

Texas Game and Fish

FEBRUARY

1964

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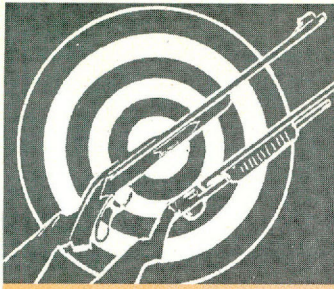
MAR 23 1964

PAN-AMERICAN COLLEGE
EDINBURG, TEXAS

She may be photogenic, but her mind is firmly fixed on the job at hand. Jay's Frankie, belonging to Billy Jay of Austin, was intent on proving her ability as a pointer, when snapped by T. D. Carroll. See related stories in this issue.



MAR 23 1964

PAN AMERICAN COLLEGE
EDINBURG, TEXAS

Long shots

Short casts



WEED DEEDS: The soil moved every year on U.S. farms amounts to a ridge 100 feet high and one mile wide, says the Weed Society of America, and at least half the energy used in moving it is expended solely for control of weeds. Weeds are among the greatest contributors to production costs in U.S. agriculture, and losses caused by them, including the cost of control, have been estimated to exceed \$4 billion each year. In addition to fighting weeds by tillage, cultivation and mechanical methods, farmers are using increasing amounts of chemicals. More than 200 million pounds of herbicides were used on about 90 million acres of land in 1962, for a total cost of more than \$200 million. The effect of this on wildlife was not mentioned in the statement.

UNEXPECTED TREET: Home owners will soon be able to obtain an ornamental tree that until recently was thought to have been extinct for millions of years. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture has released for commercial propagation a deciduous conifer known as *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* National which was discovered alive in China in 1948 after having been named from fossil remains.

CRANES' WANES AND GAINS: The official count of whooping cranes at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge was 33 at the end of December. This is an increase of only one from last year, in spite of the fact that there are seven young birds this year. No one knows what happened to the six mature birds. During 1961-62 a record total of 38 whooping cranes--33 adults and 5 young--comprised the wintering population on Aransas Refuge and adjacent Barrier Islands.

HAWAIIAN WINNER: A watercolor drawing showing a pair of Nene geese on the volcanic slopes of Hawaii is the winning design for the 1964-65 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp. The Nene goose (pronounced "nay-nay"), one of the rarest species of waterfowl in the world, is seriously threatened with extinction and may not be hunted. The birds are native only to the Hawaiian Islands and in 1956 became Hawaii's official bird. It is a specialized cousin of the Canada goose and lives in the wild only at an elevation of between 5,000 and 8,000 feet. It has been away from the water so long that its feet are only partly webbed. Each migratory waterfowl hunter 16 years or older is required to purchase a \$3 duck stamp, in addition to a regular State hunting license. Duck stamps are issued annually by the Post Office Dept. and the revenue from their sale is used in development of migratory bird refuges and habitat.

GUARDIAN OF THE STRAIGHT AND ARROW: Few may be aware of it, but bow hunters have a Patron Saint. Legend has it that St. Hubert, who died about the year 727 A. D., was a heathen bow hunter who had been exposed in vain to Christianity until on a hunt, one Good Friday, a stag appeared to him having a shining crucifix between its antlers. At the same time, he heard a warning voice. Hubert was converted, entered the church and finally became a bishop. St. Hubert's Day is November 3, which occurs during the hunting season in most if not all states. At one time the day was celebrated in many courts of Europe by a solemn chase.

WELL, DOFF MY COONSKIN CAP: Some naturalists have proposed that the raccoon join the eagle as an American emblem, thinking we should have a national mammal as well as a national bird. Among other qualifications, the raccoons are said to be more distinctly American than the eagle; tough, adaptable and successful; as common as dirt and as hardy as weeds.

YOU'LL WONDER WHERE'S THE MELLOW SCENT: Of interest to hunters is a recently-heard tip that the best thing to remove offensive odors from hands after handling deer, foxes, beaver or skunks is a small amount of toothpaste.

—Joan Pearsall

Texas Game and Fish

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TEXAS GAME AND FISH is published monthly by the Parks and Wildlife Department. Subscription price \$2 per year, \$3 for 2 years, and \$5 for 5 years. Single copies of current issue 20 cents each.

Subscriptions to TEXAS GAME AND FISH are available from the Austin offices, and branch offices. Checks and money orders should be made payable to PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT, Editorial and Advertising Offices, Reagan Building, Austin, Texas. Second class postage paid at Austin, Texas.

Postmaster: If undeliverable, please notify TEXAS GAME AND FISH on form 3579 at the Reagan Bldg., Austin, Texas.

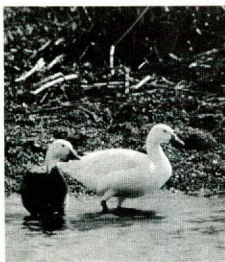
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The Cover



These handsome geese, a snow (right) and a blue (left) strike a characteristic pose, for individuals of these two species often fraternize. These species are two of the many which winter along the Texas coast. Another winter visitor to Texas is the stately Canada goose. See species story on the Canada in this issue.

Photo by Paul Hope

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES; AND TO IMPROVEMENT OF HUNTING AND FISHING IN TEXAS.

FEBRUARY, 1964

Vol. XXII, No. 2

★ In This Issue ★

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| A Lead to Follow | 3 |
| Velvet-Horn Investigation (Part I) | 4 |
| by JACK WARD THOMAS | |
| Biologists seek the answers to velvet-horn questions. | |
| All in a Day's Work | 8 |
| by W. R. LONG | |
| There's more to a game warden's day than strolling and cruising. | |
| Rewards on the Rimrock | 10 |
| by JIM THOMAS | |
| Hunters bagged nine aoudads in Texas' first hunt. | |
| Kids' Field Day | 13 |
| by CURTIS CARPENTER | |
| Kids and ranchers share buddy-system hunting built on love. | |
| Where the Wild Goose Goes | 16 |
| by J. C. ROMINES | |
| The Canada goose is a stately winter visitor to Texas coast. | |
| Tale of a Trial | 18 |
| by T. D. CARROLL | |
| Trials had a good hunt and left the game unharmed. | |
| Knowing Noses | 20 |
| by STARKEY WHITEHORN | |
| Eager and knowing dogs took prizes in the Panhandle. | |
| A Climbing Man's Hunt | 22 |
| by CURTIS CARPENTER | |
| Sportsmen enjoyed he-men hunts on Black Gap and Sierra Diablo. | |
| Hunting in '63 | 24 |
| by STAFF | |
| Early estimates give a picture of the 1963 fall and winter season. | |
| Dog on Point | Inside Front Cover |
| Long Shots | 1 Tackle Talk 29 |
| Guns and Shooting | 26 Milam County Beaver 31 |
| What Others Are Doing | 28 Parks Facilities 31 |
| Letters | 32 |
| Junior Sportsmen | Inside Back Cover |
| In a Possum's Pocket | Back Cover |

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A Lead to Follow

AS OUR POPULATION expands, as our industrial output increases, and as rising productivity makes possible increased enjoyment of leisure time, the obligation to make the most efficient and beneficial use of our natural resources becomes correspondingly greater. The standard of living we enjoy—greater than any other nation in history—is attributable in large measure to the wide variety and rich abundance of this country's physical resources. But these resources are not inexhaustible—nor do they automatically replenish themselves.

"We depend on our natural resources to sustain us—but in turn their continued availability must depend on our using them prudently, improving them wisely, and, where possible, restoring them promptly. We must reaffirm our dedication to the sound practices of conservation which can be defined as the wise use of our natural environment; it is, in the final analysis, the highest form of national thrift—the prevention of waste and despoilment while preserving, improving and renewing the quality and usefulness of all our resources. Our deep spiritual confidence that this nation will survive the perils of today—which may well be with us for decades to come—compels us to invest in our nation's future, to consider and meet our obligations to our children and the numberless generations that will follow.

"Our national conservation effort must include the

complete spectrum of resources: air, water, and land; fuels, energy, and minerals; soils, forests, and forage; fish and wildlife. Together they make up the world of nature which surrounds us—a vital part of the American heritage. And we must not neglect our human resources—the Youth Conservation Corps, proposed as a part of the Administration's Youth Employment Opportunities Bill, should be established to achieve the dual objectives of conserving and developing the talents of our youth and of conserving and developing our outdoor resources. . . .

"In the work of conservation, time should be made our friend, not our adversary. Actions deferred are frequently opportunities lost, and, in terms of financial outlay, dollars invested today will yield great benefits in the years to come. The progress made in the resources field in the first year of this Administration is encouraging; implementation of the new recommendations made today will maintain the momentum, enabling us to repay our debt to the past and meet our obligations to the future."

These are the words of our beloved late President John F. Kennedy, taken from his message on conservation to the Congress of the United States, delivered March 1, 1962. Let them be an inspiration to us all, for they came from a sportsman, an outdoorsman, a dedicated conservationist. **

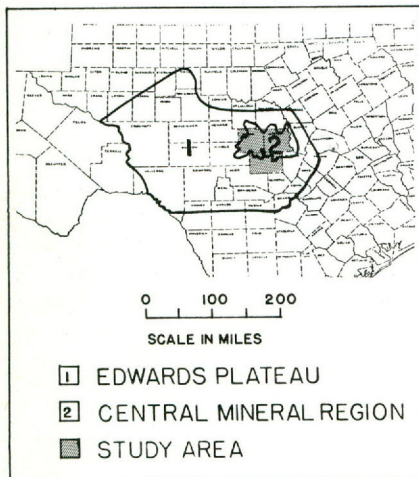
THE EDITOR

Velvet-Horn Investigation

by JACK WARD THOMAS
Wildlife Biologist

ROAMING the acres of the Central Mineral Region are not only some of the finest bucks in Texas but also some of the most unusual. A large number of sterile bucks called, "velvet-horns," "stags," "cactus bucks," or "deer-steers," inhabit this region, which is surrounded by the Edwards Plateau and covers most of Llano and Mason counties and parts of Burnet, Blanco and Gillespie counties (Figure 1).

Figure 1



Large numbers of velvet-horn bucks occur in the Central Mineral Region surrounded by the Edwards Plateau. A number of these animals are being observed in the study area shown.

These "velvet-horn" bucks, as we will call them throughout this article, are identified by several external characteristics. Their antlers, which are often of unusual shapes, are covered with skin and hair called velvet during the hunting season (November 16-December 31), whereas normal bucks have shed this covering in September (Figure 2). The testicles of these animals are reduced to about 1/6 to 1/4 of the normal size (Figure 3). The body and facial characteristics are feminine when compared to those of a normal male deer (Figure 4).

The velvet-horn condition does

not adversely affect the eating qualities of the meat; in fact, such animals are said to be better for eating because they are usually in better flesh than the other deer.

Biologists, wardens, hunters and ranchers have long been curious about these unusual animals and about what causes their condition. You could get a good discussion underway in the Llano-Mason area any time just by mentioning velvet-horns. Almost everyone has his pet theory about the cause of velvet-horns. A typical conversation among landowners, for example, might include the following surmises.

"The older bucks nip the testicles of the young buck fawns."

"No, no, I think the young fawns hang their testicles on fences and it makes a 'steer' out of them."

"Well, maybe those things cause some of it, but I think that this doe killing is responsible. For example, an old doe gets killed before she's weaned her fawns. Out of habit and hunger the fawns will try to nurse each other and this leads to sterility for the young buck fawns."

"I think the older bucks hooking the younger bucks is what causes it."

"It's these insecticides. . . ."

"No, it's these atomic bombs and fallout. . . ."

Figure 2



Velvet is normally shed before breeding season, but it is retained by velvet-horn bucks.

"It's a disease like mumps, except in deer. . . ."

Most of these theories won't hold water, but the fact that they are so numerous indicates great interest in these animals.

Intensified work on the velvet-horn problem was begun by state biologists in September, 1962. To properly approach the problem and to understand the "insides" of velvet-horn deer themselves, arrangements were made with Dr. Charles Bridges, head of the Department of Veterinary Pathology, in Texas A & M University's College of Veterinary Medicine, for the assistance of a trained veterinary pathologist from his staff.

The initial year's work on the velvet-horn problem was divided into four parts. Two of these phases are discussed separately in the following paragraphs. The other two will be explained in Part II in the March issue. As you will see, much remains to be discovered in later research segments, and this report in two parts covers only the first phases of the research project.

Background of Velvet-Horns

A review of literature concerning velvet-horns indicates that deer of this type are found occasionally in other areas of the United States but that the Central Mineral Region of Texas is unique in that it is the only area where large numbers of these animals occur.

Clarke (1916) mentioned that deer with velvet-covered antlers, during the normal rutting period, were sometimes taken in California, and he attributed the cause to accidental castration of the animals.

Clark (1953) reported "cactus" bucks to be fairly common in the Tucson Mountains of Arizona but did not elaborate.

Weston (1954) in a popular book written for lay consumption, said that "stags" occur occasionally on all deer ranges in Texas but that the

*A contribution of Pitmann-Robertson Project W-90-R

vast majority are killed in the Central Mineral Region. He guessed that there were various causes for the condition such as disease, injury, lack of development of sexual organs, anything else that is tantamount to castration or impotency, or possibly mineral deficiencies.

Severinghaus and Cheatum (1956) stated, "Upon occasion, bucks have been reported with velveted antlers in the seasons when these structures should have been shed or polished. In these instances it is likely that the testes have either failed to develop normally and descend to the scrotum, or by accident or disease their function has been impaired."

Robinette and Jones (1959) reported the condition in mule deer in Utah. It was considered to be quite rare with only six of 5,522 bucks checked being in this condition. It was speculated that these deer were

Figure 3



Testicles of a velvet-horn (left) are reduced to $\frac{1}{6}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of those of normal size (right).

This information on the 1959-1962 period is summarized and tabulated in Table 1. Llano County maps show the location of each velvet-horn kill in relation to soil type. These locations are shown by years in Figures 5 through 8.

Careful examination of these maps shows that the vast majority of the velvet-horns killed were harvested on areas of granite gravel soils types. The numbers of velvet-horns harvested on granite gravel soils areas is compared to those killed on non-granite gravel areas in Table 2.

Close examination of the kill distribution maps (Figures 5-8) reveals that the majority of the velvet-horn bucks killed outside the granite gravel areas were within one and a half miles of such areas. Various studies on deer movement and home range requirements of the deer of

Table 1

Numbers of Velvet-Horn Males Killed in Llano County As Compared to the Total Buck Kill, 1959-1962

| Year | Total Bucks Harvested | Velvet-Horn Bucks Harvested | Per Cent of Total Kill Represented by Velvet-Horns |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1959 | 5,214 | 143 | 2.74% |
| 1960 | 6,045 | 406 | 6.71% |
| 1961 | 7,079 | 441 | 6.22% |
| 1962 | 3,480 | 328 | 9.42% |

Table 2

Velvet-Horn Bucks Killed on Granite Gravel Soils Areas as Compared to Non-Granite Gravel Soils Areas

| Year | Total Number of Velvet-Horns Killed | Velvet-Horns Killed on Granite Gravel Soils | | Velvet-Horns Killed on Non-Granite Gravel Soils | |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|----------|---|----------|
| | | Number | Per Cent | Number | Per Cent |
| 1959 | 143 | 130 | 90.91% | 13 | 9.09% |
| 1960 | 406 | 372 | 91.63% | 34 | 8.37% |
| 1961 | 441 | 392 | 88.88% | 49 | 11.12% |
| 1962 | 328 | 311 | 94.32% | 17 | 5.18% |
| Totals | 1,318 | 1,205 | 91.43% | 113 | 8.57% |

suffering from inadequate male hormone secretion by the testes, as the testes were shriveled.

Efforts were made to determine the number of velvet-horns killed in Llano County, which was selected as a study area, from 1959 to 1962. Fortunately, all deer killed in Llano County in 1959 and 1960 during the November 16-December 31 deer hunting seasons were required to be examined at official checking stations. Each velvet-horn and the ranch on which it was killed was noted on the records at these stations. Questionnaires included with the Shooting Preserve Records (Under Texas law each landowner who leases hunting rights to another person must keep a record of all hunters and their kills.), personal interviews and post-card questionnaires furnished information on the velvet-horn bucks harvested in 1961 and 1962.

Figure 4



The body and facial characteristics of the velvet-horn (right) appear feminine when compared to those of a normal buck (left). For

example, note the broad face, swollen neck and regal carriage of normal buck in contrast to corresponding features of the velvet-horn.

Figure 5, 1959

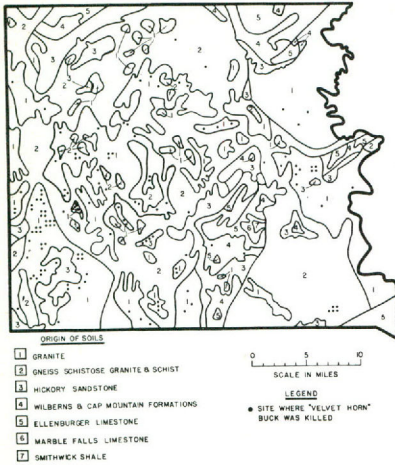


Figure 6, 1960

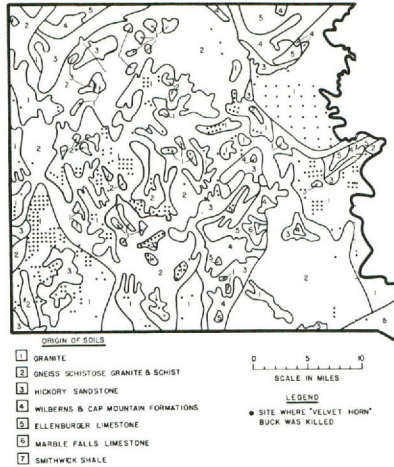
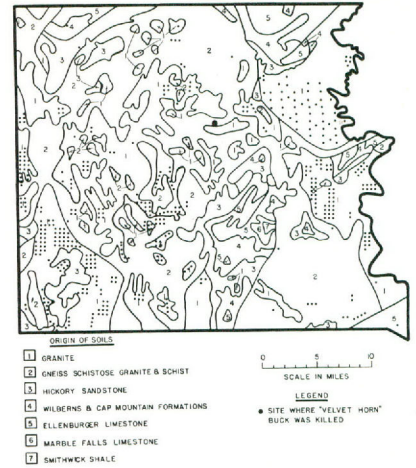


Figure 7, 1961



Through field records and questionnaires biologists determined the number of velvet-horns killed during the 1959-1962 deer hunting sea-

sons. The location of each of the kills and the type of soil on which it was made are noted on the maps shown above, Figures 5-8.

this area indicate that the maximum radius of the home range of the vast majority of deer is one and a half miles (Hahn, 1945; Hahn and Taylor, 1950; and Thomas, Teer, and Walker, 1963). This means simply that even though these deer were not killed on granite gravel soils it was probable that their daily home ranges included granite gravel areas.

Therefore, it seems that there is a definite correlation or relationship between granite gravel soils and the causative agent of the velvet-horn bucks. Just what this causative agent

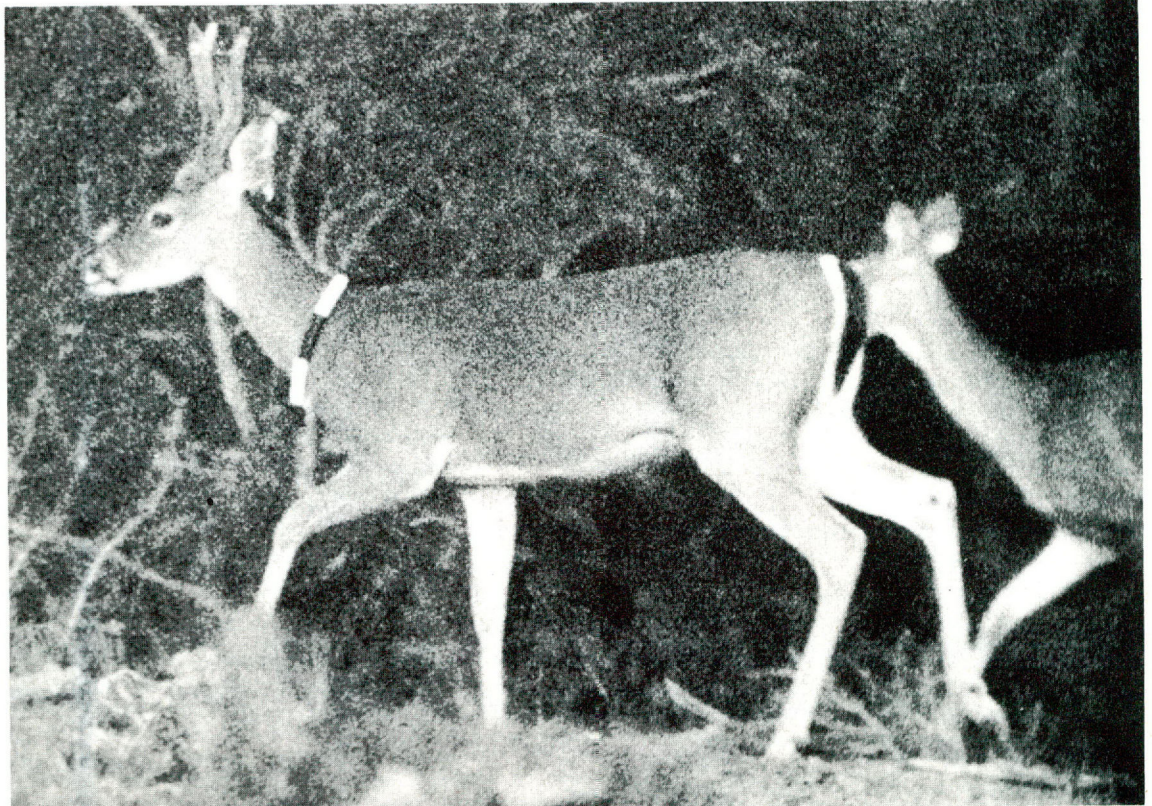
is has not been determined yet, and this is the subject for continued research.

Field Observations

To determine basic information about velvet-horn bucks such as antler development and loss patterns, possible recovery from the velvet-horn condition and social behavioral patterns including presence or absence of sexual activity, it was necessary to permanently mark individual velvet-horn bucks. Mr. and Mrs. Eric Lappé of Llano County gen-

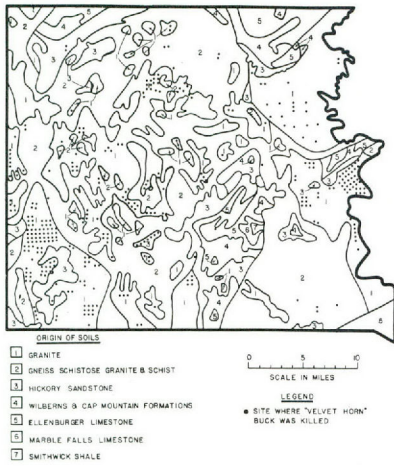
erously allowed the Department to use a portion of their ranch as a study area. This portion has 1140 acres under a deer-proof fence. We captured 10 velvet-horn bucks with the Palmer Cap-Chur gun, using the technique described by Green (1962) and Thomas and Marburger (1964), between November 12, 1962, and February 14, 1963. Each deer was released after being fitted with an individually recognizable collar with a brass bell. Attempts were made to observe these deer at least once each week from November 12, 1962

Figure 9



Field personnel placed collars complete with bells on velvet-horns found on study area.

Figure 8, 1962



through December 1, 1963. One of these collared deer is shown in Figure 9.

Nine of the deer captured and marked were in full velvet and had shriveled testicles. The other deer had shriveled testicles, but the velvet had been shed from the antlers. Undetermined numbers of bucks suffer from such abnormal testicles, or hypogonadism, but develop normal antlers; this is part of the velvet-horn problem, but more definite information on this phase of the situation is needed. Normal bucks shed the velvet from the antlers in September and early October.

The nine deer in full velvet remained so until early January. At that time, the velvet covering on the

Figure 10



In normal males, the tissue connecting antlers and the pedicles deteriorates and the antlers fall away. The antler above lying near its pedicle was shed in the normal way.

antlers began to turn black toward the tips, and the hair on these areas slipped off. This change in the antlers occurred several days after a severe freeze, and it was surmised that the living antlers, which have a very poorly developed blood supply, simply froze and died. One deer, whose antlers were made up of huge "lumps" of velvet-covered tissue about four inches high, never showed a change in its antlers. It was supposed that the antlers did not change because they were not elongated and therefore had a sufficient blood supply to the "lumps."

During the period through mid-March, the velvet on the antlers of the eight deer blackened almost to the base and began to peel off in strips. None of the animals attempted to "rub" this dead velvet from the antlers. Then one by one the eight deer lost the antlers, but by a unique process.

In normal bucks, when the testes begin to shrink after the breeding season, hormone secretion decreases; this in turn causes a deterioration in the tissue connecting the dead, hardened antlers to the pedicles (the junctures of the antlers and skull). The antlers then separate and fall away. The mode of antler loss in normal males is shown in Figure 10.

In the case of the velvet-horns under observation, the frozen antlers

Figure 11



Antlers of velvet-horns are not shed naturally. They freeze and die and finally rot off near the base. From this base the new antlers grow the following year. The result is often a lumpy array of base points and strange growths.

died back almost to the base, but a better blood supply kept the base of the antlers alive. There was a definite demarcation line where living tissue joined the tissue killed by freezing. The antlers were then lost by a process of necrosis (the death of tissue adjoining living tissue), leaving only a stump of living tissue attached to the head. This meant that the antlers finally rotted off at their juncture with the living base of the structure and fell off. The deer with the shriveled testicles and hardened antlers

Figure 12



A definite line of demarcation between living and dead antler tissue is apparent during the abnormal shedding of a velvet-horn's antlers.

mentioned earlier also lost his antlers in this fashion. This unique means of segmented antler loss is shown in Figure 11.

Antler growth of the nine was resumed in late March from the bases of the old antlers. Abnormal loss and regrowth of antlers accounts for the larger than average base, peculiar antler growth patterns and numerous antler points around the antler base often found on deer of this type. In such cases there is a definite visible line where the new growth resumes from the antler stub (Figure 12).

Antler growth in the velvet-horns we observed continued until late August and then seemed to stop. However, the velvet was retained and none of the animals showed any

• Continued on Page 27

All in a Day's Work

by W. R. LONG
I & E Officer, Tyler

THE GAME WARDEN in this story is named Tom. Tom is a time-honored and laudable name, and the woods are full of people who have it by birth or alias. It has been chosen to represent here a composite of all wardens rather than any one individual.

Tom left his home before day-break on an ordinary Monday morning. It was much too early for ducks to be out of bed, but not too early for duck hunters. He wanted to be on the lake, and in his boat, before man or duck arrived. During the hours of false dawn, Tom began his day by checking the shivering men in duck blinds. Rain was falling, mixed with sleet, like little needles.

At the first blind the hunter produced gun and license, then made a left-handed comment that no self-respecting duck would ever decoy to a blind in the middle of a crowd of people. Tom went on down the lake, ruffled but unbruised.

He checked 10 blinds, and twice that many hunters. Nine of them greeted him heartily enough, but made him feel a little less than welcome because birds were flying and shooting hours were nearing. The tenth hunter asked the question, "How in tarnation can ducks be

protected if you game wardens don't spend more time on the lake?" Tom shut his eyes for a moment and tried to visualize both blind and hunter suddenly sinking to the bottom of the lake, but he couldn't quite tune in the picture.

At least he received a momentary hot-flash, and it felt quite warming underneath the icy water trickling down his neck. His hands were blue, and it was beginning to look as if the day might be the same color.

Afternoon found him up the river with a nylon line and drag, searching for illegal nets and traps. He rounded a bend in time to see a man dumping fish from a wire trap into his boat. Tom promptly took both man and trap into custody.

Naturally, and about par for the course, Tom was assured by the man (who had been arrested the previous year for the same offense) that the trap was of unknown origin, that it had just been "found" and that the angler didn't want the fish to stay there and die. The fisherman also hinted that Tom might have descended from a long line of bachelors.

The daylight shift of the warden's day was finished by taking the suspect into custody, driving to the

courthouse with him, signing the complaint, listening to the comments of the judge who was called from home and writing the piles of case reports on the arrest.

Back at his office, as Tom's mind began to wander toward thoughts of home, fireside, wife and tow-headed kids, the telephone began to jig on the desk. To a game warden at this time of night, after this sort of day, a telephone doesn't sound like sweet chimes.

The call was from a rancher who had just heard a rifle report from the direction of his grain field. He wanted a warden, not tomorrow and not right now, but an hour ago. Tom put on his hat and left the office.

On the way he radioed a neighboring warden, who was more familiar with his county roads than with his own floor plan at home, and advised that he might need help with a road-block. Tom arrived at the scene just in time to flick on his spotlight and see two hunters loading a yearling doe into the trunk of their car. Out came pencil and visions of more reports.

Tom stood there in the soft rain, talking to the men and looking at the little 50-pound deer that, right now, was wet enough to resemble a bedraggled, land-locked beaver. A flash-thought crossed his mind. He might, he knew, have a tailored green uniform and a badge as big as a pie plate, but he was still human enough to have feet that felt like a half-thawed TV dinner, and a runny nose.

The warden knew both hunters. While they were not exactly pillars of respectability in their community, they lived in the same town where he lived—where he bought his own licenses, where he paid his taxes, attended church and sent his children to school. Knowing that he could depend on both of them to appear in court at a specified time, he was content to give them a citation to appear.





But, since he had his teeth buried in the case, he was a little reluctant to let go, so he took a chance on talking to the men about their future hunting. He withheld denouncement of the deed in favor of spelling out the reasons for the laws on night and other illegal hunting. He transferred the deer to the patrol car, and knew that as the men drove away, they'd either give some thought to what he'd said, or they'd rank him just about head and shoulders below a muskrat.

A stop by the house of the rancher, the one who called, gained him two things—three, counting a cup of coffee. He received information that this sort of thing was not uncommon lately, and the direct request to spend the rest of the night in the vicinity of the grain field. Tom sighed, armed himself with sandwiches and a thermos of coffee, and spent the remainder of the night pitying the poor unfortunates who, in boredom, had nothing to do every night except go to bed.

He hoped that the deer wouldn't spoil before he could get to an orphans' home with the meat, and he radioed the sheriff's office with a request to telephone his wife the news that they were still married, he presumed, but that he wouldn't be home any time soon.

During the long night, Tom had time to ask himself why a person will stick with a job that requires

the utmost in time, energy, ability and sacrifice of family when there are 40-hour per week positions that offer double the salary with less demands. But he had answered the question many times before. It was simple. He enjoyed drinking deeply of the outdoors, created by God. He knew the satisfaction of doing a job well. He wasn't running in circles looking for what he wanted—he had found it.

At daylight, after hours of vigilance and sporadic activity, he finally nosed the patrol car toward town and a warm bed, feeling like something ready for a taxidermist.

Twenty miles down the road, and just at the city limits, a car honked him over to the side and pulled in behind him. It was the president of a local civic club wanting him to make a talk on game laws and wildlife conservation at the group meeting the following night. Tom promised, with one eye shut, to make an appearance, but he mentally ticked off the schedule for the following day: drive a waterfowl census line and make the report; walk a deer census line and fill out the report; visit a school class and show a film on wildlife; inspect a farmer's land and make recommendations for quail habitat improvement; pick up a shipment of quail from the express office and release them; and make an appearance in court on the two cases he'd filed. Since he already had an endless supply of delinquent reports, the just-requested speech would have to be one written on the back of a chewing gum wrapper.

Some people, he mused, believed that the world ran on gasoline. He suggested to himself that these good folks were a little balmy. The world runs on paper, and he could prove it by the mountains and reams of the stuff piled on his desk, each piece, of course, needing priority attention.

Tom delivered the deer to the locker plant, where confiscated game was processed without charge for charity. He dropped by the post

• Continued on Page 30





Rewards on the Rimrock

by JIM THOMAS
Amarillo Globe-News

mesa in the canyon. One hunter was back a little way in a draw while the other two were out on projecting points which gave them a wide view of the canyon.

Alton, who was on the right point, said he was watching the sheep lower in the canyon, hoping they would come closer when, hearing the rattling of rocks close by, he turned in his blind to see six or seven of the aoudads not 30 feet away. They had evidently crept around the rim of the canyon while the hunters were watching elsewhere and were now so close, that they were difficult to see in the telescopic sights of the hunters' rifles.

"I tried for four or five minutes to get Tom and Paul's attention by doing everything but jumping up and down, but they were intent on the sheep in the canyon. I didn't want these to get away after we had hunted them for three days so I sighted in on the nearest one. I tried to shoot him where he wouldn't fall too far down the cliff, but he fell clear to the bottom anyway. By that time, the other hunters had opened fire, and the sheep were milling around in surprise on the cliff," said Alton.

Christian, who was on the other point and couldn't see the sheep because of the intervening cliff edge,

Symbolic of the rugged determination needed to hunt in the Palo Duro Canyon, this hunter inches arduously toward his prize, to be treasured all the more because of the challenge.

"SOMETIMES they get so close you can't see them!" This was one of the comments overheard after three hunters bagged three aoudad sheep in a few seconds of fast shooting from the rim of the vast Palo Duro Canyon. The kills were made during the three-day aoudad hunt early in December. Nine sheep were taken altogether during the hunt.

"One sheep was so close I thought he was going to spit in my eye!"

That was the comment of Dr. Paul Spring of Friona after he and his two hunting companions, George Alton of Campo, Colo., and Tom Christian of Claude, bagged their sheep. They had shot from a cliff's edge not 30 feet from where they first saw the sheep.

The group had been in cliff-side blinds on the rim of the 800-foot deep Palo Duro Canyon, watching a far-off group of aoudads feed on a

had also heard the rolling of the rocks from nearby. Christian commented, "That could be only one thing in this country. I knew there had to be some sheep close by, but I just didn't know where. When George opened up on the sheep, I jumped up and slipped over the edge of the cliff to where I could see the sheep churning around on the ledge below. I wanted to get there in a hurry to see where the sheep were going so we wouldn't lose one of the wounded ones. That's when I got mine."

Dr. Spring, meanwhile, had seen the sheep coming around the rim of the near-by cliff edge and had raised his gun waiting to give the others time to see the animals. Finally, he decided to shoot and did so just a split second after Alton's gun went off.

When all the shooting was over, the three hunters scrambled to the edge of the cliff to see where the sheep were falling. The cliff dropped off in a series of steep ledges some 200 feet and then fell another 600 feet to the bottom of the canyon.

Only one sheep could be seen at first. It had fallen off the top ledge and had become wedged in a crevice where its horns had hooked around a rock. It was some 100 feet below the ledge where it had been shot. The other two sheep were another 100 feet lower at the head of a talus slope where they too had lodged. The canyon is nearly 1,000 feet deep at this point.

Finding a way down to the sheep required almost an hour. Finally, while Christian scaled the cliff from the side of the canyon escarpment, Stanley McDonough, Parks and Wildlife field officer from Canyon, went down a 200-foot rope to the far ledge where the two sheep had fallen. Working with Christian, he tied the sheep, one at a time, onto the end of the rope, and they were hoisted to the top of the canyon where a crowd of ranchers, hunters and game department officials had by now gathered. A photographer had also climbed down the face of the cliff and was busy taking movies and still pictures as the sheep were slowly lifted to the top. Their horns kept snagging on the edges of cliffs, making the pull difficult.

It required seven lariat ropes and some 100 feet of block and tackle to get the sheep out of the canyon. Temperatures were in the low teens throughout the operation.

Once at the top, the sheep were field dressed and the stomach contents removed for research study by Biologists Dick DeArment and Phil Evans of the Parks and Wildlife Department.

All told, there were nine sheep killed during the three day hunt with some 30 hunters participating. Some 42 permits were passed out by

the department to landowners, but not all of these were used.

The hunt got off to a fast start Friday morning when Roy Reynolds of the Reynolds Ranch on the west side of the canyon, scored the first kill of the hunt, with a near record ram, by a single shot at a distance of 200 yards. Reynolds had left the ranch house soon after dawn to work his cows and decided to take along his .270 just in case he saw any sheep. "I didn't think I could be that lucky because they are so hard to find in the canyon and we only see them every few weeks or so." Reynolds said he came over the rise to the east side of Mesquite Mesa and there saw four sheep about 200 yards away. "I picked the smallest of the four for table meat. He fell where I shot him."

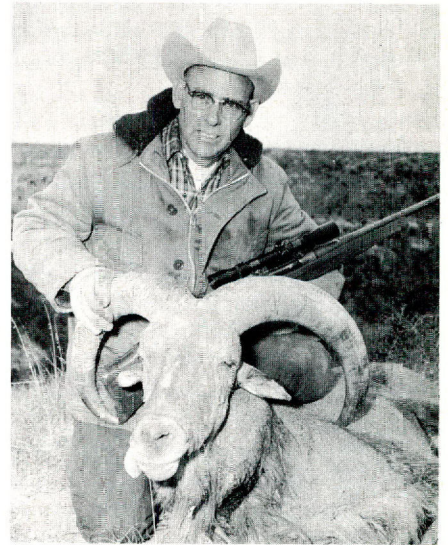
Reynolds' sheep had a curve along the horn of some 28 inches-plus. The world's record is 34½ inches along the curve and the national record is some 33½ inches. The world's record came from Africa, the native home of the sheep and the national record came from the Canadian River Canyon in Northeastern New Mexico, where the sheep were stocked several years ago. The largest sheep ever taken in Texas was one killed by Herb Cline on a hunting preserve. This sheep's horns measured some 28½ inches. Reynolds' sheep dressed out to 190 pounds.

Reynolds said the other sheep he saw were considerably larger in the

Photos by Jim Thomas



Vern Hawbaker of Amarillo bagged the second largest ram of the three-day hunt, with horn measurement some 26 inches along the curve.



The winner! Largest sheep of the Palo Duro hunt poses with Roy Reynolds, who took it in opening hours of the first day. The smallest of four sheep he saw, its 28-inch horn curve is only some six inches under world's record.

One apiece! Three of the sheep met their match in Tom Christian, Dr. Paul Spring and George Alton, on closing day of hunt.



horns than the one he shot. This viewing, taken at a distance of some 200 yards, might indicate that some world record aoudad sheep are in the Palo Duro Canyon.

Soon after the Reynolds kill, Vern Hawbaker of Amarillo brought down a good ram on the Newton Harrell Ranch. Hawbaker, guided by Harrell, shot his sheep about 11 in the morning, but the rough country and difficulties with the horses delayed the removal of the sheep from the canyon until late in the afternoon. All the sheep killed during the hunt were taken to one of the Parks and Wildlife check stations where they were measured and weighed.

J. A. Whittenburg III of Amarillo killed the third aoudad late Friday on the Ransom Brothers Ranch on the east side of the canyon.

State Senator Andy Rogers of Childress and M. L. Salmon of Plainview each took a sheep on the Theodore Giesler Ranch near Quitaque about noon Saturday.

The three sheep taken Sunday on the Christian Ranch, also on the east side of the 122-mile long canyon, wound up the hunt with another sheep taken very late Sunday, also near Quitaque.

"We know how to hunt them now and with the big heads in the canyon we can expect to see some exciting hunting next year," was one hunter's comment after the three-day season.

Aoudad sheep are originally native to the Atlas Mountains of Northern Africa and have only recently been introduced into the Southwestern United States as a game animal. They have been kept in European and North American zoos for most of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The Parks and Wildlife Department (then the Texas Game and Fish Commission) stocked some 44 of the big sheep in Palo Duro Canyon about six years ago, with the first release in 1957. Landowners entered contracts in the project, agreeing to help look after the sheep and aid in their protection. The hunt this fall was the first in Texas and the only public hunt in the United States as New Mexico called off its scheduled hunt this year. New Mexico initiated a similar program of aoudad stock-

ing several years before Texas took it up and has held several annual hunts since. Their hunt was called off due to biological uncertainties.

During the early part of the 19th Century, aoudads were trapped from their homes in the Atlas Mountains of Africa and were transported by ship to several large zoos in Europe where they prospered. At the turn of the century, some of the descendants of these European sheep were sent to the United States where they are found in many of the larger zoos and zoological gardens.

The aoudad or Barbary sheep is considered a handsome animal and in Texas is often likened to the buffalo because of its massive shoulders

Photo by Tom Christian



Steady does it! Weldon Fromm, Parks and Wildlife law enforcement officer of Amarillo, directs operations to bring a sheep up a cliff, with Biologist Dick DeArment as rope-puller.

and tiny waist. Heavy fringes of hair, which on the old rams drag the ground, support the comparison. The large, graceful curving horns of both the male and female make the animal a beautiful sight.

Its ability to scale the steepest of cliffs and the narrowest of ledges might have earned it a reputation as a ghost animal to the Indians of the Plains. The sheep have disappeared from sight while experienced wildlife observers watched. Stepping into a blending background, the animals defy perception, to the amazement of a bystander. Usually, they cannot be seen unless they are moving. The aoudad's coat is a buff tan or tawny color which blends perfectly with the subtle colors of Palo

Duro Canyon. The animals spend most of their time along the gray-green cliff rocks near the rimrock of the canyon.

Really large males will weigh in at more than 300 pounds while large females will better 130 or 140 pounds. Horns of the larger males are some 30 to 36 inches long and may spread as much as 30 inches, exceeding the spread of all other North American sheep. The female's horns may be as much as 20 to 24 inches and the tips of both the male's and female's horns are constantly sharp.

Considered to be an excellent forager, the aoudad consumes a wide variety of foods, most of which grows

on the high and wind-swept cliffs of the caprock around the rim of the canyon. The diet varies, however, according to the season. Mountain mahogany comprises about 60 per cent of the sheep's browse during the spring and summer while grasses comprise some 86 per cent of the food in winter. They seem to like winter wheat. Oak leaves and other sparse browse compose some 58 per cent of their food in the fall months. These percentages come from research done on the animals in New Mexico, several hundred miles west of Palo Duro Canyon, and may not be entirely accurate for the Palo Duro Canyon sheep.

It is also significant that many

• *Continued on Page 29*

Kids' Field Day

by CURTIS CARPENTER

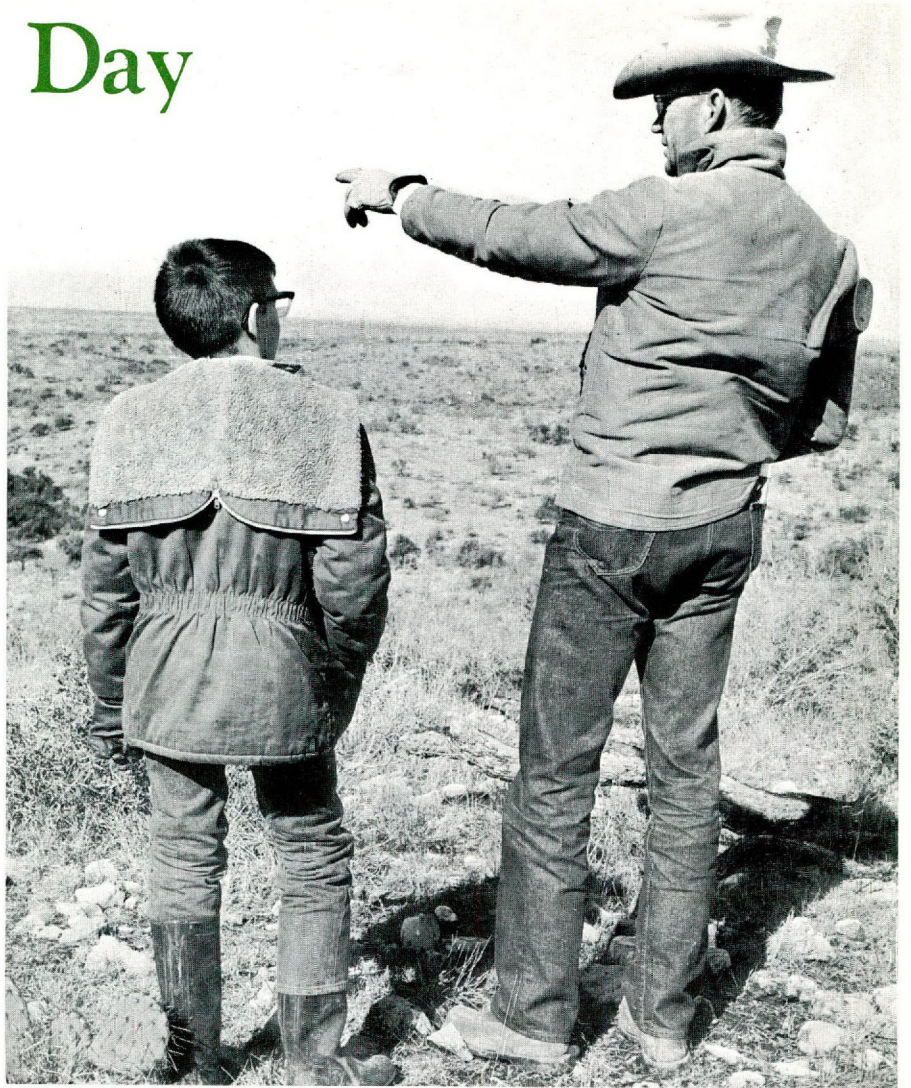
“OH, IT’LL GET loud around here before this deal is over,” laughed Gene Ashby. “After all—they’re just boys.” He paused for a moment, “and we can thank God for boys. There’s nothing better—unless, of course, it be girls.”

With a feeling like that for boys, and a concern for the damaging congestion of deer in the Hill County around Mason, Gene Ashby, game warden in the area, inspired the beginning of an event that will probably go down in history. It is Operation Orphans during which hundreds of boys have killed deer from overpopulated herds.

“When you have the hearts of the people beating for something,” said Ashby crisply, “it’s bound to be a success.” Then, thoughtfully: “You know, we built all of this on love. Everything you see here—this fine bunkhouse, the kitchen, the mess hall, the property on which it sets and all the activity you are going to see around here the next couple of days—it is all the result of contributions.”

Ashby snapped out of this serious mood and slapped me on the back. “Come on you son-of-a-gun, let’s get a fire going for those kids, so it’ll be nice and warm in here when they arrive.”

Later when the double fireplace in the center of the 100-bunk sleeping quarters had blazes shooting up the chimney on both sides, we stepped over to the mess hall. Girl Scouts from Mason’s Troop 1 were busily filling box lunches for the young hunters. Mrs. Della Moneyhon, troop leader, and several girls had volunteered their time to report each week during the hunt and fix the lunches. The special service project did not end with filling the grub bags. From there the girls marched to the kitchen and slicked it up, scrubbing dishes



Photos by Paul Hope

Rancher Jack Walker couldn't want for a more attentive audience as he briefs John Paul Williams of Boys' Harbor, LaPorte, on points of vital interest to a novice deer hunter.

and wiping off the tables. It was an excellent example of what makes the now-famous Operation Orphans click each year.

Gene showed us around the place before the first load of boys arrived. He reiterated that the brick for the buildings, the concrete, the fixtures, the labor for installing it all, even the storehouse filled with food was donated by Texans. “We can always use contributions,” said Ashby. “People send in shoes and clothes, mostly hunting styles, for the boys to use. We got a big load of new blankets to take care of those who come without bedding. The bunks on which they will sleep were donated. The ammo they’ll be using tomorrow was all made available through donations. Some people send in boxes,

cases even, and others send us checks so we can purchase the ammo. We can always use more of everything.”

At 3:30 Friday afternoon, the first boys arrived. Six excited, energetic boys were in the group, from Stephenville, along with several men to supervise them.

The bunkhouse was never quiet and peaceful again, except at night after the lights were out, and at the end when the hunt was over. By 10 p.m. nearly all of the 73 boys who filled the bunks that weekend, were scattered about the shelter, as active as boys can be. “I wouldn’t care if I never got to shoot a deer,” explained one boy, “just getting out like this is the greatest.”

When I finally closed my eyes and dozed off some time near midnight,

I had decided the only way to appreciate and understand what the hunt really means to the boys who participate, is to live with them at Camp Gene Ashby.

Soon the bunkhouse was still, except for the constant crackling of the burning logs on the fire and an occasional giggle. Then the giggling ended, and the boys were lost in their dreams.

R. C. Starks stumbled into the bunkhouse at 5 the next morning and let go with a loud call that caused feet to hit the floor. He wasn't the first to get up. Some boys had slipped from under the covers much earlier to keep the fire warm for a couple of hours. One of the adults broke the silence by tossing logs on the dying fire. It was just the excuse some of the eager hunters needed to pop out of their sacks.

After a comfortable and tasty breakfast, the boys were loaded on buses and carried to the Mason Chamber of Commerce offices where they were assigned to ranchers. The ranchers, after picking up ammunition for each boy in their charge, carried the boys out to the hunting sites on ranches around Mason.

The morning was numbing cold. A thin layer of ice and sleet coated the grass. At sunrise, the hunt began. One adult would take one or two boys and head out through the field, walking. Across the iced grass they crept, until a deer was spotted. Then the adult would hand the rifle to a boy and the boy would take a shot at the deer. On several of the ranches, herds of deer numbering up to 50 deer per herd were seen.

At noon the boys picked up their lunches and paused for a break and some chow. Most of the boys already had at least one deer. These were hung up in trees or loaded into trailers and trucks for the return to the camp. The stories were many, as groups of boys stood about in fields and along the roads describing their experiences and the excellent shots they had made.

By late afternoon each boy could account for at least one deer. The 73 boys relieved the crowded pastures of 91 deer, in a single day. The 19 boys of the Methodist Home, killed 19 deer; the Tarrant County Boys' Home had nine boys at the

No shortage of willing hands for chores here. A nose, too, can be handy when bringing in the firewood.



Not much need for stimulation, with such excitement in the air, but that pre-hunt cup of coffee sure tastes good to Gene Ashby, anyway.

hunt and they killed 10 deer. Boys' Harbor had 16 boys present and they bagged 29 deer; Christ Haven's 13

boys killed that many deer. Foster's Home Cottage had six boys who killed 11 deer. Texas Baptist Home's 10 boys accounted for 11 deer.

A final report at the end of the deer season showed that 363 boys from 25 homes killed 586 does in Mason County. Each weekend hunt was sponsored by Operation Orphans, Inc., and managed by the Mason Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Saturday night was much shorter than the night before, the hunt being one of the best tranquilizers ever invented. Lights went out early, and the bunkhouse again was quiet and peaceful.

Somewhat later the next morning



Such a big day ahead calls for stowing away a lot of fuel. Gene Ashby, originator of the hunt, enjoys a hearty breakfast with his eager proteges, at the camp that bears his name.

than the morning before, the boys hit the deck. After another hot breakfast, they began to load up their deer. Before noon, all deer were stashed away for the trips home. After a jubilant round of goodbyes, the young hunters had all departed.

Gene Ashby turned to me, "Boy! Wasn't that a bunch of peapickers? What did you think of it all?"

I think the expressions on my face all during the hunt pretty well answered his question. I don't think I needed to tell him how I felt about spending two nights and nearly two days watching 73 boys having the time of their lives—possibly the best time they had experienced all year, at least. **

Two jubilant buddies, although the kill turned out to be a buck instead of a doe. But it was an understandable mistake—and still a prize.



The handholds may be a bit unorthodox, but bringing home the venison has never yet been done with more pride and cooperation.



Lunch break around a blazing campfire is a welcome interlude to hunters on a cold day.



Hunting done, these two just had to get in some exploring. Still in sight of camp, they've discovered a gravel island in the Llano River bed.

WELL KNOWN among urban as well as rural people in these United States, flights of the Canada goose charm both young and old. Oldsters, on seeing and hearing goose flights south, predict a cold or mild winter, and hunters oil their guns. As the geese are heard on their return trip north, the prophets forecast an early or late spring, and the farmers think of the seeds in the ground.

Although the Canada is viewed affectionately on its seasonal flights, it is a bird worthy of more than sentimental notice. Shrewdness, wariness, strength and fidelity are characteristics which are collectively possessed by no bird other than the Canada goose. It is considered by many the grandest of all waterfowl, and it is the most widely distributed. From the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic, they may, at some time during the year, be seen.

At least four of the ten races of the goose (*Branta canadensis*) occur in Texas. They range in size from 23 inches in length, which is the size of a mallard duck, to 42 inches, the largest of all wild geese. The adult Canada goose weighs an average of eight pounds, four ounces, but may obtain a weight in excess of 18 pounds.

Some field identification tips on adults in flight show: sexes alike, large size, slow measured wing beats, dark body, black neck and head, with prominent white patch under chin and extending up sides of head to behind the eyes. Tips on adults on water include: large size, gray-brown body, black neck and head, with conspicuous white cheek patches. This handsome bird is so difficult to outwit that the pursuit of it has always fascinated sportsmen. It is believed to be more hunted than any other waterfowl species in the United States. For years, during the hunting season, thousands have been bagged, and yet they have rallied back each year and managed to hold their own, with the help of management practices.

When the geese are feeding on land or water, their wariness is remarkable. The feeding flocks are always protected by two or more sentinels perched on lookout, with long black necks stretched high. The differences in sounds are apparently detected by the fowl, according to the celebrated John James Audubon. He explained that the sound of a deer breaking a twig will cause no alarm, but the sound of the same twig breaking under a hunter's foot will send the flock winging into the sky; a cow or horse will pass without apparent attention, but the proximity of a bear or coyote is instantly announced. Likewise, the sound of a fish splashing or a turtle flopping causes no alarm, but at the faintest splash of a paddle, up goes every head and, in silence, they watch for the approach of the enemy. Every hunter has at some time or another attempted to stalk a dozing flock, only to have the birds go winging away just out of shooting range. They are extremely keen of sight and hearing, and at a warning from the sentry the entire flock takes wing.

When an occasion calls for camouflage, the geese lie flat with their long necks outstretched along the ground, without the slightest movement. With their grayish-brown coloring they are often hard to detect from the

foliage around them. This trick is used by the nesting geese.

The Canada is praised for its fidelity since it is believed to mate for life. It is said that should one be killed the survivor remains widowed for the remainder of its life. In captivity, widower ganders have been known to mate again, but whether this occurs in the wild is unknown.

Nesting habits of the Canada goose vary with locality, but usually the nests are found on the ground near water. Generally the nest is a depression in the ground lined with material from the vicinity including sticks, flags, or grasses, and soft gray down from the goose. Sometimes the nests are large bulky affairs of about two feet in diameter, and again they may be mere depressions with a scanty lining. In certain parts of the country nests are found in trees, but usually these are nests abandoned by hawks or other large birds. The number of eggs varies from four to ten, but usually is five or six. The eggs, when freshly laid, are creamy-white, averaging about two inches in diameter and three inches in length. Incubation takes 28 to 30 days and is performed by the goose alone. It is believed by wildfowl authority A. C. Bent that although the gander never sits on the nest, he is always in attendance, ready to protect the family from danger.

The geese are especially good parents, willing to give their lives for their young. When the family is swimming, the goose leads the flock, and the gander guards the rear against the many enemies that prey on the goslings. Parental care is believed to continue from nesting through winter and spring migrations. Even after the young have reached sexual maturity, the family remains together. The ever-present sentinels that



Where the CANADA Goos

watch over the flocks during feeding seem to be the older geese, and are probably the parent geese of the flocks.

Canada geese are grazers and spend much of the day feeding on the fresh young winter sprouts coming through the soil in grain fields. In the spring and summer they may feed both on land and water. They feed on water in the same manner as do the pond ducks, tipping up and munching on the water plants, insects and crustaceans just under the surface. When the geese feed in the fields or on water with other species of waterfowl, they do not seek the company of the others, nor do they allow the others to mingle within their flocks, but feed in compact flocks of geese only.

From their nesting grounds in the central prairies extending from Great Bear Lake in Canada, down into the Dakotas and Nebraska, the Canadas migrate into all flyways. The four major flyways in the United States are the Atlantic, Pacific, Central and Mississippi Valley. The largest number of the birds go to the Carolinas for winter. It is from the Central Flyway that Texas gets most of her birds each year.

Migration is believed to be done in family groups, maybe even with several generations participating. The migration flight is believed to be led by the old ganders with the younger ganders close behind. There is speculation that they are teaching the younger ones the routes to summer feeding grounds. The lead may change from one to another during the flight, but the old ganders are usually near the front.

No one knows the exact method used to map their routes, but the same routes are followed year after year. They do not travel by lateral waterways or mountains, but set out in a direct line toward their destination.

There seems to be no hurry in the fall migration, as they will feed en route wherever food is available, but in the spring there is urgent need for speed and they will cover hundreds of miles in a few days.

The geese fly in a V-shape in migration, and this has a significant part in their ability to attain high speeds. Just as the jet airplane is built streamlined to reduce the friction in the air, the goose formation is streamlined with the leader breaking the wind and the others following in his air trail.

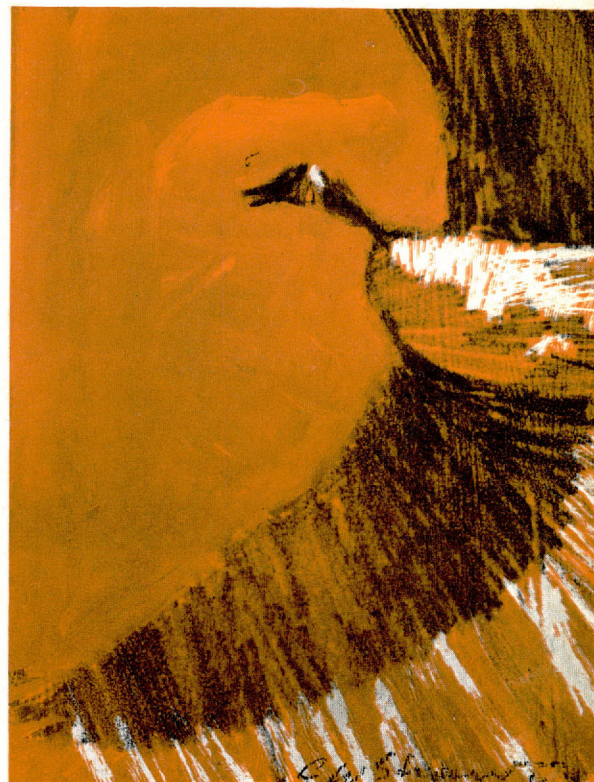
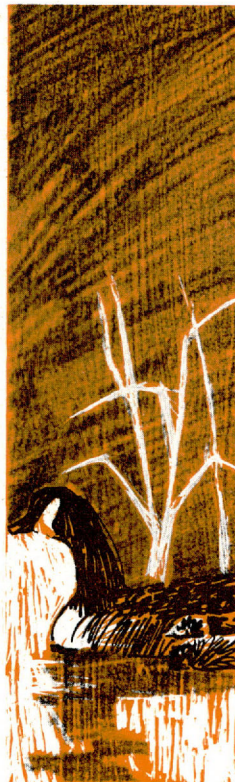
The small groups sometimes seen along migration routes in the spring are believed to be the remainder of families that have encountered hunters.

In Texas, the largest number of wintering Canada geese seems to be inland, one of the largest concentrations being on the vast Waggoner Ranch in North Texas. On this great ranch are grain fields of several thousand acres, as well as numerous lakes and stock ponds. In the winter of 1961 and 1962, there was an estimated 65,000 Canada geese on the Waggoner Ranch. The ranch doesn't allow public hunting, so the geese had protection as well as an abundance of food and water. This accounts for the great concentration in that area. There are other wintering grounds in Texas, but the Waggoner Ranch is one of the largest.

The conservation and management problems of the Canada goose may not be as numerous as those of other wildlife, but there is a need for conservation of this magnificent bird. Crop predation is the largest problem in management of the Canada goose. Thousands of geese in a small field can often cause extensive damage to crops. If the soil is wet, the geese pull up the plants by the roots, instead of nipping them off as they usually

• Continued on Page 30

Art by C. W. Shaw



Wild e Goes...

by J. C. ROMINES
Game Warden

Tale of a Trial

by T. D. CARROLL
I & E Coordinator

THERE were just thirty-six but, if names meant anything, variety was not lacking. Lon, Sue, Pat or Lou could have been anybody—or anything! Lucky, Skipper, Freckles or Spec sounded like nicknames of sandlot football players. Bill Crockett, Mandy Miller, Nelly Gray and General Lee added prestige to the occasion. For action there was Wheeling Pete, Hedgehopper, Chuckalug and Checkout, and for modern intrigue there was Texas Bandit, Invader's Trigger Moll and Commander's Rocket Joe.

The names were important, especially to the owners and handlers of the three dozen fine bird dogs entered in the Lone Star Field Trial Club's two-day competition at Lake Whitney State Park last November 23-24. Many of the entries had established their reputation in other field trials, and, though the field wasn't as large as hoped for, there was no lack of quality and class. The weather was perfect and the response of the eager dogs matched it.

Jim Falkner of Dallas and Jim Albright of Arlington were the judges selected. Mr. Albright was unable to attend, so the local game



Two gatecrashers who, knowing they looked like bird dogs, just wanted to get into the act. The frosty background for their obliging pose proves that it really was a shivery morning.

warden, Lewis Clymer, was drafted as a replacement. No one envied them—their job would not be easy!

A mild norther blew in Friday night and the crisp chill, coupled with recent rains, had the course in an ideal condition—birds were everywhere!

The all-age stake, with seven braces and a bye, got under way shortly after seven Saturday morn-

ing. Eighteen interested horsemen and horsewomen were in the gallery, and a half-dozen or so were riding the dog wagon.

My mount was a pretty palomino mare named "Honey." I didn't know it at the time, but she felt a magnetic attraction to the high-stepping black ridden by Judge Jim Falkner. Honey soon learned I was the world's worst horseman, so she took it upon her-

Pokey G. Lou, a fine example of looks and competence. Her proud owner is Dr. Arthur Bostick of Waco, and handler, Doug Guthrie.



self to keep me on the front line where the action took place. Her spirit and enthusiasm were most impressive.

A late start meant a late lunch. During lunch hour, I tried to get my program notes in shape. Most of the morning had been spent grabbing leather and protecting the 500 dollars worth of State camera equipment I carried, so I wasn't sure whether we had finished the all-age and were in the derby, or if there were to be a runoff, or what. I felt sure that every dog had run at least twice and that we had been around the 1,200-acre course a half-dozen times. You see, this was my first field trial, and, though Honey was a veteran, she wasn't much help except that she guaranteed we didn't get lost!

Lunch didn't last long enough. They helped me back onto my palomino and it was off to the derby! It was sundown when they called it a day.

Wheeling Pete, owned by Dr. M. Bruce Renner and handled by C. H. Lonon, won top honors in the all-age competition followed by Frank Craig's Texas Spot, also handled by Lonon, and Jake, handled by W. C. Kirk and owned by Bill Bagby.

In the derby were only two braces, and Jean, handled by owner George Evans, took top honors followed by Meg and Hillside Man.

The shooting dogs and puppies would put on their show the following morning. I headed for Redwood Lodge, a fine dinner and an early bed.

All set for her winning performance in shooting dogs stake. Dr. D. Guthrie approves, as brother Jan readies Pokey G. Lou.



Can't understand how I failed to hear the six o'clock alarm. I heard the clock ticking all night! When I arrived for breakfast, it was still dark, so I felt pretty smug when I asked the waitress, "Where's everybody?" When she pointed to the clock and said, "They've been gone about 20 minutes," I knew she wasn't kidding.

Breakfast gulped, it was 7:15 when I left to join the group—didn't they ever rest? I stopped at the field trial's headquarters sign for a picture. The roadside ditch was frost-covered and I wanted picture proof that it *was* cold! From nowhere two dogs appeared to pose. They looked like bird dogs to me, but I knew they couldn't be—they weren't running! My arrival at trial headquarters showed faulty timing; they were just ready to start.

Hard-hearted Hannah, alias Honey, was ready, saddled and tied to a trailer. She looked awfully tired, so I took my foam rubber cushion and headed for the dog wagon as the shooting dog competition was

begun by Trial Marshal Guthrie.

Some of the bird-findingest dogs you've ever seen were working that morning. Dogs like Pokey G. Lou, owned by Dr. Arthur Bostick of Waco and handled by Doug Guthrie; Commander's Rocket Joe, Ruben Ashley's fine setter from Lampasas; General Lee; proudly handled by Dr. J. E. Williams of Waco and Jay's Frankie, the stylish liver and white pointer of Billy Jay of Austin. Dogs were on point, backing up, and getting lost in the brush; one nearly left the county. About four furious hours later, when winners were announced, a lady named Lou had earned top trophy followed by Joe and General Lee.

By now, the quail appeared to be tiring of the fun and less cooperative. They would hang to the protection of grape and smilax-covered oaks and the handlers were having a rough time making some of them fly.

It was turning into work for me too, and I was glad when the last

• Continued on Page 28



Setter and pointer, attention riveted, are unaware of anything but their quarry. Owner of Bold Venture, left, is Dr. Douglas Guthrie, of Waco, and pointer Jay's Frankie belongs to Billy Jay of Austin.



Grand parade of winners. Pokey G. Lou, left, owner Dr. A. Bostick, Waco, handler Dr. D. Guthrie; Commander's Rocket Joe, owner-handler R. Ashley, Lampasas; and General Lee, owner-handler Dr. J. E. Williams, Waco.

Pointers and setters had an opportunity to display their abilities when members of the Panhandle Bird Dog Association conducted their fall trials on the Gene Howe Wildlife area near Canadian, early last November. There were four

First, the course is pointed out; then the dogs are led up, and at a given signal by the judge the dogs are released. The handlers quickly mount, observe and signal their dogs on into the bird field, followed by a judge for each handler and then by the

ber 1 course, the dogs search out the continuous courses over the bird field until they arrive back at the starting place. Covey after covey, point after point, the trial goes on, with the judges making their notes. Heywood McDaniel of San Antonio

Knowing Noses

by STARKEY WHITEHORN
Game Warden



Off the mark as though jet-propelled, this brace of derbies burst off with best feet forward, eager to show their prowess, followed

by the watchful and hopeful eyes of their handlers, Morris Bankhead, left, of Amarillo, and Delbert Clancy of Sayre, Okla., right.

events featured, which included the all-age, gun dog, derby and puppy stakes.

The Parks and Wildlife area, which consists of more than 5,000 rolling acres of typical bobwhite habitat, was a near-perfect place to conduct such an outdoor event. In fact, the Parks and Wildlife Department has allowed the members of the club to rearrange an old corral and some horse stalls and, as a result, the Panhandle club has the best horse and dog motel in the top part of the state. Canadian has two elaborate hostleries for the handlers.

The Panhandle club, typical of others, runs its dogs from horseback.

gallery—the spectators.

In all but the puppy stake, birds are the objective. When a dog points, the handler usually raises his arm or hat to call attention to his find and yells, "Point, Judge." Then he dismounts and attempts to flush the bird or birds. If he is successful, and he usually is, he must shoot his blank pistol while the bevy is within shotgun range. All the while the dog should staunchly remain on point until the handler gives his command to move out.

As soon as the allotted time, usually 30 minutes, expires, the dogs are picked up, and two more are set to the field. From the start at Num-

and Oliver Austin of Amarillo had little difficulty in determining the winners, considering the high population of bobwhites the dogs pointed.

Perfect handling, many times, is the difference between a first place win and no laurel at all. Naturally, there are more birds on some of the courses than others. The dog that searches the terrain merrily and thoroughly and finds his birds "on a limb" is considered over the dog that just luckily finds his birds while running.

Perfection in the field in many categories, such as desire to hunt, ground-consuming race, hunting with a purpose, manners and han-

dling ability are observed by the judges. Knowing how to train dogs and displaying a near-perfect pupil in the field of competition are goals that all field trial-ers attempt to reach.

Everyone learns a bit more at each trial, and some of the contenders have been competing for more than two score years. Sometimes a novice handler and novice dog will win, but, usually, the veterans pick up the trophies.

George Evans was originally scheduled to judge with McDaniel, but, because of unforeseen complications, he was unable to be present, and Austin was selected. Judges are paid expenses only. McDaniel had a long drive back to the Alamo City.

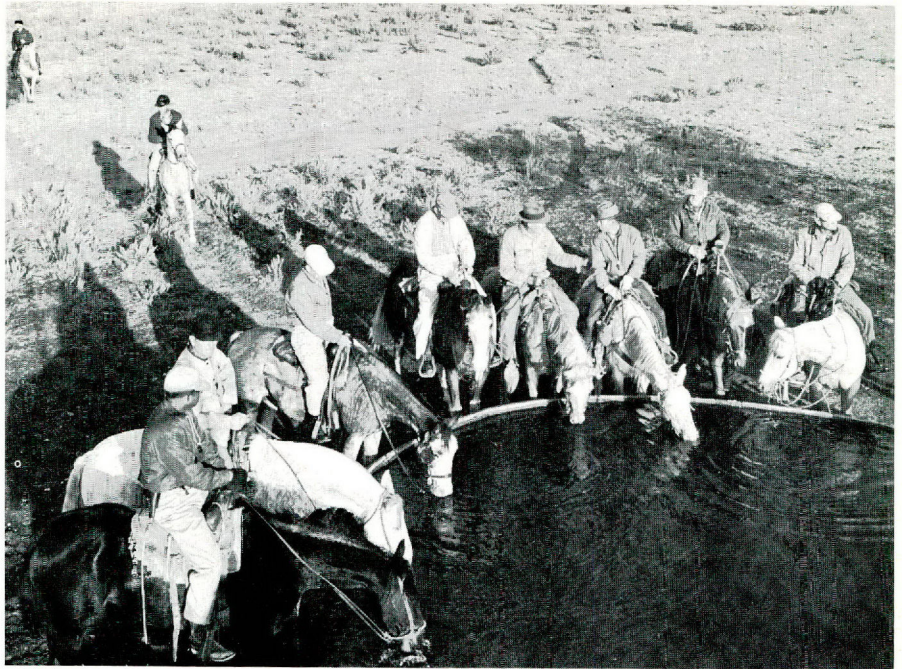
The winners were as follows:

**Amateur All-Age—
6 Pointers, 2 Setters**

1st—James Palamonium Misty—Pointer female, Dr. Don R. James, O. and H., Woodward, Okla.

2nd—Crockett Comeback—Setter male, D. E. Clancy, O. and H., Sayre, Okla.

3rd—Talamonium—Pointer male, C. W. Taylor, O. and H., Woodward, Okla.



This gets to be thirsty business. When the gallery takes a break during the running, that is one occasion when you can be sure a horse will drink when he is taken to the water.

**Amateur Derby—
4 Pointers, 2 Setters**

1st—R. J.'s Bob—Pointer male, Dr. Don R. James, O. and H., Woodward, Okla.

2nd—Lou—Setter female, Bud Clothier, O. and H., Oklahoma.

3rd—Jim—Pointer male, Harold Davis, O. and H., Stinnett.

**Amateur Shooting Dog—
20 Pointers, 2 Setters**

1st—Rockett's Blizzard—Setter male, Jim Bell, owner, Amarillo,

• Continued on Page 29



Winner of the gun dog stake, Rockett's Blizzard, shares the spotlight with handler Morris Bankhead, who is of Amarillo, as is owner Jim Bell.



Second place in the gun dog stake went to Cherokee Sam, shown here with Frank Roach of Pampa, who is both owner and handler of the dog.

A Climbing Man's Hunt

by CURTIS CARPENTER

A well-pleased pair are these brothers, Lester, left, and Leroy Alberthal, right.



ONE THOUSAND and twenty hunters removed 444 mule deer from the Parks and Wildlife Department's Black Gap Management Area



One good shot stowed away leads to another. At such a time, that water can taste pretty good.

in Brewster County during the 1963 public hunt. And, every one of this number was hunted on foot and brought out the same way. Vehicles are not allowed on the Gap and the Sierra Diablo Area, both management projects, for anything except to drive to and from camp sites. All the hunting must be done on foot—quite a feat in itself.

Even with these odds against them, Gap and Diablo hunters usually show a 50 per cent success each year. This year they had one more odd against them—the weather. Real summer days made it nice and warm for hunters, but it caused the deer to lie up most of the day.

The Black Gap, although picturesque and colorful, is probably as rugged as any area in the state. If a man is game enough to climb its steep, mountainous terrain and bring out a good deer, he can consider himself a real huntsman.

I have witnessed the hunt each of the last five years. Each year many hunters who are veterans to the Gap, apply for a chance to return to chal-

lenge the odds. "I just like the type of hunt a guy finds at the Gap," seems to be the typical answer. Many wish to come back after enjoying their first of the old-fashioned style hunts offered by the Gap. They look forward to camping in the canyons, where they sit around the camp fire at night and listen to the voices of the mountains. And, they like to pit their talents and energies against the big muleys.

I've seen hunters stagger back into camp at sundown with smiles on their faces, talking about the fun they had that day. Did they get a deer? "You bet I got one. He's just over that peak about a mile down the other side. I carried him most of the way. We'll go back up and get him tomorrow, my partner and I."

Some hunters exhaust all their strength and interest the first day. Come the morning of the second day, they either sit around the camp, sleep or hunt the low areas surrounding the camp site.

It's beautiful country. From high on a mountain peak, one lady hunter

sat and gazed at the haze-tinted mountains, and the uniquely carved bluffs, with their myriad shapes and shadows. She could see the Indian caves and wind caves, which dot the canyon walls. She was satisfied just to rest high on her perch and feast her eyes on the scenic splendor.

Last year was excellent for deer on the Gap. The rains came and the grass and other plants grew. And, all kinds of records were broken on the Area during the 1963 hunt. The largest number of hunters ever participating there showed up to get their muleys. More deer were harvested than ever before. The largest deer, 202 pounds field dressed, killed on the area was brought in this season. And the widest spread, 30 inches, was recorded. In general, the deer were in excellent condition with lots of fat marbling the venison.

Diablo hunters were a little more successful this year than Gap hunters because of more favorable weather. There, 87 hunters bagged 54 deer for a 62 per cent success.

The Sierra Diablo Management Area, right on the Hudspeth and Culberson county line, is high country, but it's not nearly as rugged as the Gap. Hunters still must stalk, shoot and recover their deer on foot. So it's tough. And the same kind of hunters who choose the Gap look forward to taking a trip to Diablo.

Both areas are rough on vehicles as well as humans. The roads leading into the areas are not the smoothest in the world. However, in recent years Parks and Wildlife Department personnel have improved the roads considerably. Passenger cars with high centers can make it to the area headquarters without too much trouble under most conditions. This year drivers had no trouble reaching most camping areas. Returning hunters, however, usually come the second time in trucks, probably the best vehicles for the areas.

It's a great accomplishment when work can be mixed with pure pleasure. And that happens on the Gap and Diablo. Although these areas were purchased and set up primarily for game management and research, 1,107 Texans this year, and hundreds in years past, enjoyed the thrills of real hunting as well as played an

important role in the work on the areas by killing deer for research purposes.

For management needs, each person is assigned a compartment on which to hunt, and each deer taken on the two areas must pass through a check station at the area headquarters. Here the biologists take enough measurements of the animals to order new hides to fit. They also take stomach samples and remove various organs for laboratory tests. These data have been kept in records ever since the first deer was removed from the areas. By entering the data on charts and graphs, biologists are able to detect trends which help them improve deer management. And their findings can then be passed on to landowners who can use them to improve the management of their deer herds.

Hunters for the Gap and Diablo are drawn from the thousands of names sent in to the Parks and Wildlife Department. All applications for the hunts are dropped into a revolving barrel. Someone from outside the Department, in the presence of newsmen and spectators, draws the names for the hunts on a pure chance basis. The lucky persons are notified soon after the drawing. The number of persons allowed to hunt on the two areas is determined by the respective management needs of the areas.

All factors are considered when deciding the number of hunters to



Robert Cook and sister, Kathleen Stovall, have an 11-point buck with antler spread, unofficially measured 30 inches, as wide as them both.

participate. Biologists take into consideration, among other factors, the number of hunters who will not show up even after they have been selected to hunt, and the number of hunters it takes to remove the desired number of surplus deer.

Most persons who hunted this year, just as they have in years past, remarked that they would turn in their names for the public drawing again in 1964. Undoubtedly there are many hunters around today who still enjoy the he-man type of hunt. It's safe to say, that if rugged hunting is what they are looking for—they'll surely find it at Black Gap and Sierra Diablo. **



Someone has to keep the home fires burning. In spite of the rugged surroundings, she sees to it that the tired hunter doesn't have to be far away from the comforts of civilization.

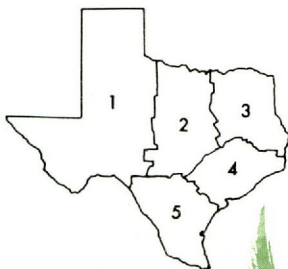
AN EARLY ESTIMATE based on field sightings, locker plant reports and shooting preserve records already in indicates that even with drought conditions over most of the state just before the season, hunters bagged more deer this past season than in 1962-63. A positive conclusion can be established when all the shooting preserve records are in and tabulated in the spring.

The post-hunt estimate turned in by Parks and Wildlife enforcement personnel across the state indicated that hunters killed 220,649 deer and 13,680 wild turkeys during the 1963-64 season.

From the 205 counties reporting deer kills, 106 showed an increase in the deer harvest over the previous season; 61 showed no change in the kill; only about 38 counties reported kill figures lower than the 1962-63 season's tally. Reports from 49 counties showed no deer killed in 1963.

One hundred counties reported turkey kills. The harvest was up in 37, no change in 33, and fell below the 1962 total in 30. No 1963 turkey kills were reported from 154 counties.

Hunting in '63



A quick look at the successes in the five regions of the state (see accompanying map) in a region by region breakdown shows how the hunters succeeded in the various areas. This information was secured during telephone conversations with I&E Officers and wildlife supervisors in the field.

Region I

Region I, which includes the western half of the Edwards Plateau, the Trans-Pecos and the Panhandle, had a good season with better than average hunter success. Deer hunting in the Edwards Plateau was better than the year before (1962) even though the country had been suffering drought conditions right up to the opening of the season.

The Trans-Pecos was in excellent condition all year for a good deer crop. Hunters had better success this past season than they did the season before. The mule deer were unusually fat, and lots of hunters went after them. One big buck at a locker plant in Alpine dressed out at 212 pounds. A new weight record was set at the

Parks and Wildlife Department's Black Gap Management Area when a hunter killed a buck that dressed out at 202 pounds. The antlers appeared to be better this year than last, with one 30-inch spread reported off the Black Gap, another new record for the area.

Panhandle hunters had a good season with many fine deer taken. A dry year in the neck of Texas didn't seem to prevent deer hunters from getting in some good hunting.

The Trans-Pecos had a fair quail harvest. The birds were there, but the hunters just didn't go after them. The eastern half of the Panhandle showed a 20 per cent increase in quail, while the western half was about average or slightly below. The remainder of Region I had a fair quail hunt.

The pheasant hunt in the Panhandle was not too successful because of a poor quality of cover. Dry, windy weather during the hunt played havoc with dogs and evidently caused a poor hunter success.

The antelope harvest this past season was excellent as far as hunter success was concerned. The Trans-Pecos hunters were extremely successful with 1,043 sportsmen bagging 1,003 antelope for a 96 per cent hunter success. A total of 1,295 permits was issued to 93 ranches, and 843 bucks and 160 does were carted off by happy sportsmen.

In the Panhandle, 589 permits were issued to landowners. They in turn issued 447 to hunters and of that number, 428 got their antelope for a 97.98 per cent success. Panhandle hunters took 292 bucks and 146 does, most of them from the Dalhart area.

Several counties scattered about the state had antelope hunts this year. On the Rocker B Ranch in Reagan County, 350 permits were issued, and hunters killed 315 antelope. In Midland County, 70 permits were issued and 66 antelope were harvested. Borden County hunters bagged an estimated 25 antelope.

Palo Duro Canyon landowners finally had their first aoudad sheep hunt in mid-December. Forty-two permits were issued and nine sheep were bagged for a 21 per cent hunter success. (For additional information, see related story in this issue.) It was as much a research project as anything. Biologists had set up a check station for gathering and processing samples and other data taken from the sheep. This information will be used in future aoudad sheep management in the Palo Duro Canyon.

The management area hunts in Region I were hampered this year by unfavorable weather. On the Black Gap Area in Brewster County, 1,402 permits were issued and 1,020 hunters showed up for the hunt. This number killed 444 deer for a 43.5 per cent success. On the Sierra Diablo Area near Van Horn in Culberson County, 101 permits were issued and 87 hunters showed for the hunt. They bagged 54 deer for a 62.1 per cent success. Gene Howe Area hunters in the Panhandle near Canadian had a 32.1 per cent success with 30 permits issued; 28 hunters hunted and took only 9 deer.

Region II

The deer harvest was a little better than had been anticipated in Region II, with Waco as headquarters.

It was definitely up from last year. Most other hunting was as good as or better than it was last season. Field personnel believe that the unexpected success was due to increased hunter interest and the availability of the game. Very few people reported deer in Region II in poor condition. More ranches opened up to hunting this past season, especially for antlerless deer in the region. The drought conditions prior to the opening of the season caused hunters to doubt the chances for its becoming a good season.

Turkey hunters in Region II had better success this past season than they did the season before. Quail hunters had a pretty good year in Region II. They had some trouble because of the lack of cover caused by drought conditions.

Duck hunting in the region was about average with some early mallard action. Lots of scaups and teal were available on farm tanks and ranch lakes. The north end of the region had some of the best goose hunting in years, with lots of Canadas.

Dove hunting in northern portions of the region was better than in other areas because of better food supplies. It was spotted, generally, with some hunters finding good hunting. The squirrel populations in Region II were down a little, but the harvest was about normal.

Altogether, the drought conditions in Region II didn't hurt hunting, as was first expected. Reports from hunters and Department personnel indicated that all game species were in good condition.

On the Kerr Wildlife Management Area in Kerr County, 359 permits were issued and 280 hunters reported for the hunts. They killed 143 deer of which 75 were males and 68 were females, for a little better than 50 per cent hunter success. The deer on the Kerr Area were reported to be in fair condition.

Region III

Most of the counties in Region III, primarily East Texas, reported very dry conditions up to the hunting season, and even into November and December it remained dry for that area of the state. However, deer in all of East Texas were reported to be in fine shape. Most counties in Region III had an increase of hunter success, over the 1962 season.

Freestone County had three check stations this past season and all deer killed in the county during the Nov. 1-Dec. 31 hunt were required to be checked through one of the stations. Biologists reported 1,088 deer passed through the three stations, and all deer were in good condition. Red River County had a check station for its Nov. 22-30 season and 295 deer were counted.

Not too many turkeys roam the counties of Region III. Where they do occur, reports indicate that hunter success was down from the previous year. Duck hunting was good around the upper parts of all lakes in the low swampy areas. Actually, the duck season was better than had been expected. Grain fields around the lakes offered some token goose hunting. However, hunters didn't complain about the few geese they bagged.

Quail hunting in Region III was generally good. Most areas of the region had birds; however, they drifted into the timbered areas early in the season, adding a little diversion to the sport. Hunters had trouble sneaking up on the squirrels this year because of the dry leaves on the forest floors. Nevertheless, they managed to get in some exciting days of squirrel hunting and the squirrels were in good condition. Evidently, all areas of the region had a good supply of mast for the game species. Toward the end of the squirrel season hunters managed better, because of some good rains which toned down the crackling leaves. Many young squirrels were reported in the bags.

Dove hunters in Region III experienced a worse season in 1963 than in 1962. They reported a flurry of activity at the beginning. But this soon died out except for some spotted hunting near the timber country.

On the management areas in Region III biologists reported the game in good health. On the Engeling Area in Anderson County, 401 permits were issued and 296 hunters showed up for the hunts. They killed 181 deer. Two squirrel hunts were held on the Engeling Area. A total of 100 permits were issued; 90 hunters participated in the hunt and killed 441 squirrels, 350 of which were grays.

On the Moore Plantation Area in Sabine County, 301 deer permits were issued, 214 hunters were afield, and they killed 59 deer. The county, very dry at the time of the hunt, offered poor hunting conditions. One squirrel hunt on the area resulted in 293 squirrels being harvested. Of the 231 permits available for the hunt, 129 hunters showed up to use them.

On the Cherokee Area in Cherokee County, 172 permits were available for squirrel hunters, and 96 hunted, bagging 149 squirrels. During the first hunt on the Devil's Pocket Area in Angelina County, 405 permits were issued, and 359 hunters reported and harvested 1,626 squirrels. All squirrels taken off the management areas during the public hunts were reported to have been in excellent condition. During a second hunt held in January, 350 permits were issued, 172 hunters reported and killed 301 squirrels.

Region IV

In Region IV, deer hunters were reported to have had a better success this past season than in 1962. An early estimate indicated that the harvest turned out to be better than had been anticipated. However, the range remains in poor condition, especially in the heavily populated areas of Colorado and Lavaca counties. Deer had enough available food just before and during season to begin to build up their bodies. The turkey crop was pretty good. The gobblers managed to find a good acorn supply on the ground.

The waterfowl hunting was good except during the bluebird weather. Squirrel hunting was a little better than average. Quail hunting in Region IV was about normal, with hunters reporting a little better than average in the eastern portion of the region.

• Continued on Page 27

GUNS



... and Shooting

By L. A. WILKE

This Month: Gun Clubs

DESPITE the fact that shooting is one of the best organized forms of recreation, many men go afield each year with a gun unprepared for their hunt.

During the past big game season I "rode shotgun" with a camera for several days over one of the largest ranches in Texas. I watched three shooters miss standing deer within slingshot range.

They were not amateurs, either. Each, during other hunting trips, had killed deer many times. But this time they were hunting with guns they'd never shot before, although the guns had been sighted in by experienced rifle shots.

The first miss was on the part of a banker. He stepped out of his pick-

up, leveled the gun across the hood of the truck and squeezed off a shot. The noise made the buck raise its head, but it just stood there while the man fired three more times. As it started off, a buddy of the foiled hunter shot the deer.

Another hunter, a young fellow, shot broadside at a deer with a gun he had used last year. He was a one-shot shooter, having killed three previous deer without a miss. But this time he missed, until, with the last shot in his rifle, he gut-shot the animal and then ran it down.

The third shooter was a mature man who has spent a lifetime in the field as a wildlife biologist. It took him four shots to kill a standing buck. He had never shot the gun before.

All hunters, even experienced ones, would profit from pre-hunt practice on a shooting range with the gun they plan to take afield.

According to the National Rifle Association, 30 million Americans own and use guns. Many of them shoot with groups at convenient ranges. A good portion of them enter team matches. Here they can enjoy the social aspect and the opportunity to improve their shooting ability.

The National Rifle Association helps to plan these programs. A non-profit membership organization, it offers shooting of every type from BB's to big bore.

Under the auspices of NRA it is possible to organize shooting events and develop clubs which, in turn, own and operate ranges. Each year NRA issues some 400,000 qualification awards, a majority of them to young shooters.

In Texas for so many years it was possible to find a place to shoot in open country within a few minutes from any home. As a result, this state perhaps is lacking in some of the best shooting facilities. However, that condition is improving. Now many small towns have gun clubs. They naturally encourage membership, but they also encourage shooting accuracy and gun handling.

In many places, just before the opening of the hunting season, such clubs offer facilities of their organizations to shooters who need to sight in rifles.

If there is no such organization in your area, write to the National Rifle Association, 1600 Rhode Island, Washington, D.C. 20036, to get details on formation of a unit in your area.

This is important, because someday gun qualification may be required before a hunting license can be bought. This is the law in some states now.

These lessons in gun handling are very important, especially in localities where there is heavy population. There isn't too much room any more for the country shooter. But, there is plenty of room for the organized shooter. Also, by getting acquainted with your gun and practicing on a shooting range, you'll have a much better chance of scoring when you go afield. **

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Region V

Region V, with headquarters at Rockport and including a good portion of South Texas, had a good hunting season, judging by all reports. Even though the area had only about half the normal rainfall, the deer and other game were in good condition. Hunters had a successful deer season, about the same as the previous season. The buck kill in some South Texas brush country counties was down, probably due to the short fawn crop in 1961 and 1962.

The wild turkey harvest in the region was lower than the year before, but not because the birds were not available. Hunters just didn't go after them as they have in past years. Actually, estimates indicate that the turkey crop was better this year than it was last year.

Dove hunters had the best year in some counties that they have experienced in many years. Biologists report that the fantastic numbers of doves, from Alice south to Zapata and stretching east and south, was due to presence of a good growth of native food. Some good showers in the sandy country produced some excellent food for the birds.

It was a great year for waterfowl hunters in Region V, especially for the duck and goose hunters. Field reports indicated that there were more geese around this year than in many years, and shotguns roared out to bring in some good bags for hunters.

Quail hunters had good success in the same areas where dove concentrations were reported.

In general, Region V hunters enjoyed a very successful year and lots of game was harvested. Many hunters were in the field to take advantage of the available game species.

Summary

Texas had another good hunting season in 1963-64, according to early estimates. A more accurate harvest total will be made on some game species when shooting preserve record books are examined and results totaled. More than 10,000 shooting preserve licenses were issued last season and holders of these licenses are required to provide the Department with a full report of the game harvested on their shooting preserves. The deadline for filing this report is May 1, 1964. The information presented in this magazine article is the best estimate available at press time. **

Effects will be treated in Part II.

Velvet-Horn ————— From Page 7

indications of recovery from the velvet-horn condition.

Information about the pathology and social behavior of velvet-horns as well as their effect on the Central Mineral Region's herds will be presented in Part II of this article in the March issue.

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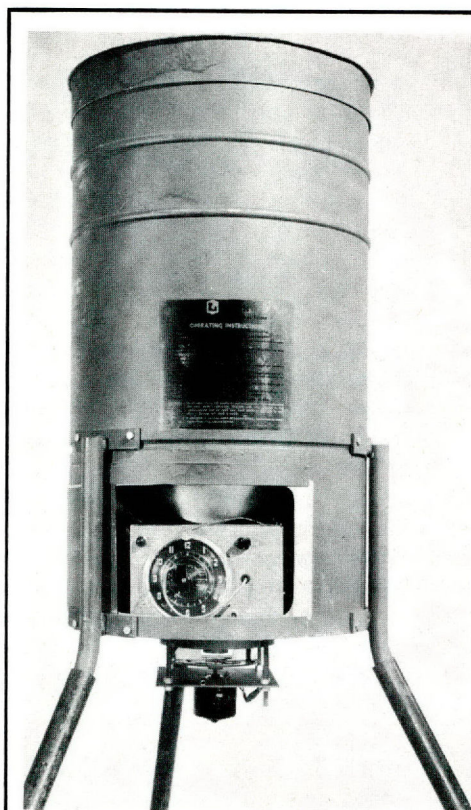
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CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Hunters left the game unharmed.

Tale of a Trial ————— From Page 19

energetic puppy had performed.

Still attached to my foam rubber cushion, I said my good-byes and set out for home.

With time to relax from the two days just flown by, I wondered, first of all, if I had any good pictures—my photography is usually on a par with my horsemanship. Secondly, I tried to evaluate my experience.

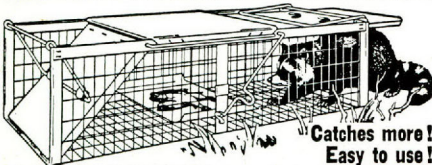
To a novice like me, a field trial could be just a lot of action and much ado about nothing, that is, to a person who just hears about one or reads of it. But let him get involved—once—and, if he cares at all for outdoor activity, his perspective will be jolted.

For two days I had enjoyed the company of some really fine people. They were hunters, yet they left the game unharmed. They had utilized a public area, yet they had not interfered with campers, fishermen or any other persons using the park. The operators of camps, lodges, cafes and other local businesses had welcomed their presence during this normally slack season. They paid their own way and had actually improved the quail habitat in the area.

The trophy winners were naturally proud; the losers were philosophical, but all had shared in the fun and fellowship of being drawn together by a common interest in the outdoors.

Most of them assured Dr. Douglas Guthrie, president of the Lone Star Field Trial Club, that they would be on hand for the club's next outing the first weekend in February of 1964. If I can borrow an upholstered jeep, I might show up, too. **

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What Others Are Doing

by JOAN PEARSALL

GIVING A DOG HIS DUE: A New Hampshire dog, Chico, was in the news this spring when he pointed a trout for his master. The two went on to combine talents on black bass, with the dog pointing the quarry and the master landing them. New Hampshire law requires a license for any act of assistance in the taking or attempt to take fish or game. So, just to make it legal, the director of the state fish and game department presented the first special "Complimentary Fishing License for Piscatorial Canines" to Chico, with best wishes for continued good fishing.

STEALING A MARCH ON 'EM: The Missouri Conservation Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the wildlife departments of Arkansas and Louisiana are cooperating in a unique transplanting program designed to "teach" geese to fly south. Fewer geese each year are going any farther south than Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri. Having so many geese winter there and so few farther south in Arkansas and Louisiana has created problems. As a start, 5,750 Canadas will be trapped on Swan Lake Refuge and distributed gulward. The agencies hope these geese, some immature, will be fooled into thinking they flew that far south and will return to the more southerly climes next fall. Biologists are avoiding older, wiser geese, who probably know exactly how far south they flew this year and just where they stopped for the winter.

SAFETY ACCOLADE: The International Association of Game, Fish and Conservation Commissioners selected Oregon from a field of 50 states and Canadian provinces as this year's recipient of the annual safety award pre-

sented by the National Rifle Association. The award, a large silver shield bearing the raised figures of a father-and-son hunting team, is presented "for outstanding contribution in the field of hunter safety."

DEADLY REPERCUSSION: A highly toxic chemical pesticide, probably dieldrin which has a long life expectancy, has wiped out almost the entire population of more than 70,600 steelhead youngsters in an Oregon state experimental rearing impoundment. Possible sources of dieldrin were found to be grasshopper control on the watershed from four to seven years ago, spraying of pasture lands adjacent to the impoundment during the past four years, or the widespread application of aldrin nearby in 1962. Aldrin is an insecticide which breaks down to dieldrin.

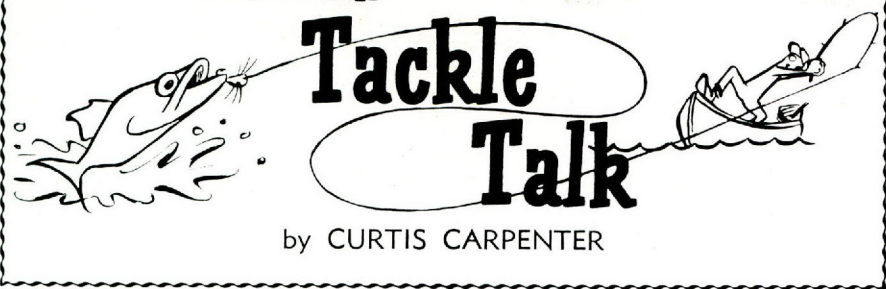
LICENTIOUS: Nemesis finally overtook a brash traveling fisherman in New Mexico. He said that he and his wife had been on a trip around the United States, and that prior to the trip he had determined not to buy a fishing license anywhere. He had fished in Oklahoma, Nevada, Utah, Texas, Colorado, Arkansas, Oregon, Missouri, Kansas, Tennessee and New York without being apprehended. In his native state, California, he had never "bothered" to buy a license.

SHELL SAGACITY: Waterfowl hunters who risk long shots have long been a nuisance. The state of Indiana last year came up with this solution, at least in controlled and closely checked goose hunting areas. Each hunter is limited to six shells, and no hunter is foolish enough to throw these away on anything but a sure shot.

Texas

Tackle Talk

by CURTIS CARPENTER



FEBRUARY is the month of the year when we all think about the spring fishing thrills just ahead. And no fisherman wants to get caught with his tackle down, or dirty. So—what do we do? We slick it up and get it ready for the fun.

“It’s too much trouble!” some will moan. Not at all! For instance, reels can be cleaned and oiled, with a screwdriver, a pair of pliers, some gas and oil, and possibly an old tooth brush.

First, break it down by carefully removing a few screws. Don’t rush the project. Be certain to note where each part fits so you can put it back in its proper place once it has been cleaned. As the cover on each side is lifted off, hold that side up so the loose parts will remain in place.

Wash off all old, dirty oil and grease with the gas and brush if necessary. Put a light coat of oil on the parts and replace once they have been cleaned. Where there are moving parts, let a drop of oil soak into places where the metal makes contact. If there were grease on a part, it’s best to put a smear of light reel grease back on the part. Don’t clog up the machinery with grease and oil, but be certain to get enough on so it can do some good.

When the inside of a reel has been cleaned and oiled and screwed back together, clean off the outside and drop some oil in places where there are oil caps. If it is a level wind reel, be sure to drop some oil on the carriage screw. Always drop some oil on this part each time you go fishing.

The language of fishermen sometimes confuses beginners. Quite often a single word can be the cause for confusion. Here is a short glossary of terms and words often used in the fishing fraternity.

BILGE: Means the area along the keel inside the boat.

GUNWALE: Means the upper edge of a boat’s side.

JIG: Means a lead-headed bait usually worked on the bottom or trolled behind a boat. Also, as verb, means to dance or bounce the lure on the bottom, or to work a spoon in a jerking motion.

SCRAPE THE BOTTOM: Usually means to thoroughly work the bottom of a lake or bay for fish.

POINT: Can mean anything from a sand bar running out from the shore to a ridge of rocks extending into the deep water. In any case, it’s usually a good place to catch fish.

SPOOKED: Means, as a verb, that fish departed swiftly after being frightened by sight or sound, or the result of a fisherman’s careless exposure or noises, chasing the fish away.

SCULL: Means to work a paddle in the water silently so it pulls the boat along slowly, enabling a fisherman to work all the spots.

WORK: Means to fish or plug an area sufficiently.

POT HOLE: This could be open water in the midst of heavy moss, a slight depression beneath the surface which is clear of vegetation, or a small body of water.

SLOUGH: This could be anything from a ditch running into a lake or bay to just a slight indentation along a shoreline. It could be a fairly large canal or bayou. **

Coloring and rugged cliffs aid sheep.

Rewards on the Rimrock — From Page 12

game officials, conservationists and ranchers, in a pre-season estimate, said there would be from 6 to 12 sheep taken during the three-day hunt. Their low estimate was based on the extreme wariness of the sheep and the excellent protection they have in Palo Duro because of their coloring and the ruggedness of the cliffs where they live.

It was a rough hunt and a cold one but all concerned said they would like to be back next year for a repeat performance.

Some record horns may be in store for Palo Duro hunters. **

Cherokee Sam was second.

Knowing Noses — From Page 21

Morris Bankhead, handler, Amarillo. He was also named outstanding dog of the trial.

2nd—Cherokee Sam—Pointer male, Frank Roach, O. and H., Pampa.

3rd—Lovely’s Lady Bird—Pointer female, Milo Craig, owner, Russell Lovely, handler, both of Fairview, Okla.

Amateur Puppy

1st—Jim—Pointer male, Harold Davis, O. and H., Stinnett.

2nd—George—Pointer male, H. L. Knittel, O. and H., Woodward.

3rd—Rockett’s Jet—Setter male, J. H. Maggard, O. and H., Amarillo. **

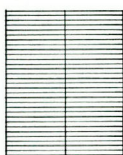
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Nesting ponds and marshes are being drained.

Where the Wild Goose Goes _____ *From Page 17*
do. The Waggoner Ranch has, in past years, tried many devices to discourage geese in its fields, but nothing has proved satisfactory so far. Old automobile bodies were placed in the field as improvised "scare-crows," but as soon as the geese became accustomed to them, they grazed around them with no apparent alarm. Explosives set to discharge at time intervals were also tried, but because of the vastness of the fields this also proved unsuccessful. Application was made to the United States Department of the Interior for permission to rally the geese with airplanes. Permission was granted and soon the ranch was using an airplane. The ranch rallied the geese every other day, and on those days of rallying the great flocks settled down just outside the ranch boundaries. As the geese settled on smaller fields, they broke up into smaller flocks; this reduction of numbers lessened the damage. This method appears to be the best yet devised. But, when night comes, the huge flocks are back on the ranch to roost in the safety of the lakes and ponds. The roosting is itself a problem. Because of the number on each pond, the manure and waste in the water is so thick that the water turns green and becomes stagnant. At times it is too filthy for use as livestock drinking water. The birds are so numerous in some ponds at night that hardly any water is uncovered.

Other problems of management are found in the fly-

ways, especially in the Mississippi Valley, where the density of the population of the hunters is a problem. Each year thousands of hunters eagerly await the migration of the Canada goose. As migrating flocks stop to feed and rest, they encounter tremendous hunting pressure.

Ponds and marshes suitable for nesting are being drained or otherwise taken over each year for agricultural purposes. With surpluses of grain and other crops stored away in government warehouses, it appears that cultivation could be deferred in some of these grain producing areas, thus providing suitable habitat for the Canada goose. Lack of suitable nesting habitat is having a serious effect on the population of the Canada goose.

Disease and animal predation of the Canada goose are minor. Man is the great predator of the wild goose, not through his gun, but through his land use program which usurps or destroys goose habitat.

The fact that the Canada goose is migratory makes management a problem. The United States has authority only within its boundaries and as the birds leave its boundaries, the protection afforded them ceases. The Migratory Bird Act, established with Canada in 1917, and with Mexico in 1934, was established for protection and research.

Wildlife management areas and law enforcement are necessary to protect the magnificent and tenacious Canada goose from man and for man. **

It seemed he patrolled 9000 long miles.

All in a Day's Work _____ *From Page 9*
office to harvest the two-day accumulation of mail. Walking up the steps of the building, he paused to shake hands with a local merchant, and was handed the question, "Tom, I haven't seen much of you lately. Do you spend all your time at home?"

Eight o'clock in the morning is a little early for premeditated mayhem, so Tom grinned his answer and opened his mailbox. Three of the letters were from his district office, one from the regional office and one from the state office. All five demanded replies and would brook no delay. The others were bills from the kids' dentist, a thank-you letter from the local Boy Scout Troop, advising that Tom's services as merit badge counselor were going to be appreciated, which was the first he had heard of that. The last one was from an Audubon Society group almost 200 miles away, asking for a detailed report on ring-billed gulls in his district, as to numbers, dates noted, and estimate of females versus males.

On the way out he waved at one of the mail clerks and grinned again in answer to the question, "Hey, Tom, why aren't you out on the lake this morning?"

Tom's county was 30 miles long and 30 miles wide. Many would say that he patrolled 900 square miles. Tom would say that he patrolled 9000 long miles, and he was still working on the problem of how to be at his desk, on the lake, in the woods and teaching a First Aid class at the same time.

He reached home too late to see the kids off to school, or have a warm breakfast with his family, but in time for coffee that wasn't too stale or too cold. His wife dropped a couple of strips of bacon in the pan, and just as she was cracking the shells of breakfast, guess what. The telephone jumped up off the stand, did a noisy twist into the kitchen and tweaked him on the ear. His Winchester was in the car, but it was nice to speculate on what a .30 caliber bullet would do to that little pile of hard rubber and copper wire. He picked it up and dodged behind a mental brick wall at the same time.

"Tom?" said a license dealer downtown.

"Speaking."

"Do you have a book of out-of-state hunting licenses?"

"Yes," Tom replied, which, under the circumstances, was an admirable thing to say.

"Well, there are a couple of fellows down here. . . ." and the voice droned on, and Tom listened with one ear, with his eyes closed, because he knew what was needed and what he had to do.

He closed his eyes a little tighter, and he let his mind wander over pleasant and beautiful things. Things like high peaks in the Davis or Chisos mountains and how it would feel to be on the summit of the highest and craggiest pinnacle in the entire range. How it would feel to launch himself into space, soar smoothly like a bird through the warm air, until he came to a thud on the bottom. At a time like this, he wondered, would there be someone halfway down who would shout at him, "Hey, Tom, are you coming back by here in a minute? Tom? Hey, Tom!" **

Drought Kills Beaver In Milam County



Before last summer, old-timers around Cameron would have sworn that there were no beaver in Milam County, and some of the area's most avid hunters would have scoffed at the suggestion.

But Jerry Matula, Cameron postal employee who spends a great deal of his spare time exploring the back-

woods of the county, took some photographs that prove the presence of beaver.

Matula said he has known for years where several beaver lodges were located but he kept quiet because he hated to see them hunted and killed. He said he admired the little animals and felt they were beneficial to man.

However, the plight of one beaver family was so tragic that the pictures came to light. Because of last summer's drought, Green's Lake, two miles northeast of Cameron, became completely dry for the first time in many years and the beaver's fight for survival there was lost.

The lodge on the lake was usually almost covered with water and speculation is that it has been there a long time. As the lake dried, the beaver apparently tried to channel water into the dens by means of long trenches.

One channel was about 100 yards long, running from north to south. Another curved into it from the east. The water finally stopped running into the den and the beaver either

died inside, or left. One died at the lodge entrance.

D. E. Davis, local game warden, said the beaver usually stay at home in their lodges and that although Little River is only about a half-mile away, others may have waited inside the lodge too long for the drought to break.

"It amazes me," Davis said, "that more people are not aware of the fact that there are beaver in this county."

"I have had some people to tell me I was crazy," Davis laughed, "but they are here."

The beaver fed on bark of elm and willow trees around Green's Lake. They have been seen on Little River, Elm Creek and the San Gabriel, Davis said. **

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| BLANCO | BLANCO | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | | | | | | X |
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| DAINGERFIELD | DAINGERFIELD | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
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| GOOSE ISLAND | BOCKPORT | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| HUNTSVILLE | HUNTSVILLE | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| INKS LAKE | BURNET | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
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| LAKE WHITNEY | WHITNEY | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| LOCKHART | LOCKHART | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
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| *MACKENZIE | LUBBOCK | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| MERIDIAN | MERIDIAN | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
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| MOTHER NEFF | MOODY | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| PALMETTO | LULING | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| PALO DURO CANYON | CANYON | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| POSSUM KINGDOM | CADDO | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
| TYLER | TYLER | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X |
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| FT. GRIFFIN (Texas Longhorn Herd) | ALBANY | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | |
| GOLIAD | GOLIAD | | | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | | | | X |
| GOV. HOOG SHRINE | QUITMAN | | | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| INDIANOLA | FORT LAVACA | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X |
| JIM HOGG | RUSK | | | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| MISSION TEJAS | WECHES | X | | X | | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| MONUMENT HILL | LA GRANGE | | | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| *SAN JACINTO | DEER PARK | | | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
| STEPHEN F. AUSTIN | SAN FELIPE | X | | X | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
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| WASHINGTON | WASHINGTON | X | | X | X | X | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | X |
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Letters



to the Editor

Drawing Favoritism

Editor:

Undoubtedly thousands of hopeful hunters applied for permits to hunt deer, quail, turkey on the various State-owned and operated game management areas. Also equally certain it is that many more failed to secure such permits than did secure them. The process of selection ostensibly was by chance (?), or a drawing.

Wouldn't it be a real service to your readers to explain in full, with no reservations, the *modus operandi* of the selection of the names of those issued permits? I believe such an article, detailed in its full explanation, would be welcomed by your readers and the public.

I've never hunted deer or turkey in my life of 71 years, nor have I hunted quail or doves in the last 50 years, but I do wonder about the possibility of favoritism in this matter.

O. C. Southall
Lubbock

(Many have written to us on this subject, and we appreciate your concern. We intend to run something on it in the magazine before the next season. Meantime, I can assure you that it is strictly chance. The drawing is held in a large room with reporters and citizens present. The application cards, just as they are received here by mail, are placed in a large barrel, similar to those used in most other drawings. This barrel is revolved, then the door is opened and someone outside the Parks and Wildlife Department picks the cards and hands them to an accountant for recording. They are stamped immediately and placed in a file. We vouch for it: there is absolutely no favoritism. See a subscriber's related letter on this page.—Editor)

Editor:

During a three-year period, I have heard from a dozen or more people (one a former employee of the Texas Game and Fish Commission) that the drawing for the Reserve Hunt was fixed or unfair. Being a State employee myself, this always disturbed me somewhat. Today I attended one of your drawings and I would like to tell you that I have never seen a more fair drawing of any kind held. Not only was the drawing fair, but all of the employees were so very friendly and not at all like I expected.

If there would be more publicity about the drawing and get more people to attend, they too would see that the drawing is as fair as can be.

No, our party was not drawn for the hunt, but I left feeling that we had had a fair chance.

This citizen will certainly be spreading the word around, IT'S FAIR.

Mrs. Jo Whitt
Austin

(Many thanks for your courtesy in writing us this way. We are delighted to pass on your impression of the public hunt drawing to other Texans.—Editor)

Spiked Bucks

Editor:

Some interesting things turned up during last season of deer harvest. Thanks to the antlerless hunt, and do hope it will continue a few more seasons. I inspected quite a number of the kill here and found three and four-year-old buck deer with hardened antlers protruding through the hide, some just nubs some three or four inches long. One in particular, a three-year-old buck, field dressed 96 lbs. He did not even have any buttons under the hide on his head.

The results here on this particular place did far more good than harm. I do not think this was caused by deficiency of mineral protein or food deficiency. I honestly believe it was caused by inferior bucks that stay with herd, and our better bucks hide out. I think after a time, when these deer are thinned out, then the does will find these better bucks. I have watched these deer and I came to this conclusion several years ago. We have several nice bucks left. Some fawns or young were seen this last season, but were not hunted.

Houston Ellis
San Marcos

(Our biologists are conducting a study in the Hill Country on velvet-horned bucks, a subject we have been concerned with for some time.—Editor)

Senior Sportsman

Editor:

I'm 79 years old. I hunt, fish and enjoy all sports. I want to pin a bouquet on *Texas Game and Fish*. I have every copy of the last 11 years. It's a real Texas magazine. Keep the boys and girls in the lime-light, as you are doing. I'd rather see a kid with a slingshot, gun or fishing pole than to see them chasing down the streets after night. At this time you may not realize the good you are doing. Keep it up. It will pay off.

I woke this A.M. to find sleet on the ground, on the trees, and the leaves fall-

ing. I do a little writing at times. I am going to send you what I wrote, and if you want to use it, you may.

It's Winter

The clouds are in the skies
The frost is in the breeze
The leaves are falling from the trees

It's Winter

As the wind comes and carries them
away

They run and dance like children play

It's Winter

Remember the shade they made for me
and you

And now their work is through

It's Winter

The tree stands naked in its shroud of
sleet and rain

Waiting for the warm spring days to
bring forth leaves again.

It's Winter.

J. E. Vandenberg
Dallas

(It's a wonderful thing, Mr. Vandenberg, to appreciate the outdoors as a sportsman and also as an artist. We are grateful for your lovely letter and poem.—Editor)

Toothsome Twosome

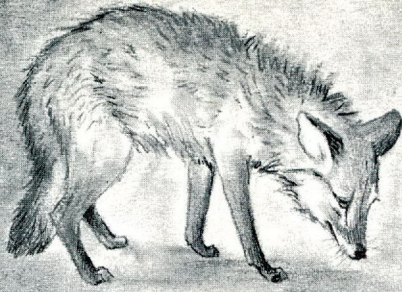


Editor:

This picture shows two bass caught on one cast by John Brown of Atlanta. The first was two and one-half lbs., the second five and one-fourth lbs. He landed both fish at the same time.

I. B. "Bogie" Price
Atlanta

(Congratulations to your friend on this successful double-play.—Editor)



Junior Sportsmen

DEADLY WARNING

by JOAN PEARSALL

IT'S MIGHTY tantalizing when some cute little furry thing scampers across your path and is gone before you can get a really good look, or when that squirrel that seems tame scoots away as you reach out a hand. Anyone who loves outdoor creatures often wishes it were possible to get close and become well acquainted. There are good reasons, of course, for these animals' not wanting to stay around long enough to pass the time of day. Their built-in wariness is a necessity if they are to survive in the wild.

But just suppose you come across one of these creatures and it does *not* take off like the wind. Suppose, instead, it actually approaches you and acts friendly. Would you be so delighted that you wouldn't stop to think a bit about this unusual situation? If this ever happens to you, be very careful. Resist the temptation to touch the animal. Keep away from it and report the incident to an adult as soon as possible.

Many of you already may know the reason. A change in the natural habits of animals is one of the first signs of rabies infection.

To many people, the word "rabies" brings visions of a mad, attacking animal, foaming at the mouth. This description is true in the last stages of the disease, and, in fact, the word "rabies" comes from the Latin word "rabere," meaning "to rage." Obviously, no warning is needed to stay away from animals in that state. But an infected animal may not show any symptoms at all for a short while, before going into the "friendly" phase. Or it may go quickly into a paralytic, dumb stage, when it drools and the jaw drops and the tongue protrudes. This often happens when the animal has received a massive dose of the virus. A person might think a beast in this condition has something caught in its mouth and be tempted to try to help.

So it is wise not to handle any wild animal, or even any domestic animal you do not know. Dogs and cats should never be abandoned. When they are, they become wild, or feral, and a possible rabies risk. You might be less on guard against touch-

ing a stray pet, but there definitely is a need to be careful there, too.

All mammals are able to catch the disease of rabies, which is passed on from the saliva of an infected animal. If you are ever bitten, or if you have any open cut that has been in contact with the saliva of an animal, it is very important that the creature be caught and placed under observation of a qualified person, to be certain whether or not it is rabid. The disease of rabies is 100 per cent fatal, once symptoms appear, but the victim can be saved if treatments are started before he has symptoms.

It was discovered only in recent years that bats (which are also mammals) are a source of danger from rabies. Cases have been known of persons touching what they thought was a dead bat and getting bitten and given the deadly infection.

The rabies menace has been with us for centuries and there are many historical references to it. It is by no means new to Texas. Many a cowboy on the old Chisholm Trail had to "cash in his chips" after an encounter with a rabid skunk. They called them "hydrophobia cats," though, no doubt, they had other names for the animals, too, that we couldn't print.

Nowadays, we do not need to be in fear of the disease so long as we take sensible precautions. Pets should be vaccinated against rabies; wild animals, and others that are strange to us, should never be handled, and any bite cases should be investigated promptly. Scientists go on studying rabies and how to control it and, meanwhile, we can do our part, too. **

Killer 'dillo

Editor:

Last summer I went to visit a friend of mine who lives just outside Madisonville on a farm. I noticed some armadillos up on the hill beside the house. My friend said shoot all the armadillos I want. I shot eight that day without even trying. In all, I shot 24 in 3½ weeks. I just

thought you might like to know there's lots of armadillo up there.

Mike O'Neal
Corpus Christi

(You are right; there is a great number of armadillos in East Texas. In fact, in the last few years they have spread into many parts of the state and the whole southwest region. Since armadillos are not serious predators, though, Mike, why not focus your target practice on some other varmint, or even on squirrels, in season? Those make excellent eating, and a good shooter like you could bring home the makings for a fine stew.—Editor)

Corpus Christi Cat



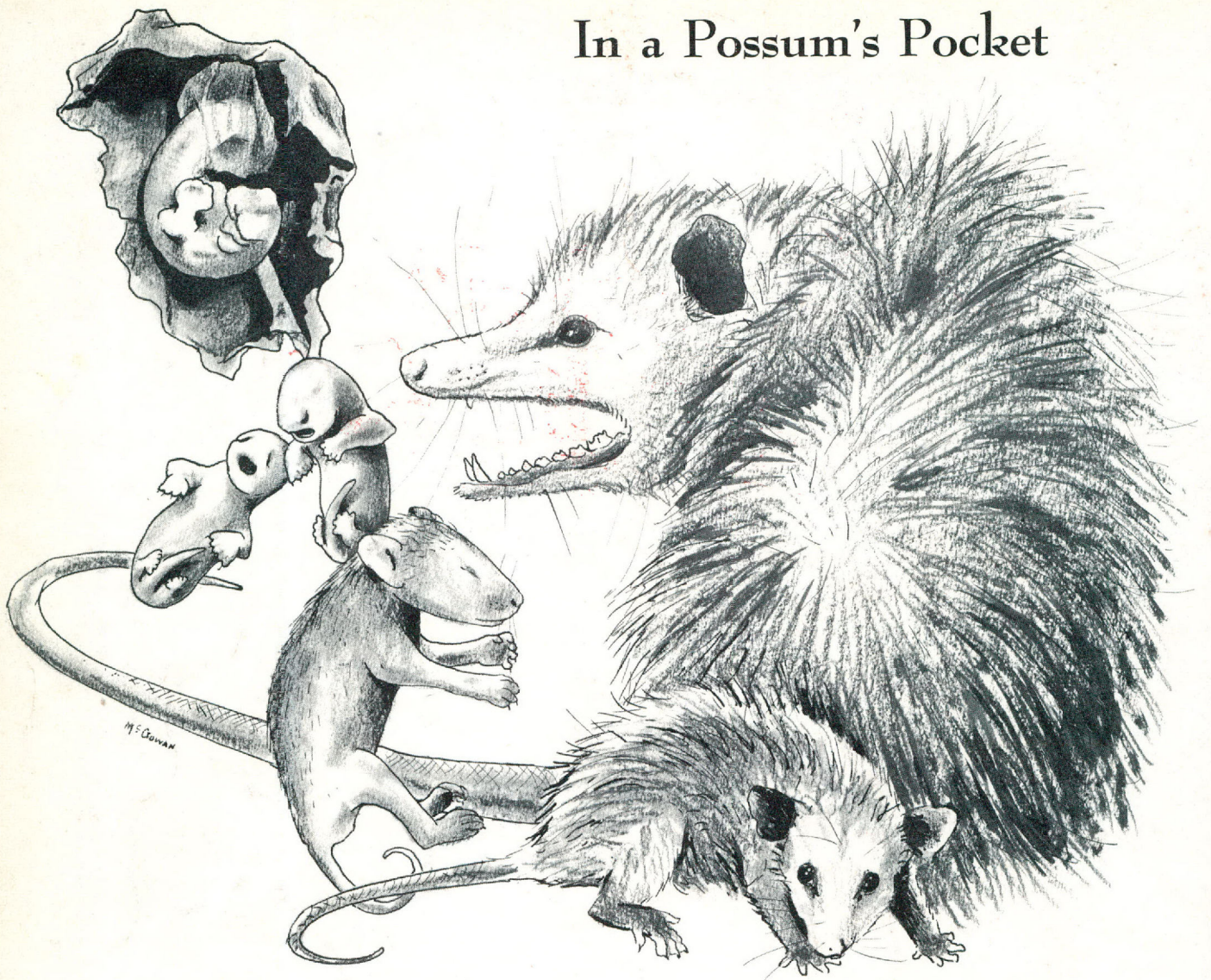
Editor:

Recently, my 10½-year-old cousin, Darrell Walters, caught an 8½ lb. yellow cat on Lake Corpus Christi. Enclosed is a picture of Darrell, the fish, and the rod and reel on which the fish was caught.

Brenda Hudson
Orange Grove

(You can be as proud of your cousin, the cat-ch and the equipment, Brenda, as we are to show them.—Editor)

In a Possum's Pocket



Contrary to current legends, the baby possum is conceived and born in the usual manner of mammals. But the first few moments and weeks after birth are unique among experiences of baby mammals. After a gestation period of only 12 days and 19 hours, the embryo is born enfolded in a water-filled membrane, too tough for it to break. Unless bitten free by its mother, it will drown. Once out of this wrapping, however, the bee-sized grub must scramble, under its own power, up across three to four inches of hairy terrain to the safety of its mother's pouch. Although the unformed baby's tail and hind legs are mere nubbins, its forearms are sufficiently developed to move in a vigorous rowing motion. Claws which are later shed help the grub to clamber upward. Birth is so rapid that all the embryos, four to 25, reach their destination in about 10 minutes. In the pouch it is a first come, first served competition with the others to elbow its way to a teat. Thirteen teats are available, and when all are reserved, the

surplus newborns must die. Once attached to a teat the embryo is not easily removed. Muscular tongue and cheek muscles draw out the milk and lengthen the nipple so that it fills the mouth. The embryo's grip anchors it loosely. The mother's pouch expands as the youngsters grow. As further protection she can close the pouch tight enough to make it waterproof by contracting a muscle bordering the pouch opening. Growth is slow. Young, born seconds or minutes apart, will vary in size and development. At six weeks the embryo can barely stagger a few steps. Nine weeks pass before its eyes open, and about the tenth week it is finally able to make short forays from the pouch. The young possum continues to snuggle with the others in the pouch until 12 weeks old, making it well nigh impossible for a mother with a big family to walk. By the fourteenth week, the rat-sized young is weaned and independent. And it's about time, since its mother probably has a fresh batch of youngsters occupying her pouch.