

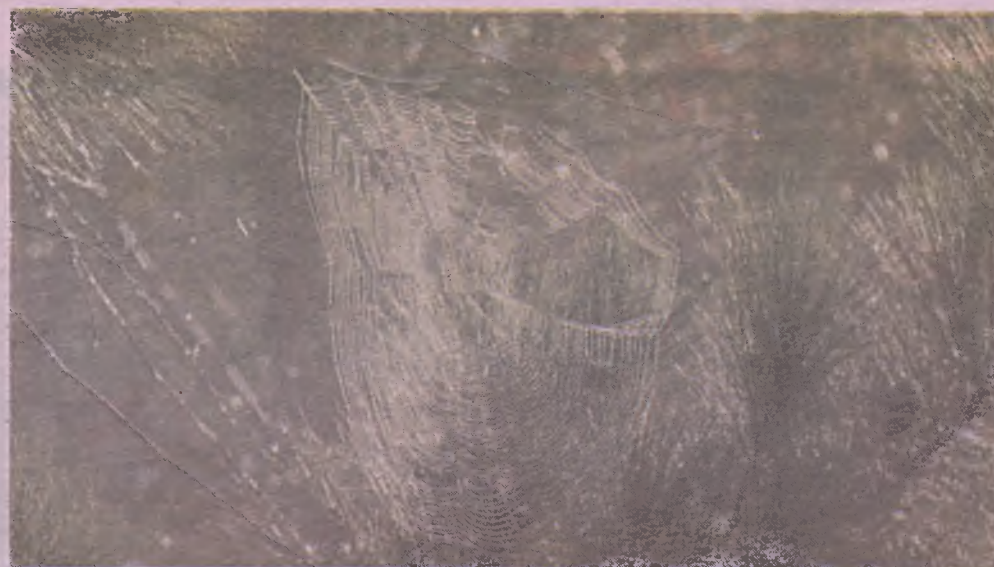
## Fishing & Hunting

(Continued from page 14)

During the last week of daylight saving time, a friend from Morehead City and I did some deer hunting near Belhaven. Our days started at 5:15 a.m., and we were in the blinds by 6:30. We had to wait until 7 for first light to break the darkness, and sunrise was not until 7:30.

One day, as we hiked away from the truck, it was evident the humidity was very high. Our boots swished through grass that was totally soaked by the dew, and the fallen leaves were quiet due to being so wet. The wind was calm, the temperature warm, and we knew this morning would be a drippy one. The stand I chose faced to the east. The heavy air was cloaked in a ground fog. When the sun broke over the tree line, it backlit an entire world of sparkling diamonds. The prisms formed by drops of water broke the sunlight in millions of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet points of color. (Remember ROYGBIV from high school physics?) It was a scene of spectacular beauty. As I surveyed this ever-changing view, a spider's web became defined. It stood out with every silken strand loaded with dew. In the middle of this shimmering web was the spider that created it. Several places in the web were missing. My first thoughts were that this was too bad since the beautiful symmetry of the web had been compromised. But as I pondered the web, the spider moved, and I realized it was a fellow hunter sharing this beautiful morning with me. I was glad the spider's efforts had been rewarded with a meal. That morning it had done a better job of hunting than had I.

It is a personal rule of mine that all life is to be respected. In keeping with this, we consume or share any fish or game I harvest. Hunting and fishing are pleasurable pastimes for me, but not pursuits for survival. Not so for the creatures I observe fishing and hunting. Their efforts need to be successful in order for them to survive. I feel very privileged to have access to places where I can share time with these creatures as they engage in their fishing and hunting pursuits. Interestingly, these creatures and I all have to take time, planning and effort to hunt or fish successfully. The spider's web placement and construction, and the repairs needed, speak clearly of such requirements.

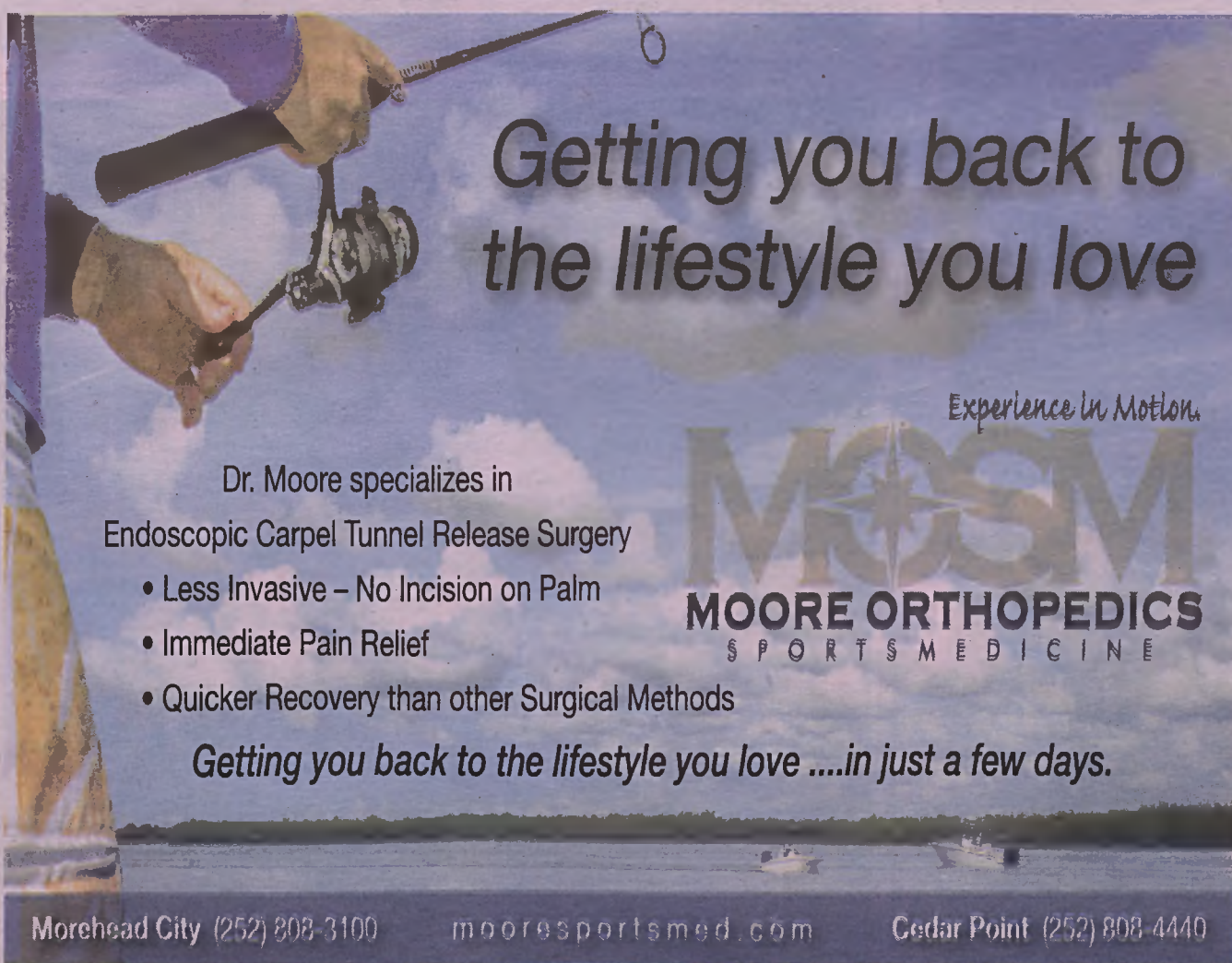


A spider web inhabited by its creator glistens with early morning dew.—Photo by Richard Seale

Being out there is also essential. There have been countless adventures I have experienced just because I was out in the wild places where these creatures live. It is a special experience to have to rely on your ears, and not your eyes, to interpret what is happening around you, when it is before first light or after it turns night-time dark. I have been fortunate that when my eyes did have light enough to see, they were able to take in incredible sights I would have missed had I not been up early and out in the field or on the water. The backlit, dew-covered spider's web is a prime example.

After writing this, as I shut the computer down to get ready to go to bed, I heard the clear hoots from still another pair of hunters on the prowl. Almost nightly, two barred owls "talk" to each other from trees around our house. Their high-pitched rolling hoots can be described as variations of the phrase, "who cooks for you." They cruise the neighborhoods of Pine Knoll Shores, so perhaps you, too, can enjoy hearing these local hunters in pursuit of their evening meals.

One of my "philosophy of life" books by Margaret Craven (1974) is entitled *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*. It is a story about a young vicar assigned to an Indian village in the Pacific Northwest. It contains a lot of information on how to live life in the wilds and how much in common human lives really share. It combines these themes with how humans can achieve many different things under difficult conditions, even when coming from different cultures. The hoots of our local owls remind me not to forget the lessons I derived from this book. If you have a love for the forests and waters—and the adventures that can happen in such wilds—you might enjoy this book as a winter read.



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