

The Blade

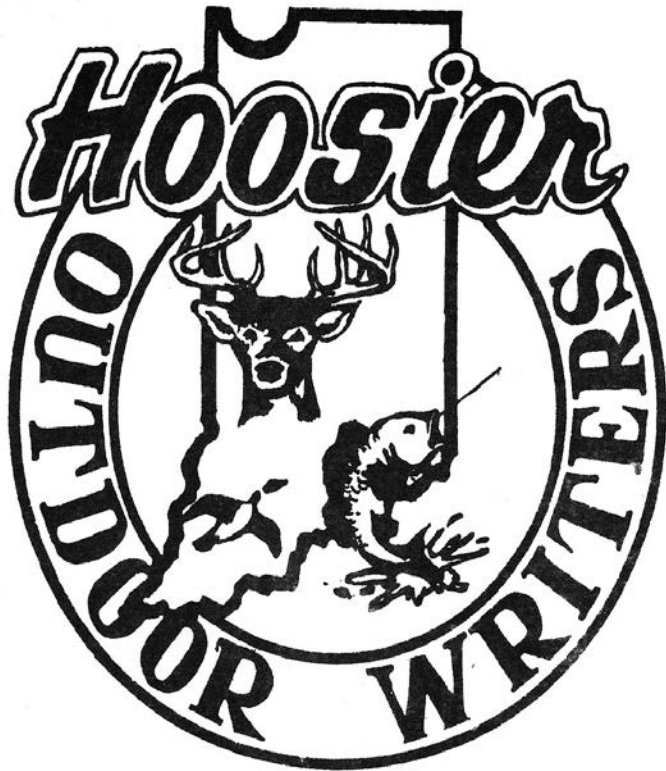
2026 Pre-Conference Issue

March - April 2026

The Official Publication of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers



"Wood Ducks Checking Possible Nest Sites", 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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On the cover: *A pair of beautiful wood ducks swim along in a backwater area of a local marsh where dead timber attracts their attention. Cavities in dead trees are attractive to female wood ducks as they search for an appropriate nesting site. Photo by Tom Berg.*

President's Message

by Marilyn Culler

Spring Wildflowers and More

Less than 36 hours after returning from a trip to Greece and Rome, I got an exciting message: “We’ve got snow trillium out here waiting for photographing.”

Friends had been watching along the trails in their woods for this early harbinger of the spring wildflower season. Snow trillium (*Trillium nivale*) is a small, showy perennial only 2-5 inches tall, growing on rocky or gravelly slopes or bluffs. I start watching for snow trillium, my absolute favorite wildflower, beginning in late February here in west central Indiana.

The appearance of Snow trillium (or dwarf white trillium) means that Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) and Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) aren’t far behind. As the hills and woods come alive with spring wildflowers, and I am out among them, I sometimes think of Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold. Did they ever frequent these woods I know?

“We live in a time of challenge, which is also a time of opportunity. We live in a time when it is easy to despair, but which is also a time of great hope. We live in a time when it is necessary to know for what we stand, and to take that stand with courage,” Carson wrote.

Carson may never have been to Indiana. Leopold, well, there’s a family connection. Charles Deam was here. Mike Homoya is here, and others whose names I don’t know. I live in Putnam County, where we have the most protected nature preserves in the state. Turkey Run, Shades and McCormick’s Creek State Parks are nearby. The backroads take me off the beaten path and into the woods, into moments of awe and beauty.



In high school, I had some version of the following quote on the wall of my bedroom. The white letters floated over a scene in a dense forest. “Man always kills the thing he loves, and so we the pioneers have killed our wilderness. Some say we had to. Be that as it may, I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?”

Soon enough, it’ll be time to go fishing. I saw a little reel the other day ... “We are rapidly approaching that fish-after-work time again, life is good.” I’m ready for wildflowers and fishing and enjoying the freedom I find in nature.

Woods and wildflowers feed our souls. Plants, animals and fish feed our bodies. I’m able to enjoy the natural world around me because of those who have gone before me, those who had the foresight to protect and preserve, maintain and manage and fight for what feeds me.

I’ve been around the members of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers for 45 wonderful years. I hope, in challenging times, we never lose sight of our responsibility to the wild country that feeds us.

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers

New Members, Past Presidents and Memorial Section

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

No new members for this issue.
See Member News Section
starting on page 22.

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” Duxtater
 Dick Forbes
Tom Glancy – HOW President 1977
 Dale Griffith
 Phil Hawkins
 Fred Heckman
Marty Jaranowski – HOW President 1996
Phil Junker – HOW President 1975+2002
 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
Bob Sawtelle	2024

The Annual HOW Fun Shoot

The 2026 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.

Since the 2026 HOW Conference will be held at Pokagon State Park near Fremont, we will be shooting at the St. Joe Valley Conservation Club in St. Joe, IN. The address is 5871 County Rd. 60, St. Joe, IN.

This is a new facility for us, but the St. Joe Valley Conservation Club was established in 1957 and is the home of the Kolar Mid-America Open. They are one of the largest shotgun shooting facilities in the Midwest, offering a total of 9 trap fields, 12 skeet fields, and 4 lighted fields.

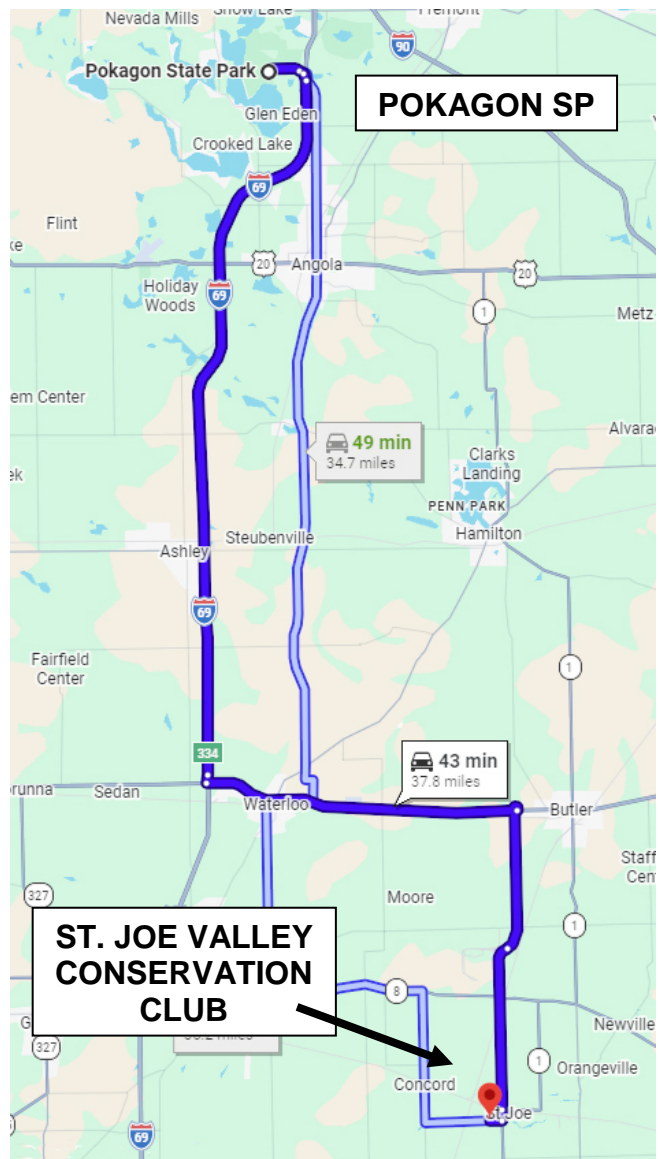
We will meet on Friday, April 10 at 12:00 noon (local time). One of the officers of the club will be opening the facility especially for us (they are normally closed on Fridays). He will give us a short tour of the facility before we start the shoot, and we will likely start shooting at 12:30pm.

The club should be easy to find. According to Google Maps, the facility is a short 43 minute drive from Pokagon. For HOW members traveling north on I-69 to Pokagon, the St. Joe Valley shooting complex is only a little out of the way.

The gun club is waiving their normal corporate fee for non-member groups (\$250), and they have also extended their special member pricing to us, so each round of skeet will only cost HOW members \$6.00 per round.

This year we will be shooting a few rounds of skeet (25 targets per round), and we are hoping for good weather. You can pay the club’s cashier when we arrive or after we are done shooting. Be sure to bring your own shotgun and hearing protection to the shoot. We are still working on obtaining a sponsor for the Fun Shoot, but if we are unsuccessful, each shooter will need to supply their shotshells (four boxes should be enough).

See the map at right for directions to the club, or type St. Joe Valley Conservation Club (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 Pokagon State Park to check in at the inn and get ready for our Friday evening barbecue.

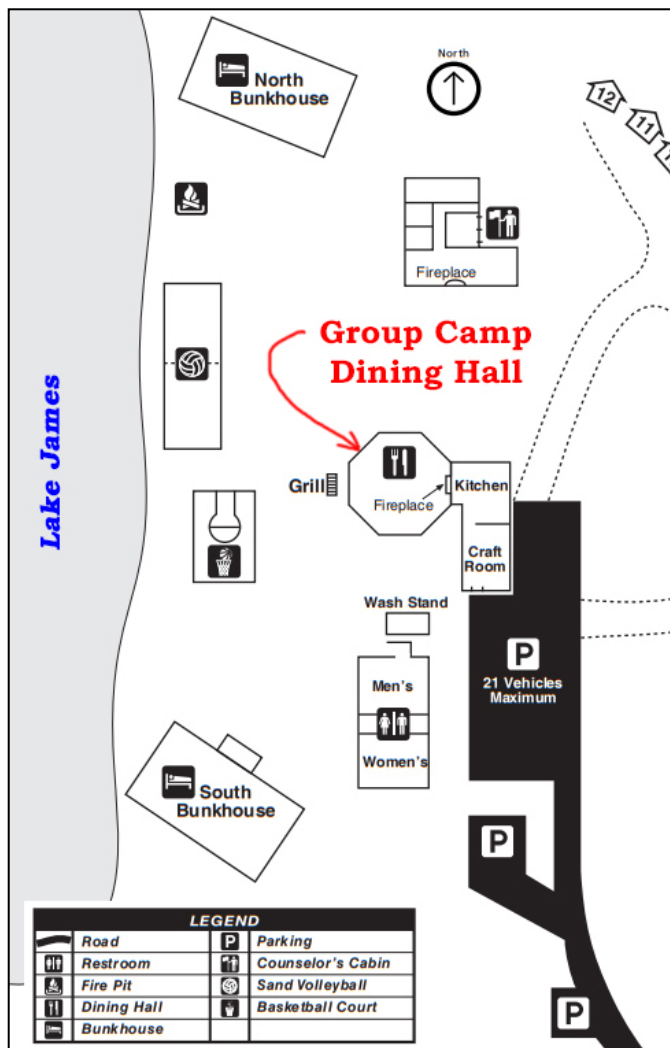


Prepare for the Friday Evening BBQ

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 Pokagon State Park, we will hold our barbecue inside the park at the **Group Camp Dining Hall and Kitchen** on Friday, April 10 at 6:00pm. The dining hall complex is located along the west side of the park on the shore of the upper basin of Lake James (see the map below). It has a dedicated parking lot, a kitchen and plenty of room for us. Public restrooms are located here, also.

A big thank you goes out to the **Steuben County Tourism Bureau** for sponsoring the barbecue and to **Pokagon State Park** for providing the Group Camp facility 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. Vice President John Maxwell is in charge of the BBQ this year, and we are sure he is planning a fine menu!

Representatives from the Steuben County Tourism Bureau will be on hand at the BBQ to greet us and welcome us to Pokagon State Park and talk about Steuben County and all that this beautiful area has in store for outdoor enthusiasts.

We hope everyone can make it to the BBQ this year. If you are planning to be there, please fill out the Conference Activities Registration sheet which can be found on page 15. You can mail it via USPS or email it (thomas.berg@comcast.net), but email is preferred since it is faster.

If you would like to attend but are still not sure if you can make it, please contact Tom Berg to let him know.

POKAGON STATE PARK

450 Lane 100 Lake James | Angola, IN 46703 | 260-833-2012
1,260 Acres | Established 1925

2026 HOW Conference Preview



HOW Members Prepare to Gather at Pokagon State Park!

The 56th meeting of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers will take place on the weekend of **April 10-12, 2026** (Friday through Sunday) at the Potawatomi Inn inside Pokagon State Park, near Angola, IN. The main meeting will occur on Saturday, April 11th. Have you been to a HOW conference lately? It has been eleven years since we had a conference at Pokagon, 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 10. 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 St. Joe Valley Conservation Club (in St. Joe, IN) and we will meet there at 12:00pm noon (local time). The club has a nice facility and we will get a short tour when we arrive. See page 5 for more information and a map to the Fun Shoot.

Save The Date!

Conference: April 10-12, 2026
Annual Meeting: April 11, 2026

On Friday evening, we will gather at the Group Camp on the west side of the state park... (continued on next page).

at 6:00pm (see the map on page 6). Our friends at Steuben County Tourism are sponsoring the barbecue, and there will be plenty to eat and drink. In fact, select representatives from the tourism group will be present to greet the HOW membership. This will be a great opportunity to see old friends and make some new ones. All HOW Conference attendees and their spouses are invited. Be sure to sign up on the Activities page (see page 15) and then come out and join us!

The main meeting will occur on Saturday, April 11 in the **Lake James Ballroom** inside the historic Potawatomi Inn. As usual, you don't have to attend any of the events on Friday if your schedule only allows you to be present at the Saturday meeting. See page 17 for a copy of this year's meeting agenda.

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. At 9:00am HOW President Marilyn Culler will greet all conference attendees. She 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. Afterwards, we will be welcomed by June Julien from the Steuben County Tourism Bureau, and she will talk about some of the great things to do in the "Northern Indiana Lakes Country" of Steuben County. This beautiful area can provide almost endless story opportunities!

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:

- **Overview of the Lake Michigan Fishery**

Ben Dickinson (below), Indiana DNR's Lake Michigan Fisheries Biologist, will provide an interesting overview of the Lake Michigan fishery, including some highlights and some current management challenges. He will talk about the salmonid fishery, including the status of the salmon and trout fishery, the tools managers use to maintain predator-prey balance, and how they evaluate current stocking programs in our Great Lake.



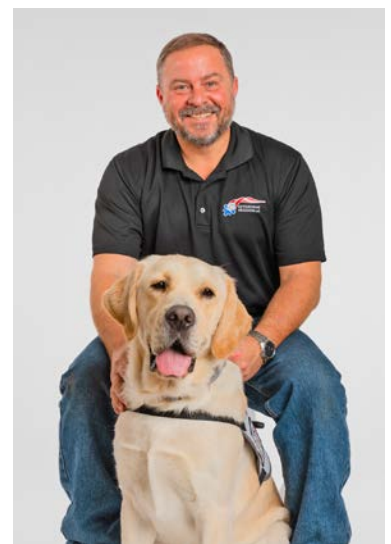
He will also talk about upcoming projects of interest concerning Lake Michigan. He will also touch on the yellow perch status in the lake and discuss the changing nature of the fish and the fishery. He'll talk about the winter perch fishery and potential concerns with overharvest and barotrauma

when perch are brought up from great depths.

- **Retrieving Freedom, Programs for Veterans and Children**

Brandon Butler (right) is the Chief Executive Officer of Retrieving Freedom, Inc (RFI) a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of veterans with disabilities and children with autism by training and placing exceptional service dogs, always at no cost to them.

The mission of Retrieving Freedom, Inc. is to change lives through the training and placement of these service dogs. With training facilities located in Iowa and Missouri, RFI dogs undergo more than two years of



(continued on next page)

personalized training to ensure they meet the unique needs of each individual they will serve. Unlike one-size-fits-all programs, our training is tailored to prepare each dog for the specific challenges of their future handler.

- **Craft Improvement: So NOW You Want to Publish?**



Brent Wheat (left), host of the award-winning *The Guns Podcast US* will present a craft improvement seminar, showing our membership how they can set up and publish their own online blog so that their writing and communications work can reach a wider audience.

More outdoor communicators are discovering they don't need a traditional publisher to bring their work to life. In this practical session, Brent Wheat outlines simple, low-tech paths to self-publishing and shares how to avoid common pitfalls while turning your expertise into a professional product.

You can even make money with it.

- **HOW Membership Criteria Discussion**

For the final presentation of the day, Brent Wheat and other members of the Membership Criteria Committee will present and discuss suggested changes to the HOW membership standards. The proposal was sent to the entire membership in a recent email message, exploring ways that we might adapt HOW's membership standards to today's changing media landscape.

Members may review the email that was sent on March 16 prior to the conference. We will also have hardcopy printouts that we will distribute at the meeting that members can refer to during the discussion.

NOTE: This is meant to be a thoughtful discussion only. These changes have not been approved and we would like to get feedback from the membership on this topic. We believe it deserves serious consideration.



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 Potawatomi 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 members of the TIP Board will make a brief presentation and present the TIP awards.



The TIP presentation will be followed by the awards for the annual HOW Awards-in-Craft contests (AIC). This year prizes will be awarded in the Writing, Photography, Broadcast and Book divisions. **Quad 4 Plastics** from Elkhart, Indiana is once again this year's official sponsor for the HOW AIC contests and they have our sincere thanks.

Of course, we are planning another excellent HOW Raffle this year, **Another Amazing HOW Raffle!** too! The annual raffle is the highlight of the meeting for some of our members, and they shouldn't be disappointed this year. For those who can't wait for the big day to hear what we will be raffling off, rest assured that we have secured a great variety of exceptional outdoors products for this year's raffle. Here is a partial list that should convince you to bring along lots of extra cash:



We have a great Ruger American Rifle Generation II (caliber: 7mm-08 Rem); a beautiful Mossberg Patriot rifle/Vortex scope combo (caliber: .308 WIN) with a fluted barrel, a 5-round magazine and a walnut stock; an excellent CVA Wolf .50 caliber muzzleloader with blued steel and fiber optic sights; a Boat US membership, premium sunglasses, fishing rods and reels, fishing lures and other fishing gear, shooting and hunting gear, a trail camera, an MEC reloading press, an RCBS Supreme Master Reloading kit, premium optics, books, coolers, shirts, hats, boots, jackets, coffee mugs, turkey calls, tackle boxes, soft-sided tackle packs, electronics, knives, ammunition, gun cleaning products, portable gun safes/lockboxes, lights, trolling gear, a premium stainless steel dehydrator, archery gear, camping gear, gift certificates and much more. Additional items are coming in every day, too, so start saving your money for tickets now. You must be present to win, so don't miss it!

As you can read on page 12, we will also be having a live auction for a springtime Lake Michigan salmon fishing charter with our very own veteran charter Captain Mike Schoonveld on his boat Brother Nature. For those who do not personally know Capt. Mike, he has been one of the most successful charterboat captains on the south end of Lake Michigan for decades. The bidding for this trip starts at \$200, and for this auction you **DO NOT** need to be present to win. Just ask someone who will be at the conference to bid for you if you cannot attend. Good luck!

Sunday Fishing Outing on Area Lakes

We are also planning a fishing outing on Sunday morning, April 12 for conference attendees who want to stay an extra day and do some fishing on local lakes. We have coordinated with a few local diehard fishermen who will act as our guides. They will take us to some of their favorite lakes to fish for walleye, primarily. The walleye fishery at Crooked Lake has been good in recent years, so that's where many of the boats will go. It's possible that one of the guides may opt for largemouth bass and/or northern pike at another lake.

HOW members will need to bring their own fishing gear, including a life jacket. You will also need to have a valid Indiana fishing license. Keep in mind the fact that this fishing trip will take place in mid-April in northern Indiana, so there is a very good possibility that the weather will be cold. The water will certainly be very cold. Make sure you bring proper clothing (including rain gear).

You must sign up in advance, and an "earnest money" check of \$25 will be required to reserve your spot on a boat. There are a limited number of guides, so sign-up will be first-come, first-served. We will give the earnest money to the captains after the event to help cover their costs (gas, bait, etc).



We will meet at 8:00am on Sunday morning and likely fish 3-4 hours. This will be a catch and release event.

The 2026 HOW Awards-In-Craft Contest

**The Hoosier Outdoor Writers
would like to thank:**

QUAD 4 PLASTICS

**For sponsoring the 2026
HOW Awards-In-Craft Contests**



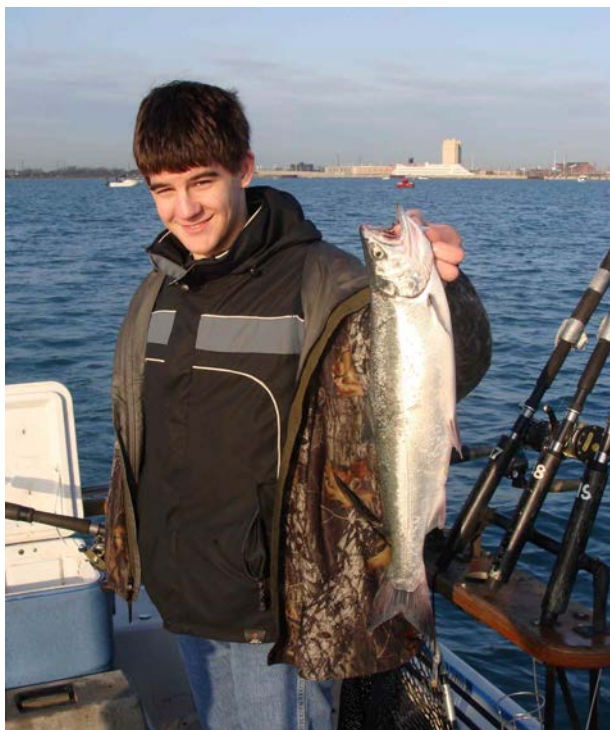
Special Auction Announcement

At the 2026 HOW Conference

Lake Michigan Springtime Salmon Fishing Charter! Bidding Starts at \$200!

At the upcoming 2026 HOW Conference at Pokagon 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 2026, or if that cannot be arranged, it can also be taken during the March-April-May timeframe of 2027.



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. Your 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 - 2026

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.

Archery Trade Association	Norsemen Outdoors
B'n'M Poles	O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.
Black River Tools	Old Salt Angling
BoatUS	OnX Fish
BPI Outdoors	OnX Hunt
Brother Nature Fishing Adventures	Otis Technology
Church Tackle	OutCast Lures
Cocoons Eyewear	Owner Hooks
Dardevle Lures	Pheasants Forever
DEX FingerLight	Phil Bloom
Egret Baits	Plano Molding
Fight'N Flies	Pro-Cure Bait Scents
Finn Tackle Company	Pure Fishing
Flying Fisherman	Quad 4 Plastics
G Pucci & Sons	RCBS
The Gapen Company	Realtree
Gill Fishing	Richard Hines
Grundens USA	Riton Optics
Habit Apparel	Seaguar Fishing
Hawke Sport Optics	Shooter's Choice
HHA Sports	Sierra Bullets
Hi-Mountain Seasonings	Snag Proof Lures
Hobie Eyewear	Speedhook Specialists
Hornady Manufacturing	Spypoint Trail Cameras
Iconic Outdoor Group (Daisy)	St. Croix Rods
Ken Keffer	Steelhead Outdoors
Li'L Tuffy Swimbait	Sturm, Ruger & Co.
MEC Outdoors	Swab-Its
Mepps	Target Communications Outdoor Books
Mercer Sport	Toyota North America
Mike Lunsford	Traveler's Guide to the Firearm Laws
Mister Twister	TTI-Blakemore
Moving Water Outfitters	Vortex Optics
National Wild Turkey Federation	Whitetails Unlimited
Nesco Vacuum Sealers	W.R. Case

Hoosier Outdoor Writers Annual Conference Registration



Where/When: The Lake James Ballroom inside the historic Potawatomi Inn located at Pokagon State Park, Angola, IN. Conference dates: April 10-12, 2026.

This registration form is for the Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 11th (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 11, 2026.

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 10, 2026 and Sunday, April 12, 2026. 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".

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

- * HOW members participating in the Fun Shoot will need to supply their own shotgun, hearing protection and ammo, but we are hoping to get a sponsor to supply the shells. The fee for the Fun Shoot will be payable at the Gun Club on the day of the event.
- ** The Sunday fishing trip on one of the local lakes 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

2026 HOW Conference

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



HOOSIER OUTDOOR WRITERS

Annual Meeting on April 11, 2026
The Potawatomi Inn (Lake James Ballroom)
Pokagon State Park, Angola, IN

MEETING SCHEDULE

8:00-9:00am

Registration, continental breakfast.

9:00-9:10am

Opening remarks by President Marilyn Culler and thanking our sponsors; followed by a short welcome speech by June Julien from the Steuben County Tourism Bureau.

9:10-10:10am

Seminar #1: “**Overview of the Lake Michigan Fishery.**” DNR Lake Michigan Fisheries Biologist Ben Dickinson will give a presentation on the Lake Michigan fishery, including current management challenges. He will discuss salmon and trout stocking programs, predator-prey dynamics including alewife populations, and other big lake projects. He’ll also talk about the winter yellow perch fishery.

10:10-10:15am

Short break.

10:15-11:15am

Seminar #2: “**Retrieving Freedom, Programs for Veterans and Children.**” CEO of Retrieving Freedom, Inc Brandon Butler will share information about this non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of disabled veterans and autistic children with the help of specially trained service dogs. Dogs are trained in Missouri and Iowa and are specifically prepared to meet the needs of their future recipient/handler.

11:15-11:30am

Business meeting, Slate of new officers, election of new officers for 2026/2027.

11:30-12:30pm

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

12:30-1:15pm

Seminar #3: “**Craft Improvement: So NOW You Want to Publish?**” Brent Wheat, HOW member, freelance writer and award-winning podcast host, will present some simple, low-tech ways to self-publish your own online blog and website. He will share advice on how to avoid common problems and make your work look as professional as possible.

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

Presentation #4: “**HOW Membership Criteria Discussion.**” Brent Wheat and other members of the Membership Criteria Committee will present and discuss suggested changes to the HOW membership standards. This is meant to be a thoughtful discussion only. These changes have not been approved yet and we would like to get feedback from members during the meeting on this topic.

3:15-3:30pm

Break. Last chance to buy raffle tickets!

3:30pm

Annual HOW Outdoor Writer’s Raffle.

4:30pm

Meeting adjourns.

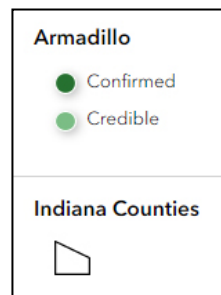
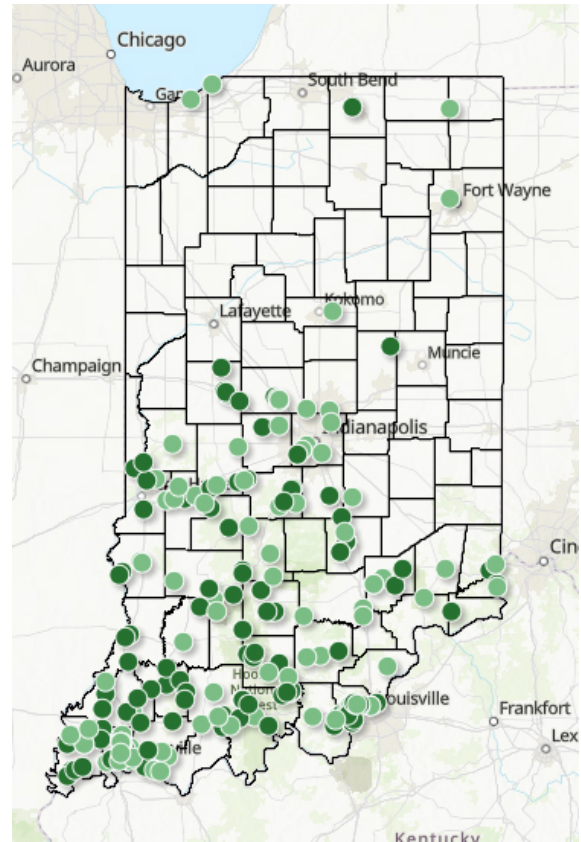
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Citizens Can Report Invasive Armadillos in Indiana

Hoosiers can help the Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife by submitting reports of certain mammals of interest. These mammals can potentially be seen from the comfort of your home, on your way to work, or while out biking, hiking, or camping. Compiling observations of these species can help identify local and state-wide trends in these rare or elusive mammals.

One of those mammals of interest is the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*). This is the only armadillo species found in the United States. Armadillo translates to “little armored one” in Spanish, and describes the bony, armor-like skin that covers most of their body. This species is unique in appearance and behavior compared to most mammals, which makes identification easy. The nine-banded armadillo is a powerful digger and can quickly excavate burrows to seek shelter from predators or weather. The network of burrows left by armadillos are then used by other species such as rodents, reptiles, amphibians, and sometimes birds.

In the early 2000s, reports of armadillo sightings on Indiana’s roadways were first noted in southwestern Indiana. Recent observations of live and roadkill armadillos indicate this species can be found year-round across the southern half of the State. Reports of armadillo have been received as far north as Porter County.



Armadillo sightings can be reported at:
www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/animals/report-a-mammal/

Left: This photo of a nine-banded armadillo was captured in June, 2021 in Daviess County. Photo courtesy of Indiana DNR.



Division of Forestry

DNR Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

2026

402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: January 28, 2026

Spring 2026 Invasive Tree Replacement program

The Indiana DNR Community & Urban Forestry program and Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) are excited to offer the Invasive Tree Replacement program in northwest Indiana.

Property owners who show proof of removal of an invasive tree on their private property within Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties are eligible to receive one free native tree at a replacement tree distribution event.

Acceptable species for removal include Callery/Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), and any woody plant listed by the Indiana Invasive Species Council ([Invasive Plants](#)).

The replacement tree distribution event will be held at Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN 46368).

- Friday, May 1, 4-6 p.m.
- Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m.-noon.

For more information about this program, visit:

<https://www.in.gov/nirpc/environment/communitree/invasive-species-replacement-program/>

To enter a submission, visit: <https://arcg.is/OX5mmu1>

Media Contact: Racheal Stenger, Urban Forestry Outreach Coordinator, phone: 317-232-0582, email: rstenger@dnr.IN.gov, 317-533-0013.



Spring 2026 Invasive Tree Replacement – NWI



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 Bill Keaton:

HOW Legal Advisor Bill Keaton lives in Owen County near Spencer, IN and enjoys watching a variety of birds on his property. One of his favorites is the meadowlark. “The **Eastern Meadowlark** (*Sturnella magna*) is beautiful bird,” commented Keaton. “It was once very common in Indiana but due to changes in farming practices it is now on verge of being declared a threatened species.”

“When my wife Rita and I moved to Owen County at the end of May, 2021 we purchased one hundred fifty acres of mature forest and old farmland. Before we acquired this property, the open land (about fifty acres) was used mostly for hay and grazing livestock. The rest is mature forest land except for our homesite.”

“The eastern meadowlark, a beautiful and somewhat friendly bird, requires large areas of grassland in order to be successful. Haying a field most often destroys the nests which has resulted in significant declines in the numbers of these birds. It is estimated that the number of eastern meadowlarks has declined by 80% in the last fifty years.”

“When we moved to our new home, we stopped using the open land for hay and livestock. We have allowed the open ground to revert to natural grasslands for nesting and habitat restoration. When we did this, we were hoping to get a covey of bobwhite quail to establish, but to date that has not happened. However, many other species of wildlife have enjoyed the area. I do not mow it until well after the time of all nesting and breeding, but I do mow to control invasive Johnson grass.”



“The eastern meadowlark is one of the birds that have thrived since we stopped using the ground for hay. The first year we stopped cutting hay, we had one pair of meadowlarks. I never located a nest, but I am sure it was successful. Last summer we had four or five pairs that nested. Because they are such beautiful birds, it is wonderful to see so many.”

“We do not expect to see meadowlarks in the winter because they normally migrate south in groups when the weather gets cold. Therefore, I was shocked to see one feeding on thistle seed under my bird feeders on February 3, 2026. There was still ten inches of snow on the ground that had been there since it snowed in late January. Then on February 5th, a pair of meadowlarks flew out of our horse shed when I went in to feed our two horses. One bird was feeding on horse manure which probably had some undigested corn in it. The picture of the pair in the snow (at left) was taken then.”

See the next page for another bird photo and more information from a fellow HOW member.



Interesting Bird Sightings in the Great Outdoors

Bird Reports Continued...

Report from Mike Lunsford:

Bill Keaton is not the only HOW member who enjoys seeing meadowlarks. HOW board member Mike Lunsford spent much of a warm afternoon in early March tracking down **Eastern Meadowlarks** (*Sturnella magna*) near his Parke County home.



“I saw what I thought was a meadowlark flying out of a grassy drainage ditch in a field near our house,” he said, “so I walked back down the road later with my camera. Meadowlarks are fascinating birds. As an ornithologist friend told me, ‘They want to see grassland from horizon to horizon, not be hemmed in by forests.’”

“That was exactly the kind of place where I found perhaps two mating pairs that day. The one bird I really concentrated on stayed in the stubble of a cornfield, but on occasion he would perch on a high corn stalk to sing to his mate (possibly). Meadowlarks, unfortunately, are in decline and development of grasslands and the loss of many species of insects are the main reasons.”

The eastern meadowlark is a prolific singer. They can be seen standing atop stumps, fence posts and even corn stalks as they sing to let others know that this is their territory.

If you look closely at the shape of a meadowlark, you will notice how they are related to blackbirds, orioles

and even grackles.”

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 hear your birding stories and see your exciting bird pictures.

Did you take a cool bird photo while exploring afield recently? Did you see the bird in your back yard? While you were traveling far from home? Send the photo in for other members to enjoy!

HOW Member News

Port Aransas is for Winter Texans

by Mike Schoonveld

Start with cheap airfares, throw in a hurricane and put a 20-pound red snapper on the end of my line and you'll be part way through the story of how, for a while each February, I become a winter Texan. My chosen destination is Port Aransas.



You've probably heard of Port Aransas because of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge – home of the endangered whooping cranes. Port Aransas is just across the Aransas River from the refuge, accessible from the north by a free ferry.

What's not to like? Port A, as locals and winter Texans call it, has two stop lights, no McDonalds, miles of beach facing the Gulf and two "deep sea" fishing operations harbored along the river front. Hard to say which of these is my favorite.

Probably what hooked me on the area was the big red snapper that gobbled my bait a few minutes after the captain said, "Okay, drop 'em in." I'd been in town less than 24 hours at the time. The boat was tied up to an offshore oil rig which had been erected in 100 feet of water.

There was nothing subtle about the bite. Imagine trying to pull a twenty-pound anchor up from the bottom with a rod and reel – but the anchor has fins and is determined to stay in the depths. By the time I'd caught my fourth one – the daily limit is four – I was beat. What saved me was taking a Ziploc bag filled with snapper fillets to the dockside restaurant adjacent to the Deep Sea Headquarters and have them prepare it for us in three different methods: blackened, baked and deep fried. Each preparation was better than the preceding one.

I was also saved by the fact the Deep Sea Headquarters only offers red snapper trips twice weekly in the winter months. The other days we would go farther offshore and fish for "saltwater panfish" – mostly vermilion snappers and other varieties of fish, nearly as tasty, and much easier to reel in from the depths.

We spent a couple of mornings fishing from shore, hoping to catch whiting, a species of fish that reminds me of white suckers that are often caught in central Indiana streams. Very tasty, without all of the bones. I've also caught salt-water catfish in several places, but I did log my personal best while fishing from a public pier one sunny Texas morning. If you like channel cats, you'd like gafftopsail catfish (photo at right).



Across the channel at one of the places I fished for whiting provided a special treat – a pair of whooping cranes wading around near the shore foraging or just basking in the sun. After all, whooping cranes are winter Texans, too.

Clouds to Catacombs – A Pilgrimage to Greece and Rome

Story and photos by Marilyn Culler

I recently returned from a pilgrimage to Greece and Rome, following the footsteps of the apostle Paul. The journey began in Greece, a land of mountains. The landscape is 80-percent mountainous, with the Pindus Range – the “spine of Greece” – central to our travels through the regions of Macedonia and Thessaly, south to the city of Athens.



Above: A view overlooking the port of Kavala, Greece, with a section of the original Via Appia (the Roman Appian Way) in the foreground.

Right: The famed Acropolis, “Porch of the Maidens” at Athens.

The Pindus ranges are an extension of the Alps, and snow-capped peaks were visible throughout our travels. Microclimates provide growing seasons for olives, cotton, citrus fruits, rice, peaches, apricots and tobacco. The best kiwi I’ve ever tasted was in Greece!

Lydia of Thyatira, known from the Bible for the expensive purple fabric she sold, is believed to have been working near ancient Philippi. The costly purple dye was derived from the secretions of several species of mollusks. The secretions were collected while the mollusks were alive, then exposed to sunlight for a certain amount of time to obtain the dye. Interesting stuff.

The six Byzantine-era Greek Orthodox monasteries of Meteora stand high atop a sandstone rock pillar complex, seemingly “suspended in the air.” Ascetics and hermits began seeking solitude in the caves of Meteora around the 4th Century. This is a UNESCO World Heritage site, hosting rare species of birds and flowers along with priceless artifacts. It’s a site (and a sight) to behold!



At Delphi, columns and stones on the path to the massive temple of Apollo featured news of the day. Visitors could learn about happenings across the empire by reading the most recent stone engravings.

The Corinth Canal, built between 1881 and 1893, links the Adriatic and Aegean Seas. The canal reduced the distance between the ports of the Aegean and Adriatic Sea by 131 nautical miles. Across the canal is Corinth, gateway into the Peloponnese. In its day, the Acropolis of Corinth was grander than Athens. Ancient Corinth, only five percent excavated, lies adjacent to the small town. The temple of Apollo, built around 550 BC, stands above a once-bustling marketplace and political center.

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In Greece, while locals fish the inland lakes, people think of freshwater fish as ‘seafood’. The government of Greece is trying to regulate saltwater fishing due to issues with fishermen keeping undersized catches.



A rooftop dinner in Athens featured a stunning view of the Acropolis at night. The next day we were reminded that ancient sites are feeling the effects not only of crowds, but also of pollution. Five of the six original female statues (Caryatids), supporting columns of The Erechtheion “Porch of the Maidens,” 5th Century BCE, are now housed in the Acropolis Museum, except for one original statue (part of the Elgin Marbles collection) which is in the British Museum in London. Those at the Acropolis today are replicas.

Our final destination of the pilgrimage was Rome, including the Vatican Museum, the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter’s Basilica, the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain and Bernini’s incomparable Fountain for the Four Rivers in Piazza Navona.

Before leaving, we stopped at the massive Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the apostle Paul’s final resting place. Last, we stepped down into the layers of dirt floors and walls of the Catacombs of St. Sebastian.

As I immersed myself in this region of the world, where earthquakes gave way to the current landscape and wars made and remade empires, where the remains of Greek gods and places of virgin sacrifices remain visible, I realized just how little and how much we’ve learned from the past.



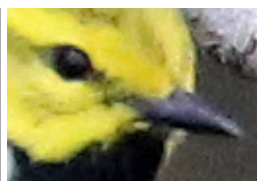
Top: Unforgettable dinner view of The Acropolis at night.
Above: Marilyn Culler standing in St. Peter's Square in Vatican City, inside Rome.

Unusual Nature Photos from the Hoosier Outdoors Sponsor: Dardevle by Eppinger

The Black-Throated Green Warbler – Expert Insect Predator



Close-up
→
Original
←



The “What is it?” photo from the previous issue was tough, but it was still correctly identified by nine (9) HOW members. Mike Schoonveld, Brent Drinkut, Phil Cox, Mike Lunsford, Troy McCormick, Bill Keaton, John Maxwell, Phil Seng and Jarrett Manek were all able to identify it. When we drew a name at random for the **Hawke** binoculars, hat and can coolers, Brent Drinkut was the lucky winner. Congrats, Brent! We will get the prize to you soon.

As can be seen in the photo above, the mystery creature for this issue was a Black-Throated Green Warbler (*Setophaga virens*). The name of this warbler is a little deceiving, because it is not as green as you might imagine. But it does have an unforgettable black throat, which definitely helps in identifying it. Both males and females have a bright yellow head with an olive-green back and a bit of olive-green on their heads. Their wings are black and white and they have a white belly, with some muted black streaking on it. Their eyes and short beak are black, too.

Like nearly all warblers, black-throated green warblers are expert insect predators. Insects make up the majority of their diet, especially during the nesting season. Flies, caterpillars, beetles and spiders are favorite snacks, and these nimble little warblers catch the vast majority of the small insects they eat on the leaves and branches of trees up in the forest canopy. They flit among the branches in a seemingly never-ending search for food. Their excellent vision allows them to see the tiniest flies and gnats hiding amongst the foliage, and their acrobatic flying skill helps them nab these little bugs.



For this issue, our friends at **Dardevle by Eppinger** have donated a very 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 three different Dardevle lure kits, Dardevle T-shirts, hats and Dardevle swag. See below for more info on the prize 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 the state of Indiana. It’s even possible you might see it in your own back yard. 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? As usual, you must identify the exact species. If you think it’s a species of sparrow, for example, go ahead and guess “swamp sparrow” (hint: it’s not a sparrow). If you think you know the answer, send it in an email to thomas.berg@comcast.net. If you’re right, you’ll be entered in this issue’s prize drawing!

As mentioned, **Dardevle by Eppinger** (www.dardevle.com) has donated an outstanding Dardevle fishing prize package for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issue’s “What Is It?” nature question. The winner gets a classic Dardevle Spinning Kit, a Pike Kit and a Red Eye Wiggler Kit, along with multiple Dardevle T-shirts, three embroidered Dardevle hats and even more Dardevle swag. The prize package is worth more than \$200! If multiple people guess correctly, we’ll draw a winner at random from the correct entries. All nature photos on this page 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.



LEVEL UP: GXR CRUSH Combos

A limited offering, all-new GXR CRUSH casting and spinning combos elevate fishing experiences with St. Croix performance and SEVIIN reliability.

Park Falls, WI (March 1, 2026) — Whatever they look like, unique angling journeys are a beautiful thing. Experiences stack up and ignite the passion. YouTube and social media fan the flame that explodes into a life of fishing obsession.

The latest collab between St. Croix Rod and SEVIIN Reels, all-new GXR CRUSH Combos are conceived and crafted to help the next generation of fishing hammers up their game... Not the retired rods and reels gifted from dad or grandpa's collection that have gotten them this far, but an aspirational statement that helps them level up.

GXR CRUSH is their own. It's St. Croix Rod and SEVIIN Reels quality and performance coupled with trend-defining aesthetics that speak to anglers who prefer to forge their own path.

And it's attainable. Available in ultra-versatile 7' medium power, fast action configurations in both spinning and casting, GXR CRUSH Combos sacrifice nothing and retail for just \$190.

GXR CRUSH Models

- 26CRC70MFC - 7', medium power, fast action casting rod with 7.3:1 SEVIIN casting reel / retail \$190.
- 26CRS70MFC - 7', medium power, fast action spinning rod with 5.1:1 SEVIIN spinning reel / retail \$190.

GXR CRUSH Features

- St. Croix SCII carbon fiber blank with Fortified Resin System (FRS) technology.
 - Stainless steel guides with aluminum oxide rings.
 - Premium-grade cork split-grip handles with premium EVA butt caps.
 - Nylon reel seat and nut.
- (continued next page)



REEL BY
SEVIIN

HOW Supporting Member News

GXR CRUSH Features (continued)

- 5-year St. Croix rod warranty.
- Lightweight, strong, & rigid composite reel bodies.
- Smooth & durable carbon fiber drag washers.
- SEVIIN GXR Crush 8-bearing spinning reel.
- SEVIIN GXR Crush 6-bearing casting reel.
- 1-Year SEVIIN reel warranty.

GXR CRUSH gives anglers a premium rod and reel combo that elevates their fishing experiences from the moment it's picked up... fueled by St. Croix performance and SEVIIN reliability, and executed in a style that makes it their own.

A limited offering from St. Croix Rod, GXR CRUSH casting and spinning combos are available right now at your local St. Croix Dealer or online at www.stcroixrods.com.

GIVING ANGLERS THE UPPER HAND

Something remarkable happens when you act on your convictions. You find focus, decisions become clear and your fear of failure fades. When Gordon Schluter returned to his northern Wisconsin home in 1977 to revive a struggling fishing rod company, he had one simple purpose – to create fishing rods that give anglers the upper hand.

About St. Croix Rod

Headquartered in Park Falls, Wisconsin, St. Croix has been proudly crafting the “Best Rods on Earth” for nearly 80 years. Combining state-of-the-art manufacturing processes with skilled craftsmanship, St. Croix is the only major producer to still build rods entirely from design through manufacturing. The company remains family-owned, owning and operating duplicate manufacturing facilities in Park Falls and Fresnillo, Mexico. With popular trademarked series such as Legend®, Avid®, Premier®, Imperial®, Triumph® and Mojo, St. Croix is revered by all types of anglers from around the world. The St. Croix Family of Brands includes St. Croix Rod, SEVIIN Reels, St. Croix Fly, Rod Geeks, and The St. Croix Factory Store.

Media contact:

Josh Lantz, Corporate Communications Manager

St. Croix of Park Falls, Ltd

Phone: 715-762-3226 Ext.316, email: joshl@stcroixrods.com.

BEST RODS ON EARTH



HOW Supporting Member News

Spartan Precision Equipment's Springbok Tripod Wins NRA Golden Bullseye Award



East Sussex, UK (Feb. 18, 2026) — Spartan Precision Equipment is proud to announce that its Springbok Tripod has received the NRA Golden Bullseye Award for Gear of the Year, one of the most prestigious honors in the shooting and hunting industry.

The NRA Golden Bullseye Awards recognize the best new products in shooting sports and hunting equipment and are selected by a committee of editors, graphic designers, and veteran NRA Publications staff, representing more than a century of combined experience. Products considered for a Golden Bullseye Award must be newly introduced and available to consumers, evaluated by an NRA staff member or regular contributor, exceed expectations in performance, demonstrate innovation in design and function, and reflect the style and quality befitting the shooting and hunting industry. This year's awards marked 24 years of recognizing excellence across the category.

“Receiving the NRA Golden Bullseye Award for Gear of the Year is a tremendous honor for our entire team,” said Rob Gearing, Founder and CEO of Spartan Precision Equipment. “The Springbok Tripod was designed to address the real problems hunters face in the field – speed, stability, and adaptability in constantly changing conditions. This recognition from the editors of American Hunter validates our commitment to engineering practical, innovative solutions that perform when it matters most.”

Designed for rapid deployment in demanding hunting environments, the Springbok Tripod features Springbok silicone technology that lets shooters transition from prone to standing positions in seconds without mechanical adjustments. Its twistable head provides added stability for a finer point of aim, while the MagnaSwitch™ quick-detach system enables fast rifle attachment and removal – making it ideal for tracking moving targets.

Built for active hunts across all environments – from the mountains to woodlands and open plains, the Springbok Tripod delivers exceptional versatility, lightweight performance, and uncompromising stability.

Key features of the Springbok Tripod include:

- Ultra lightweight design, quick-deploy legs
- Transition from prone to standing in seconds
- Silicone body enable rapide position changes
- MagnaSwitch quick-detach system
- Ideal for tracking moving targets.

For more information on Spartan Precision Equipment, visit www.javelinbipod.com.

About Spartan Precision Equipment

Spartan Precision Equipment is a globally recognized manufacturer of innovative precision shooting accessories for hunters, competitive shooters, and professional end users. Based in the United Kingdom, the company is best known for its patented magnetic attachment systems and lightweight, durable rifle support solutions. Combining advanced engineering with real-world field experience, the company's award-winning products are designed and manufactured to the highest standards, delivering uncompromising performance, reliability, and versatility in demanding environments. Spartan Precision Equipment is committed to innovation, precision, and supporting shooters who demand excellence from their equipment. Visit www.javelinbipod.com for more information.

Editorial Contact:

Karen Lutto Leatherwood, 804-539-6699 (cell), email: karen@hunteroc.com

HOC Website: www.hunteroc.com



HOW Supporting Member News

DEX FingerLight®: A Hands-Free, Finger-mounted Light Built for the Outdoors

Chesterfield, MO – A versatile, stealth-ready tool for hunters, anglers, and campers, DEX FingerLight® is a rechargeable, compact, finger-mounted LED light originally designed for surgery but quickly gaining traction among hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts.

DEX FingerLight easily mounts to any finger, thumb, or over a glove. The result is a versatile amount of light that can be switched and positioned for optimal brightness or stealth much faster and easier than a headlamp. It is particularly well-suited for hunting, fishing, and camping applications. The patented Griptonite-TPU ring self-adjusts to fit over bare fingers, gloves, or attach to nearby structures.

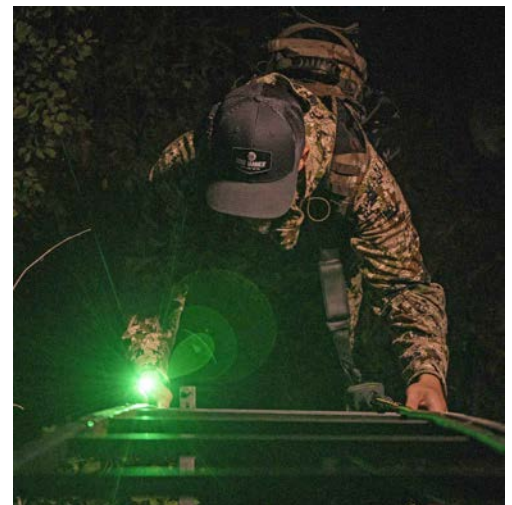
“We surpassed every original quality and durability requirement in development,” said Co-Founder Tom Mitchell. “DEX FingerLight went straight to #1 on Amazon for *Hot New Release in Hands-Free Lighting*. We rank in the top 1% of e-commerce stores for sales growth and conversion rates. For that, we thank our loyal customers. Our return rate is less than 0.5% and our on-time, reliable delivery ranks in the top 1% of e-commerce stores. It is no accident that the launch went well in 2025. We work very hard and are fully committed to excellence.”

Outdoor conditions are rarely forgiving. DEX FingerLight was engineered accordingly. The light features an IPX7 waterproof rating and can be frozen, rinsed, submerged, and has proven to survive washing machine cycles. It is constructed with rugged, impact-resistant materials designed to withstand repeated flexing, cold weather, and rough handling.

DEX FingerLight offers a significant advantage in stealth and control. The low-profile design minimizes movement, while multiple light modes — including a green LED option — help preserve night vision and reduce intrusive light. It can be positioned underhand as well for added stealth to direct light at feet, decoys, or gear without shining outwardly, blinding others, or attracting insects to the face like a headlamp can do. It is comfortable, easy to transport or carry in pocket or the Custom Carrying Case, is shipped with a USB-C cable and has a Money Back Guarantee and Limited Lifetime Warranty.

DEX FingerLight is actively seeking outdoor writers and reviewers interested in hands-on field testing for hunting, fishing, and camping applications. Learn more at [fingerlight.com](https://www.fingerlight.com) or find us on any social media platform.

Media Contact: For more information, please contact:
Co-Founder Tom Mitchell, email: tom@wildmbrands.com.
Website: www.fingerlight.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
BPI Outdoors - www.BPIguns.com
Cauldryn - www.cauldryn.com
Church Tackle Company - www.churchtackle.com
Cocoons Eyewear - www.cocoons.com
Daisy Outdoor Products - www.daisy.com
Dardevle by Eppinger - www.dardevle.com
DEX FingerLight - www.fingerlight.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
Flying Fisherman - www.flyingfisherman.com
G Pucci & Sons - www.p-line.com
Gapen Company - www.gapen.com
Gator Bait Tackle - www.gatorbaittackle.com
Gaylord Area CTB - www.gaylordmichigan.net
Gill Fishing - www.gillfishing.com
Grundens USA - www.grundens.com
Habit Apparel - www.habitoutdoors.com
Hawke Sport Optics - www.hawkeoptics.com
HHA Sports - www.HHAsports.com
Hi Mountain Seasonings - www.himtnjerky.com
Hobie Eyewear - www.hobieeyewear.com
Hornady Manufacturing - www.hornady.com
Indiana Destination Development Corporation - www.visitindiana.com
Kehrer Fish Co - www.kehrerfishcompany.com
Lawrence County Tourism - www.limestonecountry.com
LensPen - www.lenspen.com
Li'L Tuffy Swimbait - www.ramblingangler.com
Madison CVB - www.visitmadison.org
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.mojooutdoors.com
Moving Water Outfitters - www.mwoutfitters.com
Nat'l Shooting Sports Foundation - www.nssf.org
National Wild Turkey Federation - www.nwtf.org
Nesco Vacuum Sealers - www.nesco.com
Norsemen Outdoors - www.norsemenoutdoors.com
Nothead Tackle - www.notheadtackle.com
O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. - www.mossberg.com
Old Salt Angling - www.oldsaltangling.com
OnX Maps - www.onxmaps.com
Otis Technology - www.otistec.com
OutCast Lures - www.outcastlures.com
Owner Hooks - www.ownerhooks.com
Pheasants Forever - www.pheasantsforever.org
Plano Molding - www.planooutdoors.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
RCBS - www.rcbs.com
Realtree - www.realtree.com
Renfro Productions - www.renfroproductions.com
Riton Optics - www.ritonoptics.com
Roberts Camera - www.robertscamera.com
Safari Club International - www.safariclub.org
Seaguar Fishing Lines - www.seaguar.com
Shipshewana/LaGrange County CVB - www.visitshipshewana.org
Shooter's Choice - www.shooters-choice.com
Sierra Bullets - www.sierrabullets.com
Speedhook Specialists - www.speedhook.com
Sporting Classics - www.sportingclassics.com
Spypoint Trail Cameras - www.spypoint.com
St. Croix Rods - www.stcroixrods.com
Steuben County Tourism - www.visitsteubencounty.com
Steelhead Outdoors - www.steelheadoutdoors.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
Vicious Fishing - www.getvicious.com
Visit Madison, Indiana - www.visitmadison.org
Vortex Optics - www.vortexoptics.com
Whitetails Unlimited - www.whitetailsunlimited.com
Winchester Ammunition - www.winchester.com
W.R. Case - www.wrcase.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:

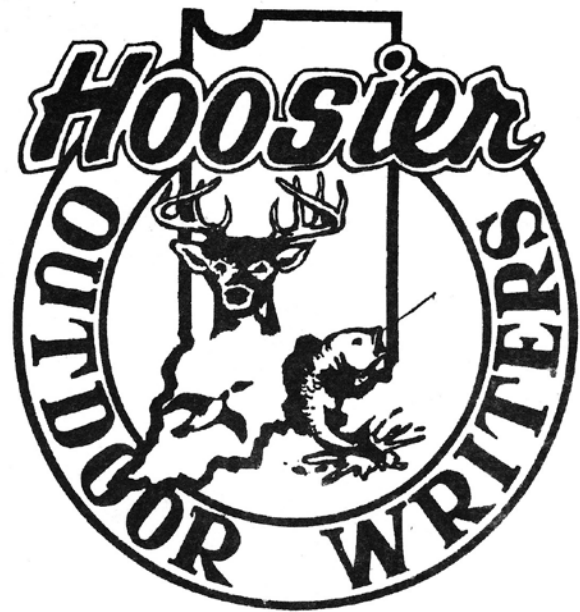
1. To give the profession of outdoor writing/reporting greater recognition and understanding, even higher standards and enlarged scope.
2. To encourage and enforce high standards of professional ethics.
3. To strive always for the truth, accuracy, clarity and completeness in the dissemination of outdoor 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 2026 Annual Conference: April 10-12, 2026
(Annual meeting on April 11)
(www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org)
Potawatomi Inn, Pokagon State Park
Angola, IN

NRA 2026 Annual Meeting and Exhibits: April 16-19, 2026
(www.NRAam.org)
Houston, TX

2026 Indiana Dunes Birding Festival: May 14-17, 2026
(www.indunesbirdingfestival.com)
Porter, IN

2026 POMA Summit: May 26-28, 2026
(www.professionalloutdoormedia.org)
Hugo, MN

ICAST Show 2026: July 14-17, 2026
(www.ICASTfishing.org)
Orlando, FL

OWAA 2026 Annual Conference: August 22-24, 2026
(www.owaa.org/2026-conference/)
Madison, WI

Indianapolis Fall Boat & Travel Show: September 25-27, 2026
(www.IndySportShow.com)
Indianapolis, IN

AGLOW 2026 Conference: October 11-15, 2026
(www.aglowinfo.org)
Lewiston, NY

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*.