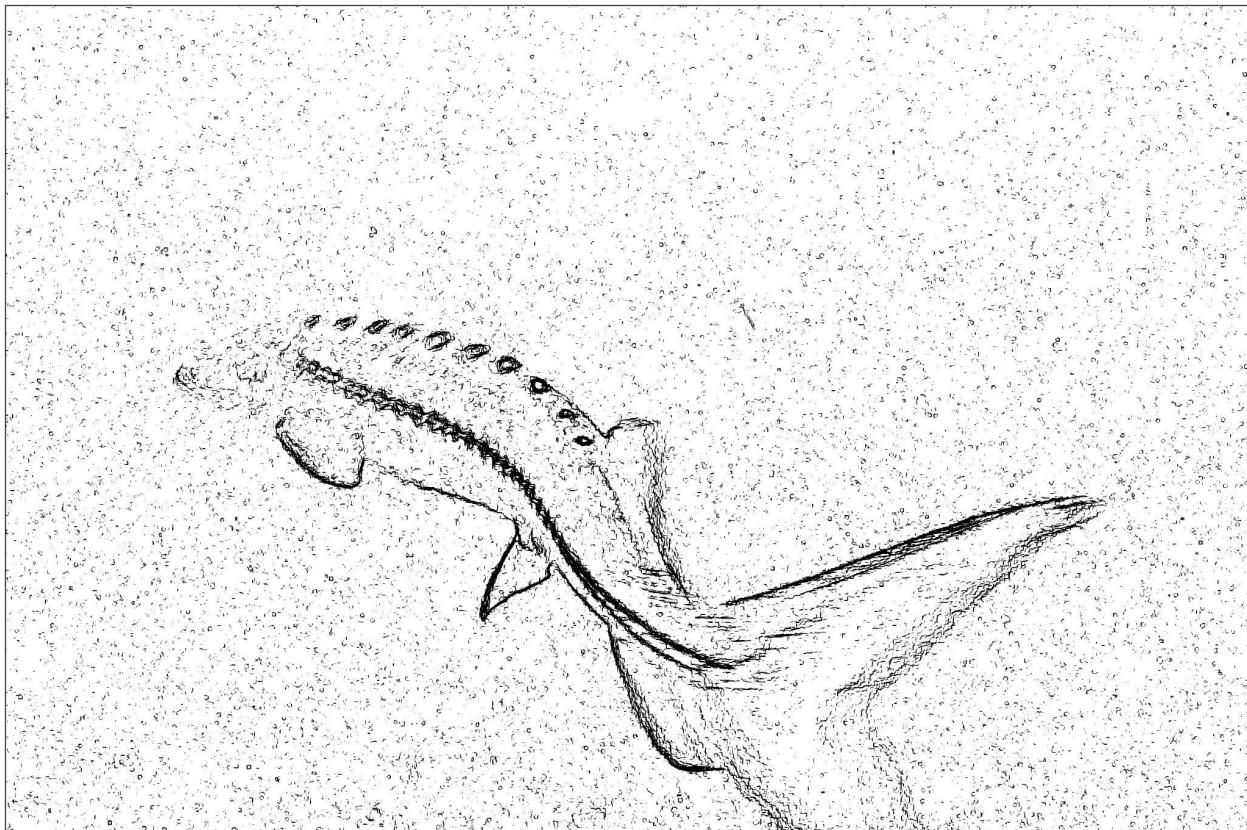


*The Turtle Lake Monster  
A Century of Mystery & Legend*



*(artistic impression)*

*Robert F Grosse (BSc, BA)*

## Dedication

To my parents; thanks for those magical years at Turtle Lake 1978-1987.



## Introduction

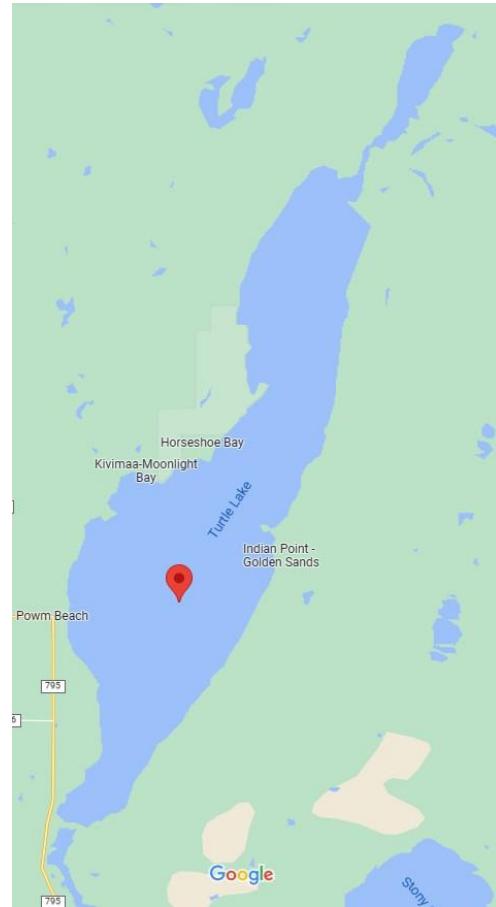
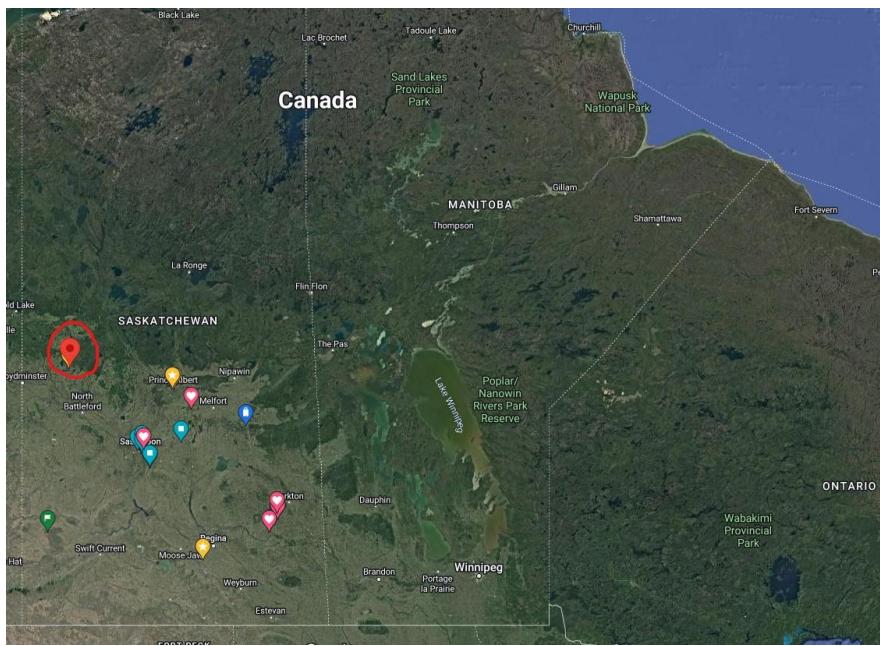
Few things can shape, inspire, and stir the imagination of a child more than spending time at one of Canada's magical northern lakes - except maybe adding to those adventures a long standing and persistent rumour of a monster inhabiting the lake's cold dark depths...

It is said every legend has at least some kernel of truth in it; some connection to a once factual event. This document is intended to serve two purposes:

1. To offer a story and help ensure the legend of the Turtle Lake Monster survives into the future.
2. To provide an anthology of located/known written resources that were published about the creature in years' past.

### Location and Physical Attributes

Turtle Lake Saskatchewan resides at 53.58192 degrees north latitude and -108.64865 longitude: 100 Kms North of North Battleford, 130 Kms NE from Lloydminster (Google Maps).



Turtle Lake is approximately 27.5 kms long, and 6 km wide at its widest point. Though not seen at this level of scale (see preceding map), the lake is accessible by road on both the east and west sides. Thunderchild First Nation resides West of Turtle Lake.

"A single outlet is present, this being at the south end via the Turtle Lake River. The Turtle Lake River flows south and joins the North Saskatchewan River at a point near Delmas, Saskatchewan. The Turtle Lake River is supplied with water from the lake for a short length of time each spring, however, there appears to be an appreciable outflow in only one year out of five resulting in a very limited amount of flushing. The lake is maintained at a relatively constant level as a result of the small amount of outflow." (Biol. of Turtle Lake Fishery, 1967, pg4)

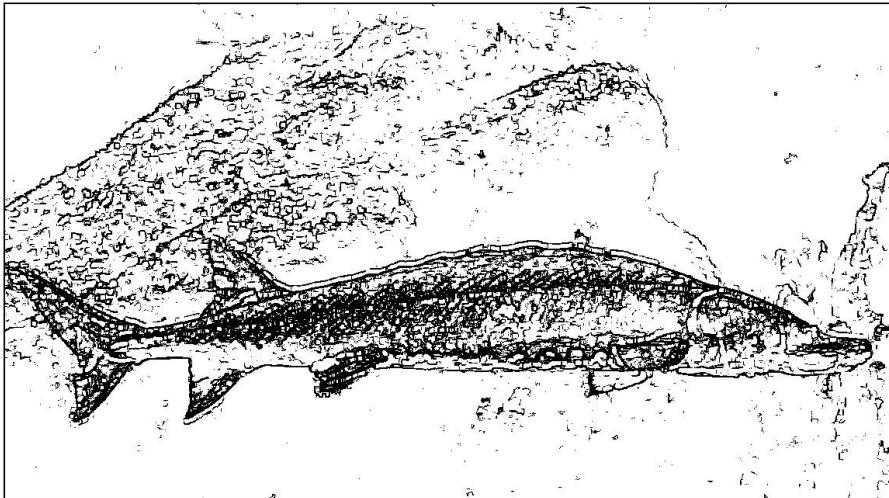
"The water area of the lake is 24.8 square miles (15,872 acres). It has a maximum depth of 14 metres (46.9) and a mean depth of 6.29 metres (20.6 feet). Other than inflow by way of several small streams at the north end, water level is maintained by runoff from local precipitation. Outflow occurs only in the spring of an average year through the Turtle Lake River." (Biol. of Turtle Lake Fishery, 1967, pg64)

"The lake slopes gradually towards a single deep point, typical of most of the lakes found on the glacial deposits of the agricultural region of the province. The maximum depth recorded for the lake was 14.3 metres (46.9 feet) at a point midway between Sunset Beach and Kopp's [Cove] Beach. The average depth was only 6.29 metres due to the extremely shallow northern quarter of the lake which scarcely exceeded 0.5 metres." (Biol. of Turtle Lake Fishery, 1967, pg5)

As far as overall biological productivity (i.e. ability to support a statistically high fish population), Turtle Lake ranks highly when compared to other Saskatchewan lakes:

"Plankton, bottom fauna, and fish production are considered the three key factors by which the productive capacity of a lake can be evaluated. [...] [in Saskatchewan] Turtle Lake ranks eighth in plankton production [...]. In bottom fauna production it ranks eleventh. [...] Fish production ranks more favourably - among the highest producers in the province than do the other two indices. Turtle Lake ranks fifth." (Biol. of Turtle Lake Fishery, 1967, pg53.)

## Earliest Reports of Something Unusual



*(artistic impression)*

It's 1923,

"Amidst winter ice, commercial fishermen complained that something huge was creating significant holes in their nets". (Page 346 Livelong the Sands of Time)

"A commercial and domestic fishery was in existence on Turtle Lake since the turn of the [last] century" (Dominion Alberta and Saskatchewan Commission Report 1910-1911). Whitefish have been the mainstay of this fishery in spite of the large numbers of other fish present." (Biol. of Turtle Lake Fishery, 1967, pg58)

"In 1923 [...] the first cooperatives were formed but prices were very low - 9 cents a pound for white fish and pickerel and two cents for jacks. Catches were heavy, the fishermen often piled their catch along the frozen banks, then hauled them by team to Paynton where they were shipped to Winnipeg" (page 344- Livelong the Sands of Time).

It so happened that the very same year (1923) it was recorded that "a horse headed animal with a long neck was seen by local resident Jack Matthews" (In the Domain of the Lake Monsters: The Search for the Denizens of the Deep. John Kirk, p195)

First Nations Oral tradition may predate the year 1923. We don't have exact dates on oral stories, but did find this general reference from a contributor on Reddit. This perception paints a very pragmatic and practical view of what the monster was perceived to be:



tachibana\_ryu · 3 yr. ago

There are reports of it looking like a giant sea horse dating back to when the area was colonized. The local cree though pass it off as a large sturgeon. However they also have legends of people venturing into the turtle lake monster's habitat and disappearing. So take that as you will.

The sturgeon theory is fairly plausible though as the Turtle river connects with the North Saskatchewan. It is entirely possible that a sturgeon managed to swim up the river systems into the lake. Sturgeon have a very long life span and can get quite large given the right growing conditions. And trust me Turtle Lake is deep enough it can definitely support a lake monster or 3.

Unfortunately we have never managed to catch a monster sturgeon in Turtle Lake so we can't confirm this myth busted. However Candle Lake that has similar conditions, we have managed to catch monster sized Sturgeon in fish nets. This is why we can mark this theory plausible for all you skeptics!

Anywho in conclusion even if we want to believe it is a giant sea horse monster, the evidence and original native myths don't really support a supernatural or unidentified mystery animal (UMA) living within the lake.

Tl;dr The turtle lake monster is or was possibly real, just being a monster sized Sturgeon. It has now become a tourist trap for the locals.

52 Give Award Share Report Save Follow



THIESN123 OP · 3 yr. ago

Hello

That's very neat. Thanks for sharing your knowledge!

5 Give Award Share Report Save Follow

*(from reddit.com)*

"[First Nations] legends [...] tell of "the big fish" inhabiting the picturesque resort lake". (Livelong - Sands of Time, pg 348)

In "Ghost Stories of Saskatchewan Volume 3" page 174, it is written, "It [the lake] would be perfect if not for the massive, writhing creature said to lurk in its depths. Ask any of the locals - they are all familiar with the story, which predates settlement of the area. The Cree were the first to speak of it, telling cautionary tales about people who had vanished after venturing into the monster's territory."

### Later Reports

Because of the lake's size, beauty, appeal, and relative proximity to a few populous communities (i.e. The Battlefords, Lloydminster, Saskatoon, Edmonton) the lake began to be developed for recreational purposes in the 1930s.

"O.E Warner can be credited with developing the first resort. Ole Knutson bought Warner's resort and built the big dance hall, tearing down the old one. Art Larson ran the resort in the late '30's. Added attractions were an annual stampede and sports day. Frank Bekolay purchased the resort and began the first division into lots for lease or sale. Lyle and Lil Varty then purchased this resort and built the Northlander Inn, after moving the dance hall to a new location...[...]At the same time many more resorts were being developed around Turtle Lake, some much larger than others." (Livelong Sands of Time pg 344).



*(artistic impression)*

The first documented newspaper reference of the TLM (found so far) arrived in 1947...

## Open Season for Monsters

War headlines are forgotten. Moscow conference records are being filed away. Make way for the Loch Ness monster, a creature of less fevered days than we have been living through. Where have you been, Loch Ness monster, all this time? Did you hibernate during the war? Scotland had need of her monsters in the dark days. Were you engaged on secret service work so secret that we heard nothing of it? Surely no genuine native of Scotland ignored the war entirely. How have you been during the austerity winter just past? Did you escape the German bombs only to have a few ripples frozen off your tail in Britain's grimdest winter? We welcome you back, but confess we did not expect you until the whisky shortage was ended in Scotland. Can you explain this?

Meanwhile, we are waiting for news from Turtle Lake, near Livelong, Sask., where Saskatchewan's native monster was once reported. Livelong is in the north east. First details of its monster came from a fisherman, who reported a long black creature of considerable length that frolicked on the waters' surface far from shore. Whether or not our prairie monster survived the winter has not as yet been ascertained.

The 1950s thru 70s was a boom period at Turtle Lake involving lot sales, road improvements, cabin building, and recreational development. The next newspaper article found so far on the topic came 29 years later. It was in the 1970s and 80s that articles on the topic took off and peaked.

Saskatoon Star Phoenix March 1 1978

The Turtle Lake monster is alive and well, and even though it appears to be headless and without a tail, it is still surfacing and creating interest to area residents. The North Battleford News Optimist carried a story of several corroborating reports that a primitive shark-like creature has been observed and discussed since early settlement of the area.

One day a local pilot who was flying over the lake noticed what at first glance appeared to be two canoes speeding along the east shore. Failing to see any people in the black shapes, he instinctively banked and eased the plane down for a closer look. He reports that two aquatic creatures dived in unison as the craft maneuvered within 100 feet. The pilot said they were over 10 feet long and he didn't see all of them because of their wake. Fisheries biologists maintain that there is no documented evidence of lake sturgeon in Turtle Lake. One fisherman who reported glimpsing the beast eight years ago, said it was black. "I saw neither head nor tail, but at least seven feet of it was visible."

## 44 News

Wednesday, January 10, 1979    Saskatoon, Saskatchewan    Star-Phoenix

# Turtle Lake monster popular topic

LIVELONG (CP) — Would you believe in a beast called the Turtle Lake Monster?

It lacks the romance of the thing from Loch Ness and B.C.'s Ogopogo — but despite its prosaic name it provides ammunition for lively conversation in the cozy beer parlor at the Livelong Hotel south of the turtle-shaped lake.

According to the believers in this community 80 kilometres east of the Alberta-Saskatchewan border city of Lloydminster, the monster is big and black.

In winter, they say, the beast lets fishermen know he's around by tearing huge holes in their nets. In the summer, well, he breaks the surface to frighten onlookers with his enormous size.

The stories about the monster, with three humps on its back, a long neck and head like a horse, pig or dog depending on which version you believe, have been kicked about for 55 years.

Indian legends — as usual in these reports — tell of "the big fish" inhabiting the picturesque resort lake.

"Some people say it's 14 feet long and there might be more under water," says Ben Blatz, a school teacher and co-owner of the lake's Northlander Inn.

"Two girls saw it last year while waterskiing and were so scared they couldn't go back in."

Blatz, who calls himself a half-believer, says he himself saw a creature in the lake one day. It looked like it had three humps on its back.

Disbeliever Gordon Kenderdine, who has also seen the "creature," thinks it is a large sturgeon about two

or three metres in length similar to a 500-pounder caught near Saskatoon.

"You have to be realistic," says Kenderdine, a sawmill owner. "I think it's a sturgeon but I don't know what you'd catch it with. Many times you get your net torn by it."

He agrees that what he saw had two or three humps, but figures them to be the creature's dorsal fins.

There are those who say they saw the creature surface and poke a dog- or horse-like head into the air.

One of them is Iana Sandwick, 17, of Calgary, who used to live near the lake.

"It didn't look like a fish's head — it sort of looked like a dog. I saw it when it jumped out of the water."

Sandwick describes the creature she saw two years ago as being greyish in color and "big and ugly."

Al Pruden likes to talk about the monster over an ale or two.

"I was out fishing one day and it was absolutely calm. All of a sudden there were these waves that came from nowhere. I never saw what made them but I've often had huge holes in fishing nets."

What do government and RCMP officials have to say?

Saskatchewan sturgeon don't grow to three metres long, a government fisheries biologist says.

"I don't know if there's anything to it," says RCMP Constable Al Morgan of the nearby Glaslyn detachment.

Blatz hopes to catch the creature to end all speculation.

"A lot of people see it but they don't say anything because they think people will say they are crazy."

# Is there a monster living in Turtle Lake?

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"A lot of people see it but they don't say anything because they think people will say they are crazy."

"In winter, it tears huge holes in the nets of local fishermen. In summer, it frightens swimmers and boaters. According to the Canadian Press Story carried by the Niagara Falls Review, Jan 31 1979, The huge monster has three humps, a long neck, the head of a horse, pig, or dog, depending on the report of the observer. The Turtle Lake terror has been dismissed as a huge lake sturgeon. There are reports of a monster appearing in the lake since the mid 1920s." (Mysterious Canada - John Robert Columbo, pg 309)

## Bait that hook and get ready to reel in the big ones

By Al Finney  
of The Leader-Post

Whether you're looking for a fly-in vacation to a northern lake, or just want to pack in the family for a weekend trip, there's no better place to go.

You can catch anything from Northern Pike to Kokanee Salmon in the thousands of fishing waters in the province. And getting to the fish is a simple matter.

The southern lakes are easy, just decide which one is right for you, pack up the car and drive on good paved highways to great fishing. Since many of these lakes are in park areas, members of your group who don't fish will find a variety of activities.

In the northern areas, things have changed, Doug Elsasser, a sportsman who has travelled extensively in the province said in an interview.

"The north has opened up, its no longer difficult as it used to be, comfortable, modern accommodation is available as many outfitters now provide housing and services that rival southern resorts.

"Its no longer the bastion of married men who travel to the north, the family can now go along, and quite comfortably," he said.

For those who wish to remain in the south, or don't have the time for the northern areas, there are many areas that offer fine fishing.

Pike, walleye and perch (get out your map) are found in Madge Lake, Greenwater, Good Spirit, Jackfish, Last Mountain, Kenosee and the seven lakes in the Qu'Appelle valley.

For a camping holiday that includes fishing, Madge Lake offers good walleye and perch.

"The best time of day to fish is early morning and evening," he said.

Doug recommended frogs and minnows as bait for walleye and fishing in rocky areas or where there is gravel on the bottom.

Madge Lake is in Duck Mountain provincial park, east of Kamsack.

Kenosee Lake is best known for perch fishing, which is great for teaching children how to fish, said Elsasser.

"Your best bet for perch is to find 10 to

### Deep ponds the best

12 feet of water in a clear area surrounded by weeds, use bacon rinds or even a piece of raw fish as bait. The fish should come in on the surface.

For the "blinker walleye" Last Mountain Lake, north of Regina, is a good bet, he said.

In the southwest of the province, the Cypress Hills area offers trout, pike and walleye. In addition the North Saskatchewan River, Battle Creek and Loch Leven, Brook Trout can be found in East Fairwell, Battle Boiler and Belanger Creeks. Brown trout can be found in Conglomerate, Bone and Belanger Creeks, as well as in the Qu'Appelle River.

The best trout fishing is found in deep beaver ponds in this area.

"The fish will take earthworms suspended by a bobber, or spinners and small spoons or light spinning tackle."

He suggests getting out of the core areas of the park and into the park perimeter areas will know the areas where fish have been taken.

Going north from Cypress Hills will bring you to Lake Dietrichbaker which has become a favorite for walleye fishermen, especially in the spring.

"Bait fishing with minnows along coulees is good, yellow perch and pike as well as walleye."

"Whitefish and some sturgeon can be found in the western end of the lake."

Also in this area, ten miles crossing on the South Saskatchewan River, provides good fishing access, he said.

Another excellent area for family fishing, according to Elsasser, is Squaw Rapids, northeast of Nipawin.

"You can fish from the shore and still have really good success."

In June and July the walleye and pike are very good.

"Just spread out along the shoreline casting, and you can almost be guaranteed fish."

There are several public campgrounds close to the area.

For some serious trout fishing mainly Brook trout, the Hudson Bay area offers a network of streams, rivers and creeks "there's great fishing."

Some of the better trout streams include the Fir River, the Woody and the Swan River, with campgrounds sprinkled along a network of gravel roads in the area. These roads will take you into some of the most scenic areas of both the Park and the Province.

For Brook trout, which can be tricky to catch, Elsasser suggests earthworms or grubs on a very small hook, floated downstream with a split shot weight about two or three across the line. Small spinners in the ponds will work, as well as light bobbers with worms or grubs.

A favorite area of Elsasser's, the Hanson Lake Road, Highway No. 106, from

souther said a guide for extended trips into the area is a must. Prince Albert is a good supply area for any trips on this road.

Going west from the bottom of Hanson Lake Road is another area in the province where pike, walleye and perch can be found in some dazzling northland scenery.

Prince Albert National Park, though a special permit is required at the park offices for sport fishing, is great for pike, walleye and perch. Waskesiu, the Range

### Smeaton to Flin Flon

with lakes such as Big Sandy, Deschambault, Jan and Amisk offer great pike and walleye fishing.

West Trout and White Swan Lakes along Highway No. 120 are best for pike, but these fish can be found almost anywhere in the area.

Highway 120, which intersects the Hanson Lake Road in Nipawin Provincial Park provides access to campgrounds, boat launches and docks. White Swan and Pippell Lake, which is known for trophy Rainbow and East Trout are good bets.

The Hanson Lake Road itself, is a well-maintained gravel highway with outfitting, food, fuel, food, gas, motors and boats and guides.

Twenty-one public campgrounds can be found along the route as well.

"Secluded parts of McDougal Creek

are very productive Brook trout waters."

"There's great pike and walleye in Deschambault, Jan and Mirond Lakes and the area is in beautiful rugged Canadian Shield country."

Many islands are scattered throughout this series of interlocking lakes and Elsasser

### Good fishing a certainty

ing Heart Lakes and the Waskesiu River all offer fine fishing.

In Kingsmere Lake, try fishing for the elusive Lake trout.

"Use steel line to get down deep while trolling, or jig the drop-offs with large spoons."

"A fish locator is very helpful if you are new to the area."

At Lake Lake and Turtle Lake north of Battleford are reasonable bets for pike and walleye. At Turtle Lake you may even catch a glimpse of the Turtle Lake monster, which is suspected to be an enormous lake sturgeon, said Elsasser.

Meadow Lake Provincial Park (600 square miles of paradise for camping and fishing) is well serviced with outfitting and has abundant camping facilities. Lac de Isles, Mustus, Waterhead

and Flotten Lakes, northwest of Meadow Lake are good to try, he said.

For north fishing that is partially accessible by road includes the Churchill River system, the highway of the north, the Churchill River, the northern end of Highway 115 at Turner Lake, stretching across Northern Saskatchewan and eventually draining into James Bay.

For those interested in a Churchill trip, complete outfitters can be found at Mississipe, north of La Ronge.

La Ronge is the northern fishing capital of Saskatchewan according to Elsasser, who provides accurate information for its Lake trout and walleye fishing.

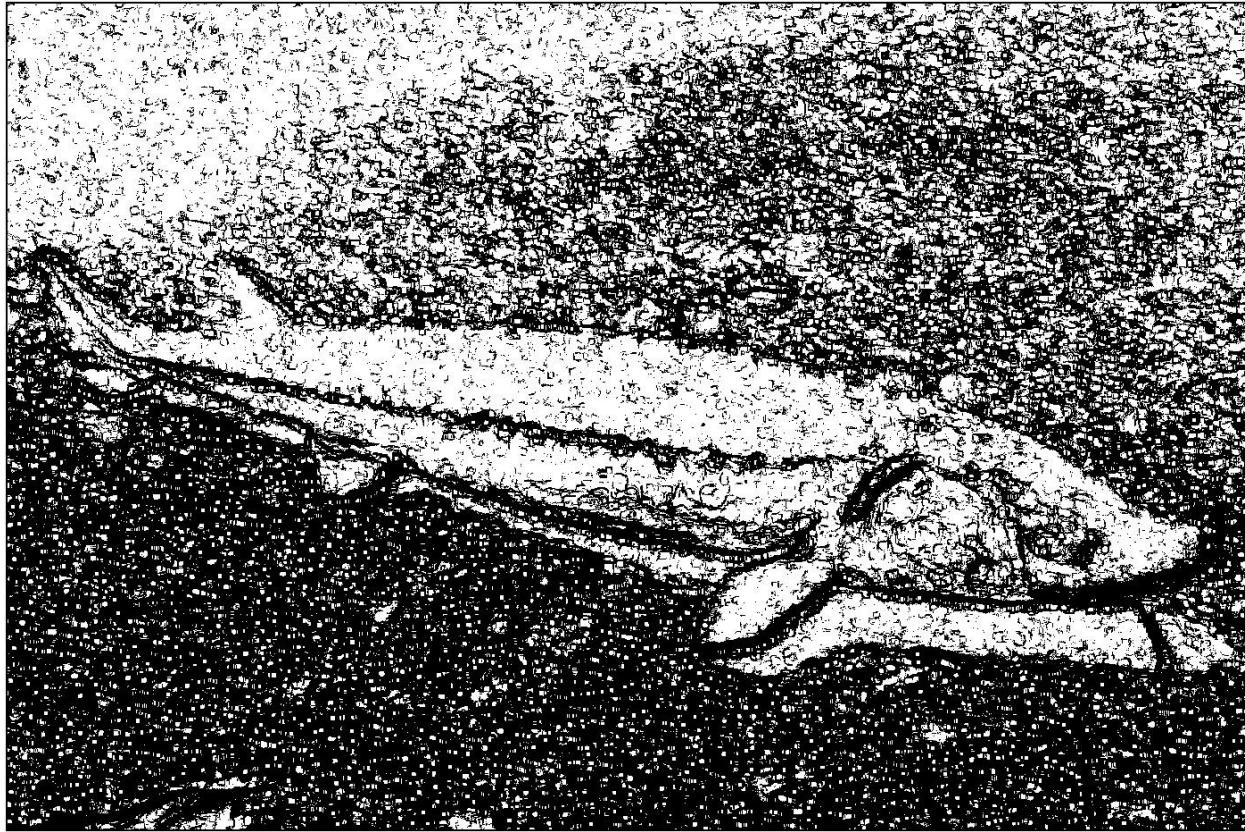
"North of La Ronge, Highway 105 extends 490 km. north to Wollaston Lake, where you can sample some of the best fishing scenery and remotest wilderness the province has to offer."

"However, make sure that you're well outfitted in La Ronge before going, because services are few and far between."

"Make sure your vehicle is in good shape."

Elsasser recommends Mcleman, Braeburn and Reindeer, Davin and Wathaman for Lake trout and the north end of the Gekie River for Arctic Grayling.

For detailed information on any trip, including accommodation, outfitters, phone numbers and service, the provincial department's travel guide is available on request. Or phone Sask Travel, which is a provincial information service at 365-2390 or dial toll free at 1 or 112-800-667-3674.



*(Artistic impression)*



## Chis Davis

Now there's another choice.

Two U.S. scientists have presented a new theory to explain the monster sightings on Loch Ness in Scotland.

They say that Nessie may be an elephant. Despite their bulk, elephants are good swimmers and with their trunks out of the water they look uncannily like the monster, the scientists point out.

At least the theory is imaginative.

The two scientists are Dennis Power, director of the Santa Barbara, Calif., Museum of Natural History, and Donald Johnson, a research associate in geography at the University of Illinois.

They appear entirely serious in presenting their theory in the widely respected British magazine, *New Scientist*. But I have a lurking suspicion: scientists have to have their fun too.

Now, check the explanation in which you have the most faith:

1. Nessie is an elephant.
2. Nessie is a plesiosaur (member of a prehistoric suborder of reptiles).
3. Nessie is a tourist lure.
4. Nessie is an apparition released by a bottle of Scotch.

### *Earliest sighting in 565*

1. According to my research, the earliest recorded sighting occurred in the year 565. I find it difficult to believe wild elephants, land animals, have gone undetected in Scotland for 1414 years. Still . . .

2. I hesitate to scratch the plesiosaur theory entirely. Several groups of Americans who have conducted costly searches of the lake are convinced it's inhabited by a monster. A U.S. biology professor said the plesiosaur is a likely candidate. I believe searching has not been abandoned.

3. Away back in 565 the Scots were

probably not much concerned about the tourist industry. Rather, they were probably more interested in keeping people out of the country. So much for the possible tourist ploy.

4. Unfortunately I have been unable to determine whether Scotch was in use as far back as 565. Any way, it probably had an effective predecessor.

Where does all this leave the Canadian monsters? There are the Ogopogo of Lake Okanagan in B.C.,

the Manipogo of Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba, the Powsawp at Saskatoon and the monsters in Loon Lake and Turtle Lake in Saskatchewan. Then there is Chessie in Chesapeake Bay in the U.S.

The Loon Lake monster is said to be a shark-like creature. Saskatonians know the Powsawp is a distinctive animal. Could all the others possibly be elephants?

Only if they are pink. After all, maybe that's what those two serious scientists had in mind.

CR  
**Forum**

**C SECTION**  
Star-Phoenix  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Friday, September 7, 1979

Printed and published by Armadale Publishers Limited at the office of the Star-Phoenix, 204 Fifth Avenue North, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2P1.

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James E. Petro, Executive Editor;  
Ed Gebeisen, Marketing Manager;  
Merv Carey, Production Manager;  
M.C. Sifton, President;  
P.W. Balmer, Vice-President.

## Turtle Lake monster search is on

Now that summer and the fishing season have passed, all die-hard fishermen will be reminiscing about the big one that managed to break free from the unsuspecting lure.

However, in Northern Saskatchewan, the talk has been about a huge fish — so-called monster — which comes and goes. Many newspapers throughout Western Canada have carried articles on this creature, simply referred to as the Turtle Lake monster, named from the lake which it inhabits.

Every summer, numerous tourists, residents and fishermen tell of seeing this monster. Indians of the area talk about the "big fish" which has been seen, even as early as the turn of the century. Recently, on Oct. 23, residents on the southwest end of the lake had a first-hand look at the "creature".

We are attempting to gather as much information on the Turtle Lake monster as possible. The type of information we are interested in is:

Year, month, day, time of day the monster was seen; the appearance, such as color, skin or scales, etc; the size of the portion seen, approximate in feet or inches; where seen in the lake, for exam-

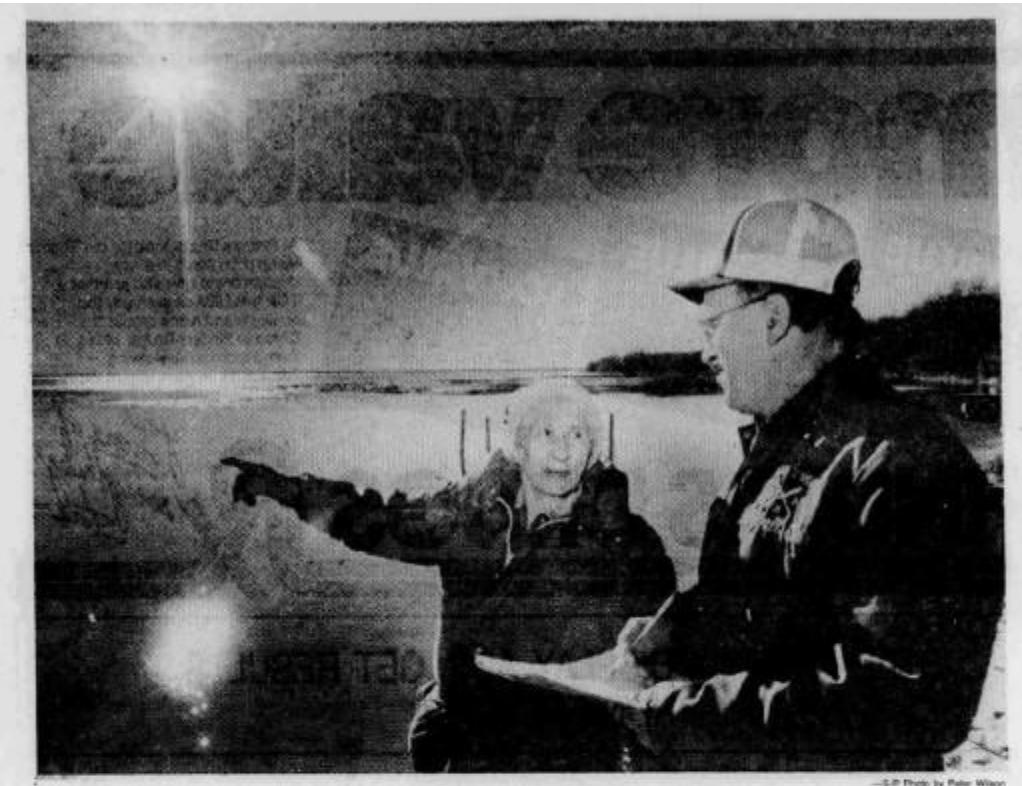
ple, in the middle of the lake, etc., where you were when you saw "it"; drawing or a sketch of what you saw, if possible; movement or speed of the monster.

There are over 70 lakes in the world which are said to have some kind of "creature" inhabiting them. The better known are the Loch Ness Monster and the Ogopogo.

Can we in Saskatchewan lay claim to a real, live monster?

If you can be of any help in this research, contact me at: Turtle Lake Monster Research, c/o B. Blatz, 9028 Abbott Avenue, North Battleford, Sask. S9A 3G3; or phone 446-2245.

B. BLATZ  
North Battleford



—S-P Photo by Peter Wilson

Catherine Okanee shows Ben Blatz where monster was allegedly sighted

## Man researches lake monster

By Catherine Lawson  
of the Star-Phoenix

**TURTLE LAKE** — Ben Blatz subscribes to the old adage "seeing is believing." And the former lakeshore resident says he has never seen the mysterious Turtle Lake monster.

But Blatz heard so much about the shy aquatic beast during the four years he ran a lodge on the lake that he is convinced there is something out of the ordinary lurking in the depths.

That is why the 45-year-old former school teacher recently began research for a book about the monster some believe resides in this lake 100 kilometres northwest of North Battleford. Blatz wants anyone who has had a good look to tell him what they saw.

Stories about the monster have circulated in the area for as long as anyone can remember. An animal, anywhere from three- to nine-metres long, smooth-skinned or scaly, with or without a fin along its back, and a face like a dog, horse or pig is sighted every year.

Whether people believe in it or not, the monster has an honored place in local lore. The Legend of the Turtle Lake Monster is printed

on paper placemats at the Northlander Inn. The inn, situated on the southernmost tip of the turtle-shaped lake, also serves monster burgers. And Lyle Burkitt sells Turtle Lake monster hats at his Lakeside Store on the west shore.

Catherine Okanee, 64, has lived by the lake "off and on for 40 years." She says there are many people, living and dead, who have sworn they have seen the monster.

"Near Indian Point (on the east shore) there are three places where it is very deep. Just like an underground river. It was said if you went around that area you would never come back because the monster lived there," said Okanee.

Okanee went on to explain that monsters or "big things" are not uncommon in Indian lore. She said that as a child she was told to "keep quiet" or she would disturb the monster reported to live in whirlpool rapids near Stanley Mission.

The majority of long-time residents say they believe the Turtle Lake monster is actually a giant sturgeon. Northlander Inn waitress Stellin Jacobson believes the sturgeon theory. "I've never seen the monster," she says. "I've never had that much to drink."

Blatz says there is no evidence

there are sturgeon in the lake. He has another theory to explain the numerous sightings. He has researched the aquatic dinosaurs that lived in Saskatchewan millions of years ago when the province was covered by a sea. In particular, he is intrigued by the long and short-necked plesiosaurs. These reptiles had long tails, four strong fins and small smooth heads with a row of tiny sharp teeth.

As the seas dried up did the plesiosaurs retreat to the depths of Turtle Lake?

Blatz says he has no scientific training that would allow him to make an educated guess.

The North Battleford resident says his research also shows that Turtle Lake is similar to other lakes where monsters have been sighted. Like Loch Ness in Scotland and Okanagan Lake in British Columbia (home of the Ogopogo.) Turtle Lake is cold, deep (30 metres in places) and was once part of a sea. Like the others, Turtle Lake "does not give up its dead," which Blatz says could explain why a monster carcass has never been found.

Obtaining good descriptions of the monster is not easy. Blatz says he doesn't believe one old-timer who says he has seen it sunbathing on the beach.

Blatz always asks where a person was when the monster was sighted. "The Northlander bar overlooks the lake," he explains.

Blatz knows of no photographs of the beast. Lyle Burkitt says he has heard a woman in Saskatoon has photographs, but he doesn't know her name.

The researcher has to rely on sketchy descriptions like one given by local school bus driver Herb Matthews. Matthews says he saw "something too long to be a fish" about 25 years ago. "It looked smooth and had a kind fin on its back," he says. "We just know it was something different."

A more recent sighting supplied even fewer details. Robert Bourassa of Lloydminster has a mobile home on the lake. About one month ago, he watched a large ripple move quickly across the smooth water. He does not claim it was the monster.

Anyone with more details on the monster should write:

Turtle Lake Monster Research, c  
Ben Blatz, 9033 Abbott Ave., North  
Battleford, Sask. S9A 3G3

Blatz would like to know when and where it was sighted, its appearance, size and how it was moving.

## Local lore celebrates Turtle Lake Monster

TURTLE LAKE, Sask. (CP) — Depending on the person you talk to, the Turtle Lake Monster is anywhere from three to nine metres long, smooth-skinned or scaly, with or without a fin along its back and has a face like a dog, horse or a pig.

Regardless of its appearance, the monster has an honored place in local lore. The legend of the Turtle Lake Monster is printed on paper placemats at the Northlander Inn, situated on the southern tip of the lake, about 240 kilometres northwest of Saskatoon.

The inn serves monsterburgers and Lyle Burkitt, operator of the Lakeview Store on the west shore, sells Turtle Lake Monster hats.

The majority of long-time residents say they believe the monster is actually a giant sturgeon. Northlander Inn waitress Stella Jacobsen believes the sturgeon theory.

"I've never seen the monster," she says. "I've never had that much to drink."

But Ben Blatz heard so much about the shy aquatic beast during the four years he ran a lodge on the lake that he is convinced something out of the ordinary lurks in the depths.

Mr. Blatz, a 45-year-old former

teacher, recently began research for a book about the monster. He says there is no evidence there are sturgeon in the lake and has another theory to explain the numerous sightings.

He has done research on the aquatic dinosaurs that lived in Saskatchewan millions of years ago when the province was covered by sea. He is particularly intrigued by the long-and short-necked plesiosaurs, reptiles that had long tails, four strong fins and small, smooth heads with a row of tiny, sharp teeth.

As the seas dried up, did the plesiosaurs retreat to the depths of Turtle Lake? Mr. Blatz says he has no scientific training that would allow him to make an educated guess.

But he says his research shows that Turtle Lake is similar to other lakes where monsters have been sighted. Like Loch Ness in Scotland and Okanagan Lake in British Columbia (home of Ogopogo), Turtle Lake is cold, deep and was once part of a sea.

Like the others, Turtle Lake does not give up its dead, which Mr. Blatz says could explain why a monster carcass has never been found.

# Lake monster huge sturgeon?

By Tom Loran  
of the Star-Phoenix

Could the famed Turtle Lake monster be nothing more than a monster sturgeon?

That inglorious possibility has been voiced by two men who saw the monster only a week ago while fishing near noon on a perfectly calm, bright day.

For many years native folklore had a huge monster lurking in the depths of that lake which lies southwest of Meadow Lake. The lake is about 22 kilometres long and as much as eight wide. Those stories have been heightened — and confirmed — in more recent times by outsiders who occupy cottages at the lake which has rapidly grown in popularity as a resort area.

Sightings of something strange have been frequent but few seem to have had as good a look, or as close a one, as the two fishermen last week.

Joe Jacobson has farmed alongside Turtle since 1918 and has fished the lake frequently but this was his first sighting of the famed finny being. With him was Don Wylie of 1689 Cassino Ave. in Saskatoon.

The pair were out in Jacobson's four-metre aluminum, putting along on the dead calm lake when they saw a series of waves rolling toward them. Neither had seen a boat around and so they decided to investigate.

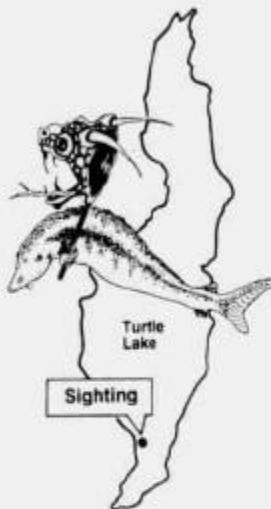
"All of a sudden, we saw this big thing in the water. It was coming towards us but when it heard our little motor, it swung sideways and dove. We saw this big fin sticking up and part of the back. I figured it was at least 12 feet (four metres) long," Wylie said.

"It's there. There's no doubt about it."

He said Jacobson, who was driving, turned the boat sideways about 50 metres away when they realized what they were looking at. A few seconds later, the creature dove for the deep.

Although unable to provide any solid reason, Wylie is convinced it was a monster sturgeon.

Jacobson echoes Wylie's story. He says the two of them were about 200 metres off the west shore near a place called Pelican



Point in the southern end of the lake. At that spot, a rock reef runs just below the surface for about a kilometre out into the lake.

On either side of the reef, the bottom drops off sharply and Jacobson is of the opinion the monster came up from the bottom to cross over the reef and it was while it was on the surface the fishermen saw it.

"It was pretty black in color with a big fin on top. It was long and heavy — he's a big one," Jacobson said.

He also holds the view it was a huge sturgeon — again without any firm reason for coming to that conclusion other than a look that lasted less than a minute.

Wylie said they were not the only ones to see the monster this year. He said another man told him of seeing it about 10 days prior to their sighting.

And Jacobson said he's convinced there is more than one of the monsters out there — perhaps as many as three or four.

Sturgeon are bottom-feeding fish normally found in the Saskatchewan River system. Many in the 50-pound and more class have been taken from the river over the years, often running a metre or more in length.

**B SECTION**  
Star-Phoenix  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Wednesday, August 8, 1984

**Hospitality**

Canadians feel curiously at home in Finland when they first visit. If you have seen a lot of countries, you may feel that the friendliness, hospitality and refreshingly distinctive Finnish identity. **B2**



**Rotating bed**

A hospital bed which turns patients in a circle has been tested at Sunnybrook Medical Centre to see whether the continuous motion would help spinal cord injuries. It is hoped the motion of the bed will reduce the formation of blood clots and bed sores. **B3**

**Monster fish**

Readers might recall an item a few weeks ago speculating that the monster fish in the lake was a huge sturgeon. After the report appeared, many scoffed. There was a general disbelief in the idea of a fresh water fish growing to such proportions. Here are some more items that report. If these items have crossed the desk which should give the group some food for thought. **B4**

**B4 Lifestyles/Outdoors** Wednesday, August 8, 1984 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan Star-Phoenix

## Tremendous-sized sturgeon not all that rare

**Tom Lorran**

### Rambling Afield

REGULAR READERS of the Star-Phoenix might recall an item a few weeks ago speculating that the Turtle Lake monster could be a huge sturgeon.

People who had just seen the monster claimed it was at least four metres long and it was they who said they had the feeling it was a sturgeon, even though they didn't see enough of it, or see it long enough, to confirm that opinion.

After the report appeared, many scoffed. There are those, of course, who simply don't believe in monsters any more than in ghosts. But then there were many

who laughed at the idea of a freshwater fish growing to such tremendous proportions.

Strangely enough, since that report, a few items have crossed the desk which should give the latter

group some food for thought. A TWO-METRE long sturgeon weighing 138 pounds was taken from the Winnipeg River this summer. Angler Darrell Spencer was using 12-pound test line and making a pickeral rig when he felt a hit. When the fight was over, he had a fish longer than himself.

A Winnipeg reader came across the Turtle Lake article and sent along a clipping, including a picture, of a four-metre long sturgeon that had been caught in the Roseau River in 1903. The fish was 120 pounds in weight and was estimated, weighing only 406 pounds. And the same reader, Wilf Chislett, says when he was in Toronto years ago he knew of a woman who pulled a sturgeon out of Lake Superior that weighed more than 1,000 pounds.

Finally, closer to home and closer in time, there is the sturgeon Roderick Bear took July 2 in

a net at Sandy Bay. It was almost two metres long and one metre around the waist, and it weighed 145 pounds.

As to Turtle Lake, I have heard

— of scuba divers down there

that northwestern lake seeing

pike almost as long as themselves

— enough of them that the divers

decided to do their swimming

elsewhere. Those deep, clear wa-

ters very well could be home to

large fish, yes, even monsters.

WHILE THESE MAY not be in the same class, some big fish have been taken out of Tobin Lake again this year in the annual Northern Pike Festival in the Nipawin country.

The largest pike to date is a

male 16.5 pounds, taken by

George Penner of Nipawin while

top pickeral so far is a whopper,

just over 11 pounds, taken by Nor-

man Vercagine of Delaraine.

Man. Even the other species are producing generous sizes. Top goldeye to date is a three-pounder by Jim Burton of Nipawin. The largest perch, just short of two pounds, was taken by Jim Sue from Pilger. Both of these

sauers to this point is a bit over three pounds, caught by Don Ellis of Deadwood, S.D., one of many Americans who have taken part in the festival.

FOR THOSE HOPING to be drawn for an antelope licence in the next week or so, there is some good news.

The annual aerial survey shows a 17-per-cent increase in the number of pronghorns in the south-

west and, as a result, the quota

has been raised to 2,700, a 13-per-

cent increase over last year. In addition, there will be 10 tags as-

signed for archers. And there is

one running from Sept. 3 to Oct. 6.

The rifle season will be from Oct.

29 to Nov. 3.

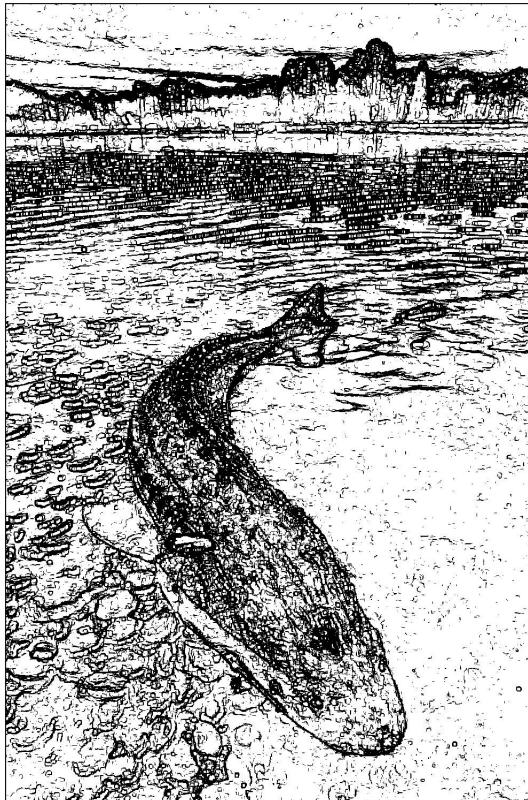
After this July's count, it was estimated the pronghorn population now stands at 11,000 animals.

IN ALBERTA, a dogfight is emerging over proposals to permit game ranching.

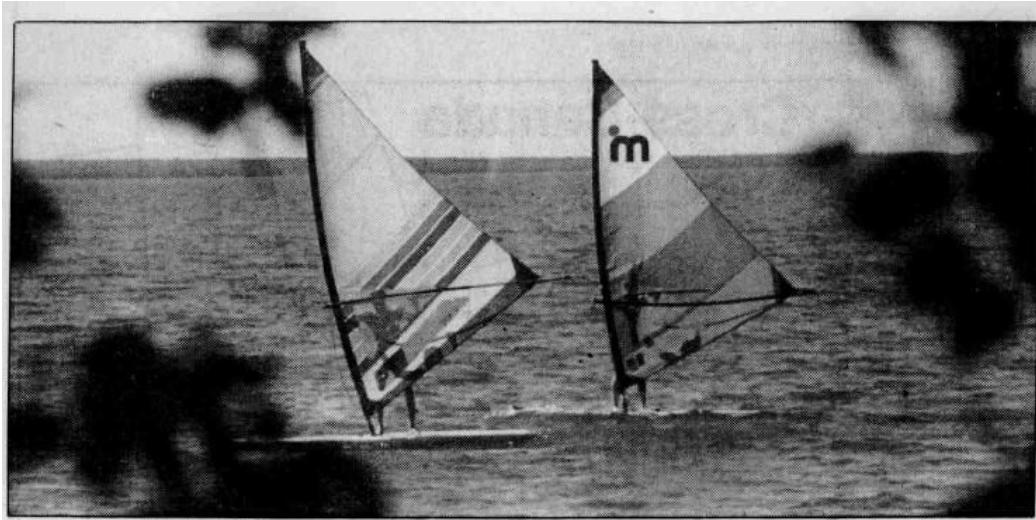
That fight has been taken to the letters to the editor section of the papers. This quote is from one, written by Don McIver of Calgary, and I think was exceptionally well done.

"If an elk or a deer's value becomes equated with a price per pound, that is what it will be. It is not the animal that is more than an example of wild beauty. The attraction of game animals is that it is difficult and rewarding to see one in its natural habitat. What are you saving if you turn them into a commodity?"

"What we need to do is, not take our game animals out of the wild, but take further steps to ensure that the wilds remain as suitable and sufficient habitat for them."



*(artistic impression)*



**Windy waters**

All these two surf sailors needed was a breeze at Turtle Lake, 90 kilometres north of North Battleford, to head out for an enjoyable afternoon. As the sport of wind-surfing catches on, more and more boards are being seen at many Saskatchewan lakes. The Turtle Lake Monster did not appear on the weekend, although it was spotted in the area (Horseshoe Bay) last week. (S-P Photo by Glen Berger)

**Star Phoenix**   
**Wednesday**

**A SECTION**  
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan  
Wednesday, August 15, 1984

Suggested Retail Price  
City and Primary  
Market Area 40 Cents  
Outside Primary  
Market Area 45 or 50 Cents

**Ranking the monsters**

*The Globe and Mail (1936-); Oct 22, 1984; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail pg. 6*

# Ranking the monsters

Is something hairy clumping around on the roof of the world?

If the answers over the years have veered from "possibly" through "don't know" and "highly unlikely" to "aw, come on," it only goes to show that the boy who cries "Yeti!" without producing one will wind up at the bottom of the credulity heap along with the one who cried "Wolf!"

If the latest report from Katmandu of mysterious tracks leading to the summit of Mount Everest fails to place us in a state of tremulous anticipation, it is because yeti footprints have a habit of remaining mysterious. On the most recent occasion they were reported by two Australians who, for all we know, were low on oxygen. Or high.

The monsters that prowl through the human mind must progress through various levels of credulity on the way from plausibility to ridicule, lodging where they can. They are graded — seeded like tennis players, according to our inclination. We should think that aliens from outer space are top-seeded at the moment, thanks to Orson Welles, NASA and the

conspiracy theory which persuades many people that little critters from Mars are being held secretly in the Nevada desert by a government that *Dare Not Let the Truth be Known*.

Werewolves, Count Dracula and vampires are downscale monsters, but earn far more respect (outside Ireland) than goblins, fairies and pixies. Ghosts of various kinds can still produce a shiver of credulity — rather more readily than the Loch Ness Monster which, by reason of superior public relations work, has a distinct edge on the Sasquatch and Ogopogo.

We have not even touched upon the Wild Man of Hubei (a Chinese cousin of the yeti), the Jersey Devil (neither beast nor man nor spirit, but a hellish brew of all three, reported the first observer in 1790), the dinosaur-like creature believed to make its home in the Congo, or the Turtle Lake Monster of Saskatchewan (you can't miss it — it's three to nine metres long, smooth-skinned or scaly, with a face like a dog, horse or pig.)

When they catch one, we'll know for sure.

**B8 Lifestyles/Outdoors**

Wednesday, January 30, 1985    Saskatoon, Saskatchewan    Star-Phoenix

# Manitobans aid starving deer population

SASKATCHEWAN is not the only place where deer are having a tough time dealing with a long, cold winter.

Mel Dagg, writing in the Winnipeg Free Press, reports an emergency feeding program is under way in Manitoba. He says the provincial government has committed \$144,000 and the Manitoba Wildlife Federation \$50,000 to the cause. In addition, donations of feed, time and money are being sought from farmers and other members of the general public.

Dagg quotes wildlife managers as saying 30,000 to 40,000 deer would die without the emergency feeding program and many will die even with it.

On the same page, C.P. Barger, another outdoors writer, says the deer herd in Manitoba already stands at 100,000, exceeding the estimated carrying capacity



**Rambling Afield**

of existing habitat. With proper management, he argues, there would have been a more favorable deer season last fall, resulting in a heavier kill.

Quite obviously, if the deer herd was not at capacity, there would be at least some more browse available for the remaining animals, improving their chances of survival.

"The concept of proper game management is to have the surplus harvested in such a way as to offer the greatest benefit to mankind... Sportsmen are asking how much longer they are to be victimized by hindsight game management," he says.

IT'S THAT TIME of year when homeowners should consider the little birds.

Both feeding them now to help them survive the rest of winter and preparing for spring arrival of the songbirds.

Wildlife has suffered through about four months of winter now, some of it pretty tough. The cold, the snow and the dampness have taken their toll of fat reserves and the food supply is thinning out.

There's one thing, though, if you start providing a little food for them, it has to be continued on

a regular basis. If birds are trained to come to your yard for some easy pickings, they must expect to find it there, not be disappointed and left to scrounge on their own after they've learned where to come for it.

While you enjoy the winter birds rustling around the yard, you might start planning for spring. Bird houses, feeder stations and bird baths all help to lure songbirds in to make the home a little more pleasant.

Andre Lerendu of the Saskatoon Purple Martin Club says those birds appear as early as mid-April, just in time to begin saving their human friends from the mosquito hordes. The martins, largest member of the swallow family, eat about 2,000 mosquitoes a day, meaning a colony in the back yard can be a double blessing.

Lerendu says the martins prefer open areas so houses should not be set into trees but well away from them and any other structures. And, if you do erect houses to lure the swallows, make sure sparrows are discouraged. He says the sparrows steal martins' homes, destroy eggs and even attack baby martins.

In other words, you can have martins or sparrows, not both.

LAST SUMMER, a couple of anglers working **Turtle Lake** reported seeing what has come to be known as the **Turtle Lake monster**. Only they said they were convinced it was a giant sturgeon.

Even though they provided a logical explanation for the **monster** stories, the two met some derision from those who wouldn't believe sturgeon could grow that

big — the pair suggested it was at least four metres long.

Well, one of them, Don Wiley of 1688 Cassino Ave., called the other day.

The November-December issue of B.C. Outdoors magazine included a picture of a 462-pound, three-metre long sturgeon which was taken in the Columbia River. It was estimated to be between 60 and 90 years old and was taken on a 450-pound test nylon line with a 10-centimetre hook by a pair of fellows fishing from a 4½-metre aluminum.

After studying the picture, Wiley is more convinced than ever that it was a sturgeon they saw last summer — one that matched or exceeded the **monster** taken in British Columbia. And he also is certain there is more than one of them lurking in the depths of **Turtle Lake**.

## Our Sighting of the Turtle Lake Monster

**Turtle Lake, Saskatchewan, Canada**

**-Rob and Dave Grosse (brothers)**

Our parents Rob and Anita Grosse owned a cabin on Coon Ave at Kopp's Cove Turtle Lake Saskatchewan between 1978 and 1987. We were a family from Saskatoon that spent our weekends and vacations at the cabin. Our father Robert Grosse Sr. was a heating plant/boiler operator at Sears Midtown Plaza, and our mother Anita Grosse spent time as a Social Worker with Saskatchewan Social Services, Sask Abilities, and the Kinsmen Children's Centre.

These were defining years for us young kids and I have many many fond memories of vacation life at Turtle Lake.



**Rob and Dave, fort building at Turtle Lake**



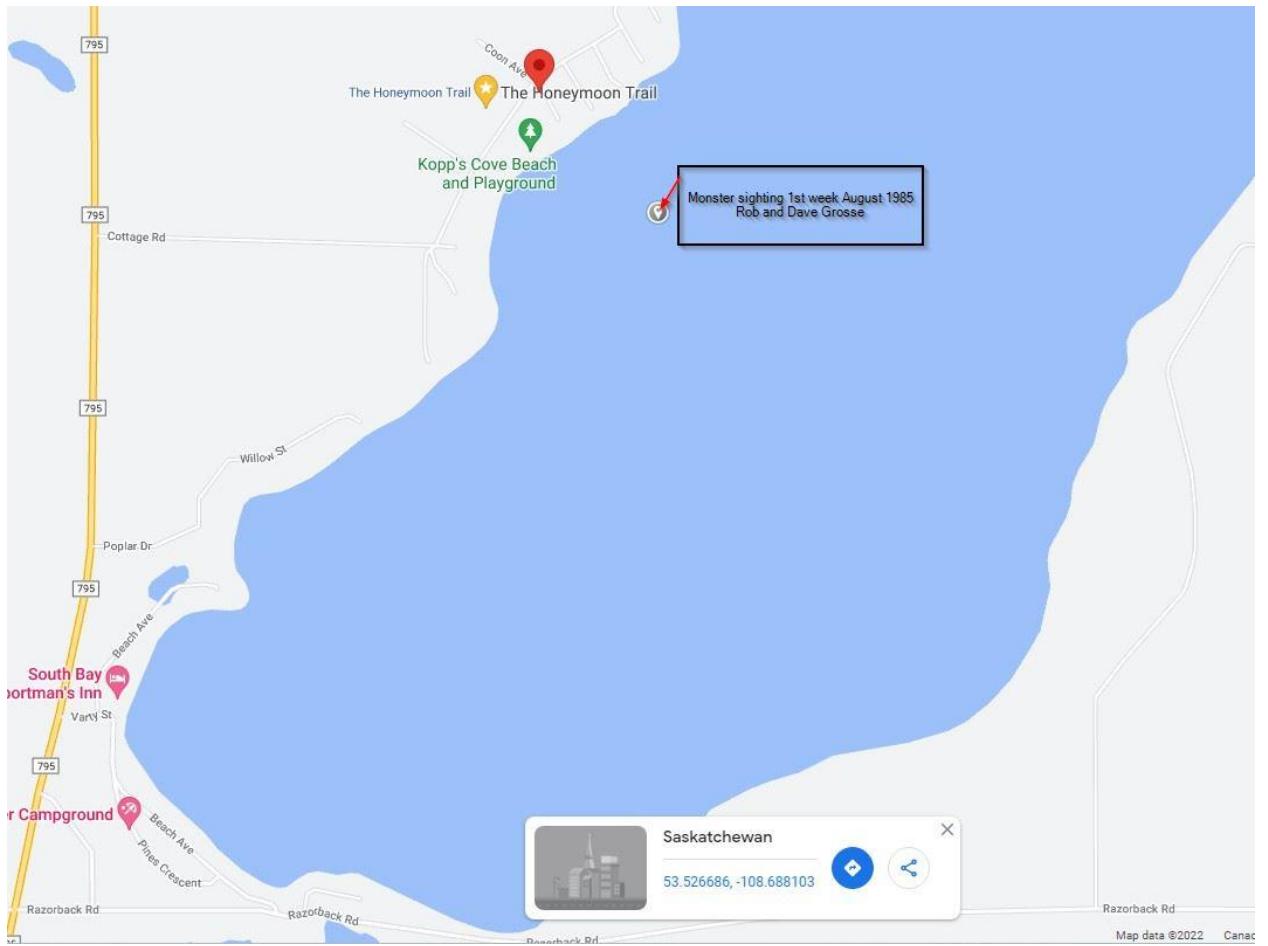
*Young Dave, mother Anita, Rob, and friend Daniel*

As young pre-teens, my brother Dave and I were graced with a sighting of the Turtle Lake Monster August of 1985, while out for a ride in a powered SportsPal canoe. Dad had recently decided we were old enough to go out on the lake short distances on our own (I was about 12 and Dave about 10). This particular evening, the lake was exceptionally calm, and we could not resist but head out for a canoe ride.



*Young Dave and Rob enjoying their newly found freedom as young pre-teens; sighting area in background*

While still in the bay off the shores of Kopp's Cove, we spotted what we initially perceived to be a stubby log, or half a telephone or power pole - floating at a distance out in the bay. The creature's location is provided in the following diagram:



We were using a small 4 horsepower engine and always had some rope in the canoe, so we decided to head to the object and tow it ashore where it would be out of harm's way for other boaters. (We were kids spending time on the lake; what else would young pre-teens with newly found freedom and lots of time on their hands think of doing?)

As we approached the object, we were shocked to realise it wasn't a log; we were actually seeing the dorsal section of a large fish. If memory serves (2022), it was maybe 7 to 10 feet in length. Using the depth map at the end of this document, it was on the surface above approx 5 metres of water (i.e. essentially very close to the 5m isobar seen on the depth map).



*(Artistic impression)*

The creature was stationary; little movement, if it all. It was dark in tint, smooth yet scaly. We saw ridges, scales, and a ridged back. Dave remembers a dorsal fin/tail. We do not remember seeing the head. Rather than staying and watching it (we were young, excited, and knew exactly what we were seeing as the legend of the TLM had been around for decades), we jetted back to the shore as fast as the little 4 horsepower Johnson would take us. We ran up the gravel road of Coon Avenue (flailing our arms and overexcited) to tell our parents what we saw.



*The family cabin on Coon Ave Kopp's Cove*



*Brothers Brian, Rob, Dave. and family pet Brandy*

When we got back to the beach with parents in tow, the large creature had submerged and was gone (It would have been visible from the bottom of Coon Avenue).

**National Tourism Week May 9-11**

## Turtle Lake's mythical monster

Monster stories have been circulating about Turtle Lake for as long as anyone can remember, and throughout the years there have been numerous individual sightings or encounters.

Mike Denny, a retired commercial fisherman who has lived at the south end of the lake for many years, has never seen the monster, but has heard plenty of stories about it. He tells of Indians who knew about a huge, dark fish but were afraid to go after it.

As a boat once landed on shore, a girl started to step on a log on her way out of the boat. Suddenly, the "log" took off. The girl remembered seeing one big eye, which continued to haunt her for some time after.

Two of the girls who had a sighting each went to separate rooms after the encounter to draw pictures of what they had seen. Their drawings apparently looked remarkably simi-

lar.

Another story involved a police diver who was looking for a drowned man. He came out of the water and refused to go down again, reporting dark holes and caves and huge fish that wouldn't get out of the way.

There have been sightings from the window of a restaurant on the lake, from airplanes and from motor boats. People in boats have tried to pursue the monster, but have always been out-run.

Mike Denny remains skeptical though open-minded about monster stories. With all the boating activity that now goes on in the lake, he wonders why there haven't been any accidents where boaters or water-skiers have run into the creature.

"I almost saw the monster once," said Denny. "A friend called me to the lake shore to report that he saw something strange. In the distance I

could see two humps, and the more I looked at it, the more convinced I was that I was seeing the monster. Then one hump flew away, and a few minutes later the other hump flew away. It simply turned out to be two ducks.

"But had I left sooner, I would have probably gone away contented that I had seen the Monster."

The most commonly heard "rational" explanation for this elusive creature is that it is an overgrown sturgeon that somehow got stranded in the lake. Sturgeon are found in other lakes in Saskatchewan so it is not inconceivable that there are one or more inhabiting the waters of Turtle Lake.

In the last few years, a great deal of development has taken place around Turtle Lake with the establishment of a number of cottage subdivisions. People come to swim, water ski and boat, but one of the major attractions is the fishing. Northern pike like to feed in the weed beds both in shallow parts at

the northern end of the lake and along the shore. Every year there are reports of pike being caught that weigh up to 15 pounds or more. Large numbers of walleye have also been stocked in the lake.

Winter recreation is also popular, and many ice fishermen come to participate in the annual fish derby held in March. Another derby is held each summer in July.

While most of the development at Turtle Lake is made up of private cottages, there is a government campsite on the northeast side which has electrified sites and picnic grounds, a campground and small motel at Blatz-Nolin beach on the southwest corner, and cabins and cottages at Turtle Lake Lodge on the east side.

The increasing activity at the lake doesn't seem to have bothered the monster, as many of the sightings have taken place in recent years. According to one theory, the monster seems to become active in hot weather.

# Scientists take to water to hunt Loch Ness monster

Phillips is a Saskatoon freelance writer.

SINCE WATER IS an alien environment to us, it inspires both fascination and fear. Sometimes these emotions are combined under special circumstances, and sea or lake monsters are created.

The most famous of all has to be the Loch Ness Monster. Nessie has a museum devoted to her and she attracts thousands of tourists each year. In the past, there have been different attempts to once and for all prove or disprove her existence.

This year, from Friday to Sunday, Operation Deepscan is set to cover the entire length of Loch Ness using the most sensitive sonar equipment available. The plan calls for 20 power boats carrying the Lowrance X-16 Computer Graph Recorder to sweep the lake with a "sonar curtain" by running in a line abreast for the lake's entire 37-kilometre length.

The objectives for the search are four-fold. They hope to study unidentified fish that earlier searches have discovered. They want to graph the deepest water, which is more than 216 metres deep. A fish population and distribution study will also result. Lastly, unusual thermal patterns will be examined. Of special interest will be any unusual creatures that show up on the graphs.

Those who believe in the existence of Nessie probably will not be greatly affected if no monster shows up. It is interesting that a device designed to aid fishermen is being used as a special tool to hunt for sea monsters.

YOU DO NOT have to go as far as Scotland to search for unusual aquatic monsters. For many years now, Turtle Lake has been home to one named, rather uni-

Wayne  
**PHILLIPS**



## Fishing

imaginatively, the Turtle Lake Monster.

Several years ago, I received a clipping from the Edmonton Journal about it. The sender knew my father and I fished Turtle Lake extensively, especially during the winter, so she jokingly wrote a note on the bottom telling us to take special care that the monster did not get us.

How these stories of monsters actually get started is a mystery. According to the locals around Turtle Lake, there have been many different sightings. Besides sightings, stories and tales of actual contact are often traced to logically explainable reasons and phenomena.

In the case of Turtle Lake, the monster has been reported to be a sturgeon. It is believed the sturgeon travelled up the Turtle River from the Battle River long ago. Since the level of Turtle dropped

dramatically, the sturgeon, or sturgeons, became trapped in Turtle Lake.

I know two people who have seen very large unusual creatures while fishing on the lake.

The late Paul Gatzke saw what he thought was a floating log while on the way to Indian Point to fish. When he got close to it, the 'log' suddenly submerged and swam away.

The other evening, I called Joe Ozemlowski, a man who has fished for Turtle Lake's large pike for many years. Several years ago, Ozemlowski, his wife Lena and Keith McCullough were trolling on the north end near Sandy Bay.

McCullough, who was using a very heavy line, tied into something very big. When he got it near the boat, Ozemlowski says it was between two and 2½ metres long and looked about 30 to 35 centimetres across the back. Ozemlowski never saw the head because the line, lure and head were covered with moss and weeds. It broke free before it was landed.

As long as there are people who want to believe in lake monsters, these monsters will live. They add a special atmosphere and mystique to some lakes. Next time you hook something large on Turtle Lake, hang on. Who knows?

# No fish, grouse got away, but had fun

By Wayne Phillips

*Phillips is a Saskatoon freelance writer.*

THE LAST TIME I saw John Kowerchuk was in 1983 when we said goodbye in Yellowknife after a terrific fishing trip out to the East Arm on Great Slave Lake.

On the Friday before Thanksgiving, we picked up Kowerchuk and his wife, Kathy, at the airport. The plan was to go up to Meadow Lake to spend a couple of days visiting, hunting upland game and fishing.

Since the retelling and reliving of past fishing and hunting trips carried far into the night, the grouse hunt got a late start Saturday. We drove out toward Neeb and the Chitek Lake area. Before we saw any grouse, we noticed an unusually high number of hawks and owls.

**Wayne  
PHILLIPS**



## Fishing

Throughout the day, we found grouse along the road and on the many bush trails in the area. The majority of the 17 were bagged were roughies although there were a few spruce hens, but the big surprise was the large number of sharptails we saw.

Even in the north, game faces the dilemma of progress. Many of the older winding roads are being replaced with new, high roadbeds. The old roads with grass and

shrub-filled ditches provided good grouse habitat. Rebuild the road, make big, wide ditches and you reduce the number of grouse. With the new road north of Leovalle, one of my favorite bird spots is gone, at least for a few years.

If Kowerchuk's laughter was any indication, I seemed to provide no end of mirth Saturday. First, I missed a grouse eight paces away because I held too high. I did not want to damage the bird, held extra high and got lots of barbs thrown my way when it disappeared into the trees.

Then, on another trail, I commented it was so open there would be no grouse on it. We saw a bird flush, stopped and flushed several other sharpies from the bushes. Once again, all I heard was, "stick to fishing because you know nothing about grouse."

On Sunday, we went looking for

splake near Meadow Lake. The three anglers we met at the lake had fished for over 15 hours the day before and had caught only one egg-laden female. The fish were in the pre-spawn and not interested in lures at all.

We decided to try the Beaver River for pike or walleye but struck out there as well.

It was a real treat to spend some time with John Kowerchuk. Of all the people I have been with in the out-of-doors, he is one who just infects everyone with his laughter and sense of humor.

The splake should have finished spawning by now and be anxious to attack your flies and lures. Bernie Mathias spotted a glaring error in my column about the Turtle Lake monster. The Turtle River definitely does not flow into the Battle River. It flows into the North Saskatchewan.

## Everything you always wanted to know about Canada

By Will Chabon

of Weekender

**Who is John Robert Colombo and why does he write so many books?**

Colombo is a Toronto writer who works out of his North York home "at a computer surrounded by wire baskets, cardboard boxes and incubators full of paper," as one magazine profile put it last year.

This is not to imply he is nothing more than a trivia buff, though. For 20 years, he was editor of a literary quarterly called *The Tamarrack Review* and has been an adviser to the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council.

Probably the best-known of the 70-odd books that he has written, compiled, edited or translated is Colombo's *Canadian Quotations*, with 6,000 entries from 2,500 people.

Last fall, he brought out *Mysterious Canada*, a 320-page collection of strange and unexplained events from across the country. Entries from Saskatchewan, for example, included the *Turtle Lake Monster*, Indian medicine wheels and a dirigible-shaped UFO reported near Regina in 1968.

**So what's he up to now?**  
His latest book continues in this vein. It's called *999 Questions About Canada*. Not surprisingly, it consists of one shy of 1,000 questions covering people, places and things in this country.

**What are some sample questions?**  
Here's No. 35: *In which Canadian city was opened the first asylum for the insane?*

St. John, N.B., in December, 1848.

The second such hospital was the Toronto Lunatic Asylum, opened two years later.

**What is Canada's leading tourist attraction?**

If you emphasize the word "tourist," then it's Niagara Falls, although Colombo adds that Toronto's Eaton Centre shopping complex and the West Edmonton Mall are in the running, too. Problem is, how do you calculate who of their patrons are tourists and who are local folks?

**What is the northernmost fortress on the continent?**

Prince of Wales's Fort, erected in 1680 near the site of present-day Churchill, Man.

**Is Canada a good country in which to be born?**

A 1987 study done by The Economist, a British magazine, put us fifth out of 48 countries, after the U.S., France, West Germany and Italy. This study attempted to take into account, not quality-of-life factors, but a different assortment of factors. Writes Colombo: "Canada scored well in gross national product, growth, limited inflation, cost of living, human rights, life expectancy, literacy and population with high education. But it did poorly in 'the philistine factor' and the yawn index." Canada was awarded bonus points for picturesque scenery and a most desirable passport."

Take this survey with a grain of salt. It awarded its booby prize to Zimbabwe, which surely isn't the worst place to live.

**Which country is more metropolitan, Canada or the U.S.?**

Surprise! We are, Colombo says 56 per cent of Canucks live in cities with 100,000 or more persons, versus only 25 per cent of Americans.

**Which countries receive the most Canadian foreign aid?**

Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan, Ethiopia, Ghana and India.

**What is the most distinctively Canadian name that a Canadian mother can give her son?**

"Murray," according to a British linguist tracked down by Colombo, who writes "apparently Murray is more popular with Canadian mothers than with mothers elsewhere in the English-speaking world."

**Who was the first member of the British Royal Family to visit what is now Canada?**

Prince William (later William IV). While in the Royal Navy, he set foot in eastern Newfoundland in 1786. Later, he visited the British naval base at Halifax.

**Why did Mohawk chief Joseph Brant refuse to kiss the hand of British King George III?**

In a move ripe with historical significance even today, Brant felt that he, too, was a monarch in his own land. "The action scandalized the English courtiers, but endeared him to the British monarch, perhaps because, gallantly, Brant offered to kiss the hand of Queen Charlotte instead," writes Colombo. "Thereafter, the English king and the regal Indian were to be fast friends."

**Are there any flaws in this book?**

Sadly, yes.

The ones involving Saskatchewan are the easiest to spot. For instance,

Question No. 39, which discusses the population densities of the various provinces, says Newfoundland has the lowest density, with 1.5 persons per square kilometre. But a mere 157 questions later, he says "the province of Saskatchewan has the lowest population density of any region of the country with 1.7 persons per square kilometre. Howzat?"

And for that matter, what about the Northwest Territories and the Yukon? Neither are exactly packed with people.

Incidentally, Canada as a whole has a population density of 2.6 persons per square kilometre, roughly one-tenth of the United States' density.

Another error in this book mistakenly has the headquarters for the RCMP's "F" Division in Saskatoon. Unless the massive red brick RCMP building on Dewdney Avenue West has been recently put onto a flatbed truck and hustled north, division headquarters is still in Regina.

Finally, question No. 533 says that the Snowbirds Air Demonstration team, based at CFB Moose Jaw, flies the "Tudor" jet. Propwash!

The correct name for this aircraft is "Tutor," a fitting name for a jet used to train new pilots.

And finally, John Diefenbaker

worried that Canada's new flag,

adopted in 1965, would be confused

with the flag of which foreign country?

Peru. Its flag has red bars flanking a white panel on which sits

Peru's coat of arms.



COVER STORY



—S-P Photo by Dave Yanko

The residents of Livelong have made butcher Paul Bamber a believer in their community spirit!

## Livelong lives up to its name

By Dave Yanko  
of the Star-Phoenix

LIVELONG — Some were waiting for tombstones to sprout on Main Street when a grain elevator burned down and the railroad left this hamlet of 100 more than a decade ago.

The same naysayers may have been tempted to sound the death knell again several times since then.

The Red and White store closed two years ago. The hotel went out of business about six months ago. Then Livelong's sole cafe suffered a largely uninsured fire in August.

But by the time Saint Nicholas circled the town during his annual rounds this year, he saw fresh footprints leading in and out of the hotel, the grocery store and the cafe.

In short, Livelong won't say die. "They raised \$11,000 for me," says Helen Pruden, owner of Pruden's Burger Stand, gutted by fire Aug. 2 and reopened in early December.

"There were private donations, and they had two bingos.

"The day after the fire, the ladies got together and donated pies and cakes and ran it (a makeshift cafe at the curling rink) the same way I did."

Proceeds went to Pruden.

Livelong's district recreation association came up with a cheque for \$5,000 more.

Pruden says she was reluctant to accept the charity, but association members convinced her she'd earned the assistance through her many contributions to the community.

"They said to me: 'It's time you took,'" she recalls.

Local butcher Paul Bamber, formerly a businessman in Saskatoon, Regina and Edmonton, has come to understand Livelong in the eight years he's resided in the community, located about 95 kilometres northwest of North Battleford.

"She (Pruden) is part of the community. When the rubber met the road, they were there for her."

"People here work together, play together, laugh together, and today they're crying together at a funeral."

Walter and Mary Gobert, farmers from the Lloydminster district, never really planned to get into the retail grocery business.

But when the old Red and White store came under the auctioneer's gavel in nearby Glaslyn not long ago,

it was a deal Walter couldn't turn down.

"The media has all these programs on about the farmer's need to diversify. Well, I'm diversifying," says Gobert.

Bob and Lillian Vail, from British Columbia, reopened the hotel during the second week of December.

"We're going to have a joint grand opening with the new store, sometime in January," says Bob.

Gobert's new store — he's calling it Bunny's Family Store — will have a sale, and Vail expects to offer live entertainment, crib and kaiser tournaments, and "free prizes" in his bar.

Gene Rindero, who owns the other grocery store in town, is not concerned about competition.

"I hope they do well. Competition is always good," says Rindero.

A saving grace for old and revived businesses in Livelong, and something the Goberts and Vails are counting on, could be tourism.

About 12 kilometres north of the hamlet lies the beautiful and growing resort area of Turtle Lake.

Like the legendary monster said to inhabit the depths of the lake, Livelong lives on.

COVER STORY

## What's in the lake: monsters or sun-worshipping sturgeons?

By Dave Yanko  
of the Star-Phoenix

How do you determine the age of the Turtle Lake Monster? Why, you simply saw out a hunk of his dorsal fin and count the growth rings.

At least, that's how one finds out the age of a sturgeon. Just like a tree.

And many believe a lumbering, old, caviar-producing sturgeon is the real culprit behind the numerous sightings of the "monsters."

"The oldest sturgeon I'm aware of was 44 years old," Saskatchewan biologist Rob Wallace. "That was in the lower South Saskatchewan (River)."

Unity district farmer Gordon Watt agrees with the notion that it's old. But it's not a completely satisfying explanation for what he encountered two summers ago at Turtle Lake, located about 120 kilometres northwest of North Battleford.

Watt was fishing with his daughter and grandson when he spotted something in the water about 10 to 15 metres ahead of the boat from which they were casting.

"Its head came up, it's back came up, and it rolled over," Watt recalled in an interview. "We never saw the tail."

He pointed out the creature to his daughter, Betsy Dearborn, and her son, Ryan. Both caught a glimpse of the thing before it disappeared beneath the surface.

"We were sort of amazed — thunderstruck, I guess," Watt said.

"Maybe it was a sturgeon, "but I'm not sure."

"Its head looked like a seahorse."

Astonished as they were at viewing the large lake-lurker, Watt and crew were far from petrified.

As soon as they gathered their wits, they moved to the point where the creature slipped under and trolled back and forth, unsuccessfully trying to snag it.

Garry Ashton, a former Saskatchewan who returned here for the Christmas holidays, says he once touched the thing with a paddle.

"I was on my jet boat at the time," recalls Ashton, whose family has owned a cottage at the lake for 30 years.

"I thought it was a dog in the wa-



S-P Illustration by Bill Clarke

ter, swimming."

"Its nose was sticking out of the water and I was going to grab it. But as I got closer, it went back down."

Ashton believes the "dog" was a huge sturgeon.

"What I saw was about five feet of it in the water."

"I think the Turtle Lake Monster just sturgeons sunning themselves on the surface."

Mary and Marcel DeRoo, who operate the Turtle Lake Lodge, say sightings of the monster may account for the monster legend.

Marcel says some people speculate young sturgeon swim down river, their normal habitat, and into the lake. Newly-built beaver dams may have blocked their return.

MORE ON PAGE A2

## A2 Local

Tuesday, January 8, 1991    Saskatoon, Saskatchewan    The Star-Phoenix

# Wanted: fisherman with camera ready

COVER STORY  
from Page A1

Mary says there's an average of one sighting of the monster each year.

For those who prefer science over legend, the sturgeon theory is an attractive one.

But it may have a hole in it.

Paul Naftel, director of the provincial fisheries branch, says sturgeons are bottom-feeding, bot-

tom-living fish.

"Very, very seldom have I ever heard of a sturgeon sunning itself on the surface, where it wasn't dead and floating."

The Saskatchewan and Churchill river systems are home to virtually all this province's sturgeons.

However, Naftel is aware of one being caught in Candle Lake about two decades ago and he says undoubtedly there are others in lakes fed by streams and rivers.

Speculation that young sturgeon

made their way to Turtle Lake and couldn't return because of beaver dams is "probably a good assessment," he says.

But he doesn't contend that accounts for the legend.

Naftel once spent a year doing depth soundings at Turtle Lake and "we never saw anything that would give us a clue" about the monster mystery.

"Mind you," he adds, "that lake is pretty big."

Wallace, one of Naftel's employees and a man who's been in-

volved in several studies of the ancient species, says sturgeons can live more than 65 years and grow to a weight of 200 kilograms.

They do prefer warm water. But he doesn't know whether the notion of "sturgeon as sun worshipper" holds any water. He says it's a possibility.

Until some boater is able to muster the wherewithal to reach for a camera at that crucial moment, the legend of the Turtle Lake Monster will live on.

Who knows, it may live on after that, too.

In 1990, a fictional children's book was released by author Jeni Mayer (Thistledown Press) using the Turtle Lake and its celebrated monster as the book's setting. Entitled "The Mystery of the Turtle Lake Monster", several reviews were published about the book over the years. Here is one example:

Regina Sun March 15, 1992, Page 9

9



## *Children's Book Reviews*

**Justin Daniels** was looking forward to a good summer at the lake with his friends Kiel and Katie Roland, but he had no idea it would be full of excitement and adventure in *The Mystery of the Turtle Lake Monster* (Thistledown, 1990). Saskatchewan writer Jeni Mayer presents a fast-paced thriller for children. Several people have spotted a strange creature with scaly green-black hide and four humps swimming in the peaceful waters of Turtle Lake. Tourists swarm the local hotels and campgrounds hoping to spot the monster. The Chamber of Commerce offers a reward of five thousand dollars to anyone who can prove the beast's existence. Justin, Kiel and Katie spot the beast from Justin's secret place on the lakeshore. It seems to have disappeared near Indian Point, but when the friends take a boat to the headland they find great danger. They face shipwreck, sabotage and menacing threats before they uncover the secret of the Turtle Lake monster. With a cliff-hanging ending to every chapter, this is an easy and appealing book for children nine years and older.

Many kids have had to deal with teasing and bullies. However, when Jeremy Thatcher ducked into Mr. Elives Magic Shop to escape the gang, he didn't expect to buy a beautiful multicolored sphere for only a quarter. He also didn't expect a list of instructions entitled "How to Hatch a Dragon's Egg." Intensely curious, Jeremy follows the instructions to expose the egg to the light of a full moon for three hours, and becomes **Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher** (Pocketbooks, 1991). Jeremy loves his beautiful dragonlet Tiamat, but taking care of her is an ordeal. She is always hungry and even an entire carton of milk doesn't keep her satisfied for long. Tiamat is sure that Jeremy's pet gerbils and guinea pigs are meant to be dragon-snacks and she terrorizes the household dog and cats. Luckily she is invisible to everyone except Jeremy and Mary Lou Hutton, but her telepathic communications with Jeremy prove extremely distracting in class. In fact Jeremy gets into so much trouble that he is forbidden to enter the special art contest he has been looking forward to all year. Is being a dragon hatcher really worth it? Bruce Colville tells a humorous magical tale.

Henry doesn't feel the least bit magical but his mother dispatches him to Wizard's Hall to study for a career in enchantment. Renamed Thornswallow, he resolves to try very hard to learn magic. Unfortunately, his spell-casting is hopeless and being tone-deaf, he cannot even chant properly. Thorny reluctantly decides to leave Wizard's Hall and his new friends but discovers that he is the one hundred and thirteenth student, and exactly that number of young wizards is needed to defeat the evil wizard Nettle and his Quilted Beast. The night of the confrontation draws near and a terrified Thornswallow has no idea what he will do. But he will try. Well-loved writer Jane Yolen has created an amusing tale of a school of magic and a very ordinary hero who turns out to be extraordinary in *Wizard's Hall* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991).

Clair Isaac  
Regina Public Library

## Perhaps it's 'pseudo' new

So... There is something new on the face of the Earth after all. What is described as an "entirely new" species of mammal has been discovered in the jungles of Vietnam. It is said to have characteristics resembling a cow, a horse, a goat and an antelope, all in one package. It has even been given a scientific name: "pseudoryx nghetinhensis."

If we were close to April Fool's day, all of this would sound like somebody's idea for a little joke. A British biologist insists it is no such thing. Nor, apparently, is there any suggestion the Vietnamese people who share their space with the creature are just setting up a tourist attraction. The scientist described the pseudoryx as a cowlike creature, with the glossy coat of a horse, the agility of a goat and the long horns of an antelope. He has not seen the creature. He claims, however, to have done tests on skulls, hides and teeth of specimens that have gone wherever pseudoryxes go when they leave this vale of tears. DNA tests on these items are said to confirmed that the beast is a "new" mammal.

The use of "new" in this context would, of course, be vigorously disputed by any self-respecting pseudoryx. Undoubtedly, it would point out that it is not "new," having been around the Vietnamese jungles for quite some time. Just because it took eons for a European to come on the scene, does not make the creature "new," any more than the land which Columbus "discovered" was some kind of "new world."

All that aside, the "discovery" of the pseudoryx raises interesting questions for other species. Perhaps tales about Saskatchewan's Turtle Lake monster will be received in future with less skepticism. The same might go for Bigfoot, Ogopogo and Nessie. If there are critters in Vietnam which combine features of the horse, cow, goat and antelope, the old sailors line to the effect of "Aye, lad, there be dragons" may not be so far out after all.

**TODAY IN HISTORY**

Compiled by Wayne Roberts

**25 YEARS AGO:** Pion-Era attendance was lagging. General manager Ray Johnson blamed the poor figures on the plight of farmers. But the weather also deserved a share of the blame. Heavy rain and unseasonable weather at the beginning of the week discouraged attendance.

**10 YEARS AGO:** Joe Jacobson, who had farmed along Turtle Lake since 1918, and his companion, Don Wylie of 1689 Cassino Ave., sighted what they believed to be the lake's monster. Native lore said a huge monster lurked in the lake.

Saskatoon Star Phoenix July 9 1997

## Website shows world real Sask.

By Joanne Paulson  
of The StarPhoenix

Saskatchewan is so much more than the view seen through the windshield of a car travelling along the TransCanada, Yellowhead or Highway 11, says Dave Yanko.

He is out to prove it to the world.

Yanko and his brother Paul, both journalists and avid Saskatchewan fans, have gone on line with the first tourism magazine exclusively about this province.

Virtual Saskatchewan On-line Magazine ([virtualsk.com](http://virtualsk.com)) has been in the works since last October, when the Yankos started collecting information from every corner of the province.

Since hitting the Internet May 16, Virtual Saskatchewan has been accessed by people from Korea, France, Australia, New Zealand and all over the United States and Canada. It has also won three awards.

While tourism information is available on a number of websites, the new virtual publication runs fully researched stories on topics ranging from Grey Owl's Cabin to the mythical Turtle Lake monster.

"We're not just aiming at attractions," said Yanko in a Tuesday interview.

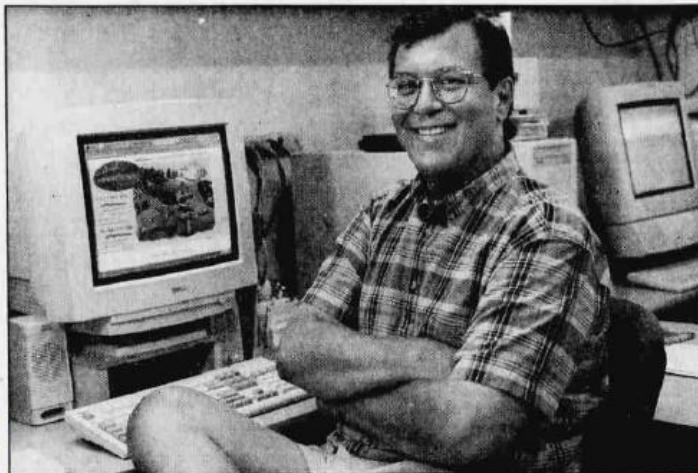
"We're also doing stories about people and artists to give people a sense of what Saskatchewan is like beneath the surface."

In the first edition, web browsers can read a story on the "typical Saskatchewan farm family," a topic fascinating to Europeans, explains Yanko.

While the Yankos provide the writing and researching, the digital publishing company zu.com provides the graphic design and computer knowledge.

Ryan Lejbak of zu.com and his staff have set up the site with a map illustrating the 11 provincial tourism regions.

"Every single community event in Saskatchewan is listed on the site, from the Jazz Festival — which gets



Dave Yanko wants to show web browsers the many sides of Saskatchewan

a lot of publicity — to lesser-known events like the Kinistino rodeo," said Lejbak.

Accompanying the stories and events are full-color photos and graphics to link browsers easily with other sites and pages. Like any publication, Virtual Saskatchewan solicits advertising and develops readership with its stories.

Soon, Yanko plans to add a fully interactive Saskatchewan road map — the first one on the Internet, as far as he knows.

The site was originally planned for renewal every two months, but people were already asking for more up-to-date information. A new edition will be posted every two weeks.

For Saskatchewanians, the website will help people choose vacation spots — whether for a long weekend or a full family holiday.

For browsers outside the province — and the country — Virtual Saskatchewan will introduce the many attractions available here, says Yanko.

One of those browsers nominated the site for a "Canadian Cool Site of the Day" award, which was given to Virtual Saskatchewan on Canada Day. Lejbak says this award is one of the more prestigious Internet awards available.

The site also won a Starting Point Hot Site Award out of Chicago; and one of 25 Laslo's Web Page Design Awards.

It was a long haul putting together the magazine's debut edition, but the awards gave the partners a big boost.

"It's all new," said Yanko, a former StarPhoenix editor and columnist. "We may be encountering the same

problems someone in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania is, but we have to figure this all out ourselves.

"We're learning to meld the skills Paul and I have with the skills at zu.com."

It is the right time to get into a tourism-related business, he adds, because tourism is the fourth-biggest industry in the nation, and the fastest-growing.

Yanko is reluctant to estimate how much affect his new magazine will have on the provincial industry, but feels there could be benefits.

"Inasmuch as we have introduced Saskatchewan... to people who have never heard of it before, there's a benefit right there."

"It's a great mix — the World Wide Web and tourism. Are we going to help Saskatchewan? I don't see how we couldn't."

**In the Domain of the Lake Monsters: The Search for the Denizens of the Deep**

*John Kirk*  
Softcover \$24.95

Somewhere in a Saskatchewan Lake lives an aggressive and fearless monster. Area residents describe the creature as a "horse-headed animal with a long neck" known to destroy the nets of fishermen. The place is Turtle Lake. Locals simply call it The Turtle Lake Monster.

Is it a monster or one of the many pre-historic looking sturgeons known to inhabit the lake? Details are sketchy and photographs are lacking. And so it goes.

The Turtle Lake Monster is just one of dozens of denizens of the deep chronicled in John Kirk's *In the Domain of the Lake Monsters*.

Predictably, Kirk devotes a large part of his work to the sightings of the most famous lake monsters — Ogopogo in Lake Okanagan, B.C., (of which he claims to have seen a videotape) and 'Nessie' the Loch Ness Monster.

Kirk provides a riveting account of his search for the elusive Ogopogo.

Just as interesting are the monsters that allegedly inhabit lakes around the world. Relying mostly on anecdotal evidence the sightings range from the monster of Lake Champlain to what could be the last of the duck-billed dinosaurs living in Chang Bai Tien Lake in China. If there is a strange lake animal anywhere in the world Kirk probably describes it in his book.

Some of the beasts come with catchy monikers: Big Wally of Wallowa Lake, Oregon and Slimy Slim of Payette Lake Idaho.

Are these real or the products of tourist promoters' fertile minds?

Don't bother accusing Kirk of making things up, he is passionate in his belief of pre-historic lake animals and wonders why scientists don't take a greater interest in exploring unknown creatures.

Most disappointing is the lack of pictures.

It would be too easy to make fun of these fish stories. Still, even the most skeptical minds will find this an interesting read. At the very least you might think twice before dipping your toe into Turtle Lake!

Reviewed by Costa Manos

# Catching the biggest fish in the whole world

This week's column is the story of three fish. One was caught in Thailand, one in Ontario and one in Saskatchewan. The Thai fish was a monster-sized catfish and the Ontario fish was a huge lake sturgeon, but in the eyes of Connor Parker Cates, the pike he caught was the biggest of them all.

Newspapers around the world carried the story of the two Thai fishermen from Chiang Khong who pulled an unbelievably large catfish from the Mekong River. This catfish might well be the largest freshwater fish ever caught in world. It was over two metres (nine feet) long. It weighed 293.6 kilograms (or 646 pounds). No matter how you look at it, that is a real mess of catfish.

An attempt was made to release the fish, but it died before they could get it back into the water. The fish was then cut up and the villagers enjoyed dining on catfish.

Our second fish story is about a big lake sturgeon caught in Black Sturgeon Lake in Ontario. Since these swim in some local lakes, you could well be reading a story like this concerning a Saskatchewan angler. For example, the Turtle Lake monster likely a sturgeon that was trapped in the lake when it could no longer get down the river.

Cam Coleman battled the sturgeon for 90 minutes before he was able to release the fish. There is no way of knowing the exact weight of the sturgeon since it was released



Wayne  
**PHILLIPS**

without being officially weighed. A sturgeon that weighed 76 kilograms (168 pounds) was 175 centimetres (69 inches) long with a girth of 91 centimetres (36 inches). Coleman's fish was 215 centimetres (85 inches) long with a girth of 88 centimetres (35 inches). It is likely that Coleman's sturgeon weighed in at just under 100 kilograms, or around 200 plus pounds.

Combined, these two fish total near 500 kilograms, or 1,000 pounds. But when it comes to "big" fish, often size does not enter the question. If we think back to catching our first fish, it was a fish of mammoth proportions. My first pike seemed to be bigger than me.

When our young neighbor Connor came to talk to me the other day, his smile covered his whole face. The reason for his smile was he had just caught his first fish. The digital photograph shows a serious looking seven-year old holding a small pike.

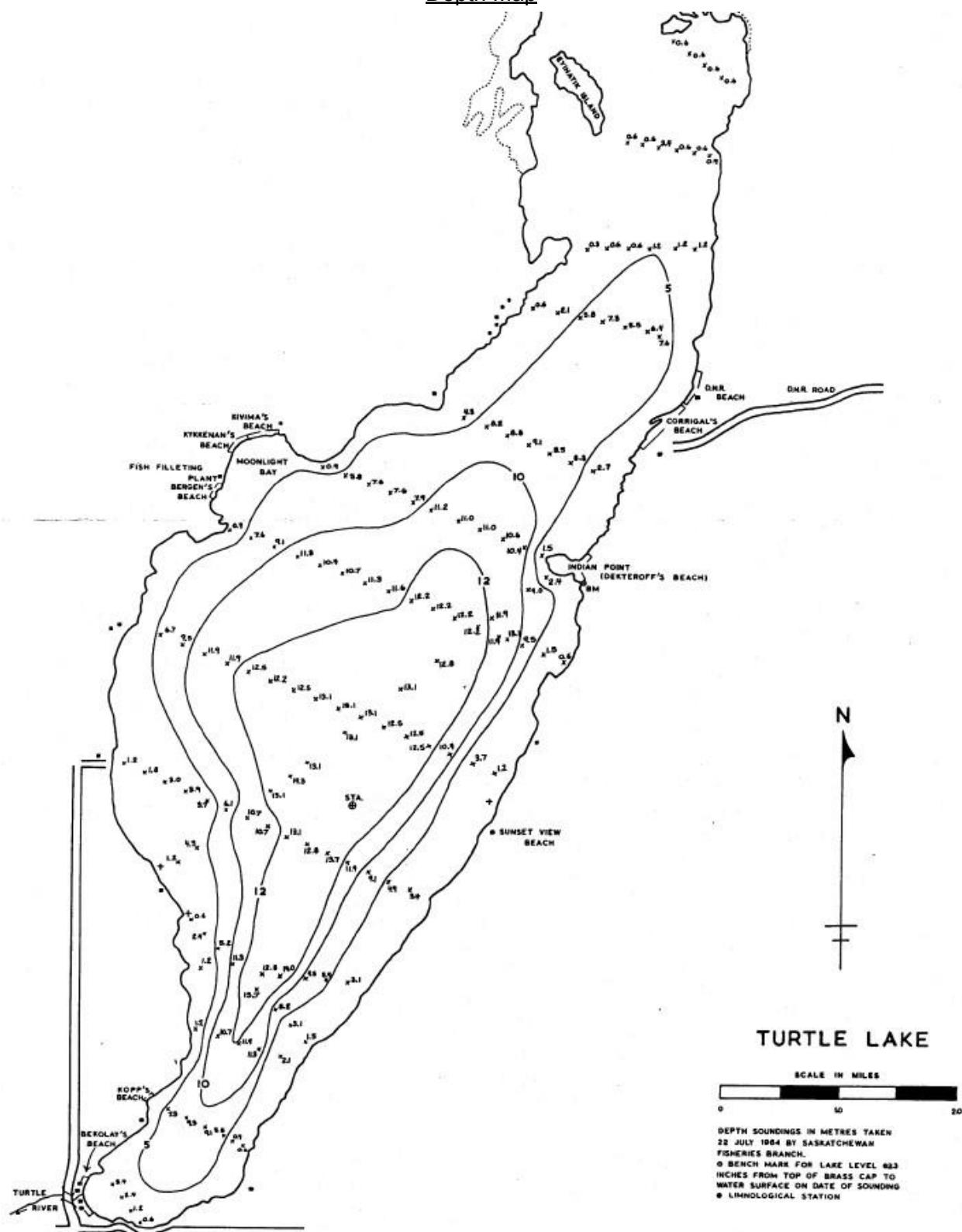
When he told me the story of catching the pike, his excitement bubbled over. I have long believed that when it comes to taking youngsters fishing, it does not matter how

big the fish are. Your first fish is always big, whether it be a perch, walleye or pike. What matters is that you take the time to get kids outdoors, so they can try their hands at activities like fishing.

Sometime this week or next, I plan to take Connor, his sister Zoë and their dad down to Diefenbaker to try our luck at catching more fish. I know that Zoë will be just as excited as Connor was when she latches onto her first fish.

Do not let summer pass by without taking some kids fishing. Their enthusiasm and sense of wonder will fill you with a renewed appreciation for our incredible natural world. Get out there and go fishing with kids.

## Depth Map



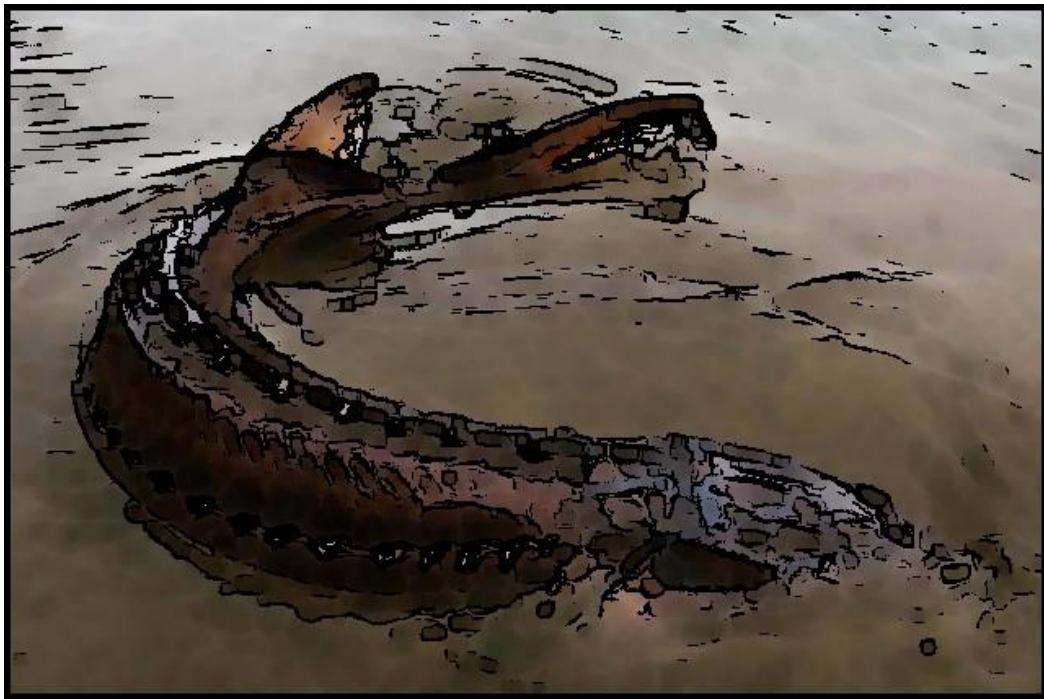


1980's era souvenir from Turtle Lake

### Epilogue

It is said that every great legend has some kernel of truth behind it. It's my hope with this anthology, that the legend of the Turtle Lake Monster will live on, well into the other great unknown - the future.

Nothing stirs the imagination of a child more than stories of a great creature stalking the depths of a Canadian lake. This publication is therefore dedicated to the world's children - the young minds who will soon be the custodians of this and indeed all stories from their ancestors.



*(artistic impression)*



*(2020 visit, Kopp's Cove, facing North)*

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### **Acknowledgements**

-Special Thanks to Lisa Thomson of Saskatoon for proofreading.

### **Additional Reading**

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*Ensuring the legend lives on; Sharing family history and the story of the TLM with my son and daughters in 2020/21.*

*Robert Grosse (BSc, BFA)  
Jan 17 2023 edition*