



DUCK BLINDS VERSUS TREE STANDS – A PUBLIC HUNTING COMPARISON

I was reading your article about tree stand safety (“Stand up for safety” October 2014) and I agree completely. They can be unsafe; which is why I can’t understand why guys like me, who hunt public land, have to take them down every day, risking injury. Duck hunters are allowed to keep not only their blinds out in the bog where I hunt, but they’re even allowed to keep their boats out there! Yet we’re required to move a stand? It makes no sense to me, other than they don’t want guys feeling like they can “reserve” a spot out on public land. So why are duck hunters given the privilege?

Brad Bartkus
Cedarburg, Wis.

Thanks for taking the time to share your thoughts and questions related to tree stands and waterfowl blinds. Over the past decade, the Department of Natural Resources has received varying degrees of public support for allowing overnight placement of tree stands on DNR lands with the most recent during the 2015 Spring Hearing meeting. As you mentioned, hunter safety and hunter convenience are the normal discussions behind the rule change with user conflicts and “holding an area or spot” on the other side of the discussion. Additionally, taxpayer costs associated with stand theft, stand abandonment and other personal property storage concerns

further complicate the issue. The results of the several public input processes have never supported the change. As for waterfowl blinds, their placement in marshes, bogs, and shorelines is historical, and the laws regulating their placement pre-date the proliferation of commercially manufactured portable tree stands. That said, the same debates stated above occur with waterfowl blinds, however the density of waterfowl hunters is much lower than land-based hunters. The department continually solicits public input on land management topics, and routinely evaluates property/hunting rules.

JUMPING WORMS BOUNCE INTO WISCONSIN

If it has taken until October 2013 for the Department of Natural Resources to find our first jumping worms, we are very lucky. I live in Green Bay and remember the Georgia Jumpers being sold locally in the early 70s as popular bait. A neighbor used to get 3x3 packages of these worms from Faines Baits in Georgia on a regular basis. Your article did not mention the Wisconsin counties in which they were found, but I would not be surprised to find them in or near the fishing areas around Brown County. The little jumpers have had over 40 years to get loose. I have seen articles saying they are becoming a problem in the Great Smoky Mountains area. Not a surprise as that is where ours may have originated.

Lawrence Klee
Green Bay, Wis.



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RARE SNAKE LUNCHING IN THE GARDEN

Does anybody on staff know what kind of snake this is? I found him having lunch in my perennial garden. I’m thinking it is a northern ribbon, which is a rare species.

Marty Malinowski
Hayward, Wis.



MARTY MALINOWSKI

DNR conservation biologist Rori Paloski responds: *The snake in the photo is definitely one of Wisconsin’s five species of gartersnakes. Gartersnakes in Wisconsin can be very difficult to identify given their nearly identical physical characteristics and due to the fact that several of these species can also hybridize. Gartersnakes are typically distinguished from one another by the location of their lateral (side) stripes. Lateral stripes involve a variety of combinations of scale rows. Scale rows are horizontal rows of scales found along the length of the snake and are numbered starting above the rectangular ventral (belly) scales. The ribbonsnakes are typically differentiated from one another by counting the number of scales on their upper “lip.” Wisconsin is home to five gartersnake species: eastern ribbonsnake, western ribbonsnake, plains gartersnake, Butler’s gartersnake and common gartersnake. The two ribbonsnakes are endangered species in Wisconsin and are only found at fewer than 10 sites each. These species typically inhabit wetlands and surrounding areas. The plains gartersnake and Butler’s gartersnake are species of special concern in Wisconsin and are found in open and semi-open canopy uplands and wetlands in southern and southeastern Wisconsin, respectively. As its name indicates, the common gartersnake is the most common species of gartersnake in Wisconsin and is found throughout the state in a variety of habitats. The plains, Butler’s and common gartersnake are also known to hybridize with each other in southeastern Wisconsin.*

HONEYBEE CLARIFICATION

I enjoyed the article, “Bee aware” (June 2015), on the importance of pollinators. I believe, however, there was an inaccuracy in the story. The article mentions “various native species of honeybees.” Honeybees are non-native to North America and were brought by European settlers. Wisconsin does have several native bee species. Your June 2009 article (“What’s the buzz about bees?”) on the subject confirms this and does an excellent job describing the enormous impact that pollinators have on the economy and natural resources.

Bill Hickey
Excelsior, Minn.

The author, Christopher Tall, responds: *Thanks and you are correct. Honeybees are indeed, not native to North America. European settlers first brought colonies to the continent during the early 1960s. I should have written, “If you look at a plot of land in Wisconsin, recent research suggests that the greater the diversity of ecosystems, including wild flowers and natural habitats (forests, prairies, fields, ponds and marshes), the greater the abundance and richness of various bee species.” It is a noteworthy distinction.*

SPIDER IN THE SINK

While visiting near Minocqua, this critter was found in the basement bathroom sink. I posted it on Facebook and had several different ideas of what type of spider it might be. Would you confirm what type it is?

Jenny Ramker
Colby, Wis.



JENNY RAMKER

Patrick (PJ) Liesch, UW-Madison Dept. Entomology Insect Diagnostic Lab, responds: *With the color patterns on the legs and the faint black “W” patterns on the abdomen, this looks like it may be one of our fishing spiders from the genus Dolomedes. Good-sized spiders can be pretty common in the Northwoods, but ultimately harmless. They’re associated with, and normally hang out near water; they do sneak indoors on occasion.*

COMMENT ON A STORY?

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