

# WILDLIFER



**WISCONSIN ORIGIN TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

# NEIL F. PAYNE

# Wildlifer: Wisconsin Origin to Climate Change

Neil F. Payne

2024

## Table of Contents

End of an Era: Remarks by Estella Leopold.....	9
Foreword by Adam N. Payne, former Secretary of the WDNR.....	10
Preface. Rabbit, You Started It All.....	12
Prologue.....	21
A Book	
Great Possessions	
Aldo Leopold Centennial Symposium	
Acknowledgements.....	29
Chapter 1. Those Influential Beginners.....	30
The Award	
His First Student	
His Last Student	
His Mere 15 Years: 1933-1948	
His Shack and His Book	
His Kids	
Starker Leopold	
Luna Leopold	
Nina Leopold Bradley	
Carl Leopold	
Estella Leopold	
His Wife	
His Protégé: Bob McCabe	
Earth Day, Worldwide—Gaylord Nelson	
Other Early Nationally Recognized Wisconsin-Connected Wildlife Leaders	
Ding Darling	
John Muir	
Paul Errington	
Herbert Stoddard	
Joseph J. Hickey	
Edward Birge, Chauncey Juday, Arthur D. Hasler	
Ernest (Ernie) Swift	
Lawrence (Larry) Jahn	
Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom	
Owen Gromme	
Political Help	

Chapter 2. Wildlifer.....	71
Wild Life, Wildlife, Wildlifer	
National Wildlife Federation and The Wildlife Society	
Certified Wildlife Biologist (CWB)	
Professional Wildlife Management	
Chapter 3. Wildlife Education.....	87
Becoming a Wildlifer	
Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit	
Wildlife Management Books from Wisconsin	
Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America: Guy Baldassarre	
Other Wisconsin Publication Sources	
Wildlife Techniques Manual	
Chapter 4. The Department of Natural Resources, and Support Groups.....	99
WCD to WDNR	
The Big Three	
Research and Management	
Protection and Enforcement	
Information and Education	
Biopolitics	
Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program	
Wildlife Organizations	
National Wildlife Health Center	
Izaak Walton League, Wisconsin Division	
Aldo Leopold Foundation	
International Crane Foundation	
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation	
The Nature Conservancy, Wisconsin Chapter	
Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association	
Wisconsin's Green Fire	
The Wildlife Society, Wisconsin Chapter	
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin	
Wisconsin Society for Ornithology	
Wildlife Rehabilitation	
Other Wildlife Organizations	
Chapter 5. Wildlife Exploitation, Reduction, and Recovery.....	128
Dinosaurs	
Mastodons and Mammoths	
Extirpated	
Endangered and Threatened	
Passenger Pigeon	
Mourning Dove	

Songbirds  
 Kirtland's Warbler  
 Piping Plover  
 Common Tern  
 Massasauga Rattlesnake  
 Amphibians  
 Bats  
 Bison  
 Moose  
 Elk  
 White-tailed Deer  
 Black Bear  
 Prairie Chicken  
 Sharp-tailed Grouse  
 Spruce Grouse  
 Bobwhite Quail  
 Turkey  
 Peregrine Falcon  
 Osprey  
 Bald Eagle  
 Whooping Crane  
 Sandhill Crane  
 Trumpeter Swan  
 Canada Goose  
 Wood Duck  
 Common Loon  
 Double-crested Cormorant  
 Ring-necked Pheasant  
 Fur Trade  
 Beaver  
 Otter  
 Fisher  
 Marten  
 Wolverine  
 Badger  
 Bobcat  
 Gray Wolf

Chapter 6. Wildlife Habitat Diversity: Glaciated, Unglaciated, Water Galore.....159  
     Ecological Diversity  
         Major Habitat Types  
         Tension Zone  
         The Wisconsin Glacier and the Driftless Area  
         Freshwater Haven: Rivers, Lakes, Wetlands

Two Great Lakes	
Mississippi River	
Two Continental Watersheds	
Wisconsin River	
Public Land and Protected Private Land	
Native Land	
Public Land	
Private Land	
Chapter 7. Wildlife Habitat Alteration and Economic Growth.....	185
Mining	
Lumber and Pulpwood	
Hydropower	
Agriculture	
Urbanization and Roads	
Chapter 8. Wildlife Values.....	195
Economic Value of Wildlife	
Non-economic Values of Wildlife	
Consumptive vs. Non-consumptive Use of Wildlife	
Social Value of Wildlife	
Nuisance Wildlife	
Legacy in Wildlife Management	
Epilogue.....	204
Wealth, Population, and Natural Resources	
Environmental Awareness and Ignorance	
Climate Change and Unprecedented Dangerous Problems	
Figures.....	227
1. Neil Payne checking wooden live traps for rabbits, Hog Island, VA, 1962 and 1963.	
2. Wildlife Biologist Neil Payne, Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Division, measuring and injecting extra Sernylan to tranquilize a nuisance large male Newfoundland black bear (a distinct race) for transport to Long Island in Terra Nova National Park, 1969. (The bear returned 9 miles by swimming 1.25 miles of ocean.)	
3. Neil Payne with saber, captain of U. Wisconsin fencing team, 1960-61; 1st Lt. Neil Payne, USMC, with M14 rifle, .45 pistol, and Ka-Bar knife in Vietnam, Christmas 1966.	
4. Cottontail rabbit (courtesy Al Cornell).	
5. Beaver (courtesy Al Cornell).	
6. Great Possessions (photo by Bruce Paddock).	
7. Aldo Leopold's graduate students (McCabe 1987).	
8. Gaylord Nelson to Neil Payne, 1996, at conference of Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association organized by Adam N. Payne, Executive Director.	
9. Aldo Leopold Memorial Award recipient Richard D. Taber (left) in 2008, with Neil F. Payne at the Annual Conference of The Wildlife Society in Miami.	

10. Aldo Leopold family at The Shack. Back row: Aldo, Estella Bergere Leopold, Luna, Starker; Front row: Nina, Estella Jr., Gus; Photographer: Carl; 1939 (*courtesy Aldo Leopold Foundation and University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives*).
11. Fred (1909-90) and Fran (1907-98) Hamerstrom (from Hamerstrom 1980, courtesy Elva Hamerstrom Paulson).
12. Certified Wildlife Biologist, early certificate from The Wildlife Society.
13. Guy Baldassarre, Adam and Mark Payne, Wisconsin River slough, 1977.
14. Ducks, Geese, and Swans of North America (Kortright 1942, Bellrose 1976, Baldassarre 2014).
15. Charter members, January 1963, Virginia Tech Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society (from “Virginia Tech Forester,” Volume XV, June 1963).
16. Prototype Wildlife Techniques Manual (1958).
17. Profile of Wisconsin River (courtesy Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company).
18. Deer hunt; 3 generations, 2014, Sauk Co., WI, 2014: Mark, Forrest (Adam’s son), Adam, and Neil Payne.
19. Logo and arm patch (older: 3 conifers, replaced by newer: caribou, designed by Neil F. Payne) of the Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Division
20. May 1967. California. Neil Forrest Payne, 28 years old, unemployed, future Professor of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point; Adam Neil Payne, 3 months old, unemployed, future Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.
21. Erin Payne receiving BS diploma from her father Dr. Neil F. Payne, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, 1998.
22. Neil and Adam Payne with elk Adam shot, Colorado, Oct 2020

Appendix.....249

1. Richard D. Taber, Last Surviving Leopold Grad Student, Dies in Montana (*courtesy Wisconsin Outdoor News*); His Book.
2. Early Wildlife Books.
3. Wildlife Education in Wisconsin: UW-Madison & UW-Stevens Point.
4. Wisconsin’s Official Dog: American Water Spaniel.
5. Guns.
6. Boomer on a Booming Ground—a 60-Year Memory.
7. A Funny Thing Happened on My Way to the Office.
8. 9/11 and The Wisconsin and Newfoundland Wildlife Connection.
9. Washington State: A Wisconsin Wildlife Connection.
10. Vietnam: A Sad Wisconsin Wildlife Connection.
11. A Unique Wisconsin Wildlife Connection.

References.....312

The Author.....330

**Books by Neil F. Payne**

*Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat Improvement Handbook* (1986; 402pp; with Fred Copes)

*Techniques for Wildlife Habitat Management of Wetlands* (1992; 549pp)

*Techniques for Wildlife Habitat Management of Uplands* (1994; 840pp; with Fred C. Bryant)

*More Wildlife on Your Land: A Guide for Private Landowners* (2002; 168pp)

*Wildlife, Conservation, and Human Welfare: A United States and Canadian Perspective* (2003;  
232pp; with Richard D. Taber)

*Wildlife Delights and Dilemmas: Newfoundland and Labrador* (2011; 277pp)

*The Newfoundland Mystique* (2015; 265pp)

*Wildlifer: Wisconsin Origin to Climate Change* (2024; 319pp)

## **Appendix. A Unique Wisconsin Wildlife Connection.**

Unlike my wife Jan's ancestor (Francis Cooke), mine didn't make the *Mayflower* in 1620. But 10 years later, in 1630, my 9<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather, William Phelps, arrived at the Massachusetts Bay Colony from England on the ship *Mary and John*. Born in 1639, exactly 300 years before me, my 8<sup>th</sup> great-grandmother, Martha (Kitcherel) Wright, was scalped there by Indians in 1708.

I am a 6<sup>th</sup> generation Wisconsinite. I have known 7 generations of my family, all in Wisconsin; the genes of my revered great-grandma Bilgo now occur in my own great-grandchildren.

My great-grandmother, Susan (Griggs) Payne, was born in Ontario in 1848. She was in Ontario because I had ancestors in New York on both sides of the Revolutionary War and the losers were evicted to Canada. After her birth, her parents moved about 1844 with their 3 children to the Town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin to farm, where members of the Payne family settled from New York in 1857, and where they are buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery of the Town of Mitchell. My great-grandmother Susan Griggs married Stephen Payne and probably gave the middle name of John Alexander Griggs, her brother killed in the Civil War, to her son Charles Alexander Payne, my admired and beloved grandfather and farmer, who influenced me to pursue a career with animals.

*I knew someone personally who was born during slavery, before the Civil War, before Abraham Lincoln became president—my great-grandma Alvina Bilgo of Cascade, WI, who died at 96 when I was 17. She was born in 1859. (Her granddaughter, my mother, 150 years later, in 2009, would live to witness the first black person become President of the United States, and incidentally the first women to vote in 1920.) To this day I regret never having asked my great-grandmother about her childhood, her parents, her grandparents! In the 2 wars to develop and to*

preserve the nation, 13 of my ancestors were in the Revolutionary War—both sides—and at least 12 for the North in the Civil War including 2 of my great-grandfathers: Stephen Payne and William Steinke, who had recently immigrated from Germany and then had an arm shot off in the war. He is buried in the Winooski Cemetery of Sheboygan County. For 3 years I lived across the street with my parents and younger brother in a house without running water.

William Steinke was the father of my grandfather George who had a tavern in Cascade, WI. My grandpa didn't make moonshine. He bought it from 2 moonshiners, sold it, and was arrested during Prohibition when he didn't get the stuff hidden under the lilac bushes fast enough. (As a little girl, my mom used to help hide it, which, I suppose, made her complicit.) Before Governor Tony Evers appointed George's great-grandson Adam, my son, as Secretary of the WDNR, Adam spent most of his career as the County Administrator of Sheboygan County, coincidentally the very county where I grew up, and thus in charge of the county jail where his great-grandfather had been incarcerated. (Grandpa George died 8 years before I was born, evidently from drinking too much of his illegal stuff; the death certificate reads "cirrhosis of the liver." He is buried in the Cascade Lutheran Cemetery with other relatives including my parents.)

In 1939, "Wizard of Oz" and "Gone with the Wind" were filmed, the Great Depression ended, World War II began, and I was born,<sup>199</sup> my first memory being of our rented house without running water and a mouse in the back hall that scared stiff at age 3 this future wildlife biologist who would someday live-trap bears. Sometimes we neighborhood kids played in the nearby city dump, until Old Franz the caretaker would emerge from his shack and raise his curved pitchfork at us. The milkman delivered our milk with a horse and wagon. My grandfather let me hold the reins of Star and Flora, his impressive mother-daughter team of draft horses pulling the hay wagon.

At Christmastime in Sheboygan Falls I listened on our huge upright radio to Billie the Brownie on WTMJ from Milwaukee.

After World War II, which ended in 1945, I was in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation to attend school; I began kindergarten in 1944 and graduated from high school in 1957. The high school classes of 1957 have unique status in Wisconsin because they are making history in a long-term study (until death) called the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS), conducted by the Institute of Aging and Adult Life at the University of Wisconsin-Madison ([wls.wisc.edu](http://wls.wisc.edu)). The report includes information such as family, health, education, military, financial matters, reproductive rate, mortality rate. A random sample was selected of 10,300 men and women, involving 1/3 of all folks graduating from 400 high schools in 1957 in Wisconsin. I'm in the sample.

In 1961, I received a BA in zoology from the University of Wisconsin, the 1<sup>st</sup> person in my family's direct ancestral line to receive a college degree. In 1964, I received an MS in wildlife (studying rabbits<sup>195</sup>) from Dr. Burd S. McGinnes of Virginia Tech, then went through OCS in the Marine Corps at Quantico, VA, got married then and lived in Fredericksburg, VA on a street (Hanover) still with bullet holes from the Civil War, and ended up in the Vietnam War. In early 1967, from Dong Ha, South Vietnam, I began looking for my first wildlife job. From there I contacted the Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Service, and got a job as a wildlife biologist working for Chief Biologist Frank Manuel.

I really liked my job with the Newfoundland and Labrador Wildlife Service, but after 4 years I resigned in 1971 due to low salary. My next stop, with my wife and 2 sons, was 3,500 miles (and a ferry ride) distant in a 1970 Falcon station wagon (bought in Toronto while attending a polar bear conference) to Logan, Utah (1971-73) at Utah State University for a PhD in wildlife (studying Newfoundland beaver), received in 1975. The assistant unit leader of the Utah Cooperative

Wildlife Research Unit, Dr. J. Juan Spillett, accepted me as his PhD candidate, along with my already completed beaver work in Newfoundland as a PhD proposal, and allowed me to complete the PhD dissertation (which produced 7 publications) while on my next job. After Utah I worked for Aldo Leopold's last surviving graduate student, Dr. Richard D. Taber, in the College of Forest Resources at the University of Washington in Seattle (1973-75).<sup>206, 207</sup> But it was a research position for 2.5 years only, studying the effect on wildlife of water releases from dams along the huge upper Columbia River (in collaboration with the Washington Game Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers); at the end of it I was out of work with no paycheck. I had to scramble for a wildlife job, but there wasn't much to scramble to.

In 1975, by pure coincidence, I returned to Wisconsin after a 14-year hiatus involving the Marine Corps, the Vietnam War, wildlife pursuits, and 4 single and 8 family moves across the United States and Canada. Pure coincidence because so few positions and opportunities are available for someone with a PhD in wildlife, especially at a university. In 1975 when I was without a job, I knew of only 2 such positions, 1 of them at the University of Maine where I came in second.

In an unlikely event, it just so happened that the year I needed work, a university wildlife position opened in my home state of Wisconsin at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. In 1975, I sought and accepted a position as assistant professor of wildlife ecology in the College of Natural Resources at UWSP, working for Dr. Dan Trainer, dean of the college. Only 2 locations in Wisconsin are available with a professorial wildlife program: UW-Madison and UW-Stevens Point. Many states and provinces provide no university wildlife programs; others have 1 or 2 universities with a wildlife program. Thus, few such positions are available. But I had returned to

Wisconsin.<sup>199</sup> (Not helpful along the way were my debilitating migraines every 2 weeks or so since age 7, now mostly history.)

I drove a large U-Haul the 1900 miles between Seattle and Stevens Point, towing my station wagon with my canoe on top, mooned enroute from a passing car. My 2 young sons sat next to me in the U-Haul looking into the bags of things my wife had prepared for them, and my dog and cat were in the towed station wagon. My wife flew 2 weeks later with our new baby daughter (Figure 25).

Although I worked with willow ptarmigan, rock doves, mallards, blue-winged teal, other waterfowl, songbirds, raptors, water birds, and massasauga rattlesnakes, as a wildlifer my interest was mostly with mammals (like when I was a kid). During my career, I worked with and/or published mostly on cottontail rabbit, marsh rabbit, snowshoe hare, arctic hare, black bear, beaver, red squirrel, gray squirrel, northern flying squirrel, southern flying squirrel, mink, muskrat, lynx, caribou, marten, fisher, otter, opossum, raccoon, gray fox, white-tailed deer, various species of big game, small game, furbearers, and small mammals along the Columbia River in Washington, and even with horses. (I joke that I know pert-near everything there is to be known about horses on account of I once took a 3-credit college course in Western Horsemanship and got an A.<sup>195y</sup>)

I have 3 kids: Adam born on the Pacific coast in California (3 months old before I saw him), Mark born on the Atlantic coast in Newfoundland (15 minutes old before I saw him), and Erin born on the Pacific coast in Washington (2 weeks old before I saw her). I joke that my wife Eileen threw litters all over the place; it's an indication of how much we moved in a relatively short time and the difficult, stressful decisions and action involved. Eventually we lived in the North, South, East, West, and Central United States and eastern Canada.

As a wildlifer, I now go back a ways. I knew Earth Day originator Gaylord Nelson. I knew 8 of Aldo Leopold's 26 graduate students: 2 as my teachers (Joe Hickey, Al Stokes), 2 as my university associate colleagues (Fred Hamerstrom, Fran Hamerstrom), 1 as a contemporary advisor (Bob McCabe), 2 as state wildlife contacts (Cy Kabat, Jim Hale), and 1 (Dick Taber) as my boss and book co-author<sup>235</sup> and author of the Foreword in 2 of my other books.<sup>200, 203</sup> I was proud of my association with Dick Taber, last surviving former graduate student of Aldo Leopold (Father of Wildlife Management) and recipient of the Aldo Leopold Memorial Award in 2008 (which I witnessed). Having worked for him from 1973 to 1975, I think he was glad we became acquainted and friends; I don't think he would have gotten his hardcover book published otherwise<sup>235</sup> and I would not have had the unique connection to Aldo Lepold as the only book author with 1 of his graduate students. The book is displayed with his other achievements in his scholarship shadow box at the University of Montana. (See His Last Student, in Chapter 1; also see Figure 7, 8, 10 and Appendix 1).

I knew 3 of Aldo Leopold's kids (Starker, Nina, Estella). Estella and I were email pen pals.

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Wildlife Techniques Manual<sup>182</sup> was my textbook and its editor, Henry Mosby, my teacher and MS committee member. (See Wildlife Techniques Manual, in Chapter 3.) With biodiversity and habitat critical to survival, I wrote 2 large books on wildlife habitat improvement<sup>197, 203</sup> (UWSP Scholar of the Year, 1992). I taught my graduate students and thousands of undergraduate students about wildlife ecology, published technical articles in journals, and wrote a few more books after retirement in 1998. (See Rabbit, You Started It All.)

After retirement, my wife and I wintered a few years on Sanibel Island, FL, regularly visiting there the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, named after a college graduate from Beloit College in Wisconsin and Aldo Leopold's friend and associate too. Also after retirement, I

was drawn from Wisconsin back to Newfoundland where my wife and I have a summer house on the ocean shore, visiting annually my former wildlife co-workers there. In 2001 during the disaster of 9/11, we were in Newfoundland, where the planes from Europe were diverted; we helped buy food, make sandwiches, and feed the “plane people” stuck there.<sup>44x 44y</sup> (See Appendix 8.)

I’ve been lucky: (1) not getting killed or injured in the Vietnam War or crashing on the road or in a low-flying plane censusing beaver or capsizing in a 14-foot boat traveling to islands in the Atlantic Ocean and on the Columbia River for wildlife work (although capsizing once in a canoe to hunt caribou) or injured live-trapping bears and other animals, (2) traveling here and there for education and work adventures, my wife Eileen accompanying me, (3) divorcing gently and remaining friends, (4) marrying Jan in a commuter marriage for 11 years between Wisconsin and Illinois to accommodate our kids and careers, careers now history (professor of nursing, professor of wildlife ecology), (5) enjoying our present life style (Wisconsin, Florida, Newfoundland), (6) gazing at that enlarged wonderful picture on the wall of Jan and me with our 6 accomplished, good adult kids (her 3: Patty, Shari, Gail; my 3: Adam, Mark, Erin; now with families of 13 grandkids) that says so much to us, (7) satisfying career, (8) other things. (And now, somewhat shockingly, I’m a great-grandfather.) Planning was involved certainly. But I’ve been lucky.

I’m still a wildlifer. But I had various wildlife and other experiences: born and growing up in Wisconsin with ancestral roots here, leaving Wisconsin for some years and doing what I did and where I did it including in the Vietnam War at age 27-28 in 1966-67 (my son Mark at age 53 taking me at age 84 to Washington, DC on the Honor Flight for Vietnam War veterans in 2023), returning to Wisconsin to work in the wildlife profession at a university and teach, write books, and retire in

the same state with my deep roots. I've collaborated on wildlife research with, and some of my students work with and even retired from, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. (My 2 closest associates there were Chuck Pils and Bruce Kohn.)

Since my birth, I have lived in 28 different places including 5 (by age 5) while growing up in Sheboygan Co., WI and 9 with the USMC. A round trip. I turned 18 in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin where I grew up. I turned 19 in Madison, Wisconsin. I turned 23 in Blacksburg, Virginia. I turned 24 on Hog Island State Wildlife Area, Virginia (not talking to a single person that day). I turned 25 enroute to joining the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia and was 25 in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. I was 26 in Vieques Island, Puerto Rico. I turned 27 in Fallbrook, California. I turned 28 in Vietnam. I turned 29 in St. John's, Newfoundland. I turned 33 in Logan, Utah. I turned 34 in Lynnwood, Washington. I was 36 in Plover, Wisconsin—18 years after graduating from Sheboygan Falls High School at age 18.

I have lived in or visited some 30 countries. I have owned car license plates in Wisconsin, Virginia, North Carolina, California, Newfoundland and Labrador, Utah, Washington, Illinois, and Florida. Every move brought excitement and anticipation, apprehension and stress.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison provided my wife Jan and me our professional foundations, both of us with a bachelor's degree initially. Jan is a retired professor of nursing and I am a retired professor of wildlife ecology. Thus, in a way, she and I have been in professions with similar goals. The medical profession is concerned about the health of society in the short run. The wildlife profession is concerned about the health of society in the long run.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison provided my son Adam and me our professional foundations, both of us with a bachelor of arts degree—Adam's in communications, mine in

zoology—and a master’s degree there in urban and regional planning for Adam, who (Figure 26 and see Figure 24) became Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources at the same time that his father, professor emeritus of wildlife ecology, was publishing a book about Wisconsin wildlife. That brief coincidence probably constitutes a somewhat distinctive father and son simultaneous contribution to Wisconsin’s natural resources.

A question I would ask my graduate students during their final oral exam in defense of their thesis was, “Is there anything you would do differently?” Invariably the answer was yes, hindsight being 20/20. Is there anything I would do differently in my life? Hard to say exactly, circumstances often dictating or at least influencing decision over so long a time. Timing and the word *if* can enter a decision—*if* something hadn’t happened then, or *if* something had. Certainly I would have modified or altered some things, including behavioral, and whatever failings I had as a husband and father, and as a wildlifer, now that hindsight lends me more perspective. The round trip of locations and adventures since I left my relatively humble origin so long ago has taught and given me much, from pride to humility. Is there anything I would do differently in my life relative to my locations and adventures regarding my round trip *Return to the Falls*?<sup>199</sup> Except for the incidental stupid things I’ve done and said at times along the way, not much I guess. As I said, seems like another time, another place, another me; it was.

All of this stuff seems to yield a strong, perhaps somewhat unique, connection to Wisconsin and its wildlife. And now I am a weathered old guy, a retired, ageing wildlifer. But with age comes wisdom—if only I could remember it.

It has been quite a trip.