

# **FISH STORIES**

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Fish Stories by Henry Abbott

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**HENRY ABBOTT**

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By  
**HENRY ABBOTT**

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## Preface

**A**N ALLEGED humorist once proposed the query, "Are all fishermen liars, or do only liars go fishing?" This does not seem to me to be funny. It is doubtless true that a cynical attitude of suspicion and doubt is often exhibited on the recital of a fishing exploit. I believe the joke editors of magazines and newspapers are responsible for the spread of the propaganda of ridicule, skepticism and distrust of all fish yarns, regardless of their source. The same fellows have a day of reckoning ahead, for the circulation of that ancient but still overworked mother-in-law joke.

It is quite possible that some amateur fishermen, wishing to pose as experts, are guilty of expanding the size or number of their catch, upon reporting the same. But I cannot conceive of a motive sufficient to induce one skilled in handling the rod to lie about his fish. The truth always sounds better and in the case of a fish story, truth is often stranger than any fish fiction.

In my own experience and observation I have found that the more improbable a fish story sounds the more likely it is to be true. The in-

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credulous attitude of the average auditor, also, is discouraging, and often reacts against himself, as thus some of the very best fish stories are never told. To me, it seems a pity that through these Huns of history many charming and instructive tales of adventure should be lost to literature and to the unoffending part of the public.

The fellows whose exploits are here set down, seldom mention their fishing experiences. They are not boastful, and never exaggerate. They do not speak our language. I have, therefore, undertaken to tell their fish stories for them.

H. A.



## Fish Stories

by

Henry Abbott

**B**IGE had the oars and was gently and without a splash dipping them into the water, while the boat slowly glided along parallel to the shore of the lake. We had been up around the big island and were crossing the bay at the mouth of Bald Mountain Brook, which is the outlet of the pond of that name, located in a bowl shaped pocket on the shoulder of Bald Mountain three miles away. I was in the stern seat of the boat with a rod and was casting toward the shore, hoping to lure the wily bass from his hiding place under rocky ledge or lily pad, when I discovered another and a rival fisherman.

He was operating with an aeroplane directly over our heads and about two



**The Osprey**

hundred feet above the lake. Slowly sailing in circles, with an occasional lazy flap of wings to maintain his altitude, and at intervals uttering his sharp, piercing, hunting cry, the osprey had a distinct advantage over us, as with his telescopic eye he could penetrate the lake to its bottom and could distinctly

see everything animate and inanimate in the water within his hunting circle. He could thus, accurately, locate his prey, while we could not see deeply into the water and were always guessing. We might make a hundred casts in as many places, where no bass had been for hours. So I reeled in my line, laid the rod down in the boat and gave my entire attention to watching the operations of the fish hawk.

For about ten minutes the aeroplane fisher continued to rotate overhead; then I observed that the circles were smaller in diameter, and were descending in corkscrew curves, until from a height of about fifty feet the body of the bird shot straight down and struck the water about twenty-five yards from our boat with the blow of a pile driver's hammer, throwing a fountain of spray high into the air. For a few seconds nothing was visible but troubled waters;