

NEWSLETTER

Coming Events

Start time is 6–6:30 P.M.–dinner & drinks– for the January 5 meeting at the Police Association Offices. This is on the second floor upstairs over

Proulx Photo –141 Catherine Street
near the corner of Bank and Catherine. The parking lot is across from the Police Association. Best to approach from the Metcalfe Exit and go west on Catherine Street.

Awards and Trophies

Things are finished for the 2004 season. Don't forget to bring in your "dust-catchers" (trophies). Last call for getting your results and pictures (where needed) into Greg. Any comments on this year's events and locations should be reported to Neil McColl.

As an example, perhaps we could add a Club Fish at Hog's Back next year. This would be welcome to many if gas prices remain high.

Safe To Go In The Water?

Something fishy is happening in the headwaters of the Potomac River. Scientists have discovered that some male bass are producing eggs — a decidedly female reproductive technique.

In June 2002, reports appeared of fish die-offs in the South Branch of the Potomac River. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources asked U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) scientists to examine fish health in the watershed near the town of Moorefield, about three hours drive from Washington, D.C.

Male smallmouth appear to be producing eggs. Chemicals that increase the level of hormones in the water may cause this condition.

Anglers were also reporting fish with lesions, indicating exposure to bacteria and other contaminants.

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Giant Squid Taking Over The World

Giant squid are taking over the oceans and are getting bigger. According to scientists, squids have overtaken humans in terms of total bio-mass.

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A Thinking Woman

A couple goes on vacation to a fishing resort in Northern Ontario. The husband likes to fish at the crack of dawn. The wife likes to read.

One morning the husband returns after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap. Although not familiar with the lake, the wife decides to take the boat out.

She motors out a short distance, anchors, and continues to read her book.

Along comes a game warden in his boat.

He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning, Ma'am. What are you doing?"

"Reading a book," she replies, (thinking "Isn't that obvious?").

"You're in a restricted fishing area," he informs her.

"I'm sorry, officer, but I'm not fishing, I'm reading."

"Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know, you could start at any moment. I'll have to take you in and write you up."

"If you do that, I'll have to charge you with sexual assault," says the woman.

"But I haven't even touched you," says the game warden.

"That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know, you could start at any moment."

"Have a nice day, Ma'am!" and he left.

MORAL: Never argue with a woman who reads. It's likely she can also think.

Giant Squid (Continued)

Over-fishing some fish species has taken away competition for food. The warming waters from climate change have also allowed squid populations to grow. Squid eat anything that comes their way, breed whenever possible and keep growing. Squid live only about 200 days but grow exponentially. Warming water by even a degree has a tremendous snowball effect of rapidly increasing their growth rate and ultimate body size.

The Leap of the Mascalonge —Still an Open Question

*I was going over some of my old magazines and came across an article that may be of some interest to certain honourable members. This article appeared in **The American Angler** – February 3, 1883.*

“Lest “Old Mossyback”, of Mascalonge Lake, Jefferson county, N.Y., should think that the champion of his family has been completely annihilated, or has laid down the cudgels at last, let me bring some additional facts to bear on the question of whether the Mascalonge is apt to show above water after being hooked.

Soon after my last letter on this subject in the **Angler**, Gen. John Satterlee accosted me on Cortlandt street, one afternoon, with the exclamation, in his usual bluff and hearty way: “Thompson, you are right about the MASCALONGE; stick to your text.”

The General is a native of Herkimer county, N.Y., and was a lumberman in the North Woods, in his younger days when the game of forest and stream was very abundant. Some of his comical adventures with moose, deer, bear and panther, have given me many a stitch in the side. Spoon trolling for pike and MASCALONGE in the St. Lawrence, among the Thousand Islands, was a frequent diversion with him, and his reported catches seem fabulous in these days, when it is by no means easy for the Bonifaces of Alexandria Bay to keep their tables supplied with fresh fish.

The General once had a Mascalonge jump out of his boat after being placed on the bottom of it, and wants to know why such a strong and quick fish should not leap out of his element in his struggles to get free. The Irishman, to whom was pointed out the immense volume of water rolling over the precipice at Niagara, said: “And sure, what hinders it from rowling?”

Uncle John, as his friends familiarly call him, says that he has seen many a St. Lawrence Mascalonge show above water after being hooked.

I noticed in the **Angler** of November 25th last, the astounding statements of “G.B.” that “the Mascalonge very seldom, if ever, leaps from the water, differing greatly in this respect from the silvered or northern pike, which almost invariably leap from the water on being struck;” and again that, “the northern pike leaps frantically from the

water to shake himself from the merciless hooks;" and again that "of the few hundred northern and silver pike which we have killed with the rod, few have remained under water, almost invariably leaping some feet above the water on being struck."

I wrote to Charles W. Crossman, Alexandria Bay, for the experience of the oarsmen there. He writes in answer, under date of December 21st, as follows; "let me premise that the northern pike, *Esox lucius* – Linn. is always called 'pickeral' at that place."

"Last evening I called a meeting of our best oarsmen and read your question to them. All said that a Mascalonge on being hooked, always came to the surface and shook his head, while in many cases they leaped full length out of the water. Pickeral, on being hooked, never leap out of the water. Sometimes they come to the surface and remain there like a log of wood, and are drawn into the boat with hardly a struggle."

"The above observations are by Henry Westcott, Andrew Duclin, Daniel Duclin, Jno. Dingman, and many others. You will recognize these names as the men are sons of guides who were here fifty years ago."

Although Charley Crossman was trotted on my knee when a five year old, it is to be hoped that he don't mean to insinuate that the subscriber trolled in the St. Lawrence half a century ago.

I have in reserve more facts bearing on the question whether or not it is of rare occurrence for a Mascalonge to show above water after being hooked, and they will not be withheld from the columns of the **Angler**, although, forsooth! A phenomenal angler on the 'bank of the St. Lawrence near the Thousand Islands, who has never lost a Mascalonge,' is of the sapient opinion 'that these fish when hooked can be so mishandled that they will cut up rough, and among their capers, leap part way out of the water,' nor although another angler elegantly stigmatizes those who speak of the mascalonge's leaping and other acrobatic proclivities as indulging in 'rot'.

H.H.T., New York, January 30, 1883"

I'd say we could still argue that one today. I know that some of the pike I've caught loved to jump. So did some of the muskies.

Quirkiest News of 2004: Flatulent Fish and Beyond

Truth is stranger than fiction. Any doubters should just follow the parade of weird discoveries, bizarre behaviours, and other oddities that Mother Nature and scientists around the world trot out each year.

Here then, is a decidedly unscientific ranking of the top ten quirkiest stories of 2004, as chosen by the editors of National Geographic News.

10. *Bloodthirsty Bedbugs Stage Comeback in U.S., Europe.*

Bloodsucking bedbugs are sneaking back between the sheets some 50 years after being all but wiped out in the developed world, a new study says. The insects are sweeping cities across North America, western Europe, and Australia.

9. *Ancient Olympics Mixed Naked Sports, Pagan Partying.*

Nude athletes, performance-enhancing lizard meat, and animal sacrifices are just a few of the things that separate the ancient Olympics from the modern games.

8. *Unknown Life of Lobsters: Sex, Robots, and Beyond*

When lobsters flirt or fight, they first signal their intention by urinating in one another's faces—just one of many intriguing facts uncovered in a new book about the little-known life of these familiar crustaceans.

7. *Camel Spiders: Behind an E-Mail Sensation From Iraq*

A photo of a U.S. soldier in Iraq holding massive, hairy, supposedly flesh-eating spiders has been burning up e-mail in-boxes around the world. The arachnids are real, but scientists say many claims about them are anything but.

6. *Huge, Freed Pet Pythons Invade Florida Everglades*

In the past 5 years, the United States has imported more than 144,000 Burmese pythons. Some of these snakes are now wrestling alligators in the Florida Everglades and breeding.

5. *Alien Contact More Likely by "Mail" Than Radio, Study Says*

Intelligent alien life, should it exist, is more likely to communicate with Earth by sending artifacts, rather than radio waves, a new study says.

4. Hobbit-Like Human Ancestor Found in Asia

Scientists have found skeletons of a human species that grew no larger than a three-year-old modern child. The species lived with pygmy elephants and giant lizards on a remote island in Indonesia.

3. "Brain" in Dish Flies Simulated Fighter Jet

Scientists have grown a "brain" in a petri dish that can fly a simulated F-22 fighter plane. It's all part of a quest to build "living" computers.

2. Cat Cloning Now Offered to Pet Owners

Now cats may have more than nine lives. The company that funded the first successful cloning of a domestic cat two years ago has gone commercial. Four pet owners have each ponied up U.S. \$50,000 to get their kitties copied.

The company name is **Genetic Savings and Clone, Inc.**

Honest!

1. Herring Break Wind to Communicate, Study Suggests

Schools of herring communicate by passing gas, according to an unprecedented study. The fish apparently hear the bubbles as they're expelled, helping them to find each other in the dark and form protective groups.

World's Biggest Freshwater Fish ?

The mighty Mekong River in Southeast Asia was recently the starting point for a scientific adventure to find the world's biggest freshwater fish. Researchers will continue to cast their nets far and wide, from the Amazon to the rivers of the Mongolian steppes.

Their goal: to assess the conservation status of giant catfish, stingrays, gars, carp, salmon, sturgeon and other freshwater fish species that grow to at least 6.5 feet (2 meters) in length or 220 pounds (100 kilograms) in weight.

At 9.5 feet (3 meters) in length and weighing up to 660 pounds (300 kilograms), the critically endangered Mekong giant catfish is one of the largest freshwater fish in the world.

More next month, but in the meantime, ponder whether such a catfish could survive in the Ottawa – an easy Derby winner !