

# Trails and Tales



1959 – 1994

Stories, myths and legends  
from the first 35 years of Alberta Fish and Wildlife

Volume 1

## Preface

We've all heard them – in living rooms and watering holes, around banquet tables, while warming before campfires – the stories created over the past 35 years as Fish and Wildlife grew and developed its own history and personality. These are part and parcel of the “glue” that holds our organization together. We hear about what has been done, and we want to be a part of it – at least by association.

Stories are best told verbally. The audience can see the story teller's gestures and hear the voice inflections that dramatize the important points, and indeed make it memorable. The problem with verbal stories – other than they change over time – is they must be continually retold or they are eventually forgotten. When the key characters and the story tellers move on, the stories begin to fade from collective memory. It was for this reason that the 35th Anniversary Committee decided that an attempt should be made to write down some of the stories and preserve them for present and future staff.

Written stories have their own advantages. They don't require the presence of the story teller, and can be enjoyed just about anywhere. The plots don't change over time, and the writer can take the time to ensure that the story is told right. And, the stories are easily passed on to others who may not personally know the characters or the story tellers.

We hope you enjoy these stories and poems composed by your colleagues in fish and wildlife conservation. Yes, we are contemplating the production of a Volume 2. If you have a story or a poem you would like to share with other staff, please send it, by December 22, 1994, to Don Meredith, c/o Community Relations Division, 9th Floor, S. Tower, 9915 – 108 Street, Edmonton.

### **35th Anniversary Committee**

Michele Aasgard  
Tom Bateman  
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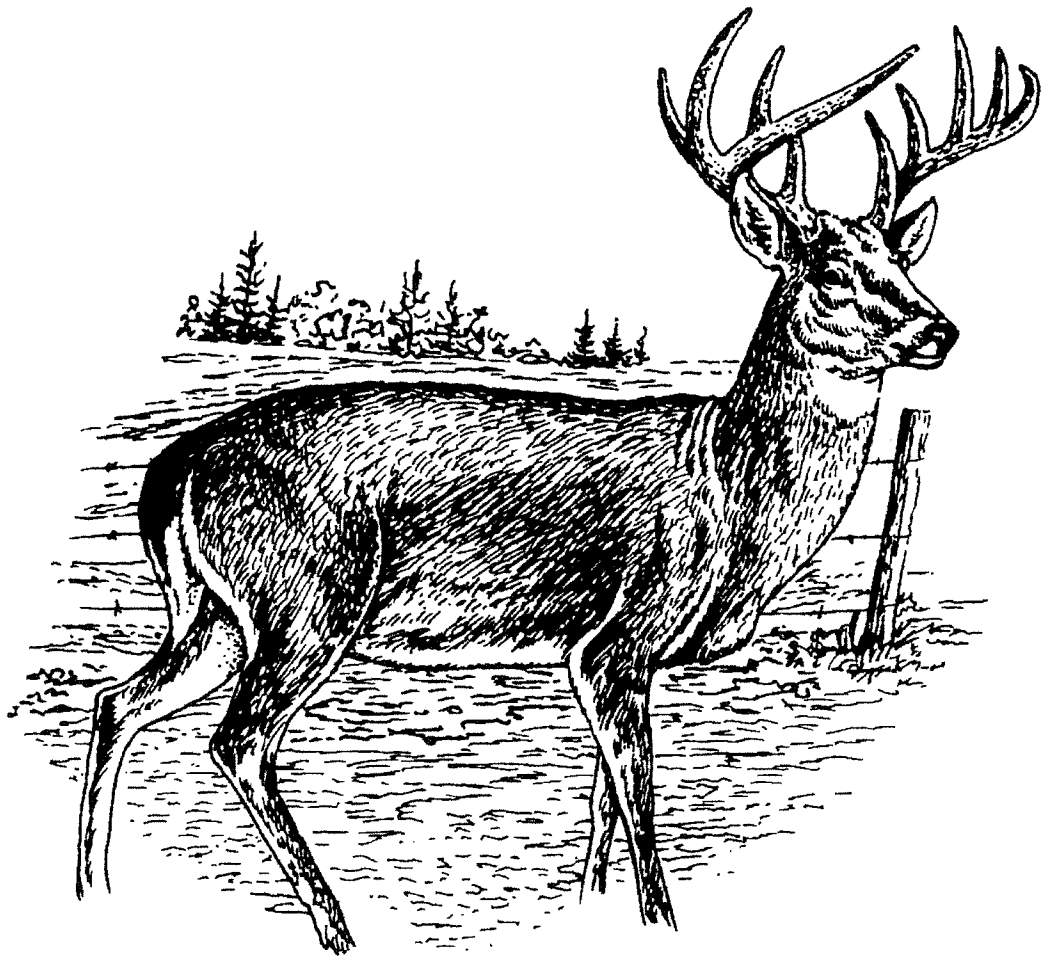
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## The Antelope Trap by J. Tom Bateman

I was sharing a glass of lemonade with Professor Gimblatt a few weeks ago when Morley Barrett's name came up. Professor Gimblatt is the Dean of Biology, Tatting and Obscure Thought at his own personal diploma mill.

Morley's name was not all that nearly came up because sharing lemonade with the professor turned out to be an unpleasant experience. He started blowing into his straw and I began to experience an overwhelming need to puke.

Anyway, the professor was Morley's supervising academic when Morley got his Ph.D.

Actually, the University involved was ahead of its time. The government was busy trying to administer cuts to all the various activities of choice at the University. The problem was the government couldn't find the school because Professor Gimblatt kept on the move. He had a new box number every few weeks and still remains in business.

Morley's name caused Professor Gimblatt to warm to the discussion, especially after he knew he had discouraged me from getting my share of the lemonade. He told me about Morley's desire to be a psychologist. Apparently, Morley switched faculties when the University printer broke. The only diplomas available said "Biologist" so Morley chose to be one of those.

The professor said Morley actually took a few courses, some more than once, but seemed to discourage easily when his marks were posted.

A quarter of a century ago, Morley disturbed the tranquillity of southern Alberta just by showing up. I could see right away that he should have been a psychologist. At least he should have spent some time in the company of the Faculty members. Morley and I attended a local Fish and Game meeting where all those in attendance agreed that all their troubles were Morley's fault. There were very few deer, no pheasants, too many ducks and their cows were drying up prematurely. Morley began explaining to them that their antagonism toward him was really caused by their wounded inner child. He told them they needed to connect with their inner feelings and learn to express their emotions and not hold back because it created frustrations. He advised them to beat on the ground with sticks and to learn to weep and wail and express themselves. Part way through the evening, a couple of them produced old hockey sticks and began to take part in the prescribed therapy. They centred on Morley, however, and I will admit that I was impressed by his alacrity and speed.

Morley had not anticipated such enthusiastic participation in his first psychological session. Those Fish and Gamers wielding the sticks beat on the floor, the podium from which Morley had recently spoke, and several chairs that Morley threw behind him to interfere with the pursuit as he left the

auditorium. It was a very exciting time. The stick wielders returned saying "Before we had biologists, we had deer" and "We like deer better than biologists." It was a wonderful evening.

Morley was not easily discouraged. He designed a project to save our antelope. I never understood what we were saving them from but that's probably because of my limited training in psychology. In January of 1968, Morley organized a crew of 12 and we travelled to the Q Ranch which was the designated Antelope Saving Area. The antelope would be saved by driving them into a large trap which we were to construct. Once the antelope were in the trap they would be wrestled to the ground by naive crew members. A necklace was scheduled to be placed on each antelope that would somehow prolong their existence and enhance the quality of their life. All this remains academic, however, because we never did catch an antelope. Most of the crew didn't know Morley or they wouldn't have come. I was immediately suspicious that this undertaking was really another one of Morley's psychological projects. He ran things like a military general, telling people where to sit, where to sleep, where to pound steel posts in the ground and what to think. All these things are critical to antelope saving. I was assistant cook as well as morale officer. As usual, I was a model of diligence and cooperation as I attempted to persuade someone to listen to my theories. No one ever did because it was a rude, inconsiderate crew.

Conditions were challenging. There was about two feet of snow, the temperature averaged -40° complete with a steady wind from the southeast at about 50 kmh, all of which was Morley's fault. Our accommodation was a log cabin built near the end of the last century. We never did figure out which end.

Morley was happy, observant, accommodating and sickening. The crew turned on him almost instantly. Of course, most of the crew hated him by then anyway, so it took very little effort to turn on him. Through it all, he remained disgusting. "Don't eat the yellow snow" he counselled for the 30th time, which was followed by gales of laughter.

Morley still laughs in gales. Antelope were soon forgotten and survival became our objective. It was obvious to most of us that our best chance of surviving was to kill Morley. It immediately turned into a heated debate because everyone wanted to do it. The whole crew became a team, totally focused on this common objective. They all contributed to the cause and created some wonderful ideas for the execution. The result was a bonding of the crew, except for Morley. Everyone was happy, vigorous and determined to survive. Some of the crew even laughed at the yellow snow joke. They were in bad shape. The whole project was a picture of a successful endeavour because the team functioned as a well oiled unit. They were focused and excited about their perception of what needed to be done. They all cooperated with one another and rushed to the aid of any individual who was working on a job by himself.



Morley was convinced that his therapeutic sessions were achieving unbelievable results, so he too was smiling. There were some wonderfully creative ideas for killing our executive, but the opportunity evaded us. Ideas were shared in whispers as people cooperated in the yellow snow project. Before we knew it the allotted time was gone and Morley was still giving orders, writing notes in his little book, and generally being obnoxious. When the crew realized our time was up and Morley was still alive, several of them began to weep. Some of us cursed silently, and some not so silently. Several of the men beat sticks on the ground. The sticks used to be attached to big hammers. This single issue bonded the crew together so well that it has lasted for 25 years. Once in a while some of us get together for coffee and dream about our project which has become the career passion of some of the crew.

Morley's psycho-approach to saving antelope achieved great results because we still have antelope and they seem to be vigorous and healthy.

It is always interesting to watch as the remaining crew members look back and remember the great week when eliminating Morley was the glue that held us all together. Many of those dedicated people have gone to great lengths to save Morley from his own philosophy to ensure he stays alive just in case he ever decides to trap antelope again. It just goes to show how well agency staff work together when we have an urgent, common goal.

### **Attack at the Namur Lake Cabin** by Vonn Bricker

It was a beautiful fall night, following one of the most spectacular sunsets I had ever seen. We were bedded down in the Namur Lake cabin, snug and secure without a care in the world.

I had been given the opportunity to fly into Namur Lake to help take out the warning buoys around pelican nesting sites. All in all, it was pretty rough duty. Flying in by Beaver float plane, a couple of hours of pulling buoys and then a couple of days to test if the fish were biting.

There were four of us, a comfortable number for the cabin, and we crawled into our sleeping bags after a big trout dinner. Pretty soon everyone was well out of it and catching up on zzzz's preparing for another hard day in the boat tomorrow.

Crash! Bang! Scratch!

I was instantly wide awake and listening. What the heck was that? I could tell everyone else was awake by the silence in the cabin: no snores, nobody tossing and turning.

Bang! Crunch! Rattle!

Something was on the porch and it was making a lot of noise.

Snuff, snuff. Scratch. Rattle, rattle. The something was checking out the door and trying to get in.

I'll admit it, I'm by and large a city kid. At three or four in the morning, I was feeling definitely uncomfortable with the scene at hand.

Shake, rattle, bang! Snuff, snuff.

This door was of definite interest to some extremely large and hungry critter.

"Did anyone put the latch on the screen door," one of my cohorts whispered.

Oh great, I thought. Here I am in the wilds with some of Fish and Wildlife's finest and they're counting on a 95¢ latch from MacLeods to keep us alive. Come on guys, my six-year-old could do in the whole flippin' door with one of his ninja moves.

Crash! Shudder! Bang!

"No."

Terrific, I thought. Not only is this goofy latch my only protection but no-one does it up. I snuggle down a bit deeper in my sleeping bag.

Bang, bang, smash!

Game over. That door ain't going to hold.

All of a sudden the pitch black cabin is a madhouse of activity. "Where's the gun? I can't find it!"

"Here's the gun! Where's the shells?"

"Ouch!" Someone trips over some gear.

"Here's the shells. What happened to the gun?"

"Where's the flashlight?"

At this point, I figured I was pretty smart to go for the top bunk. Maybe it will be a short bear.

Oh oh, but then I had another problem. These guys were falling over everything in the dark trying to load that shotgun. Top bunk wasn't going to save me from a dose of 12 gauge.

But wait a minute. Except for the stumbling around, it was pretty quiet.

With flashlight and shotgun at the ready, we opened the door. It was absolutely still outside. Not a sound. There was some gear and garbage strewn around, but no wildlife.

Back to the bunks, we went. I lay there for a few minutes thinking about the recent adventure.

Bear, wolverine, ravenous squirrel, I thought, who knows? All I know for sure is that this has been a great trip, so far – good company, nice country, good fishing. Tomorrow night, though, I'm going to lock that screen door.

### **Bear in the Yard** by Chuck Shipley

There was the case of the very large bear in the very large bee yard in the High Prairie district, somewhere around 1973/1974. Officers Shipley and Martel were on patrol and discovered the bee yard with supers on each hive probably six or seven high. It was sunset and probably mid to late September, thereby causing it to cool off considerably as soon as the sun went down. The bear was spotted feeding on the combs of a super that he had just knocked over. Since the bear hadn't yet seen the truck, the officers backed it out of plain view and watched the bear.

He polished off the honey combs in that pile, promptly sat up and whacked another super, sending the super, the bees and the honey comb flying in every direction. At this point, it was decided to cut down the bee keeper's losses by shooting the bear. Officer Martel had a vent for shooting bears, so he decided that he should be the one to do that. He took out the rifle, stood on the side of the road, and shot. The bear promptly went down.

Now, the decision had to be made, should they leave the bear there or should they take it. They thought they had better take it, but there was a bunch of mad bees in there. The evening was cooling off so maybe the bees wouldn't be too bad.

They lowered the tail gate on the truck. The plan of attack was to back in, jump out, run and grab the bear, fire it into the back of the truck and leave in great haste. It seemed flawless.

The officers entered the truck, put it in reverse, backed up to the bear, leaped out, grabbed the bear, heaved on it, and nothing happened. They looked at each other in a daze, yanked on the bear again, grunted and heaved. It finally went into the back of the truck. They ran, jumped into the truck and started down the road at a high rate of speed.

When they had stopped the truck at the bee yard, they left the truck heater on. Now, when they got down the road a little way, all of a sudden there was quite a bit of buzzing inside the truck. They soon discovered there were five or six bees buzzing around. They were not happy at all.

The truck had power-lock brakes. The brake was hammered, the release lever was hit at about 30 miles an hour and both officers exited the truck while it was still going down the road. Neither suffered any stings from the bees or gravel rash. We were younger and more agile in those days.

The next day the bear was weighed and found to be in the 350 pound range. That may have been the reason they had so much trouble lifting the bear.

### **A Bigger Bang for Your Buck** by Daryl Watters

Many years ago, Fish and Wildlife staff were instructed and certified in the use of explosives as a fish capture technique. Shortly after being certified, I found myself on Saline Creek, south of Fort McMurray, with Doug Lowe, former Fisheries Biologist. The objective was to assess the presence of arctic grayling in this creek and the method was to set up a seine below a pool, then lay some B-line (detonating cord) in the pool, touch it off, and recover any dead or stunned fish in the blocking seine.

Now Doug was a great believer in the old saw "If lots is good then more is better." We proceeded to lay a length of B-line down the middle of the pool. One length of orange string in the water looked pretty insignificant so we decided to criss-cross the pool to ensure we would be sampling all the available fish habitat.

After some effort, we had pretty much covered the pool with B-line so the next step was to plan our escape route and light the fuse. The outside portion of the pool was bounded by a 50-75 foot high cut bank and we decided climbing to the top of this bank would give us a safe vantage point.

We proceeded to put our plan into action. Those of you who have used B-line probably know what's coming next; however, suffice to say we had considerably more than enough B-line to do the job. When the B-line detonated we were able to visually assess the presence or absence of grayling in that portion of Saline Creek because the creek became instantaneously dewatered. In fact all the water in the pool was in the air above us and we were able to see every detail of the creek bottom.

A few minutes later, after we had stopped shaking and the falling rain had refilled the creek, we checked the seine for casualties. Unfortunately the largest portion of fish(?) in the seine was the size of your fingernail and species identification was impossible. Needless to say we chose a different method for a subsequent grayling assessment.

### **Bishop and the Boat** by Chuck Shipley

There is a story about Frank Bishop, the Fisheries Biologist. When he was in Peace River, he and I had occasion to patrol over to Fort Vermilion and launch the government boat into the Peace River. The boat was a 14 foot Springbok, with a 35 horse motor.

The launch sites were, at best, poor. The gravel wasn't really gravel, it was stones, very round, river washed stones about the size of your head.

We backed the truck, boat and trailer up to the edge of the river and we weren't quite to the water line. To get the boat into the water, we thought we'd unhook it from the truck and move it around some further rocks to better launch it without causing any damage to the boat. It should be noted that the grade on the river bank was fairly steep, but we didn't think that would be a problem.

We unhooked the tongue of the trailer from the back of the truck. As soon as it got free of the trailer hitch ball, it started heading for the water, which was probably 10 or 15 feet away. Biologist Bishop with true grit, determination and self-sacrifice, gripped the tongue of the boat trailer and allowed himself to be bounced and carried down to the edge of the water over the big ugly rocks, until the boat finally stopped, partially in the river and almost floating. I'm dedicated to Fish and Wildlife, but not enough to be dragged over rocks into a river to save a boat. But Bishop didn't care. He had all his family by then.

### **Bridge Over the River Tiny** by J. Tom Bateman

A crowd of people gathered in the late afternoon on the banks of an obscure and unnamed creek in southern Alberta. When the sunlight hits the water at precisely the right angle, it is possible to see the outline of a human form. Actually, the crowd of curiosity seekers was not all that large, but I did see three people there once. Two were yawning but the third was genuinely interested, and seemed convinced that the image was Elvis. He also speculated that maybe it was a sign from one of his ancestors who had a deity complex.

It was lucky I was on the site because I know how the image came to be in the creek bottom.

It was late June of 1968 when Frank Sommerville called from his ivory tower in Lethbridge to direct me to a creek where a bridge had washed out. I remember inquiring about why I should care about bridges. Frank explained that our Regional Fisheries Biologist, Duane Radford, had built a fish trap near the bridge. He didn't catch any fish but a lot of aquatic vegetation had piled up against the trap. It became a small impoundment, and the bridge washed out, and the farmer was mad, so fix it.

Fish and Wildlife Officers Ron Sole and Terry Wendland were at the site when I arrived. Both these guys, together, knew less than nothing about fixing bridges. When we added my knowledge and experience, however, our total resources were about the same.

Sure enough, there was a mickey mouse bridge that had sunk about two feet. Ron, Terry and I walked around the area

clicking our tongues and making humming sounds in an effort to hide our total helplessness.

Finally, Ron announced that we should take a very long plank and wedge it under one corner of the bridge. We could then pry the bridge up to its original level. This idea met the totally enthusiastic response of Terry and me mostly because we were tired of walking, clicking and humming. The plank was wedged under the corner but the other end was way up in the air. Three determined, diligent, loyal and not too bright officers began to lower the high end of the plank. The bridge made slurping noises something like Duane Radford when he has soup for lunch. The combined energy of all three of us was just enough to pry the bridge up to its original level.

We sat on the plank and rested, pleased with our efforts. Ron, our idea man, soon pointed out the fact that we had another dilemma. It would not be practical for three civil servants to hold up the bridge for an extended period of time. He suggested that we place one of our trucks in a position so the end of the plank we were holding could be secured under the front bumper, thereby releasing the crew. This idea made so much sense that I immediately went to get my truck. Unfortunately, Ron went to get his truck at precisely the same moment. Terry issued forth a long quavering wail on a frequency that would shatter a wine glass.

I looked back to see what all the fuss was about and was surprised to see no one there. About this time Terry started his re-entry. A faint sound of very bad language grew louder as he descended. He sounded like a combination of an opera singer, auctioneer and a siren. The words were not at all complimentary but they ended suddenly when he hit the creek. There were still cursing noises, but they were garbled or gurgled because Terry was imbedded in the creek bottom under two feet of water and about 10 inches of mud.

I immediately sprang into action, and using the same plank we had used on the bridge, I pried him loose from the mud and water. I also immediately explained that the unfortunate incident was Ron's fault. Terry was in no mood to reason and I'm still embarrassed by his untoward remarks about Ron's and my ancestry. I still can't imagine how he could be so ungrateful after I saved him. I will admit that I may have chuckled a little as the events unfolded. The fact that I was rolling on the ground holding my sides as I chuckled was not necessarily related to the event.

### **Cool Head in a Hot Spot** (reprinted from the Edmonton Journal, May 14, 1993) by Wayne Brown

It is mid-January some years ago. I am on routine patrol as a Fish and Wildlife officer checking ice fishing activity at a lake in northeastern Alberta.

The low-hanging sun does little to warm the mid-afternoon air as I make my way across the stark, frozen ice. The green and

white marked truck is bucking and jumping in spite of my effort to steer around the worst of the snowdrifts that lie before me like white waves.

I round a point of land and a group of fishers come into view ahead. An old, beat-up yellow truck passes me going in the opposite direction. A friendly wave is returned to the driver, a local farmer who lives on the south shore behind me.

Suddenly, CRASH!

Water, chunks of ice and slush explode from under the front wheels, the roof light bar and an empty gas can from the back fly out across the ice, landing 20 feet in front of the truck. I'm slammed against the seat belt hard. With instant, shocked realization, I gasp, "God, I've gone through!"

The nose of the truck begins to settle in the lake and with a glance I can see four inches of water that have already rushed into the cab through the door jambs and ventilation ducts. Convulsively, my feet jerk up, knees on each side of the steering wheel.

As the seat belt is snapped off I glance outside. In just those few seconds, the water is halfway up the door. The ice and water pressure won't allow me to open it, so escape has to be out the side window. It seems to take forever to roll that window down, turn and slide out on to the door sill, then scramble up on to the now bare roof.

Still dry? Well almost. Feels as if one Skidoo boot is half full of water, but that's all. On the roof I have a moment to pause and appraise the situation. Six inches of solid ice lies about four feet beyond the truck. The water is now almost up to the hood. That yellow truck I'd just waved to is turning to come back, but none of the fishers seem to have noticed me go in.

It's time to move! Looks like the best way is a running three-step start with a leap across the gap from the truck hood to solid ice. I land safely in time to turn and see the truck settle to the muddy bottom, three quarters submerged in the murky, ice-strewn water.

It all took less than 20 seconds!  
Lady Luck rides my shoulder again!

### **"Does Your Dog Bite?"** by Pat Dunford

Several years ago I received a call from a lady who was quite upset that her chickens were disappearing mysteriously. She was convinced that some predator was making off with them. I promised her I would visit her farm to attempt to resolve the problem.

Later, while patrolling in the area, I stopped by. As I pulled up in the farmyard I noticed a prominent "Beware of Dog" sign posted on a picket fence. Using the usual caution, but knowing

that most of these signs were merely a bluff, I waited momentarily for evidence of a mean dog. When nothing showed itself, I exited the vehicle and knocked on the door of the house. A small non-descript mutt of a dog was tied on a leash by the door. It couldn't have weighed five pounds. It barked at me and I ignored it.

The lady was putting on her boots to take me over to the chicken coop to explain the problem she was having. "Oh, my dog didn't give you any trouble did she?" she asked, "She can be real mean with strangers, you know." I eyed the mutt for a second and replied, "No, she never gave me a bit of trouble, Heh, Heh," thinking that this poor elderly woman was probably quite far past her prime.

I investigated the complaint and offered the lady some advice on locking her chickens up securely at night and keeping a close eye on them. I promised to return if she called to report the problem was continuing. She was very gracious and thanked me profusely, wishing me well before re-entering the house.

"Watch out for my dog, eh?" she said.

"Oh, I will, don't you worry." Poor woman.

I was just reaching for the door handle of the truck when I heard a skittering noise from around the back of the vehicle. I began to turn toward the sound when out of the corner of my eye I detected movement.

A large brown dog was hurtling toward me in a full charge without making a sound. Its speed was incredible. I barely got halfway turned toward it, when – flying through the air in a tremendous leap – it struck me. The animal's teeth locked on my thigh with tremendous force while the weight of the animal spun me completely around.

The dog's charge and weight caused it to tear free of my leg at the end of the arc. When it ripped loose, it tore away a large flap of material from my pants. Just as quickly the animal spun away and disappeared around the front of the truck.

Clutching my leg and grimacing painfully, I stepped quickly to the front of the vehicle with some instinctive thought of revenge, only to discover that the animal had vanished completely. It was though it had never been there.

I cautiously returned to the side of the truck, all the while looking in every direction. I got in the vehicle and carefully looked around to see if there had been any witnesses. There were none. I left.

I had a large bruise on my thigh, some missing skin and a small gash that caused me to lose a few drops of blood. My uniform pants, however, were a complete write-off.

You know, I should have listened to that lady.

## Fish, Fur and Feathers Forever

by Sam Bundt

I started with this outfit  
Back in May of '81  
And I'd just like to share with you  
Some of the things I've done.

It was Red Deer where I met him  
Al Kirkwood was his name  
Parliamentary Procedure  
Was how he gained his fame.

And Al, he seemed to drink a bit  
A small bladder had the chap  
Every time we'd stop, he'd go  
Always wore his forage cap.

Now Al retired in '82  
And who should take his place  
But the blond-haired Swede called Egon  
With a big smile on his face.

You see, he came from the mountains  
Where most girls he knew were sheep.  
He'd heard of the Red Deer ratio  
For days he couldn't sleep.

And then in 1983  
To Barrhead I did go.  
Career development they said  
To learn some things I didn't know.

You're lucky going to Barrhead  
With McKee there, I was told.  
I was shocked when I first met him  
I thought that they said "BOLD."

Work with Milt was never dull  
And I certainly have proof.  
I recall the time he locked us out  
On our office building roof.

It was summer time in '85  
When Dennis Giggs did call.  
He said you're transferred to Grande Cache  
My wife Barb began to bawl.

I was in Grande Cache nearly four full years  
And was starting to have fun.  
It took that long to straighten out  
All the things Al Gibson done.

And then we moved to Evansburg  
In 1989.  
I assured Barb and the children  
That things here would be fine.

And sometimes you have to question

The things that you may do.  
I'd clean forgotten one big thing  
Al Gibson's been there too.

But now things are pretty stable  
And I only think it's fair  
To talk a bit 'bout other folks  
With whom I work out there.

I've worked with Dennis Urban  
With greying, reddish hair.  
He likes to dress in women's clothes  
And hunt elk from the air.

I once stood beside him  
On a cutline one tense day.  
A woodpecker tapped upon a tree  
Den said, "let's blow that bird away."

And then there's Fred, he was right here,  
He's gone, where can he be  
And now I know why he's known  
As Phantom 523.

Then young Darcy came along  
Such things I've never heard  
Like lickin' eyes, and tongue push-ups  
To me they sound absurd.

And now I have Big Brian.  
If a hunter makes him frown  
He calmly gets into his truck  
And runs the sucker down.

There's Ian Tarr from Edson  
With 10-50 foot he's had good luck.  
He's always good to have around  
But keep your quad chained to your truck.

And Slats from Athabasca  
Or, St. Paul now, I should say.  
I've never seen a man whose bowels  
Can disgust me quite that way.

And of course there's Dale Archibald  
Whose singing we all adore  
And the famous line he'll often use  
"I think I'll have one more."

And then there's squirrely Earl from Lloyd  
With his inventions he has fun.  
I heard that he made somethin'  
That shakes it when he's done.

Bill Peters, Hawk and Nichols  
They could very well be here.  
Just be sure to watch real close  
They'll be the first one's to the beer.

That's newly wed Steve Carlson  
I had a good time at your stag.  
The next time that I take you home  
I'll use a body bag.

And Kim McAdam, he was there.  
He had a front row seat.  
He really couldn't comprehend  
The size of that girl's feet.

But as I sit and read this poem  
I'll tell you what I see  
Are the men and women, and boys and girls  
Of one big family.

We all must work together  
To achieve our common goal  
Or instead of having diamonds  
We'll have nothing but the coal.

As we protect the fish and wildlife  
Of this province where we live  
We have the satisfaction  
Of knowing what we give.

So when you leave tomorrow  
Please keep one thing in mind  
A better group of people  
Would be real hard to find.

### **14-Carat Gold** by Chuck Shipley

Jack Morrison and Officer Nichols were involved in an incident that happened somewhere between 1970 and 1975. Briefly, the story goes that they had a report of some non-resident aliens hunting north of Athabasca. At that time, Officer Nichols was a District Officer in Athabasca and Jack Morrison was a District Officer in Slave Lake. Officer Nichols called Morrison and asked him to come and assist him in tracking these guys down and find out exactly what they were doing.

This trip involved quite a long truck drive, and then a snowmobile trip of some length to locate the camp where these folks were staying. When they arrived, the officers questioned the hunters about what was going on and found that the hunters and guides were somewhat intoxicated. A scuffle ensued in which Officer Nichols and one of the hunters ended up rolling around on the ground. Morrison attempted to keep the other hunters at bay. There were no major injuries to either party. Some firearms were seized and some tickets were written. The firearms were taken back to Athabasca.

At a later date the trial ensued in Slave Lake. There were some notable people in attendance: Ernie Psikla and other folks from Edmonton. Of course, Officers Nichols and Morrison were there, as were officers from High Prairie, and other officers

from adjoining districts, because this proved to be an interesting case.

Officer Morrison was asked by the judge to describe how he had managed to keep the other hunters from entering into the scuffle when it appeared that Officer Nichols was getting the better of the person that he was fighting with.

The judge said, "Officer Morrison, I want you to tell me exactly what you said to those people or what they said to you."

Officer Morrison indicated he was unable to do that because there were ladies present.

The judge looked at him very sternly and said, "Officer Morrison, I want to know exactly what those gentlemen said to you."

Jack in his very best voice said, "Your Honour, they called me a fourteen-carat-gold prick."

The court room burst into laughter. The judge stayed stone faced, never cracked a smile, and carried on with the trial.

The firearms were entered as exhibits, and at one point, a .30 calibre, Model 94 Winchester was presented to Officer Nichols by the Crown. He was asked to identify it as one of the firearms having been at the camp he and Officer Morrison attended. He identified it and Judge Barker asked to see the gun. He asked to have the action opened. Low and behold, when the action was opened, a live round came out of the chamber and flopped onto the courtroom floor. Judge Barker adjourned court to have a little chat with the officers.

### **Gotcha** by Jim Nichols

When stationed in Athabasca, occasionally I would team up with Ron Black to patrol either the Slave Lake or the Athabasca districts for night hunters. One fall night, Ron and I were patrolling around Long Lake Provincial Park. It was well after midnight and we were cruising down some of the roads just looking for vehicles moving slowly that might be up to some illegal activities. We decided to drive into the park and see if any of the park rangers were up, and maybe have a cup of coffee with them. As we headed to the park, we met a vehicle driving towards us coming up a hill. The vehicle looked unusual because it had tire chains on the back tires. Although there was snow on the ground, the road was paved. I proceeded down the road a ways, turned off my lights, turned the truck around and followed the other vehicle.

Ron asked why I was doing this. I told him I thought the guy was up to no good. Ron said he thought the guy was just going out to visit some friends. I told Ron I didn't think people put on tire chains to visit friends.

We continued to follow the vehicle a short ways to where it turned into a darkened farm yard.

Ron said, "I told you so. He's going to visit friends."

I told Ron, "I think not. I know this farm and it's deserted."

We followed the vehicle into the farmstead and into a field. As soon as we entered the field, the vehicle started shining a spotlight around. It moved half-way through the field when the light fell on a herd of deer. The vehicle immediately stopped and the driver got out and stood by the door. We could see one other person present in the vehicle.

I told Ron that I didn't know whether there was another exit to that field. So, the minute the driver shot, I was going to turn on the red light and pull up behind his vehicle. I advised Ron that I would grab the driver and he should look after the passenger. I told him to make sure that he got out fast enough to grab the passenger in case the vehicle got away on us, because I would not be able to keep up with it, since I didn't have tire chains on my vehicle.

It wasn't very long before the driver shot, and we saw the deer go down in the spotlight. I immediately hit the red light, pulled in behind the vehicle and jumped out.

Now Ron Black was about six-foot-four and in pretty good shape in those days. Ron was out of our vehicle, grabbed the passenger in the other vehicle, fired the person out of the cab into the snow, and jumped on top to subdue the suspect.

The poor old driver was awe struck with all the activity and never even moved. I took the firearm from him and took the keys from the ignition of the truck. I identified myself as a Fish and Wildlife Officer and advised him that he was under arrest for illegal hunting.

I then went to help Ron subdue the other suspect. The suspect turned out to be the driver's girl friend. She had just been sitting on the passenger side enjoying a little whiskey and Seven-up. The next moment she was flat on her face in a snow bank with Ron Black twisting and pounding on her arms.

We placed both individuals in the patrol vehicle, and I told Ron that I would take them down to the park and do the interviews in the park office where it was warmer and more comfortable.

Ron said he would stay there, gut the deer, and look after the vehicle and exhibits. I left the field with the two suspects and proceeded back to the park. Shortly after getting out of the field and on to the road, I met one of the RCMP patrol vehicles from Boyle. I had a short conversation with the officer, whom I knew.

I then remembered that I had taken the key from the suspect's vehicle, and Ron Black had no way of starting the truck and keeping warm. I suggested to the constable that he go to the

field, pick up Ron and let him warm up until I returned. The constable agreed. I then proceeded on my way to the park to interview the two individuals and lay charges for night hunting.

About an hour and a half later I came back to the scene of the offence. I found Ron and the constable sitting in the RCMP patrol vehicle sharing a coffee. Ron then advised me of the rest of the story.

After I had left, Ron got busy gutting out the deer. Soon, the headlights of another vehicle entered the field. The new vehicle drove around for a while, and then stopped. A spotlight came on and started searching the field.

Ron figured, "Holy smokes! I got another one!"

Now Ron was a pretty aggressive individual and thought the best way to apprehend this new offender – since Ron was by himself with no vehicle of his own – was to shoot the front tire of the vehicle.

As told to me by Ron, he was just lining up the tire in the sights of the previous suspect's rifle when something white caught his eye. He looked to see the decal of an RCMP vehicle.

Thank God he saw it in time.

We were successful in convicting the original suspect. Black was not forced to shoot the tire out of the police vehicle. And all of us were spared a tremendous amount of paper work.

## **Hell of a Party** by Vonn Bricker

Fish and Wildlife may have an undeserved reputation as a rough and tumble crew lacking the social graces. So what if we tell waiters they've made a mistake if we get more than one fork. What's it matter if finger bowls and tea cups are good ways to put out stoggies so you can smoke the butts later. In fact, I've seen some first class behaviour at some really classy events. Like the time Lew Ramstead impressed the hell out of some real high society types.

Several years ago Lew and I were lined up at the bar in the mezzanine in the Convention Centre before the Conservation Education banquet. Ahead of us in line was a very distinguished couple, resplendent in evening gown and tuxedo. Not known for a high degree of shyness, Lew started up a conversation that went something like this:

"Pretty classy do, eh?"

Eyeing Lew and his bright blue sports jacket with the fifteen lapel pins, the woman gave Lew a small nod while the gentleman made no acknowledgement whatsoever.

“Too bad there’s no free booze,” Lew said.

The woman made a weak smile while the gentleman stared at the ceiling.

Always up to the challenge, Lew continued the one way conversation.

“You sure dressed up the old man for this, eh. Where’d ya rent the tux?”

The woman gave a noticeable shudder while the gentleman looked anxiously at the length of the line-up for the bar.

“So where are ya from?”

“Edmonton,” the woman said quietly, staring at her feet.

“Haven’t seen you guys around before. What hunting club are you with?”

“Hunting?” the gentleman finally spoke up. “We don’t hunt.”

“So whatcha doing here?” Lew asked, “Getting a free meal?”

“Sir,” the obviously flustered gentleman retorted with as much dignity as he could muster. “We are guests at the Symphony Fund Raising Ball in that ballroom over there.”

“Oh,” said Lew.

As a short addendum to this tale, we had a great evening and when the tables were cleared and the dancing started, it was interesting to note the number of tuxedos and evening gowns that appeared in the room as our elegant neighbours from the adjoining ballroom crashed our function. After all, everyone knows that Fish and Wildlife can throw a hell of a party.

### **House on Fire** by Don H. Meredith

1983 was a busy year for me. I was working on contract with Fish and Wildlife helping Norm Gaelick get the international conservation education program, Project WILD, up and running in Alberta and Canada. It was also the year my daughter was born.

To celebrate the latter event, I followed the then waning tradition of giving cigars to the guys and chocolates to the gals in the office.

When I first started doing work for Fish and Wildlife about five years earlier, smoking in an office was a pretty common practice. The presence of tobacco smoke depended upon whose office you were in. Few complained at that time, or if they did, it was to themselves.

By 1983, however, the anti-smoking campaign was beginning to take its grip. Many offices were smoke-free – not so much by decree (that came later) as by mutual agreement among the office workers. For example, although cigarette smoking was not tolerated on the third floor of the Bramalea Building in Edmonton, Norm Gaelick’s pipe smoke was endured to a certain extent. (Norm’s attitude was: like me, like my pipe.)

Carla Payne was a secretary who worked in the Information and Education Branch at the time. She was “prim and proper” and extremely efficient in her job – to the extent that she did not hesitate to correct grammar, or even edit one’s memoranda for content and style (including those composed by an ADM – but that’s another story).

Carla detested cigarette smoke, and was not afraid to tell people so. She also didn’t like Norm Gaelick’s pipe, but quickly learned (as did many others) that Norm was not a person to be taken lightly. If you wished Norm to bend to the rules, you had better bring plenty of ammunition, guile, patience and the willingness to answer the question: “Is it really worth it?”

In September of 1983 as a contractor, I worked out of my home, coming into Edmonton for meetings, direction and a break from the boredom of staring at a computer screen that provided no inspiration. Norm had recently returned from a secondment to the Canadian Wildlife Federation in Ottawa, and I was not aware of the interactions that had taken place between him and Carla.

When I arrived with my gifts, Carla politely took her piece of chocolate, eyed the box of cigars with disdain, and whispered her congratulations. I moved on to Norm’s office which was like so many others in that building – a desk surrounded by six-foot high room dividers.

As luck would have it, Peter Boxall was there with Norm. They each congratulated me and took a cigar. Now, I am not a regular cigar smoker, so my choice of brands was probably not the best. Norm looked at his, tore off the cellophane, and gave the stogy a long sniff. Then a glint came to his eye.

“Let’s try ‘em,” he suggested.

“Here?” I asked. “Now?”

“Yeah!” Pete said, sharing Norm’s mischievous grin. “Why not?”

I thought of several reasons. But before I could speak, Norm had his matches out and was lighting up. He passed the match book to Pete, and soon we were all sitting in this eight by ten foot office sucking on the most gawd-awful, foul-smelling cigars ever crafted.

Of course, none of us were willing to admit to there quality – least of all me (after all I had bought them, and on sale too!). Instead, we hailed them as very fine creations of the



tobacconist art and continued on to discuss the latest “dirt” on the “moccasin telegraph.”

Soon a cloud of steel-grey smoke began to build. It got so bad that I was having trouble seeing my two colleagues across the room. Then I realized that Norm and Pete were working harder on their stogies than I. They were taking long drags and blowing out large balloons of the acrid smoke. I tried to match them drag for drag, but quickly began to wish I hadn't eaten breakfast or even the previous evening's dinner. Since we could no longer see each other, I backed off, lowering my head closer to my knees where the air was a little cleaner and my head didn't spin so much.

As we talked, I watched the cloud slowly rise and begin spilling over the top of the dividers. It wasn't long before passers by began making snide comments – actually doubting our choice of vices, as if it affected our morals or health or something.

The cloud grew larger and thicker. Soon I couldn't see the reception area outside the office. It was at about this time that I began hearing a new sound, a sort of “Pfsst” – at first distant, then closer.

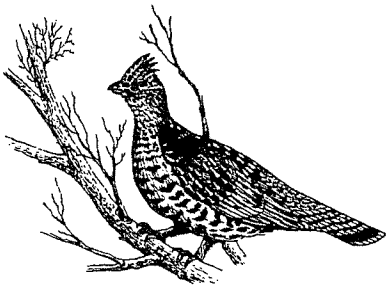
Suddenly, a spray can appeared in the grey fog above one of the dividers and began spraying the office with a cheap flowery scent. If I was having difficulty controlling my nausea before, I was in real trouble now. The three of us scrambled to get away from the offending mist.

Then Pete cried, “GEEZ! It smells like a whore house on fire!”

Not knowing whether to laugh, puke or go blind, I staggered out to see Carla walking – no, make that running – down the hall, all the while spraying the air. I turned back to see Pete and Norm laughing, coughing and wiping tears from their eyes.

I was told that Carla did return to her desk that day. But she mentioned nothing and no one said anything to her about the incident.

In my rush to leave, I forgot to ask Pete how he knew what a burning bordello smelled like. Perhaps if you see him, you could ask for me?



## Hung Out to Dry

by Daryl Watters

Over time, Fish and Wildlife staff have had to do more with less and Fisheries Branch is no exception. For instance, I frequently completed creel census and water chemistry tests by myself or with the assistance of onlookers at boat launches where I put in my boat.

One day in early spring I found myself at the Gunn boat launch on Lac Ste Anne preparing for a day of creel census and fish sampling. Being the sharing caring person that she is, my wife had offered to record data. As usual the presence of a Fish and Wildlife truck, weigh scales, measuring boards etc. drew quite a crowd. Under the watchful eyes of the public (and my wife) I was determined to get the boat in the water and the gear on board in an efficient, professional manner.

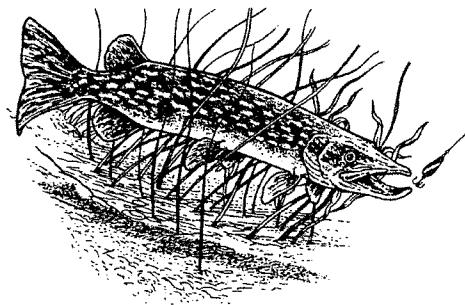
On this fateful day, my downfall was my use of a new cartop boat. Normally I used a 12 foot Springbok boat because of its light weight and ease in loading/unloading. My standard procedure was to stand on the back bumper, pull the boat back past the point of balance, then hanging from the handles let my body weight pull the boat down thus allowing me to get under the bow and swing it past the boat rack and lower the boat to the ground.

Unfortunately I was using a 14 foot Gregor cartop boat which weighed twice what the Springbok did. Imagine my embarrassment when I carefully removed all the tie down ropes, shooed a couple of youngsters out of the way, pulled the boat back to the point of balance, grabbed the stern handles then hung there while the boat stubbornly resisted gravity and refused to drop to the ground.

Having committed myself, I couldn't get my feet back on the bumper nor could I let go thus admitting that I had forgotten everything I ever learned about physics.

Fortunately after a few pointed comments from the onlooking kibitzers, and my significant other, one of the fellows came over and helped me get the boat in the water.

So much for efficiency and professionalism.



## Injured Polar Bear

by John Clarke

Mr. Scheck, an elderly gentleman, came into the Manning Fish and Wildlife Office requesting the assistance of an officer to help save his polar bear that had been injured at home. Office clerk, Janice Topechka, ever vigilant, seized the opportunity to abuse the expertise of Officer Clarke, who rapidly found himself coming to the aid of the wounded teddy. It appeared the bear fell off the bed and injured its neck, shoulder and both legs. Mr. Scheck stated he would like us to x-ray his wounds and repair them.

Thanks to Janice, a half an hour passed trying to solve Mr. Scheck's problem. Unable to satisfy his request he was directed to the local tailor.

## Jimmy the Ghost

by J. Tom Bateman

"Where were you born and why?" demanded a little guy with a big nose. "Have you ever been a member of the Communist party or the Alberta Fish and Game Association," asked the same little guy whose name was Hales.

Without waiting for an answer to Hale's question, a guy named Campbell followed with his question, "If hired, do you promise to subscribe to and abide by all the principles of the great Social Credit party?" Campbell's hand rose to his heart as his question developed.

The third member of the tribunal was a man who didn't have a name. "Do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing--"

"That's a stupid question," roared Hales, "and it's not appropriate."

"You guys never let me ask what I want," whined No Name.

Jimmy was being interviewed to determine if he was a likely candidate to become an Alberta Wildlife Officer. It was a strange interview in that Jimmy had never been given an opportunity to answer one question. It was almost as though he wasn't there. Still Hales and Campbell considered it to be a wonderful interview and No Name was non-committal.

Jimmy was hired and told to report to Athabasca. He was given a badge and a stack of Acts and Regulations, and told to "enforce these as best you can, don't get into any trouble, and above all else remember his commitment to Social Credit." Jimmy disappeared for three months. The only evidence of his existence was an occasional expense account. There were also, however, some strange rumours that began to make their way out of the mists of obscurity. Apparently, this strangely quiet wildlife officer was reported to appear suddenly in the middle of a hunting party or a group of fishermen. He was businesslike and pleasant as he checked various permits and

licences, then disappeared as suddenly as he had appeared. Sometimes in his early years, he disappeared while holding an angling licence and the licence disappeared with him, much to the consternation of the licensee.

As Jimmy's career developed, so did his reputation. He moved from Athabasca to Whitecourt to Edson, and in each area he used his unusual enforcement technique. Stories circulated far and wide about the Wildlife Officer who appeared out of nowhere just as a violation was being planned. As the numbers of stories increased and were told and retold, the exploits of this Officer began to take on the status of legends. Stories were told in quiet whispers around camp fires about Jimmy's sudden appearance in an ice fishing shack, just when the daily limit had been achieved.

He did not totally eliminate all wildlife or fisheries violations, but he seriously curtailed any fun or enjoyment associated with the violation. For example, between midnight and 3 a.m. a crew of three walleye poachers were removing fish from their nets and placing them in the back of their 1/2 ton truck. They were pleased with the take and were enjoying the cover of darkness.

"Hey!" remarked the team leader, "there's 4 of us here and there should only be 3 people putting fish in this truck."

"Shouldn't be anybody putting fish in this truck," announced the fourth person. "So let's put everything in my truck including you."

Needless to say, the three men were subdued and cooperative because not only had Jimmy appeared like an apparition, but on this occasion his truck had joined him. Interestingly, Jimmy never appeared in color. His ghostly interference in the midst of various violations was always in black and white. This may have been his personal preference.

Hundreds of stories have been told over the years about Jimmy the Ghost. Each story needed to be more sensational than the last and after all these years it's hard to tell which ones are true and which are not. What is obvious is Jimmy left a serious mark on the mind of every wildlife law breaker in every district he ever called home.

## King Neptune's Gift

by Daryl Watters

Many years ago, Dick Brown, Fisheries Technician, and I headed out to Moose Lake to pull some test nets we'd put in the day before. It was a Friday with a weekend on the way.

Shortly after we started pulling our last net, the wind shifted, pushing the boat sideways and dragging the net along the lake bottom.

As we pulled the net in, we discovered a labelless bottle, with the distinctive shape and color of Canadian Club whisky,

caught up in the gill net mesh. Having landed this prize we paused while we discussed how this bottle may have got there, and more importantly, whether the full bottle actually contained whisky.

My first thought was that some ice fisherman had used the bottle as a urinal during a day's fishing then disposed of it by dropping it down the hole. The other more tantalizing thought was that an unknown fisherman, seeing a Fish and Wildlife or RCMP boat approaching, decided to avoid any legal problems by ditching his full bottle of whisky over the side.

Having retrieved the bottle, we did what all good technicians do, namely completed an odour check. With favourable results from the odour test, the obvious thing to do was complete a taste test.

After some deliberation, we decided the taste test was definitely favourable; however, additional lab analysis was required. Upon arrival at the office at afternoon coffee time, we displayed our unusual catch and suggested since it was Friday afternoon, the detailed lab analysis could be completed in the coffee room.

Unfortunately, the Regional Director felt it inappropriate to complete scientific sampling outside of an approved lab facility.

So – we took our catch to the warehouse and successfully completed all necessary palatability tests there.

The moral of the story is that fine Canadian whisky just gets better with age, whether it's stored in a cellar or at the bottom of Moose Lake.

### **The Legend of the Saddle Lake Monster** by Wayne Brown

One afternoon in 1984, a native from the Saddle Lake Reserve came into the office at St. Paul and related a story of a monster that had been seen on several occasions rising out of the lake. He told of reliable witnesses who had seen it – a teacher, a band constable, and several lake shore residents. He described it as snakelike, about thirty to forty feet long and with a sort of horses head. I listened to his story with mused interest, yet in a way, he was convincingly serious.

Ray Makowecki, Regional Director, overheard the native's tale, and with his interest peaked, spoke with the man for several minutes. The conversation ended with a promise to look into the story, maybe even fly over the lake with a helicopter and have a look.

“Ray!” I pleaded, “What have you said?”

“Don't worry, Wayne,” he reasoned. “You'll likely be going by there in a month on patrol with the helicopter during deer

season anyway – have a quick look and then we can reassure the people on the reserve and everyone's happy at no real cost.”

Over the next few weeks the stories of the monster persisted – in fact grew, reaching us from several different sources. In the meantime the helicopter schedule allowed us a flight on October 31, the day before the deer season opened. There was no thought of the monster search.

The local St. Paul Journal heard the story somewhere and phoned. I gave the reporter a short run-down on what we knew, the concern reserve residents had, and how I would allay their worries by having a quick look during a routine scheduled helicopter flight.

“When will the flight occur?” inquired the reporter.

“Day before deer season, October 31.” I replied.

“Halloween? How fantastic!” exulted the reporter. “A search for a monster on Halloween!”

Oh brother, I thought. That did it!

Just like the proverbial snowball, the story was really rolling now! The reporter syndicated the story and within days it was a feature in almost every newspaper and radio station in the country and the United States. The phones went nuts!

October 29th arrived and my luck turned. The weather went downhill, turning really cold and by the next day Saddle Lake was almost frozen over. The search was postponed until at least spring.

Unfortunately, word of the infamous monster reached the University of Alberta and Professor Jim Butler became involved. A public meeting was set for the council chambers of the band office. Butler's intent was to gather information on the sightings. Butler even had a slide presentation. There was a turnout of about 150 people, reporters and TV cameras. Butler outlined the history of sightings from all over the world.

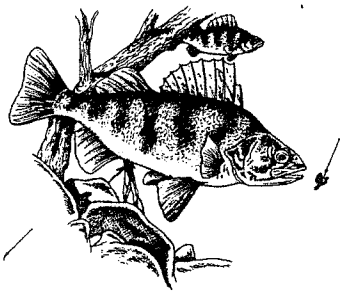
In the meantime, the story had expanded and now there was one in Christina Lake too. Maybe it was only one monster which really travelled from lake to lake through underground streams? CBC TV concocted a half-hour program complete with interviews of witnesses which aired nationwide. There was a “Mr. X” in contact with me. He was a self-styled monster search expert. Another call came from someone who claimed to have a submarine that would locate the thing if we'd only supply operational and transportation funds. In all of this, the monster acquired a name: “Sadie.”

Over a period of about two weeks both Ray Makowecki and myself spent untold hours on the telephone doing morning radio show interviews for stations all over North America, including Hawaii. Our “patter” was one of common sense. The lake is only three miles long, one mile wide and less than fifty

feet deep. The possibility of a monster existing in a waterbody that small was incomprehensible. Ray even had the privilege of being featured in *The National Enquirer*! Surely a new low!

In the spring, I finally did get an opportunity to fly over the lake and have a look around, and of course there was nothing to see. The story slowly faded away into oblivion until January 1994.

An RCMP officer flew over the lake and noticed a patch of open water near the pump house intake at the west end. A call to the local native radio station warned of the open water danger, but it also started “Sadie’s” resurrection. After all what else would make a hole like that in the ice in January? – It just has to be old Sadie back again! The legend lives on!



### The “Little Ranger” by Ruth Desjarlais

We were raised on a trapline northeast of Mosquito Lake, now known as Spencer Lake, on the Sand River, which is now the Primrose Air Weapons Range. We only went south to Glendon twice a year, once in the spring for Dad to sell his fur, and in the fall to sell the cattle. For a kid, that is not very often to see other people, so we were real bush rabbits.

The only way of travel was a team of horses. So in the fall of 1950, when we saw a jeep with three men show up, we were pretty surprised and not all that brave. Dad told Cecil, my youngest brother who was seven at that time, and I was eight years old, to behave because they were Rangers and would “pinch us” if we did anything wrong. Now Cecil and I thought he meant that they had a big pair of pliers and would really **pinch** us. That scared the hell out of us.

They set up their camp about a quarter mile from the house. As it was fall, it was blueberry time. Mom baked up blueberry pies and told Cecil and I to take a pie to the Ranger’s camp. So away we went. Well the walk down there was nothing, but once we got there, it was a different story because we didn’t know what to say and were scared of getting “pinched.”

We stopped back from the fire, in the dark, and tried to think what we should say. Finally Cecil said I know one of them is called the “Little Ranger” so I’ll give the pie to him. Now

Cecil was seven, but real small for his age. No more than 3 or 3-1/2 feet tall.

Now Johnny Doonanco was not a very big man and did not like anything said about his size. But we didn’t know that at the time.

So Cecil just walked right up to Johnny Doonanco and said, “Here Little Ranger, mom sent a pie over for your supper.”

You should have seen the looks on their faces as they stood there in surprise. Then Johnny Doonanco stepped over, took the pie and said thank you. Then he ruffled Cecil’s hair and told him, “At least you were brave enough to say it to my face, but my name is Mr. John Doonanco, not the Little Ranger.”

We later learned that’s what people called him behind his back and that he did not like it.

[The other two men were August Gatzke and Steve Forsovitch. They were there looking the timber over for the saw mills.]

### Man’s Best Friend by Daryl Watters

Back in the good old days when we used to do real fieldwork, I spent most of each winter doing “pothole surveys” – visiting sloughs and ponds in the area, measuring the lake depth and dissolved oxygen level, and assessing the potential of the pond for additional survey work and future fish introduction.

One morning found me in the Vermilion area with a full slate of lakes to visit. As most of these ponds were on private land, I made a point of contacting the landowners to inform them of my business and requesting their permission to skidoo across private property to the ponds.

This particular morning I drove into a farm yard to speak to the landowner about assessing five lakes that were on his property.

I hadn’t done any surveys that day so I was still in street clothes. As I got out of the truck a nondescript yappy little dog immediately began announcing my arrival to the world. As I started up the drive to the farmhouse the little mutt sneaked up behind me and bit me in the back of the leg. I whirled around with the idea of introducing the dog to the toe of my boot. Now we all know, 99 times out of 100, you won’t be able to make contact with the dog because obnoxious, yappy little dogs develop very quick reflexes as a matter of survival. This time, however, was the one time out of 100 when my well aimed kick made solid contact with the little dog and rolled him over backwards. Now before I go any further, understand I had pulled my kick so I would remind the dog to mind his manners and not do him any serious harm.

You can imagine how I felt when I turned back to the farmhouse to see the landowner standing in the doorway.

Visions of formal complaints from this citizen, civil suits or banishment from his property were dancing through my head as I proceeded to apologize to the landowner about my conduct, that this dog had bit me and in reaction I had given him a swift kick.

My fears evaporated when the landowner said, "That little mutt is my wife's and I wish you'd killed the S.O.B."

Needless to say, I didn't have any problem obtaining access to his property and getting my work done.

### **Mayday! We're Going Down!** by Wayne Brown

The entry in my Pilot's Log Book for November 6, 1983 is brief, "Cessna 337 – CGFSC – Storvold/Brown – Lac La Biche – 7:00 hrs." It belies the real story of that night!

There was an anti-night-hunter patrol laid on for that fall evening in the Lac La Biche area with Chuck Scott in charge of eight men in four trucks on the ground. I was acting as navigator and airborne coordinator in a Cessna 337, twin-engine aircraft. The pilot was Burt Storvold and there were two observers in the back seat, Officer Lee Robley and my son, Gordon, who at the age of eleven was already an experienced flyer and pilot of our own plane with my supervision.

The weather was reasonably good for November as we flew the south area in the early evening with no success. About 10:00 p.m. we landed at Lac La Biche for coffee and a quick conference with Scott. In the meantime the ground units relocated themselves northward into the Wandering River area. The late session began as Burt lifted us off the runway about 11:30 p.m. and climbed straight out toward our rendezvous over the ground units. In a few minutes we settled into the routine of the flight and I dug out a set of Infra-red goggles used by American helicopter pilots in Vietnam. They had been loaned to us for evaluation and comparison with our own StarTron nightscope. In just a few minutes I was able to tell they would be of little value in our work. They seemed very good for seeing the general area and for low level but at the heights we flew our surveillance flights the magnification of the StarTron was needed and in the end I put the goggles away in their case.

A couple of hours later, our pilot mentioned we'd better consider heading for home as the fuel was starting to run low. Just as I was about to advise Chuck on the ground we were "pulling the pin," Lee Robley sang out from the back seat "There's a spotlight to the west!" The intercept was on! If we were successful it would take about ten, fifteen minutes at most.

We did succeed. Trouble was it took over half an hour! Burt was worrying! "We gotta get outta here!"

The Cessna broke away from the circling and took up a heading for St. Paul, our base. Burt trimmed the plane up, cut back the mixture as fine as he could then started doing some fast calculations. "We've got over an hour of fuel and a twenty minute flight. We'll be O.K.!"

I looked at the two fuel gauges in front of me and they were showing just under one quarter full – good! The twin engines droned on and in a few minutes the town of Ashmont showed up over the nose three thousand feet below. Now we could see our airport in the distance, its beacon flicking a welcome. A slight shudder ran through the airplane!

"We're outta gas! There goes the back engine!" Burt gasped as he reached over and switched off the ignition to the dead rear engine. He grabbed the microphone for the radio as he dialed up Cold Lake Air Base Tower on 126.2 frequency. Burt and I exchanged knowing glances, he took a deep breath and punched the mike button.

"Cold Lake Tower; Cessna 337 Golf Foxtrot Sierra Charlie." A pause. "Cold Lake Tower; Cessna 337 Golf Foxtrot Sierra Charlie."

Another pause, then a reply! "Cessna GFSC, Cold Lake Tower, go ahead."

"Cold Lake Tower, FSC, I'd like to declare an emergency!" Burt's voice quavered slightly.

"Cessna FSC, Cold Lake Tower. Confirm you have an emergency?"

"Cold Lake Tower, FSC confirms emergency." Burt glances at me again. "I am two miles south of Ashmont over Highway 28A, destination St. Paul with four souls on board. Altitude is 3,000 feet, heading 170 and I've one engine shut down. I think I'm out of gas!"

As Burt spoke I stared at the fuel gauges – still reading above the "empty" mark! In a moment of inspiration I reached down under my seat and dug out the infra-red goggles, flipping on the switch. "I can help you, Burt! With these things I can see the highway really good – I'll keep you over it in case the other engine quits! We'll be O.K.!" Within moments the front engine shudders and the prop windmills to a stop.

Burt punched the mike button again, "Cold Lake Tower, FSC, MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! Both engines are dead, we're going down on Highway 28A south of Ashmont!"

"FSC, Cold Lake Tower. We copy you're going down. We are in contact with St. Paul RCMP Assistance is on it's way – Good Luck Guys!"

"O.K. Burt," I encouraged, "I've got the road in sight – move a little left, that's it!" All I heard was a hissing sound of the air over the plane, then the whir as Burt lowers 10 degrees of flap and the landing gear.

“Back to the right a bit. Good – good – good, keep the heading – good – good.” I thought, God, are we going down fast – these things are supposed to glide!

More whirring as 20 degrees flap was applied.

Dimly, the landing lights began to reflect off the road below. We were right over top and it was coming up to meet us quickly. Burt applied full flap now, and dropped the nose to keep up airspeed. At what seemed like the last split second, he hauled back on the control wheel flaring the gliding Cessna to skim along inches above the pavement. A screech from the tires and we were down!

“We made it Burt! Ya did it! Good job!”

The plane rolled down the road on the centre line and came to a final stop just opposite a farm house. Now the shakes started! Robley in the back dug out his “snooze” and jammed half a can of it into his mouth. Gordon looked visibly relieved – didn’t we all? We crawled out and pushed the plane off the highway into the approach. A look around and about a mile to the south we saw the junction of the highway. Ah! the flashing red and blue lights of the police as they tore up to the intersection corner, made the turn and headed away from us – the wrong way! We shrugged our shoulders and laughed – typical!

We touched down at almost exactly 4:00 a.m. By 7:00 a.m. we had clearance from Government Services, RCMP and Ministry of Transport to remove the plane as quickly as possible. Gas was picked up from the airport and the plane refuelled. Burt shook hands with me, climbed into the cockpit and while I blocked the highway, taxied down, turned and with a roar soared back over my head, wagged his wings in salute, then swung toward Edmonton and home.

The reports and investigation could wait till later – I was tired!

## **Men of the Mountain Winds** by Gordon Polis

Many a story has been spun and told,  
over the dancing firelight of gold.  
One could say that this is common to happen,  
yes, it is common, but this is the Sheeplakes Patrol Cabin.

This is a place that was established a few years ago,  
so Wildlife Officers would have a roof out of the snow.  
Richard and Stan felt that it was the perfect lair,  
where they could eat a steak, drink coffee, and smoke a cigar.

Every year when the month of August comes to a close,  
back in the rocks where the cold wind blows.  
Sheep hunters prepare by setting up wall tents,  
putting bells and hobbles on horses, a backcountry fence.

The food is bought, the horses packed, and away we proceed,  
back to the Patrol Cabin ready for opening week indeed.  
At the Cabin we unpack and sort out our junk,  
as Junior Officer, I get the most uncomfortable bunk.

It is opening day and a big breakfast of eggs and bacon,  
all we hope is that no short sheep are taken.  
Sheep hunters are slowly coming down off the Mountains,  
we check licences and tags as they drink from their portable  
fountains.

Later in the afternoon after many miles have been ridden,  
we stop and tether the horses a little bit hidden.  
As the horses rest we remark “this work is the best,”  
leaning back on a slope under the sun for a siesta.

The day starts to cast it’s afternoon shadows,  
and bull elk challenge for harems amongst the Mountain  
meadows.  
We arrive back at the cabin and each with a task of chores,  
after a long day of riding and climbing, complaining of our  
sores.

As we finish our meal and discuss the day’s events,  
the thoughts go to the hunters tucked away in their tents.  
Some have ended the day with success, others have not,  
they’re hoping that perhaps tomorrow will bring that achieving  
shot.

This is the place where hunters and Wardens go,  
up in the rocks dealing with the rain, wind, sleet, and snow.  
One tests his ability against an animal with such grace,  
the other ensures the laws are followed, the rules of fair chase.

The opening week starts to wind down and come to a close,  
when we get home, we’ll jump in the tub and wash the dirt  
from our toes.

Some of the sheep shot did not meet hunters expectations,  
and as a result they have become Short Sheep Investigations!



## The New Job

by Gordon Polis

'Twas a cold November morning in the Alberta south,  
like a horse chomping at the bit in it's mouth.  
The young Rookie Game Warden eager to get going,  
awaiting his Senior Officer for a day of patrolling.

Through the morning twilight they did drive,  
his Supervisor reflecting on his first days, a twinkle in his eye.  
The young Rookie full of questions about his new life,  
his Boss saying "sometimes its your second wife."

Travelling down the roads they do go,  
sharing coffee and laughs amongst all the snow.  
Off in a field they watch a white-tail buck,  
saying to each other, "It's hunting season, he better remember  
to duck."

Later in the day, after many hunters have been checked,  
his uniform looks a little bit wrecked.  
He remembers how he pressed it with much elation  
no matter to his Supervisor, the Rookie wrote his first  
violation.

Looking at a hole caused by barbed wire, which he'll mend,  
the late afternoon darkness brings the day to an end.  
Driving home, both wardens reflect on what they did,  
the Boss remarks "same time tomorrow, you did a good job,  
Kid!"

## Night Traffic

by Jim Nichols

When I was stationed in Athabasca, I worked with other  
officers in the St. Paul subdivision on numerous night patrols  
to apprehend night hunters. The majority of these patrols  
originated in Edmonton. We used the Dornier aircraft, which  
was the government airplane of the day.

We would leave Edmonton and fly up into the Cold Lake or  
Lac la Biche area, where there would be a number of officers  
in trucks at various locations waiting for the aircraft. The plane  
would fly into one of the areas, contact the vehicles on the  
ground, and proceed to make sweeps through the area. The  
crew in the plane was looking for the telltale signs of lights  
flashing, or vehicles driving the fields in search of deer.

If a vehicle was noticed we would make a notation of time, the  
activity and location. We would then contact the ground units  
to apprehend the vehicle. If we were successful in locating the  
vehicle, we would stay in the area until the vehicle was  
intercepted by officers on the ground. We would then sweep  
down with the airplane, flashing our landing lights to let them  
know that we had observed their activities.

On one particular night, we were flying in the Cold Lake area.  
I was acting as the navigator, sitting to the right of the pilot.

Ron Black was one of the observers in the back, and I forget  
the name of the other observer. At approximately midnight, we  
noticed a vehicle driving around in a field shining its lights  
along the bush rows on each side. It was obvious to us that  
whoever was in the truck was involved in the illegal activity of  
"jacklighting."

The vehicle left the field, and proceeded to travel down  
country roads while we attempted to bring in ground units to  
make the interception. However, the vehicle came to a  
residence before we were able to intercept it. So we made the  
decision to circle the house until the ground patrol units  
arrived.

In those days there were not a lot of regulations governing  
night patrols. In this case, we were flying over the house at  
about 2,000 feet, with all the lights on the aircraft off,  
including the navigation lights. Because we had the location of  
the farm house, there was no need to navigate any more, and it  
was just a matter of watching the scene below us to determine  
when the ground units apprehended the individuals in the  
house. We were only using the Fish and Wildlife radio  
frequency and not any of the air traffic control frequencies.

I was looking from my seat in the front of the airplane down  
through the window at the farm house below. All of a sudden I  
noticed another aircraft below us. This plane was so close that  
I swear I could see the individual's hands on the stick,  
although my partners later doubted this. I could most certainly  
see the lights from the dials on the instrument panel, the plane  
was that close.

I immediately advised our pilot that an aircraft had flown  
beneath us. The pilot said this was impossible. I informed the  
pilot that if that was impossible then we must be flying upside  
down because I saw a plane through the bottom half of my  
window.

At that time, Ron Black said from the rear, "Holy Cow! Here's  
another one!"

It turned out that we had strayed into Cold Lake air space. And  
on this particular night, Canadian Forces was running  
manoeuvres for some of its jet fighters. They had picked us up  
on radar, and I understand that our circling of the house had  
indicated to them we were an aircraft in distress. As a result,  
they sent some aircraft up to investigate and tried to contact us  
by radio. But of course, we could not hear them. The only way  
they were able to get our attention was to fly by close enough  
for us to see them. I want to assure you that they certainly got  
our attention.

Our pilot immediately turned on the navigation lights and  
tuned the radio to the local flight control station. He also left  
on the overhead speaker. The chewing out we received went  
on for about five minutes – although it felt like an hour and a  
half. We were finally allowed to apologize, and returned to  
base.

The chewing out over the air from Canadian Forces was no match to the one we received from John Doonanco and Ernie Psikla upon our return. Needless to say, after that flight, aircraft on night patrol always had their radio and navigation lights turned on.

### **The #1 Sportsman** a recollection by J.B. Struthers

Back in 1970, the Fish and Wildlife Division of the Department of Lands and Forests instituted what is affectionately called an M-E-D Licence. This licence came with a single tag, which could be hung on a moose or an elk or a mule deer or a white-tailed deer, and could be had for the price of \$10.00.

The Minister of the day, the Honourable Dr. J. Donovan Ross decreed that this M-E-D Licence could, and therefore should be sold in conjunction with a Wildlife Certificate, a game bird licence, an Angling Licence and, most importantly, a bright, shiny badge. All of this would be called the Sportsman's Package. All could be had for a mere \$20.00. The good doctor made it very clear that he wanted to be the recipient of the first Sportsman's Package that rolled off the assembly line.

As luck would have it, yours truly was visiting H.Q. on the very day that the Honourable Dr. J. Donovan Ross received his Sportsman's Package. In fact, I was seated in E.J. Psikla's office on the fourth floor of the Natural Resources Building (now known as the Bowker Building).

While we chatted, a meek little lady appeared in the doorway. When Psikla became aware of her presence, he snapped, "What do you want?"

She reported, in barely more than a whisper, that she was from the office of the Honourable Dr. J. Donovan Ross. Apparently, the good doctor was not impressed with his Sportsman's Package. It seemed the badge did not meet his expectations. The little lady tip-toed across the office and laid the offending button in front of Psikla and hastily retreated to the doorway.

I watched quietly, as Psikla examined the badge. Tactfully, he enquired, "What the hell's wrong with it?"

"It doesn't have a number . . . Dr. Ross wanted number one," the little lady mumbled.

"Well fer Christ's sake," the suave Psikla muttered as he rummaged in his desk drawer. After a slight delay, he pulled out a screw driver, placed it carefully in the centre of the badge and gave it a brisk smack with the shoe he had pulled from under the desk with his free hand. He set the shoe aside and re-examined the badge. The timid lady stood horrified during this process.

Finally, Psikla arose from behind his desk, limped (one shoe on and one off) over to the lady and offered the bent button to

her. "Dr. Ross is now our number one sportsman," he grinned. She snatched the #1 Sportsman's Badge from his hand and disappeared.

The M-E-D Licence and the Sportsman's Package are things of the past. Dr. Ross has been gone from government for a long time. E. J. Psikla is enjoying his retirement. And I venture to say that out there somewhere is an unassuming little lady who still gets the shakes when she thinks about Alberta Fish and Wildlife.





**Ode to the Quality Hunt**  
by Anonymous

The boys don't believe me  
When I say I am good,  
At getting my food  
From the wilds and woods.

Whenever I tell them  
Of hunts now gone by,  
They laugh and then giggle  
But I don't know why.

I killed the big six point  
And I don't understand,  
Why they say that I had  
Someone holding my hand.

So I went to the Blackfoot  
And you know what I saw?  
Elk by the hundreds  
So I entered the draw.

At last came the day  
for the computer print-out,  
And there was my name  
And I started to shout.

Laughing and leaping  
And shouting for joy,  
That's the end of the working  
For this good ole boy.

So now in my sleep  
And deep in my dreams,  
I see all the action  
And try out my schemes.

Planning my stalk  
And practising sneaks,  
Careful when peeing  
On my shoes not to leak.

Into the wind  
And down on my knees,  
I crawl through the bush  
And under the trees.

So awake in the morning  
I know I am set,  
To head for the hills  
And the big one to get.

I'll settle for nothing  
But the biggest and best,  
A seven at least  
Would end all the jest.

I arrive the first morning  
And sneak under the line,  
The elk all stand up  
There was at least nine.

Cows by the number  
I try to draw bead,  
But I haven't a clue  
How much to lead.

And then I remember  
How the boys oft' repeat,  
You don't have to lead them  
Unless their moving their feet.

With all of my skill  
And none do I lack,  
At least twenty yards  
I blaze over her back.

Off she then goes  
At a lightening walk,  
So I take my last chance  
And throw up my stock.

I close both my eyes  
And fire the aught-six,  
When I open them up  
She lays dead in the sticks.

I run to the spot  
And I guess Christ was born,  
For God has provided  
This sucker has horns.

So what if they're small  
And tangled in wire,  
I guess trapped in the fence  
Had made the bull tire.

So in order to cover  
All of my tracks,  
I'll tell a good story  
But none of the facts.

I know I have done it  
And I won't be the brunt,  
Of any more jokes  
It was a QUALITY HUNT!!

## Officer Overboard

by Jim Nichols

In 1970-1975, I was stationed in Athabasca as the district officer. Dennis Urban, another young officer of that time, was stationed in Edmonton with Vic Sigurdson. Because Dennis was in an urban setting, he didn't get much of a chance to check hunters, anglers and other resource users. To expand his horizons, Dennis would on various weekends travel out to Athabasca and go on patrol with me.

One spring morning we were out together on Cross Lake checking anglers. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we came upon a car-top boat. There were two people fishing in the boat: a woman in the front, and her husband in the back. I was operating the patrol boat and pulled alongside. I talked with both individuals and proceeded to check their angling licences. As it turned out, the woman did not have one. I advised her that she was going to be charged with fishing without a licence, and proceeded to issue her a ticket.

I asked her to reel in her line so that I could see if there was indeed a lure on the end of it. She did so and handed her rod to Officer Urban, who moved out of the passenger seat of our boat and behind me on the driver's side.

While I continued to write the ticket, I heard a blood curdling scream and a large splash. I immediately turned around and noticed that Dennis was no longer in the boat. I looked into the water and found Dennis happily treading water. The only things that were above the surface were the epaulets on his uniform shirt and his forage cap, which had been pulled down just over his ears. All I could see of Dennis was his red face and his desperate efforts to keep afloat.

The people in the other boat didn't even stop fishing. The woman merely asked Dennis if the water was cold. Dennis replied, "No, it isn't bad."

He then tried to get out of the water. That was next to impossible and he requested I help him. This was also impossible as I was laughing so hard that I could not get out of the seat of the patrol boat. I finally made my way to the back of the boat and noticed that Dennis – while falling overboard – had had the presence of mind to throw the lady's fishing rod into our boat so we didn't lose an exhibit. (Dennis always was a truly dedicated officer.) I then managed to pull Dennis into the boat.

We finished the check, issued the ticket and proceeded on patrol. We didn't have much conversation about the incident until Dennis said, "Boy, I sure hope nobody else noticed."

We came across another boat of fishermen and we proceeded to check them. The first question was "Who fell out of the boat?"

I felt it my duty to inform them that it was the rookie. However, it should have been obvious to anyone inspecting the appearance of both officers.

We continued on patrol for a couple of hours and then returned to load the boat and leave the area. As we left Cross Lake, Dennis asked if it would be possible for this incident to be kept between us, so nobody else would know about it.

I informed Dennis that even though we had a poor radio system – we used the forestry radio in those days – I would certainly attempt to keep the story within the region. To the best of my knowledge, I was unable to do that, and I think Dennis is fairly well known as one of the first officers to fall out of a patrol boat and survive to tell the tale.

## Officer Up a Tree

by Chuck Shipley

There is the story about an officer who left Fish and Wildlife to go to Provincial Parks. He didn't like to see anything killed. No matter how badly it was injured he thought he might be able to fix it.

One day in June or July, a farmer came in and reported that he had inadvertently shot a sow black bear not knowing she had two cubs. He gave the location, and Officer Pete Wadell and I proceeded to the site.

We were able to locate the bears, which were cubs of the year, up a very tall aspen tree, at least 25 to 30 feet high. Of course this tree had very few branches and the bottom had none. The trunk was probably a foot across at the base. This made it very difficult to shinny up. However, Wadell decided that was the only thing to do.

I was in favour of using other measures to get the bears down. But I decided that if he had the energy and the ambition to climb after them, he could go after them.

So, I waited at the bottom of the tree and he climbed. As he proceeded up, the farmer showed up with some of his friends.

At about 20 feet up the tree was a large crotch. The bears had proceeded up one side as far as they could possibly go without breaking the branches. This left Wadell in a bit of a precarious position. However, he was not to be deterred. He continued on and got to where it looked like it was rather dangerous but he was able to reach and get hold of one of the bear's back legs and give it a big yank. The bear promptly defecated all over him, down his arm, his face, down the front of his shirt, etc., etc. This brought gales of laughter from all the viewers.

Not to be deterred, Wadell got hold of the little fella, somehow kept from being scratched, packed him part way down the tree. I had cleared a space at the base of the tree so that when he dropped him, the little fella wouldn't get any sticks in him. He dropped the bear, and I jumped on the back of him, grabbed

him by the back of the neck and the behind, and hustled him over to a bear trap that we had waiting about 30 or 40 feet away.

When I came back, Officer Wadell had proceeded back up the tree to get the last bear cub. This animal had decided to go a little farther up than his buddy because he didn't want to get caught. Again, Officer Wadell proceeded far beyond where he should have gone, but he did in fact get hold of the next little fella by the back leg and there was an instant replay – there was fresh cranberry juice all over him. More laughter.

Wadell was getting very tired by now. He climbed part way back down, and had to let the bear go because he was just running out of energy. The bear spread out like a flying squirrel, and landed in the appropriate area. I pounced on him from behind when he hit the ground. He had most of the wind knocked out of him, so great care wasn't taken on where I grabbed him, and I grabbed him a little far back. He wasn't long getting his wind back and he promptly turned around and bit through the two pairs of leather gloves into my thumb. He wasn't about to let go, and all these people were watching. Finally, I encouraged him to let go with a sharp punch to the stomach. He joined his sibling in the bear trap.

Now, the worst was yet to come. We couldn't leave Wadell out there smelling like half digested cranberry juice. So we gave him some coveralls to put on, and cleaned him up a little bit. But he still stunk – all the way back to High Prairie in the Fish and Wildlife truck.

### The Oldest Yuppie by J. Tom Bateman

Sonia is a product of a forgotten era. She has been a secretary for the Fish and Wildlife's money men for all these decades. Sonia's work history is unique in that she has held the same position for 30 years – secretary to the Director of Program Support. These directors were R. Hales, C.G. Campbell, T.W. Smith and D.J. Empson. She commenced work with the Division the same day as Jim Struthers.

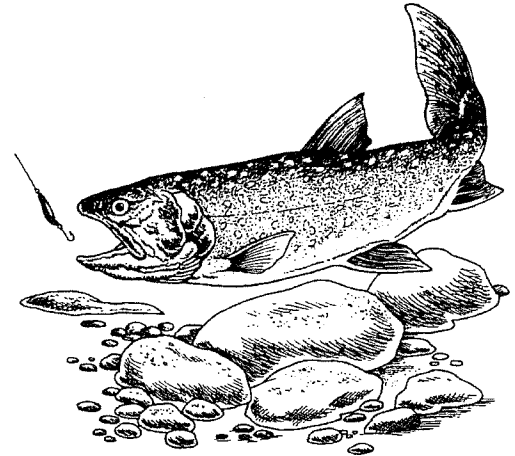
A lot of the information she deals with is confidential. During recent years, this has presented few problems because her memory protects her from violating any secrecy laws. Even during earlier years, Sonia was a very faithful protector of all classified information. She was very good at keeping secrets. Sometimes the people she told blabbed, but never Sonia!

Rumour has it that Sonia is aging. This seems strange and unfair to me, because she has remained the same beautiful lady for so many years. I notice, however, that she is becoming even more of a creature of habit. Every Sunday afternoon she and her mother, who is even older, can be found at the Swiss Chalet. Sonia also has apparently started to complain a little. Whining and complaining are sure signs of aging.

Throughout her 30 years Sonia has arranged or participated in many social events for the Division. Staff enjoy her baking talents, particularly cheesecake!

Sonia is a wonderful, dedicated lady, who shares her winning smile with all of us.

Congratulations, Sonia, for 30 years of successfully managing some very difficult directors of Program Support.



### One of Those Days by Gordon Polis

Do you ever wake up knowing you should have stayed in bed, thinking that your body feels like a ton of lead. Out you crawl, grabbing your uniform and getting dressed, into the washroom only to find that your out of Crest.

Down to the kitchen and to the coffee pot, your loving spouse remembered to leave you a cup, **NOT!** Tying up your boots, you wonder how to keep up this pace, tightening the boots, **SNAP!** a busted lace.

Out the door to the patrol truck you go, turning the key and the truck says **NO, NO, NO!** As you search the truck to figure out why, the lights were left on, you want to cry.

Finally getting to the office, parking, not believing your luck, to your dismay, you've slammed your hand in the door of the truck. Re-opening the door, you let out a yell like a snared grizzly bear, this brings helpful co-workers to the office windows, only to laugh, point and stare.

The secretary greets you and your throbbing fingers with  
 “good morning,”  
 holding up your hand showing her not as yet, a sort of  
 warning.

Behind your desk you can't believe how you feel,  
 rolling your chair ahead, **WHAM!** off pops the wheel.

Collecting yourself up off the floor,  
 you decide, I've gotta get out of here, as you head for the door.  
 This can't be happening, your on such a roll,  
 maybe if you go for a drive, yes, that's it, go on patrol.

Driving on a back trail, you get into a bit of a pinch,  
 no worries, just hook up the cable from the electric winch.  
 After hooking up to a tree, you find you have no luck,  
 that dead battery earlier affected the winch on the truck.

Two hours of hand winching, never can you remember so  
 much fun,  
 with every pull, you can't wait for this day to be done.  
 What is wrong, you come to a conclusion, of course,  
 ditch the truck and patrol the rest of the day by horse.

Riding high checking hunters while on a steed,  
 you take a break and the horse starts to feed.  
 Back on top you travel through the bush and see a bull moose,  
 oh, oh, your out look on life is quickly changing as the saddle  
 cinch comes loose.

Looking at the world from under your horse, its time to go  
 home,  
 hey, even Caesar had some bad days in Rome.  
 After turning out the horse and putting away the tack,  
 you bend over to pick up your ticket book and out goes your  
 back.

Hobbling home in a great deal of pain,  
 going to work today, you must have been insane.  
 Why couldn't you have been in Hawaii today, soaking up rays,  
 instead, you were here and its definitely been **ONE OF  
 THOSE DAYS!**

### Passing the Practical Test in Basic Survival

(reprinted from the North American Association  
 of Hunter Safety Coordinator Newsletter,  
 February/March 1985)  
 by J. Tom Bateman

David knew he was in trouble. It was getting dark, very  
 quickly, and starting to snow. He nearly panicked, but his  
 better judgement forced him to sit down and think.

David, 14, lived at Taber, in southern Alberta. The Alberta  
 Fish and Wildlife Division and his school presented a unique  
 opportunity for adventure by way of the Conservation and  
 Hunter Education program. David had finished the 35 hours of  
 classroom instruction and his class was completing the three

day outdoor camp experience. Approximately 6,000 students  
 per year take part in the program, offering basic survival,  
 firearm safety, and live firing.

His teacher, Al Herbst, had taken time to make sure all  
 students knew how to start a fire, even under adverse  
 conditions, and how to build a shelter and read a compass.

Herbst had explained the things they would experience if they  
 ever got lost. He had carefully gone over the enemies of  
 survival: pain, cold, thirst, hunger, fatigue, boredom,  
 loneliness, and fear.

They were in the foothills in west central Alberta. It is a mixed  
 forest area with muskeg throughout. The area had been burned  
 15 years ago and the new growth, primarily of lodgepole pine,  
 was thick and about 15 to 20 feet high.

At about 5:00 p.m. Herbst reported David missing. David had  
 left his camp and was lost in heavy bush. A wet, cold March  
 blizzard – the kind that sometimes catches even the seasoned  
 outdoor veteran – had descended on the area and caused  
 darkness to fall earlier than usual.

The Fish and Wildlife staff responded to Herbst's plea for aid.  
 Hunter Education staff in Calgary immediately assembled their  
 survival gear and headed for the camp, 130 miles away. Herbst  
 and his assistants had searched the area diligently but to no  
 avail. Marty Robillard, an experienced Conservation Officer,  
 was assigned the job of signalling by firing three shots with a  
 firearm every ten minutes.

David had never known the kind of fear he was experiencing  
 now. He began to recall the things he had learned from Herbst.  
 Build a fire first. He remembered the matches he had put in his  
 pocket earlier.

There was a large white spruce nearby which David crawled  
 under. Here he found a supply of dry twigs he gathered  
 together for a fire. A series of gunshots sounded and it  
 occurred to him that somebody was looking for him. David's  
 mind was conquering panic now, and he carefully dried his wet  
 hand on his shirt before handling the matches. He struck the  
 match, a tiny very smoky flame appeared at the base of the  
 twigs, and soon he had a small fire going.

David checked his watch at 6:30 p.m. Again, the sound of the  
 evenly spaced three shots provided an element of comfort. He  
 knew that daylight would not come for about 12 hours. The  
 fire certainly had improved his circumstances, and became  
 increasingly important to him. He had already used up the dry  
 twigs and dead branches on his spruce tree. Close to his shelter  
 he found a good supply of dead wood, though it was wet from  
 the snow. He dragged a couple of logs to his shelter and  
 carefully placed one on his fire.

The wet log smoked up his shelter until he thought he would  
 have to move out. Eventually the fire got through to dry wood  
 and began to blaze. With his fire going and his shelter dry,

David's thoughts turned to food. He had eaten nothing since around noon, had no food with him, and realized his chances of finding any were nil. His Hunter Education course had taught him that he could go several days without food.

Back at the campsite the Fish and Wildlife staff and instructors assessed the situation and decided that if David was not injured and did what he had been taught during the course, he would be fine. If he panicked or kept moving there was grave danger for his life. Doug Sproule and Ernie Lalonde checked their survival gear and flashlights as they prepared to go into the bush for a night of searching. A vehicle was dispatched to cruise the roads around the area just in case David had made it through. Herbst and I decided to call David's parents and the RCMP search and rescue unit. I doubted they could do much but we had to do everything possible.

David's watch read 12:30 and he knew for the first time he would make it. His only discomfort was the smoke and hunger. The realization that a lot of people would be up all night looking for him gave him great comfort. He knew that the sound of the gunfire must be coming from the camp area. Come daylight David knew he would go toward the sound.

At 5:30 a.m. David was prepared for his walk. As soon as he could see clearly, he kicked out the fire and waited for the familiar sound of the shotgun. He moved slowly at first, but as the shots became louder he picked up his pace.

Five RCMP officers and one dog arrived at 11:00 p.m. The next several hours were spent planning. A helicopter was placed on standby, equipment was checked and maps of the area examined. But in spite of the search people doing all we could, it was up to David to take care of himself.

The entire search party was assembled at the campsite an hour before daylight. The weather was still an obstacle. Just as we were leaving we heard Marty fire three shots in rapid succession followed by a fourth. That was the most welcome sound we could hope for.

David estimated his morning walk at three miles. He was dirty and his eyes were red from smoke, but he was found to be in excellent health.

### **The Reluctant Informant** by Wayne Brown

Back in the fall of '78 I was having coffee one day when one of our biologists told me he heard of some jacklighting going on in the Vilna country and the guy to see was John \_\_\_\_\_. That's all the info he had – just see John. The next day, I headed over to the area and stopped at John's farm, knocked on the door and waited. A few moments later it opened and I was face to face with my contact, a large heavy-set jovial type guy.

"Hi!, I understand there's been some jacklighting going on around here and I thought I'd stop by and see you about it."

"I – uh – I – well – uh – ya." John glanced around, licked his lips, then stammered, "Uh maybe, come in and have a coffee."

In the kitchen, John's wife put on the coffee pot and over the next hour we had a lengthy conversation about night hunting, different techniques, areas and times. John was now warming to the idea of filling me in on the activities of some of the locals, and finally he offered: "Tell you what, I'll take you for a tour of some fields these guys hit, but you gotta change your jacket so no one will recognize you."

I thought to myself, Right on, now I'm getting some place!

Away we went! I jumped into John's 4 x 4 with a different jacket over my uniform, and the tour began. We headed south a couple miles and turned into a field. John reached down and flipped it into four wheel drive, like he'd done this a lot before. We toured the field with John pointing out the deer trails and access gates. On to the next field, same thing, then another. Over an hour later we were back at the farm and I bade John a goodbye and said thanks for the tour. Just great, wow!

Back at the office I met our biologist again and thanked him for the info, it really helped. A perplexed look came across his face.

"You caught John?" he said.

"Pardon?" I replied.

"You caught John, that poaching SOB?"

"What? – He's the jacklighter? I thought he was the informant!"

"Oh for God's sake, no! He's the poacher!"

"Oh brother!"

### **The Rookie** by Anonymous

D.J. Empson was probably the youngest game warden ever hired by Fish and Wildlife. He came with all the tools, BUT . . . early in his service he wore a 6-7/8 cap. That was duly noted and he was cautioned that it would be unlikely he would get his own district until he graduated to a 7-1/8 cap. As it turned out, a 7-1/8 cap almost did him in.

One bright fall day early in the '70s Empson, in the company of a fellow officer, was patrolling south on the Cynthia/Lodgepole Road. A northbound vehicle cleared the rise and came toward the officers. At precisely the right moment Empson brought the patrol unit to a halt, flipped on the red light, grabbed a forage cap and stepped from the truck. As he raised his arms to signal the oncoming vehicle to pull up, he dropped the forage cap on his head and . . . the lights went out!! There he was, helpless in the middle of the road

with a truck coming straight for him. Seemed he had picked up the wrong cap and obviously, he was not yet ready for a 7-1/8 cap!!

### **Southern Alberta's Model for Managing Fish** by J. Tom Bateman

Duane Radford had finally realized his life-long dream. He was officially the Fisheries Biologist for the southern region of Alberta. He moved into his Lethbridge home in 1970 full of confidence and enthusiasm. He would finally be able to practice the theories he had studied for years. There were some good fishing spots throughout the region when Duane arrived. Within 18 months, all game species had been extirpated. The fact that it took 18 months is a tribute to the hearty nature and survival instincts of the fish.

Duane's management techniques were such that weaker, less vigorous fish would have given up within 2 or 3 months. Having no fish to manage didn't discourage Duane. He immediately began to investigate the cause of the disappearance of the resources and to find someone or something to blame.

Local anglers were getting restless and difficult to deal with. Duane's 6th sense revealed the anger of the natives toward him. Actually, the rocks thrown through the living room window helped – especially the ones with notes attached.

There was no question the situation called for quick thinking and drastic action. Perhaps, he reasoned, he should leave his air-conditioned, organized office and venture into the area where fish used to live. The thought of actually touching a smelly fish was more than he could stand, but maybe just looking at the water would help.

A large rock crashed through his office window just in time to help him with his decision. He left town.

He drove southwest in his brand new fish saving vehicle. The idea of driving off the pavement caused serious nausea, but the Trudeau salutes from passing motorists made him desperate for solitude. He stopped by a beautiful little creek that meandered through a peaceful prairie meadow. What a place to get stuck! He already had mud on one of his new shoes and, how would he ever get his truck clean. Well, while he was here he may as well investigate the creek. He hoped there were no fish in the water because the one he had been forced to operate on while in University had made him sick for several weeks. He remembered reading in Mark Trail about building a fish trap. There was a small bridge nearby so he could build the trap and not have to get wet or any more yucky mud on his shoes.

The farmer who owned the meadow came by to enquire and Duane convinced him to pull the government truck out of the mud. He thanked the farmer by sharing his donut with him.

The trap was completed and his truck was no longer stuck, even though it had an ugly mud spot on one wheel.

By the time he reached the paved road it was almost dark so people wouldn't recognize him and he could get home and wash his shoes without all the rednecked harassment.

The phone rang at 5:00 a.m. Duane didn't know any farmer and especially one who used that kind of language. He agreed to meet the farmer by the fish trap as soon as he could, but certainly not as fast as that unreasonable farmer suggested. Duane parked his truck well away from the mud. He walked toward a strange looking contraption that seemed to be in his trap. The same farmer he had befriended the previous day had now turned ugly. His tractor and baler were caught in the fish trap. Duane had carefully constructed his trap and while it hadn't caught any fish, the aquatic vegetation had drifted against it until it created a small impoundment. The farmer discovered the impoundment by driving his tractor on his bridge which promptly collapsed depositing tractor, baler and farmer in the creek.

Duane instantly surmised that the farmer was angry because his tractor was muddy and even offered to help him clean it off. The farmer became very specific with his instructions and even though Duane was shocked, he understood. He was frustrated because of being so vigorously chastised by a farmer. He drove back to headquarters determined to exonerate himself, but only after he had persuaded the supervisor of enforcement to instruct some junior officers to fix the bridge.

### **True Confession** by Chuck Shipley

Officer X had a propensity for never giving up in any situation. This story – told personally to yours truly – is about the time he became aware of an offence that had taken place and found that one of the prime witnesses was residing in a hospital bed in Edmonton.

He went to the hospital and proceeded to the witness's room. The witness denied having any knowledge of the offence that had taken place, or the persons involved. Being somewhat on the desperate side, Officer X decided that he would have to deviate somewhat from the truth. He indicated to the person in the hospital bed that Officer X already had a statement from the witness's friend who could and would identify him as a person involved in the offence.

The guy in the hospital bed said that was a lie, that his friend would never do that. Officer X volunteered to go down and get the statement. He left, went down to his vehicle, wrote out a statement in his best handwriting, signed the guy's name and took it back up to the person in the hospital bed.

The person in the hospital bed read it over, and confessed to the whole heinous crime. Very interesting interrogation techniques I would think.

### The Way It Was by Wayne Brown

When I began working as an officer at Cold Lake in 1967 I had no concept of what the job entailed nor how to accomplish the task. I was one of the last officers to be hired "off the street" with no post secondary education or formal training. I arrived in head office on Jasper Avenue in Edmonton, was sworn in, given a badge, no. 105 (later reissued as #38), a diary, handshake and instructions to report to Cold Lake within three days to Officer Chuck Scott.

My wife, Marilyn and I arrived as directed to find no accommodation available and as a last resort Chuck and Shirley let us have a spare room in their house for a month until we could get into an apartment. The four of us lived, breathed and talked Fish and Wildlife every waking moment for that whole month. We became sort of a family and it still remains intact today, even after Chuck's passing.

The scrounging began! Ralph Harle from Bonnyville gave me a shirt to wear with my jeans, Chuck's clothes being far too big to fit. It took about a month for my own uniform to arrive from Lafleché in Edmonton. Shoes were a \$20 yearly allowance, buy whatever you preferred. Patrol jackets didn't exist so standard wear was the tunic in the field! Most of the guys bought jackets of one sort or another with their own money. There were no equipment belts but most of the guys wore belt knives with the sheath stuck into their back pocket. Firearms were our own as well and this extended to some officers including a concealed sidearm carried usually on night patrol. There was no policy as such.

Vehicles for patrol were personally owned and consisted of an assortment of cars, a few half tons and the odd Jeep. We were paid mileage for their use on patrol and also doubled as the family car. Most of us would do some modifications to them like putting on larger tires, usually from Sears because their warranty was on time – not miles of use, and included road hazard. We'd usually wear them out at about half time so it was a substantial saving. We fashioned roof lights from the rear eight inch school bus stop lights, one facing forward the other back. They were wired through a signal light flasher to blink on and off, mounted on a chunk of plywood and held on the roof with suction cups and parachute strapping scrounged from the military. I think Jim Nichols was really well set up as he had a fireball and an old moaning siren he probably absconded from a wrecked police car somewhere.

Radios were non existent. We'd phone each other and meet somewhere at the appropriate time. In the mountains, a few of us were able to scrounge forestry, one-watt, mobile phones which were good for getting in touch with a lookout tower provided you could see it!

Snow machines had just come on the market a few years previously and two brands seemed to dominate: Skidoo, as it does today, and the old blue Snow Cruiser. The Skidoos were one lung double track machines that were real killers until they invented reverse! They'd do about 40 mph under ideal conditions but more normally about 25. They could pull massive amounts of frozen fish for they rarely spun out! I once used a double track with the hood off for added cooling in June to pull a crashed airplane out of the bush near Edson. It ran like a charm, even on the muskeg and grass.

Boats varied, as they do today. In Cold Lake we had a 65 hp Evinrude powered Larson, the "S.S. Duckshit." Chuck had it wrecked on an RCMP boat course when one of the Mounties made a sudden left hand turn and rammed him broadside. It was temporarily replaced by a brand new Starcraft 21 foot cabin cruiser that finally ended up on the Athabasca River above Fort McMurray. It wasn't really suited to river use and ended up an unreliable floating wreck over the years.

Work hours were as required with no overtime. Going a month or two with no days off wasn't uncommon. Often our wives accompanied us on patrol in the evening, or we'd meet our family at a lake shore campground for a picnic on Sunday afternoon. Hunting and fishing on duty was of little concern and usually boiled down to the opportunity presenting itself so you took advantage of the situation. Our pay was poor; (I started at \$345/month) so a moose or deer in the freezer for the winter was important.

Aircraft use by officers was very much part of the job. There were several of us who owned aircraft of our own and we had special authorization to use them for work from H.Q. Ralph Harle, John Doonanco, Bill Macdonald, Gerry Labrie and myself were in that category. The public knew we had aircraft and that we used them. I recall being threatened by poachers that they'd shoot us down if we ever caught them in the act with a plane but it never came to pass. We were allowed to charge car mileage as compensation for the costs of operation. This lasted until about 1970 with the advent of government trucks being issued. I continued to use the plane on fire patrol for Forestry at Edson until about 1974.

Administration was very minimal, usually consisting of your daily diary – which went onto a weekly report, expense account, balancing your office cash and licence returns, and answering one or two memos. To have to come back into the office Monday afternoon to finish up was considered a major screw-up in your operation. Coffee usually consisted of a group at the local "greasy spoon." The regulars present were RCMP, the Judge, Indian band constable, Town Police, Bank manager, and ourselves. Conversation centred on what had happened the day before, what had to be done today, where everyone was in case you needed them, and general gossip.  
**And coffee cost a dime!**

In remembering back, one often thinks how good it was or how bad it could be. But really the job itself hasn't changed all that much. New concepts come and old procedures die but

after all this time I'm seeing us simply go in a large circle. In so many little ways, I find myself back in '67! I lean back, listen to the younger officers and – just sort of smile!



### What Goes Up Must Come Down by Daryl Watters

A few years back, long before the concept of District Management, we had occasion to work with District Enforcement staff to complete fisheries projects.

During an assessment of the stocked walleye population in Wabamun Lake, Mike Sullivan, Fisheries Biologist, and I borrowed Steve Carlson, Stony Plain District, to act as the third member of an electro-fishing crew working on the warm water canal on Wabamun. As walleye are most active at dusk and at night, the plan was to start at nightfall and complete several runs up and down the canal and dip net walleye that were stunned in the electrical field.

The particular electro-fishing boat we used was set up so one person drove the small outboard motor and two dip netters stationed at the bow of the boat dip netted fish and deposited them in a live well located amidship.

The dip nets used were approximately 12 feet long with a shallow 6 inch deep holding bag. The usual practise to avoid cracking your dip netting partner in the head was to net a fish, then slide the dip net handle straight back through your hands, then turn and deposit the fish in the live well.

I guess we weren't too clear on our instruction about dip netting techniques. Steve saw a 6 lb. walleye thrashing around at the edge of the electrical field and immediately got his dip net under it. Being the strong individual that he is, Steve proceeded to lift the dip netted walleye straight up, until this poor fish was approximately 12 feet in the air.

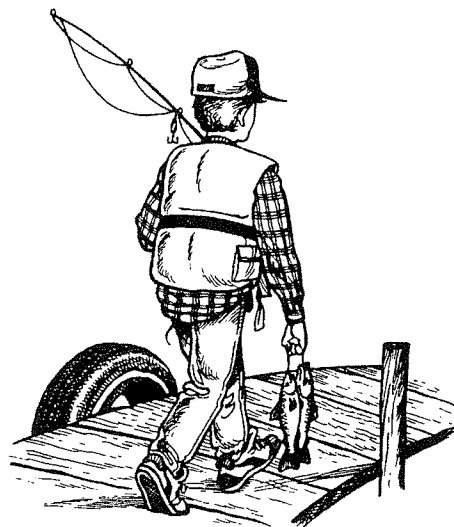
Of course, by the time the net had reached vertical, the walleye had recovered and with a couple of flips fell out of the net . . . at which time, with a level of teamwork rarely seen outside of tag team wrestling, Mike Sullivan snagged the falling walleye out of mid air and without missing a beat, deposited it in the live well where it was subsequently sampled and released.

### The Whistling Wildlife Officer by Chuck Shipley

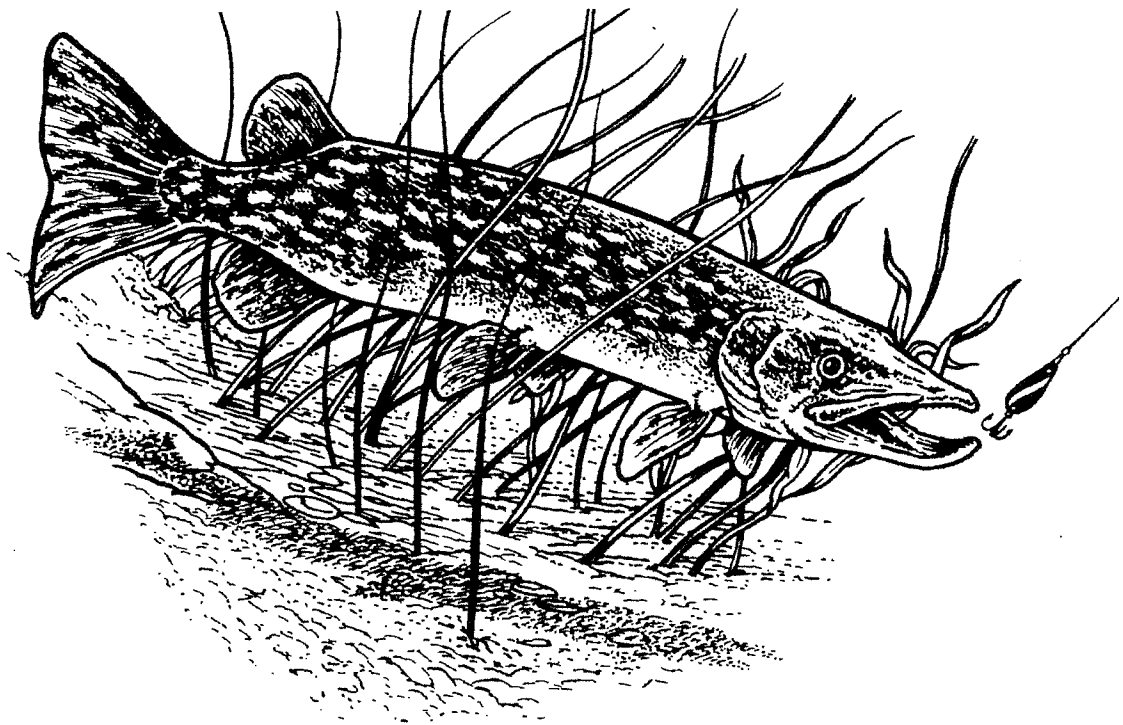
Sometime between 1970 and 1975, Officer Koteles had asked for some assistance along the Little Smoky River. Officers from High Prairie responded, who finally found him questioning two bird hunters. They were not clothed in red, which was customary for that time.

As the other officers pulled up, Officer Koteles was in the midst of writing a ticket to one of the gentlemen for the mentioned offence. The officers noticed that every time Officer Koteles asked a question – such as, "What's your address sir?," the person responded, and Officer Koteles whistled a few bars. "Your height," and whistle a few more bars, etc., etc.

The officers found this quite amusing. In fact, they found it so humorous that they had to go to the back of the truck to hide their laughter.







# **Alberta Fish and Wildlife**

