



Grass Roots News

Advocating for Conservation and Sportsmen Since 1933

May / June 2019

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A FISH FOR ALL SEASONS

By Mike Elam, NYSCC Director at Large

Photos by Krys Elam

How about a fish that is abundant throughout New York, prolific spawner, easy to fillet and tasty to eat, and on top of that, it's relatively easy to catch, just plain fun to fish for and catchable year-round, open water or through the ice? It has many books and magazine articles written about it and has even made television appearances. There are rods, reels, line and lures specifically for this fish. It has gotten popular enough over the last 20 or so years that there are derbies for it, mostly in the South. And last year a new state record was caught in New York. What is this fish? How about the crappie.

New York is blessed with many waters that harbor good crappie populations. NY also has two different crappie species, the black crappie and the white crappie. The black crappie, to me, looks more like a dinner plate with fins, especially when they reach 12 inches! Often referred to as a slab, it has a greenish color with checked black spots. The white crappie has a somewhat sleeker body, a little lighter color and has vertical gray stripes. The blacks appear to do better in cleaner water while the whites seem to handle darker or turbid water better.

Crappies are known by other names depending on the part of the woods you come from. When I was a boy, we fished calico bass with a cane pole, pencil bobber and a minnow. They can be known as strawberry bass, calico, specks, speckled perch, papermouth but when they got well known, they pretty much just became crappies.

Crappie spawn when water temps reach the 60's. They spawn on gravel bottoms where the male fans a nest and attracts a female. They often seek cover for their nest and you can see a jet-black crappie guarding a nest under a tree or brush pile. These fish get jet black, nature's camouflage, to hide them. It's common to see largemouth, bluegills and sunfish spawn in the same areas. Like most sunfish families, crappie dads stay behind to guard the nest and mom heads deeper to recover from spawning.

Crappies are unique in that they can be caught tucked in a tree, brush pile, dock or duck blind. They also can be taken suspended off trees, bridge pilings or over deep open water or can be found related to the bottom in 15 to 25 feet of water. They can also be in weed beds or suspended in deeper water adjacent to weed lines. One of my better ice fishing experiences was when I found a large school of fish two feet below the ice over twenty feet of water.

Soon after ice out, anglers get the crappie bug. As the sun warms the surface waters, crappie move to warm up and often suspend off trees, docks or pilings. From the first warming of surface waters until spawning, these fish really chow down. The appetite helps to build the spawn and give the fish energy needed for spawning. Like most sunfish, crappies continue to feed while spawning.

Knowledge, tackle and electronics have made us all better anglers and panfish have become very popular targets. We know that fish populations can be impacted by angling pressure. Spawning



season is a good time for selective harvest by releasing some prime fish for seed. New York allows a bag limit of 25 crappie 9 inches or longer in length. The 9 inches should allow crappies two spawning seasons before potential harvest.

Jigs are one of the most productive lures to take crappie. There are so many kinds of jigs and jig bodies that they could turn this article into a book! I like to use tube jig bodies or twist tails on a 1/32 oz. or 1/16 oz. jig head. Once in a while, I go to 1/8 oz. heads. These heads have a size 4 or 6 hook. Chartreuse or a combination of chartreuse are my best color most days. There are so many colors of jig bodies and we all have our own favorites.



The crappie seems to have a love of a slow sinking lure. You just see a twitch of your line when they inhale it. I often tip my jig with a spike, a mousie or Berkley Gulp to add scent and pick up some bonus bluegills. Crappies can get a little finicky sometimes; fishing a jig below a bobber and twitching it will do the trick. Other times vertical fishing in cover can tease them to bite. It's fun to see a crappie swim up cautiously, inspect the bait and inhale it.

When fishing heavy cover like trees, brush piles or even docks, ditch the mono and use the thin diameter braided line. Most times the light jig hook will straighten out and save the jig. Just re-bend the hook and go back catching. Also, a net comes in handy for landing bigger crappie or you may find out how they got the "papermouth" name.

There are times when a good old minnow can't be beat for crappies. I'm convinced that on some waters there is nothing that can out-fish a minnow for crappie. I'm also sure crappies bite 24/7. I've done well in the dark and during mid-day sunlight. After dark, crappies are attracted to lights from docks, marinas, bridges or even street lights. Lights attract the food chain and the crappies follow to chow down. If you know of or find these areas, you can have a bonanza! Don't forget about your Coleman lantern or a floating crappie light to attract nighttime fish. Lights can also work when ice fishing.

Spring crappie are the most popular but summer crappie can be great. Fall can be a real sleeper when the crappie school up and often relate to open water or weed lines and often stay into ice season for additional opportunities. So good luck enjoying New York's year-round fish!

P.S. The more miserable the weather, the better the fish taste!



The NYS UKC Hunting Beagle Championship, hosted by the Orleans County Houndsmen Club, will be held at Oakfield Rod and Gun Club on June 8 and 9. The Club address is 3199 Maltby Road in Oakfield, NY. There is plenty of room for tents and campers, and Batavia is only 10 minutes away with lots of hotels and motels.

A full set of trophies will be awarded each day in champion through 4th place, and many more prizes will be given away. A full kitchen is available for food, and dog supply vendors will be present. For more information contact Ernie at 585-303-1001 or Ed at 585-948-9483.

THE GOOD AND THE UGLY

By Douglas H. Domedion



We'll start with the good – wild leeks (or ramps as some may call them) are in season. These wild onions are one of the earliest edibles to emerge in the spring. Historically leeks were regarded as a spring tonic in the Appalachians. Early settlers relied on their restorative qualities after long, hungry winters. The high vitamin C in leeks has saved many a mountaineer from scurvy and other nutritional maladies. I, myself, like that uniquely pungent garlicky-onion flavor ... the same flavor that permeates your pores to effectively stave off man and beast!

I was educated about this wild onion years ago by an old friend in Pennsylvania; so when some were found years ago around here a few were dug up and planted in my woods next to the house. Over the years that patch has been raided each spring about this time but not overdone, and thus it has expanded a great deal. It takes a long time for leeks to get established so don't figure on disturbing the patch for four or five years -- and then sparsely.

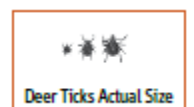
I enjoy gently digging a few out from various spots in my patch and eating them raw right on the spot. There is a sheath around the lower part (the bulb) that is easily to slide back down over the bulb's roots, and then with a snip of the fingers the sheath and bulb roots are removed. Now the bulb is eaten and the leaf can be too, right there on the spot!

The leaves can be used in a salad where they add a touch of "spring" to it. In fact, if you are looking to start a patch of your own you don't want to harvest the bulbs for a few years so they can spread and grow. Just cut the leaves off and leave the bulbs undisturbed in the ground.

The peak of this plant's goodness doesn't last long but the bulbs can be stored by freezing. Simply cut off the greens, clean the dirt off the bulbs and cut off the roots. Then spread the bulbs out on a sheet pan or waxed paper so they are not touching, and freeze. This prevents them from sticking together. Once they're frozen put them in jars or plastic containers, seal tightly and put in the freezer for up to six months. The greens won't last long fresh and deteriorate when frozen so it's best to eat them as soon as possible. One word of caution ... friends may not enjoy the leek smell they produce around you!!

Now the bad news – Lyme disease is spreading across the State. If you have not heard of this disease get educated as it is spreading from the downstate area (seems a lot of bad stuff comes from this area!) and it is nothing you want to deal with. This disease is the most common tick-borne infection in NYS and the US. It is caused by a bacterium and typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a characteristic skin rash. If left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, heart, and nervous system. Lyme disease is transmitted by the bite of an infected black-legged (deer) tick. Not all black-legged ticks maybe infected but why take the chance? Once a person is bitten, the tick must be attached for at least 24-36 hours to transmit Lyme disease if it is a carrier, so you have time to find and remove it.

Mice and deer are the big carriers of this tick but it can also be carried by birds and even found on grass and brush. Folks hiking, hunting or involved in any outdoor activity are capable of picking up a tick and the disease. If you have a dog it, too, could transport a tick to you or your home.



So what can you do to prevent getting a tick on you? Wear a tick repellent on your skin and clothing that has DEET, lemon oil or eucalyptus. Use the chemical Permethrin on clothing, especially on your

lower pant legs. Shower within two hours after coming inside, checking your skin for ticks and washing your hair. You can put your clothing in a hot clothes dryer to kill any unexposed ticks.

Removing a tick that has attached itself to you is tricky. Remove it with a pair of fine-tipped tweezers as soon as possible, pulling upward with slow, steady pressure. If parts of the tick remain in the skin, also try to remove them with the tweezers. After everything is out, clean the bite area with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

My contact information is 585-798-4022 or woodduck2020@yahoo.com.

ORLEANS COUNTY FEDERATION OF SPORTSMEN'S CLUBS, INC. *Est. 1938*



Albion Rod & Gun Club
Barre Sportsmen's Club
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Oak Orchard River Chapter, National Wild Turkey Federation
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

DEFENDER MEMBERS:

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NEW YORK STATE OUTDOORSMEN HALL OF FAME HONORS 11 SPORTSMEN Bill Conners Joins Class of 2019

The New York State Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame proudly announces induction of 11 new members for 2019. Selection for the Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame does not represent individual achievement, but rather service to the causes of conservation or outdoor sports. The NYSOHOF is an organization dedicated to honoring those who have spent many years preserving our outdoor heritage, working for conservation, or enhancing our outdoor sports for future generations. This year's inductees represent a diverse group from all areas of the state.

NYSCC's own Bill Conners was inducted as a leader and spokesman for sportsmen, not only in the lower Hudson Valley but across New York State through his newspaper column, roles in NYS Conservation Council, NYS Conservation Fund Advisory Board, Fish & Wildlife Management Board, and many other organizations. He has recruited and set a positive image for sportsmen through his efforts in Deer Search, Hunters Helping the Hungry, youth hunts, and fishing events. He strongly advocates for public access and has served on the Stewart Airport Buffer Lands Citizens Advisory Committee as well as the Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee. Bill speaks, listens and acts to resolve problems while promoting the concerns of sportsmen, always with future generations in mind to enjoy our great outdoors.



(Photos by Scott Faulkner)

Pictured are those honored in the class of 2019: (L to R) John A. Patane, William Conners, Jim Farrell (seated), Jack Borquin, Tom Hughes, Tom Schneider, Andy Jeski, Paul Hudson, Ed Gardephe, Kenyon Simpson.



The NYSOHOF also has several special awards given periodically to deserving individuals or groups. The Dave Pierce Memorial Award is presented to someone for outstanding work with youth. This year's recognition was given to William Lloyd (Herkimer County) for his initiative in founding and establishing funding for the Janice and Paul Keesler Memorial Award which grants scholarships to deserving college youth pursuing a degree in some form of wildlife management.

SPRINGTIME RITUAL IN GENESEE/MONROE COUNTY, NY

Stocking fish in Oatka Creek on Good Friday

By Glen Adams, Region 8 NYSCC Director

Between 15 and 20 youth accompanied by parents, grandparents and club members of Oatka Fish and Game Club participated in the second of three stockings for Oatka Creek that started in Monroe County at Canawangus Park in Scottsville and ending at the Oatka Fish and Game Club in Genesee County. One future stocking is to come. Public access to these locations is available from DEC access sites along Oatka Trail.

To finish up the stocking the Oatka Fish and Game Club provided a free lunch of hot dogs, hamburgers, baked beans, chips and drink for the volunteers.



The stocked fish are raised at the historic Caledonia Fish Hatchery.

In this older picture of the Hatchery, the raceways seen on the asphalt have been covered and protected for the repairs that are scheduled to be started soon and will continue for two years. DEC has stated that the building shown is to be lifted, the old raceways taken out, those on the asphalt put in on a new foundation, then the historic building lowered back onto the new foundation with additional structural repairs. The good news is that this work is planned to start in spring 2019. We will be watching and hope that renovations take place as per the word of the DEC.



SCHENECTADY CO. CONSERVATION COUNCIL ASSISTS WITH LISHA KILL TROUT STOCKING

Gary Mosher reports that the annual trout stocking of the Lisha Kill was done on March 29th. About 800 brown trout from the NYS DEC Van Hornesville Hatchery were put into the Lisha Kill at five different locations. Assisting were eight volunteers from the Schenectady County Conservation Council. Thank you to these volunteers!

CUB SCOUTS AND BLUE BIRDS AND WOOD DUCKS AND BATS, OH MY!

*FitzPatrick Fostering Future Environmental Stewards
Information and photos from Exelon Corp.*

At the James A. FitzPatrick Nuclear Power Plant in Scriba (Oswego County), Chuck Parker (AKA Cub Scout Master of Pack 825) recently teamed up with members of the station's Environmental Stewardship Committee to build habitats for bluebirds, bats and wood ducks. Soliciting the help of Chuck's Scout Pack and local conservation group CNY Wildfowlers they set forth to enhance the site's ecosystems.

In early March, members of Scout Pack 825 with help from CNY Wildfowlers assembled 10 bluebird, 6 wood duck and 4 bat houses to be placed on FitzPatrick property. The station purchased the houses from CNY Wildfowlers and then presented them to the scouts to assemble. While enjoying donuts, juice and chocolate milk, the scouts learned about the importance of the habitats they were building and their role in being environmental stewards.

On a cold and damp Sunday, March 31, the Scout Pack, station Environment Stewardship Committee members and representatives from CNY Wildfowlers strategically placed each of the bluebird and wood duck houses and two of the bat houses on FitzPatrick property located just south of the plant. The remaining bat houses will be placed at a later date.

We have a variety of animals and plants in our shared environment, and this partnership was an opportunity to reinforce that all living things are vital to the ecosystems in which they live.



GENESEE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION, INC.

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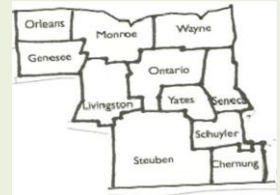
A charitable foundation concerned about conservation issues, with special interest in Genesee, Livingston, and Monroe Counties.

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Representing County Federations and Affiliate Clubs of New York State Region 8

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF SPORTSMEN'S WATERFOWL TASK FORCE MEMBERS CONTINUE

By Chuck Parker, NYSCC President

With the introduction of the SDM (Structured Decision Making) process more individuals and more data is being used to determine the migratory waterfowl seasons in New York State. Much of the new available information requested and that used to evaluate and determine future seasons is subject to the input and study of the Waterfowl Task Force. While the role has been modified, the Waterfowl Task Force in New York State continues to play an important part in determining our hunting seasons for ducks and geese.

The following DEC link,

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/searchresult.html#stq=selecting+the+optimal+Duck+Season&stp=1>

gives most of the information on which this article is based. The NYS DEC has added a Structured Decision Making process, similar to that used with big game hunting, to the evaluation process used with duck hunting. Along with SDM, information from multiple groups such as the U S Fish and Wildlife Service, Flyway Councils, Cornell University and Input from the Waterfowl Task Forces continues to play an important role in determining season dates.

Waterfowl Task Forces in NY have always been and continue to be an advisory group. They have recommended season dates based on federal guidelines in the past and these recommendations have often been followed. The Waterfowl Task Forces have never set the dates -- recommended dates to DEC, yes; set the dates, no. Now the role of the Task Force includes working with the additional data made available through the SDM process. For example, a



recent survey with questions and recommendations from the Waterfowl Task Force was sent out to 6,000 of the 18,000 duck hunters in NYS and yielded valuable information that helped to determine season dates. This information is available for the Waterfowl Task Force members and is an example of how more data from more waterfowl hunters is being used along with knowledge from state and federal biologists. "DEC used SDM to evaluate a suite of season date alternatives that were developed by the Waterfowl Hunter Task Forces in each zone."

Throughout NY there are four Waterfowl Task Force Zones -- Long Island, South Eastern, North Eastern and Western, and NYSCC has a strong involvement therein. By statute the NYSCC can have a representative for each DEC region that exists within that WTF Zone. Statewide we can have 8 representatives with total representation within a zone between 9 and 11. NYSCC representation is highest in the Western Zone with 3, since the western zone encompasses Regions 7, 8 and 9. With the present SDM process, "DEC intends to adopt the recommendation of the SDM evaluation of duck season dates for a period of 5 years (barring any changes to the federal framework)." This is an initial introduction of the SDM process for waterfowl. It deserves close monitoring by our Waterfowl Task Forces in NYS. See <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/40737.html>.

With the continued commitment of our NYSCC representatives who serve on the Waterfowl Task Forces we will be there to serve the concerns of the NYS Sportsmen.

SPRING TURKEY TIKKA MASALA

(serves 2-4 people)

Along with turkey hunting, springtime brings fresh cilantro in gardens and ripening hot-house tomatoes...a perfect combination for this Indian-inspired recipe.

Ingredients:To marinate the meat:

- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 2 teaspoons garam masala (Indian spice mixture found in the international section of many grocery stores)
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- Freshly ground black pepper, salt, cayenne pepper to taste (~1/2 tsp each)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 pound skinless, boneless turkey breast* – cut into 1-inch strips (about one side of a turkey breast)

For the Sauce:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 3 large tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup tomato paste
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream or half & half
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro for garnish



The Wild Harvest Table started as a celebration of the culinary bounty represented by wild game and fish in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. Cornell Cooperative Extension Nutrition Educator, Moira Tidball, from Seneca County started the website in January of 2009 as a resource for game and fish recipes, nutrition information, and preparation techniques.

Directions:

To marinate the meat, combine yogurt, 2 teaspoons garam masala, paprika, black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon salt, cayenne pepper, and 1/2 teaspoon coriander in a large bowl. Add turkey strips and toss to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for 2 hours up to 10 hours.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place turkey strips on a lightly greased baking sheet, leaving space between each piece, and bake in the preheated oven until browned and no longer pink inside, about 10 minutes. Remove and set aside.

To make the sauce, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion; cook and stir until onion begins to soften, 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and ginger and continue to cook a few minutes, being careful not to burn the garlic. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, and water into onion mixture and cook until tomatoes begin to break down and incorporate into the onion mixture, about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally for even cooking.

Stir the garam masala, coriander, turmeric and cream into the tomato mixture. Fold in the cooked turkey pieces and stir to coat. Cover and let simmer gently for 10 minutes. Season to taste and garnish with cilantro. Serve with seasoned basmati or brown rice.

Note: if you are short on time, you can use left-over cooked wild turkey and a jar of prepared tikka masala sauce and simply combine, simmer for about 10 minutes, and serve with rice.

*Be sure to save your wild turkey legs for other delicious recipes that are slow cooked to make them tender!



Buck A Member Contributors:

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A-On-Da-Wa-Nuh Sportsman's Club, Inc., Leicester
Baldwinsville Rod & Gun Club, Baldwinsville
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General Donation Contributors:

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ATTENTION!!! CALL FOR AWARDS NOMINATIONS



Do you know of someone who should be recognized for his or her achievements? Consider nominating that person for one of the Council's annual awards – Professional, Volunteer or Youth Conservationist, Outdoor Program Contest, Conservation Educator, Lifetime Achievement, or NYSCC's President's Award. See www.nyscc.com for details about nominations.

Save the dates! September 6-8 – NYSCC Annual Meeting at the Delta by Marriott (formerly the Radisson Hotel Utica Centre), 200 Genesee Street in Utica, NY.

NYSCC FISH COMMITTEE MEETS AT HERKIMER COLLEGE

By Joe Fischer, Fish Committee Chair

Herkimer College was the place to be on April 13 for NYSCC's Fish Committee meeting during the NYSCC's annual spring/legislative conference. Committee members and guests heard a report from Steve Hurst, DEC Bureau of Fisheries Chief, and discussed all manner of issues from hatchery production and renovations to cormorants and trout management plans.

Updates were provided regarding hatchery vehicle and equipment replacement and ongoing radon mitigation. Good fishing for walleye should be available in Oneida Lake. Likewise for Lake Ontario chinook salmon and brown trout, though there is concern about the drop in alewife population as the main forage fish. Consideration is being given to Lake Ontario regulation changes. Lake Erie walleye fishing is very good, as is steelhead catch in Erie's tributaries. Low populations of emerald shiner and rainbow smelt are cause for concern.

Further information about the meeting is available from Chair Joe Fischer at fischer8881@roadrunner.com.



Perhaps some future fishing enthusiasts are in this gathering of 10-12-year-old students from Park School of Williamsville which helped stock 2,000 rainbow trout in early April. The fish were over 1 year old and we're 8-12" in length.

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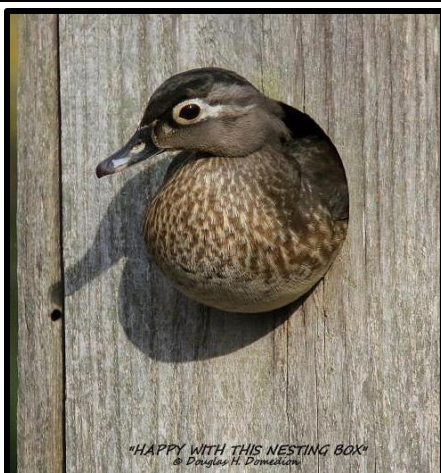


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