

The Blade

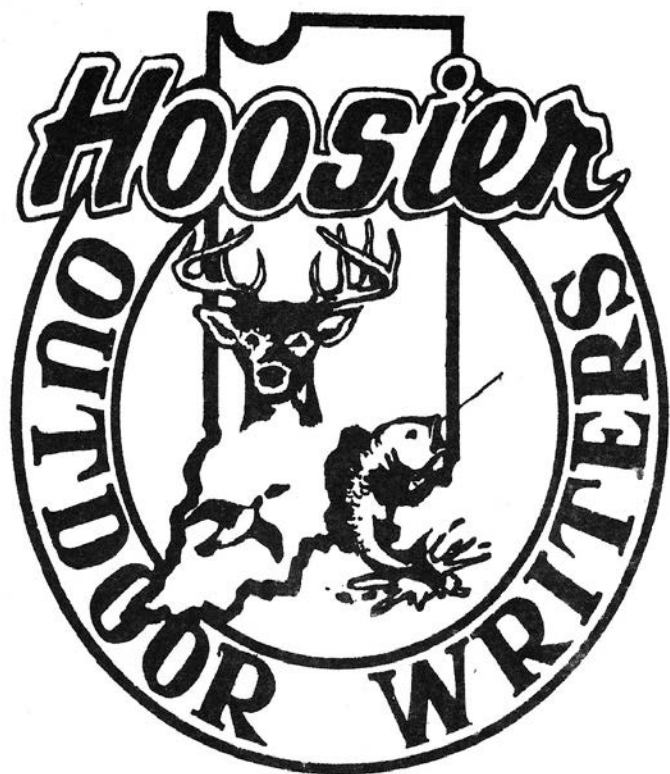
2025 Pre-Conference Issue

March - April 2025

The Official Publication of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers



"The Stunning Brook Darter in Springtime", 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.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers Executive Council

Board Chairman

Jarrett Manek
7234 Old Forest Rd SW
Corydon, IN 47112
jmanek@dnr.IN.gov

President

Bob Sawtelle
2350 Harrison Spring Rd NW
Corydon, IN 47112
blueriverbob1@gmail.com

Vice President

Marilyn Culler
204 S. Spring St
Greencastle, IN 46135
culler.photo@gmail.com

Executive Director

Tom Berg
2142 Nondorf St
Dyer, IN 46311
director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org

Advisor

Bill Keaton
7070 Vilas Rd
Spencer, IN 47460
wbkeaton1945@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor/Publisher

Tom Berg
2142 Nondorf St
Dyer, IN 46311
director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org

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2025

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Brent Wheat – 2025
Rick Bramwell – 2026
Don Cranfill – 2026
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All submissions and correspondence in regards to the newsletter should be directed to: Tom Berg (e-mail: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org), or to Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf St., Dyer, IN 46311. Portions of this newsletter may be reproduced only with the permission of the Hoosier Outdoor Writer's Executive Board and/or the permission of the original author or authors submitting the material. HOW website: www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org.

On the cover: This beautiful male brook darter is all decked-out in its spring spawning colors. Red, orange and turquoise-blue make this fish hard to forget. Unfortunately, most people never see the brook darter – other than those crazy microfishing anglers, of course. Photo by Tom Berg.

President's Message

by Ranger Bob Sawtelle

Florida Fishing Report: Hunting Snook at Night

I am writing this message in early March from my fishing HQ in Florida. It is a lot warmer here than it is at home in Indiana!

Snook are one of the most popular inshore game fish in Florida, but at times they are hard to find and pull from their deep mangrove-root-shadowed lairs. Fishing at night along canals and docks can help even the odds. Snook often congregate while looking for smaller fish that are attracted to dock lights and special green-colored “snook” lights. Sea trout and jack crevalle also gather at these spots.

Snook lights are usually placed by dock owners, so be courteous and give their boats and motors a wide berth when casting. Waterproof snook lights can also be purchased from sporting goods stores or retail websites featuring outdoor equipment.

Spin casting and fly casting can be equally successful. For me, it's fly fishing at night that I find most exciting. Keep in the shadows and cast to the well-lighted target areas. If you want to spoil the spot, land your fly or lure directly in the center of the light. If you want to catch more snook and other species, work the dimmed edges. Don't spook the lighted area on your first cast.

Stealth is important. Trolling motor approaches are a must. I use a 7wt flyrod with a 9-foot tapered leader and a soft-landing streamer fly. My favorites are Dave's Light Bulb #6, a pink and white shrimp, or glass minnow imitators.



Don't let the fly sit after landing. Move it immediately with lively, short strips. Hook sets usually just happen with determined strikes from snook. Sometimes a surprise speckled sea trout joins the fun. Occasionally, a giant shadow from a mystery fish moves across the light and silently disappears, never to return.

When you do hook a fish, try to steer the fight away from the light. That might keep other nearby fish from getting spooked. But don't be surprised if a whole herd of snook pursues the fish you hooked. One last word of advice: After you catch a snook or two from a light, move on. This calms the remaining fish and the dock light owners, too.

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers

New Members, Past Presidents and Memorial Section

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

Terry Hyndman (Associate)
Columbia City, IN
Sponsor: Phil Seng

Rebekah Zipay (Associate)
Fairmount, 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
George Tilford
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 “Cork” 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 |
| Jarrett Manek | 2023 |

The Annual HOW Fun Shoot

The 2025 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 some clay targets, have fun and renew old friendships on the Friday before the Annual Meeting. Some of our participants are experienced shooters while others are new to the sport and are still learning. All skill levels are welcome, and the “senior” members are always willing to help newcomers.



WINCHESTER
AMMUNITION

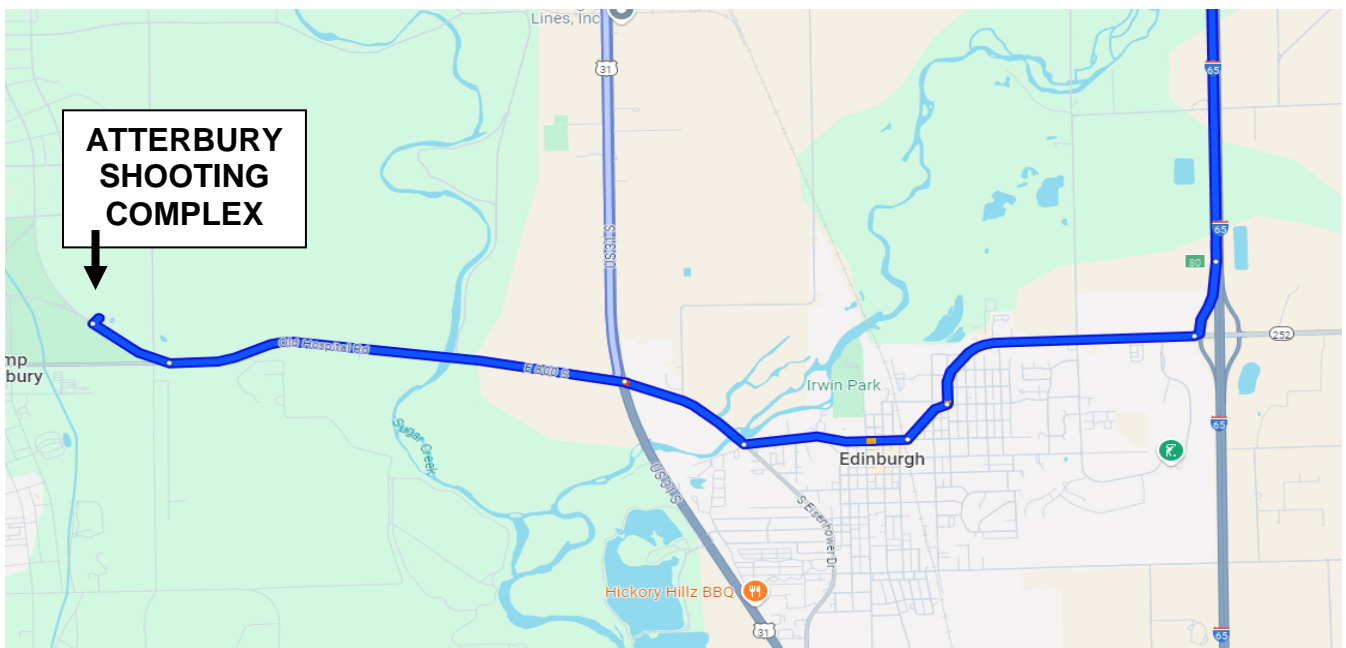
Since the 2025 HOW Conference will be held at Clifty Falls State Park near Madison, we will be shooting at the Atterbury Shooting Complex near Edinburgh. The address is 4250 Edinburgh St, Edinburgh, IN.

We will meet on Friday, April 4 at 1:00pm (local time) and start shooting at 1:30pm or as soon as everyone arrives. This facility is easy to find, and we have printed a handy map below. According to Google Maps, the gun club is only about a 40 minute drive from downtown Indianapolis. For those of us traveling south on I-65 to Clifty Falls, the Atterbury Shooting Complex is nearly right on the way – it’s just a few miles west of I-65 at the Edinburgh exit.

This year we will be shooting a few rounds of skeet (25 targets per round), and we are hoping for good weather. The cost for the shoot will be whatever the gun club normally charges and you can pay the club’s cashier when we arrive. Be sure to bring your own shotgun and hearing protection to the shoot. Just like last year, our friends at Winchester are sponsoring the Fun Shoot again and supplying the shotshells for all of the Fun Shoot participants.

See the map below for directions to Atterbury, or type Atterbury Shooting Complex (or the address) into Google Maps, your GPS or your smartphone. Come on out and join the fun! We should have plenty of time to finish shooting and get to Clifty Falls State Park to check in at the inn and get ready for our Friday evening barbecue. It is a one hour and 15 minute drive over to the state park from Atterbury.

A special thank-you goes out to our friends at **Winchester Ammunition** for once again sponsoring the event and supplying the shotshells for the Fun Shoot.



Prepare for the Friday Evening BBQ

As we have done in the past, many HOW members will gather and socialize on the evening before the main conference meeting at an informal barbecue/cookout. Since the HOW conference will take place at Clifty Falls State Park, we will hold our barbecue inside the park at the **Clifty Shelter House** on Friday, April 4 at 6:00pm. This large shelter is located near the north end of the park (see the map below). It has a nice parking lot, a fireplace and plenty of picnic tables. A public restroom is located within 100 feet of the shelter.

A big thank you goes out to the **Madison Visitor's Center** for providing the shelter and sponsoring the barbecue for us.

The barbecue will begin at 6:00pm, so come with a healthy appetite! There will be plenty of time to meet up with old friends and make some new ones as the food is being prepared. Andrew Forrester, the Executive Tourism Director from Visit Madison, Inc, will be on hand to greet us and give a brief description of Clifty Falls State Park and the Madison area and what it has in store outdoor enthusiasts.

We hope everyone can make it to the BBQ this year. If you would like to attend but have not reserved a spot yet, please contact Tom Berg ASAP and he will get you on the list.



2025 HOW Conference Preview



HOW Members Prepare to Gather at Clifty Falls State Park!

The 56th meeting of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will take place on the weekend of April 4-6, 2025 (Friday through Sunday) at **Clifty Falls State Park** near Madison, Indiana. Madison is located on the southeastern edge of the state, right on the banks of the mighty Ohio River. Have you been to a HOW conference lately? It has been twelve years since we had a conference at Clifty Falls, so you won't want to miss this one. It is shaping-up to be another great conference!

The weekend conference activities will begin with the annual HOW Fun Shoot on Friday, April 4. All HOW members who enjoy the shooting sports should consider joining us this year! We will be shooting skeet, and if you have never shot skeet (or 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 Tom Berg has contacted the Atterbury Shooting Complex (near Edinburgh, IN) and we will meet there at 1:00pm (local time). The Atterbury location has a nice facility which we have used in the past. See page 5 for more information and a map to the Fun Shoot.

On Friday evening, we will gather at the Clifty Shelter House near the north end of the state park at 6:00pm for a special barbecue and get-together that we are planning with the help of the Madison Visitor's Center. See page 6 for more info and a map that shows the location of the Clifty

Save The Date!
Conference: April 4-6, 2025
Annual Meeting: April 5, 2025

(continued next page)

Shelter. This will be a great opportunity to see old friends and make some new ones, and all HOW conference attendees and their spouses are invited. The activities sign-up sheet is printed on page 14 of this newsletter if you haven't signed up already.

The Madison Visitor's Center is in the process of recruiting one of the local Madison BBQ teams to prepare a nice barbecue dinner for us. As mentioned on page 6, Andrew Forrester, from Visit Madison, Inc, will be on hand to greet us and talk about the area. With all that Clifty Falls State Park has to offer and with the Ohio River "right next door", the opportunities for outdoor recreation around Madison are nearly endless. That means there are endless story opportunities, too! The BBQ should be a lot of fun and there will be plenty to eat and drink. It will be a great time to see old friends and make some new ones, too. So come out and join us!

On Saturday morning, April 5, the main HOW meeting will take place in the **Overlook Room** inside the historic Clifty Inn. HOW members who can't make it Friday night or who can't stay until Sunday should still feel free to come for the meeting on Saturday. It is "The Main Event", and some people will be coming on Saturday only. The meeting will open at 8:00am with registration and a continental breakfast/coffee hour. Mingle with other HOW members and greet old friends that you haven't seen for a while.



The main meeting will begin at 9:00am as HOW President Bob Sawtelle will greet all conference attendees. He will provide a briefing of the day's schedule and read a list of this year's HOW conference sponsors. We should all thank this year's sponsors for their support of HOW. He will also point out the press kits supplied by Visit Madison, which will be useful when writing stories about the Madison area after the conference. Clifty Falls State Park is a beautiful park with numerous waterfalls, gorgeous views and abundant wildlife. So bring your camera and a notepad (or just use your smartphone)!

We have a great lineup of interesting seminar speakers for this conference. They will provide some excellent material for your stories, blogs and podcasts. Here is a brief preview of the speakers and what their presentations will cover:

- **The Ohio River Fishery:
Past, Present, and Future Management**

Phillip Kacmar (at right) is the big rivers fisheries biologist for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He is responsible for sportfish populations in the Ohio, White, Wabash and Patoka Rivers. He will talk about the Ohio River, its fishery, and where it was, is currently, and future thoughts. Specifics include Indiana's commercial fishery, current management of a few species including catfish, and historical creel data. Between shipping, water levels, and multiple state agencies, management of fish in the Ohio River is a complicated process that DNR biologists must navigate.



- **Invasive Carp in the Ohio River Basin**

Craig Jansen (below), the invasive carp biologist for the Indiana DNR, will provide an interesting presentation on invasive carp in the Ohio River. As most people know, Asian carp are not just a problem in Indiana. Jansen will describe how it will take an enormous collaborative effort to get this issue under control. He will summarize the history of how Indiana's dedicated invasive carp work unit came about, and the role they play in the Ohio River invasive carp partnership.



Great strides have been made over the past few years to significantly ramp up harvest and removal efforts within the Ohio River, and substantial efforts are underway to increase harvest and use of carp from Indiana waters. Complete eradication is a long shot, but continued innovation and hard work can reduce invasive carp populations to levels that will have limited impacts to our native fishes and

recreational boaters.

- **Bird Watcher's Digest Magazine**

Michael Sacopulos (at right), the publisher and owner of the Bird Watcher's Digest magazine, will talk about the magazine's history, what it takes to put together a national nature magazine about birds and birding every two months, and some of the myriad challenges faced by publishers today. He will also discuss the types of bird photos and articles he uses in the magazine.



- **Imperiled Freshwater Mussels in Indiana**

Brant Fisher (below) is a nongame aquatic biologist for the Indiana DNR, and he will discuss freshwater mussels in Indiana. These mollusks are one of Indiana's most imperiled groups of



animals. Over half of Indiana's 79 species are now considered extirpated or listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Habitat alteration/degradation, overharvest, water quality issues, and impacts by non-native species have all contributed to their decline. Their interesting biology, unique life history strategies, and current restoration activities for freshwater mussels in Indiana will be discussed.

In addition to the speakers and seminars on Saturday, we will conduct our annual HOW business meeting. 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 kitchen staff at the Clifty Inn. 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 are able to help promote the TIP mission. HOW TIP liaison Phil Seng and Lt. Col. Terry Hyndman will present the TIP awards. The TIP presentation will be followed by the awards for the annual HOW Awards-in-Craft contests (AIC). **Quad 4 Plastics** **Another Amazing HOW Raffle!** from Elkhart, Indiana is the new official AIC sponsor for the HOW AIC contests this year and they have our sincere thanks.

Of course, we are planning another excellent HOW Raffle this year, too! The raffle at the 2024 meeting in Indianapolis was a great one, and this year's raffle will be very good, too. We have received a great variety of exceptional outdoors products for this year's raffle, including a great Ruger American Rifle Generation II (caliber: 7mm-08 Rem); a beautiful Mossberg Patriot 350 Legend rifle with a fluted barrel, drop box magazine and a walnut stock; an excellent CVA Optima V2 .50 caliber muzzleloader combo, complete with a Konus Pro scope and a CVA soft rifle case; a Boat US membership, premium sunglasses, high-end backpacks, fishing rods and reels, fishing tackle, fishing lures, shooting and hunting gear, a trail camera, an MEC reloading press, optics, books, electronics, knives, ammunition, gun cleaning products, a Hornady gun safe, waterfowl decoys, fishing rod holders, trolling gear, 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!



Sunday Fishing Outing on the Ohio River

We are also planning a fishing outing on Sunday, April 6 for any conference attendee who wants to stay an extra day and do some fishing for catfish on the Ohio River. We have coordinated with members of the Indiana Catfish Association (ICA) and they will have some boats and volunteer boat captains to take us fishing on Sunday morning. Boats, fishing tackle and other equipment will be provided, but you will need to have a valid Indiana fishing license, proper clothes (including rain gear), camera, etc. You must sign up in advance, and an "earnest money" check of \$25 will be required to reserve your spot on a boat. We will give the earnest money to the captains after the event to help cover their costs (gas, bait, etc).

For those who don't want to fish on Sunday, there are plenty of other options inside the state park. Hiking (there are more than 12 miles of hiking trails here), bird watching and nature photography are other great pursuits that will be available at Clifty Falls as well. Hiking through Clifty Canyon is popular, and hikers can also try the 'Four Falls Hiking Challenge'. Don't forget the individual waterfalls themselves. If there is sufficient rain this spring, the falls will be very picturesque. Be sure to bring your camera (or phone!).



Besides interesting things to see inside the park, the city of Madison is right next door to Clifty Falls State Park. There is plenty of shopping for the ladies in quaint shops downtown, and there are several historic sites, as well. In fact, Madison's downtown business district is one of the country's largest National Historic Landmark Districts. There is the Lanier Mansion State Historic Site, the Madison Railroad Station, the Masonic Schofield House (built in 1815) and the Schroeder Saddletree Factory Museum, just to name a few. Come to Madison and see it all for yourself!

Special Auction Announcement

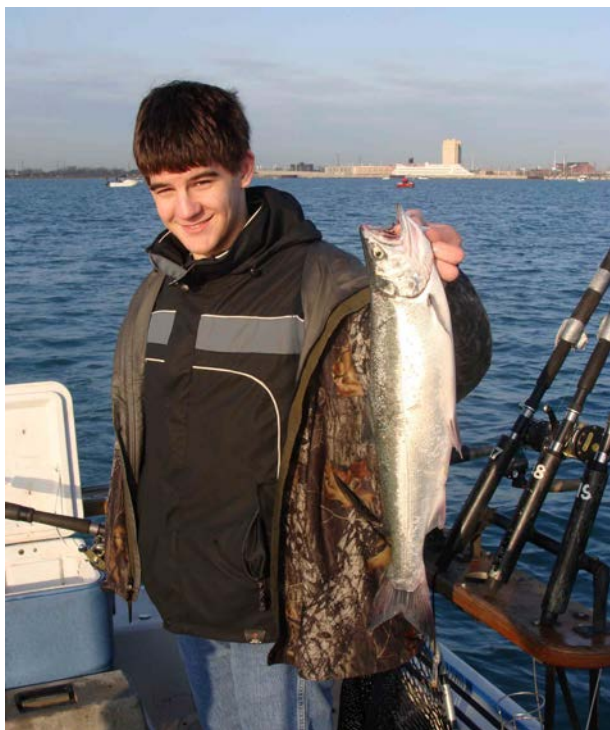
At the 2025 HOW Conference

Lake Michigan Springtime Salmon Fishing Charter!

Bidding Starts at \$200!

At the upcoming 2025 HOW Conference at Clifty Falls State Park, the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will be auctioning-off an exciting Lake Michigan salmon fishing charter trip. This spring fishing trip was generously donated by HOW member **Mike Schoonveld** of **Brother Nature Fishing Adventures** and includes fishing for a variety of Lake Michigan salmon and trout species. Although the main target (and likely the majority of the catch) will be coho salmon, it is very possible that other Great Lakes species such as brown trout, steelhead (rainbow trout), chinook salmon and lake trout might also be caught.

This is an auction for a 5-hour guided fishing trip for up to three anglers on Lake Michigan during the springtime. Bidding will start at \$200. High bidder will enjoy a memorable day of fishing on Lake Michigan with HOW member Capt. Mike Schoonveld. Trip to be taken during April or May of 2025, or if that cannot be arranged, it can also be taken during the March-April-May timeframe of 2026.



Have you been thinking about experiencing springtime salmon fishing on Lake Michigan? This is the perfect time to try it with a seasoned professional! Winner can email Mike Schoonveld at mike@bronature.com or call 219-819-0000 to schedule the trip and arrange all of the details.

All required tackle is included, and fish cleaning after the trip is included as well. Fishing license, transportation and lodging are not included.

Be sure to check out the **Brother Nature Fishing Adventures** website for additional details and other fishing trip information (www.brother-nature.com).



HOW Raffle Donors - 2025

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

Alps Brands
Archery Trade Association
B'n'M Poles
Black River Tools
BoatUS
BPI Outdoors
BrushPile Fishing
Church Tackle
Costa
Dardevle Lures
Falcon Guides
Finn Tackle Company
FINS Braid
Fiocchi Ammunition
Flying Fisherman
G Pucci & Sons
Gator Bait Tackle
Gill Fishing
Grundens USA
Habit Apparel
Hawke Sport Optics
HHA Sports
Hobie Eyewear
HoldFastPro Phone Holders
Hornady Manufacturing
Kehrer Fish Company
MEC Outdoors
Mercer Sport
MOJO Outdoors

National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Nothead Tackle
O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.
Off Shore Tackle
Old Salt Angling
Outdoor Edge
Owner Hooks
Plano Molding
Pradco Outdoor Brands
Pro-Cure Bait Scents
Pure Fishing
Rapala VMC
Riton Optics
Seaguar Fishing
Snag Proof Lures
Speedhook Specialists
Sporting Classics
Spypoint Trail Cameras
St. Croix Rods
Sturm, Ruger & Co.
Target Communications Outdoor Books
Toyota North America
Traveler's Guide to the Firearm Laws
TTI-Blakemore
Vortex Optics
Whitetails Unlimited
Winchester Ammunition
W.R. Case

Hoosier Outdoor Writers Annual Conference Registration



Where/When: The Overlook Room inside the historic Clifty Inn located at Clifty Falls State Park, Madison, IN. Conference dates: April 4-6, 2025.

This registration form is for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 5th (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 April 5, 2025.

Please print this application and mail it along with your check for each person attending (make check payable to “HOW” or “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

Hoosier Outdoor Writers Conference Activities Registration

Please register for the Pre-Conference and Post-Conference activities listed below which will take place on Friday, April 4, 2025 and Sunday, April 6, 2025. The only activity that requires an advance payment is the guided Sunday fishing trip, but please indicate the number of people planning to attend each activity so we can plan accordingly. Note that activities are reserved for registered conference attendees only.

Contact information:

Name: _____

Spouse's Name (if attending): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City or Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Activity Registration Fees for HOW members and their spouses (per person):

Please print this registration form and mail it along with your check (if you choose guided fishing) for each person attending. Make checks payable to "HOW".

| | Number Attending | Shotgun Gauge (20ga or 12ga) |
|--|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Friday's HOW Fun Shoot*: _____ X | _____ | _____ |
| Friday Evening Barbecue: <u>FREE!</u> X | _____ | |
| Sunday Guided Fishing**: <u>\$25.00 each</u> X | _____ | = \$ _____ |
| <u>TOTAL:</u> | | \$ _____ |

* HOW members participating in the Fun Shoot will need to supply their own shotgun and hearing protection, but Fun Shoot sponsor Winchester will be supplying the ammunition. The fee for the Fun Shoot will be payable at the Gun Club on the day of the event.

** The Sunday guided fishing trip on the Ohio River will include a guide, boat, bait and tackle. HOW members will only need to bring their fishing license, jacket, drinks, camera, etc.

If you are planning to attend any of the activities listed above, please complete this form and either mail it or email it to Tom Berg at:

Tom Berg
2142 Nondorf Street
Dyer, IN 46311-1829
thomas.berg@comcast.net

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

2025 HOW Conference

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



HOOSIER OUTDOOR WRITERS

Annual Meeting on April 5, 2025
The Clifty Inn (Overlook Room)
Clifty Falls State Park, Madison, IN

MEETING SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00am

Registration, continental breakfast.

9:00-9:10am

Opening remarks by President Bob Sawtelle and briefing on the day's schedule. He will also list all of the HOW conference sponsors and thank them for their support.

9:10-10:10am

Seminar #1: **"Ohio River Fishery: Past, Present and Future Management."** DNR Big Rivers Fisheries Biologist Phil Kacmar will give a presentation on the Ohio River, including its past, present and future management. He will discuss current management of certain species including catfish, commercial fishing in Indiana, and historical creel data. Biologists work with multiple state agencies on this river.

10:10-10:15am

Short break.

10:15-11:15am

Seminar #2: **"Invasive Carp in the Ohio River Basin."** DNR Invasive Carp Fisheries Biologist Craig Jansen will talk about these non-native Asian carp in the Ohio River and efforts to get them under control. He will summarize the history of Indiana's invasive carp work unit and describe plans to significantly ramp up carp harvest and removal in Indiana to lessen impacts on native fish and recreational boaters.

11:15-11:30am

Business meeting, Slate of new officers, election of new officers for 2025/2026.

11:30-12:30pm

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

12:30-1:15pm

Seminar #3: **"Bird Watcher's Digest."** BWD owner and publisher Mike Sacopulos will talk about the magazine's history and what it takes to put together a national nature magazine every two months, along with some of the challenges faced by publishers today. He'll also discuss the types of bird photos and articles he needs in the magazine.

1:15-1:45pm

TIP Awards-In-Craft presentation.
HOW Awards-In-Craft presentation
(Sponsored by Quad 4 Plastics).

1:45-2:15pm

Break. Raffle tickets go on sale!

2:15-3:15pm

Seminar #4: **"Imperiled Freshwater Mussels in Indiana."** DNR Nongame Aquatic Biologist Brant Fisher will make a presentation on freshwater mussels in Indiana. He will discuss reasons for the decline of our native mussels, including habitat degradation, overharvest, water quality issues and impacts of non-native species. His talk will include their interesting life histories and current restoration efforts.

3:15-3:30pm

Break. Last chance to buy raffle tickets!

3:30pm

Annual HOW Outdoor Writer's Raffle.

4:30pm

Meeting adjourns.

Newport Bird Count Yields Golden Eagle and More

by Phil Cox

Just after sunrise last December 28th, myself and a couple of “Docs” participated in the 25th Annual Newport Christmas Bird Count. It was my 19th time for this event. Former Indiana Audubon Society & Wabash Valley Audubon Society President Alan Bruner has organized this event every year since 2000. The 15-mile diameter “count circle” is centered northeast of the Vermillion County seat of Newport. The Docs in my group were Ben Cvangros DDS and “rookie” Jim Nardi - an all-around naturalist and retired University of Illinois Research Entomologist. We traversed approximately 5,000 acres southeast of Newport during our all-out census of bird life during our 4-hour trek.

Shortly after we started, I drove directly to the location where Marty Jones and I had spied a golden eagle (closer than either of us had ever seen one) during the previous Newport CBC. Much to our amazement, we spotted the soaring white tail feathers of a large bird a couple of hundred yards away. It flew out of sight, but not out of mind! As we drove further down with eyes peeled, we came up over a crest with woods on both sides. Ben exclaimed, “There it is!” Sure enough, it was the biggest bird I’d ever seen in Indiana, roosting on a tree limb right along my side of the road. I had to lunge forward to look straight up through my truck’s windshield to see it. Of course, it didn’t stay long, but young Ben was able to lean out the window and get some photos for posterity’s sake. So, we lost him again, but were surprised a third time when he showed up roosting in another tree by the road just a little further down.



Was he playing “cat and mouse” with us? He decided the game was over, though, as that was the last we saw of him. For you photography gurus, Ben was using a Canon EOS 5D Mark IV camera with a Canon EF500mm f/4L IS USM lens. Camera settings: shutter speed 1/800 sec, aperture f/4.0, ISO 1250. For the record, that was his seventh time seeing a golden eagle, but by far the closest he’s gotten and the best pictures he’s had. He has seen 284 bird species in Indiana and photographed 270 of those within the state since starting the hobby in 2010. His current life list for the world is 536 species.

Thanks to Alan Bruner’s meticulous records, we know there have been sixteen golden eagles counted in the 25 years of the Newport CBC. They have been seen in 12 different years, with a high count of three in 2017. The Docs and I counted 42 species that day and the total species count for everyone was 70. For this year’s count Alan summarized, “Our total species count of 70 was very respectable considering diving ducks were absent and we missed on gulls, shorebirds and accipiters. We actually did pretty well on passerines with red-breasted nuthatch, winter wren, ruby-crowned kinglet and lapland longspur being the only notable misses. But what surprised me was that we established or tied high counts for seven species: snow goose, great horned owl (tied), pileated woodpecker, Carolina wren, savannah sparrow, purple finch and house finch.”

Also for the record, myself, fellow HOW member Mike Lunsford, and his daughter (my niece) Ellen Lunsford were able to see this guy on and off during snow squalls the afternoon of January 19. Unfortunately, we have no photos to show from that excursion. Will he be there again for Newport CBC #26? I sure hope so!

Indiana's Big Trees

by Phil Cox

Purdue Extension Ag & Natural Resources Educator, Vermillion County

As I write this, winter is in full swing with the beauty of fall having left us with memories of oak and beech trees still clinging to their crinkled leaves. We are lucky to live in a state that has a diverse array of 101 species of native trees, with about 94% of them being deciduous and losing their leaves each fall. That leaves (no pun intended!) us with only a few species of native pines, hemlocks, and cedars to brighten our winter months. It makes sense that many IMN Workshops have a class with something pertaining to native trees of Indiana, since they are so beautiful and functional.

The Indiana Division of Forestry continues to update its Big Tree Register for the largest known specimen of each native tree species in Indiana. To qualify for the registry, a tree requires three measurements to be recorded: 1) trunk circumference (in inches) at 4½ feet above the ground, 2) total height (in feet), and 3) average crown spread (in feet). The total size of a tree is calculated using this formula: circumference + height + ¼ average crown spread. The individual tree of each Indiana native tree species with the highest total points will be that tree species' big tree champion. All nominations will be reviewed as received, but only the nominations with the highest scores will be verified. Nominations for all tree species as well as species that do not have a current

champion are being accepted. The species that do not have a current champion are umbrella magnolia, winged elm, and sweetgum.

The tallest listed Indiana tree is a 152-ft. bitternut hickory tree growing in Hamilton County. The largest in circumference is a 361-in (9.58 ft. in diameter) silver maple tree in Lawrence County. The widest crown is a 224-ft blackjack oak tree in Vanderburg County. Vanderburg County can also lay claim to being the Big Tree Capitol of Indiana with 20 species of champions. To see the Indiana Big Tree Register, view measurement instructions and nominate a tree, see on.IN.gov/big-tree.

Unfortunately, of the 561 species in the 2021 National Register of Champion Trees, there are no Indiana trees listed. The surrounding four states have at least two each, with Ohio leading the way with 16. However, a small consolation for Kentucky and Illinois is that they hold bragging rights as co-champions to the largest Ohio buckeye trees in the nation. For more info about the National Register see americanforests.org/champion-trees/champion-trees-registry.

In 2025, I encourage everyone to look for big trees. Sometimes really large trees can be found in local parks since they have more room to grow. If you discover an exceptionally large tree, please consider measuring it and submitting the online form to be the next big tree champion.

Even if you don't start looking for big trees right away, now is the time to be thinking about planting the next big tree champion for future generations. Indiana landowners can order inexpensive, high-quality tree and shrub seedlings from the Indiana DNR Division of Forestry nurseries. These seedlings are 1-, 2- and 3-year-old bare-root seedlings intended for conservation plantings: windbreaks, wildlife habitat, reforestation, erosion control and other conservation uses in Indiana. Trees are available in multiples of 50 or 100; or in packets containing a mixture of species for different planting purposes like nuts, fine hardwoods, upland or bottomland or wildlife plantings. I suggest that you order as soon as possible to get the species you prefer for spring planting as ordering started on October 1. For detailed information call the Vallonia State Nursery at 812-358-3621 or refer to the Indiana Division of Forestry tree seedling nurseries [website](#).



Phil Cox stands in front of a giant black walnut tree at Turkey Run SP. Photo courtesy of Phil Cox.



Mark Berg looks up at a trio of mighty trees growing along Sugar Creek. Photo by Tom Berg.



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 here 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 Bill Keaton:

HOW legal advisor Bill Keaton recently submitted this birding report:

“When I was young, and even clear up into my forties,” said Keaton, “I almost never saw a **Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). None lived near our home or anywhere else nearby. Every few years as I got older, we would occasionally see a migrating bald eagle. However, between 1985 and 1989 the Indiana DNR began a program of reintroducing the bald eagles to Indiana. The DNR began raising and releasing 73 bald eagle chicks acquired from Wisconsin and Alaska into special cages at Monroe Reservoir. As they grew and matured, they were released. In 1992 the first bald eagle chick was hatched in Indiana at Monroe reservoir.”



“In 2018, my wife Rita and I purchased land about a mile east of the East Fork of the White River in Owen County. We moved there in 2021. Once we started spending time in Owen County, we began to regularly see bald eagles near our home. The eagles now fly over and near our home often. We discovered a nest about three miles north of our home, and each year the eagles have raised young there which we have enjoyed seeing as we go past the nest.”

“This year we have been seeing a pair of eagles very regularly around our home. We see them gliding and spending time in the river bottom behind our home. We suspect that they are building a nest there in the woods, but we have not been able to confirm that. We see them perched around in the trees frequently.”

“On January 20, 2025, I was outside on our driveway, and as I returned to our house I saw two bald eagles perched in the shagbark hickory tree nearest to our home. I thought they would fly, so I approached the house from the other side. As it turned out, they seemed to be accustomed to us and our home. We live six-tenths of a mile off the road, so they feel quite at home in the trees. Eventually, we quit worrying about them and they just stayed put. They stayed perched in the tree for about three hours that day. Eventually, the female flew on back into the woods, and about an hour later the male left. We love seeing them and are very hopeful they will nest behind our home!”

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 cool bird pictures.

Did you take a cool bird photo while exploring afield recently? Did you see the bird in your back yard? 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: February 21, 2025

Second Positive Case of Chronic Wasting Disease Confirmed in Indiana

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has confirmed Indiana's second positive case of chronic wasting disease (CWD). CWD is a neurological disease that affects deer, resulting in their eventual death. The positive, wild white-tailed deer was a 2.5-year-old male harvested in Posey County.

CWD has been detected in wild deer in 36 states, including all states bordering Indiana.

During the 2025-2026 deer hunting season, DNR will enhance its surveillance efforts in Posey County and the surrounding counties to determine the extent of disease in this area. This will allow biologists to develop a targeted response based on the prevalence of CWD in this part of Indiana. CWD testing will be voluntary for hunters in this area.

"The public can help by reporting sightings of sick or dead deer to the DNR, as well as submitting harvested deer for testing during deer hunting season. Through increased awareness and testing, we can work to monitor CWD within Indiana's deer population," said Joe Caudell, Indiana DNR deer biologist.

There have been no reported cases of CWD infection in humans. DNR recommends that hunters have their deer tested, and that people do not eat meat from deer that test positive for CWD. See the National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center's [website](#) for more information.

The deer was confirmed positive for CWD by two independent tests. CWD is caused by a misfolded prion that causes damage to the animal's nervous system. CWD can spread from deer-to-deer contact or through contaminated environments and remains in the soil for many years. Animals in the late stages of CWD can experience drastic weight loss and show abnormal changes in behavior. If you see any sick or dead wildlife, please report it at on.IN.gov/sickwildlife.

Indiana's various deer hunting seasons run from mid-September until the end of January.

Hunters can have their harvested deer tested for free by voluntarily submitting a sample via one of DNR's head drop coolers at select Fish & Wildlife areas, State Fish Hatcheries, and National Wildlife Refuges. All CWD sampling locations can be viewed through an [interactive map](#).

Alternatively, people may submit samples directly to the Indiana Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (ADDL) at Purdue University for a fee. More information and submission forms are available on the [ADDL website](#).

Find more information about CWD on DNR's website at on.IN.gov/CWD.

Media contact: Joe Caudell, State Deer Biologist, email: jcaudell@dnr.IN.gov, phone: 812-822-3300.

HOW Member News

Don Cranfill and Friends Start New Website Named Hoosiering

HOW Past President Don Cranfill and his fiancé Rebekah Zipay have recently started a new website named “Hoosiering”. It is still in the initial stages, but you can check it out at www.hoosiering.com. Rebekah has recently joined HOW and she is a contributing editor. HOW member Scott Weaver is also helping as a contributing editor. Here is their first press release:



Get Out And Go...Hoosiering!

We are excited to announce the launch of a new website and social media presence featuring all there is to do in the Hoosier outdoors. We will be covering everything possible outside of the traditional “hook-and-bullet” coverage.

From fairs and festivals to hiking and biking, motorsports to music festivals, canoeing and kayaking, birdwatching to beaches, we will bring you an explorer’s view of Indiana. Ultimately, we plan to crowd source coverage of Indiana’s most popular outdoor fun spots to get the fans and followers involved.

Hoosiering will be recording a video podcast series featuring participants and planners of various events as well as provide livestream coverage interviewing attendees. Our goal is to present coverage from the point of view of everyday people in the crowd. Keep an eye out for the podcast (Hoosiering Presents, People in the Crowd) later this Spring on your favorite streaming platform.

We would like to thank the folks at Renfro Productions for their instrumental role in helping to get this project off the ground. Opening the doors of the Travel & Tourism room at the Indianapolis Boat, Sport and Travel Show played a huge role in shaping our first season. We plan to work with the Renfro team moving forward to bring you the best possible coverage. Now get out and go... Hoosiering!

Thank you,

Don Cranfill, Publisher
Rebekah Zipay, Contributing Editor
Scott Weaver, Contributing Editor

Alan Garbers Hunts Stink Pigs

HOW Past President Alan Garbers lives in Arizona these days, and he has found that the local wildlife can sometimes be...unusual. Such is the case with the local javelinas. Read on...

“Scientifically, they are called collared peccary or javelina,” explained Garbers. “Locals call them stink pigs. I call them a nuisance. They come into our yard looking for water and grubs almost every day. They are a nuisance because they eat nearly anything I plant, including cacti. They love to root under weed cloth, looking for bugs and grubs. But they are game animals, and many Arizona hunters decorate their dens with snarling javelina heads or even full-body mounts.”

“They travel in sounders or herds, and the babies are actually adorable. The babies are constantly hiding under mommy as he walks and feeds. Most hunters find elevated locations overlooking vast fields of prickly pear cacti, which is one of their favorite foods. We have a well-beaten path to the water tank sunk into our backyard. After five years of watching the little vermin swarm my backyard almost daily, I decided a javelina hunt would be a slam dunk, so I put in for the draw and got drawn.”



“I had been seeing them daily between 11:30 and 1:30pm. To be safe, I was in my blind at the edge of our acreage by 9:00am. By 2:00pm, my posterior could not take the pressure anymore, so I went back to the house and staged my Winchester 270 next to the upper deck door. Shortly afterwards, I was typing

away on an article when my Spidey senses tingled. Stepping to the upper deck door, I was greeted by the dusky bodies surrounding the far water tank about 100 yards away. Grabbing the rifle, I knelt and braced it across the rail. The shot went true and the javelina wobbled and fell.”



“In stripping off the head and cape, I realized why they are called stink pigs. They stink! I removed the good meat for chorizo and took the head to the taxidermist. It was not the most adventuresome hunt, but I’ll take what I can get these days!”

Top: Baby javelinas are cute and they always stay close to mother. Adults are not quite as cute. **Left:** Alan Garbers poses with the full-grown javelina he harvested this past season on his own property. Alan Garbers photos.



Mike Schoonveld Donates Another Salmon Fishing Trip to Pheasants Forever

The Iroquois River Chapter of Pheasants Forever held its 30th annual fundraising banquet in early March. That means it's the 30th time HOW Past President Mike Schoonveld has donated a fishing trip on Lake Michigan to the chapter.

"I grew up in southern Newton County, the northern portion of Indiana's wild pheasant range," said Schoonveld. "If someone in our town or one of my classmates said they were going hunting, it was assumed they were after pheasants. Although the first game animal I harvested was a rabbit and I eventually became an avid duck hunter, hunting pheasants was my first love."

"Over the years, the fishing trip Mike donates to the Iroquois River Chapter has been at or near the top of the best money makers at every banquet," said Brian Johnson, president of the local chapter. "Our records show he has raised over \$25,000 for our habitat work in Jasper and Newton Counties here in Indiana."



Mike Schoonveld holds three colorful cock pheasants that he and a friend harvested on a recent pheasant hunt.

Troy McCormick Speaks at the Indiana Gold & Treasure Show

HOW Past President Troy McCormick has been interested in treasure hunting and metal detecting for much of his adult life. In fact, he was just recently featured on the popular TV show **Expedition Unknown** with Josh Gates as they searched for treasure right here in the Hoosier state.

“I had the opportunity to attend the Indiana Gold & Treasure Show 2025 this year in Lebanon,” said McCormick, “and I had a blast talking about gold prospecting and treasure hunting in Indiana.”

“This was a weekend event at the Boone County Fairgrounds,” he continued. “The Community Building had a number of booths dedicated to gold prospecting, gold panning, and treasure hunting. If you were in need of a gold pan, sluice, dredge parts, wanted to try your hand at panning some paydirt, or wanted to shop the tables of rocks and minerals, this was the place to be.”

“They also offered guest speakers, such as myself, to talk on subjects like metal detecting in Indiana and prospecting for gold in the Hoosier state.”

“I visited with the owner of a metal detecting shop, the owner of a FaceBook group on metal detecting, a supplier of gold dredging equipment, and dozens of Hoosier gold



prospectors. If you’ve ever searched for gold in Indiana, you know that while we don’t typically have nuggets in our streams, there are numerous places here to pan for flakes of gold.”

“The event was hosted by Prospecting Gear LLC, Detecting Gear, The Indiana PayDirt Company, and The Indiana Gold Prospectors. A special thanks to these businesses and the time spent putting this fun event together. I’ll see you there next year!”

Top: Hopeful prospectors learn about gold panning. **Middle:** Vendors had plenty of gold panning supplies for sale.

Above: Troy McCormick speaks to the crowd at the gold and treasure show in February and talks about metal detecting.

Guess the HOW Member!

Here is an old photo of one of our current HOW members from “back in the day”.

This young man and his sister were all dressed up in their Sunday best! Can you guess who the boy in this photo is?

HINT: It is a current HOW member. The fact that he has a sister is another hint, but I suppose that would only help if you know the family.

In any case, see if you can guess the name of the boy in the photo.

Guesses can be sent to Tom Berg at thomas.berg@comcast.net. We will only allow two guesses per person, so make your guesses count!

The first one that guesses correctly will have their HOW membership dues pre-paid next year! Good luck!



Membership Changes and Member Contact Info

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

Terry Hyndman: 3755 West Goss Rd - 57, Columbia City, IN 46725, phone: 317-694-7515,
Email: terryandlindaretired@gmail.com.

Rebekah Zipay: 608 N Buckeye St, Fairmount, IN 46928, phone: 646-335-5737,
Email: rebekah@hoosiering.com.

The following HOW members have new contact info. Please make a note of it:

Doug Allman: New phone: 317-501-2638.

Don Cranfill: New address: 608 N Buckeye St, Fairmount, IN 46928.

Gene Hopkins: New phone: 812-785-8581.

Paddy McCune: New address: 812 Wabash Circle, Huntington, IN 46750.

Paul Moore: New address: 7628 Hwy 268, Corydon, KY 42406.

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 Gill Fishing

The Blue Jay's "Blue" Feathers are Not Really Blue



Close-up



Original



The "What is it?" photo from the previous issue was slightly easier than the previous, since it was correctly identified by five (5) HOW members. Phil Cox, Mike Lunsford, Alan Garbers, Mike Schoonveld and Jarrett Manek were all able to identify it. When we drew a name at random for the special **Z-Man** tackle bag and fishing lures, Jarrett Manek was the lucky winner. Congrats, Jarrett! We will get the prize to you.

As can be seen in the photo to the left, the mystery creature for this issue was a common Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*). Blue jays are fairly large songbirds, usually measuring up to 12 inches from beak to tail and with a typical wingspan of 16 inches. Their plumage appears to be blue with black and white markings on the wings and around the head and neck.

Although some blue jays do not migrate for the winter, many others do and they can form large flocks as they head south. Migrating jays include older adults and young birds born earlier the same year. Some blue jays fly south one year and then the next year they stay in their northern breeding grounds.

Did you know the feathers of blue jays are not really blue? The pigment in their feathers is melanin, which is actually brown. However, when light hits the feathers they appear to be blue because of an optical illusion. Light is scattered and all colors except blue are absorbed. Only the blue wavelengths of light are reflected back to the viewer, so the feathers look blue to our eyes.

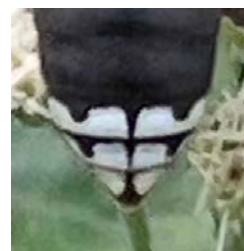
For this issue, our friends at **Gill Fishing** have donated a very nice prize package for the HOW member who is able to guess the right answer to this issue's "What Is It?" question. This time the prize will be a great Fitzroy jacket, along with a pair of Gill gloves and a Gill beanie. See below for more info.

Berg Poses Another Nature Photo "What Is It?" Question

Tom Berg has posed another Nature Photo mystery. The photo shown below right is part of a close-up of a creature that can be found throughout the state of Indiana, and you might even see it in your own back yard. 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 snake, for example, go ahead and guess "corn snake" (hint: it's not a snake). If you think you know the answer, send an email to thomas.berg@comcast.net. If you're right, you'll be entered in this issue's prize drawing!



As mentioned, **Gill Fishing** (www.gillfishing.com) has donated a nice Fitzroy jacket, Gill gloves and Gill beanie hat for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issue's nature question. The winner can choose their size and styles. This is a fantastic prize with a retail price of about \$250, so start thinking! If multiple people guess correctly, we'll draw a winner at random from the pool of correct entries. All nature photos here 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.

Road Runner Lures – The Pro's Choice, And Still Catching Fish!

Wetumpka, AL – The TTI-Blakemore Group has been making lures and fishing tackle that catches fish for decades. Located in Wetumpka, Alabama, they know a thing or two about fish and fishing. One of their most popular brands is the famous Road Runner.

It is a simple truth: Road Runners catch fish! For over 60 years, anglers from all over the world have caught hundreds of different species on Road Runner lures. The unique head design and blade under the head, have put millions of fish in the boat and on the bank. The sound, flash and vibration that Road Runners put out drives fish to strike. From Panfish to salt water species like snook, redfish and seatrout, the Road Runner has proven itself over and over. Road Runners have been outfishing your ordinary jigs since 1958! Check out all of the different styles, sizes and colors at www.ttiblakemore.com.

TTI-Blakemore Group – Home of Tru Turn, Daiichi, Boss Kat, Team Crappie, StandOUT and X-Point Hooks, Road Runner Lures, Real Magic and Brush Grippers.

PRO 2.0 Heads

ROAD RUNNER®
by BLAKEMORE
SLOW PRESENTATION + FLASH + VIBRATION = MORE FISH!



#101
Frosty



#114
Red Shad



#130
Classic



#180
Chartreuse Shad



#192
Blue Pearl

The PRO 2.0 head is great for swifter moving waters.
The willow blade allows it to get down faster.

TIP:

The barb is easily removed for use with smaller plastics.
Just mash the barb down then carefully lift up.
It will break off easily.



| 6 Count Packs | | |
|---------------|------|------|
| ITEM# | Size | Hook |
| 202+ Color # | 1/16 | #2 |
| 203+ Color# | 1/8 | #1 |



Photo Courtesy of
Ron Stallings

HOW Supporting Member News

AVAILABLE NOW: Z-Man® Shadtron™ LT

Breaking down the award-winning line-through swimbait

Ladson, SC (Feb. 27) – “Can’t imagine a more versatile, durable, go-anywhere swimbait,” affirms Bassmaster Elite Series rookie Beau Browning, with a nod to Z-Man’s ICAST award-winning Shadtron™ LT.

Like Browning, anglers today face the burden of selecting from a surplus of specialty swimbaits. Most of these lifelike lures do one or two things particularly well, yet often lack the intangibles to close the deal. Consider the confident hope of a big bass hookset, swiftly shattered when the hawg in question head-rattles free on the first jump. Or the angst of a giant in hot pursuit gone horribly wrong . . . As the lure tries to accelerate, it rolls on its side instead, spooking the bass and breaking your heart. Or, perhaps worst of all, sacrificing the tail off your prized swimbait when a pike or other toothy critter chomps down on your very first cast. *Ouch*.

Last July, solving each of these dilemmas and more, the fishing world witnessed the arrival of the Z-Man® Shadtron™ LT, stamping the line-through swimbait with its seal of approval and ICAST’s Best Freshwater Soft Lure award. Finally, after months of salivating over YouTube videos and watching bass pros rave about its performance, anglers are finding Shadtron LT swimbaits at their favorite fishing retailers, ready to crush personal-best bass, everywhere.

Offered in two sizes (4.5” and 6”) and two rates of fall (Slow Sink and Fast Sink), the Z-Man Shadtron LT leads with its supernatural shad sculpt and visual sizzle, exact to every scale. The Fast Sink version sinks 12 feet in 10 seconds (ROF 12), while the Slow Sink Shadtron is rated ROF 5. Eight photo-printed and hand-painted shad patterns include vivid Gizzard and Threadfin Shad models, as well as Blueback Herring, Sight Flash and other strike-inducing hues.



Matching the prevailing sizes of threadfin and gizzard shad eaten most often by predators, the 4.5-inch Shadtron LT gets gobbled by bass of all sizes, while the meatier 6-inch appeals to bigger bass, stripers and other predators.

Dual Line-Through Design

“LT stands for line-through, but they should have called it ‘DLT’ or dual line-through,” Browning laughs, “because the bait’s hidden core contains an impressive two-way harness for fishing it around cover or open water. Factor in its durability, and you can throw this swimbait almost anywhere, including places you’d normally cast a ChatterBait®.”

Beneath its malleable yet impossibly durable ElaZtech® body, the 10X Tough Shadtron’s two-way line-through harness can be rigged with the included single sickle-style dorsal hook, ideal for rolling through cover, bottom bumping or skipping beneath boat docks.

Alternatively, for casting around openwater shad schools, or for smallmouth or spotted bass that bite from below, arm the Shadtron with a favorite belly treble hook. The bait’s underside sports a smart hook claw that clips the hook tight, pinning the shank against the bait’s body until a fish pulls it free. In either case, hooksets almost always culminate in liplocks and fist-bumps in the boat, a direct result of the line-through system that slides the lure up the line, where bass can no longer leverage lure weight as a means of a headshaking escape.



(continued next page)

Multi-Speed Wedge Tail

Generating the most realistic shad-swimming action attainable, the Shadtron's calibrated wedge-shaped tail empowers a versatile range of motions—from slow-roll to escape velocity. Further imitating the locomotion of a live shad, the Shadtron swims with minimal body roll and just a hint of head wag—all in the name of enticing eagle-eyed predators.

"If I've got a big fish that's following but won't eat, I can give the bait a quick burst of speed—or twitch the rod to make it slash right or left—to induce a positive reaction," Browning explains. "Try the speed thing with most swimbaits and they'll usually roll over or crash and burn—spooks bass every time. But the Shadtron nails it, keeps its composure at almost any speed."

Oppositely, Browning often retrieves the Shadtron extra slow, which shines in cooler water. "Even in the clearest water, a slow retrieve can be so good as it lets bass get a good look at the bait and inspect its natural shad body before it eats," explains Browning. "I'm also digging the bait's flat sides, which let me skip it under docks like the perfect pancake rock."

Factoring Rate-of-Fall

For slower tail-thumping retrieves, particularly near cover or bottom, Browning suggests opting for the Slow Sink version and the dorsal hook option. "Particularly for moving a big fish off a dock or a cool piece of cover, slow-rolling or surface-bulging the Shadtron is always a tasty tactic," he suggests.

"If I'm working deeper water or want to fish the swimbait a little faster, the Fast Sink version counts down quickly and stays at depth. I can also burn the ROF12 version faster across shallow water, which can be great in warmer conditions."



Durability to the Max

Two vital elements ensure the Shadtron LT's long, fruitful, fish-catching lifespan. One, when a bass or other predator engulfs the soft swimmer, it automatically slides up your fishing line where it's removed from powerful jaws and plastics-piercing teeth. Two, the Shadtron's exclusive ElaZtech composition prevents it from tearing or sacrificing its tail. Z-Man's proven superplastic formula is soft and active underwater, and yet almost impossibly durable. At just \$13 to \$16 a pop, it's likely the best value in high-end swimbaits today.

Tips & Tricks

Among its numerous above-and-beyond design elements and extra fish-catching goodies, the Shadtron LT features a refined sound-making rattle implanted deep in the line-through harness itself. It's just enough audible enticement—a restrained clicking noise—to complement the full meal deal. Activate the rattle by giving the lure occasional rodtip action, creating subtle clacking sounds.

Finally, to keep your bait in mint condition, Z-Man has packaged the Shadtron LT in a special protective clamshell. When you first open the lure, don't discard this storage package. Instead, when you're done fishing, put the lure back into its clamshell, hooking it to a reel or rod guide. This will keep the lure's tail perfectly straight, even in cramped rod boxes.

The new Z-Man Shadtron LT mimics the bass' most prolific meal on every level. Available in stores now, the Shadtron is perhaps the most user-friendly shad swimbait ever made.

Media Contact: Cory Schmidt, Z-Man Fishing, email: cschmidt@zmanfishing.com.
For more information, go to www.zmanfishing.com.

HOW Supporting Member News

The Riton 5 Primal 15-45×60 Spotting Scope The Perfect Companion for Outdoor Adventures

Tucson, AZ — Riton makes optics for all shooters and provides solutions for all situations. At some point, your season, match, or even your life is going to come down to a singular moment where you will succeed, or fail. That reality drives all of us at Riton to provide you the optics that give you the edge and perform when it matters most. We live those moments. We engage in those same pursuits. We want you to succeed in those defining moments. Because those moments are what Riton is all about.

Outdoor enthusiasts understand the importance of having the right equipment to fully immerse themselves in the beauty of nature and make their adventures memorable. Whether you're a hunter, a target shooter, or simply someone who craves breathtaking outdoor views, the [Riton 5 Primal 15-45×60 Spotting Scope](#) is here to elevate your experience.



The Riton 5 Primal 15-45×60 Spotting Scope: An Overview

When it comes to optics designed for outdoor exploration, Riton Optics has consistently delivered high-quality products. The Riton 5 Primal Spotting Scope is no exception, boasting a range of features that cater to your specific outdoor needs.

Key Features of the Riton 5 Primal 15-45×60 Spotting Scope:

1. **Impressive Magnification Range:** With a versatile magnification range of 15-45x, this spotting scope offers both wide-angle views and up-close, crisp details. Whether you're scouting game, examining distant targets, or taking in panoramic vistas, this scope can handle it all.
2. **Stunning Clarity with ED Glass:** The inclusion of Extra-low Dispersion (ED) glass in the lenses ensures stunning clarity, reduced chromatic aberration, and vivid, true-to-life colors. Every detail comes to life.
3. **Compact and Lightweight:** Despite its powerful optics, this spotting scope is remarkably lightweight and compact. It's designed to be your portable companion for all outdoor adventures.
4. **Durable and Weatherproof:** Engineered to withstand the harshest outdoor conditions, the Riton 5 Primal Spotting Scope is both waterproof and fog-proof, thanks to its nitrogen-filled and sealed construction. Rain or shine, trust this scope to perform without limitations.
5. **Built-In Sunshade:** The integrated sunshade minimizes glare, ensuring crisp views even in bright sunlight.
6. **Tripod-Ready:** Designed to be tripod-adaptable, this spotting scope allows for stable and hands-free viewing, perfect for extended observation sessions.
7. **Limited Lifetime Warranty:** Riton Optics stands behind the quality and durability of this product with a lifetime warranty, providing peace of mind for your investment.

For technical specifications and applications, go to www.ritonoptics.com.

Media Contact: Trent Marsh, Marketing Director, Riton Optics.
Cell: 260-417-0158, email: tmarsh@ritonoptics.com.

HOW's Supporting Member Websites

Alps Brands - www.alpsbrands.com
Archery Trade Association - www.archerytrade.org
B'n'M Pole Company - www.bnmpoles.com
Black River Tools - www.blackrivertools.com
BoatUS - www.boatus.com
BOLT Locks - www.boltlock.com
BPI Outdoors - www.BPIguns.com
Church Tackle Company - www.churchtackle.com
Cocoons Eyewear - www.cocoons.com
Costa - www.costadelmar.com
Daisy Outdoor Products - www.daisy.com
Danner Boots - www.danner.com
Dardevle by Eppinger - www.dardevle.com
Ducks Unlimited - www.ducks.org
Egret Baits - www.egretbaits.com
Falcon Guides - www.falconguides.com
Finn Tackle Company - www.finnspoons.com
FINS Braid - www.finsfishing.com
Fiocchi Ammunition - www.fiocchiusa.com
Flying Fisherman - www.flyingfisherman.com
G Pucci & Sons - www.p-line.com
Gapen Company - www.gapen.com
Gator Bait Tackle - www.gatorbaittackle.com
Gill Fishing - www.gillfishing.com
Grundens USA - www.grundens.com
Habit Apparel - www.habitoutdoors.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
Hobie Eyewear - www.hobieeyewear.com
HoldFastPro - www.holdfastpro.com
Hornady Manufacturing - www.hornady.com
Indiana Destination Development Corporation - www.visitindiana.com
Kehrer Fish Co - www.kehrerfishcompany.com
LaCrosse Footwear - www.lacrossefootwear.com
Lawrence County Tourism - www.limestonecountry.com
LensPen - www.lenspen.com
Li'L Tuffy SwimBait - www.ramblingangler.com
Mack's Lure - www.mackslure.com
MEC Outdoors - www.mecoutdoors.com
Mepps by Sheldons', Inc - www.mepps.com
Mercer Sport - www.mercersport.com
Mister Twister - www.mistertwister.com
MOJO Outdoors - www.mojoutdoors.com
Nat'l Shooting Sports Foundation - www.nssf.org
National Wild Turkey Federation - www.nwtf.org
Nesco Vacuum Sealers - www.nesco.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
Owner Hooks - www.ownerhooks.com
Pheasants Forever - www.pheasantsforever.org
Pradco - www.pradcooutdoorbrands.com
Pro-Cure Bait Scents - www.pro-cure.com
Pure Fishing - www.purefishing.com
Quad 4 Plastics - www.quad4plastics.com
Rapala VMC - www.rapala.com
Renfro Productions - www.renfroproductions.com
Riton Optics - www.ritonoptics.com
Seaguar Fishing Lines - www.seaguar.com
Shipshewana/LaGrange County CVB - www.visitshipshewana.org
Shooter's Choice - www.shooters-choice.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
Target Communications Outdoor Books - www.targetcommbooks.com
Toyota Motor Sales - www.toyotanewsroom.com
Traveler's Guide to Firearms Laws of 50 States - www.bookvalueusa.com
TTI-Blakemore Fishing - www.ttiblakemore.com
Vexilar, Inc. - www.vexilar.com
Vortex Optics - www.vortexoptics.com
Whitetails Unlimited - www.whitetailsunlimited.com
Winchester Ammunition - www.winchester.com
W.R. Case - www.wrcase.com
Yakima Bait Company - www.yakimabait.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

HOW 2025 Annual Conference:

(www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org)
Clifty Inn, Clifty Falls State Park
Madison, IN

April 4-6, 2025
(Annual meeting on April 5)

NRA 2025 Annual Meeting and Exhibits:

(www.nraam.org)
Atlanta, GA

April 24-27, 2025

POMA 2025 Conference:

(www.professionalloutdoormedia.org)
Toledo, OH

June 23-25, 2025

ICAST Show 2025:

(www.ICASTfishing.org)
Orlando, FL

July 15-18, 2025

OWAA 2025 Conference:

(www.owaa.org)
Chattanooga, TN

August 19-21, 2025

AGLOW 2025 Conference:

(www.aglowinfo.org)
Eau Claire, WI

September 21-25, 2025

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*.