

Back Trails

Perspectives on People and Nature

Family Affair

by James Getman

It was the third Saturday of spring turkey season in New York. My grandson, Josh, and I were enjoying another beautiful day in the woods. We sat along the edge of an old logging road that runs down one side of my hunting property. Josh was only ten years old, but had gone with me on turkey hunts for several years. In fact, the first year he came bow hunting with me, I had to modify a tree stand for him because when he sat, his feet didn't touch the platform!

On that Saturday, my son Cory (Josh's dad) was about 100 yards farther down the road. He was softly making turkey calls every 15 or 20 minutes. We waited quietly for any noise or movement in the woods.

Suddenly, Josh poked me and pointed across the way. There was something small moving along the stone wall on the opposite side of the road. It was moving in our direction, but was still too far away to tell what it was. As it got closer, I realized it was a mink and Josh noticed something hanging out of its mouth. When it was within 10 yards, I could see that it had a kit in its mouth. Almost directly across the road from us, the mink sat up and looked around to see if the coast was clear. When she was satisfied, she disappeared into a gap between the rocks of the wall. A few seconds later she emerged again, minus the kit, and scampered back down the wall toward where she came from. As we sat there discussing what we had just witnessed, she returned with another kit and went into the wall again. The scene



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Sharing his passion for the outdoors with his family, including grandsons Josh, Lucas, and Connor, has always been important to the author.

was repeated twice more, but before she entered the wall with the fourth kit, she stopped and looked around one more time to check the area. That was the last time we saw her.

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I told Josh I had never seen anything like that, but had heard that some animals move their young to different locations if they sense danger, or to avoid predators.

When the morning's hunting was over, Josh excitedly told his dad about our experience with the mink and how, next time, we should bring a camera. He showed Cory where the mink had gone

into the wall, and we headed to the car for lunch.

On the walk back to the car, I felt blessed to share these experiences with my son and grandson. Nature's example provided me with amazing insight on the importance of family.

Besides, can you think of a better way to spend a beautiful spring morning?

James Getman is a retired metallographer. He lives in Schoharie and enjoys hunting and fishing with his son and three grandsons.