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Texas Game and Fish

MAY

1963

20 CENTS



A. Pulich

A proverbial busy beaver repairs a leak made by photographer Nancy McGowan for the sake of capturing the aquatic engineers in action. See story page 16.





TIMBER NUMBERS: There are now some 22,696 tree farms covering 58,248,554 acres in the United States. The largest individual number of tree farms is in Mississippi, with 2,945 tree farms covering 2,845,333 acres.

HUNTERS JUST AREN'T THE SAME ANY MORE: The Karankawa Indians of our Gulf Coast area were real hunters. With almost unbelievable stamina, these people could chase a deer from sunrise to sunset without tiring. They would sometimes conceal a slanted stake in a deer trail behind a brush barrier, then chase their quarry until they got it running on the right trail and in the right direction. When the deer jumped the barrier, it was impaled on the stake. Early historians also recorded instances in which Karankawas actually ran deer down and caught them.

NOSEY PARKER: If you go to a national park area this summer, don't be surprised if someone asks you about your "motivation." That's because the Applied Psychology Corp. of Arlington, Va. has been awarded a \$27,500 contract to study visitor motivation and behavior for the National Park Service. The study is to help the Park Service's long-range planning task force to project wants and needs of the public. Questions will be asked in 17 national parks.

GOOSE GOSSIP: The Giant Canada Goose, *Branta canadensis maxima*, long considered extinct, is very much alive. These great birds have been discovered breeding in their original territory in northeastern South Dakota and in Minnesota.

"KETCH-UP" FOR POACHERS: Time was, when a deer poacher had the venison tucked away in a mince meat pie, he could breathe easily. Not so any more! A relatively simple test has been developed, by means of paper chromatography, whereby even the difference between white-tailed deer and mule deer tissue can be detected. The test is based on variations of the amino-acid combination for each species. Even cooked hamburger of mixed meats can be identified.

CARSON TOPS IN CONSERVATION: Miss Rachel Carson, the lady who stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy with her book on the dangers associated with the use of agricultural chemicals--"Silent Spring"--has been named "Conservationist of the Year" by the National Wildlife Federation. The award--a bronze plaque cast in the form of a scroll--was accepted on behalf of Miss Carson by Dr. Clarence Cottam, director of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, Sinton, Texas, at the federation's recent annual banquet in Detroit, Mich.

FOR FUTURE FISH SCIENTISTS: A career guide for the field of fishery science, entitled "Fisheries As a Profession," is now available in the form of a three-fold, eight-panel brochure, from The American Fisheries Society, 1404 New York Ave., N.W., Washington 5, D.C. It will be useful to guidance people in secondary schools and to sportsmen's groups, etc. In addition, it should be noted that a useful book, "Careers in Conservation," sponsored by the Natural Resources Council of America, is scheduled for early publication by The Ronald Press Company, 15 E. 26th St., New York, 10, N.Y. It will contain a chapter on fishery science which will be extremely valuable to guidance people and should be available in every school.

QUICK CAMP LAMP: Here's an easily made camp lantern. Take an empty tin can from which the top has been removed. Cut an X in the side and push in the four points, making a hole large enough for a candle. Fasten a wire handle through two little holes opposite the candle hole, scratch a match and there you are. Because of the bright tin inside the can, the little candle flame will throw a long ray of brilliance on a dark night.

Texas Game and Fish

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The Cover



Spring and early summer find the petite golden-cheeked warbler in Texas. A stroller in the Edwards Plateau area during this period might glimpse the little bird fluttering among the cedar brakes or splashing in the dancing water of some streamlet. The nest of the devoted warbler parents is made of juniper strips laced with cobwebs and lined with a few plant fibers, hair and feathers. See related story on page 4.

Painting by Anne Marie Pulich

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MAY, 1963

Vol. XXI, No. 5

★ In This Issue ★

Weak Links	3
by HOWARD D. DODGEN	
Bird of the Cedar Brakes	4
by WARREN M. PULICH	
The golden-cheeked warbler is a distinguished Texas guest.	
White Lightning	6
by CLIFFORD FARMER	
Sometimes a man's dream fishing becomes reality.	
A Family Ramble	8
by MARGUERITE BOTKIN	
A wilderness weekend is good for the whole family.	
Seafood from the Pecos	11
by NORREL WALLACE	
West Texas fishermen can catch saltwater fish at home.	
Hoppin' Huntin'	12
by CURTIS CARPENTER	
A speck of amber in the night means a marsh rabbit.	
Panhandle Pointers	14
by STARKEY WHITEHORN	
Texas and Oklahoma dog fanciers enjoy Panhandle field trial.	
Timber-r-r!	16
by ANN STREETMAN	
Aquatic lumberjacks understand togetherness.	
She's Made Her Mark	19
by HENRY STOWERS	
Mrs. Fred Alford owns an enviable shooting record.	
Vipers in the Rocks	20
by RUSSELL TINSLEY	
Rattlesnake hunting is a rising sport in Texas.	
Beauty and the Bass	22
by CURTIS CARPENTER	
Dam "B" Reservoir in Southeast Texas swamp is tops for a tourney.	
Beaver	Inside Front Cover
Long Shots	1
Regional Roundup	24
Fishing Lines	25
Guns	26
Junior Sportsmen	Inside Back Cover
Built-In Dry Cleaning	Back Cover
What Others Are Doing	28
Tackle Talk	29
Books	31
Letters	32

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Weak Links

REGARDLESS of what some persons say, laws are not made to be broken. Whether a law is designed to protect or prevent, it should be respected. Conservation laws are included. Once a law is broken, the guilty must pay the penalty, usually of fine or jail sentence, or both.

Seldom, however, is there a conservation law broken when only the violator pays the price of the crime. The history of natural resources in this country alone shows that all mankind has suffered because of the selfish, thoughtless errors of a few.

Any person should realize it is absolutely necessary that our conservation laws be understood, respected and enforced. Resources—it makes no difference what type—should be used, not abused.

The Game and Fish Commission was assigned the responsibility some 50 years ago, to restore, manage, conserve and protect the wildlife resources of this state. The citizens, generally, have been very cooperative and understanding. Most Texans know what must be done, and they have shown great confidence in the actions taken by their conservation agency. But, a few have not shown a community interest in the welfare of our wild creatures.

Unfortunately, this is true in any type of work where laws are involved. To some, a law is a fine idea until it reaches out and touches them through the enforcement channel, or until it causes them to have to change their habits. It is the case of the speedster on the highways, the pickpocket and racketeer who steal from the innocent and the fisherman who consistently strings too many fish. The law is fine, until they, or friends or relatives, get caught; then they're angry.

In this very serious and necessary business of conservation, law enforcement is imperative. Thanks to the majority of Texans, the percentage of violators compared to the numbers participating in sport hunting and fishing and commercial fishing is unbelievably low. Those who constantly disregard conservation laws are much the minority. But, even this minority must be reduced. **

HOWARD D. DODGEN
Executive Secretary
Game and Fish Commission

TEXAS is the only state in the country which hosts the golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) in spring and early summer. While in Texas the bird lives only in cedar brakes. And, during this period, the bird is found nowhere else in the world. It leaves Texas from mid-June to August, winging to southern Mexico and Guatemala where it spends winter months. Such a restricted range is rare among birds found in the United States.

The petite warbler—only five inches long—was discovered a little more than a hundred years ago by Osbert Salvin, a famed collector of the British Museum. Not until early spring of 1864 was this warbler collected in Texas, at Howard's ranch on the Medina River. It was 1878 before other specimens were taken. Shortly after that time, many leading museum collections of the United States and Europe contained golden-cheeked warbler specimens, including eggs and nests.

Although there are at least eight species of cedar, or juniper, in Texas, the golden-cheeked warbler prefers one species known by various common names, such as Mexican cedar, blueberry cedar and mountain juniper. This species, *Juniperus ashei*, found in virgin stands is a prime requisite for golden-cheeked warbler habitat. Only where dense stands of this juniper remain can one find the warbler, although the cedar habitat contains other trees including Spanish oak, live oak, shin oak, elm, hackberry and black walnut.

In Texas the range of the golden-cheeked warbler is chiefly the Edwards Plateau from west of Austin to the San Antonio region, and north to the Junction area, and northeast to Bosque County. Along the northern limits this species has been reported from southwestern Dallas County to Eastland and Palo Pinto counties. This endemic species has been reported in 37 counties. Generally believed to be rare, the bird is relatively common within its range.

The adult male is one of the most handsome birds adorning the cedar brakes. Its crown, upper parts, throat, neck, upper breast and flanks are a striking jet black; the cheeks, line over the eye, sides of neck and small stripe on the crown front are

Bird of the Cedar Brakes

by WARREN M. PULICH

golden-yellow. The wings are black with two conspicuous white wing bars; the tail is blackish with the two outer feathers largely white. The lower breast and belly are white. The female has much less black on its throat and underparts, and olive-green above with much less white in the wings and tail than the male. The cheeks of the female and immature male are not as brilliant a yellow as those of the adult male.

are usually swallowed whole. The extra big ones are beaten against a branch before they are eaten.

The golden-cheeked warbler is very fond of water. At a small seep spring in one cedar brake the author has frequently seen wood warblers bathing. The birds hopped into little sparkling pools, lowered themselves slightly and with a rapid flutter of an outstretched wing splashed water everywhere, and often emerged tho-



The back of the immature male is streaked with green.

The golden-cheeked bird is nervous, particularly in feeding habits, as it searches among the leaves for insects. Although this bird feeds on a variety of insects, it is very partial to moths and butterflies which abound in cedar brakes. Small larvae

roughly drenched. Surprisingly, on one occasion a bird on a limb near the top of a cedar tree was seen bathing in much the same manner by using raindrops clinging to some leaves.

Soon after arrival in the spring, the male selects a territory. Then, perched on some high branch over-

looking his territory, he begins his four-note song. At the height of the season, he may sing up to seven songs per minute for hour-long periods. In such situations a spectator may approach to within six or eight feet of the bird without disturbing him in the least. In contrast, the duller-plumaged female is extremely shy and seldom seen.

Although one pair of golden-cheeked warblers may claim a territory several acres in size, they live in close and harmonious association with other species such as the mourning dove, yellow-bellied cuckoo, chuck-will's-widow, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, Bewick's wren and the cardinal. Among themselves, however, warbler males frequently fight at edges of territories. Up to three males have been observed fighting over a single female.

Once a territory has been established and the male has selected a mate, the female begins the task of selecting a nesting site and building her nest. Nests are usually constructed in cedars, but they have been seen in oaks, black walnuts and elms at elevations of five or six feet and up to about 20 feet. They are placed near the tops of cedar trees, neatly tucked in the forks of perpendicular branches and carefully concealed. The delicately constructed nests are works of art—built entirely of strips of juniper, held together with cobwebs and lined with a few plant fibers, hair and feathers.

Usually three or four eggs are in a set, but occasionally as many as five occur. The whitish eggs are marked about the larger end with spots, splashes and small blotches of lilac, gray and pink to form a delicate wreath.

Apparently the male does not assume any parental responsibilities until the eggs are hatched. He then begins to assist the female in the feeding and caring of the young. The male continues to sing and remain nearby. But, as the task of feeding and caring becomes more and more time consuming, the singing gradually becomes less frequent.

Reports show that during the time of family life some warbler parents find themselves victims of social parasitism. The brown-headed cowbird lays its eggs in the nests of gold-



en-cheeked warblers as well as of other species. Golden-cheeked warblers are reported to feed the ill-placed cowbird young and it is possible that the young cowbirds starve out and sometimes peck to death the young golden-cheeked warblers as they sometimes do the young of some other species. A study of the Kirtland's warbler shows that cowbird parasitism is a potential threat to that species' existence.

Apparently, even a greater threat to the golden-cheeked warbler during family rearing is the rat snake. On two occasions the author observed the rat snake prey on the golden-cheeked warbler and eat all the young of one nest. The adult birds become very alarmed when tree-climbing snakes come into the vicinity of the nest. The female tries to decoy the snake away from the nest by fluttering in front of the snake and dragging her wings along the branches, chipping rapidly during this exhibition. The male golden-cheeked warbler also participates in this behavior to divert the attention of the snake from young in the nest. At the peak of this defensive strategy, in a desperate attempt to further dis-

tract the snake, both parents flutter downward through the foliage and give the appearance of falling leaves.

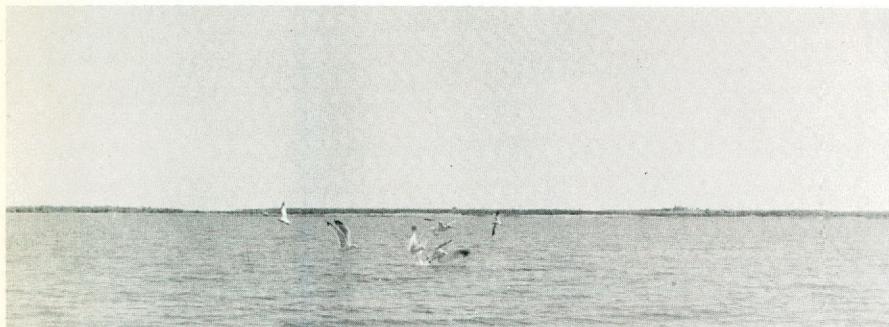
Once the young are able to leave the nest, part of the brood goes with the male and the other part goes with the female; however, the family remains together in a loose group in the vicinity of the territory. The young birds follow the parents about and constantly beg for food by an incessant twittering.

Many young are out of the nest by early May and by mid-June many of the birds depart for their winter home. By July it is difficult to spot a golden-cheeked warbler; by August very few are found in Texas. The bird has been reported as far south as Nicaragua by mid-September.

Now that a century has passed since the discovery of the golden-cheeked warbler, one cannot help but ponder the fate of this small warbler in the next century. If dense stands of *Juniperus ashei* are not retained to provide suitable habitat for the propagation of this species, future generations will not experience a part of a unique biota of our country: the cedar brakes of Texas and its golden-cheeked warbler. **

WHITE LIGHTNING

by CLIFFORD FARMER



Circling gulls prove the presence of a large school of white bass feeding on young shad.

I SAT UP in bed, looking around the moonlit interior of the cabin, and wondered what had awakened me. My fishing clothes were draped across the chair near the bed and my spincast rod was in the corner. A slight breeze, fanning the curtains at the window, brought in the fresh fragrance of mid-summer outdoors. Through the window, I could see the shimmering reflection of the moon on the lake's smooth surface.

The steady breathing from my wife's side of the bed told me that she was still asleep.

Then, I heard a noise out on the water—and I knew that was what had awakened me. It was not the sharp splash of a fish; it was more like a bunch of ducks taking off. The noise resounded in a wide area of the cove in front of the cabin.

I got up and walked to the window, listening. It died down, then started up again. It was like a school of surfacing fish. I dressed and went outside.

The full moon in a cloudless sky lighted the scene. I had never seen Lake Kemp so beautiful. The motor started on the first pull and I eased the boat out, trying to make as little sound as possible. Then, I killed the motor and let the boat drift as I picked up my rod. The surface was glassy smooth, reflecting the light of the moon that was almost directly overhead.

Suddenly, all around the boat, the water came to life as though someone had turned a high-pressure hose on it. I wrist-snapped my rod and sent the surface lure into the midst of the commotion. With the sound of the plug hitting the water came the jolt of a strike, and I was busy fighting a fish. It made battle, boring down, then splashing on the surface, but by putting on the pressure I soon had it to the side of the boat and in my landing net.

I turned on the flashlight so I could see to remove the hooks. I had caught a two-pound white bass. When I freed the plug, I saw a shad minnow in the fish's mouth.

I cast again and felt a strike as soon as the plug hit the water. I had another fight on my hands. After that, it was fast and hectic. There was no time to string the fish. I left them flopping in the bottom of the boat. Sometimes, when I missed a strike, another fish would be hooked before I could reel the lure to the boat.

Without warning, the action stopped and the surface of the lake was smooth again. I turned on the flashlight and counted the flopping fish at my feet—14 white bass, as alike as peas in a pod. And, scattered about were a dozen or more two-inch shad minnows, some of them still alive, that the bass had disgorged after I boated them. I tossed the



Dub Legion has a wide grin for his friend's fish story now that he has two stringers of white bass slung across his back for proof.

minnows back into the lake and put the white bass on my keep-alive stringer.

I waited for the fish to take another feeding spree, but they did not appear again. I moved the boat to another cove, watching for action. None appeared. The feeding seemed to be over for the night so I returned to the dock.

The next day, Dub Legion and his wife, our friends from the Gulf Coast country, arrived at their cabin nearby. I showed off the dishpan full of two-pound white bass in the deep-freeze, and Dub agreed to go moonlight fishing with me the following night.

It was July, the time of year when it can really get hot in northcentral Texas. We tried trolling that afternoon. With the sun bearing down overhead and the reflection throwing it back from the smooth surface of the water, we soon decided the small fish we were catching were not worth a sunburn. We spent the rest of the day in the shade.

We set our alarms for midnight and turned in early. I don't know about Dub, but I didn't go to sleep for I kept listening for the noise of the feeding fish, the sound that had awakened me the previous night.

When we got to the water, we waited in the boat, listening. There was no wind, but it had cooled down some after the oppressive heat of the afternoon. We continued to wait

but we could hear no sound of fish activity on the lake.

"Maybe they have moved to another cove," Dub said. "You know whites are great travelers."

We started the motor and moved slowly out where we could see the main outline of the lake. Again we sat listening. We heard the occasional splashing of a single fish, but none of the slashing noise of a surfacing school.

"Last night—" I began.

"I don't want to hear any more about it," Dub said. "I'm about to believe you dreamed the whole thing!"

Then, for the first time, we noticed the layer of high clouds. Sure enough, the moonlight was far from as bright as it had been the night before.

We waited until three o'clock but there was still no sign of schooling fish. The cloud cover was getting heavier. Finally, we gave it up and decided to try again on a brighter night.

We slept late and it was mid-morning before we were back on the lake. We trolled across rocky points that sometimes were hot spots and along the edge of bushy coves, but only a few small bass were all we had for our work. We anchored and tried casting plastic worms, slow-crawling them on the bottom, but had not a single strike.

We tried two more nights of

searching for surfacing whites, still without results. It seemed the large school of two-pounders had disappeared.

Finally, with only one day of the Legions' vacation left, we agreed to pass up our night fishing so Dub would be rested for the long drive back to South Texas. When I awakened the next morning I could see a line of light across the eastern sky, the pre-dawn promise of a new day. As I lay in bed reviewing the fishing of the week, I suddenly remembered that in our hours of moonlight fishing we had been coming in tired and had slept late each morning. We had passed up the just-before-sunup fishing time! During the full-moon period when the sky was cloudless, I had found them in a wild feeding spree at night. But the past few nights had been cloudy, and that—or some other mysterious factor—had kept them from feeding. It was too hot for them in mid-day. In that case, the very early morning hours would be the time for them.

I hurriedly got dressed and walked across the field to the Legion cabin. Reluctantly, Dub agreed to dress and meet me at the boat in a few minutes.

I was adjusting the motor for starting when Dub let out a yell. He was pointing across the lake. "Look at that!" he said. "The gulls are going crazy out there!"

I looked where he was pointing and, sure enough, a big flock of gulls circled low over the water.

"That's it!" I exclaimed. "They've found the white bass!"

I gunned the motor and the light boat climbed to the surface and planed toward the circling gulls. My confidence and excitement had returned. Many times, gulls had tipped me off to surfacing fish.

The gulls were a half-mile from shore, out over deep water where I had never found surfacing whites before, but there was no mistaking their activities. We could hear the gulls' excited cries as they circled and dived to the water for minnows driven to the surface by feeding fish. Before we reached them, we saw the churning water and minnows leaping like grasshoppers in a meadow.

I cut the motor and we coasted in.



Scales fly as Clifford Farmer prepares the large catch of white bass for a big fish fry.

• Continued on Page 27

AFTER my husband had made two trips through the Santa Elena Canyon via rubber raft, he was enthusiastic about taking our whole family to Big Bend. I was a bit skeptical about taking our three-year and five-year-olds, Eric and Elaine, on a camping trip in such wild, desolate country—and, I hadn't camped out or "roughed it" since I was a small child. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm engulfed us. Even my husband's plans for hiking to the lofty plateau of the south rim of the Chisos Mountains (7,500 feet in elevation) didn't dampen our ardor.

We arrived in the "basin area" in the very heart of the Chisos Mountains about 10:30 p.m. This is the area where the park ranger headquarters, cabins, camping area, restaurant, grocery store, etc. are located, and it is the only sign of civilization in the park's 708,221 acres. We claimed one of the camp-



From the south rim, the magnificent view of mountains and sky seems to stretch to infinity.

A Family Ramble

by MARGUERITE BOTKIN

ing sites, which consisted of a roof-covered concrete slab with two large picnic tables, readily accessible to water and clean rest rooms. I had already made up a bed for the children in the rear of our station wagon, so they were all set for the night. We put our two cots next to the car.

That first night was one I'll always remember. All I could think about were snakes as big as your arm. I waked several times on hearing a rustle nearby—only to see skunks snooping under our cots and around our tables, or to see a great horned owl swoop overhead into a nearby bush, or to see a trio of jackrabbits hop past us. My qualms were arrested, and I looked forward to sleeping (and watching) in the open the next night.

Our cook-outs turned out to be

easier and more fun than I had expected. We assigned regular chores to Elaine and Eric, such as emptying trash, drying dishes and helping set and clear the table. I had frozen all meat and other freezable items before leaving home and then transferred them to two ice coolers at the last minute. We had an assortment of foods, including T-bone steaks, smoked sausage, ham, hamburger patties, canned foods and even green salad items in a sealed plastic container.

After breakfast, we went to the Boquillas Canyon area. This canyon is the largest of three in the park. It is 25 miles long, and sheer walls reach to 1200 feet. We walked down a trail to the mouth of the canyon where, across this narrow part of the Rio Grande, we could see the quiet little town of Boquillas, Mexico.

The children begged to ride the horses they had seen in the corral, so that afternoon we all rode to the "window"—about a three-hour round trip. The trail to the "window" ends at the very base of a V-shaped crevice where two mountains join, revealing the only opening in the circle of mountains in which the basin is snuggled. One can see a panorama of distant hills through this opening.

We told our guide that we planned to hike to the south rim the next day and spend the night there. He told us that this 7,200 feet climb was very steep to make on foot, carrying camping gear. The trip is usually made on horseback which takes about eight hours. We had agreed to hike only as far as we comfortably could with the children. Our guide suggested that we go by horseback



This old tree on the south rim of the Chisos Mountains matches the rugged beauty beyond.

as far as Boot Springs (about three-fourths of the way to the top) where a ranger cabin was located and where we could leave our sleeping bags and food and then hike to the rim. Elaine and Eric looked forward to this with enthusiasm, for they had both talked of nothing but riding the horses for weeks. My husband, Ron, and I were amazed to see how well the children rode these horses which they barely could straddle.

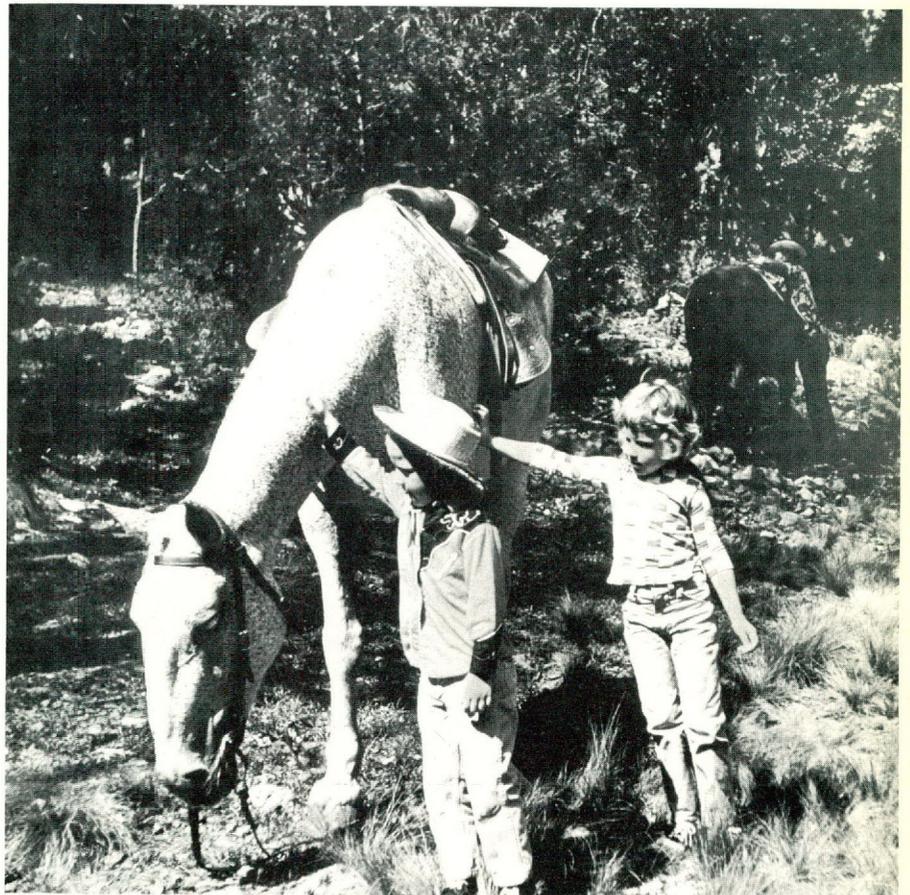
After breakfast the next morning, we started upward on horseback with our guide and a pack mule—Elaine rode “Sundown” and Eric, “Freckles.” As we wound upward, I was constantly marveling at trails which were cut out of treacherous inclines—with such extreme drop-offs that at times I unconsciously slouched over the side of my saddle away from the precipice. At the same time, Eric would be slapping his horse with the reins and calling, “Giddyap, Freckles!” or Elaine would be grinning at us.

Our four-mile ride ended at Boot Springs which is so named because of a great, natural boot-shaped formation on a nearby mountain and springs located about 100 yards from the ranger cabin. Ron and I were glad to descend from our mounts, but Eric and Elaine both chorused, “Do we have to get off? Can’t we ride around a little?”

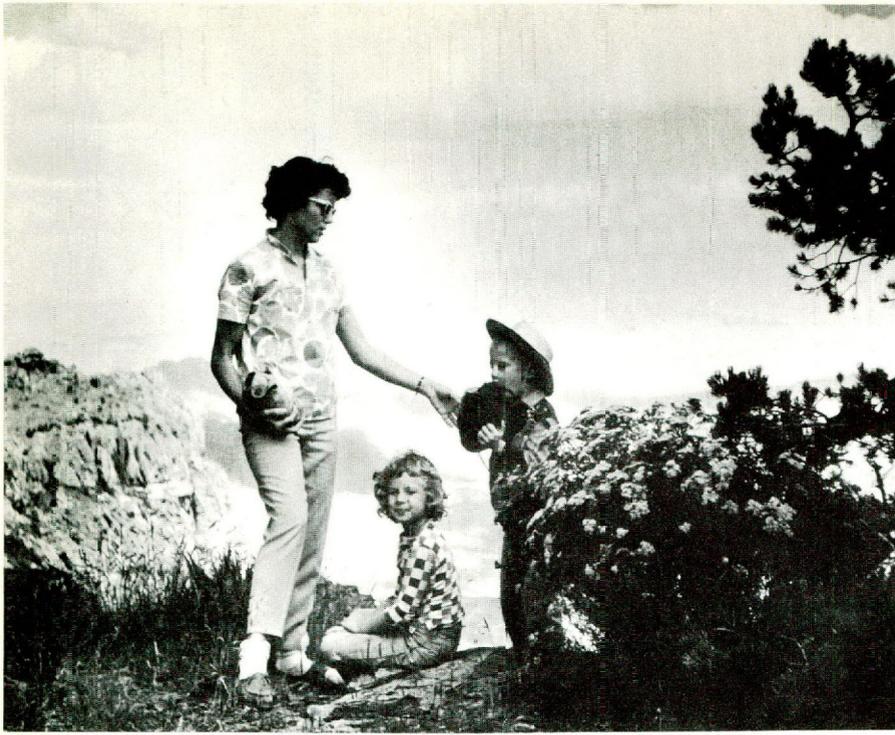
We welcomed the cool waters of the mountain spring, which trickled over and under a great wall of mossy rocks.

Then we explored the area around the cabin where we were to spend the night, and our guide pointed out a completely closed-in cage of wood reinforced with wire where horses were kept overnight as protection from panthers. He also showed us panther claw marks on the screen of the cabin porch. At this point we were grateful to have a screened-in porch to sleep on; the cabin itself was locked. When the guide slapped the horses’ flanks, and he followed them homeward, I think I knew how Daniel Boone’s wife must have felt—if he had a wife. However, we actually had more conveniences than we had planned on originally and certainly more than Mrs. Boone enjoyed. We had a direct-line telephone to the Ranger Station as well as pans, a coffee pot, axes and hatchets, and even a stack of wood already cut. Ron chopped an additional supply of wood to ensure a huge bonfire all night; the panther marks had made us wary of what the night might hold.

We gathered up our canteens and



Confident and happy riders, Eric and Elaine lovingly pet Freckles, a sure-footed delight.



After a hard climb to the top of the south rim, Eric gets a refresher before exploring.

all available pans and walked down to the spring to collect water. After a lunch of roasted wieners, canned fruit, cookies and toasted marshmallows, we hiked up to the south rim. We had been given a rough trail map, but no distances were noted. We estimated this to be about a five-mile round trip. We walked up beautiful wooded trails that bypassed clear streams in which we saw two water snakes. Hundreds of varieties of plant life nestled among the mossy rocks along the shady, winding trail.

We left this wooded area to cross stretches of mountain meadows. Suddenly, the sky enveloped us, and we emerged on the plateau of the very rim of the mountain. From this rim we saw some of Texas and much of Mexico, with the great, winding river marking the boundary line between. Impressive vistas of the many-hued foothills, plains and distant mountains stretched, as the park rangers expressed it, "into the day after tomorrow." The view from this rim is notably the most awesome spectacle of the park.

After resting about 45 minutes we started for the cabin.

Back at the cabin we got the fire going for the night, fixed a skillet of beef stew, and then climbed into our

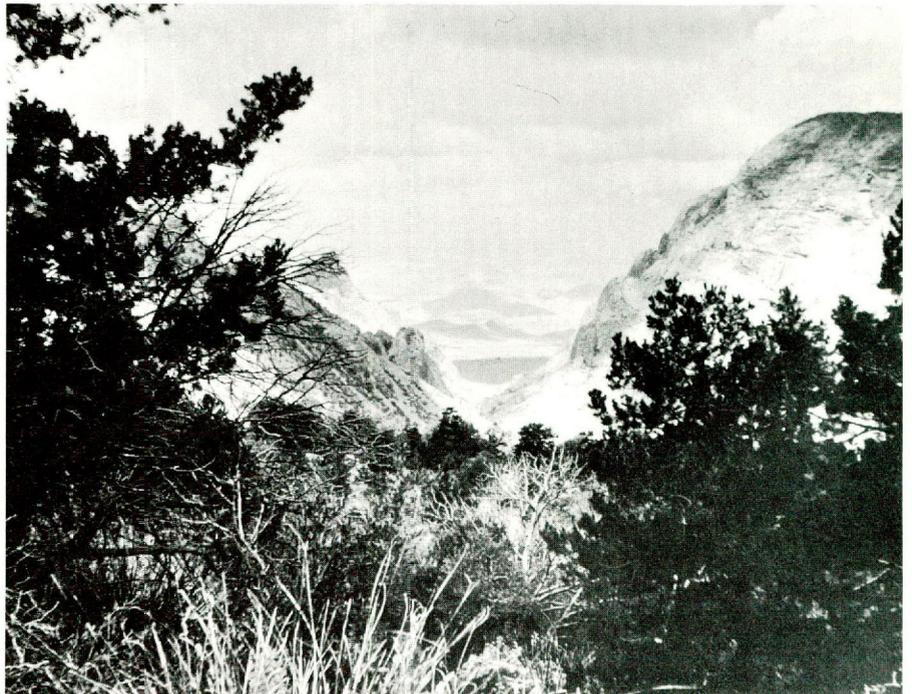
sleeping bags on the screened-in porch. Lying there in my sleeping bag that night, I thought of the generations past who lived day by day in a similar but more difficult manner—retiring at dusk and arising at dawn, utilizing the simplest of tools for survival and perhaps living miles from other signs of civilization, all

working together and for each other. . . . I then realized how good this trip had been for our own family.

By prior arrangement, the owner of the horse concession called to see if we had changed our minds about walking back down the mountain. We were all well rested and felt that we would be able to hike downhill without any trouble. He told us that if our packs got too heavy, we could leave them on the trail and they would be picked up that afternoon. My husband and I each had a bed roll, a knapsack with lunch items and a canteen on our backs. The children rotated the camera and another canteen between them.

We enjoyed the scenic walk down, and actually our back packs were never too uncomfortable. We killed one rattlesnake, ½-inch in diameter. As we descended, I was again amazed at the engineering of the trails—and again somewhat squeamish at the thought of the horses climbing such steep, narrow trails daily. When we knew by the landmarks that we had only about a half mile to go, we stopped to eat lunch.

When we reached our original campsite, Ron and I were both ready to just rest a while, but both Elaine and Eric wanted to know when they were going to ride Freckles and Sundown again. **



As we ascended the south rim we gazed at the haze-covered mountains through "the window."

Seafood from the Pecos

by NORREL WALLACE
I & E Officer Region I

UNTIL a couple of years ago Red Bluff Reservoir and Lake Imperial were unfamiliar names to all but a few avid fishermen living near the Pecos River. A drastic change has occurred. Now, these two heretofore unknown lakes on the Pecos River are major topics of conversation wherever fishermen meet. Within these unheralded waters, 500 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, trophy-size saltwater redfish and flounder are growing rapidly.

Introducing saltwater species in inland waters may be new to many fishermen, but not to Texas fishery biologists who have successfully transferred several marine species from salt water to fresh in the last five years. Other states' agencies also have shown that saltwater species can flourish in inland lakes. South Carolina and California as well as New Jersey have had good success. In Texas, Lake Diversion near Wichita Falls has been stocked with striped sea bass and Lake Whitney near Waco has the requisites for stripers.

Many people wonder why saltwater species are needed in inland lakes. They aren't needed in waters where healthy freshwater species are doing well. But, in lakes where freshwater species don't grow or reproduce because of high salinity, something different is in order. Imperial Lake and Red Bluff Reservoir were two lakes that needed an innovation.

Fishery crews have known for some time that the waters of Red Bluff and Imperial are extremely high in minerals, principally in the form of chlorides. Repeated introductions of freshwater species such as black bass and catfish had little success. Conversely, the white bass, a cousin of saltwater stripers, has done well in most cases. The naturally salty water of Red Bluff and Imperial combined with a high evaporation rate caused by wind and hot sun and frequent draw-down for irrigation purposes created unnatural conditions for an inland lake that only white bass and rough fish species could withstand. Fishery crews reasoned that saltwater predators could more easily withstand the high salinity and other adverse conditions. In addition to preying on carp, gar and shad populations, a marine sport fishery would provide fishing thrills for some Texans long deprived of good fishing places close to home.

The Game and Fish Commission's coastal and inland fisheries divisions transported 246 redfish, 75 flounder, 50 speckled trout and 500 golden croakers from the Gulf of Mexico in April, 1960 and released them in Imperial Reservoir. In 1961-62 233 reds, 39 flounder, 54 speckled trout and 470 golden croakers were released

in Red Bluff Lake. The transplanted fish were about four inches long when released; growth was astonishingly good, even by coastal fishery standards. In five months redfish fingerlings weighed one pound, and they reached four pounds in 15 months. In October, just 19 months after their release, reds were caught in check nets that weighed more than seven pounds and measured 26 inches. Rapid growth was a characteristic of flounder and croakers as well. A 19-month-old flounder caught weighed more than four pounds, and croakers were showing $\frac{3}{4}$ -pound figures.

In November, 1962, fishery crews caught reds weighing 12½ pounds and a flounder weighing seven and one-half pounds. Speckled trout have not been recovered by fishery crews, but concessionaires report seeing a few during the last two years. If the speckled trout survived, growth should be rapid for them also, but biologists are doubtful that they did live because their condition was poor when released, although other species experiencing the same long hot ride from the coast were in excellent condition.

Redfish grow to 40 pounds in coastal waters and flounder reach 20 pounds. Perhaps they will grow to similar sizes in inland waters. The golden croaker is adult size at one pound, but a finer light tackle fish is hard to find. Speckled trout often reach 10 pounds in coastal waters.

All saltwater species introduced in Red Bluff and Imperial are fine coastal game fish and will strike lures with the same enthusiasm of largemouth bass. As far as eating qualities are concerned, reds, specks, flounder and croakers are excellent, with flounder topping the list.

Positive evidence of the spawning success of reds and flounder has not been found yet, but biologists are hopeful that spawning will occur this year. Even if reproduction does not occur immediately, there is a good possibility that saltwater species can be periodically stocked, increasing chances for reproduction.

Until biologists have positive evidence that spawning has occurred, fishermen are urged to release immediately any saltwater fish they catch so the introduced species can have an opportunity to reproduce a few more thousand of their kind. Biologists also urge fishermen to report marine catches to the nearest concessionaire so records can be kept on fishing success.

If reproduction is half as successful as growth has been, the prospect is bright for many West Texas fishermen's experiencing the thrill of catching a really big fish on a rod and reel.

Hoppin' Huntin'

by CURTIS CARPENTER



E. D. Foreman Jr. is a good guide and a good sport who himself loves to hunt marsh rabbits.

THE RABBIT was there. If E. D. said it dropped in the spot where he had his light, a marsh bunny had to be there. "Look for the eyes," whispered E. D. "See them—they're sorta red, very tiny, and—" Then there it was—a small glow of amber shining up from the ankle-high grass. And behind the eye, as

if an artist had filled in the missing parts with the stroke of his brush, was the rest of the bunny.

"Aim for the eye," suggested my guide on the exhale. At that instant, the restless rabbit bounced straight up, clearing the ground 24 inches with all four feet. E. D. dropped it in mid-air with one blast. "Under

the circumstances, the rabbits are a mite shy tonight, you gotta shoot quickly," smiled the marksman.

This was marsh rabbit hunting deluxe, one of the many attractions of the East Texas wonderland. It was late on the first day of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association conference held just outside Port Arthur.

"Okay, you varmints," teased Ed Holder, past association president who had scheduled the hunt, "those who want to hunt on scooters get over here by me, and those who want to go by boat pile up over there by E. D. Foreman, Jr."

The setting for this event was the marsh land on the upper Texas coast. Our headquarters was the Stanco Hunting Club site in the midst of a marsh that stretched from yonder to yonder. The music for the occasion was composed by geese overhead and thousands of mixed duck species dotting the open pools about the area.

I had never heard of hunting rabbits from boats. But then, this was East Texas. Rabbit hunting in some parts of the state is popular, but in this marsh country, it is extra special and is rated by many with duck and deer hunting. Rabbit is just one of many bags—with squirrel, geese, deer, ducks, frogs, freshwater and coastal fish—that East Texas sportsmen enjoy. Hunting and fishing in the marsh is ceaseless.

We drove by auto to a little harbor sliced into the banks of the Intra-coastal Canal just west of the club house. An outboard was pulled high with a block and tackle. We slipped the craft into the water and headed toward the canal with shotguns, headlights, sacks, flashlights and a jug of water. As we made a wide swing parallel to the west bank, we received our first instructions above the roar of the motor.

"Keep your eyes on the banks just ahead of where my spot falls on the shore. You'll see the eyes first," advised E. D.

"Do you want us to crack down on him if we manage to locate the thing?" asked Billy Wilson of Bay City, another hunter in the group. His son was the third member of the hunting party led by Foreman.

"Shore, man," laughed E. D. "And don't waste time. Just be careful that you don't shoot anyone." Then the guide reminded us to keep our guns pointing up or out of the boat.

"Are there deer in that area?" I asked instinctively.

"I thought you would ask that one," laughed Foreman. "You don't worry about deer along here. You'd travel miles over there before you'd

see any deer. The landowner knows we're out here. Everything's been arranged. All you have to do is hunt."

We saw one or two rabbits along the shore, but we had only a glimpse of them before they bounced out of sight in a flash of the light. Ahead a bright light flashed back and forth across the channel. A tug shoving a series of barges along the watery highway was checking the banks. Soon it met us, flicked its light off, and chugged by, never slowing its big engines. A steep wall of water lifted us up and dropped us joltingly down a two-foot step. Just as the tug passed, E. D. aimed the boat for an opening in the steep bank.

"Jump out and hold the boat," he signaled to Wilson. "We'll tie to that little stake there. There ought to be some rabbits along here if the grass is good."

The grass wasn't so good, and we picked up only two marsh rabbits. After walking about a mile or so, we went back to the boat. We tried a couple of other spots, but no rabbits. "No grass," mumbled the guide. "I know of one more place where we might pick up a hopper or two." So, we climbed into the boat.

The new spot was worse than the first and second places. The ground was dry and very little vegetation was visible. As E. D. explained it, "Those rabbits have no reason to be here; there's nothing for them to eat."

Billy and his son decided that they had had all the rabbit hunting they wanted so we took them across the channel where a party hunting from a pickup was waiting with lights flashing.

Then, E. D. suggested we again try the second spot we had hunted. It had more new grass breaking through the ground than any other place we had visited.

As we walked along in the dark, I got to know my guide. He was a fine man, and he loved to hunt. He let me know instantly that he would have been out there hunting and enjoying it regardless of whether he was acting as a guide for me. It was then I learned all about rabbit hunting in that part of the state.

When E. D. and other hunters go on a rabbit hunt, they are out for

fun, but they also are out for the meat. To the people in his area, a rabbit isn't just something to shoot. Some deep-freezers around Port Arthur and other cities in the area aren't unfamiliar with rabbit meat. The meat is used to make sausage, stew and gumbo as well as the main course of a fried-rabbit and french-fried potato dinner.

We had five rabbits by the time we had walked another four or five miles. "It's just not right for them," said E. D. as we headed back for the boat. "You'll have to come back next year a little earlier, or just after a good rain."

I mulled over the technique of this hunting. The light was played over the terrain until the hunter picked up an eye. The light is not kept directly on the rabbit. Just the outer edge of the spot is kept on the little animal as it crouches in the grass. Usually a rabbit when first spotted scampers across the open and drops instantly into the grass. It lays its ears down on its back and remains rock still. A hunter, keeping his light on the animal, must rush noiselessly closer to the rabbit for a good shot. Often the animal bounces up and scoots off. Alertness is a must. Before any shot is fired, the hunter must be certain that no livestock is in the background. The eyes of a cow show up like two bright lights and can't be mistaken for a rabbit.

We had seven marsh rabbits when the hunt ended. The next day the cook tossed them over a hot bed of coals and we had barbecued bunnies—fruits of East Texas' versatile hunting. **



Shotguns are always the safest weapon to use on rabbits, especially where livestock roam.

THE PANHANDLE Bird Dog Club recently concluded its twenty-third trial at the Gene Howe Wildlife Refuge eight miles north-east of Canadian. Featured were all-age, derby, gun dog and puppy stakes.

The trial began at 8 a.m., March 1, on the 5,000-acre-plus game management area of the Texas Game and Fish Commission and ended March 3.

The occasion was strictly amateur. The trials were a high-class, nationally recognized test of top dogs. Bird dog fanciers from northern Texas and Oklahoma entered their dogs in this elimination contest. Many of the contestants have been competing since the club was organized in the late '40's. Most of the dog handlers have run dogs over the

courses through the years and know the way around.

In the past, Walter Layman and his wife (Mrs. Layman, now deceased), together with Haywood McDaniel and Dr. C. E. Stokeley of San Antonio, have been familiar faces at the running. Carl Duffield, Frank Gerlach and others of Abilene, are usually found in the competitive field. Howard Phariss and Tom Templeton of Lubbock are worthy contenders since they have garnered a number of the laurels during the years.

The event is published and contestants are notified of the trial weeks in advance. The night before the trial, contestants meet at the City Hall in Canadian for the drawing. There, the entry blanks for each stake are filled out and dropped into

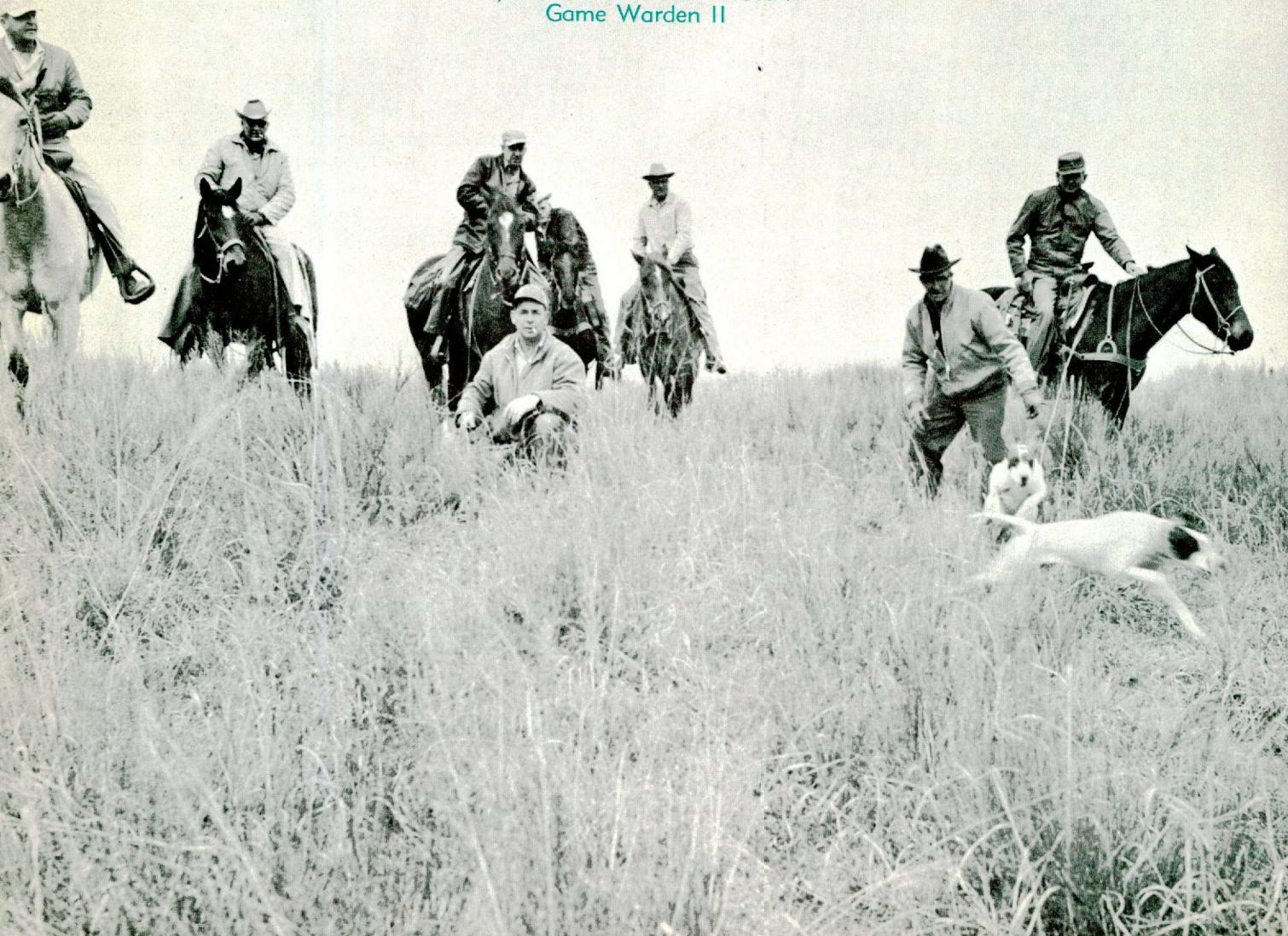
a hat. When the drawing is completed, each handler knows in what brace he is to run his dog and with what dog he is braced.

The next morning the running begins at Course No. 1. When the dogs are released, handlers mount up and follow their dogs, with judges close behind, followed by the gallery. Judges look for a fast-moving dog which displays a merry desire to find as many birds as it can in so many minutes and which points and holds the bobwhites majestically. When the dog points, the handler rides up, dismounts, flushes the birds, shoots a blank pistol, walks back to the dog and gives the signal to resume hunting.

In the all-age, the judges look for a big-running, fast-moving dog that displays perfect manners in the field.

Panhandle Pointers

by STARKEY WHITEHORN
Game Warden II





Boots Little Egypt, owned by Milo Craig and handled by Russ Lovely, won first place in the Panhandle trial's gun dog competition.

In the gun or shooting dog event, the gun dog is expected to repeat the performance of an all-age except to hunt much nearer the handler. A gun dog is what the term implies, one that you would like to take bird hunting. In the derby for younger dogs, an animal is expected to show all the potential of an all-age but not expected to be a finished product. In the puppy stake, the puppy, usually less than 18 months old, is expected to lay down a ground-consuming heat, covering as much ground as possible and searching out the birdy areas objectively.

The goals are high; perfection is the objective. Sometimes the heights are met and sometimes not, but



The second place winner in all-age competition, Burt's Commander Rocket holds a show stance for owner and handler Carl Risley.

where quail are plentiful the judges usually have little difficulty in determining the best dog in the event.

The Panhandle trial was typical in that there were quail found on all the courses. In fact, 18 coveys were found the first day of running. Each dog that placed had ample opportunity to display his ability on wild bobwhites.

Winners in the Panhandle competition were as follows:

All-Age

(5 Pointers, 4 Setters)

First—James Palamonium Misty, pointer, male, owned and handled by Dr. Don R. James, Woodward, Okla.

Second—Burt's Commander Rocket, setter, male, owned and handled by Carl Risley, Sayre, Okla.

Third—Chuckaluck's Rawhide, setter, male, owned and handled by Chuck Taylor, Woodward, Okla.

Derby

(5 Pointers, 2 Setters,
2 Brittany Spaniels)

First—Crockett's Comeback, setter, male, owned and handled by Delbert Clancy, Sayre, Okla.

Second—Mickey's Belle Star, setter, female, owned and handled by Milt Crosby, Sayre, Okla.

Third—Goop, pointer, male, owned and handled by Milo Craig, Ringwood, Okla.

Gun Dog

(18 Pointers, 7 Setters,
4 Brittany Spaniels)

First—Boots Little Egypt, pointer,



James Palamonium Misty, owned and handled by Dr. Don R. James, won first place in all-age.

female, owned by Milo Craig, Ringwood, Okla., handled by Russ Lovely, Fairview, Okla.

Second—Carl's Little Annie, pointer, female, owned and handled by Carl Mask, Amarillo.

Third—Accolade's Cherokee Sam, pointer, male, owned and handled by Frank Roach, Pampa.

Puppy

(5 Pointers, 3 Setters)

First—R. J.'s Bob, pointer, male, owned by Dr. Don R. James, Woodward, Okla., handled by Bud McMurtry, Amarillo.

Second—Lou, setter, female, owned and handled by B. E. Clothier, Woodward, Okla.

Third—R. J.'s Dixie, pointer, female, owned and handled by Dr. Don R. James, Woodward, Okla. **



Winners in the puppy class shown with men are from left to right as follows: R. J.'s Dixie, third, owned and handled by Dr. Don R. James; Lou, second, owned and handled by B. E. Clothier; and R. J.'s Bob, first, owned by Dr. Don R. James and handled by Bud McMurtry.



AS WE stared, three naturalists thrilled to be getting a personal glimpse of beavers' private lives away from books and zoos, each animal gnawed clean the limb it was holding just above the water's surface. Four beavers on a creek near Austin were enjoying an early evening feast.

Quarter-hours slipped away, and the beavers became accustomed to our invading lights and even our whispers and movements, for their resounding tail slaps and quick exits became few.

This particular colony of beavers was established about a year ago, according to estimates of nearby inhabitants. Although no beaver had been seen by local residents before we slipped into the area that evening, the presence of the colony was indisputable because of the 30-foot dam across the creek and the pencil-sharp stumps and upper portions of trees that lined the bank.

Research materials and stories

came to life as we watched our four beavers by flashlight and binoculars.

Beavers display an astonishing control over their environment. Their establishing colonies—building dams to create a pond when a stream is not naturally three feet deep and constructing lodges and burrows—is evidence enough of their ability to work together to mold environmental circumstances to their desires.

The colonies, cell groups of beaver society, usually consist of from seven to 14 beavers including a mated pair and young in varying ages. One colony in New York, studied eight years, contained five lodges and four dams.

Beavers carefully choose the sites for their colonies. The availability of stands of aspen (their favorite), cottonwood, willow and oak is a requisite for their aquatic homesteads, for these trees provide food as well as building material for dams and homes.

When the site has been chosen,

the newly mated pair, or eligible bachelor, begins damming the stream to create a pond which will protect the animals and their food supply.

To get materials, the builders fell small and medium-sized trees near the water's edge. They do this with their characteristic rodent incisors which simultaneously wear away and grow anew. Sometimes two fellows work on one tree. They chew grooves around the trunk and then chisel out the wood above and below. With one-third standing and two-thirds on the ground, a beaver-felled tree looks like a broken pencil sharpened on both ends at the cleavage point.

An examination of this work shows that the powerful incisors leave impressions on the tree trunk and a pile of chips at the base. Records show that one beaver-felled cottonwood was an estimated 110-115 feet high and had a measured five-foot, seven-inch diameter just above the cut. None of the trees felled by the beavers we observed approached that size. The largest was an estimated nine and one-half inches in diameter. Many trees we saw were simply stripped of branches which were used for food and building. We noticed that the cuts of these one to two-inch limbs varied in neatness. Sometimes the severance was made smoothly and looked as if it had been sheared off and planed. Others were shredded.

When the materials are cut, the aquatic engineers drag them to the stream, scraping trails down sloping banks.

Authorities differ on just how beavers order their work of constructing dams. Several methods are recorded. The varying accounts probably are just more evidence of the beaver's adaptability to different circumstances. For example, naturalists have observed beavers begin-

BEER-R-R!

by ANN STREETMAN

ning their dams by felling a tree across a creek and letting branches and logs float down stream to be caught and held in position for construction. Other accounts explain that beavers tow large logs into the middle of the stream and pile them there. Then, they add mud and rocks, which help to hold the logs in place. More logs are placed atop and criss-crossed on the first group. When this central structure is high enough, the furry engineers build toward either shore.

Still others report that the constructors place mud and stones across the stream to make it overflow its banks. Then, bushes and limbs are put into the stream with the butt ends pointed at an angle upstream. The loosely laid woody parts are reinforced with mud and sod. Gradually, the stream widens, forming a pond.

Whatever the method, the untidy pile of logs, limbs, sticks and mud is enough to make a sophisticated civil engineer laugh, but these straggling structures last for years and



Photos by Nancy McGowan

Although it looks like flood-washed debris, this 30-foot dam creates a large pond in which the colony of aquatic mammals thrive.

are strong enough for a man to walk across. Many dams are curved to

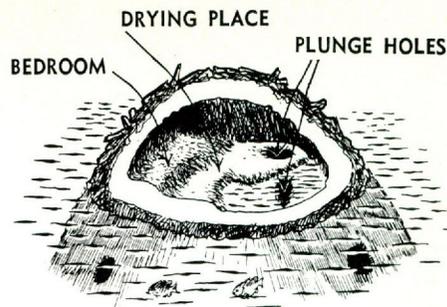
withstand the upstream pressure, as was the one we saw.

When the dam is constructed, the beavers build a sluiceway of mud and gravel, or as apparently in the colony we visited, the sluiceway is a natural occurrence and is one fruit of the original careful selection of site.

Canals are sometimes built for transportation of food and building materials, diversion of water and use as a thoroughfare. Whether canals are built seems to depend on the site and its circumstances and the individuals. The colony we visited had no canals.

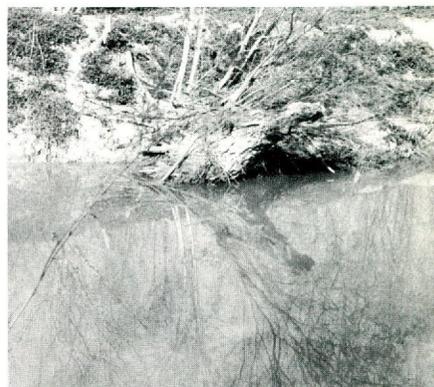
Home construction is another beaver activity. The home structure usually takes one of two forms—lodge or burrow, but there is evidence they both are sometimes present in a colony. The position of the lodge varies greatly with pond conditions and lay of land and water. Lodges are built in the middle of the pond, on a floating marsh, or near the shore. Beavers in Texas usually build burrows into cut banks—30 to 150 feet long. But the dwelling we saw seemed to be a combination of burrow and lodge. It was placed between a clump of willow saplings growing on the bank and an old stump at the water's edge. The structure was more oblong than round, and the roof was a mass of mud, leaves and sticks. Under the covering were layers of more mud and larger limbs.

In constructing a lodge, beavers usually first build a large mud and stick structure and then hollow out a chamber inside the massive mound. This chamber is located just above the water level. As the family enlarges or the animals for some other reason desire more room, they gnaw away a few inches of mud and sticks for expansion. They continually add new mud plaster to the out-



side walls and roof, which allows for the gnawing expansion and gradually makes the whole structure thicker and stronger. Walls can finally be three feet thick, making the dwelling a fortress against enemies including bobcats, coyotes and man. The lodges have ventilation holes in the roof, from which steamy breath rises in winter.

Inside this fortress the living quarters are humble but sanitary. Usually, there is one large living room which is two to three feet high and



This beaver dwelling appears to be a combination burrow-lodge at the pond's edge.

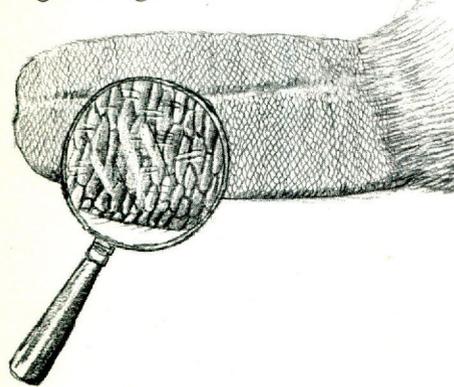


The burrow-lodge is a mound of mud and limbs placed between an old stump at the water's edge and some saplings growing on the bank.

three to four feet wide with a water door at one end of the chamber. The

floor is strewn with grass, bark and roots to make sleeping comfortable. Youngsters, however, have a special berth with softer bedding of rootlets, leaves and twigs which also double as food. In the floor of the chamber a handy food supply for adults is anchored; the main winter supply, however, is usually piled outside but nearby the lodge, under water.

Beavers are well adapted for their aquatic work. With fully webbed hind feet, they are good swimmers although not particularly graceful. The tail—a broad, flat, almost rectangular organ—is an excellent rudder



der used in swimming as well as a fine prop used in standing erect and sitting on hindquarters. Some authorities believe that the animals' slapping their tails in water (and on land) is not only a danger signal for their fellows but also a manifestation of anger and an attempt to scare an approaching adversary. With their aquatic equipment the animals swim as silently as a piece of silk slips from a lady's hand. Although we were listening intently for every beaver sound as we waited that night in intermittent darkness and flashlight beams, we heard no ripple in the water.

Other organs as well as the tail are especially adapted for water activities. The lips are constructed so the mouth closes behind the four large incisors to keep out water when the animals are towing sticks. And the nostrils close when the busy workers dive for mud to patch a lodge roof or dam walls.

On land also, the toothy mammals fare well, but their gait is slow and lumbering unless they are fleeing from danger or dragging logs to the water's edge.

Power for all these land and aquat-

ic activities is no problem. Adult beavers are husky 40 to 60-pound mammals, which measure from three to four feet in length, with a tail one-third their total length.

The beavers' stocky frames are covered by lustrous coats. Beaver pelages vary in color with species and locality as well as seasons. The Texas beaver, *Castor canadensis* (Kuhl), is a dark chestnut brown in winter. By spring the color fades to a light golden tan. One of the two beavers we observed closely was much darker than the other which appeared to be in faded spring pelage.

Although not as delightful as mink fur, the beaver pelt is pleasant to touch. It has a variety of textures, from the long, coarse guard hairs along the back and legs to the fine, dense hairs of the underparts. Over all the body regions the undercoat is darker than the upper covering. This undercoat is so dense and well oiled that water cannot seep through it to the skin.

This pelage was desirable almost to the point of the species' extermination. In 1910 trapping and other factors had reduced the beaver population drastically. Strict regulations and live-trapping and transplanting practices in the ensuing years, however, have given the species an encouraging comeback.

To help beavers keep their rich coats beautiful, they have a special tool—a split nail on one toe of either hind foot. This nail helps them to comb the coarse outer fur into beau-



tiful array and spread the oil in preening the underfur.

These beautifully-pelted animals are vocal. Through experience with captive beaver one authority, Alex-

ander H. Leighton, categorizes beaver noise into seven kinds of voices—a hiss connected with displeasure and vexation, a very thin whine, a cry usually indicating impatience but sometimes associated with pleasure, a nasal sound of pleasure or happy anticipation, a summons of a high pitch to which fellows respond, a soft churr and a guttural spluttering.

The animals are not vicious. One account describes a beaver which, when it was cornered by a man, allowed the man to stroke it; later the animal watched him at a distance and even performed water antics, seemingly for the man's benefit. But, some instances in which beavers have reacted violently to man's presence are recorded. For example, Leighton describes the following experience with a caged female beaver. "When we approached, she hissed and slapped the ground with her tail. Frequently she charged, hopping with both hind feet together. She was stiff and compact like a bullet, neck pulled in and legs drawn up close to her body."

But, the animals, regardless of their attitude toward man and other animals, bring benefits to them. Beavers are water and soil conservationists. Animals including deer take advantage of the beaver ponds, browsing along their edges. Muskrat, mink and otter often share the water with beavers, and many fish benefit from beaver water regulation. Sometimes beaver services are so badly needed in remote parts of the United States that they are parachuted to the headwaters of troubled creeks and streams to keep soil from washing and to conserve water. Their activities also benefit agriculture in a long-range view. When beavers leave their ponds, dams give way and swamps gradually drain. Rich loam is left in which vegetation thrives. Ecologists believe that this enriching process has created some of the best farmlands of New England, the northcentral states and Canada.

Beavers mate for life. In Texas the breeding season is in January and February. The litter is born in April or May. Sometimes a second litter is born in August, but this is unusual.

• Continued on Page 29

She's Made Her Mark

by HENRY STOWERS
Dallas Morning News

A MODEST, slight Dallas grandmother who is certain to get serious consideration for the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, has been picked on the women's All-American Skeet Team for the 15th straight year.

She is 55-year-old Mrs. Olita Alford.

Her husband, Fred Alford, had always been an outdoorsman, with his favorite sport being wingshooting. Quail, doves, ducks and geese got first call. He taught his son, Fred Jr. to be quite poison with a scattergun. But, Mrs. Alford never expressed any desire to go along with her menfolks until 1948.

"Get yourself a shotgun and go out to the Dallas Gun Club first," her husband advised. "They say skeet shooting is a fast way to become a fair wingshot. Try that at first."

Her first round of 25 resulted in no hit. But, she is a determined lady, and soon she began to hit a few clays. The next year she was selected on her first All-American team. Furthermore, she became so enthusiastic about skeet shooting that she persuaded her husband and son to try it.

The Alford's have made a rough man and wife team in shooting history. He also was selected on the All-American Team, and in 1953 the pair shot an amazing record of 497 x 500 during the world championships, a mark that stands firm a decade later.

In addition to other records, Mrs. Alford and her husband set a long run record of 358 targets in one event without a miss, and she posted a record straight run in an event of 228 without faltering. In 1955 they set a husband-wife record for 300 targets, shattering 299.

Together they have won well over 500 shooting trophies in the last 15

years, and although he has been sidelined by a series of illnesses, Mrs. Alford is still one of the most dangerous shots in the world.

That doesn't mean just among women. She has beaten the best male shooters in the world numerous times. For example, two years in succession she broke 100 x 100 at the Iron Man Open in Birmingham, Ala., and in 1961 and 1962 she won shoot-offs with men for the titles of that competition. Those are just isolated instances. Her official record takes 46 typewritten pages to list her tournament wins.

During one year the Alford's shot 17,500 registered tournament targets. In the last 15 years Mrs. Alford has fired a conservative 150,000 shells, roughly 6,000 boxes weighing over seven tons. During any one of those years she has fired more ammunition than the average regular hunter shoots in a lifetime.

In 1953 she won the women's world championship with the 12-gauge with 248 x 250, tying the record of Mrs. Jean Smythe of Palm

Beach, Fla., set in 1942, and Mrs. Ann Martin, Phoenix, Ariz., who tied the record in 1949 and 1950. In 1956 she won the world's title with the .410-gauge gun, hitting 96 x 100, setting a record that still stands.

The grandmother, who stoutly maintains she is not by nature competitive enough for skeet, but whose record just as stoutly argues the point, has been recommended for nomination to the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, and the committee will have a difficult time in passing her up, even though no shooter has ever been so honored.

Her selection on the 1962 Guns & Ammo All-American Team makes the Dallas sharpshooter a member of that highly select group about twice as many years in a row as any other feminine shooter in history.

She has made her name and mark with a shotgun. Some ladies have lasted four or five years among the top gunners. None, however, have matched the little lady who was in her 40's when she fired her first shot.

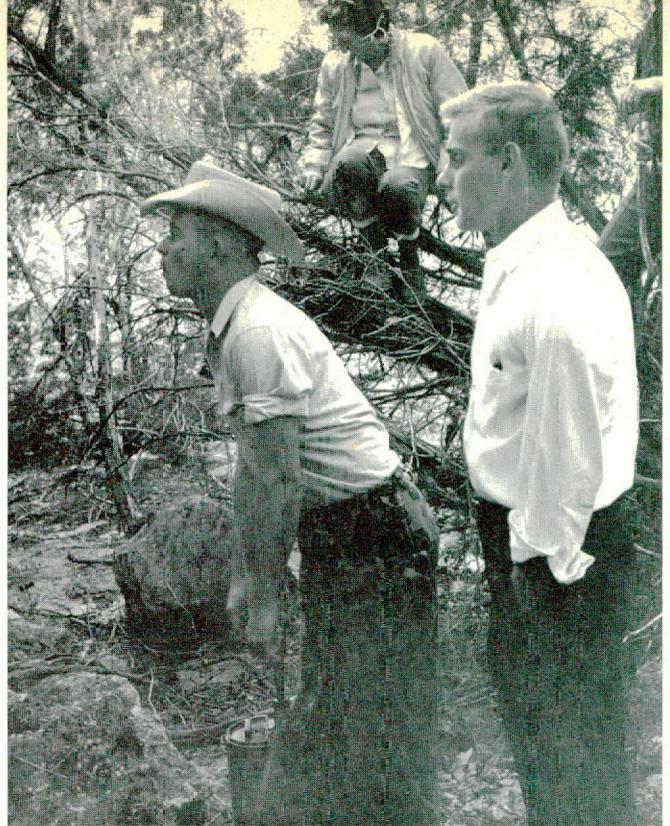
♦♦

Mrs. Alford stands with trophy, flanked by Ed Scherer (left), Pan-American champ; and Peter Candy, the world's men's champ holder.





People gather in fascination as hunters prepare to raid a snake den.



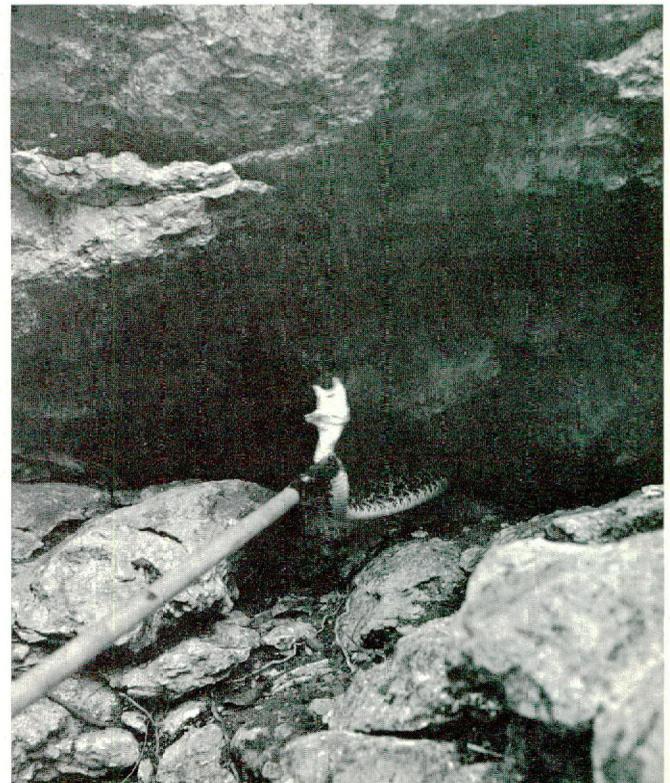
Spectator in tree watches as hunter pumps gasoline into a rocky den.

Vipers in the Rocks

by RUSSELL TINSLEY
Austin American-Statesman



Hunters stand ready as gasoline is pumped in. (Cigar is unlighted.)



An ill-tempered rattler snaps its fangs as it is nabbed with snare.

HUNTING is generally accepted as a solitary sport. Woodsmen prowl alone, reasoning that this creates less disturbance in outwitting sly creatures of the wild. But, there is one startling exception to the rule: rattlesnake hunting, one of Texas' fastest-growing winter outdoor sports. Curious people crowd gallery style in wild-eyed fascination around a known snake den, some squealing in delight, others gasping in horror as the weird drama unfolds.

Rattlesnakes, for some inexplicable reason, den together during the cold-weather months. An innocent-looking hole in a rocky cliff or along a hillside may harbor 50 or more of the deadly reptiles. And one den is productive from year to year. Dozens may be captured from a den in one season, yet twice that many might come from the same hole the following year.

February and March are traditionally the best hunting months. Occasionally, the snakes will be caught in front of dens, where they gather to sun themselves on sunny days. But usually, they must be flushed into the open.

A snake hunter's weapon is ordinary gasoline. The gas is pump sprayed into the den, and the fumes flush the snakes out. Some hunters use long sections of flexible garden hose to probe deep in a den, to reach the snakes slumbering back in the distant reaches of a crevice.

When the gassed rattlers come scurrying out, they are nabbed with specially built snares and dropped into an enclosed escape-proof box. A typical snare is fashioned from a long piece of aluminum tubing. A piece of wire is doubled through the tube, with a loop being on one end. By pulling the loose ends of the wire at the opposite end the snare can be jerked taut.

Some intrepid hunters go a step further. A snake slithering from its den, groggy from the gas fumes, is grabbed quickly by a gloved hunter, close behind the head where it can't flip about and stab its captor with venom-filled fangs.

It's as one man remarked to me: "Courage alone is not a reasonable requisite for catching rattlers alive. You've also got to be darn-fool crazy!"



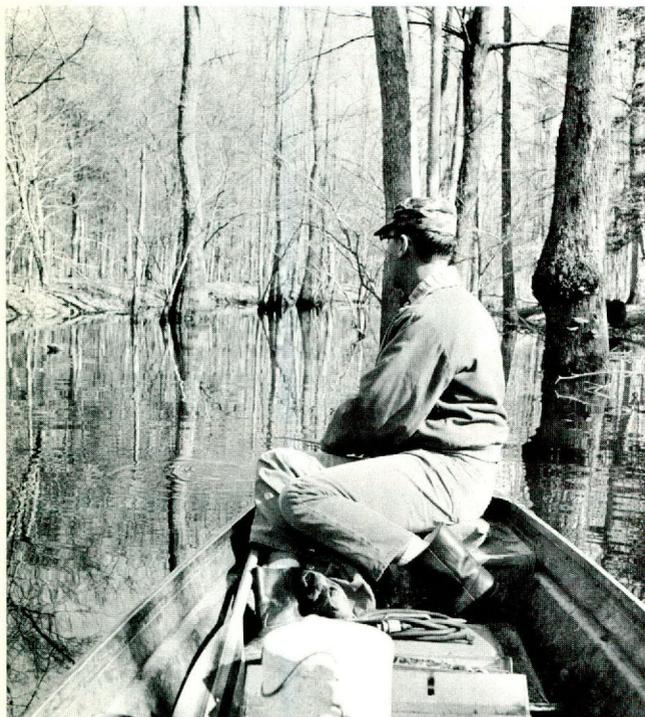
A cool-headed hunter transports the squirming, hostile snake to the wire-mesh prison.



With deftness, the hunter dumps the wriggling reptile into an enclosed, escape-proof box.

THE MOST impressive feature of the Southeast Texas Bass Tournament to a stranger is the lake on which it is held. Dam "B" Reservoir, between Jasper and Woodville on U. S. Highway 190, has a personality quite different from any other lake in the state. On many maps called Town Bluff Reservoir, the lake is very shallow compared to most lakes, and it is plagued with brush and virgin timber. Anyone fishing it for the first time and judging it by other lakes will probably say on seeing the open water, "Isn't much to this pond." What that same individual will learn on his first guided tour is that the fishing part of the lake is camouflaged by some of the wildest jungles in the south.

The advice of the local fishermen is, "Don't go back in those woods the first few times without a guide, un-



John Thompson, outdoor editor of *Beaumont Journal*, makes short casts in a typical setting. John boats, like this Buddy Boat, are popular.

less you take lots of grub, a tent to sleep in and a good signal flare." It's even worse than that. Just a few nights before the tournament, several men who are well qualified to guide on the lake went on a coon hunt and spent several hours trying to find their way back to their boats.

Fishermen have discovered numerous short cuts which interlock with the open water and the Neches and Angelina rivers winding through the timber country. Some of these short cuts are simply narrow water trails tunneling their way from hidden lake to hidden lake. It takes an experienced driver to navigate the water trails at a maximum speed.

What appear to be dead ends at times turn out to be 90-degree turns to the left or right. The channels branch out along the way. A newcomer may wish to go to the "East Log Jam" and wind up in "Clear Lake," if he takes a wrong turn. All the trails look alike at first.

One trail leads to a place called "Bee Tree Slough." When you get to the end of this moss-infested, stump-

studded bayou you will think you're back in Tarzan's country. And, there are several others which get even wilder. Some folks who venture deep in the virgin timber land can't fish for the first few hours. They cannot wrench sight and thought from the fascinating beauty of the hidden natural wonder and strange activity in straight, cloud-jabbing trees.

At the end of these ancient bayou trails, and all along the way, are some of the most bassy looking fishing spots a bass fisherman could expect to behold. Some fishermen would go bass-water blind just staring in disbelief at places such as "Squirrel Hole" just a short portage off the Trinity River.

Not only do the spots look good, but according to the success of the tournament and the reminiscing of some fishermen, it produces good catches consistently. It takes a while for a fisherman to learn how to work the lake.

Beauty and the Bass

by CURTIS CARPENTER

But, once he does, he can slip some good ones on his stringer. Black bass is just one of the popular species of fish in Dam "B" Reservoir. White perch, black crappie and catfish are other very important and highly prized challengers.

At the Southeast Texas tournament, however, old largemouth was the target. That all the picturesque trails lead to some top flight fishing was proved when 170 contestants brought in 759 bass which pushed the scales at about 716 pounds. The tournament began Thursday, March 7, the first day of qualification. Friday and Saturday were also qualifying days when some of the most beautiful weather of the year greeted the largest number of teams in the history of the tournament.

Sunday arrived with 74 finalists still in competition. Typical spring weather greeted the contestants during the morning. Shortly after lunch time, a whistler came through with rain and 30-mile-an-hour winds. Some fishermen surrendered to the elements and returned early.

Not all checked it to the wind and rain. Dam "B" Lake is noted for its wade fishing and sheltered fishing areas. Because it is shallow, about three feet in

many areas, several contestants never felt the bottom of a boat. They simply parked their cars along the highway crossing the lake or along the shore and waded out. It's not uncommon to see dozens of waders creeping along shooting their plugs into likely holes and cuts in the cypress and willows growing all along the lake edges and shallows.

Also, once back in the tall timber where the favorite



Kenneth Ballard of Port Arthur snagged this 5-lb., 1-oz. bass the second day of qualification, which won him the big bass trophy.



Ed Holder, outdoor editor of *Port Arthur News*, wins admiration and wistful comments from contestants with this good 5-pounder.

fishing lakes and holes are, a fisherman is out of the wind. While on the outside the winds can be blowing the tops off waves, back in the timber it's hard to tell that anything but a breeze is rocking the giant trees. This wind protection points to one of the great characteristics of the lake: it can be fished just about any day of the year.

A few determined fishermen kept plugging right up to the final minutes of the event. Two fishermen put their rods down at 7:30 p.m. and checked their fish in just 10 minutes before the 8 p.m. deadline.

The tournament has a reputation for close competition. Last year the race was so tight only ounces sep-

arated the top placers. This year was no different.

C. C. Taylor and Billy Haynes, both of Livingston, won the team championship with 30 bass weighing in at 26 pounds, 12 ounces. Close behind them was the team of Lynwood Short and David Holt with 15 fish each, which totaled 26 pounds. The two men's strings weighed exactly 13 pounds each, an unusual thing for tournaments, but enough for second place.



Lynwood Short (left) and David Holt of Lufkin display equal catches which were good enough to win them second place in team division. They each contributed 15 fish and 13 pounds.

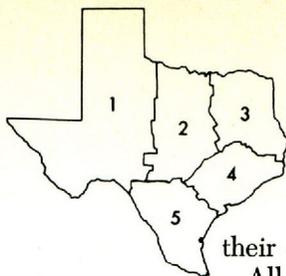
Leo Smith, fishing with Clayton Barbay, both of Groves, weighed in 14 bass that tipped the scales at 14 pounds, 14 ounces. Smith's string won him the individual champion honors. Barbay's 6 pounds, 5 ounces added to this win to get the pair third place in the team standings.

Ralph Shivers, of Vidor, plopped 13 fish on the scales which weighed 14 pounds, 8 ounces, just a shave under the top string, for second place in individual. C. C. Taylor produced 14 bass for 14 pounds and one ounce for third place in the individual string competition.

Mr. and Mrs. R. C. McCroskey of Jasper, winners of

• Continued on Page 30

Regional



Roundup

Region I—San Angelo

SYNTHETIC MATERIALS will play a big part in 1963 State Fish Hatchery operations in San Angelo. Black neoprene plastic sheets, similar to those used by farmers to cover hay stacks, will be used in experiments to determine if troublesome algae (moss) and rooted vegetation can live beneath submerged sheets of black plastic.

Another synthetic material will be used in catfish rearing ponds. Plastic foam pads will be rolled into cylinders about 18 inches in diameter for yellow catfish spawning sites. In native waters, yellow catfish spawn under cut banks or in logs in three to four feet of water. The porous plastic pads will more closely resemble natural materials than the smooth, crock jugs that have been used in the past.

Desert bighorn sheep now on the Black Gap Management Area near the Big Bend National Park are doing well within their one-section pasture—thanks to the eight-foot electrically charged fence and battery of steel traps that protect them from mountain lions, bobcats and coyotes. Since the operation started in 1954, 22 mountain lions, 44 bobcats, and 61 coyotes have been trapped in the vicinity of the sheep pasture. No sheep have been lost to predators.

Region II—Waco

REX DEAN, a Pakistani student at Southwest Texas State College, is conducting a growth rate study with channel catfish at San Marcos Fish Hatchery. Nine ponds, each $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre in size, are stocked with catfish at varying rates, from 25 to 3,000 individuals per pond. Standard hatchery fish food is fed daily and recorded. The growth rate of the fish is checked periodically. This experiment is designed to provide information which will indicate proper stocking rate for channel catfish.

In a recent net sampling of Lake Olney about 46 per cent of the fish taken were comparatively large game fish. The largest black bass weighed more than six pounds and the average bass weighed four pounds. Several large crappie were netted, with the largest weighing more than three pounds. The rough fish population is not desirable, but the large number of good-sized game fish prevented the Commission's fisheries biologists from recommending any control measures, except more good sports fishermen.

Commission biologists have found that banded turkeys returned the second year to the same roosts in Sutton County. Movement studies, which started early in 1961, indicate that turkey hens move out from winter roosts to nesting areas many miles from the winter range. There seems to be very little movement, if any, from one roost site to another. Banded and color-marked turkeys have fed and moved near existing roosts into

their own home roost, and returned each night.

All turkeys which were trapped at a roost site were marked with colored plastic bands or "leggin's." Similar color markings were used for each flock of turkeys so turkeys from each roost could be identified by using high powered field glasses.

By checking closely, turkeys were identified at the roosts and in the nesting areas. Incomplete returns show that the most ambitious turkey moved 26 miles, and one was observed one-half mile from the banding site. The average movement was 11.9 miles. Turkeys seem to know what they like for nesting and roosting and use the same areas from year to year.

Region IV—Houston

BIG HILL BAYOU Wildlife Management Area, 8,400 acres of prime marsh land about 10 miles southwest of Port Arthur, was bought in 1958 by the Game and Fish Commission for development as a duck and goose refuge. The marshes of Southeast Texas serve as vital wintering areas for a large proportion of the waterfowl of the central flyway. Increasing urban and industrial expansion threaten to impair or destroy much of the marsh for waterfowl use.

At Big Hill Bayou, the marsh is about one to two feet above sea level, subject to freshwater flooding in wet years and salt water invasion in dry years or during storms. The depth and salinity of water on the marsh during each season of the year has a strong influence on the types of vegetation that grow. In turn, the vegetation and the food and cover it produces determine the kinds and numbers of birds attracted to the refuge.

Development plans call for the construction of levees six feet above sea level to form eleven "compartments" of from 200 to 1085 acres. By the use of pumps and drain valve structures, the water levels can be varied to increase or discourage the growth of desirable or unwanted types of plants. Three of the compartments next to the Intercoastal Canal will get mixtures of fresh and salt water for brackish water plant species. Work is in progress.

Besides serving as a waterfowl refuge, the area will also be the site of intensive investigation and research. Wildlife Biologist Charles Stutzenbaker has been the project leader on the area since it began. Assistant Leader Hugh Robinette has recently been hired to help with research. Fall and winter months are largely occupied with waterfowl counts and trapping and banding. Summer brings vegetation analysis and banding of young mottled ducks.

Region V—Rockport

THE SPRING RUSH of work has begun for field personnel of Region V. Hatchery men are busy

• Continued on Page 25

Cedar Bayou is periodically checked to see if it is open.
Regional Roundup ————— *From Page 24*

with spawning bass, biologists on the coast are making spring census counts to determine what kind of spawn took place last fall, and wildlife biologists are already laying plans to band whitewings in the Valley and in Mexico, in addition to their other work.

Marvin Townsend, maintenance supervisor and Leander Sukup, engineer's aide, along with a crew are running a survey on Cedar Bayou to find out if the mouth of the bayou, which opens into the Gulf, is moving, closing or opening wider. This bayou is the connecting link between Mesquite Bay and the Gulf and is a favorite fishing spot. In the past it has closed up sealing off circulation of the waters from this bay complex to the Gulf. Several years ago the Commission re-

opened the bayou, primarily as a fish pass. Periodic checks are made to ensure that the bayou remains open.

A new type of fish tag has been put into use by coastal fisheries biologists. It is an internal anchor tag. A plastic disc about one inch long, by 1/4-inch wide and 1/32 of an inch thick with the tag number and return address written upon it, is the anchor onto which a plastic filament is attached. The fish is cut on the abdomen so the disc can be inserted, allowing the plastic filament to project outside the fish. Several fish recently have been tagged by this method. So far one tag has been recovered from a drum handled in Redfish Bay two months ago. The wound where the tag was inserted had completely healed and the fish appeared in good condition. The new tag is another step in biologists' efforts to trace the movements and growth rates of fish. **

FISHING LINES

When he struck I knew I had it,
 One to mount and show to you;
 So I set my hook and fought him
 'Cross the top and bottom too.

Up he came just like a fountain
 Leaping high and shaking too—
 Down he went across the bottom—
 How I trembled through and through!

Suddenly my memory failed me,
 What was I supposed to do?
 "DO NOT RUSH HIM," I remembered;
 "PLAY HIM DOWN AND BRING HIM
 THROUGH!"

So I played him like an expert,
 All my skill against his strength;
 Monofilament ten-pound test line
 It was going out full length.

Easier then, when he grew weaker,
 Coming closer to the bank;
 Out again he went like magic
 At that moment my hopes sank!

I'd no net! I'd never land him!
 But my fishing buddy there,
 On her knees, right by the water,
 "I'll help you now; take care."

"If you touch that line I'll kill you!"
 "You must get him in the mouth!"
 Off to Shangri-la he headed,
 Fighting hard and going south.

Up I brought him through the moss banks,
 Out he went into the reeds,
 Back he came and then I got him,
 This matched any sporting deeds!

Oh, the triumph of that moment!
 Breathing fast and heart a-pound,
 Hardly noticed my friend call me
 "Cotton-pickin' dirty hound!"

by *Dorothy Hord.*



Dorothy Hord and poem inspiring bass.

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GUNS



... and Shooting

By L. A. WILKE

This Month: **Gun Camps**

WOMEN not only have invaded the field of shooting, but many of them also are becoming experts. At a summer camp in the Hill country, west of Kerrville, several dozen young girls each year become very proficient in the use of firearms.

And, from the range where they learn to shoot they can watch deer cavort on the hillsides around them.

Frances Parker, on the staff of the University of Texas, is the summer instructor of riflery at the Waldemar range, hidden in a deep canyon back of the main buildings.

Miss Parker herself is an expert shot, having qualified for National Rifle Association instructorship. She holds medals she has won in numerous competitions.

What she has to say to women about shooting might also well fit into any program for men or boys. She stresses safety more than accuracy.

"There is no such thing as a gun 'accident,'" she says. "All accidents with guns are *caused* by someone's carelessness, ignorance or disregard for safe practices.

"Our rifles will not go off by themselves; they are not dangerous until someone mishandles them."

She points out that safety with guns depends upon habits and training of the persons who use them. For that reason gun training is the first step of her course for the girls.

Summer camps, such as Waldemar,

and comparable camps for boys are affiliated with NRA and have the benefit of all information developed through long years of experience in teaching marksmanship.

This program has been in progress since 1926; no gun accident has occurred in an NRA-supervised program for juniors.

Firing is done on the standard 50-foot range, with a high hill for a backstop. Mechanically controlled targets are used.



Miss Parker demonstrates the correct hold.

Sun shelters over the firing line add a degree of comfort from the elements. All these things are essential.

But, gun handling is drilled into each prospective shooter long before that shooter gets to sight in on the bull's-eye. In addition, good range discipline is maintained. No horse-

play is permitted on the range; the breech of each gun is kept open when it is not actually on the firing line.

All shooting is done after everything is in the clear. When a girl has finished her string of shots, the targets are brought in for scoring.

These girls use high quality, heavy competition rifles, such as the Winchester 52D or the Remington 40X. Lighter rifles include the Remington 513T and the Mossberg 144S.

For lightweight training rifles, the Winchester 69 and the Remington 521T are used.

All the rifles are chambered for the .22 long rifle and are bolt action. They all have slings.

It is not necessary for your boy or girl to go to camp to get the benefit of NRA instruction. Every city of any size in the state has one or more persons who either qualify, or can qualify as instructors. Many highway patrolmen, game wardens and even police officers have the qualification.

Mainly, the range is necessary. Some towns have municipal ranges. In others, gun clubs provide ranges. If your youngster can get this type of instruction in gun handling, it will be one of the finest things for him or her.

In fact, many states now are proposing laws which would require juveniles to pass tests in gun handling before they can get a hunting license or permit. Might not be a bad idea. **

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(One KIT....\$1.25 (One pkg. (2 lines) of extra Rubber.....75 mailed prepaid
Add 2% Sales Tax

We hooked and landed them until we both had to rest.

White Lightning

From Page 7

Before I could get my line out, Dub had tossed his plug and I saw the tip of his rod bend sharply as he got a strike. I made a hurried cast and got a jolting strike. There was no mistaking what was on the line. It was no yearling. The fish bored deep, making the drag sing, as I hung onto the rod. Then, it turned and made a wide, wild dash near the surface, sending minnows jumping to get out of the way. I put on all the pressure I thought the rod would stand and brought the bass to the boat, thrashing on the surface. I reached for the net but Dub beat me to it and, with one pass, he scooped up both fish.

They were two of a size, just like the two-pounders I had landed in the moonlight. I happily freed both our plugs and tied the stringer to a seat brace. By the time I had both bass on the stringer, Dub was fighting another fish.

"Here, get this one off the hook," he yelled, swinging the net into the boat.

I put down my rod and took off his fish, then hurried the stringing process and made another short cast. Dub was yelling that he had another one, and, turning the reel crank one round, I had a strike. Like the other one, this fish was determined and put up a hard fight before I could boat it. Dub had unhooked his fish and left it flopping at my feet. He was grinning as he cast back into the

commotion of surfacing fish.

"That's three to your two!" he said.

By the time I got both fish on the stringer, he had another one ready for me.

"Hey, what's going on here," I said. "I want to fish, too!"

It lasted like that for an hour or more. We hooked and landed them until we both had to rest. I opened the thermos bottle and passed him a cup of coffee.

"First time I ever took time to drink coffee when fish were trying to jump in the boat," Dub grinned.

I pointed to the sun that was newly up.

"My guess is that it will be over as soon as Old Sol gets his burner going good," I said.

Dub nodded. "It's about over, but this I will never forget."

Back at the dock, Dub untied the stringers while I was tying up the boat. He threw the strings of white bass across his back and started up the bank.

"Come on, boy, let's dress these fish and have a fish fry that will make folks forget all fish fries!" **



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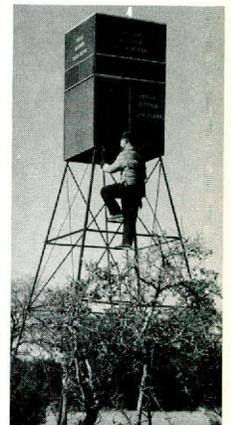
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What Others Are Doing

by JOAN PEARSALL

THE POWER AND THE HATCHERY: Oral arguments are being presented in California to the Federal Power Commission, which may set an important precedent in the area of sea-run fisheries management. The California Dept. of Fish and Game may be required by an F.P.C. decision to assume the financial burden of operating and maintaining fish hatchery facilities made necessary by the elimination of a natural fish spawning area by the construction of a power dam. The State of California contends that the power company which destroyed the fish habitat by building the dam should be required to operate as well as construct a hatchery to maintain the fishery resource at a level equal to that which existed before the construction of the dam.

BRIGHT RECORD: A law was recently passed in Massachusetts, requiring hunters to wear daylight fluorescent red or orange colors during deer season. Last fall, not one firearms accident was attributable to the victim's being mistaken for game or being in the line of fire of another hunter. This safest deer hunting season in the state in many years was credited to the new mandatory bright color law.

BETTER THAN BOUNTIES: The Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game has found that the interest in cougar, or mountain lion, hunting as a sport in that state is producing annual kills greater than those formerly attained under the bounty system. In 1961/62, 164 cougars were taken by sportsmen, exceeding any previous annual cougar harvest on record, with 80 per cent of the animals taken by persons actively hunting with hounds.

KIND CONSERVATIONIST: One man who had permission to

trap beaver in New Mexico decided to hold off when he saw what a good job the beavers were doing in creating little dams on a certain creek. "There are kids in that area who like to fish that creek," he said. Those small dams were improving the fishing potential of the little creek and he didn't have the heart to take the beavers.

BUG THUGS: The Great Insect War of 1963 is going on in Rome, Italy. Lining up in battle formation are more than 60 billion imported warrior ants, mercenaries from Sweden, whose objective is to wipe out the columns of Italian caterpillars chewing up the nation's scarce forests, at the rate of an estimated \$1 million a year. This is Italy's last desperation blitzkrieg to conquer the vandals which so far have resisted all other imported killer ants. The Swedish creatures are winter-hardened and feast primarily on caterpillars' eggs.

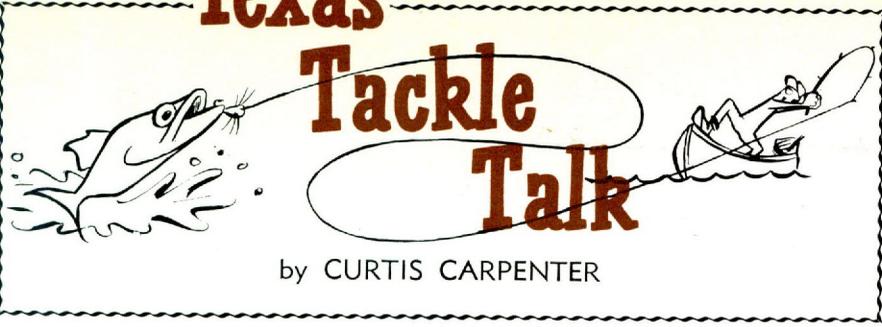
DOGGONE DAYS: From April 1 to July 15 Nebraska sportsmen cannot run or train hunting dogs in the field. This is to prevent dogs from disturbing nesting game birds and animals. Most of the early nesting there by waterfowl, pheasants and quail begins in mid-April and hits a peak during May and June.

FISHER-FUL THINKING: The Idaho Fish and Game Dept. has imported some 39 wild fishers from British Columbia, where they were live-trapped. They released them in remote areas of the state in an effort to restore a rare and interesting species of wildlife to its native range in Idaho. The fisher, which is a member of the weasel tribe and resembles a marten, may help control porcupine populations there and may be harvested as a fur-bearing animal if it can be successfully reestablished.

Texas

Tackle Talk

by CURTIS CARPENTER



PIER FISHING has something special to offer travelers who stop for a night in one of the many coastal towns. By checking into a motel or court which has the fishing pier as an extra, travelers who just happen to have some tackle along can slip on some fishing clothes and walk out beyond the shoreline and catch a few fish just for the fun and relaxation.

A lot of equipment is not necessary. A rod and reel, a few artificial lures, a net, stringer, a couple of corks, sinkers and hooks will suffice. You never know what the fish are hitting until you get to the fishing

spot. Then, no matter what you take along, you probably will need to go to the tackle store and buy the right bait. Most of the time, live shrimp will do the trick.

I always take along a box with the necessary fishing gear for a quick pier fishing jaunt. Most piers are high enough off the water so the fishermen can stay dry. I have fished in my dress clothes. At night the action under the lights can often be exciting. Even if you don't catch a thing, you'll enjoy the intriguing sounds and sights of being over the water at night. There's always someone to talk to—perhaps another

The two-year-olds leave the home pond to establish their own colony.

Timber-r-r!

From Page 18

The female prepares soft bedding in the youngsters' special bunk (if the living quarters is a lodge) before their arrival. When the youngsters—one to eight, but usually four—arrive, they are fully furred and weigh about a pound. Authorities disagree on whether the eyes are open at birth or open shortly thereafter. The professionally important incisors— $\frac{3}{8}$ inch—are visible at birth but are usually encased in a thin membrane. Nourished by their mother's milk as well as soft twigs and vegetation, kits remain in the lodge for the first two or three months.

After this time, they venture into the colony pond where, under firm but not harsh discipline from parents, they learn skills and experience the social relationships of beaver life. They enjoy loving caresses from both parents and playful scuffles with brothers and sisters.

The young usually remain under protection and close association with their mother and father through their second year and until the beaver parents have the second litter since the two-year-olds' birth. Then the young beavers, sexually mature, are

ready to travel overland or by water to establish families in a new colony. Sometimes these young adults remain in their childhood colonies and build their own lodges.

Whatever can be said about the lives and personalities of the busy engineers, the animals cannot be termed loners. Working together to control their environment is the essence of beaver existence. **

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traveler who is just passing time as you are.

Topwater Tricks

Don't always work your topwater lures fast, or slow for that matter. Vary the speeds and the jerking action until you find one which attracts the fish. Sometimes just the action caused by the rod tip when retrieving the lure will be the best action. At other times, you may need to blast a hole in the surface every so often. Just remember that the topwater lure is supposed to represent something alive and swimming. Try to make your retrieve cause the lure to look alive. Lots of fish hit a lure just as it touches the water. Other fish will crack a lure as it sits perfectly still. So, if the fish aren't hitting your topwater plugs, maybe it's because you aren't giving them the right action.

Regardless of how you work a topwater plug, always be ready for a strike. The rule of thumb is watch closely, and snap quickly. Perfect reflexes are absolutely necessary in topwater fishing. Good luck!

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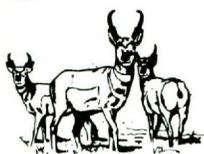
Beauty and the Bass ————— *From Page 23*
the man and woman team division for 1961 and 1962, were champions again this year with 16 bass at 11 pounds, 14 ounces.

Second place in the man and woman division went to Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Sudduth of Port Arthur, with 8 fish weighing 9 pounds, 3 ounces.

Only one ounce separated the first and second place fish in the big-bass division. During the qualifying round Thursday, March 7, Dewey Vines of Port Arthur checked one through the weighing station which sent the needle to 5 pounds even. It stood up through that day as the largest. However, Friday, Kenneth Ballard, another Port Arthur fisherman, produced a 5-pound, 1-ounce bass. It rode the competition throughout the tournament and placed first in the big-bass division when the fishing ended Sunday. Vines took second place in that division and Highie Davis of Port Neches, with a 4-pound, 12-ounce bass walked off with the third place trophy. Most fish were caught on single spinners, topwater plugs and worms. Yellow seemed to be the choice color.

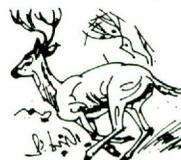
The sponsors, C. A.'s Cafe and Tackle, Lakeside Drive and the *Port Arthur News* were satisfied that it was the most successful tournament in the event's history. The 170 contestants more than doubled the 72 contestants in 1961, and nearly doubled the 96 of last year. C. A. Williams, owner of C. A.'s Cafe; Charles and Curtis Byerly, owners of Lakeside Drive; and Ed Holder, outdoor editor of the *Port Arthur News* plan an even bigger event next year. Numerous clubs will be contacted between now and next year. It is hoped that bass clubs from all over the state will enter the competition next year. "We feel we have some unusual fishing water to offer these clubs," said Holder. "I know if they try it once, they'll love what they find."

Holder and the other sponsors were too modest to admit that the citizens and business establishments along the lake go all out for the contestants. They didn't mention that the people of that Southeast Texas area love their lake and consider it a privilege to show new contestants the tricks of fishing the rich, multicolored waters. Nothing was said about the ideal camping areas or the many facilities scattered all about the lake. But, they are there—all this and the great fishing, too. **



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that there are many companies who have customers and clients who are avid hunters. South Texas Hunters, Inc. have available key personnel to work directly with company officials in planning and outfitting their hunt. We also make sure the hunt meets the needs of the individuals. It may be said that no two company hunts are alike, and that a well-planned hunt is the most rewarding hunt.

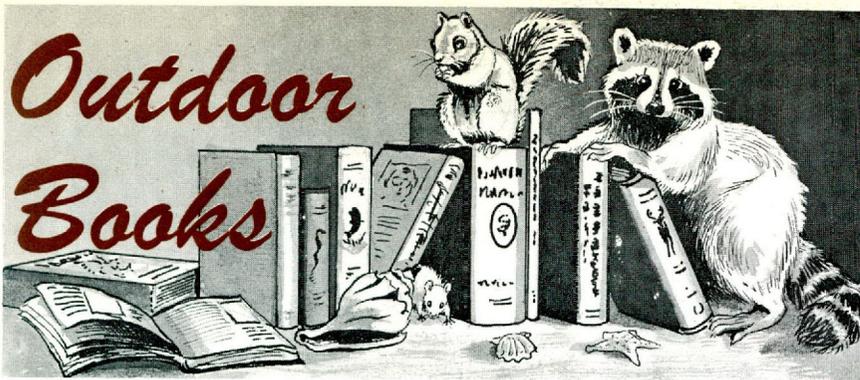
By necessity the number of hunters we may take each season must be limited, in direct proportion to the amount of prime hunting country South Texas Hunters, Inc. has under their control. We can not OVER-PRESSURE any area and destroy a good hunting area as so many have done in the past. May we suggest that you avoid disappointments by planning and booking your hunts early in the year.

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GUN DIGEST, Edited by John T. Amber, 348 pages. Published by Gun Digest Association, 4540 W. Madison, Chicago 24, Ill. Price \$3.95.

The 1963 edition of Gun Digest is one of the most outstanding of any issue during the more than score of years it has been published.

The giant pages cover facets of hunting, target shooting, firearms history and collecting not to be found elsewhere. It has an array of sparkling articles by some of the biggest-name writers in the business, with pictures of new guns and full coverage of ballistics.

There is an extra bonus with this year's Gun Digest, which is a 32-page book of exploded drawings of guns, old and new. It is available at all sporting goods and book stores and is recommended for everyone interested in shooting.—L. A. Wilke.

LIFE HISTORIES OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS OF PREY, in two parts, by Arthur Cleveland Bent. Published by Dover Publications, Inc., 180 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y., 482 and 408 pages, \$2.35 each.

Like Bent's volumes on North American wild fowl, this study is comfortably correct in detail and delightfully drawn in prose. Hawks, falcons, caracaras, owls, condors, vultures, kites and eagles are thoroughly treated by species and subspecies with information on behavior, breeding, ranges, courtship, nesting, eggs, young, plumages and food.

A barrage of colorful facts falls from the pages, and the passages are not without humor. About the Cooper's hawk Bent quotes and writes, "But the hawk is not always successful in capturing its prey; sometimes it meets more than its match; and sometimes it may attack for the mere sport of it. At least two observers have noted its fruitless attempts to capture a kingfisher in flight over water. As the hawk gained on the slower bird, the latter, at the most critical moment, suddenly dove into the water and the hawk's momentum carried it far beyond. As the kingfisher rose the hawk returned to the attack with the same result, which was repeated six or eight times. After the last fruitless attempt the hawk gave it up, the kingfisher, as Charles E. Johnson (1925) says, 'alighting on a perch at the water's edge, with

bristling crest and many a hitch and jerk, as if to reassure itself of its own personal solidarity, burst forth in a rattle, loud and ringing with triumph if not actually vibrant with inexpressible scorn."

Accounts of the nesting of birds are indicative of Bent's ability to make his readers feel personally acquainted with the avian subjects, through descriptive details and examples. The following passage is a case in point:

"Barred owls are slovenly and careless with their nests; I doubt if they ever succeed in building a satisfactory nest for themselves; if they attempt it, they generally make a poor job of it. If they cannot find a good nest to appropriate, they will take a poor one and often fail to make it secure. I have recorded in the notes six cases where the nests were so insecure that the eggs rolled out and were broken. The North Middleboro owls stuck to their old rotten tub until a hole developed in the back of it and the eggs rolled out. The Scotland pair twice attempted to nest in such flimsy old nests that the eggs fell out and were broken, once through a hole in the center and once through a broken-down side; we wondered if these were not attempts at nest building by the owls."

This unabridged paperback edition of the birds of prey work originally published for the Smithsonian Institution is an authoritative account which holds pleasure for professional as well as amateur ornithologists.

—Ann Streetman

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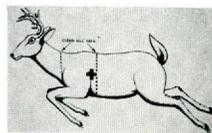
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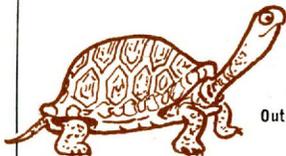
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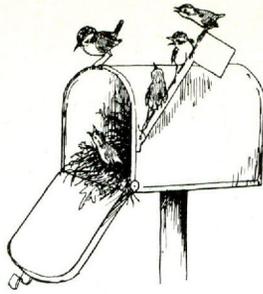
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Letters



to the Editor

Buzzard Bulletins

Editor:

I am writing in reference to Mr. J. M. Goforth's letter about an albino buzzard.

There used to be a large buzzard roost here at Eagle Lake in what was known as the Calhoun Bottom, between the lake and the river. (It has been destroyed.) One winter day in 1946 my wife and I decided to visit this roost and see how they roosted. We found them roosting in enormous live oak trees, some of which by actual measurement were 22 feet in circumference at the base. (I sure hated to see them bulldozed down.) From all indications including two-feet piles of guano, I judged that the buzzards had been using this roost for a great number of years and that there seemed to be no harm to the giant oaks. They had no fungus on them and very little moss. We estimated that there were from 400-500 buzzards roosting here. Our visit was in the winter and there was very little odor to be noticed.

We found a snow white buzzard walking around on the ground. He did not seem to be sick, but he could not fly. We caught him and took him home and put him in a pen. We fed him scraps from the butcher shop at first, but later he learned to eat bread, boiled beans, rice, hominy grits and, in fact, anything we gave him. But, he still preferred raw meat. He lost all odor and became very tame.

When the weather started to get warm, he seemed to be continually exercising his wings. He was fat and beautiful by now. We opened the pen and he came out in the day time but went back in to roost at night. He began to make short running flights which became longer and longer until finally he would soar around and around over the house. He began to disappear all day, coming back only at sundown. He ate less and less food we put out and finally started to stay away at night. Then he disappeared altogether.

He was a true albino with pink eyes, and we decided that perhaps his eyes were so weak that he was on the verge of starvation when we found him.

Bill Kramer
Eagle Lake

(Thanks for adding your experiences to those of other readers. It is possible that the buzzard was near starvation because of his eyesight.—Editor)

Editor:

Reference is made to the letter of Mr. J. Morris Goforth of Comfort which appeared in the January issue.

F. C. Albright, Star Route, Burnet, and I saw a white (or albino) buzzard on Nov. 21, 1962. We were about 15 miles northwest of Burnet. The bird was on the ground with black buzzards at a distance of 100 to 150 feet from us. There was no doubt in our case.

A. D. Casey
Temple

(Thanks for reporting.—Editor)

Editor:

I just received your magazine the other day and I read the part about the bleached buzzard (January 1963). It said that just about any kind of animal can be born albino. Anyway, I just thought you might like to know that I have been seeing a big buzzard around Live Oak County where I hunt, and it is white. A friend of mine said he shot a buzzard not too long ago with a black body, but the tail feathers were white and the head was completely white.

Mike O'Neal
Corpus Christi

(Thanks for telling us about your white buzzard experiences. It sounds as if you and your friend saw buzzards in some form of albinism. There are four classifications, or degrees, of albinism. To determine which applies, one must be able to examine the specimen's plumage, irises and skin.—Editor)

Doused 'dillo

Editor:

Regarding the experience of Mr. J. F. Clary with an armadillo published in the January issue, I have this comment.

Some five years ago I happened upon an armadillo that had fallen into a small masonry-walled reservoir. The animal was swimming along the wall trying to find a way out, and as I approached he immediately submerged and walked across on the bottom to the opposite side. The water was very clear and you could follow his every move. On reaching the opposite wall he came up and began trying to scramble out. I went around toward him and down he went for another trip across the bottom. This was repeated a total of three or four times before I finally waylaid him as he came up and lifted the beast out.

R. F. Lindsey
Tyler

(Thanks for adding your experience to our other armadillo reports.—Editor)

Skin 'm Alive

Editor:

I have read numerous articles about the bowfin, or grindle, not being good fish to eat. I do not agree. The secret is in the cleaning. If the bowfin is skinned while it is still fresh and kicking, and wiped clean with a dry cloth, using no water at all, you have some fine tasting fish.

It is better to put them in a tub of water for a few days before cleaning, keeping them alive during this time.

I have fished the good Southern streams and some in Texas, and I haven't found anything to compare with the bowfin in taste. Try it.

S. T. Sims
Freeport

(Thanks for your cleaning tip. Perhaps some of our readers will enjoy trying it.—Editor)

New Bass Lure Discovered

Editor:

The main purpose of this letter is to relate a fishing story that will tie Capt. John Bowers' episode of catching a pelican on a topwater lure (reprinted December 1962).

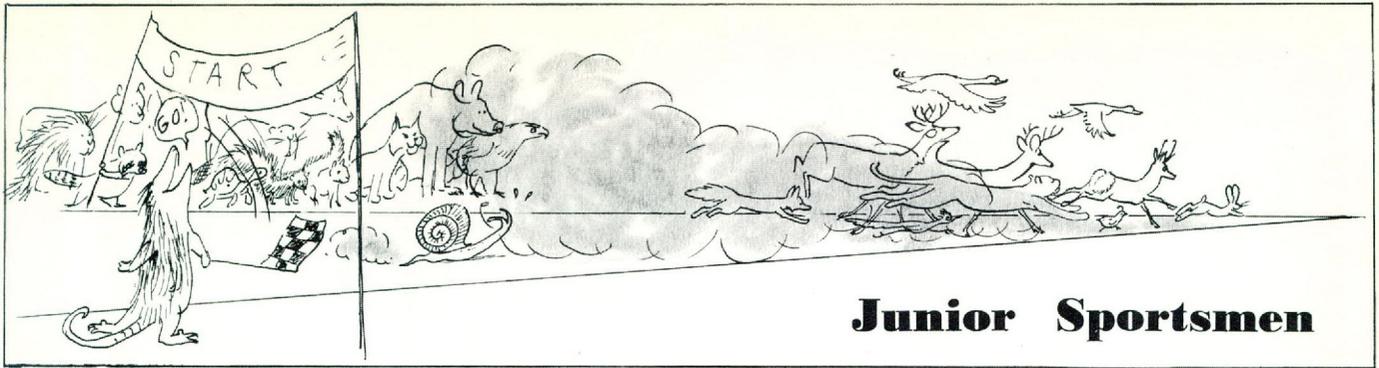
I had as my guest LeRoy Fife of Big Spring at some large stock water tanks on the Horace Garrett Ranch.

Upon arriving at one of our fishing holes, we noticed it was covered with a large flock of ducks. I scrambled out of the old ranch jeep and fired at them as they arose to fly. As luck would have it, two were killed.

We thought we'd never get the ducks until the wind rose. But, Fife went back to the jeep and rigged his rod and reel with a topwater lure. He began to cast just beyond one of the dead ducks. The lure would hang the duck and tow him nearer shore; after a number of casts, the duck was some six or eight feet from the water's edge. On the last cast Fife got a good hook on the duck. Just as he was lifting the duck out of the water, a one-and-a-half-pound bass struck the duck on the lure side; he was hooked. Fife landed both fish and duck.

Charles M. Dublin
Big Spring

(There's always someone to top the best fishing story! Thanks for telling us about your unusual but true experience.—Editor)



Junior Sportsmen

Speedy Beasts, Birds and Bugs

by ANN STREETMAN

Some wildlife species found in Texas have been timed traveling at higher speeds than an automobile—the Model T, that is. Some horseless carriage enthusiasts could push their T's to 50 miles per hour, but a canvasback duck can streak through the air at 72 miles per hour. Of course, the duck has some advantage in air currents. By sharp contrast, a common snail ekes out a .07 miles per hour.

The following is a list of other species' speeds in miles per hour which you may not know. All these creatures are found in Texas. The records were taken from *Nature Parade*, by Frank W. Lane.

Ground Travel

Gray and fox squirrels	12
Kangaroo rat	12
White-tailed deer	30
Mule deer	35
Red fox	45
Jack rabbit	45
Gambel's quail	15.5
Roadrunner	26

Air Travel

Wasp	12
Mosquito	3.1
Blue jay	20

Canada goose	60
Mallard	65
Pintail duck	65
Scissor-tailed flycatcher	10

Water Travel

Beaver	2
Green turtle	22
Otter	10

Hey, Uncle

Editor:

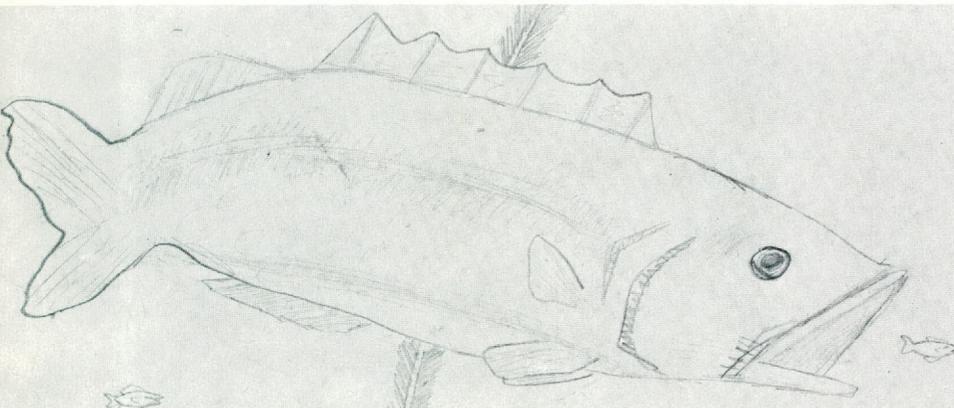
I just got my first *Texas Game and Fish* magazine. I think it is wonderful.

My uncle, Jack W. Currington of San Antonio shot the biggest buck in Kimble County this year. It weighed 190 pounds and had eight points. He shot it on my grandfather's 800-acre ranch 15 miles north of Junction. I am 11 years old and in the sixth grade. (Please print this in your magazine so I can show my uncle.)

Cliffy Herbst
San Antonio

(Thanks for writing us. You help to make the Junior Sportsmen page interesting for other Texas youngsters.—A. S.)

In-between-meal Snack for Black Bass



is Gary Kiolbassa.

Gary Kiolbassa
San Antonio

Editor:

This is a picture of a black bass that I have drawn. I am 10 years old. My name

(Thanks for sending us that fine drawing.—A. S.)

Melon Thief

Editor:

I was reading in the January 1963 *Texas Game and Fish* about the "Woodland Wizard." I have seen coons do things like in the magazine. One time we were in Colorado on a vacation. We were on a ranch where my pa hunts in winter. We ate half of a watermelon and left it on the porch so it wouldn't spoil. We got up the next morning and found watermelon seeds all over the porch. We looked at the watermelon and it had the heart of it eaten out. We didn't know what had done it. I noticed on the dirt in front of the cabin coon tracks. The tracks went to the porch and the other set went the opposite direction.

Clifton Padgett
Utopia

(Thanks for your coon story. Perhaps other Junior Sportsmen have had similar experiences.—A. S.)

Top This!



Editor:

This is a picture of my eight-year-old grandson, David Painter, at his moment of glory. He caught this seven-and-one-half pound bass in our private lake at Gilmer in Upshur County. The only help he received from grandpa was with the dip net; he did all the rest by himself.

S. G. Medley
Dallas

(Congratulations to David. That catch puts many seasoned fishermen to shame! —Editor)

Built-in Dry Cleaning

Greasy kid stuff is nothing new in the bird world. The oil gland is a small nipple-tipped structure hidden under soft feathers at the root of the tail. Under stimulation by the bill, it secretes fatty acid, fat and wax.

Shape and amount of secretion vary with the species. As many as eight openings may be in the tip, or thin feathers may be bunched around it, creating a brush for easier distribution.

The gland reaches its maximum size in aquatic birds and is reduced or non-existent in quail and hummingbirds.

A bird preens upon awakening, or after a dip in a puddle or following a refreshing dust bath. The bird's probing bill releases the oily substance and the bird liberally anoints head and beak with it. Meticulously it is spread over every feather, loose ones being pulled out and ruffled plumage smoothed.

Deprived of this structure, a bird would not survive long in the wild. The protective coating insulates and streamlines it for flight. Even the bill benefits; without secretion it would become dry and scaly.

