



### Beautiful Bloodroot

My daughter Renee took this photo of a bloodroot that we took to the Altamont Fair where it was chosen to go to the State Fair. Unfortunately we never made it there. However, I thought your readers might be interested in seeing it.

Nancy Davis-Ricci  
Guilderland, Albany County

*Beautiful shot! Thanks for sharing it with us.*  
—Conservationist staff



### Memories of Camp

We recently heard from Mr. Tim Scheltz, an attendee of Camp Rushford during the summer of 1955. He fondly remembers learning to tie flies, helping fisheries biologists shock fish, and caring for raccoon cubs until they were placed with a wildlife rehabilitator. Mr. Scheltz described how after he returned to



central New York following discharge from the Marine Corps, he continued to enjoy the outdoor pursuits he honed at camp. Today, he remains an avid fisherman, and still treasures his camp certificate, photographs and memories of Camp Rushford.

If you know a girl or boy aged 12 to 17 who would enjoy an outdoor adventure, consider sending them to one of DEC's four residential camps! We are still accepting applications for 12- to 14-year-olds for the 2011 season. Registration forms, available weeks and detailed program descriptions are available at [www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/29.html) or by calling (518) 402-8014.

### Meeting a Timberdoodle

I enjoyed your article on the American woodcock (April 2010 issue). After I read it, I scouted out mud puddles on my property and stumbled upon this timberdoodle. I assume this is a male as it was in fluff mode.

Walter Eisserer  
Margaretville, Delaware County



*Tremendous photo! Because male and female woodcock look alike, it's hard to say for sure, but this looks like a male woodcock in courtship display. Each display is a little different, but raising the tail, dropping the wings, calling, and puffing the chest are common in courtship displays of gamebirds like grouse, turkey, woodcock and pheasant. Notice the underside of this bird's tail is beautifully colored, further enhancing the attractiveness of the bird during courtship. Only males perform the aerial display, so if you see a woodcock performing the courtship flight, it is a male.*  
—Mike Murphy, Retired DEC Wildlife Biologist

### Mudpuppies

Can you tell me if mudpuppies and hellbenders are the same salamander? If so, there are hundreds of them in the Erie Canal/Mohawk River near one of the locks.

K.B.  
Schenectady



Bev Wigney

*Actually, hellbenders and mudpuppies are different salamanders. The biggest difference is that mudpuppies have very noticeable bushy, red external gills, whereas hellbenders don't have external gills. Instead, hellbenders have several loose flaps of wrinkled skin that run laterally along either of their sides. Also, a mature hellbender can reach an average of 12-29 inches, while a*

## ✉ LETTERS

*mudpuppy averages 10-11 inches. Hellbenders actually don't occur in the Erie Canal/Mohawk River, but there is a good population of mudpuppies in that system—it looks like you've been seeing these.*  
—Conservationist staff

### Peek-a-boo

We saw this fox den near our home. I sat off a ways and took pictures as one baby fox after another came out. This is the second time that I saw the mother using this den.

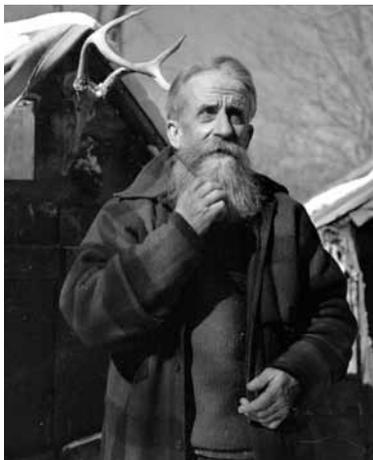
Nevada Caparulo  
Cameron, Steuben County

*Thanks for sharing these photos of young red foxes. It's lucky to have the opportunity to photograph one young pup—much less four! Your images really show the inquisitive, yet apprehensive nature of foxes.*  
—Conservationist staff



### Kudos for 'Noah' article

Thanks to all our readers who wrote in to tell us how much they enjoyed the article “Secret Scratchings” (February 2011 issue) about Noah John Rondeau, the hermit of Cold River. Katherine Grimard of Altamont described hearing stories of Noah John, his friend Red, and her grandfather hunting and fishing together. John Smith of Randleman, NC, explained how his father



knew Noah, and Marie Stanger of Cragmoor recounted how after reading the article she got out a picture she had taken of Noah at Whiteface Mtn. Another reader, George Nimmo of NJ spoke about having hiked to Cold River many times in his younger years and how the article has triggered a desire to go there again.

### Ask the Biologist

**Q:** Can holding a musky or northern pike vertically out of the water harm it?

**A:** Yes, it can. Holding long fish such as musky or pike vertically can put unnecessary strain on the fish's internal organs, body tissues and vertebrae and can lead to death. This isn't a problem if you plan to keep the fish.

If you intend to release members of the pike family (including muskies, pickerel and northern pike) it's best to keep the fish in the water when removing the hook or measuring the fish. If you must take the fish out of the water, be sure to hold it horizontally with one hand cradling its belly (as shown in photo).

—Ed Woltmann, DEC Fisheries Biologist



### Write to us

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