

prairies became dry enough to burn, when countless millions of fish and amphibians were lost. This not only had bad effects on sport fishing for several years thereafter, but resulted in scarcity of wading birds which live on this type of food. First of all, then, the Service will countenance no more drainage projects. It may go a step in the other direction by placing a sill across Suwannee River, the principal outlet, to help stabilize water levels in time of need.

Law enforcement remains one of the principal duties of management. In spite of generally excellent cooperation by nearby residents, it must be realized that Okefenokee was for many years a hunting and trapping paradise. Old habits sometimes die hard. Chief source of temptation today is the 'gator, whose knobby hide has tripled in value within a decade and which has now become exceedingly plentiful within the refuge.

In the dark of night the 'gators eyes shine like rubies when caught in the beam of a flashlight, and the floating animal will allow a boat to be poled within a yard or two before taking alarm. "Shining 'gators" persists as one of the most troublesome problems of Okefenokee's guardians, necessitating regular patrols by officers skilled in the ways of the transgressor, thoroughly experienced in the lore of the swamp.

FROM THE NORTH, the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge may be reached by following U. S. Highway 1 to Waycross, Ga., location of the headquarters office. Here a nonprofit organization called the Okefenokee Park Associa-

**The swamp visitor may see several water snakes, black moccasins, or perhaps a canebrake or diamond-back rattlesnake during his visit, although these reptiles are not overly plentiful.**

tion has leased 1,200 acres just north of the refuge boundary and has developed facilities especially for passing tourists. Short rides in electric boats through a dark cypress swamp are provided. For those who desire panoramic views, a 75-foot tower has been erected. A small zoo houses many creatures peculiar to Okefenokee.

About 35 miles southeast from Waycross the autoist enters Folkston, Ga., where the sign of the flying goose points the way to subheadquarters at Camp Cornelia. Small boats are available here for fishing and sightseeing along "Jackson's Folly" canal and into a series of lily-covered prairies noted for their amazing reflections. An alternate route is from Waycross south along the west side on U. S. Highway 84 and State Highway 89 to Fargo, Ga., then by a narrow dirt road to a fishing camp operated by special concession. The west side of the swamp probably has the more spectacular scenery, combining heavy forests of bearded cypress standing knee-deep in the dark waters, stretches of open water, and broad vistas of blooming prairies.

In all cases where the visitor wishes to penetrate beyond the perimeter of Okefenokee's watery wilderness, the use of local guides is essential.

