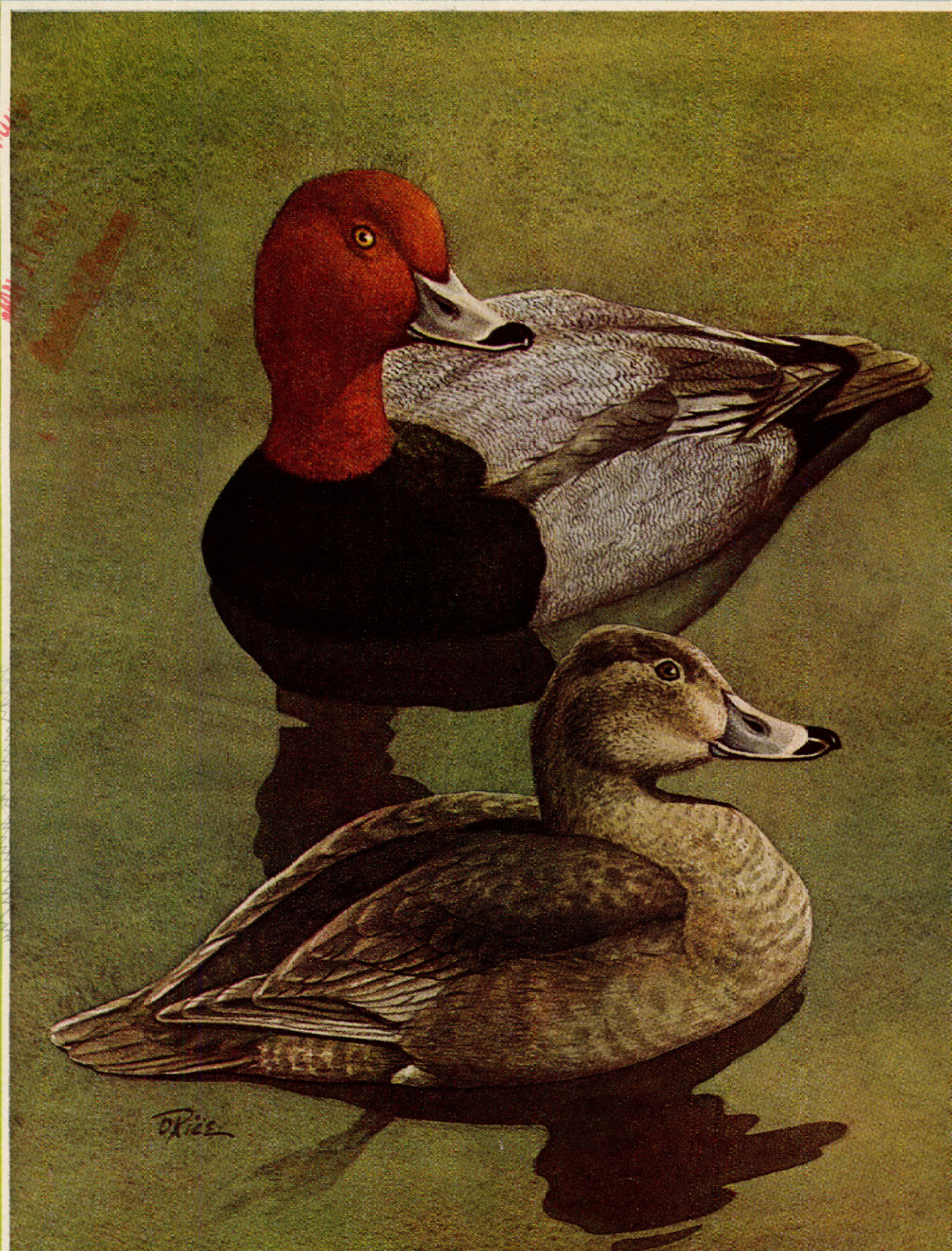


Texas **GAME AND FISH** November, 1953



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The Texas Coast boasts some of the finest duck and goose hunting areas in the nation. This huge concentration of scaup or "bluebills" with some redheads mixed in shows why.



# Texas Game and Fish

★

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A MONTHLY MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF OUR NATIVE GAME AND FISH; AND TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF HUNTING AND FISHING IN TEXAS.

November, 1953

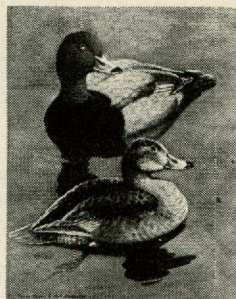
Vol. XI, No. 12

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### The Cover

The redhead duck is the subject for this month's cover painting by Orville O. Rice. This duck, which concentrates in large numbers along the lower Texas Coast, is known by hunters as one of the most unpredictable of game birds. The full story is on page 10.





Fort Phantom Lake Bass

Editor:

Enclosed is a photo of a fine string of fish from Fort Phantom Hill Lake. There are no giants, but it isn't often that two fishermen come in with 20 black bass

weighing 80 pounds—an average of two pounds each.

The anglers are Johnnie Supulver and Bill Ash, both of Abilene

Harless Wade  
Outdoor Editor  
The Abilene Reporter-News  
Abilene, Texas

### ARE YOU CHANGING YOUR ADDRESS?

Then please fill out the following form and send to TEXAS GAME AND FISH, Walton Bldg., Austin, Texas, so that you will continue to receive your copies of the magazine.

The magazine is sent second class mail and can not be forwarded by the post office nor remailed from this office. Allow six weeks for processing.

Name.....

Old Address.....

City....., State.....

New Address.....

City....., State.....

### PRIVATE WATERS?

Editor:

I wish you would settle a couple of questions for me please. (1) Suppose I had a lake on my ranch that I stocked with bass. Would I need a fishing license to fish in this tank with artificial lures?

(2) Suppose I had a friend that had a lake on his place. If he gave me permission to fish there, would I need a fishing license to use artificial lures in his lake?

J. P. Mitchell  
P. O. Box 654  
Cotulla, Texas

(You would not need a license in either case PROVIDED [1] the lake was completely land-locked and not connected to any stream or subject to overflow from any stream and [2] provided the fish used to stock the lake were captured legally.

(In any case the owner has the right to say who fishes in his lake.)

### SEARCH ABANDONED

Editor:

I stopped taking TEXAS GAME AND FISH last November, because I thought I could find a better outdoor magazine. However, I haven't found a better one yet, so I want to renew my subscription for a year. Enclosed find a dollar.

Edwin Loudenberg  
Rt. 2, Box 480  
Waco, Texas

### NO ARGUMENT!

Editor:

Kenneth Barth, Jr., aged 10 years, killed a jackrabbit at 100 yards with a .22 pistol.

How's that for marksmanship?

He is the son of K. A. Barth, Mercedes.

Mrs. E. F. Barth  
Rt. 1, Box 11  
Mercedes, Texas

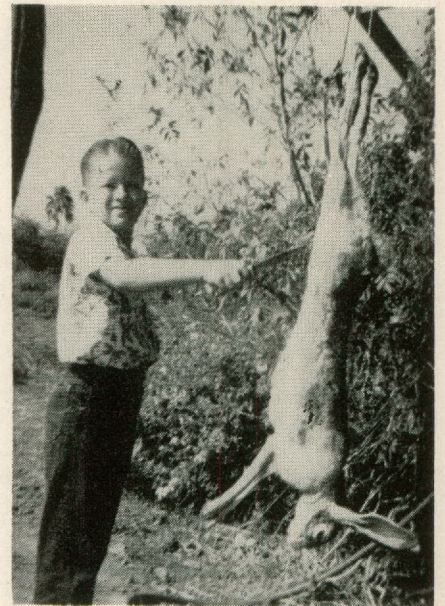
(Anyone dare disbelieve the story of a guy who can shoot that straight!)

### BIGGER ONE

Editor:

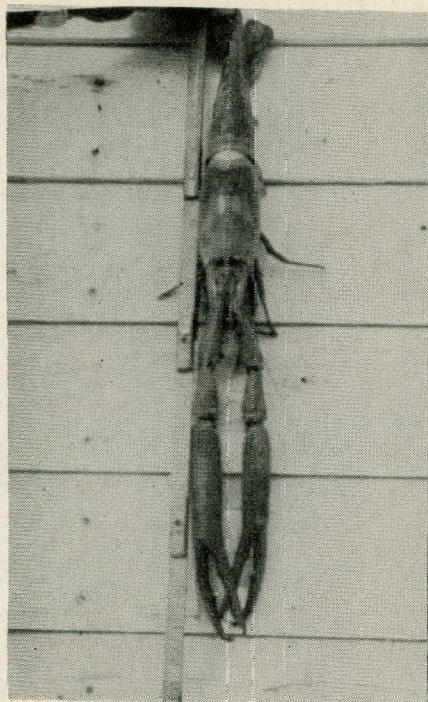
I am enclosing a photo of a tropical shrimp which I caught on a hook at La Grange in July 1953. It measured 21½ inches long.

I thought you might like to see it, since the one you pictured in your article "Giant Fresh-Water What-Is-It" in the June 1953



Young Sharpshooter





Fresh-Water Shrimp

I saw this feat in the fall of 1942 while I was being held as a P. O. W. by the Japanese, so maybe Willette's idea is not so new after all.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that I think you are doing a wonderful job with your magazine.

J. E. Nowlin  
1700 W. Mulberry  
Denton, Texas

### SURPRISE!

(We had a pleasant surprise this month. We were actually FLOODED with letters complimenting the game wardens. Unusual? Read on.)

Editor:

It was my good fortune to receive a permit to hunt antelope this year. Unfortunately, on the evening of the first day I mistakenly killed a doe.

I explained what I had done to Warden Robert E. Miller and Warden Supervisor A. R. Williams. I was assessed a fine, which I paid willingly. Then these wardens were kind enough to recommend to the court that I be permitted to continue my hunt for a buck. For this I would like to publicly express my appreciation for the understanding and fairness shown me by these two men.

I also would like to add that my experience with the game wardens of this state has always shown them to be courteous, understanding and fair.

Cecil B. Spence  
Town House Hotel Bldg.  
Fort Worth, Texas

P.S.: I got my buck.

Editor:

. . . I have nothing but praise to pass on to you for . . . the performance of three different game wardens that I recently was privileged to contact. . . .

It is only a shame that more citizens of the state cannot meet such men in person to form the same high opinion I now hold for the game wardens and the Commission.

Wilson W. Crook, Jr.  
Fidelity Union Bldg.  
Dallas, Texas

Editor:

. . . We would like to make a comment on the game wardens we know, Arthur Hitzfelder, Frank Smith, Bill Garrett, and

J. T. Taylor. If the other wardens are of the same high level as these men, then it would seem our wildlife is in mighty good hands.

J. A. Bemis  
Box 155  
Burnet, Texas

Editor:

. . . I would like very much to commend you on your fine bunch of wardens. . . .

Russell K. Williams, M. D.  
Plainview, Texas

Editor:

. . . Your game wardens are among the finest law enforcement officials I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. . . .

William T. Green  
Western Hills Hotel  
Fort Worth, Texas

(Wardens—take a BIG bow!)

issue measured some four and one-half inches less.

I am wondering how large they actually do get.

Rufus Altmann  
P. O. Box 424  
La Grange, Texas

(Your shrimp seems to be about the biggest anyone around the Commission has ever seen. Someone else have a larger one?)

### PIG BALLOON

Editor:

I thought you might be interested in hearing of a trick I saw in China, which was similar to the method of skinning beavers employed by Bill Willette, Saranac Lake, N. Y., described in your April issue.

I saw a Chinaman skin a hog (approximately 220 pounds) by blowing the skin off. The Chinaman made a small slit in the hind leg and put a hollow piece of bamboo in it. He started blowing through the bamboo tube and slapping the hog with his hands and a small board until the skin came loose from the body.

He blew so much air into the hog that it looked like a balloon. I'll bet that Chinaman could get a job inflating truck tires at most any service station.



Reflect a moment on the waste that occurs in human and animal life and in natural resources when forest fires occur. Now you can clearly see the need for the use of care in handling fire when hunting, fishing, or camping in the woods. Don't let a fire get out of control, don't leave a fire burning, be careful with cigarettes and matches.



# HONKERS

in the SNOW







While Emil set up the heater and got the guns out of their cases, Virgil set out the decoys in front of the pit.

## **The hunting can be hard, the weather bitter cold, but when those huge flocks of Panhandle geese come honking in low . . .**

By JOE HEFLIN SMITH

This was the day we'd been waiting years for. Snow was piled up on the high Texas Panhandle plains, and the ground was glossy white from sky-line to sky-line. It was just the type of day that the big honkers would be both cocky and hungry.

My watch said 4 a.m.; the thermometer just outside the frosty window said five above zero; and Emil Dettman said, "We'd better get to the pit; they'll be flying soon and low," as he pushed his plate back and drank the last drop of coffee.

We pulled on our hunting clothes plus everything else in the closet, and, after making a last minute check, walked through the creaky snow to the pick-up truck. Decoys, ammunition, and guns had been packed the night before.

For a heater, we had a specially-prepared five gallon can with the canned heat to go with it. We knew that our homemade gadget, described separately with this article, would keep the pit warm as toast.

Emil stepped on the starter; the motor groaned heavily and slowly began turning. Finally, it took off, and we pulled on our gloves and scraped ice from the windshield as the engine warmed up. It was pitch dark and the stars were bright and low.

"I wish it would start snowing," Emil said. "You can't beat a cold snowy day for good goose hunting."

"Let's drive by for Virgil Cocanaugher," I reminded Emil as the truck backed out of the driveway. "He's a high school boy who does lots of hunting, is cool and cautious in a goose pit, and a good companion to have along."

We picked Virgil up and drove away over the deep rutted roads that stretched forever away like two black ribbons in the snow.

Hunters in the Texas Panhandle will swear that goose hunting on the flat prairies is about the best sport this side of the King's forest, but it's also the hardest and can be the most disappointing.

In our country, there is little water; a few scattered surface lakes is about all, and they're far apart and often dry. We have a large government lake, Buffalo, that covers several square miles and has been set aside as a waterfowl refuge.

The first cold snap brings the geese into the country by the thousands, and they fly straight to the protected area. On bright days they usually leave the lake about six in the morning and fly high to near-by fields of corn and maize. When they've fed, they return to the water and snooze until around five when they fly off again to their favorite lunch counter. By taking all the odds, a hunter has a chance to bag his limit either in the morning or afternoon. But he has to be on his toes.

There's little chance to stalk geese because our country is flat as a pancake and almost treeless. Geese can see for miles. One disgusted hunter who had crawled on his stomach for miles to get a shot only to see them fly when almost in range, put it this way, "Those big devils can see us in this area as soon as they cross the Canadian border."

Interested nimrods, before season opens, watch the flights out from Buffalo Lake to Mr. Goose's dining room,



determine the flyways, and dig pits directly under them. Then they pray that decoys, calls, and cold weather will do the rest.

That's exactly what we did. We lay behind a fence row for a few days before the gong sounded and determined, as best we could, flyways out from the water to the feed fields. Corn fields—geese love their corn—were located and the flights were watched in relation to them. That's one time we fooled the squawkers; their sky path was an open book.

The pit was dug four feet wide, eight feet long, and five feet deep with a shelf for a seat. A depression larger than our oil can heater was flanged out from the bottom about midway in the pit so the heater would be completely out of the way and in no position to be kicked over. All dirt was carefully hauled away and piled up so the pit could be re-filled and our promise kept to the landowner who was kind enough to let us use his land.

The maize field, location of the pit, had been cut with a binder, leaving stalks some eight inches high, thick in rows four feet apart. When the pit was dug, naturally, the continuity of the rows was broken, but we were careful to stick the stalks back into the ground along the side of the pit so as not to tip off the location to the wily leader of our good Canadian visitors.

A frame, slightly larger than the pit, was made out of tough two-inch lumber, and a white canvas stretched tightly over it. When placed over the top of the pit, stiff wire legs eight inches long at each corner supported the frame, raising it enough to leave a strip of view space all around.

When the geese come in, we simply flip the cover back and are ready for action.

It was still dark, but the morning star was gone as we turned off the main road and drove down a cattle fence to the corner of the field. The gate was down, and we rode along the fence until we came to the flag on a post that told us what row to follow to the pit.

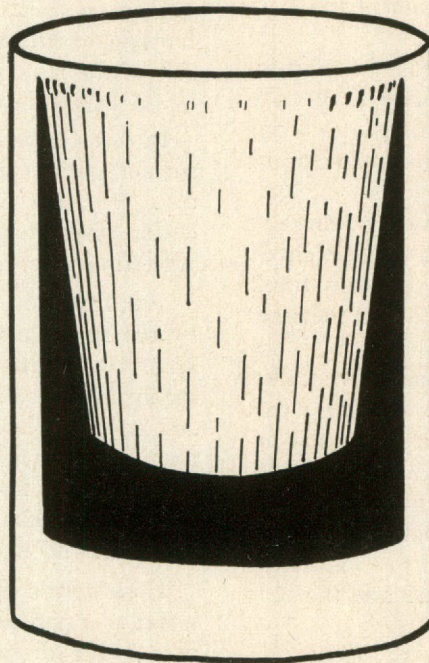
There was not a movement or a sound on the white landscape as we climbed out of the truck and started

unloading gear. For fear that the geese would suspicion something, we parked the truck several hundred yards from where we were to plant the decoys. We were a bit chilly by the time we reached the slit in the ground.

"It's cold enough," Virgil emphasized, "to freeze the horns off a billy goat." He shivered and pulled decoys from the canvas bags. "But we don't have a minute to lose. They'll be sailing over any minute now, and we ought to have the foolers out for 'em to glide into."

Meanwhile, Emil was in the pit lighting the cans of heat, arranging the thermos bottle, and getting guns out of fleece lined cases. He suggested that we put decoys on the south side of the pit because the Honkers would come in from the north. That way, we would be shooting at their rear ends, a safer spot for a kill, as they glided into the decoys. Any ole goose hunter knows what he meant.

The decoys were quickly set up about six feet apart with the closest one some twenty-five feet from the south edge of the pit. We swept out our tracks with a broom as we backed into the pit. Virgil said the forty-five



**HOMEMADE HEATER** mentioned in story is constructed from a five gallon lard-type can. Can is cut almost half way around, seven inches from the bottom. Vertical cuts running almost to the top rim are made from the ends of the first cut. The piece is then bent inward to form a reflector. Canned heat is placed in the bottom of the can.

decoys made quite an impressive sight on the flat white waste as he returned from parking the pick-up, a half mile away. He said if he were a goose he'd be looking for a nice bunch like those.

"They do look good," Emil agreed, "but another dozen would be better. A man can't have out too many decoys when they fly early in the morning. They come off in large flocks then, and the more decoys, the merrier."

We moved to our favorite shooting spots.

Emil was getting his wish. It was time for the sun to be up, but snow clouds had drifted in, and it was growing darker. Fluffy flakes of snow were floating lazily toward the ground. The wind had a sharp edge, but the cans of heat were doing their stuff, and the pit was as warm as a club room.

"If they're on schedule," Emil said, "there won't be action for another five minutes. How about a cup of coffee?"

We had a cup and Emil and I lit our pipes. Virgil tore the cover off a stick of chewing gum. Emil got out the call, tried it for tone, and pulled his cap down over his eyes. "I'm ready," he said.

We were sitting in the pit soaking up the good heat and telling wild tales about geese, you know how fellows will do, when Virgil's face lit up. "I hear something," he said, "and it's not a steamboat whistle. Listen!"

We strained, but the sound we were longing to hear did not come in. We strained harder, edged forward on the bench, and wrapped our fingers around the triggers, but still no sound from the honkers. We had settled back down when Virgil shot forward on the bench. "I know I hear 'em," he insisted. "I'm gonna have a look."

Cautiously, he pulled himself up and peeped over the rim of the pit. Then he fell back down, his face ashy white as though he'd seen a ghost, and grabbed his gun. "They're flying right on the ground and not over four hundred yards to the north. There must be five hundred of 'em!" he gasped.

I ventured a peep and saw them going slightly to the west, just off the flyway. "Put the call to 'em, Emil," I

● Concluded on Page 28





# HOW SAFE

## Are Hunting Colors?

**T**HE time-honored "red cap" for safety while hunting may be on the way out—or at least be in line for some new thinking and revision.

Hunting accidents are serious business. Unfortunately, the hunter often never realizes how easily firearms, either his own or that of someone else, can do him harm until he has time to think about it in a hospital. Less fortunate hunters who find out too late may never get even that chance.

A good proportion of hunting accidents are caused by accidental discharge of mishandled guns. More often than not, another hunter does the discharging.

However, it may seem somewhat surprising that about half of the accidental shooting casualties come from bullets which were discharged intentionally. Between one-fourth and one-fifth of these accidents occur when a human is mistaken for game. The whopping other 75 to 80 percent happen when an unseen hunter is trapped in the line of fire.

It seems important that all these accidents occur simply because the hunter does not see the man destined to be the victim. This unfortunately is true despite the widespread use of red caps, red coats, and other red apparel.

Some folks began to wonder. A number of research projects were set up here and there, and preliminary reports are beginning to cast a shadow of doubt on the effectiveness of the color red as a safeguard.

One study was made by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Clothing of different colors and patterns was used against various backgrounds such as found in field and forest. The experiments even went so far as to use the same colors and same backgrounds in different light—twilight and noonday, cloudy and sunshiny.

**I**NCLUDED in the range of colors used were different colors and shades of the new "fluorescent" dyes. It was in this field that the best results were found.

The study group, after extensive experiments with these glowing col-

ors, issued the following conclusions:

(1) The daylight fluorescent colors, particularly orange and red, were **four times** as bright as ordinary orange or red under **poor light conditions**.

In fact, these colors were most vivid in deep shade or in the late hours of evening or early hours of morning.

In poor light, ordinary reds and oranges tended to become gray or black, even at relatively short distances.

(2) In good or poor light, the fluorescent colors retained their identity at **long range** when ordinary colors faded to gray or black.

(3) The fluorescent colors contrasted sharply with all backgrounds, whereas any of the ordinary colors are duplicated by the flowers, leaves, or stems of plants at some time of the year.

(4) The fluorescent colors are not simulated by any common mammal or bird, whereas all of the ordinary colors may be reproduced by native animals. Nearly any shade of red, from dark red to scarlet, can be found among the common birds or animals.

The fact that hunters are shot every year while wearing apparel of ordinary red pinpoints one facet of the case. The effectiveness of fluorescent orange or red as found in these studies seems to provide one solution to the question of what to do about it.

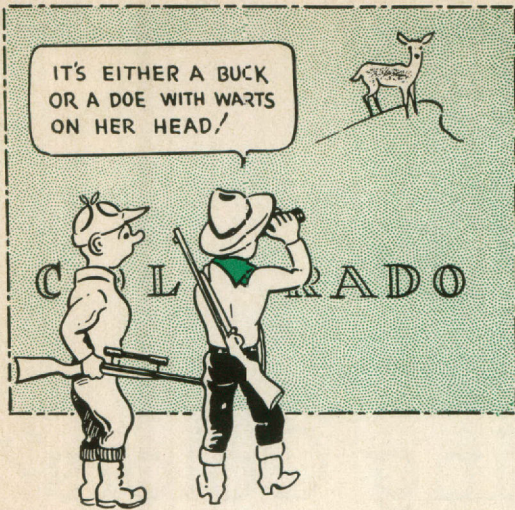
**LOOK  
BEFORE YOU  
SHOOT!**



**SHOOTING IS FUN** FOR THOSE WHO ARE CAREFUL

**PREVENT FOREST & GRASS FIRES!**





# Deer Laws

## Here and There

Credit is due D. H. Jenkins of the Michigan Department of Conservation game division, who compiled much of the data contained in the following article.

**I**N GENERAL, most states pretty well agree on how the hunting of deer should be regulated. However, the laws which govern such management present an entirely different picture—each state seems to have its own ideas about that.

Of course some of the laws vary simply because conditions are much different from state to state. Some of the legal wording to a Texan would appear, shall we say, peculiar. Chances are some of our laws seem just as strange to others.

The state of Idaho goes to great lengths to set up its legal code. Take a look at this page. If planning to hunt deer in Idaho you would have to read over five full pages this size just to get an idea about the various areas in which you could hunt deer in that state. With that preliminary chore out of the way, you still would have to wade through a voluminous "thou shall and thou shall not" section.

What is a legal buck? Here is a good example of how different ideas can spring from different states. In Texas, of course, a legal buck is one with at least one pronged antler. It's about the same in 13 other states. However, in three states spiked antlers are sufficient. The spike must be

at least three inches long in five states, four inches long in two states, five inches in two, and six inches long or more in two other states.

Colorado says antlers merely have to be "through the skin." That's why scope manufacturers are getting rich off Colorado hunters.

Virginia says "a legal buck has spikes extending two inches above the hair." It seems a cinch that heavy hair tonic would be taboo with young Virginia bucks and that the wind-blown, flared-up hair-do would be more than the fad—it also would be a ticket to longer life.

The various states look on this business of what constitutes a legal weapon in many different ways, too. In New Jersey rifles definitely are out for deer hunting. It's shotguns only, and no slugs at that—only buck shot. A lot of deer hunters throughout the nation would consider shooting a deer with buckshot the kind of unpardonable sin that not even a habitual game law violator would commit. Shotguns are illegal deer hunting weapons in 32 Texas counties.

The idea of prohibiting the use of certain rifle calibers for deer hunting is becoming increasingly popular with state game departments as well as with sportsmen. At the present time, several states outlaw rimfire cartridges of 22 or 25 caliber. Fourteen states require that bullets must deliver a specified number of foot-pounds of energy at the muzzle or at 100 yards.

Western states particularly are careful about prohibiting inadequate loads. Oregon, for example, prohibits the use of all rimfires plus the 25-20, the 32-40, the 32-20, the 38-56, the 40-82, the 38-40, the 40-65, the 44-40, the 32 Winchester S. L., 35 Winchester S. L., 41 Swiss, and even the old 38-50. Army carbines are illegal in most states.

In many states archers are under certain restrictions, too. The legal size for arrowheads of from seven-eighths of an inch to one and one-half inches in width may be specified. A minimum bow pull of 40 pounds is common. Oregon insists that arrows must weigh at least one ounce and that the heads be "sharp."

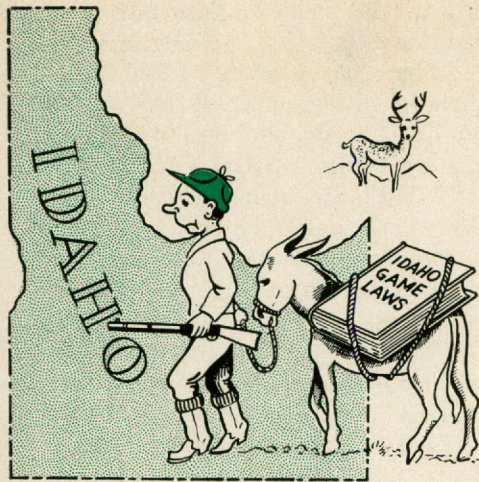
What about deer resident license fees? Thirty-six of the other 47 states charge a higher fee to kill a deer than does Texas. The average is around \$3.20, about half again as much as the \$2.15 charged in the Lone Star State. Fees range from \$1.50 in Arkansas to \$7.50 in South Dakota and Colorado.

Non-resident licenses range even wider. An out-of-stater pays \$100 in Montana to slay a deer, only \$10.50 in New York. Texas' \$25 is a little lower than average.

In Massachusetts, it's the man who pays. A resident male hunter pays \$1 more to kill a deer than does mama.

There must be a feud out in the northwest. Most non-residents pay \$25 to kill a deer in Washington.





However, if you are from Idaho it costs you 50 bucks and hunters from Oregon get soaked \$65.

If a hunter goes to Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Tennessee, or Oklahoma from another state to hunt deer he pays the same price non-residents are charged in his home state. For instance, it would cost a Texan \$25 in any of these states. Wonder what happens when a Tennessean goes to Oklahoma?

It can get complicated in Florida. If a Texan wanted to kill a deer in Florida, he normally would pay \$26.50. However, if the Texan owned at least 3,000 acres of Florida real estate and kept his taxes paid, his license would cost him only \$11.

Texas is one of the states prohibiting the use of deer calls. However, it specifies that rattling antlers is O. K. This practice, well known in Texas, seems a little queer in most states.

In Maine, whistles and horns are illegal for driving deer, but it is all right to holler. Maine is proud of the size of its deer. The folks there have been shooting all deer, even mama and baby deer, since the Pilgrims landed and they have some pretty nice trophies. All deer shipped out of Maine must be tagged with "This Deer was Shot in the State of Maine," and they even specify the size of the printing.

Archers in Massachusetts must have their names and addresses on the arrows they shoot. And in Arkansas, the law gives the string-and-

stick boys a break. Non-resident archers buy an inexpensive license to hunt, then pay \$20 more if they bag their deer.

Many states keep close check on every deer that is killed—or at least try to. Most of them merely request that hunters report their kills of deer. However, in New Jersey you make your report within 48 hours or else—\$100 fine.

Hunters go about their business under pretty close scrutiny in some states. For instance in Pennsylvania any five people hunting together constitute a "camp." A running inventory of the following information must be kept posted in camp and carried on the person of a camp captain: name of the camp, name of the camp captain, whether the camp is permanent or temporary, names and addresses of the camp members, their hunting license numbers, the calibers of their firearms, the day they came to camp, the date they left camp, and the sex, number of points, and approximate weight of any deer they killed.

Shooting from trees or platforms is illegal in quite a few states. Virginia is contrary. If you shoot a rifle within 100 yards of a railroad or road you must be on a platform or in a tree at least 15 feet above the ground.

At least three states take a dim view of what they call "wanton waste of edible meat." Minnesota and South Dakota say you must take all edible portions of your game back to camp or home. Out in Wyoming they really mean it. All edible portions of game taken there must be in camp and *properly dressed out* within 48 hours or you are guilty of a felony.

New Mexico says no target practicing in camp during that day-before-the-season urge to "shoot up a couple of tin cans to sort of warm up."

Topography of the land in several of the Western states makes the location of checking stations fairly easy, and they can keep a pretty close figure on the deer killed. Some of these states have the authority to close the season or change regulations on 48 hours notice. When, in their opinion, the proper number of deer have been taken, all they have to say is "Sorry, boys, that's all for this year," and the season is closed.

It is still legal to hunt deer with dogs in a few states. In fact, Texas still has some counties where chasing deer with hounds is permitted. In other Texas counties the use of dogs is legal only for trailing a wounded deer.

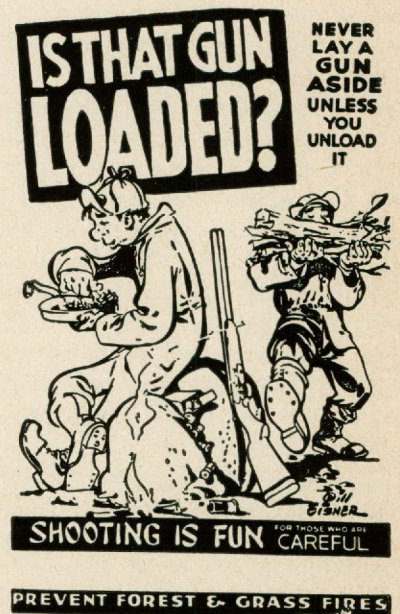
Florida specifies that only slow-trailing dogs can be used on deer; no packs of yapping hounds. In Wisconsin you can't even take little Fido into camp with you without special permission of the warden.

Speaking of wardens, South Dakota shells out \$50 to anyone who furnishes information leading to the conviction of a deer law violator.

Despite increasing evidence that red-colored clothing offers doubtful protection against other hunters (see page 7, this issue), at least four states have laws on the books which require deer hunters to wear red. Wyoming says a red hat and coat. Wisconsin says 50 per cent of your hat and coat must be red. Utah specifies a red hat, and Minnesota insists that a full three-fourths of your outer garments must be scarlet.

The states apparently haven't hit on the idea of requiring those new fluorescent colors, which are easily seen and don't seem to startle deer.

In Idaho and Wisconsin the deer could turn the tables and protect themselves by wearing a specified color—white. It is against the law to kill albino deer in those states.





# REDHEADS

...ACRES

OF 'EM

By W. S. JENNINGS  
and J. R. SINGLETON

*Wildlife Biologists*

## The story of this month's cover subject

WE TOOK off from the little grass strip on the outskirts of Harlingen and headed southeast toward the coast. It was just getting light enough to see and the weather looked fine—only a few scattered clouds and a very slight southeast breeze. Within a few minutes we were approaching the Brownsville flats, beyond which lay the starting point of the waterfowl census.

As we passed over the shallow lagunas and marshes small flocks of green and blue-winged teal arose from the cattails and arched swiftly away from the low flying plane. Pintails, scattered along the shore, waddled further up the bank or splashed hastily into the water. The few ruddy ducks that were far out in the lagunas dived instantly, leaving only bull's eyes on the water to mark their positions.

Circling South Bay, the starting point of the census, we only found about three hundred and thirty-five pintails on it. We began to wonder if the ducks still hadn't arrived in their migration from the north country.

Turning north we passed Port Isabel and started out over Laguna Madre. For several anxious minutes we searched the bay in all directions without success.

Then, far out, under our left wing we saw them. Their formation on the water gave them away long before we were within definite identification range.

"Redheads." Mac said, "Acres and acres of 'em. Sure is a sight to see."

We dropped down lower and skimmed along beside the huge living raft, so low you could see their feet as they swam. The raft varied in width from a few feet to about 100 yards and curved for a mile and a half across the bay. They sat so close together that a man's hat could not have been dropped among them without touching a bird. It took two passes along the raft before we were satisfied with the count.

"76,000," I said. "Not bad for the first bunch."

By the time we had covered the distance from Port Isabel to Port Mansfield our estimate on redheads

alone totaled 326,000 birds.

Mac was shaking his head in wonder at the tremendous numbers of redheads.

"That's not so many," I said. "Remember in December of 1951 when we had 700,000, and most of them in the lower part of Laguna Madre?"

"What are so many redheads doing right down here?" he asked.

"Hope you can hear this above the noise of the engine," I said, "Cause here goes.

"Redheads are one of the most numerous species on the Texas coast. A large percentage of the redheads hatched in the northwestern United States and Canada come to the Texas coast for the winter. That 700,000 we had in December of 1951 was the high point in recent years. Last year was second best with a peak nearing half a million. We don't have that many every year, though. That's a lot of redheads.

"Sometimes the population we have on the coast varies greatly from month to month during the winter. They apparently move back and forth across the Texas-Mexico border. We have noticed them moving south when a norther comes in and have seen them coming back after the bad weather is over.

"As to what makes them stay in the lower Laguna Madre most of the time—they are just like any other wildlife species; they go where they can find suitable food.

"Redheads feed upon salt water vegetation, mainly shoal grass and widgeon grass, both of which are very abundant in the shallow bays of South Texas. These two grasses or salt water mosses make up as much as 40% to 50% by volume of all foods eaten. The submerged plants form extensive underwater meadows which are excellent places for feeding and resting grounds. Along the coast of Texas there are over 750,000 acres of such areas.

"Another 25% or more of their food is composed of minute salt water snails, bivalves, and crustaceans. These small animals attach themselves to the shoal grass and widgeon grass and are eaten by redheads and other species of waterfowl."

"Say," Mac broke in. "Awhile ago you said that a large percentage of



the redheads hatched in the *north-west* come to the Texas coast. How do you know just how many come from where?"

"Have you ever killed a duck with a band on its leg?" I asked, and Mac shook his head. "Just since 1948 hunters have killed 216 banded redheads in Texas. Records are kept of the banding dates and sites, and when these banded birds are killed it's a simple matter to check the band number and find where the bird was banded. Thus we can tell where the ducks that migrate to Texas come from."

"Most of them that are hatched in Canada come from the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, while most of those hatched in the United States come from the northwestern states."

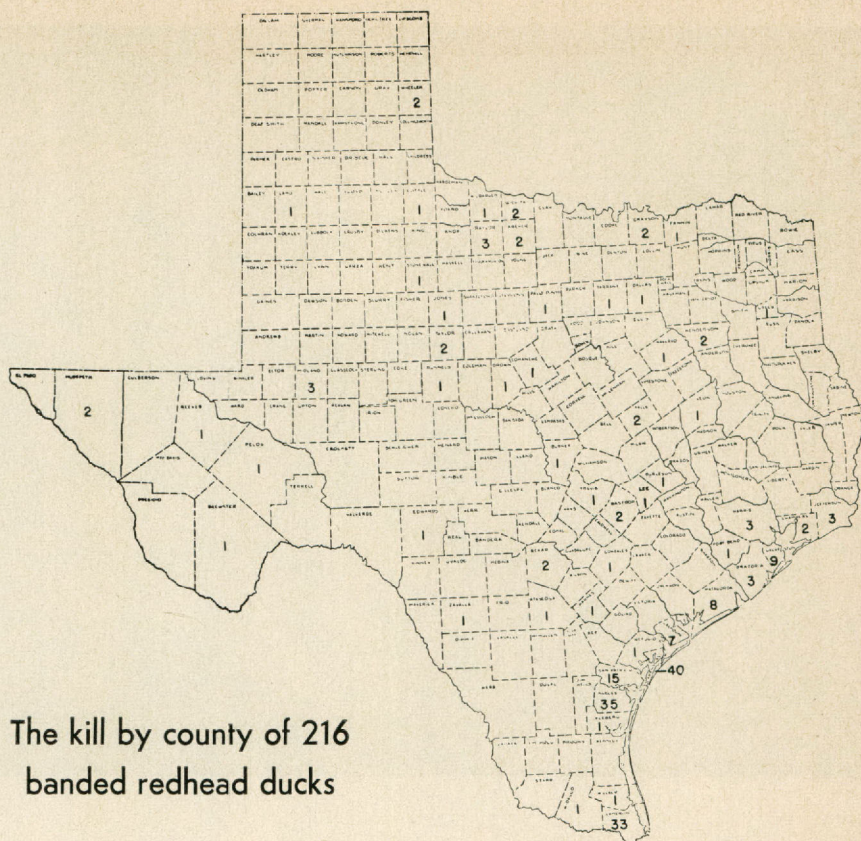
"Banding stations along the migration routes enable us to know the principal migration routes that ducks take when they leave their nesting grounds. So you see, finding out these things isn't as difficult as it might seem. It's just a matter of cooperation by all of the State Game Departments and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

"I guess not many are killed down here since they sit so far out from shore," Mac mused as we circled over another tight-packed raft of redheads far out in the bay.

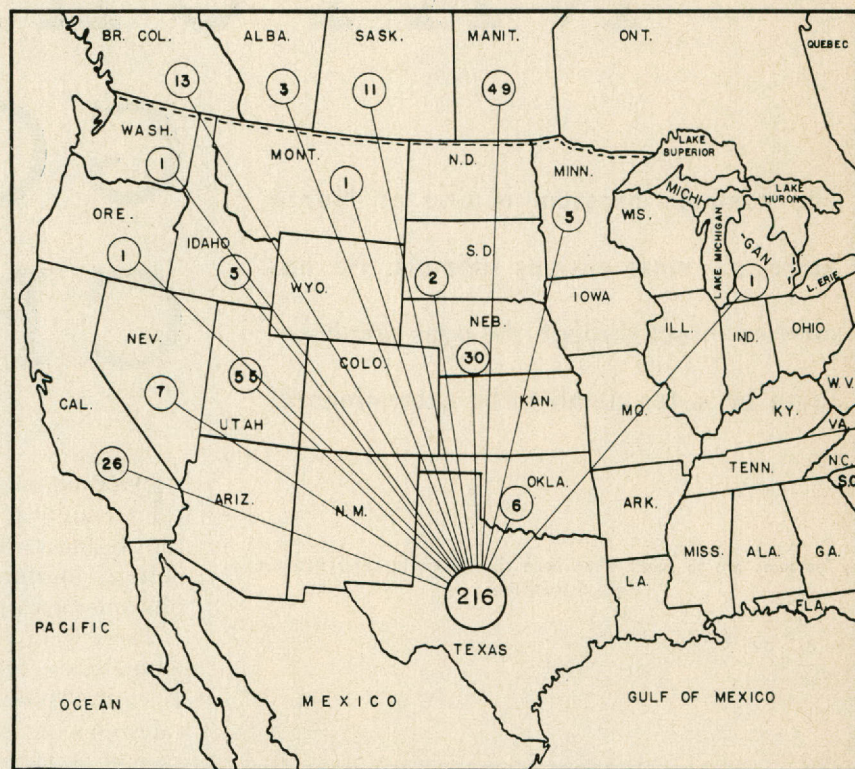
● Concluded on Page 27



Banding stations along migration routes help trace the paths ducks take in their seasonal travels.



The kill by county of 216 banded redhead ducks



216 banded redhead ducks have been killed in Texas since 1948. The small figures indicate the states and Canadian provinces where these ducks were banded.





By JOEL F. WEBBER

Photos from the book "Possums"

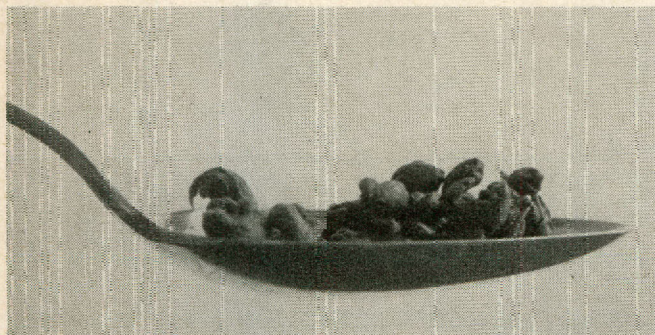
By Carl G. Hartman

Courtesy University of Texas Press

# NATURE'S GOD CHILD

The common opossum is one of North America's most curious animals. He has survived intact through the ages simply because he is too dumb to be exterminated!

Baby 'possums are so small when born that a whole litter fits neatly into a teaspoon.



THE opossum is nature's contradiction to the theme of survival of the fittest. Why this slow-witted creature survives when many of his betters are to be found only as fossilized remains in limestone quarries or tar pits is not known.

There is an old proverb that mentions the special care given babes, fools and drunks by a kindly providence. Since the 'possum' does not fall into any of these three categories, it may be assumed that he possesses some type of providential dispensation all his own.

Unlike larger and fiercer animals, the possum has little fear of man. He is often found roaming city streets, lumbering inquisitively along until some house-wife mistakes him for an over-size rat and emits a screech that fetches the gendarmeries with tear-gas bombs and riot guns to subdue one of the animal kingdom's most harmless members.



Other animals, too, have had no fear of man. And by size or temperament were able to fight man on almost even terms before the more intelligent mammal developed his mentality sufficiently to produce weapons more powerful than fang or claw. By the time the larger predators discovered man was dangerous, many of them were very dead.

Among the large predators threatened with extinction during our time is the grizzly bear. And this is attributable largely to the fact the bear has more guts than sense. The possum has neither, and he survives.

Even the possum's feeding habits are sheer suicidal. His nocturnal prowling which leads him into hen-houses in search of eggs or brooders for baby-chicks has provided many a farmer's wife with a fur neck-piece, neither gaudy nor expensive, but representing the possum in its most useful state.

His diurnal habits are equally bad since he shuns every concealment. Unlike the ostrich which hides an orange-size head (according to the popular superstition) in the sand but leaves uncovered a rump as large as a bushel basket for the edification or confusion of his enemies, the possum doesn't bother with such giddy artifices. He leaves everything sticking out.

Pursuing the fascinating subject of the possum's feeding habits, the creature will eat anything, preferably those things which a goat in direst moments of starvation would reject. However, in all fairness to the possum, he does draw a line. He will not eat anything he can't get into his mouth.

His food ranges from very ripe carrion to small birds, fruit, berries and eggs. Even the porcelain nest-eggs, the sly subterfuge farmers employ to induce hens to lay, are sometimes worried for minutes on end before the light begins to filter through his skull that he's just wasting his time.

The possum dotes upon eggs—hen-eggs—and at the prevailing prices for cackle-berries, it isn't cheap eating.

This over-weening fondness for hen-eggs often leads the possum into adventures something akin to the last of the Rollo Boys. Hence, you can readily imagine the consternation of H. W. Sanders of Bartlett, Tennessee, who found a possum sleeping on a nesting-box in his henhouse.

Possums have been found practically everywhere in strange environments and under almost every conceivable condition—and almost each time they were courting death.

Let us, for example, consider a possum scooped out of a Los Angeles incinerator, a bit singed but otherwise un-hurt. It is a remote possibility that the possum was disguising himself as a baked potato. Be it as it may, this fortunate possum escaped being "invited" to a possum-



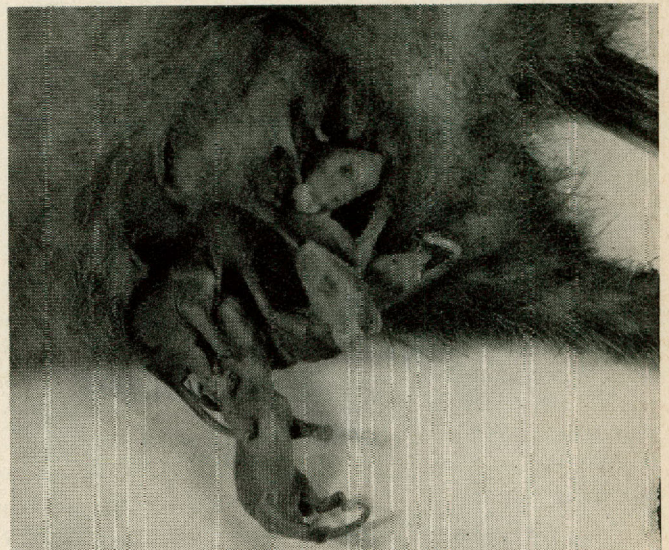
When an opossum feels death, he may not be just "playing 'possum." It is now believed he actually may be frightened into a state of stockd unconsciousness!

and-sweet-potato dinner by having fallen into the hands of a Boy Scout backing for a merit badge in natural history.

The possum has been around for a long time. Mammalogists believe the Age of the Possum began during the Mesozoic Period when marsupials (N. B.: Any member of the *marsupalia*, i.e., kangaroo, wombat and possum, whose female lacks a placenta and carries her young in a pouch. *College Standard Dictionary*.) were distributed over the earth. Through countless millennial periods since creation, the possum has increased phenomenally in numbers. And those numbers presently threaten to over-populate the world with rat-tailed, long, sharp-snouted progeny.

Our common possum (*Didelphis virginiana*) is a member of a large, distinguished and sometimes ferocious family. By blood, he is related to the *dasyure*, a hairy-tailed, tree-dwelling survivor of the Fossil Age. The dasyure

While in the delicate marsupial stage, only those baby opossums lucky enough to reach and hold on to one of the mother's breast nipples in the pouch are able to live.





is a fierce almost cat-like creature causing heavy damages to the sheep flocks of Australia and Tasmania.

Another preposterous relation is the bandicoot, the pig-rat of India. And an aquatic cousin is the yapok (*Cheironectes variegatus*), a possum with webbed feet, ranging from Paraguay to Guatemala.

A minor member of the possum-family is a dainty little fellow which lives South of the Border. About the size of a field mouse, he's all possum, although as the piece de resistance for a possum dinner, he'd get lost in the gravy.

The U. S. Post Office quotes from Herodotus to establish the fact that nothing fazes it except the current economy measures in getting out the mail. The possum can make a similar boast. While he has nothing to do with getting out the mail, it does apply to the possum's survival. Nothing fazes it, either! Climate is the one thing to which he is adaptable. Deserts and river bottoms alike are his oysters. He lives in either.

No great intelligence is responsible for the possum's survival. Perhaps, it is the lack of it, for the animal seems to be well-insulated against any attempts by nature to instill one scintilla of intelligence.

Even the porcupine outranks the possum mentally. Old quill-pig soars over him like Einstein over a Stone Age man. And the average zoologist will tell you when it comes to brains, the porcupine is a wash-out in the upper-story.

Every predacious animal except man, or those crazed by hunger, will leave the porcupine alone. A whack in the muzzle from Old Porky's tail is comparable to getting it in the face with a bucketful of red-hot rivets.

Our possum friend is every animal's push-over. He seems to realize he can't whip his weight in soap-bubbles. And the only defense he has is a super-charged nervous system.

Some say the possum does not "play dead." He hasn't that much imagination. When danger threatens, it seems possible that nature hoists the storm signals in his brain, and overcome by fright, the creature just faints right out of the picture.

True, a few enthusiastic and tem-

porarily belligerent possums do occasionally hiss or bare their teeth menacingly; it doesn't mean a thing. If the attack is pressed, the possums will dust off their fainting routines and go into their trances.

The possum survives, yea flourishes! But it is in the manner of the fishes whose breeding habits are equally hazardous. This could be nature's compensation for the high mortality rate among them.

Many of the alleged breeding habits of the possum are absurd and often obscene fictions. Since they are mammals, they breed like mammals.

But when the possum embryos are thirteen days old nature takes a hand. Being without a placenta, the embryos must have a place to develop. This development is done in the *marsupium* or pouch of the mother.

The embryos transfer themselves as they emerge from her body. This is a dramatic and even dangerous moment in the life of the young possum. At this time, each embryo is about one-half inch long and weighs approximately 13/100ths of an ounce, about the same weight as a book of paper matches. Should something prevent the successful transference of an embryo, that youngster starves to death.

Strangely, the *marsupium* is equipped to nourish an odd-number of embryos—thirteen. But the average litter is much larger, often eighteen or twenty young ones. Naturally, the surplus die. Here, again, nature is compensating for her loss. Following the pattern of fish, a striking parallel, more are spawned than are expected to survive.

At the end of sixty days in the *marsupium*, the survivors make their appearance. At this time they weigh eight hundred times their previous weight at the moment of transference to the *marsupium*.

It is interesting to note that, according to Professor Harold C. Reynolds, University of California zoologist, if human beings produced and developed like the possum, the human infant would weigh one-seventh of an ounce at birth, the same as a five-cent piece.

The weaning period is thirty days after birth, or after they have emerged from the *marsupium*. The young may ride piggy-back on their mothers, but

their growth and development is rapid. Soon the ties are broken and the young are on their own to begin their curious life cycle.

The possum has few natural enemies. Only man seems to have much interest in his existence; and then, man does not hunt the animal with any great zeal. As food, he's generally rated near the bottom of the list of edible possibilities, although some rate possum as a delicacy. And as sport, he offers about the same possibilities as shooting cats off the back fence. Even his fur is practically worthless.

Since nobody is really concerned about him, he has every reason to thrive. If placed in captivity, the possum approaches heaven. He simply dotes upon captivity and becomes a docile although not a very stimulating pet.

Next to eating, the possum is preoccupied with breeding. A single pair's progeny (and a pair can have several litters annually) if permitted to breed undisturbed, could almost take over any given area, ousting desirable game or fur species already there.

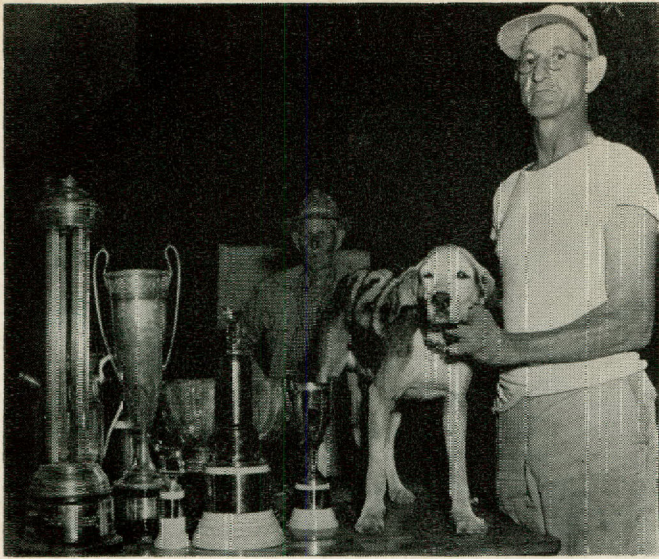
His prospects are looking better every day. Nature's god-child could, following the pattern for survival promulgated by the Beatitudes, inherit the Earth, since he is the meekest of the meek.

The human race is said to have evolved many years after the possum, yet it is within the realm of possibility that the possum will outlast man, since he does not experiment in nuclear fission.

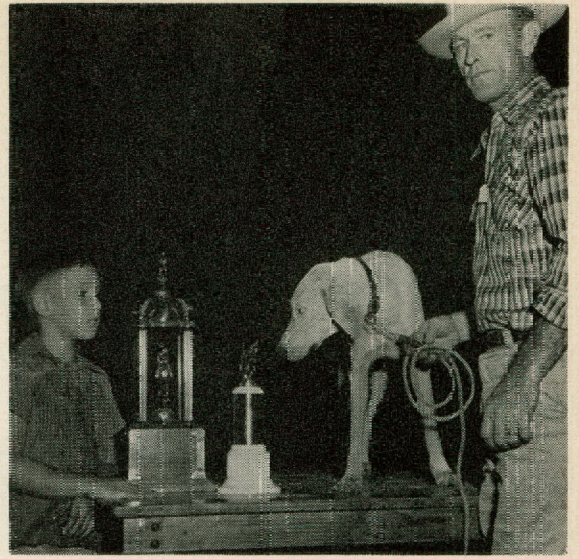
Roaming the earth today are literally millions of species of animals; yet, few of them could, like the possum, make the claim of being Nature's god-child. Nor could they, like the possum, climb down the leafy branches of their respective family trees to grin sardonically at our common and contemporary ancestor, the cave man.

The atomic age which threatens the human race with a catastrophe verging upon annihilation does not worry the possum. Should man finally disappear into some kind of primordial radio-active ooze and have to begin over again the torturous ascent of the primates, the first glad-hand to greet man could well be that of the possum with a grin that says, "Well, here we go again!"





Crowned field trial champion and showered with trophies was Tony, shown above with his owner, Leo Stevers, Beaumont.

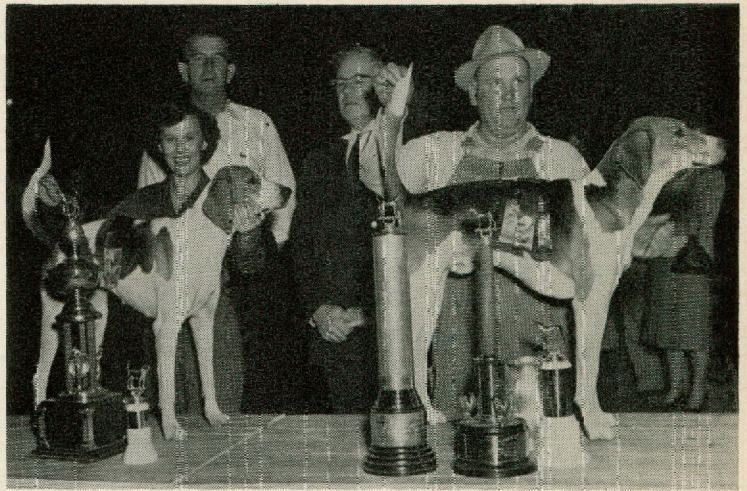


Jane, winner of the derby class field trials, seems to have her own ideas about the trophies she won for J. L. Berry, Deweyville. Berry's young son shows more interest.

## CHAMPION HOUNDS

Houn' dog men find that the good companionship, the dog talk, the races, and the relaxation found sleeping in the open are lure enough to bring them by the hundreds to Camp Tonkawa near Nacogdoches each year. This meet of the Texas Fox and Wolf Hunters Association has become one of the best, both in quantity and quality, in the nation. There are other lures, too. Some owners see their dogs crowned champions. Pictured are the big winners.

*Sid Abernathy photos courtesy Texas Farm Products Co.*



Big Boy Hiatt, right, was crowned grand champion of them all in the bench show. He is owned by C. E. Hiatt, Blackwell, Okla., president of the Southwest Fox and Wolf Hunters Association. Champion female was National Joy, owned by Mrs. Ferris Tate, Picayune, Miss.



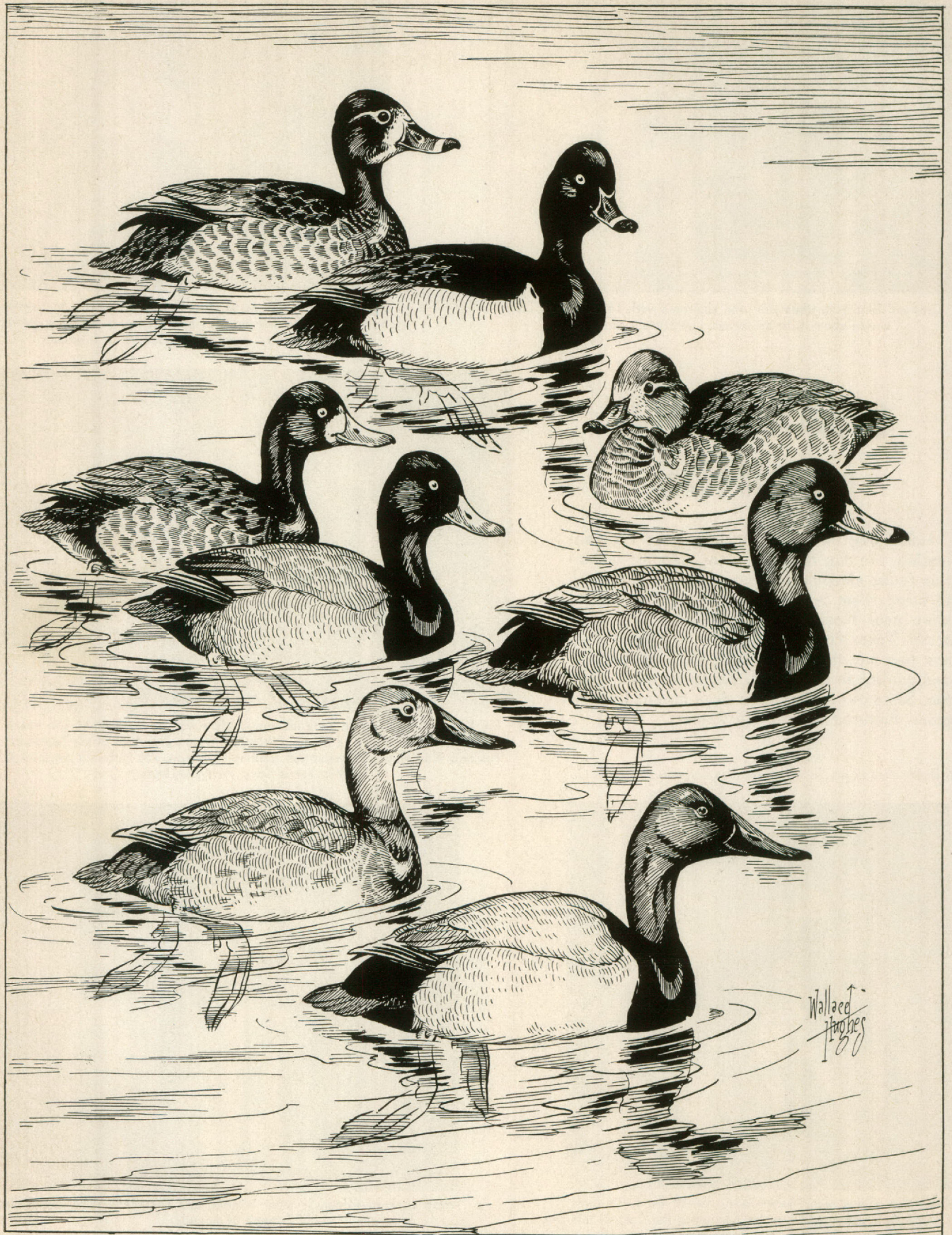
Champion puppy was Marvel Ann, owned by J. D. Liles, Conroe. She won over all males, including Ike Cotton, left, owned by Blue Caldwell, Houston, champion young dog.



Hiatt's trio of Adam, Seymour Winner, and First Pick, were judged best pick of hounds.



# First Group of Diving Ducks





# Texas Ducks

## Second in a Series

By WALLACE HUGHES

Oklahoma Game & Fish News

**REDHEAD** (*Nyroca americana*)— Winter resident, October to April. Most common during spring migration (March), and fall (November). Like most diving ducks prefers larger lakes and open-water ponds. Diving ducks dive under water for food and run or patter along the surface before taking flight. Found in large flocks. Rafts up in middle of lake during day. *Male*: Red-brown head and neck, black rump and breast, gray body, yellow eye, bluish-gray bill with black tip. *Female*: Uniformly brownish-gray, lighter on belly. Area around base of bill, whitish. Pale eye ring. Eye, brown. Both sexes show

band or stripe of light gray in wing when wing is spread. About the size of the Mallard. Average length, 20 inches. Wingspread, 33 inches. Weight, 2¼-pounds.

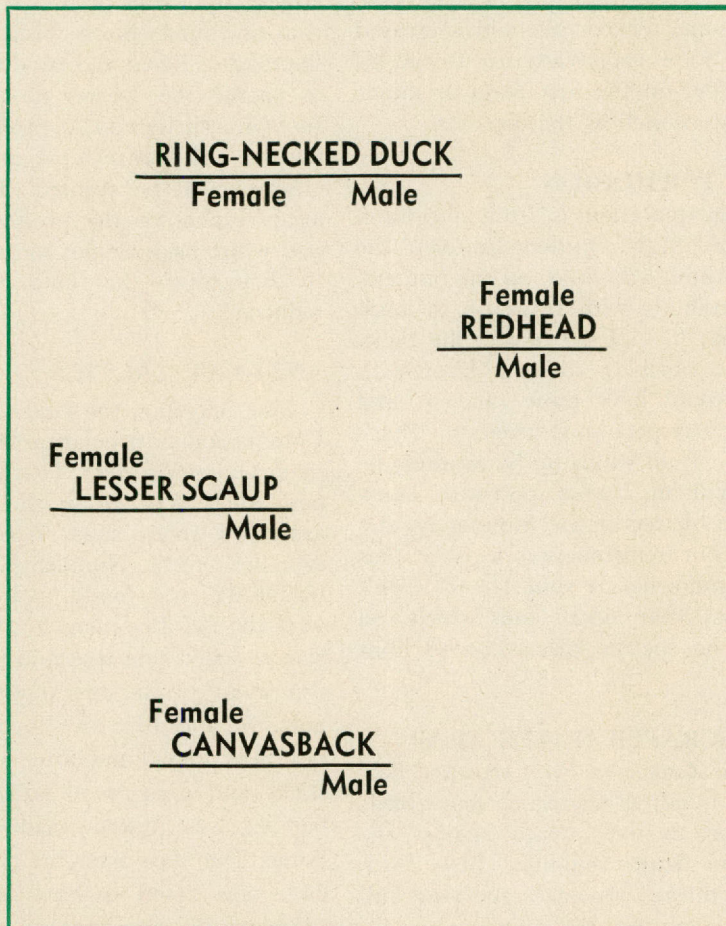
**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Nyroca collaris*)—Spring and fall migrant, occasionally found in winter. Prefers open water lakes. Sometimes associates with surface-feeding ducks. Bill is ringed with white, one at base of bill and one bordering the black tip, in both sexes. *Male*: At a distance, head, neck, breast, back and rump, black. Sides and belly, grayish to white. Closeup, head and neck show glossy purple iridescence. Eye, yellow. *Female*: Chiefly

brownish-gray, darker on head and back. Belly, whitish. White eye ring and streak behind eye. Area around base of bill, whitish. Eye brown to yellowish-brown. Both sexes show band of grayish in wing when wing is spread. Smaller than Mallard. Average length, 17 inches. Wingspread, 28 inches. Weight, 1½ pounds.

**CANVASBACK** (*Nyroca valisneria*)— Spring and fall migrant and winter resident. Found on open water of lakes and ponds. Sometimes associates with surface-feeding ducks on smaller ponds. Sloping forehead and bill present in both sexes. *Male*: Head and neck, reddish-brown. Breast and rump, black. Back, sides and belly, light gray, appearing nearly white at a distance. Bill, black. Eyes, bright red. *Female*: Chiefly brownish-gray, darker on the breast and rump. Head, neck and breast, pale buffy-brown. Bill, not quite as dark as male. Eye, brown. Size of Mallard. Average length, 21 inches. Wingspread, 33 inches. Weight, 2½ to 3 pounds.

**LESSER SCAUP** (*Nyroca affinis*)— Spring and fall migrant and winter resident. Prefers smaller lakes, ponds and open water in marshy areas. Also found along rivers and sandbars. Rafts up in middle of lake during day. Often called Blackjack, Bluebill or Butterball. *Male*: Head, neck, breast and rump, black. Back and sides, gray, lighter on the belly. Up close, head and neck show glossy purple iridescence. Eye, yellow. Bill, bluish-gray. *Female*: Brownish-gray, darker on head, breast and rump. Belly, whitish. Distinct white face or area around base of bill. Bill, bluish-gray. Eye, yellow to yellowish-brown. Both sexes show a band or stripe of white in the wing when wing is spread. Ring-necks and Redheads show gray bands. Smaller than Mallard. Average length, 17 inches. Wingspread, 28 inches. Weight, 1½ pounds.

### IDENTIFICATION KEY





By JAY VESSELS

## END OF THE LINE

One of the elder members of the Big Bend antelope tribe bit the dust during the recent open season. It was Antelope Buck Number 487. The animal was at least thirteen years old since it had been tagged in the fall of 1940 after being trapped for release in Brewster county where it was harvested. The buck was bagged by William A. Jeffers of San Antonio. Its age was considered extraordinary since the average age of antelope has been estimated at about five years. The Alpine Chamber of Commerce has not yet been heard from about the longevity advantages of that climate.

## POOR BUSTER

Bill Thompson of the *Paris News* describes some of the perils of a dog's life: "These modern farm-to-market highways in Lamar County are great for the farmers. But old Buster, a bony greyhound belonging to the Hunter Richeys of near Petty, has a complaint. Lamar County jackrabbits have learned to keep to the pavement when Buster gets after them. And Buster has worn nearly all the pads off his feet chasing rabbits on the hard-surfaced highway. So lately, what with his sore feet and all, Buster's hunting has been confined to a few innocent cottontails."

## LAGUNA MYSTERY

Marine Biologist Ernest Simmons reports the mysterious depletion in Laguna Madre of *Mulinia Littoralis*, a small bivalve mollusk which drum feed upon. The drum were becoming too populous in that Gulf Coast area. Could be Nature's way of making adjustments.

## AIREDALE MAKES TEAM

Game Warden Supervisor Bob Snow, the old lion tamer, has a new member of his second (hound) team. It's a city-bred airedale. "Had to cut the hair off his face so he could see," explained Snow. "Then he looked so good, I decided to give him a full length cut. And is he a whiz in the brush. Keeps him from getting overheated, too." Bob, one of the best in the dog business, says the pooch also is a fighter when it comes to bobcats and the like. "Doesn't want to choose his own grounds or anything," said Snow. "Just wades in." All of which, he added, means he is getting a face lift in addition to the haircut. You know, a scar here and a scar there plus some nicked ears and a creased nose. Snow isn't ready yet to try his new find on the first team or major predators such as the big cats.

## GET PERMISSION

This quotation is from a column by Fred Maly, Outdoor Editor of the *San Antonio Express*, on the hunters' responsibility with relation to landowners: ". . . I say respect the rights of the ranchers and the farmers as you would have those ranchers and farmers respect your property. That's all . . . it all winds up by meaning be a sportsman, a good sportsman, obeying the letter of the hunting regulations but remembering mostly that the landowner is your friend. Don't trespass, ever, upon lands which you have no specific permission to hunt upon."

## SKYSCRAPER DEATH TRAP

The *Associated Press* reported how three hundred migrating shore birds crashed to their death against the Empire State Building, New York City, during an early morning fall haze.

## FACTS OF LIFE

Ken Foree writes in his "OUT-DOORS" column in the *Dallas Morning News*: "Occasionally this column gets out its axe and tries to brain meat hogs who, in a day of disappearing game and declining habitat, are murdering the hunting future. Then, when lower down in the same column, there are reports of a big fish catch, a prediction can be made: Shortly there will come letters asking why sauce for the game is not sauce for the fish? Why preach conservation of fowl and not of fish? Actually both are conservation, most of the time anyhow. Game habitat is decreasing. Fishing habitat in a lake remains largely the same despite man's beer cans and lunch boxes. Fish, native to fluctuating rivers and producing eggs to enable the species to survive in such, in a sheltered lake produce more than a lake can feed and if not cropped will be stunted. Therefore, legal catches of the prolific crappie and white bass are not meat hoggish. If they were, the limits would be reduced."

## ANTI-ANT TACTICS

Lisa Engeling, the Game and Fish Commission statistician, relays a note from Game Wardens Tom Browning and Allen Woolley in the Crockett area. It's about newly banded dove Number 56342. Number 42 (meaning 56342) was found on the ground with the old dove near by. Investigation revealed that a second little dove was dead in the nest covered with ants. In a nearby tree, a last year's nest was found and after some new sticks and grass were added, Number 42 was placed inside his new home. Two days later the old mother dove was noted to have taken her place on the new nest.



## Press Views

### Game Notes

#### MAN VS. BEAST

Down near Rocksprings there's a great underground cave called "The Devil's Sink Hole." The area leading to the opening is rather deceptive, but the aperture is definitely visible on approach in daylight. Over the years, the local residents knowing of the chasm doubted reports that wildlife, such as deer, fell into the place; but when the natural showplace was utilized for public visitation, safeguards had to be taken and a fence was erected around the pit. As Game Warden Malcolm Reinhardt puts it, wild animals would sense the danger but not so humans.

#### TROUT BLANK ANGLERS

An Associated Press dispatch from Berlin, N. H., carried in the San Antonio *Light*, reported the indifference of 250 trout averaging one pound in weight, which were used by the New Hampshire Game and Fish Department to stock a tank for a fishing rodeo. One hundred fifty persons participated but only two midget specimens were snagged. Both weighed about three ounces. Red-faced promoters blames the piscatorial strike on the fact that the trout had been too well fed in the state hatchery.

#### DESPERATE DOE

Game Warden Bob Evins reported that a nosey hound dog almost was drowned by a doe deer after the dog got too curious about a newly born fawn. Evins said the doe drove the dog into a tank and on into deep water and that the ranch foreman had to intervene to save the pooch. The incident occurred on the Longhorn lease on the Maynard Ranch near Junction.

#### WILDLIFE TRAGEDY

Game Warden Eugene Willmann of Edinburg, found out under tragic circumstances why the white winged doves were so jittery just before the recent open season in the Rio Grande Valley. At one road intersection a maze of power lines proved to be a veritable suicide hazard for the birds. The wardens picked up thirty two white wings. Their crops were practically empty. In their frantic search for nourishment, the game birds had dashed pell mell into the deadly obstacle.

#### WATCH IT, MARVIN!

The Houston *Post* carried a Nacogdoches item telling how Marvin McBride, an insurance man, helping out on his farm on the Brown's Ferry Road, sampled the perils of the outdoors. He reached down to move a sweet gum log that blocked his pick-up truck, and almost touched a ground rattlesnake coiled and ready. When the reptile ran into a hole in the log, McBride sought to dislodge it with a pine pole. He punctured the rotten log baring a yellow jacket nest. Luckily, the motion of the snake attracted the buzzing jackets and McBride again escaped trouble.

#### NOT PERSECUTION

It is the policy of the Game and Fish Commission NOT to take unfair advantage of persons arrested for violating the law. Prosecute but NOT persecute is the custom. Thus recently when a man in a small town gave himself up to the Game Warden for multiple violations, none of a major nature, the name of the town was withheld from information channels. It was feared that the place was so small that the man might be held up to needless ridicule.

#### PINEY WOODS PROJECT

Wildlife Biologist Dan Lay is studying the effects of prescribed burning on forest lands with particular reference to the effects on deer browse production. Lay's work, according to W. C. Glazener, director of Wildlife Restoration for the Game and Fish Commission, will center on the Siecks State Forest near Kirbyville and will be supplemented by checks on the National Forest plots near Nacogdoches.

#### TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE!

Three members of the Commission's Marine Laboratory at Rockport dashed outside toward the seawall after a fisherman alerted them about "a big sea turtle." These staffers proceeded on the theory that each such tip may end the eternal search for the lost link. This one, like most of the others, was "just a slider," explained Marine Biologist Howard Lee. "He's already had his big moment. Made the GAME AND FISH magazine cover a while back."

#### NEW VALLEY PROJECT

W. C. Glazener, Director of Wildlife Restoration for the Game and Fish Commission, reports new mourning dove research in Lower South Texas. He says Wildlife Biologists W. S. Jennings and John T. Harris have undertaken a mourning dove trapping and banding assignment designed to determine an effective method of checking large numbers of adult doves in fall and winter concentrations. Returns from this project will supplement information from young doves banded throughout Texas the last few years.

#### ONE SURE WAY

A butcher shop advertised in the Minneapolis, Minnesota, *Tribune*: "Hunters fill out your bags with our domestic ducks and pheasants."

#### NIGHT BITES

Marine Biologist Ernest Simmons of the Game and Fish Commission staff reports night fishing becoming more popular on the Gulf Coast.

#### FIGHTING BADGERS

A future issue of *Texas Game and Fish* will feature the badger, which, although unknown to many, still is plentiful in Texas. The editor would like to hear from persons who have personally witnessed battles between dogs and badgers.

#### WOMEN ONLY

The Corpus Christi YWCA is sponsoring a women's fishing class which meets weekly. And both instructors are women, too.



# UNDRESSING BR'ER SQUIRREL

*If difficulty in dressing squirrels is spoiling your hunting fun, here in easy one, two, three order is a favorite method of the veterans.*

When you don't know how, skinning a squirrel can be one of the meanest, most discouraging, cussed-est jobs in the world. You spend half an hour shucking off the tough hide, only to find that a good portion of meat has come off with it. What's left is covered with small hairs that your wife has to pick off one by one.

But when you know how, there's nothing to it. Squirrel hunting is a lazy man's calling, and you owe it to the honor of the sport to do things the easy way. Just as most experts kill their limits of squirrels by simply sitting down somewhere, so they also completely clean a squirrel in less than a minute.

There are several ways of doing this, but we are only concerned with the quickest, laziest and cleanest method.

With a sharp knife, cut through the underside of the tail next to the body, cutting through the bone but not through the skin at the top of the tail. Extend this cut along each side of the squirrel's back for about an inch.

Take the two hind feet in your

right hand and place your right foot on the squirrel's tail. With a seesawing motion, pull up on the hind legs until the skin peels tightly up against the shoulders. Change the hind feet to your left hand (still standing on the tail).

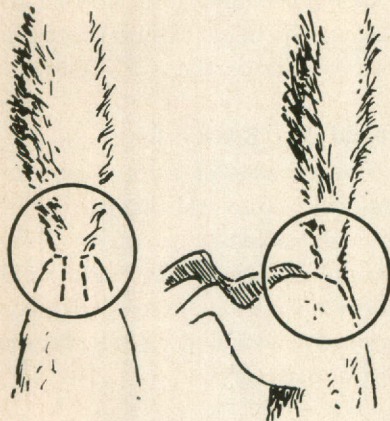
With your right forefinger and thumb dress out the front legs and neck, cut off the head, but don't cut off the front feet or pull off the skin. The resulting loop of skin on the front of the squirrel can be thrown over the top of any convenient fence post, hanging the squirrel up where you can easily work on it.

Insert the knife under the point of the unpeeled fur on the stomach and pull the skin over the hindquarters and legs. Make a full-length incision along the belly of the squirrel and remove all innards. Cut off the feet and tail and the job is done.

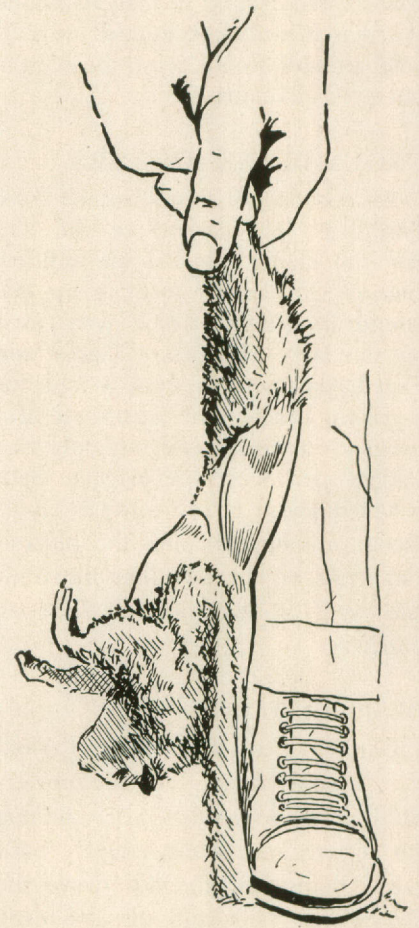
And if it's done right, there won't be a hair on the squirrel's carcass. It's

a good idea to wipe excess blood out of the body cavity, but don't wash the meat in the field. As the carcass dries it will have a glaze that will protect the meat until you get home. Carry the dressed squirrels in clean cotton sugar sacks to protect them from dirt and dust.

Many hunters prefer to clean each squirrel in the field as they shoot it, saving a job at the end of the day. The best way is the easiest way, and leave it to squirrel hunters to find it.



1. The secret of easy squirrel skinning with this method is in making the first cut exactly as shown at left. DO NOT cut through the skin on the upper side of the tail bone. Cut carefully through the tail bone at the underside of the squirrel's tail.



2. Step on the squirrel's tail. Take the hind legs in both hands and pull to peel the skin back to the shoulders. Leave feet attached.

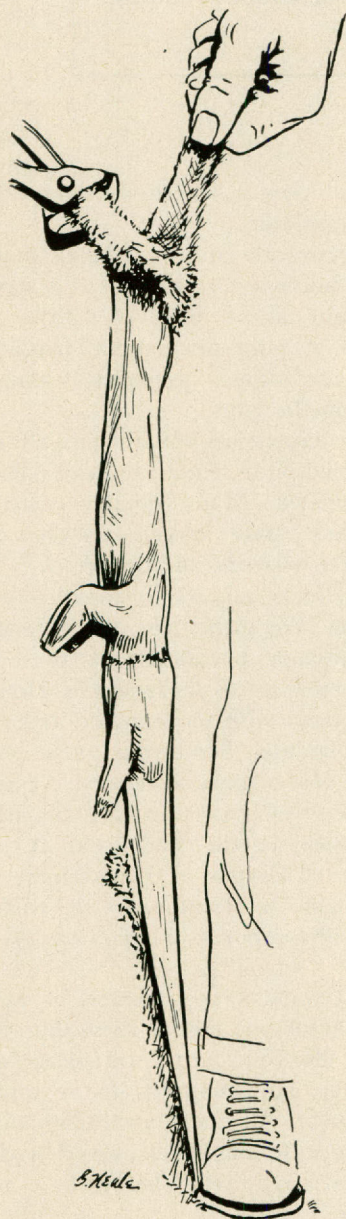


By JOHN MADSON

*The Iowa Conservationist*

Illustrated by

BILL NEALE



3. While still standing on the tail, pull the forelegs through the skin. Catch the V-shaped skin flap where it comes to a point in the center of the stomach and pull it off over the hind legs. Cut off the head and skin at the neck, clip off all four feet, and the skinning process is complete.



## *Old-Time Deer Rifle Gets Trophy Buck*

Jack Weldon of Rock Springs, shown with a terrific prize from the 1952 season, suggests that Texas gunners shouldn't fret too much about the potency of those firearm heirlooms.

Weldon got this 25-point beauty with a Winchester 44-43, Model .98, which has averaged two bucks a fall for more than half a century.

Weldon's father, Forrest Weldon, said "it can't be beat for the distance—or around 100 yards." After that, the big slug might not hold true to its trajectory. Anyway, the experts say most of the deer harvested are shot within 100 yards distance.

The lever-action Winchester, which has a hexagon-shaped barrel should be good for many more years, according to the senior Weldon. And son Jack says he will be back in Edwards County this fall looking for a mate for that 25-point rack now displayed in his father's home.—Jay Vessels.



# Wild Game for the Boys

(Every year several thousand hospitalized service men have a wild game dinner. There's entertainment galore, and it's one big fun-time of good food and laughter. Texas hunters contribute game from their bags. You can help, too. Here is the story, written by one of the kingpins of the project, Andy Anderson, Outdoor Editor of the *Houston Press*.

By ANDY ANDERSON

A statewide game collection program to gather enough ducks, geese, deer and other edible game to feed about 6500 patients in Army, Navy and Veteran Hospitals in Texas got under way with the opening of the duck season November 6.

Dinners are tentatively set up at Houston VA Hospital, Temple VA Hospital, Brooke Medical Center, Corpus Christi Naval Hospital, and the Beaumont General Hospital at El Paso.

A vast statewide plan of collecting game donated by hunters has been worked out. It is the seventh year in a row these game dinners have been staged and in the past hunters have responded nobly.

Down in the Valley A. A. Prince of the VFW of Corpus Christi and Evan Hurst of Harlingen are heading the committee to provide game for the Navy Hospital dinner at Corpus Christi. Grover Edge of the Baytown VFW and his committee are aiding with the Corpus Christi dinner.

At San Antonio Harold Scherwitz of the *San Antonio Light* is heading a committee to provide game for the Brooke Army hospital dinner.

In Houston, the General committee headed by the writer plus the Katy VFW will provide the game as well as part of the game for other dinners. The Temple Junior Chamber of Commerce will be in charge of the collection at Temple and Warren Hoyt will be general chairman of the El Paso Committee, which in conjunction with the *Herald Post* is in charge of the game collections out there.

The big event of the program will

be the annual Katy VFW free duck hunt, the date to be set when the most ducks are in. In the past this has always produced 1,000 ducks. From 250 to three hundred hunters usually go out and Katy landowners make available 300,000 acres of rice and peanut land for the hunt for this one day. All hunters must observe the law. They hunt for free, and landowners, their sons, hired men and relatives act as guides for free. Many Houston hunters who otherwise would not be able to hunt get a chance to do so. VFW members are on the highway to see that all game killed goes into the Hospital dinner pool. The VFW pays for cleaning the ducks and keeping them on deep freeze.

In Houston there is a continual game collection with Watty Watkins' frozen food locker the general headquarters for game.

Other hunters may leave game at Johnny Pikes Food Bank and any Consolidated locker. Sporting goods stores also have lockers.

Many smaller hunts are staged. Joe Lagow at Anahuac has a hunt each year, as does Tom Hargraves of the same city. C. F. Mann of the Plantation Club at East Columbia invited the Harris County Deputy Sheriffs down for a hunt a year and now the Plantation Club is planning a hunt for the game dinner.

The Freeport Boat and Hunting Club will have a hunt and other clubs will do likewise. Individuals have always responded nobly, but with more patients in the hospital this year than ever before the task of bringing

the outdoors to the disabled vets becomes greater.

A statewide appeal is being made to all hunters. One deer usually feeds as many as 30 boys. We figure a pound of game per patient. Hospital chefs are already preparing ways of cooking the game.

The dinners are usually gala affairs in the hospitals. Entertainment galore is provided. Many notables attend and kids start looking forward to the dinners weeks in advance.

All Texas hunters are urged to cooperate. We want deer, ducks, bear, elk, antelope, pheasants, and turkeys.

If you want to ship game to Houston comply with the state and federal shipping laws. Send your game prepared, and it must be cleaned. At San Antonio you can contact Harold Scherwitz. In the Valley call A. A. Prince of Corpus or Evan Hurst at Harlingen. In Houston call the writer or Joe Presswood in the *Houston Press* office.

And remember—a pound of wild game feeds one boy at these dinners. Please do your part. And please do not ship any chopped up or scrap deer meat. All ducks and other wild game are thoroughly examined by the hospital inspectors before it is accepted.

When game is shipped Ellington Field planes carry it to the various hospitals for free. No one gets paid for any effort in this project. School kids at Katy even help clean and pick the ducks, and the Katy VFW in appreciation has an auction once a year to raise funds for a scholarship to send an FFA boy to school. You can help. How about it?



# GUNS

and

# SHOOTING

By JOHN A. MASTERS

The time of the year has come to start thinking about the fall hunting season, to start deciding what sort of equipment one is going to have, and to start thinking of ways to sneak a bit out of the budget without attracting the attention of the little woman. This last part is usually the hardest.

Fortunately, in the past few years, a number of manufacturers have seen the light, and in comparison with other prices, it is my conviction that one can get completely adequate firearms and equipment at very reasonable prices.

This column and the one next month will discuss game rifles, since it is the writer's belief that more people are misguided on that subject than any other.

Shotguns, fortunately, do not exist in such confusing varieties as do rifles; consequently, one is less apt to make a mistake in picking a weapon. But when a prospective hunter sallies forth to select a game rifle, unless he has studied the subject at some length, may heaven bless and keep him.

Everyone will give him sage advice, most of which will be wrong. Often he will find little help at the store where he goes to make his purchase. It is a blight on the escutcheon of many sporting goods stores that their sales people are grossly uninformed. Yes, there are shining exceptions. Too many times, however, one encounters a deep desire on the part of the salesman to make a sale, and little else.

This state of affairs came to the attention of the writer when I first began taking an interest in rifles. Having been offered an opportunity to hunt deer, I went to a local store to purchase a deer rifle. Some four or five confused days later, I wound up

with a rifle that was adequate, but I did so only because a kind soul who had devoted a great deal of time to the study of firearms took it upon himself to discuss the matter thoroughly with me.

This experience left me with a strong desire to learn more about rifles. Now, some years later, I am still learning, and I hope to continue the process. Guns are fascinating things.

I have accumulated a respectable library of gun books, and have fired thousands of rounds of ammunition checking the various theories of the numerous experts. I have listened to the folk stories associated with this caliber and that, and have listened with tongue in cheek to all sorts of claims and misconceptions. During this time, I have been rather forcibly struck with the idea that for people living in the only nation on earth where freedom with firearms abounds, we collectively know very little about guns, and furthermore, don't particularly know where to find out the things we ought to know.

Now, I don't intend to set myself up as an expert. There are enough of them already in existence. What I propose to do is to set down certain facts pertinent to rifles in general, and other facts about rifles for a particular purpose. The observations that

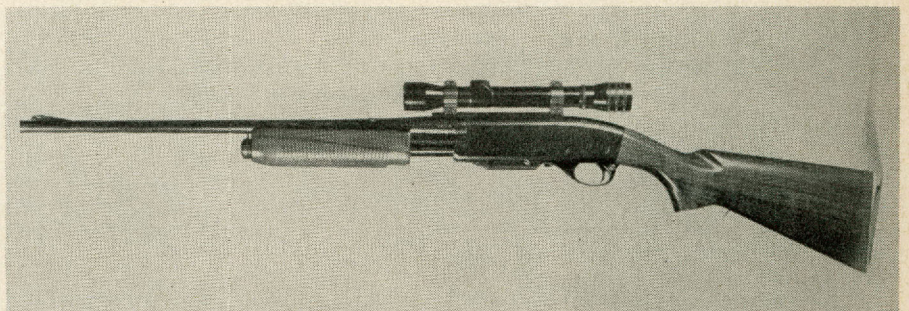
I will pass along will be carefully authenticated in every case, partly from my own observations, and partly from the findings of others. Naturally some of the things I propose will express my own personal opinions.

The small game rifle is undoubtedly used by more people than any other. The small game rifle is almost invariably a .22 caliber. Factory made ammunition is cheap, readily available everywhere, and is excellent in every respect. Numerous manufacturers turn out an even greater number of models of rifles chambered for the .22 caliber. The choice of a .22 is largely a matter of preference, since any one of the several styles available is completely satisfactory.

Basically, .22 caliber rifles are available in three styles: viz., bolt action, slide action or "pump," and automatic. No manufacturer builds a drop block or rolling block rifle today; however, Marlin still makes their excellent little lever action repeater. Each of these rifles has its advantages. Briefly listed, the important facts to consider are, in my opinion, these:

*Bolt action:* Strong and safe. Usually more accurate. Adapted to all sizes of .22 ammunition available. Readily fitted with any type sights, including telescopic sights. Simple

● Concluded on Page 26



The old reliable 30-06 remains one of the favorite deer rifles. This is Remington's slide action Model 760 equipped with a Stith Bear Cub 4X double adjustment scope and Dovetail Mount—a real deer-getting combination.



# How Much Should You Lead a

# FLYING DUCK

By HENRY P. DAVIS

?

**Table I**  
LEAD IN FEET DUE TO FLIGHT TIME OF SHOT CHARGE  
12 GAUGE LOADS—CROSSING TARGET—30 MPH

Dram Equivalent	Shot Weight	Shot Size	RANGE IN YARDS				
			10	20	30	40	50
3¾	1¼	2	1.1	2.3	3.7	5.1	6.8
		4	1.1	2.3	3.8	5.3	7.0
		5	1.1	2.4	3.8	5.4	7.1
		6	1.1	2.4	3.9	5.5	7.3
		7½	1.1	2.4	4.0	5.7	7.6
3¼	1⅛	4	1.1	2.4	3.9	5.5	7.2
		5	1.1	2.5	4.0	5.6	7.4
		6	1.1	2.5	4.0	5.7	7.5
		8	1.2	2.6	4.2	6.0	8.0
3	1	4	1.2	2.5	4.0	5.5	7.3
		5	1.2	2.5	4.0	5.7	7.5
		6	1.2	2.5	4.1	5.7	7.6
		7½	1.2	2.6	4.2	5.9	7.9
3¼	1¼	7½	1.2	2.6	4.2	6.0	8.0
		8	1.2	2.6	4.2	6.1	8.1
3	1⅓	4	1.2	2.5	4.0	5.7	7.4
		5	1.2	2.5	4.1	5.8	7.6
		6	1.2	2.6	4.1	5.8	7.7
		7½	1.2	2.6	4.2	6.0	8.1
		8	1.2	2.6	4.3	6.1	8.2
2¾	1½	7½	1.3	2.7	4.3	6.2	8.3
		8	1.3	2.7	4.4	6.3	8.5

**Table II**  
LEAD IN FEET DUE TO FLIGHT TIME OF SHOT CHARGE  
12 GAUGE LOADS—50 YARD RANGE—30 MPH TARGET

Load	SHOT SIZE					
	2	4	5	6	7½	8
3¾-1¼	6.8	7.0	7.1	7.3	7.6	.....
3¾-1⅛	.....	7.2	7.4	7.5	.....	8.0
3-1	.....	7.3	7.5	7.6	7.9	.....
3¼-1¼	.....	.....	.....	.....	8.0	8.1
3-1⅛	.....	7.4	7.6	7.7	8.1	8.2
2¾-1⅛	.....	.....	.....	.....	8.3	8.5

IN THESE days of small bag limits and short game supplies, the duck hunter is more anxious than ever to make good on all of his fair shooting chances. Good shooting opportunities do not come as often as they did "in the old days."

Every time a wildfowler lifts his gun to his shoulder and points it at a flying duck, he asks himself this question: "How far must I lead him?" for he knows that lead is one of the foremost, if not the all-important factor in good marksmanship with a shotgun.

No one can tell exactly how far to lead every duck, for every flying duck is a different shot and presents a different problem both in pointing and lead. The fellow who whispers "Lead him four duck lengths" may have an entirely different picture in his mind than the one the words convey to the shooter. One thing is certain: You can't hit 'em if you shoot behind 'em!

The expert, adroit with a slide rule and with a mass of ballistic data at hand, can readily compute the exact lead in any given situation, but when a fellow's in a duck blind he's got to get into action fast and he has no time to reach for a slide rule. The length of time it takes the shooter to decide to press the trigger and then press it, plus the time for the gun mechanism to work, the primer to explode and ignite the powder, plus the



time for the shot to travel down the barrel of the gun and from the gun muzzle to the target . . . plus the additional fact that the duck is moving at a goodly rate of speed make it necessary to lead the target, and the shooter will have better luck if he has some knowledge, at least, of these factors.

The reaction, gun and shot times mentioned above are quite short in comparison to the sort of time intervals most of us are accustomed to deal with, but they are quite long when we are thinking in terms of the distance that a duck moving, say, cross range at 30 miles an hour at a distance of 40 yards from the shooter will travel in this same total length of time.

Generally, the best duck shots become the best duck shots through experience. Yet a closer knowledge of the factors which make lead necessary is certain to be helpful to both novice and experienced gunner. The most important factor is that portion of the lead which is due to the flight time of the shot pellets from the muzzle of the gun to the target of duck.

Dr. C. S. Cummings, supervisor of physics and ballistics research at Remington Arms Company says:

"As an example let us assume that we are shooting at a duck which is moving at a speed of 30 miles per hour in a direction at right angles to the line of fire. This is the angle of flight for which the greatest amount of lead will be required. The formula for determining the amount of lead due to the flight time of the shot pellets is simple and consists only of multiplying the speed of the target by the time of flight of the shot pellets from the gun to the range at which the target is located. If we want the answer to come out in feet, it is necessary to express the speed of the target in feet per second and the time of flight of the shot pellets in seconds. Since 30 miles per hour is equal to 44 feet, per second, our formula then becomes:

Lead in Feet = 44 feet per second  
 $\times$  Time of Flight in Seconds.

"Again it should be emphasized that this is the part of the lead due only to the time of flight of the shot pellets and does not represent the total lead, which must take into account the other factors mentioned

above, such as barrel time, reaction time, etc. Hence, although the time of flight is by far the most important factor in determining the lead, the total true lead will be slightly larger than the figures presented here.

"For most of the important 12 gauge loads we have calculated the lead in feet for ranges of 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50 yards firing at a crossing target traveling 30 miles per hour. These figures are given in the accompanying Table I. They are based on average flight times, and it must be recognized that the time of flight of anything as fuzzy as a charge of shot does not have the same precise meaning as it does for a rifle bullet.

"Let us examine the figures in Table I and ask the question: 'How important is the muzzle velocity of the shot charge in affecting the amount of lead necessary with a given shot size at a given range?' In other words, do we decrease the amount of lead by an important amount when we go from light loads to heavy loads? The answer, interestingly enough, is that we do not. The advantage in using heavy loads in the field is not due to any reduction in lead which may be brought about by the fact that the heavier loads have a higher initial velocity.

"This can be seen readily from Table II, in which we have tabulated for a 50 yard range the amount of lead required for various loads from 2¾ dram—1⅛ oz. to 3¾ dram—1¼ oz. Looking at the column for No. 7½ shot, we see that the difference in lead between the lightest and heaviest load is only a matter of 0.7 foot or about 8 inches, a negligible amount when we consider other factors such as error in judging the range, direction of target flight and size of shot pattern at 50 yards. A similar comparison for 30 yards shows that the difference between the lightest and heaviest loads is only three tenths of a foot.

"Since the difference in muzzle velocity between the 2¾ dram—1⅛ oz. load and the 3¾ dram—1¼ oz. load is very nearly 200 feet per second, we see immediately that it is useless to attempt to bring about a significant reduction in lead by the simple expedient of increasing the muzzle velocity of the shot charge."



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functionally, not prone to give operating trouble. Few moving parts to wear. Not affected in general by weather conditions. Simple to take down and clean. Available as a single shot or repeater. Usually cheaper than other types.

**Slide action:** Strong and safe. Acceptable accuracy. Adapted to all sizes of .22 ammunition. Usually adapted to all types of sights, but some "hammer" models cannot be fitted with scope sights. Considerably more working parts than bolt action, therefore subject to more wear and functional failure. Fairly expensive. Somewhat more difficult to take down and clean. Requires more frequent cleaning.

**Automatic:** Strong and safe mechanically, but more dangerous functionally due to its being ready to fire immediately following a previous shot. Numerous parts as a rule, therefore prone to give functional trouble. Usually adapted to only one size ammunition. Requires frequent cleaning, and is somewhat difficult to clean as a rule. Not as accurate as other types, since chamber has to be made oversize to insure feeding of ammunition. Usually expensive.

**Lever Action:** Fundamentally the same as the slide action.

Considering all things, it seems to me that the bolt action is the most logical choice. It will serve you well, and will permit one to shoot as rapidly as he can aim well. I have found a clip fed bolt action .22 serves my purposes better than any other. It is more positive in feeding ammunition than any other type, and mounts a scope sight easily and in excellent position.

Whatever type rifle, you will be getting a dependable and acceptably accurate arm. But you will be getting *only* a small game rifle, *not* a deer or varmint rifle. I personally feel that the most unsportsmanlike thing you can do is use a gun that is underpowered for the animal you intend to shoot, and certainly the .22 is not adequate for anything larger than a jack rabbit.

I know deer have been killed with a .22. I have heard many people say

that it is adequate for varminting. I violently disagree. Later on in this article, I intend to discuss such things as velocity, trajectory, and muzzle energy. I believe I can demonstrate that the .22 is good for only what its designer intended—the killing of small game.

I said that the .22 was ALMOST invariably chosen as a small game rifle. There is another approach to the problem of small game shooting. If one wishes to handload ammunition, or to have ammunition custom loaded, a number of center fire rifles can be made to serve admirably. Among these are the so called "hot" .22 caliber center fire rifles, and several of the .25 caliber center fire type.

The .22 Hornet, the .218 Bee (which is, incidentally, a .22 caliber), the .222 Remington (another .22 caliber), and the .219 Zipper can all be used with reduced loads to take small game. Any of these make excellent varmint rifles when used with the regular factory ammunition.

In the .25 calibers, the 250-3000, the 25-35, and the .257 Roberts all serve well as small game rifles with the proper reduced loads. The 250-3000 and the .257 Roberts likewise are excellent varmint calibers and are also fine little deer rifles. The 25-35 is not a satisfactory varmint rifle. Even loaded to its maximum velocity, it is suitable only for short range varmint hunting. It is a bit on the weak side

for deer, but in the hands of a good shot who can *place his bullets well*, it will take deer.

Let's assume that you plan to handload your ammunition. Let us also presume that you like to shoot a bit the year round. You can provide yourself with one rifle that will permit you to shoot small game, varmints, and deer. It is a simple matter to reduce your loads for small game, load light bullets at high velocity for varmint shooting, and load heavier bullets at medium velocity for deer. I have done so for a long while.

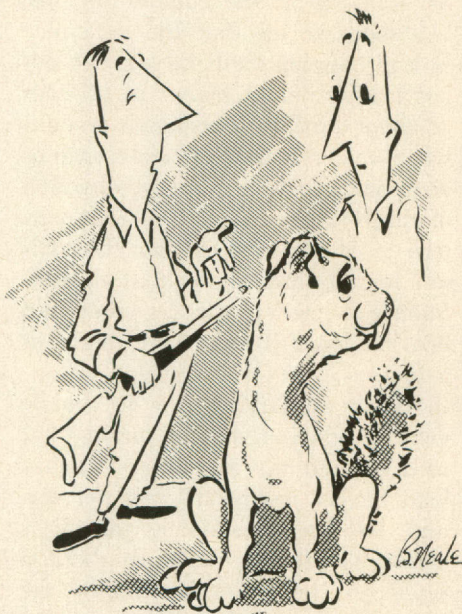
A 250-3000 will do all these things, and do them well. So will a .257 Roberts, although it will not be quite as accurate as the 250-3000 with reduced loads. Unfortunately, the 250-3000 is presently available only in the Savage Model 99 Lever Action. This is a perfectly good, sound firearm, but I have found it is generally not accurate enough for varmint shooting.

One can buy barreled actions in 250-3000 that are made in Belgium by Fabrique Nacional (the so-called FN Mauser), and have a stock made by a gunsmith. Occasionally, one sees a complete gun in this make stocked by the manufacturer, but they generally have to be obtained on special order. The barreled action is widely available.

I personally prefer to obtain an action and have a gunsmith barrel, chamber, and stock it for me. In this manner I obtain a gun built exactly as I want it. The cost is little more than a mass produced factory rifle, and the final product, if done by a competent gunsmith, will always be equal to or better than a factory rifle. One can obtain any caliber rifle he desires by having a gunsmith build it for him.

The .257 Roberts is available in a medium priced model built by Remington, and in a higher priced model built by Winchester. Both are good rifles, and with proper hand loads, will serve admirably for shooting small game, varmints and deer.

I personally do not believe any .22 caliber rifle should be used to hunt deer. Even the high speed .22 center fire rifles are at best only so-so deer killers, due to the fact that their bullets are made with thin jackets so they will break up easily. This factor



He's a great squirrel dog!



prevents their being used successfully on deer due to their lack of penetrating power.

When one gets out of the small game rifle class, he is usually after a rifle that will take either deer or varmints. Usually, any rifle suitable for deer can be used for varmint shooting, but some calibers are better than others for this dual purpose. I have already shown that the .257 Roberts and the 250-3000 can be used in a dual role. Numerous calibers will serve well as combination varmint-deer rifles, but will not perform satisfactorily when loaded down to velocities that would be appropriate for small game.

Tops on my list for a combination

varmint-deer rifle is the 270 Winchester. Its 130 grain bullet, with a speed of about 3150 feet per second, is a deer killer par excellence. Its 110 or 100 grain bullet, moving at around 3500 feet per second, is a fine varmint killer.

The fine old 30-06, and its near relatives, the 300 Savage and the new .308 Winchester, are all excellent deer rifles. They are not as accurate with light varmint bullets as the .270 Winchester, however.

The venerable 30-30, the 30-40 Krag, and the .32 Special are all good deer calibers. I believe them to be inadequate as varmint rifles. The same thing can be said of the .35 Remington and the .303 Savage.

I think the prime consideration in choosing a rifle should be its adequacy for the type shooting one intends to do. If one plans to hunt deer in brush, the rifle he will shoot will be a relatively slow, heavy-bullet model. If longer shots are in prospect, one of the fast, flat shooting rifles is in order. Next month we will consider why these things are true.

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## Redheads—Acres of 'Em

Continued from Page 11

"You're wrong there, Mac. The redhead makes up anywhere from 35% to almost 60% of the total bag of all ducks along the lower coast. They aren't too hard to get because they come in daily to fresh water potholes and tanks along the coast. Sometimes there will be as many as 40 to 50 thousand at one water hole at a time and still others coming and going continuously.

"Then when the weather is blustery they do a lot of flying over the bay and decoy in pretty well if you keep still. I've seen them come in over hunters and get shot at several times. The whole flock would just circle out a couple of hundred yards and come right back in. You'd think they were totally lacking in the sense department.

"At other times, particularly in blue bird weather, they won't even look at your decoys and it takes real know-how to get a shot at the few birds that are flying."

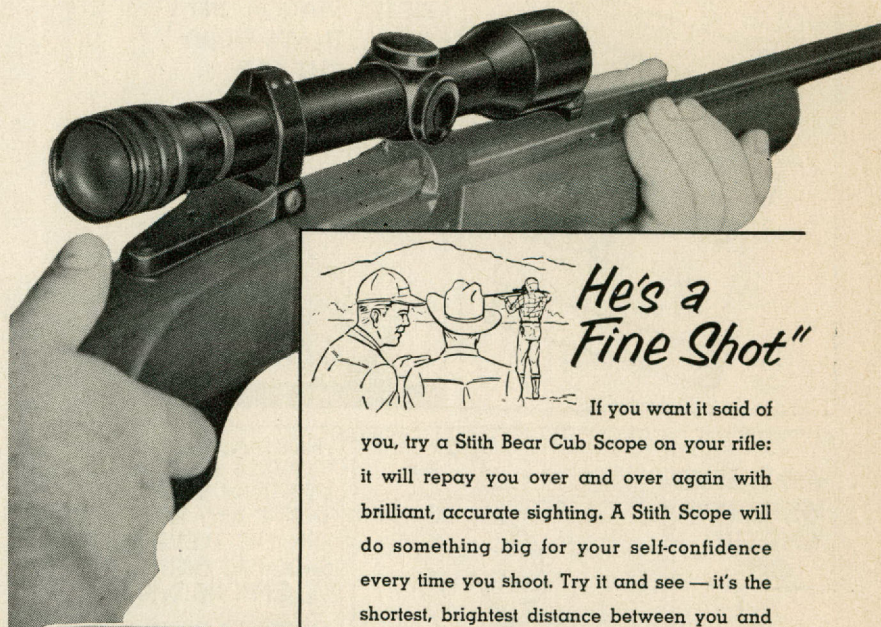
"I sure hope they keep coming down in here for their winter vacations," Mac laughed.

"They probably will," I said, "As long as their food supply is not destroyed by over salinity of the bay water or pollution by industrial wastes. Those are about the only serious factors we will have to guard against."

"There's another large raft—off to the right," Mac said as he banked the plane in that direction.

They rose from the water like a solid gray cloud—running and flying at the same time like all diving ducks and settled again some 200 yards away still in the tight-packed mass.

"Redheads," I said. "Acres and acres of 'em."



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**Honkers in the Snow**

Continued from Page 6

said. "Here's where we come in."

Emil called a couple of times, and we all were looking when the wily leader peeled off and headed straight toward our decoys with his bill pointed toward the ground.

"Gads," Virgil whispered, "this is hard on my heart!"

"My friend," Emil answered, "the sportsman whose heart doesn't miss a beat as the big beauties glide into his decoys just hasn't been born, that's all."

Now we could hear 'em, "the sweetest music this side of heaven."

"Let's don't get excited," Emil said. "Wait until they're past us and gliding into the decoys, then let's level off and take 'em."

They weren't fifty feet away. Now they were coming over the pit. We could see the color of their eyes. They were beautiful all stretched out in flight with their big white breasts gleaming in contrast to their big powerful dark wings. It would have been

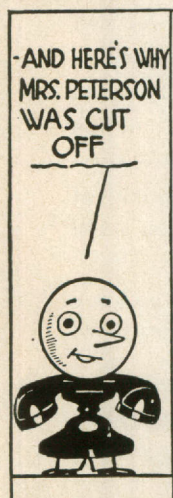
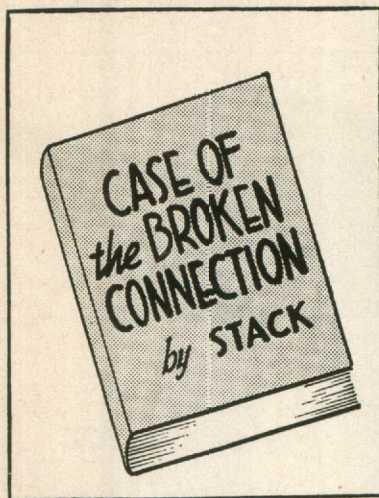
wonderful, I thought, if I could have been shooting with both a camera and my old scattergun.

Emil gave the signal, I flipped the cover back, and we sprang to our feet. Then I saw the duped leader swerving to the right. They saw us and were honking for all they were worth. It was now or never.

Three guns sounded as one. As I squeezed off, I saw a big honker fold up and plunk to the ground. "You got him, Mr. Smith!" Virgil screamed. Out of the corner of my eyes, I saw another one double up and head for the last round-up out in front of Virgil's gun. Emil was shooting from the east end of the pit toward the north, and I was too busy with my own affairs just then to notice what was going on with him, but I heard him laugh and say, "Bullseye!"

Then I knew we had scored around. By this time we could barely see the tail ends of our departed guests as they winged back toward the lake to stay away from those blasted decoys out on the plains.

The three big babies looked good out there on the snow. "Do you think



**County Park Set For Lake Whitney**

A 480-acre tract is being licensed by the Corps of Engineers to Hill County for the establishment of a county park on the shores of Lake Whitney.

The license requested by Hill County has been issued by the Secretary of the Army, and the way is now open for the development of a public park on the shores of this new Central Texas lake.

The license, being issued without any charge, is for a 25-year period.

According to the county's plans, the area known as Towash Park will be developed for numerous recreational uses including a swimming beach, picnic area, playgrounds and public boat launching facilities.

The licensed area is located near Whitney Dam on the Hill County side of the Brazos River, adjacent to Texas State Highway 22.



they're all dead?" someone asked. "Maybe we'd better bring 'em in."

"No use to hurry," I remarked. "They won't get away, and if we'll stay quiet we'll have a look today at one of the grandest arrays of big geese that could fly in any country under the sun."

We all agreed that we'd had enough shooting for one day. Decoys were brought in, guns packed, and we settled back in the pit to watch ducks and geese on parade.

For hours we saw ducks and geese by the thousands wing their way overhead on their way to feed. They made crazy patterns in the sky, but they were pretty, no matter how. We looked at the sly wingers and appreciated the good sports that had gone before us, how they had stayed within their limits to allow us the fine and rare shooting that we had had that day.

When Virgil went out to get his goose, the old boy took off, half running and half flying. The youngster took after him like a scared coyote, and, when within tackling distance, left his feet for a headlong dive at Mr. Goose.

There was a flurry of snow, goose, and Virgil as he rolled over and came up with his prize. Then a big smile covered his face and he said, "Boy, this is real sport."

There isn't an outdoorsman alive who would argue the point.

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# Don't Ruin That Head You Want for Your Den

Many fine animal heads taken each year are lost between the point of kill and the taxidermist. The loss of these trophies of the hunt can be prevented if the hunter understands how to skin and prepare his animal's head for the taxidermist.

The skinning process should start behind the shoulders of the animal leaving sufficient hide so the taxidermist will be able to anchor it around the edge of the form on which the skin is stretched. An incision should be made up the back of the neck from just behind the shoulders (point A in illustration I) to a point between the ears (point B). The hide should then be cut from point B to the base of each antler.

Next, a cut should be made in the deer hide from point A around the body of the deer to a point behind each front leg, and then across the front of each leg to a point behind the brisket.

The next step is to peel the hide

from the shoulders and neck as far up as the ears and to cut the ears off at the base of the skull, leaving them attached to the hide.

The hide should now be pried away from the base of the antlers and carefully removed from the skull, jaw, and nose by the use of a small dull pocket knife. The hide is finally detached from the animal head by cutting off the lips close to the skull, leaving plenty of inside skin attached.

The next operation is to detach the antlers from the animal's skull. Take a good rip saw and cut in a straight line from the base of the skull through the center of both eyes and out at the bridge of the nose as shown in illustration II.

Now with the skull cap and antlers in one hand and the hide in the other, you have all of the elements for a fine trophy head; however, there is one more step to take in order to prevent the spoilage of the hide. The inside of the hide should be heavily—repeat, heavily—salted twice. After the first salting, drain and salt a second time. Rub the salt in good, roll the hide up, and put it in a cool dry place.

Take it to the taxidermist as soon as possible.

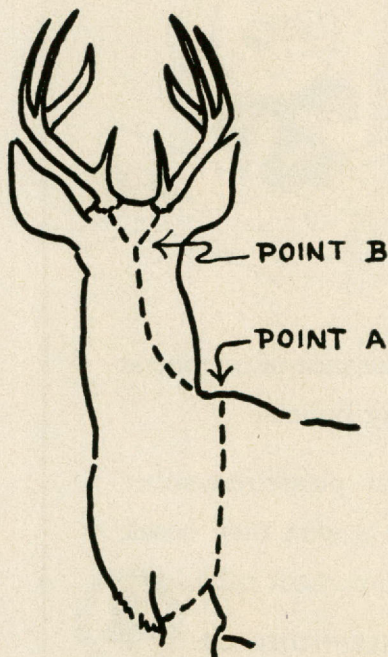


Illustration I

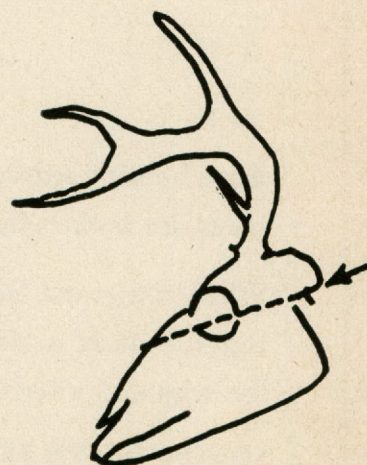


Illustration II.



# Florida Key Deer Show Population Gain

The National Wildlife Federation has issued a report on the status of the Key Deer of Florida, the declining species which the Federation spotlighted during National Wildlife Week in 1952.

An article by Werner O. Nagel of the Missouri Conservation Commission on the precarious position of the Florida Key Deer and the nearness of this specie to extinction was published in TEXAS GAME AND FISH last year. The plight of the diminutive deer herd had first attracted national attention during 1950 when eight of the little deer were run over and killed on U. S. Highway No. 1, the "overseas highway" to Key West. This

left a herd of less than fifty animals.

In 1951 the Boone and Crockett Club of New York provided funds for the inauguration of the Key Deer Fund which was later sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation in connection with National Wildlife Week. The Key Deer Fund was used to pay the salary and expenses of a special Game Management Agent with duties including the protection of the deer against illegal hunting, against fire, dogs, and other man-caused hazards subject to control; study of the deer and their habitat; and public relations.

During the Key Deer Fund project year which closed June 30, 1953, the Federation reports that the little deer herd increased from the fewer than fifty animals to an estimated 90 or 100 animals, including the current fawn crop. No key deer were killed on the "overseas highway," indicating that the fresh water holes which

were provided in other parts of the islands eliminated the necessity for the deer to utilize roadside-ditch water, and probably that motorists are driving a little more carefully, being aware of the presence of the little deer.

The number of Key Deer will undoubtedly continue to increase if continued protection is granted to them. The report says such protection is assured for the coming year by Congressional action authorizing the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to use a reasonable part of its regular game management funds for leasing lands for the protection and management of the Key Deer.

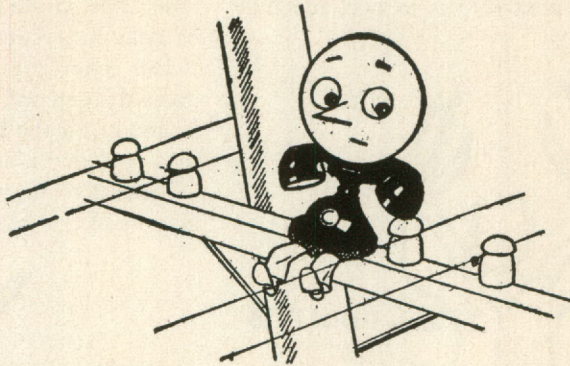
The Key Fund Project, along with congressional action establishing a temporary refuge, at present has preserved the Key Deer. These results cannot be considered as permanent. A final solution must include the establishment of a permanent wildlife sanctuary, the Federation report concludes.

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## 'Line Trouble' For Waterfowl

Hazards to waterfowl, in addition to gunfire, are demonstrated at the San Marcos State Fish Hatchery where a five strand power line runs the full length of the ponds.

R. P. Winn, superintendent of the hatchery, said ducks frequently strike the wires and are injured. Occasionally one is killed from breaking its neck.

The point was brought up when a gadwall and spoonbill were noticed on the hatchery waters long after waterfowl had migrated north. Both had been disabled by striking the wires during the fall movement southward.

A. Y. Ball, assistant superintendent, described how one drake pintail overcame a fracture. He said the duck had a broken wing but finally recovered so that he could fly from one pond to another. Many weeks after it was crippled, the pintail disappeared and Ball assumed it joined its feathered kind in normal flight.

—Jay Vessels.



# Anything Can Happen on Texas Coast

Denizens of the deep gave Texas salt water fishermen an exciting time during the summer, according to reports acquired along the Gulf Coast.

Some of the yarns were about the big ones, others described the fierce ones, and some tales related to the strange ones.

Helping along the mystery angle was the something-or-another that grabbed the anchor rope of a boat occupied by three Houston men off Matagorda Peninsula. The whatever-it-was started out to sea with the trio, boat, anchor and all. Finally, one of the men started the engine, put it in reverse, and, in the end, got rid of the monster just as the boat was about to be swamped after shipping water.

What happened to Frank and Dan Sitterle, Rockport youngsters, was not as scary but was mighty exciting. They were fishing for small fish in a light skiff about 350 yards from shore when they hooked a tarpon. One hour and some skinned hands later, they beached the 45 pound beauty. Dan, who is 15, held on to the line and Frank poled the boat to land.

At Palacios, A. T. Rutledge was certain he had hooked a rare fighter while casting from a pier. As the aquatic king, lunged and ripped, Rutledge stripped for action. His wife helped him remove his shoes and took his watch and billfold. Rutledge slipped into the water and played his prey in to the seawall. It was a 57-pound gar.

A Corpus Christi man, Eugene Wolnitzek, knew what he was going after and he knew it would be big. He went shark fishing. Using a five-pound hunk of stingaree for bait, he snagged a 400-pound hammerhead shark, measuring 11 feet long.

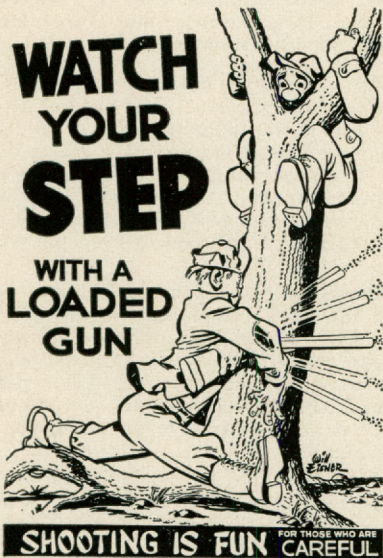
The rare specimens had their day too. The South Padre-Port Isabel waters yielded a tinker mackerel which became the 272nd variety of fish known to exist in that semi-tropical section of the Gulf.

Albert Lea Adcock of San Antonio went out for shark fishing but had to settle for an odd specimen weighing 40 pounds identified as a Cuban snapper.

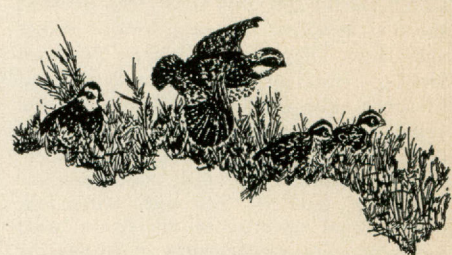
The scientists also dynamited what had appeared to be a great mystery at Port Aransas. Manley Ramsey caught a bluefish which, to all appearances, had been tattooed with the number "17" on its side. Texas Game and Fish marine biologists finally had to disillusion the folks. They magnified flesh taken from the "numbered" area 160 times and found that the freak growth was caused by an abnormal concentration of pigment.

A pretty good catch all the way around, the anglers agreed, even though they did have to appeal to the scientists now and then to maintain law and order.

"Just a normal year—strictly routine," observed Cecil Reid, Chief Marine Biologist for the Game and Fish Commission. But he wasn't fooling anybody, because his own staff, too, had corralled some odd specimens.—Jay Vessels.



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# BOOKS

**THE AMERICAN FISHERMAN'S GUIDE** edited by Bill Bueno. 549 plus XVI pages generously illustrated with 75 line drawings, 22 pages of black and white photos, and 10 pages color photos. Published 1952 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., 70 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y. \$5.95.

The purpose of some books is to entertain. Others are written to teach the reader. Here is one that does both.

This book is jam-packed with solid information about fresh-water fish and fishing but written and put together in such a way that you can pick it up for an entertaining and relaxing five minutes or full evening.

No less than 43 well-known outdoor writers and experts have contributed their bit, each giving the best he has to offer in his own specialty. It's a hard combination to beat. Editor Bueno has rounded up top-notch articles and excerpts from various outdoor magazines and books for the bulk of this volume and added much new material.

The book is divided into five parts, which should give you some idea of what the text includes. They are headed Fishes and How They Live, Fishing Without Hooks, Angling Tackle and General Methods, Fishing Through the Ice, and What You Can Catch and When. The book opens with a brief, concise treatment of the scientific aspect of fish, runs the gamut of how to fish with either the conventional or off-beat methods, and winds up with a good catch of fascinating articles covering the full field of fishing.

**ALGONQUIN** by Dion Henderson. 152 pages illustrated with line drawings by Edwin Schmidt. Published 1953 by Henry Holt and Co., 383 Madison Ave., New York 17, N. Y. \$2.50.

This is a novel. It is the story of a great dog and as such has a great appeal to those who have a fondness for dogs and the outdoors, for dogs seem to go with the outdoors and hunting.

Algonquin was a hunting dog, a pointer. It is the story of him and a little boy and two men, all of whom shared in the joys of Algonquin's greatness and the little tragedies of his life. The author has woven the emotions and lives of the three humans and

the near-human dog into a fascinating pattern. And if the dog at times seems too perfect to be true—well, Algonquin was a great dog.

**ROUND RIVER: FROM THE JOURNALS OF ALDO LEOPOLD.** Edited by Luna B. Leopold. 173 plus XIII pages illustrated with line drawings by Charles W. Schwartz. Published 1953 by Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y. \$3.

Serious students of wildlife and those who work in the field of game management know Aldo Leopold as one of the greatest of their band. He died in 1948 after having pioneered in the relatively young science of wildlife management. In this book the average hunter or outdoor enthusiast can get to know him as a better-than-average hunter and one who enjoyed the outdoors as much as any man who ever lived.

Leopold was a man who knew how to take time to live while working as hard as anyone. He knew how to devote his mind to the enjoyment of his hobby, the outdoors, while at the same time giving most of it to solving the problems of preserving it.

In this book you will travel with a great man from Canada to the tropic jungles. As his companion, it will be a hunting trip you will never forget.

Aldo Leopold was a professional conservationist and we owe much of our present game management policies to his forward thinking. The development of this young science and his life are almost as one.

He was no less a great hunter, great when he killed, greater when he failed in that his hunt was never unsuccessful.

Edited by his son and companion, this is a great book and, like his earlier "A Sand County Almanac," fascinating reading from beginning to end.

**AN ANGLER'S ANTHOLOGY** edited by Eugene Burns. 147 plus XIX pages illustrated with drawings by Louis Macouillard. Published 1952 by The Stackpole Co., Telegraph Press Building, Harrisburg, Pa. \$5.

Physically, this book is handsomely done and beautifully illustrated. The rest is a

little difficult to describe, except to say that there never was anything quite like it.

Gene Burns, besides being one of our country's most talented fishermen and outdoor writers, is far more studious than most of the clan. We fishermen have benefited periodically, because he has weeded out the uninteresting for us and presented us with the best.

This he has done here. He compiled most of the material for this collection of all-time great writing about fishing while at Harvard, where he had at his disposal the famous Fearing collection of angling literature.

Most of the material is made up of short passages selected from writings of all ages. Few of the selections are more than a page long. It makes for interesting browsing, and the book is a must for the serious collector of angling literature.

**WILLIE WHITETAIL, MAC MAL-LARD, WOODY WOODCOCK, AL ALLIGATOR** by Dr. R. W. Eschmeyer. Each book approximately 50 pages, generously illustrated with two-color line drawings by Roy K. Wills and Francis W. Davis. Published 1953 by Fisherman Press, Inc., Oxford, Ohio. Paper binding 50 cents each; cloth \$1 each.

These are four new titles to join Dr. Eschmeyer's excellent "True-to-Life" series of books about different species of wildlife. They are written for juveniles, and as such are the finest contribution to outdoor literature in many years. Yet every adult will find enjoyment aplenty between the covers, and all readers will benefit from the reading.

There could be no finer Christmas gift, and the price makes possible the gift of an entire set or such titles as the giver might choose. The fifty-cent paper-bound edition is very attractive, the dollar cloth-bound edition even more so, and the low price is a far contrast to the excellence of the text.

There now are ten books in the series. Others are Billy Bass, Tommy Trout, Freddy Fox Squirrel, Bobby Bluegill, Charley Cottontail, and Bob White.

Each book is in reality a true-to-life story of the animal it portrays. They are not fairy tales of prodigious feats by half-human animals. Instead, they are the stories of animals as they live, from birth to death, and of their everyday conflicts and conquests in their natural environments, including the part humans have come to play in the animal world.

Dr. Eschmeyer's experience in the field of wildlife conservation and writing assures authenticity of the text. His handling of the material is a superb example of entertainment blended with education.

**WHAT EVERY PARENT SHOULD KNOW WHEN A BOY OR GIRL WANTS A GUN!** Prepared and distributed without charge by the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute, 343 Lexington Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

The title is descriptive of this fine little bulletin available at the above address.





*Photos by Robert L. Spicer*

Simplest blind is made of brush piled on the ground. It is cheap, effective, and inconspicuous.

## Deer Hunters Take to Blinds

Whether you approve or not, the practice of hunting deer from blinds has established a definite place for itself in Texas, particularly in the "hill country."

Few persons frown on the use of a blind by itself. Unfortunately, the blind often is accompanied by a feeding post. Deer are fed regularly during the off-season and wander back to their deaths when legal firing begins.

The practice probably is a direct result of the fierce competition among the ever-increasing number of hunters for the available deer. Some ranchers are inclined to go along with the hunter who is "going to get a deer one way or another or else."

Just how proud a hunter can be of a deer killed at a

A tent added to the brush blind makes it warm and dry.



Tree blinds also are popular. They are comfortable, provide good vision, and the hunter is seldom seen or winded.

feeding post is something that only his own conscience can answer. Perhaps he is only after meat and a trophy, after all, and cares nothing for the thrill of the stalk or of victory over a cunning opponent on equal terms.

The method has its beneficial points. Physically handicapped persons can get their deer where otherwise they might be deprived. The normal hunter finds his shots easier with a less likelihood of crippled animals. The deer get a lot of supplemental feed.

However, there remains the important question of how "sporting" the method is. And the use of feed posts to lure deer from the land of a neighbor could lead to serious problems if it continues to spread.

The cabin type blind is more expensive. Logs are better than lumber.





# "SCISSORTAIL"



THE SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER, BETTER KNOWN AS THE "SCISSOR TAIL" OR "TEXAS BIRD OF PARADISE", MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN OUR STATE BIRD. HIS DIET CONSISTS OF INSECTS ALLOWING THE BENEFICIAL ASPECTS TO BE APPARENT. HE IS COMMONLY SEEN THROUGHOUT TEXAS IN MESQUITE TREES AND ON WIRES. HIS HABIT OF CHASING HAWKS, CROWS, AND OTHER BIRDS OF PREY FROM THE NESTING AREA IS QUITE A DISPLAY OF COURAGE, WHILE HIS CONGENIAL DISPOSITION WITH OTHER NESTING BIRDS IS DIFFERENT FROM SOME. THE DISTRIBUTION OF THIS BIRD IS PRIMARILY IN TEXAS, BUT EXTENDS SLIGHTLY FURTHER NORTH.

WOOLDRIDGE

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