

Tiny Tot Toads Trundling Along and Color Me Brown

Well things sure have changed in the last week or two. My computer was down for a while. This ten year old relic and I have spent a good many hours together and with a little help from Northpoint computers of Concord we are partners again.

Lots have happened in the last two weeks. My daughter and her family and her friends from Kansas with their four boys all enjoyed the 4th weekend at our camp in Maine. The six 3 to 10 year olds, including my 4 and 6 year old granddaughters, had a blast. While back here at home the thermometer was pegged in the mid 90's our camp on the tucked away lake not far from the Maine coast was very comfortable. Swimming, fishing, kayaking, more swimming, paddle boat riding and evening camp fires will no doubt leave a lasting impression on the little ones. And stir into the pot a couple of snapping turtles, some frogs and hundreds of tadpoles in the swamp out back... well it is pretty close to heaven for young and old. I mostly just took it all in. I have spent my life studying animals and their behavior. These scurrying critters were fun to watch and switched my mind back some 56 years when I first fished this lake. Where did time go? I hope my grand kids enjoy a lifetime of this lake and all it has to offer with fish galore, eagles and ospreys, and a star filled sky at night.

We are now into our sixth day of a heat wave hitting 90. In just these past few days the lawns and fields around have turned brown. We are going into the third week here at my house with hardly any measurable rain. Thunder storms have drenched spots not three miles from here. But not a drop here. Fortunately my mom has a deep well and has been keeping our garden quenched of thirst. But the recently hayed fields around me and the pasture at Yeaton's farm has turned mud brown.

Yesterday I picked my first cukes! I quickly chilled them and sliced a couple into my first cucumber sandwich of the summer. Oh life is so good right now with fresh vegs from the garden. I have picked chard, radishes and peas as well. Peppers and potatoes are close behind.

I headed out late yesterday morning down a shaded trail leading into the park for an hour hike. A swarm of deer flies was about some of the time. I leave them alone, and they pretty much me, except for those that land and bite. At the far end of my hike the trail came alive with tiny tot toads as I passed a now nearly dry wetland. How quickly the vernal pools have dried this year. And these baby toads have their legs some two weeks earlier than usual. It is not until the third week of July that I would expect to see them. But there they were skittering across the trail. I couldn't help but to bend down and cup one in my hand for a brief study of this so fragile life. These baby toads, just minutes out of the nearby wetland, are smaller than a pencil eraser. Yet a few may live to be twenty something. Just before I made it back to my truck a young garter snake lay in my path. I just can't help myself, so I slowly reached down to pick up the snake for a closer look too. I love wiggly live things. From tiny tot toads and bristling bears to magnificent monstrous moose I have caught, and released, them all.