the olde WOODSMAN'S journal

By Bob Hurton
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A great amount of concern has been forthcoming in recent months pertaining to the large amounts of Polycholorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) which have been discovered in our Hudson River, St. Lawrence River, Mohawk River, Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario and even in Lake George. The Hudson has shown the largest concentrations of this chemical, due to the discharge from many factories, landfill areas, etc. along its length. EnCon has issued warnings to fishermen to refrain from eating any striped bass and only one meal per week of other species from the Hudson.

An all out campaign is now underway by New York State to determine the extent of this contamination and eliminating the causes of it in our waters. Thirty water sampling stations scattered about the State will be expanded this year until they total 160, with constant water monitoring in progress. A proposed $1.1 million will be devoted to this project in the future. At least five agencies are now pursuing this vital program, including Department of EnCon, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fedral Food and Drug, N.Y. State Department and the Federal National Atmospheric and Oceanographic Administration.

General Electric Co., which operates plants at Fort Edward and Hudson Falls, have been ordered to cut discharge of PCBs into the Hudson to two pounds daily by December 1975 and to zero by September 1976. The order also requires GE to eliminate PCB discharges from all sources on their premises including residues on the ground, etc., which has built up over the years. The elimination and control of mercury and other toxic substances in our waters are also being studied in conjunction with the PCB problem.

Field Dressing Deer

One of the most vital functions in preparing good venison for table use is field dressing the animal. One of the old hunter myths is that it is necessary to cut an animal's throat the first thing. No so. If a deer is field dressed properly, all blood is drained during the process and cutting the throat has ruined many a fine cape as far as preserving it for a good shoulder mount. First step is to either remove the musk glands on the rear legs, (dark patches near the hocks), or be extra careful not to handle these areas as the oder can be transferred to the meat as you handle it. Next, cut deeply around the anus, draw it out a couple of inches and tie it off with a piece of cord. This will prevent intestine contents from coming in contact with meat as they are withdrawn. Now, insert knife carefully just below the breastbone and, being very careful not to cut into intestines, slit abdominal wall all the way to the tail. Now, with the animal on its side most of the contents will spill out partially. Cut the diaphram at the ribs, then sever the windpipe. Now most all contents will pull out easily. Clean out whatever organs such as kidneys, etc. still cling to carcass, pack the heart and liver in a plastic bag which you should have in your game pocket, and wipe out interior of carcass with rags, dry grass or moss (don't use water) and prop body cavity open with a stick to facilitate cooling out thoroughly. Upon reaching home it is simpler to skin your animal immediately as it will skin much easier when warm, however, you may hang it with the skin on if you prefer. To insure the best meat I would recommend skinning immediately upon reaching home and then take the carcass to a cooler.

Hang by head or antlers as this will ensure better drainage of all blood or fluids from the vent openings. The question of whether a deer should be hung for a period of time before consuming has been argued many years. I personally prefer to let my venison age a few days, however, weather temperature, etc. are all factors to take into consideration.

Outdoor Goodies

Castleton Fish & Game Club will be presenting a Hunter Safety Training course on November 11 at the club grounds on Van Hoesen Road. Applicants may call Frank Davidson at 732-7778 or Wayne Van Amburgh at 732-4382 for details.

Pistol shooters - Need to sharpen up your shooting eye? Try the fine handgun range facilities at Castleton Fish & Game Club. Pistol range will be open to the public on Thursday evenings throughout the winter season. Professional assistance will be on hand if needed and the range is in excellent condition. Club can be found off Van Hoesen Road.

Trappers - To dye your steel traps and kill odors, simmer a couple of hours in a solution of 5 gallons water to 1 pound Logwood extract.

The porcupine has as many as 30,000 sharp quills on its body. Some effective defense against predators!

There are three distinct groups of sportsmen - those that take time to observe what's happening on the outdoor scene - those that get out and help make things happen on the outdoor scene - and those that stand around and wonder what's happening on the outdoor scene.

Rensselaer Sportsmen's Lodge of 30 Harison Ave. will present a Hunter Safety Training course each Saturday until November 8. Applicants may pick up manuals at the Lodge on Saturday at 9 a.m.

Are you an autumn fisherman? Try the walleyes at Burden's Third Lake; they are now reaching 24 inches in length and should be on their cooler water feeding sprees.

Good outdoor sport,
The Old Woodsman

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