

WOLF'S

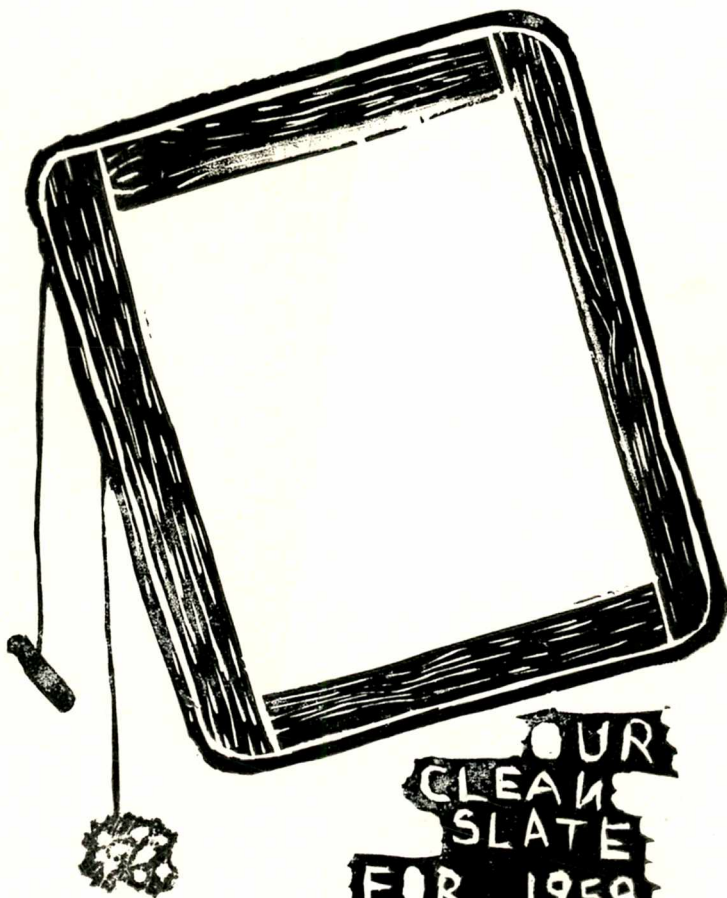


EYE

Vol. 2 No. 1

ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK, HOUGHTON, MICHIGAN

January 15, 1958



OUR
CLEAN
SLATE
FOR 1958

"CHRISTY" -- by Stanley Sivertson, Washington Harbor

Let's talk about Christivomer namaycush, as he should be very close to the lives of Isle Royale residents and visitors alike. "Christy" begins his life in a small egg less than a quarter inch in diameter, reddish or orange in color and semi-bouyant in water.

Christy has been deposited, preferably on a rocky or boulder reef, in six to sixty feet of water; such reef or shoal being unsheltered from several directions. Christy will have about six thousand brothers and sisters, and if his mother has deposited her eggs in a spot where the menomonie, suckers, stonerollers and other fish fond of caviar cannot reach them, and if the eggs have been properly fertilized by the father, he will emerge early in the spring from his egg about a half inch in length, ready to conquer the deep cold waters of Lake Superior, for you see "Christy" is really our Lake Trout.

From the time our baby trout has emerged from the egg, and grown to the size of about six inches, little is known of his habits. It is assumed, however, that he moves toward deeper water, where he is later found in considerable abundance in depths of from one hundred to four hundred feet of water, approximately. Here he lives on tiny worms, bugs, etc. that thrive in these depths.

As our trout grows to the size of about eight to ten inches, he begins to feed on other small fish living at the bottom of the lake at these depths, such as tiny ciscoes, shiners, smelt and stonerollers. When he has grown to a size of about fifteen inches, or about one pound in weight, he will move toward shallower water during the summer months, when the in-shore waters have warmed to about forty to fifty degrees. Often he will swim into four or five feet of water during the dark of night, feeding on small herring, smelt and stonerollers and rising to the surface to gobble a few moths and flies.

Should the shallow water become too warm, (above fifty degrees or so) the small trout will seek deeper, cooler water. For some reason as the trout grow larger, they spend more and more of their time away from the bottom of the lake. For instance, the larger trout can be found in varying amounts from the surface down to almost four hundred feet of water, even where the water is six to seven hundred feet deep.

In the vicinity of Isle Royale, the surface water warms to about forty degrees around the middle of June. At this time the larger mature trout begin to rise to the surface of the lake in the evening and night to feed on moths, bees, flies, butterflies and other insects. When this sort of feed is available, the larger trout seem to prefer it to the herring, which is their chief diet at other times of the year.

When the upper layer of water warms to over fifty degrees, or so, usually during the latter part of August, swift currents begin to run in patterns not yet fully understood. When this happens, the trout will descend to cooler and calmer water.

In autumn, the weather will cool the surface water somewhat, and the fall storms can then mix the upper layers of warmer water with the colder deeper water. Then the trout will again swim shallower in the lake, and since there will be no insects to feed on, his main diet will be herring.

About this time, usually in early September, the large mature trout will approach the reefs and shoals to find their intended places to spawn. The middle of October comes along, and if Christy is now about six years old, he will find a mate and some dark night during the last two weeks of October, they will foster in the neighborhood of six thousand offspring.

Our fish stocks of today are the product of remnants of many forms of life that once lived on the earth. Many forms of life that existed on earth ages ago, are now

known to us only as fossils. Our fish of today survived through the ages because they were able to build up a strong resistance to disease and natural enemies. This "built in" resistance makes it possible for fish populations to restore themselves even after natural enemies have reduced their numbers. Fish populations have the ability to reproduce themselves to the limit of the environment's capacity to furnish food and living space. When a fish population is reduced in numbers by angling or commercial fishing, below the environment's capacity, the infant survival rate or growth rate or both, tend to increase so as to fill its environment's capacity. That is why a reasonable harvest of fish stocks can be made each year without danger of depletion.

Large lake trout are very particular about the purity of the water they inhabit, and will, therefore, avoid water made turbid by storms, pollution, etc. This explains why the large trout, although often found in very shallow water, will inhabit it only when it is in close proximity to deeper water into which they can retreat during storms, warm weather, etc.

In 1950, a fifty three pound trout was caught about twelve miles southwest of Washington Harbor. This fish was caught in water about six hundred feet in depth, and about eighty feet down from the surface. Scales from this fish examined by a biologist, showed it to be nineteen years old.

There are many races of Lake Trout in Lake Superior. One variety around Michipicotin Island, Ontario, enters the larger streams to spawn, and actually returns to his parent stream when spawning. There are also varieties that tend to localize themselves to certain bays, channels, shoals, and rarely move any appreciable distance from these areas. These fish often take on different shapes, sizes, textures and colors from the main body of trout that roam the deeper open waters of the lake.

ON THE LAMPREY TRAIL

The current (January-February 1958) issue of Michigan Conservation carries an article which brings us up to date on the fight against the sea lamprey in the Great Lakes. This article by F.A. Westerman is entitled "BIG HOPE for the Great Lakes."

Men with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service: James W. Moffett, Chief of the Services Great Lakes Fisheries investigations; and Dr. Vernon C. Applegate and John H. Howell of the Hammond Bay laboratory (near Cheboygan), are responsible for the most recent advance in lamprey control. After testing 6000 larvicide chemicals, the men focused their efforts on "Dowlap 30" put out by the Dow Chemical Co. Recent tests conducted at Little Billie's Creek near Cheboygan indicated a 95% kill of lamprey larvae without appreciable harm to other fish species. Further extensive tests are needed, however, before the chemical can be used because the "where, how, how much, under what conditions" type of data is still needed for greatest effectiveness. The poison, incidentally, would be used in conjunction with the electric weirs now in operation. "Nevertheless," the article concludes, "the enemy is now engaged and the direction the attack must go is becoming clear."

FROM THE ISLE ROYALTY

From Dave and Kay Stimson at Acadia we have several news items: Gordon has been promoted to Corporal and has been transferred to Camp LeJuene, N. C. Congrats, Gordy! Bob Daschke visited them in December for several days. Jim Marvin (former seasonal ranger at Windigo) is now a 1st Lt. in the Air Corps at Fayetteville, N. C. Dave has apparently been quite busy -- having variously been acting Chief Ranger and assuming two different District Ranger positions. Followed by several exclamation marks is Kay's statement, "Still no Snow" (Jan. 7th).

An envelope with a 15 Lire stamp arrived from Tom Smith. Enclosed was a lithographed drawing of "Roma antica" which our WOLF'S EYE foreign division translates into "Ancient Rome". Within the folded card Tom writes: "Season's Greet-

ings from Rome", and with his own artistry adds a Christmas candle and Holly leaves.

Cynthia Baine sends her greetings to all ("y'all", we think she meant) from Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Cynthia says it's been cold enough there for a long coat but no snow has fallen. Actually we're 30-inches under our quota here in Houghton, too, and currently it's slushy outside!

From Sioux City, Iowa, comes a very interesting letter from Milton Lory. We quote in part: "In October, Phyllis and I went on an extended canoe trip in the Quetico and on some of the border lakes. Did about 12 of them. Had wonderful weather and only rained just as we broke camp the last day. Then after we returned from our canoe trip we drove to Ft. William and boarded the Assiniboia and took a cruise to Port McNicoll in Georgian Bay. About nine o'clock of the night of October 10th, I figured we should be passing Blakes Point and Passage Island. We went out on deck and sure enough the Blake light was just coming to our starboard. It seemed as though we passed only a few yards distant. The old nostalgia for Isle Royale welled up in me and I longed to set foot on its shores. If it had been earlier in the day I would have sent you all a wireless.....Now, tomorrow we leave again for the North Shore of Superior. This time for a wolf hunt, some snow shoeing and winter photography, of ten days or so - then on over the trans-Canada highway to Toronto and then down to Washington."

The long distance wire to Two Harbors was in operation just before press time. Everyone that Bob Johnson is aware of is fine and well. Some fishing for herring is still going on at Two Harbors.

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A REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

One year ago this month, the first issue of WOLF'S EYE came out. Most everyone, especially the editor, wondered how long it would last, how well it would be received, and what eventual service it would render to the "Isle Royalty" and the NPS. The first mailing list included 65 persons -- mostly Isle

Royale residents, employees, past employees, and NPS personnel in Philadelphia and Washington. Since that time requests have come in from many Isle Royale enthusiasts -- the word had gotten around, and clearly there was a demand for such a newsletter. This month's issue will be mailed out to over 120 persons plus the counter "take one" stack here in the Houghton office....more than double the original number.

Perhaps you remember the first issue. It was something! The cover page explained the purpose, the name, etc. After six lines of hand-set type we began to run out of letters and had to switch to another type style. We ended up with 7 different type styles on the first page; we'd never set a page of type before and we didn't know all the in's and out's of making the press print the whole page with uniform clarity. The first line of type had an upside-down e, and we filled up space with little decorations which the printing supply company had sent us. The paper used was a 9 x 12 medium weight book paper purchased from the same company and we discovered that all blazes broke loose when we tried to make it go through the mimeograph machine for the inside pages.

The next four issues (February through May) had "halftones" (that is, photographs) of various subjects on their covers. This eliminated any necessity for hand-setting whole pages of type which is so time consuming. The printing plates for these were of a cheap plastic variety made by the Daily Mining Gazette here in Houghton. These, however, weren't too successful because the smallness of our printing press made it necessary to re-ink after about each 10 copies. This, again, was time consuming and the photos were too often a very poor quality.

In June we were at the island faced with publication without any photograph for the cover and there was no way of getting one made quickly enough. In the Mott Island warehouse attic we found some pieces of rubber tile left from a construction job which we glued to a scrap of 3/4" plywood. So we traced an outline of the island upon it with boats heading in from all directions -- signifying the official reopening of the park for 1957. With a wood router used for making signs we carved out the design on the rubber tile and upon printing

it discovered that in order for the design to come out correctly it had to be done backwards on the printing block. We knew this all the time, of course, but in our haste, had overlooked it. So we started over and finally came out with the June issue -- probably the first rubber-tile-carved printing block ever done by mankind.

Up to August, the entire function of WOLF'S EYE had been simply news of various local going's on. In August, however, two other ideas were added: A "major" article by Stan Sivertson concerning the status of fishing in Isle Royale waters; and two articles devoted to the origin of Isle Royale place names. These additions somewhat changed our prospectus and indicated that WOLF'S EYE could be much more than a mere gossip column. Also in August we made the second rubber tile cut that we used for the fish on the cover and we put a staple in the binding to hold the thing together.

The report on Lone Tree followed in September to carry out the "main article" idea. Also, in September, the Isle Royale Natural History Association took over mailing costs.

The cover for the October issue was probably the most complex one that ever was or will be. It took seven rubber tile cuts to reproduce the beautiful water color submitted by Sharon Maki. With the heading and all, the cover went through the press 9 different times. The biggest trouble in October occurred when neither of the mimeograph machines at the Park would make a readable copy.

November was more or less a special issue devoted to the retirement of Joe Colombe. For the occasion we used a better surfaced, heavier paper, and had the drawing of Joe at the helm zink etched. Also we had invested in a binding machine which is capable of stapling a Houghton-Harcourt telephone book if necessary and does a much better job on WOLF'S EYE -- also cuts stapling time down to about 10 minutes and reduces ulcers nearly 100%. This is the issue that carried the order blank for cover-folders. Those who have ordered their folders will receive them along with this issue. The whole cover-folder idea originated with the desire by some to retain their WOLF'S EYE copies and second-

arily we thought we could make enough money to help pay current WOLF'S EYE expenses. To break even on the deal, however, we have to sell about 30 more than we have to date. At any rate the main purpose has been fulfilled and the financial loss is not great.

When we wished you a Merry Christmas on last month's cover we made another rubber tile cut, put 3 colors of ink (red, silver, blue) on the ink table and prevented the ink table from revolving, thus giving a blending effect of the colors. Our choice of paper for this job was poor, however, because its coarse texture didn't give a very smooth inking job.

Well, that brings us to date on our experience in publishing WOLF'S EYE. We've learned a lot in doing it and even with exasperating moments included it has been a great deal of fun for us. We believe we've been improving more or less steadily throughout the year and we hope to go right on with more improvements in the future. Yes, there's one good way you can help in the effort....several ways, in fact: we need news from YOU --- EVERY MONTH! Further, we need any ideas you may have that will help us carry out a good program for WOLF'S EYE. So, never hesitate to write us and let us know what your thoughts are.

Thanx for listening.....

Editor

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This month's feature article on the life of the lake trout in Isle Royale waters, was written by one of the few men who is intimately acquainted with many details of fish habits at Isle Royale. Mr. Sivertson has been fishing commercially in the Washington Harbor area for many years and his views in this issue are the product of a keen insight and interest combined with many down-to-earth, practical situations with which the commercial fisherman is continually faced.

...Ed.

