
_____ Television	_____ Teaching	_____ Trade Journals	
_____ Blog/Online Work	_____ Public relations	_____ Government Info - Ed	
_____ Other (Specify): _____			

3. Are you paid for your outdoor work? Yes _____ No _____

4. Your work is published or disseminated: Daily ____; Weekly ____; Monthly ____; ____ times a year

Attach samples or other proof of your work in the outdoor field: newspaper clips, letters from station managers attesting to frequency of radio or TV broadcasts, lecture schedule or publicity clips, photo clips or artistic prints, title of latest book, masthead of trade journal showing your position, etc.

Send completed application and article copies to: **Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311.**

I have read the principles and membership requirements of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers and would like to enroll in the classification checked above.

Signature: _____

Sponsor: _____

Who We Are

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

What We Do

These are the purposes of HOW:

1. To improve ourselves in the art, skill and effectiveness of our craft, and to increase knowledge and understanding of the whole state.
2. To help ensure the wisest and best conservation of Indiana's resources, and the most wide-spread fair use of Indiana's recreational potential.
3. To provide a vehicle for bringing together and joining in common cause all Hoosiers who by profession, hobby or interest are devoted to the outdoors.
4. Conduct an annual Awards-In-Craft Contest among its members. The award winners are announced each year at HOW's annual conference.

What We Stand For

These are what we strive to accomplish:

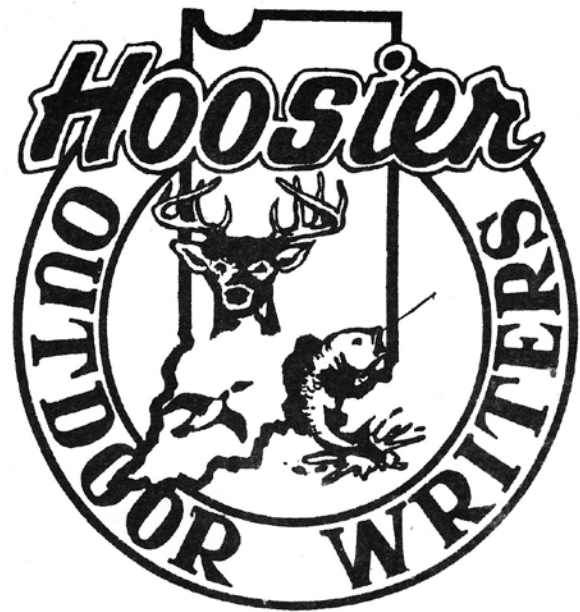
1. To give the profession of outdoor writing/reporting greater recognition and understanding, even higher standards and enlarged scope.
2. To encourage and enforce high standards of professional ethics.
3. To strive always for the truth, accuracy, clarity and completeness in the dissemination of outdoor information.
4. To help friends and fight the foes of wisely conserved Indiana resources.

Membership Requirements

Membership is open to anyone who meets one of the following:

1. Active

Members are those regularly engaged in the paid dissemination of outdoor-oriented information via newspapers, radio, television, internet/online, magazines, trade journals, books, photographs, art, lectures, or other fitting media. (Basic guidelines of "regularity" of dissemination are: 20 newspaper articles, photos or broadcasts a year; 20 online



articles, blogs, vlogs or podcasts a year; two national or four regional magazines or specialty journal articles a year, or one book, 10 lectures, or 20 bona fide outdoor news releases a year). The legal advisor for the association shall be an active member without meeting the basic guidelines.

2. Associate

Members are those who have a strong direct interest in the outdoors, either professional or personal, such as conservationists of all kinds; nature lovers; sportsmen; outdoorsmen; public employees in outdoor fields; educators teaching related subjects; fishing guides and tournament anglers, and retail-level dealers in outdoor goods, equipment or facilities.

3. Supporting

Members are those engaged in major commercial efforts directly related to the outdoors, such as manufacturers, distributors, service providers, manufacturers' representatives, or advertising agencies serving any of these.

4. Active Student

Members are those between the ages of 18 and 24 years who are bona fide college students with a major in journalism, communications, or natural resources sciences.

5. Associate Student

Members are those who are students who have an active interest in the outdoors in the areas of fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, nature, ecology, or in preserving the environment in general.

Calendar of Events

2024 ATA Show:

(www.archerytrade.org)

St. Louis, MO

January 11-13, 2024

Cincinnati Boat, Sport & Travel Show:

(www.CincySportShow.com)

Cincinnati, OH

January 19-21 & 24-28, 2024

SHOT Show 2024:

(<http://shotshow.org>)

Las Vegas, NV

January 23-26, 2024

HOW 2024 Annual Conference:

(www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org)

Indiana Fairgrounds

Indianapolis, IN

February 16-17, 2024

Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show:

(www.IndySportShow.com)

Indianapolis, IN

February 16-18 & 21-24, 2024

Indiana Deer, Turkey & Waterfowl Expo:

(www.IndySportShow.com)

Indianapolis, IN

February 23-25, 2024

POMA 2024 Business Conference:

(www.professionalooutdoormedia.org)

Pinewood, SC

May 6-8, 2024

NRA 2024 Annual Meeting and Exhibits:

(www.nraam.org)

Dallas, TX

May 17-19, 2024

HOW members may submit upcoming events, along with dates, locations and other details to the newsletter editor at: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org for possible inclusion in future issues of *The Blade*.