

Oregon State GAME COMMISSION BULLETIN

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Oregon's Fur Resources

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During the period of early settlement of the west, Oregon was very rich in its fur resources. In seeking this wealth trappers became explorers, pushing deeper into the wilderness in search of virgin territory where no white man had ever set a trap. Not only did they trap but traded various manufactured articles to the Indians for huge stacks of raw pelts. The desire to get more of these useful items which the white man possessed stimulated the Indians to become commercialized trappers. Traders and fur houses, such as the Astors and Hudson Bay Company, became wealthy in a few years. At that time people considered this resource to be inexhaustible, the same as they thought of the buffalo, forests, and the now extinct passenger pigeon. There was no thought of the future. Fortunately before any of the fur-bearing animals became extinct, the people realized what was happening and enacted laws giving protection to these animals throughout the spring and summer months when they were nesting and when their pelts were worth very little. With this small amount of protection some assurance was given that future generations would still be able to enjoy this interesting and profitable kind of work.

Our aim is to build up again these populations through sound management and to allow the greatest annual take possible without exceeding the annual increase. Any management program to be successful must have as its ultimate goal the production of as many animals for annual cropping as the habitat will support without interfering with agricultural practices and other land uses. For the lack of sound and practical management programs few states have done anything to improve the habitat or in any other way increase the production of this valuable source of income except by opening and closing seasons, allowing the animals protection when they are scarce, and providing for a harvest when they become plentiful.

Oregon's fur catch during the 1945-46 trapping season brought an income to 2,500 commercial and part time trappers of \$500,000 from seventeen species of fur-bearing animals. Unfortunately there are few records available on the amount of fur taken in the early days to be used as a basis for comparison with our present records in determining to what extent our fur resources have dwindled.

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Game and Fish Exhibit Attracts Visitors

The game and fish exhibit at the Pacific International Livestock Exposition held in October was, as in previous years, one of the feature attractions among the many displays. Always a strong drawing card, the Game Commission's exhibit drew hundreds of interested visitors, and realizing its value, Exposition officials had agreed in advance to contribute toward the expense of installation and maintenance.

Taking up a space of about 50x72 feet, the exhibit was divided into two parts. One section included an information booth and pens for 20 varieties of game and

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Six Hatcheries and Storage Plant to Be Constructed

At the regular monthly meeting of the Oregon State Game Commission held in Portland on October 12, plans were announced for the construction of six new fish hatcheries and a large refrigeration plant in Portland as soon as materials and labor are available.

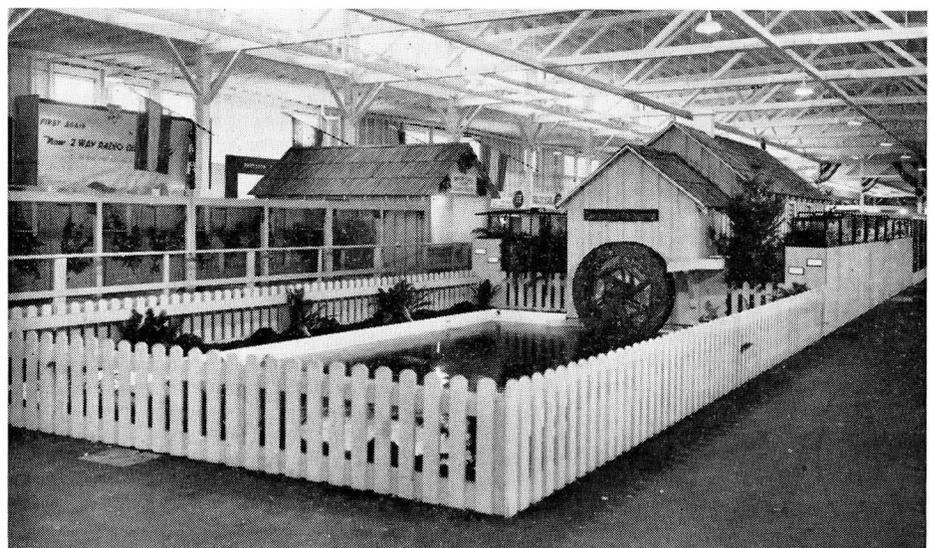
Two fish hatchery sites, which have been under investigation for sometime, were definitely named, Wizard Falls on the Metolius River in Jefferson county and Ana Springs in Lake county. Development of the Wizard Falls location will cost around \$100,000 and the one at Ana Springs about \$75,000.

Three more hatcheries along the coast also are on the Commission's program with the sites yet to be selected. These will cost approximately \$50,000 each. The sixth hatchery will be located somewhere in northeastern Oregon and cost is estimated at \$75,000.

A large refrigeration plant at an estimated expenditure of \$100,000 to \$125,000 is to be constructed in north Portland to provide facilities for storage of fish food in sufficient amount to take care of the hatchery demands.

A delegation representing the Lake o' the Woods Home Owners Association in

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Fish and game exhibit at Pacific International Exposition.

The Supervisor's Column

Another deer season has rolled around and deer hunters flocked to their favorite hunting areas in greater numbers than ever before judging from the preliminary reports on license sales from agents all over the state. And that meant a larger deer kill than we have ever had.

According to the game biologists, who are in the field the year around, we have more deer than ever before. The Fish and Wildlife Service census report has given Oregon credit for having more mule deer than any western state. The estimated kill last year was about 27,000 and we expect this figure to be higher this year.

Under the present law, the deer tag is attached to the general hunting license so that it is not possible for us to obtain a definite check as to the number of hunters who buy a license to hunt deer nor how many deer are killed. Most of the other states issue a separate deer tag and from the sales of the tags can tell exactly how many people do hunt deer. We feel that a similar system would be very advantageous, for to manage properly our big game we should know not only how many we have but should know how many animals are harvested annually. This is a matter that will bear consideration during the next few weeks for if any action is taken it will have to be done by the legislature which meets the first of the year.

We have heard lots of hunting stories this past season. Some hunters are happy because everyone in their party got a good buck. Others reported that the deer were not where they expected them to be and they saw no horns on their entire trip so they naturally came to the conclusion that the deer herds had decreased. Our experience as an old-time hunter is that the deer are not always found where they were the year before. There may be good reasons for their moving, such as an early migration to lower levels or the reverse, or sometimes the feed conditions are changed so the deer have sought greener fields.

Also after certain hunting spots become popular because everyone gets a deer, the hunting pressure increases to the extent that eventually the deer in the areas became depleted. Offhand we can think of two examples. One is the Ochoco. In years gone by this was a tiptop area and all the hunters who knew about it flocked there. They finally reduced the herds so that hunting has been only fair. Grant county had a very heavy deer population at one time but through heavy hunting the deer are not as plentiful as they used to be.

If your old hunting area has been overworked, don't come home mad. Next time ask somebody where hunting is good and change your location if necessary and let the old one rest. Also be sure you have targeted out the old Yauger so that the

big bucks you get a shot at won't get away. Many a hunter comes home empty handed because he can't hit them.

Fishway and Screen Program Shows Marked Progress

The fishway and screen crews of the Game Commission have been wasting no time in the field while weather conditions have been good, and as a result report the following projects recently completed or nearing completion:

Installation of two new fishways in the Walla Walla river near Milton-Free-water.

Completion of fishway over the city of Sutherlin dam in Calapooya river in Douglas county.

Construction started on two new fishways in the Necanicum river in Clatsop county.

A jam resulting from trees and debris in Elk river near Cannon Beach is being cleared out.

Two new fishways are being built on Elk river, tributary of the Rogue river.

The screen at Paulina Lake has been recovered with smaller mesh screen which it is expected will keep the small fish from going out the lake.

The screening program in Wallowa and Baker counties has progressed very well, and if good weather conditions continue, the number of screens installed will be considerably more than originally scheduled for this season.

Fishway over Gold Ray dam on Rogue river has been remodeled.

In cooperation with Fish Commission, fishway is being built over in Eagle Creek, tributary of Clackamas river.

Lane County Fish and Game Clinic

A three hour fish and game clinic, the first of its kind to be held in Oregon, was conducted by the fish and game committee of the Chamber of Commerce at Eugene on September 24 at the Eugene armory.

Administrative and biological personnel of several governmental agencies cooperated in a question and answer session led by Mert Folts, Chairman of the fish and game committee and also president of the Eugene Sportsmen's Club.

Topics discussed included all fish and game species, their requirements and life histories, as well as activities and policies of the various agencies.

Government agencies participating and the number of personnel from each were: Oregon State Game Commission (5). Oregon State Fish Commission (4). State Sanitary Authority (1). Fish and Wildlife Service (3). U. S. Forest Service (2). U. S. Army Engineers (2). Oregon State Police (2).

Representatives from numerous sportsmen's organizations were present and participated in the discussions. The audi-

ence submitted written questions after the discussion had been concluded.

Hatchery Improvements

Lack of both labor and materials has slowed up the expansion and improvement program considerably with respect to hatcheries, but work is going ahead as fast as can be expected under current conditions.

Concreting of the sloping sides and walkways on the rearing ponds at the Cedar Creek station has been completed. This work materially improves the efficiency of the ponds there because the circular movement of the water around the ponds eroded the banks away making constant maintenance necessary. Repairs to the fish trapping weir in Three Rivers has also been completed and it is now ready for another season's use.

Repairs to the water supply dam at the Fall River station have been completed, and it is now in first class condition. The old planking on the upstream face has been covered by a layer of 2x12 planks, and these in turn covered with gravel. It should last several years before further repairs are needed.

Repairs to the water supply dam at the Rock Creek station above Roseburg on the Umpqua River were completed in October. Many tons of rock slid off the cliff on to the south abutment of the dam last winter and it was necessary to repair and stabilize that end of the dam to prevent damage from high water in winter.

Construction of the intake headworks to a new water supply line to bring water from Clear Creek into the Wallowa station at Enterprise is now under way by the Commission's fish screen crew. Installation of the pipeline awaits delivery of the 24" pipe from the manufacturer. The outside dirt ponds at this station have been completely renovated by Ralph Kay, the foreman, who installed new flumes and screen frames in addition to cleaning up the banks, removing debris and weeds. A quite successful season was had this year in rearing fish at the Wallowa station. Out of about a million fish handled, losses were less than ten per cent.

A new spawning house is under construction at the Klamath hatchery near Klamath Agency. This will be provided with traps and holding pens for the fish as well as furnish shelter for the staff doing the spawning work. A particularly choice strain of eastern brook trout is now being reared there for future egg supplies. These were secured in the fall of 1945 from C. O. Hayford, Superintendent of Fisheries at the New Jersey State Fish Hatchery at Hacketts Town, New Jersey. Some 72,000 eyed eggs were shipped west via express, and after being nine days in transit, a loss of only some 6,000 was found upon arrival. Most of these eastern brook trout spawn at the end of their second year of age and will

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1946 Pheasant Liberations

A total of 46,802 Chinese and Mongolian pheasants have been released in the more suitable upland game coverts of the state during the spring and summer months.

The liberation seasons started in May with the release of the current year's mature breeding stock. Most of the pheasants were released in July and August at an age of 7 to 10 weeks.

Arrangements for liberation of these birds were made by resident personnel of the department within the respective game management districts as established by the Commission early in 1946. Land-owners were contacted in advance of each liberation and each liberation site carefully chosen so that a maximum survival and return to the sportsmen can be realized.

The following tabulation indicates the distribution of pheasants released this year. Allocations were made in proportion to the quantity and quality of habitat available in each county, giving due consideration to other factors such as hunting pressure and pheasant stock already present.

District and County	Pheasants Released
Willamette District:	
Benton	1,570
Clackamas	717
Columbia	591
Lane	1,811
Linn	3,408
Marion	2,908
Polk	2,313
Washington	1,433
Yamhill	2,162
Sub Total	16,913
Southwest District:	
Douglas	2,173
Josephine	758
Jackson	714
Sub Total	3,645
Lake-Klamath District:	
Lake	566
Klamath	1,796
Sub Total	2,362
Central District:	
Deschutes	359
Crook	839
Sub Total	1,198
Columbia District:	
Hood River	1,194
Wasco	2,387
Jefferson	416
Wheeler	463
Gilliam	748
Sherman	820
Sub Total	6,028
Umatilla District:	
Umatilla	2,669
Morrow	2,013
Sub Total	4,682
Northeast District:	
Wallowa	1,806
Union	3,010
Baker	2,285
Sub Total	7,101
Grant District	1,521
Harney District	1,512



Releasing pheasants in Willamette Valley.

Malheur District	1,915
Total 1946 Release	46,802
Source of Pheasants Released:	
Oregon State Penitentiary	806
Corvallis Game Farm	8,394
Eugene Game Farm	11,342
Ontario Game Farm	19,792
Pendleton Game Farm	6,655
4-H Clubs	76
Total Pheasants Produced for Release	
	47,065
Shipping Loss	188
Total Pheasants Released	46,877

Game farms were seriously handicapped this year by shortages of essential food ingredients and labor. It is anticipated that with the development of a new farm at Hermiston and correction of current shortages, it will be possible to surpass the prewar production of 80,000 pheasants per year.

Game and Fish Exhibit Attracts Visitors

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show birds, three deer and a raccoon. In the other half was a small rustic cabin located between two ponds. One pond was stocked with trout while the other had several varieties of ducks. In addition, 20 varieties of game and food fish were displayed in glass aquariums.

Hatchery Improvements

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average close to 1,000 eggs per female at their first spawning as contrasted to unselected strain will average only around 400 eggs. In addition, they are noted for their rapid growth. Once these fish come into egg production in the fall of 1947,

ample egg supplies of this species will be available for planting purposes. Other lots of these fish are also being reared at the Hood River, Fall River and Wallowa stations.

The four new rearing ponds to be constructed at the Butte Falls hatchery near Medford and for which a construction contract has been let, will increase the rearing capacity there by approximately one-third. Each pond will be 106 feet long by ten feet wide with concrete sides and bottoms. Four-inch valves and lines will supply each with water.

Construction of a two-way fish counting weir on Sand Creek near Sand Lake has about been completed. This was authorized by the Game Commission at its August meeting in the amount of \$1,600. This is to be used as a checking station or "traffic control" for study of the life history of the coastal cutthroat trout. Fish migrating upstream and downstream will be trapped there, and after all pertinent data is secured, will be released either above or below the weir in the same direction as they were moving when caught. Use of this weir should greatly increase knowledge of the habits of these fish and aid materially in the development of suitable stocking and management measures for coast cutthroat trout.

The eyes of a whale are set far back and look in opposite directions. They cannot be moved to look straight ahead or behind. If Master Whale wants to see what's on the horizon, he must stand up in the water and slowly turn around.

Very young mussels, called glochidia, attach themselves to birds' feet and feathers and thus get a free ride to other waters.

This and That

At least one deer hunter made his hunting trip pay the first week end of the season when he bagged a medium-sized cougar and a black bear in the mountains east of Valsetz. He did not get his buck but at least he is able to enjoy bear steak or stew and collect a \$50 bounty on the cougar.

Two young deer hunters showed a commendable desire to obey the spirit and intent of the law even though it lost them a bear by a hair's breadth. Having killed their deer, they suddenly noticed a large bear charging down the hill in their direction. One boy grabbed his gun and held it aimed at the bear while the other frantically leafed through his hunting synopsis to see whether or not the season was open. By the time he discovered bear were not protected by law, this particular one was out of sight.

A new way to catch the predatory coyote was demonstrated by Pop Leyva, superintendent of the Summer Lake Management Area, when he walked out with his rope and proceeded to lasso one. Saves ammunition, too.

Early reports from the Summer Lake area indicated that speckle-breasted geese and spoonbill ducks were coming in to the area in larger numbers than usual.

Requests to keep coyotes as pets are received by the Game Commission office every once in a while. Such permits are not issued, however, as a law passed by the legislature some years ago specifically prohibits the keeping of coyotes in captivity except in public parks or zoos.

Huns

Of interest to upland game hunters of the Willamette Valley is the fact that this spring several broods of Hungarian partridge have been seen in Linn county. The presence of small scattered bands of Huns has been known to Commission field men and farmers of this area for several years, but this is the first spring that any broods have been seen by game men.

It is believed that these birds are remnants of plants made around 1935 or perhaps earlier around 1919. Several pairs have been sighted north and west of Salem in Marion county, near Broadmeade in southern Yamhill county, and a few have been reported along Gales creek west of Forest Grove.

Probably these birds are present in such small numbers that the uphill fight against their natural enemies makes it impossible for them to establish themselves in larger numbers without aid from additional plantings, which the Game Commission has in mind as soon as proper stock can be obtained.

Archers Hunt Deer In Deschutes Refuge

A total of 140 archers participated in the short archery season for deer on the Deschutes refuge. The area open included only 15 sections, and the season extended from September 28 through October 6.

The 140 archers bagged only 8 deer, which is low compared with the success of rifle hunters, but this ratio was considered a very satisfactory one by the archers, who recognize the limitations of their weapons.

All archers were required to check in and out of the hunting area, so that accurate information on the hunt could be obtained. Of the total archers participating, 44 were from Portland and 65 from other western Oregon communities; 18 were from eastern Oregon; 8 from Washington, 3 from California, and 2 from Iowa.

The largest deer, a 4 point buck weighing 200 lbs. dressed, was bagged by Mrs. V. Lawson of Seattle, Washington. Other successful archers were C. Stevenson, Eugene; D. L. Stevenson, Bend; C. Eatinger, Portland; B. Thompson, Corvallis; E. Dachtler, Portland; W. Blackmore, Marysville, Wash.; and J. McCully, Willamette. Of the 8 deer taken, 3 were bucks and 5 were does.

The philosophy of archers was found to be much different from that of the average rifle hunter in that they were hunting purely for the wholesome recreation and thrill of stalking their prey in the great outdoors. Even those who hunted the full length of the season without success had no regrets, for they had enjoyed every minute of it, in spite of cold rain and snow.

The possibility that the barbless broad head arrows might not always be lethal, with a heavy loss sustained by crippling, was given careful study. All hunters were requested to volunteer their observations. Eight of the 140 hunters reported hitting deer that did not go down. Five of these had flesh wounds on the hip or shoulder, which should not be lethal, and the other three were hard hit but escaped and probably did not survive. At the close of the season strip counts were systematically made by Game Commission personnel through the most heavily hunted portion of the area. Approximately one fifteenth of the total area was thoroughly searched, and no dead or crippled animals were found. Similar counts on areas hunted with rifles will frequently yield 2 or 3 animals. Barbless broad head arrows were used so that arrows buried in the flesh would work out with a minimum of damage to the animal.

With the rapidly increasing demand for more hunting and fishing, it is possible that hunting with such weapons as the bow and arrow may be a very practical means of providing true recreation for many sportsmen with a minimum of cost in game.

Albino Elk

Three albino elk have been found in Clatsop county in the vast logged-off area north of the Lewis and Clark river by the Game Commission's district game biologist, Wesley Batterson.

On April 20 of this year, the first albino cow was seen in a herd of 23 elk, and it was thought to be a yearling. On July 10, an albino calf was seen in the company of five other natural-colored calves among a herd of 26 elk.

Then on September 18, three albinos were seen in separate herds which range not more than one-half mile apart, and which were within one-fourth mile of the spot where the albinos were noted earlier in the year. The three albinos included one albino cow elk in the company of 8 natural colored elk at the edge of a conifer thicket; one albino spike bull elk with antlers 18" in height with 3 natural colored spike bulls on an open ridge; and one albino calf with several other cows and calves scattered in a thicket.

The albino elk are not white in color but of a light tan from nose to tip of tail. The cow elk is slightly darker than the spike bull or calf. Whereas the natural colored elk have dark brown mane and legs, these albinos have no break in the light tan color with the exception of the spike bull which has a very slightly darker tan mane than the rest of his body. As yet the albino elk have not been observed at close enough range to distinguish the color of their eyes.

The range of these elk is considered one of the best in Clatsop county as browse plants, water and cover conditions and the open range are ideal. It is hoped that the albinos will be spared by hunters during the current elk season so that observations can be continued from time to time as the years go by.

November Hunting and Fishing Calendar

Species.	Season.
Elk—Western Oregon	Closes Nov. 14
Elk—Eastern Oregon (except Baker area)	Closes Nov. 20
Elk—Baker area	Closes Dec. 22
Crooked Creek deer hunt	Nov. 4-10
Cove deer hunt	Nov. 16-20
Devils Garden deer hunt	Nov. 30-Dec. 4
Waterfowl	Open until Dec. 9
Pheasants—Malheur county	Closes Nov. 3
Pheasants—Summer Lake Basin	Open until Dec. 31
Cottontail and Brush Rabbits	Opens Nov. 15
Mink, Muskrat, Otter, Marten and Raccoon	Opens Nov. 15
Salmon and Steelhead over 20"	Open entire year
Jack salmon under 20"	Open entire year
Spiny-rayed Fish	Open entire year
Rogue River—Trout over 15"	Nov. 1-Jan. 15

American Fisheries Society Holds Annual Conference

The American Fisheries Society meeting held in St. Paul, Minnesota, September 11 to 13, was attended by Dr. P. R. Needham, Director of Fisheries under the Oregon State Game Commission. This meeting overlapped by one day with the annual meeting of the International Association of Fish and Game Commissioners. Over 600 delegates attended both meetings. Wednesday, September 11, was devoted to a joint session of both organizations on the Missouri Valley water development program in its relation to wildlife. Representatives of the Army Engineer Corps and the Bureau of Reclamation presented arguments for power, irrigation, navigation and flood control benefits. Dr. Clarence Cottam, Assistant Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, presented the wildlife problems concerned and said that for the land game habitat flooded out, the Fish and Wildlife Service was going to request replacement in kind. Other speakers and remarks from the floor indicated the complexity of coordinating all land and water uses into a unified, comprehensive program.

September 12 and 13 the American Fisheries Society meeting alone, heard some forty papers, many of them technical in nature, dealing with fish population studies, use of DDT and its effect on fish life, standardization of fishery techniques, etc. It was particularly significant to learn that the bulk of the state conservation departments are limiting their stream and lake survey work to a rapid inventory of state waters and to doing things that are of immediate practical benefit. The emphasis now, in fisheries work, is on experimental projects which are paying better dividends in terms of stocking and management, than the old line, straight stream and lake survey work. Oregon has ten strictly experimental fisheries projects under way, and is in the forefront of this work among the western states.

Among the resolutions passed was a strong one against dam construction in west coast rivers having runs of steelhead and salmon directed to federal construction agencies.

The general attitude expressed at the meeting was one of optimism for the future of conservation work and, with the war won, the idea implied was, let's get to work and do the job as it should be done.

Burnt River Special Deer Season

Hunters bagged 26 deer, 16 does and 10 bucks during the special Burnt River deer season ordered by the Game Commission for the purpose of preventing game damage by reducing a resident deer population which had been increasing

Six Hatcheries and Storage Plant to Be Constructed

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Klamath county appeared before the Commission to request that some action be taken to poison the trash fish in the lake and restock it with trout. The matter was taken under advisement until the next meeting and the fisheries department was instructed to obtain in the meantime additional information as to the past history of the lake as well as current conditions.

Application for renewal of game reserve contract in vicinity of Timberline Lodge was approved.

The fisheries department was authorized to hold in Portland this winter a staff conference of the hatchery men and fisheries biologists.

Fall seeding of grain on 40 acres at Summer Lake management area was authorized as well as the purchase of 160 acres of land from Tim Guinee.

Additional land for the Camas Swale project will be acquired with the authorization granted for the purchase of 85 acres of land from W. Francis.

Bernard West, Silverton, was added to the list of recommended applicants for membership in the game division of the State Police.

H. M. Fowler, Tahkenitch Lake resort owner, appeared before the Commission to discuss the weed situation in Tahkenitch and Siltcoos lakes.

Construction of bachelor living quarters in an existing building at the Rock Creek hatchery was authorized at an estimated cost of \$1,500.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held in Portland on November 9.

during the past few years along Burnt River. The season was held from September 22 to 27, and 76 hunters checked into the area, 89 per cent of whom came from western Oregon and 11 per cent from nearby areas.

While there were some complaints by hunters that hunting was poor, the success ratio approached 35 per cent, which is approximately the average for hunters' success in the general deer season. The take would have been larger had other ranchers allowed hunting on their river bottom lands. However, Mr. Ed Sullivan, rancher with the largest holdings in the area, opened his fields to the hunters and gave excellent cooperation.

No hunters' accidents occurred and no livestock was shot. Likewise, violations were held to a minimum, two arrests being made, one for shooting deer from the highway and another for hunting without a license.

Deer, elk and moose have no gall bladders.

Trapping Regulations For Furbearers

The open season for the trapping or taking of marten, mink, muskrat, otter and raccoon is the same as in previous years, November 15 to February 15. A trapping license, which costs \$3 for residents and \$25 for non-residents, is required to take these species. There is no open season on fisher, beaver and ring-tail cat.

The eight animals just mentioned are the only ones legally classified as furbearers by Oregon statute. All other fur animals are unprotected and may be taken at any time of the year under a general hunting license. These include coyotes, bears, skunk, weasels, badger, foxes, wildcats, cougar and wolves.

Other regulations affecting the trapping or taking of furbearers follow.

No person is required to purchase a trapper's license to hunt or trap furbearing animals during the open season upon land of which he is the lawful owner or lessee, but he is required to register the location of such land with the Oregon State Game Commission and have in his possession a receipt of such registration before hunting or trapping furbearing animals.

Any person trapping furbearing animals, whether on his own or other lands, is required to file with the Oregon State Game Commission within 30 days after the close of the season a report of the number and species of furbearing animals taken and the amount received from their sale.

All traps, whether set for furbearing or other wild animals that may be trapped lawfully, must be marked with a brand approved by and registered with the Oregon State Game Commission and no such branded trap may be sold unless accompanied by a uniform bill of sale; provided, however, that unbranded traps may be set for unprotected nongame animals by any person upon land of which he is the lawful owner or lessee.

Warning signs must be posted in conspicuous places within 50 feet of all traps larger than No. 5 or with a jaw spread of more than 10 inches.

The above regulations do not apply to the trapping of gophers, moles, ground squirrels and weasels.

No flesh of any salmon or steelhead may be used for trap bait.

No flesh of any game bird, game fish or game animals may be used for trap bait.

It is unlawful to disturb or remove the traps of any licensed trapper while he is trapping on public domain or on land where he has permission to trap.

It is unlawful for any person to destroy or injure any muskrat house at any time except where such muskrat house is an obstruction to a private or public ditch or watercourse.

Oregon's Fur Resources

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Catch records compiled from trappers reports have been kept since 1924, however, and they show little variation in the annual take for most animals during these last 22 years.

At one time the business of trapping was undertaken by only the hardiest individuals who could brave the wilds and live through extreme hardships in uncivilized areas. Now most of the trapping is done by part-time trappers who find this a pleasant and profitable means of earning a few extra dollars during the winter months when their regular line of work is slack. Farm boys, too, trap a number of animals during their spare time when they are not attending school and after their farm chores are finished. A number of commercial trappers still find running a trapline during the winter months very profitable, but most of these men must also depend on other types of work to make a living the balance of the year.

FURBEARERS CLASSIFIED

For discussion in this article furbearing animals are divided into four theoretical groups:

- (1) Those that cannot adjust themselves to civilization and a changed habitat;
- (2) Animals that can adapt themselves readily to agricultural practices;
- (3) Predators, and
- (4) Exotics or introduced species.

In the first classification fall the beaver, fisher, marten and otter. Their pelts are quite valuable, and during open seasons are eagerly sought by most trappers. Too often these men take every one they can get with little thought of leaving breeding stock from which to harvest future annual crops. Where men are interested in trapping on a sustained yield basis and taking only the annual increase their traplines have been very profitable each winter.

The principal animal sought by the early trapper was the beaver, and streams were practically stripped of this valuable resource in a very few years. At one time nearly every stream in the state supported a large number of these animals, but through constant uncontrolled trapping they were practically exterminated.

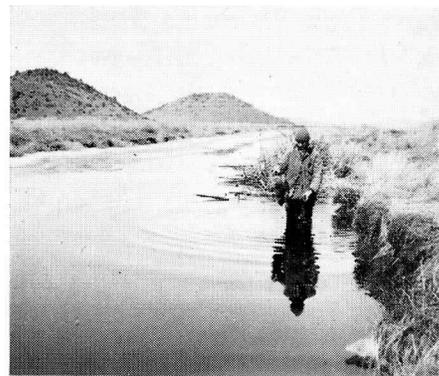
The last open trapping season on beaver occurred in 1932 in specified parts of the state. Since that time they have increased very satisfactorily in most of their present range, but a great many streams still remain to be restocked through natural reproduction or transplanting. When it was found that beaver could be successfully live-trapped and transplanted the Game Commission, in 1939, started relocating a large number of these animals, taking them from areas where they were causing damage and moving them to streams where their dams would be beneficial in water and soil conservation. This program is being continued on a large scale again after being curtailed during the war because of scarcity of gas,

automotive equipment and personnel. Throughout the winter months it is impractical to transplant beaver because of the heavy casualties they suffer from cold and exposure while they are in the livetraps and before they have a chance to establish themselves in new homes. For this reason they are dead-trapped and pelted by state trappers as the quickest and most practical means of controlling damage.

Perhaps the most valuable pelt Oregon's forest produce is that of the fisher, which formerly sold for as much as \$75 per skin. This animal was never very plentiful, and the greatest annual take for the state was 13 reported in 1924. Scattered remnants still remain of this valuable furbearer but they have not been increasing very rapidly since 1937 when they were last legally trapped. Very few have been seen and little sign of their activities have been noted in the last few years.

Although otter have always been fair game during trapping seasons their numbers have not diminished greatly in the last 20 years. About 200 are taken annually, mostly from western Oregon, with a few being reported trapped along the Deschutes and Snake Rivers in the eastern part of the state.

The Game Commission realized that the marten population had increased and declared an open season in 1945 for the first time since 1937. It was gratifying to receive reports of 906 being taken, as our records show that the highest previous total was 496 in 1928, which gradually dwindled to 273 in 1937. Indications

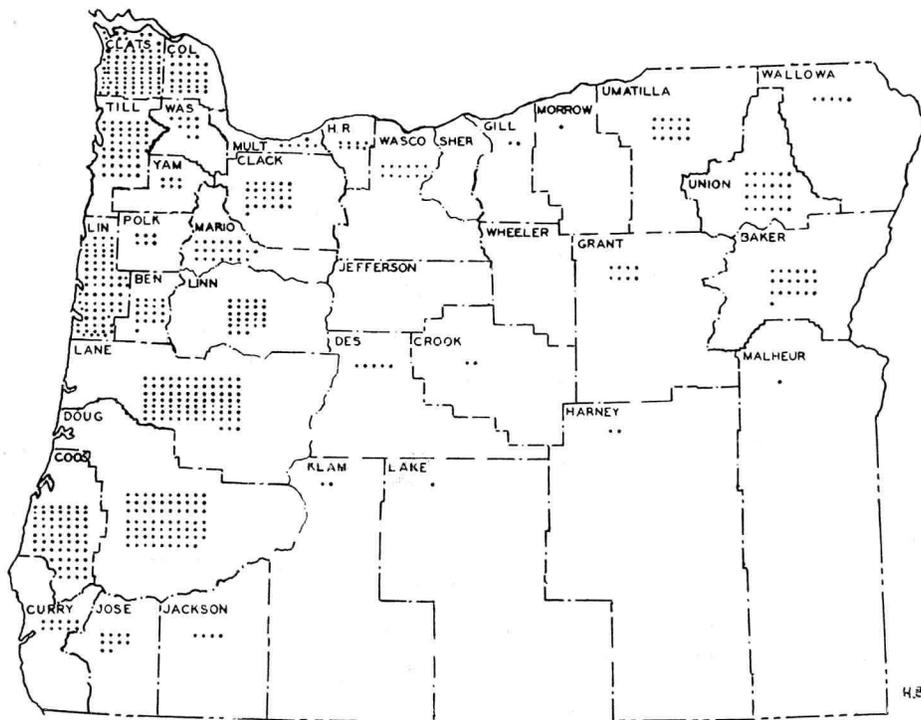


Muskrat trapping in Klamath county.

are that this last open season did not deplete the population greatly, and it is hoped they will continue to increase despite trapping pressure so that an open season can be allowed each year.

Mink, muskrat, raccoon, skunk, civet cat and weasel have been classified in a second group — animals that have been able to adapt themselves to a changed habitat and with a little protection been able to maintain their numbers and produce an annual fur crop.

As an area is settled and more land is opened up for agricultural purposes through clearing of brush, construction of dams and water holes, and digging irrigation and drainage ditches, more habitat is made available to muskrats. In the East and Midwest where a large amount of the land is farmed a huge revenue is reaped annually through increased production of this furbearer. Here in Ore-



Distribution of mink taken during 1945-46 season. 1 dot equals 10 mink.

H.B

gon a total of 10,500 pelts were taken in 1925 and 65,000 during the 1945-46 season showing the same trend is taking place as more land is being farmed.

The opposite trend is noted for the civet cat which in 1929 produced 5,600 pelts in comparison to 756 last season. Here the price paid for this pelt determines whether many of these odorous animals will be trapped and skinned. Between 1937 and 1941 the season was closed entirely because of their decreased numbers and recognized benefit in the control of certain injurious forest insects.

Little variation in the total annual catch of mink, weasel, skunk and raccoon is apparent since 1924. Very few trappers depend on trapping weasel, skunk and raccoon for a living as their fur value is quite low. Mink, however, averaged \$21.24 per pelt last season which stimulated trappers to concentrate on catching this furbearer. Over 6,700 were taken. Trappers received a larger return from trapping mink than from any other fur animal. This is the first time known that mink have brought in more revenue than muskrats.

PREDATORS

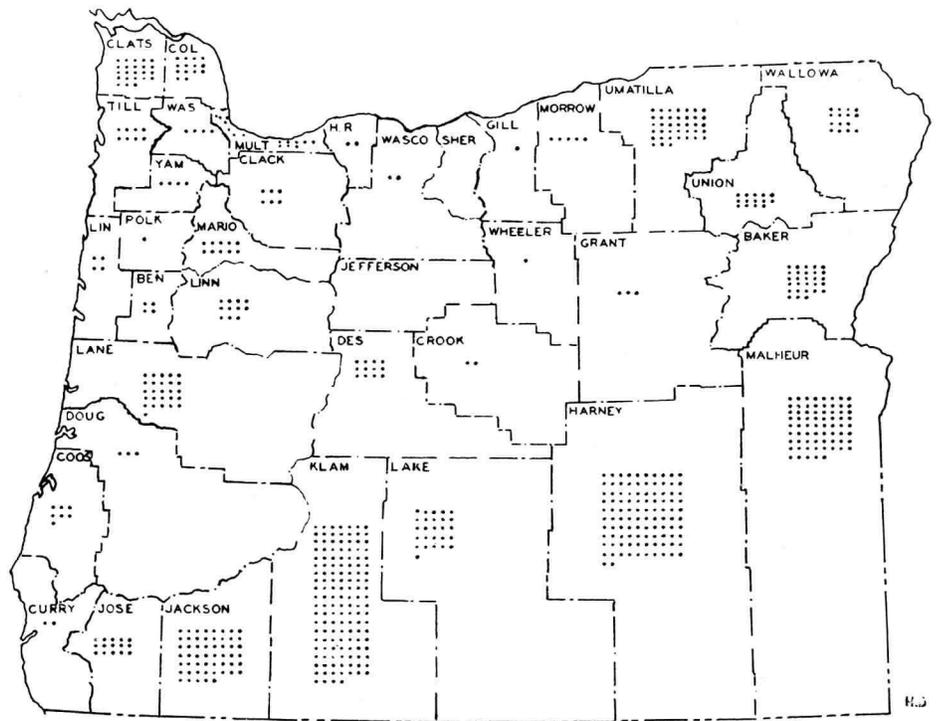
Even though the pelts of predatory animals do not have a high market value the addition of state, county and private bounties often makes hunting and trapping coyotes, wildcats, wolves and cougar profitable. Foxes and bear are other important predators included in this third class but no bounty is paid on them.

The timber wolf has been practically exterminated, but the coyote or prairie wolf has changed its habits to conform with the inroads of civilization and actually increased as its habitat changed. Few people pass up the chance to kill coyotes, and despite the concentrated effort by federal and private trappers to reduce their population they still appear to be on the increase. Even in the coastal mountains they are now becoming quite numerous since fire and logging operations have opened up most of this territory to alter the habitat to their liking.

Even though a little sign will bring hunters and trappers a great distance to bag a cougar or bear they are still quite plentiful in most of the wooded mountain areas. A \$50 bounty is paid by the Game Commission on cougar which makes hunting it a profitable business to a few experienced hunters.

Foxes and wildcats are taken mostly during the winter months for their fur value but a constant control must be kept on them the year around to keep down their depredations on domestic and game animals and birds. The greatest concentration of foxes, both red and gray, is found in the Willamette Valley and their numbers are steadily increasing. Wildcats are common in all of the counties in the state and show little variation in population trends.

The fourth and final classification of



Distribution of muskrats taken during 1945-46 season. 1 dot equals 100 muskrats.

furbearers are the exotics or introduced species which through accidental introduction have become established in certain parts of the state. These are the nutria and opossum.

Fur farmers imported the nutria, South American beaver or water rat to be raised in captivity for their pelts. Through escapement they have established themselves in the Portland area and between Toledo and Elk City in Lincoln county. These rodents cause damage to crops and dikes which is often blamed on beaver or muskrats. It is questionable whether the returns to be realized from their pelts will be enough to justify the damage they cause.

Through perhaps an unfortunate introduction the opossum has extended its range from the southern and midwestern states to Oregon. Animals were brought into the Warrenton C C C Camp by southern boys for pets when they manned that camp prior to the war, and when this camp was disbanded these animals were liberated. They are increasing in numbers and extending their original range in Clatsop county. Again it is doubtful whether the low value of their pelts, approximately thirty cents, is enough to offset the damage they cause to crops and wildlife.

MANAGEMENT NECESSARY

Fashions play the main role in determining prices that trappers will receive from the sale of raw furs. The more in demand a particular fur is the higher will be its sale price. Naturally the trapper is going to devote most of his time

to trapping the particular kind of animal which will bring him the largest profit. This direct influence causes serious inroads into the breeding stock that otherwise would remain. When competition becomes keen people will try to take the available fur before someone else does and may even trap before the pelts become prime. Through taking of unprime pelts and improper handling of even good skins most of the sale value is lost.

Our fur resources will naturally decrease with unrestricted competition for all furbearers, without some thought of the future by every trapper to maintain breeding stock in his particular trapping area. The present policy of many unthinking trappers in taking everything available will prove disastrous to our future fur crop. Continual research is necessary to learn all there is to know about each animal and through applying this knowledge in working out better methods of increasing the present seed stock, improving habitat, restocking depleted areas and giving complete protection to over-trapped species, we again hope to build Oregon back to one of the major fur producing areas in the United States.

"Precocial" birds are those which are able to run about shortly after being hatched from the shell and are not cared for in the nest by their parents. Examples are the bobwhite, quail, ring-necked pheasant, Hungarian partridge, ruffed grouse, prairie chicken, woodcock, jack-snipe and killdeer.

Oregon State Game Commission Bulletin

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Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration

An amendment to the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act was passed by the U. S. Congress and approved on July 24, 1946 (Public Law 533-79th Congress) which changed the method of apportioning appropriated funds among the states and permits the expenditure of a portion of these funds for maintenance of completed projects.

The Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act was originally known as the Pittman-Robertson Act and was passed on September 2, 1937. The original Act was very specific and limiting in scope, designating that these funds could only be used for research, habitat improvement and management area acquisition and development. The Act also assigned the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to inspect and approve all projects submitted by the various states. The states are required to match each \$3.00 of federal funds with \$1.00 from their game funds setting up the commonly known federal aid operating fund and in addition the states were expected to carry all secretarial, administrative, accounting, preliminary investigation and maintenance expenses without the use of Federal Aid funds.

In the early days of the Federal Aid work the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service was very strict in their interpretation of the specifications of the Act but at least as far as Oregon is concerned, there has been a tendency to be more lenient as the years passed. After a few years of operation the States were permitted to charge in a share of the administrative and secretarial costs.

This program still offered a threat to our game funds. Any habitat improvement or management area acquisition and development projects must be maintained to be of value. Since the States were expected to maintain these with game funds every completed project became an additional burden. Consequently the passage of this amendment permitting the use of a portion of the Federal Aid funds for maintenance is looked upon with favor and is expected to put the Federal Aid program on a self-sustaining, stable and secure basis.

The part of this amendment changing the method of apportioning funds affects Oregon very little but makes a more equitable distribution of funds to small states like Rhode Island and some of the Possessions, particularly Puerto Rico and Hawaii.

Black Brant

The black brant is a small seacoast inhabiting goose which winters extensively on the Oregon coast. It usually frequents bays containing an abundance of eelgrass which makes up a large percentage of its diet.

Brant do not often appear in numbers until December or January. From then until they leave in April the population constantly increases as late migrants arrive. Great rafts of the birds may be seen in such bays as Tillamook or Netarts during this period.

Breeding range of this species is the Arctic coastal region of northern Alaska and Canada. From 4 to 8, but generally 5, eggs are laid in a well-constructed nest, located in moss or grass.

The flight of black brant is very distinctive. Usually the birds form a long line at right angles to the direction of flight. The flights are low, usually between 10 and 30 yards above the surface. Long detours are often made to avoid passing over even a low hill.

Common identification features are: black head; broad white collar, incomplete behind; black breast; upper parts dark, sooty brown; and belly and rump regions white.

The size is slightly larger than a mallard.

Scientific name: *Branta nigricans*.

Angling Regulations to Be Considered at Jan. Hearing

With the hunting seasons almost over, attention of the Game Commission soon will be turned toward formulation of the angling regulations for the 1947 season.

As provided by statute, the Commission will hold a hearing on the second Saturday in January, which will be the eleventh, to determine seasons, bag limits and other regulations affecting the taking of game fish.

Whatever regulations are adopted by the Commission when the hearing is finally adjourned, and this must be before the last day of the month, then become effective as law and may not be changed until January of the following year.

The hearing is open to the public and will be held in the Portland offices of the Game Commission.

Duck Hunters Urged To Limit Kill

Duck hunters are urged by Albert M. Day, Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to stay well below their legal bag limits this season to prevent necessity for further hunting restrictions next year. Mr. Day predicted that probably more than 2,000,000 "duck stamps" will be sold to potential hunters this year as compared to 783,000 in 1938, and that unless moderation is practiced, the total kill may reach staggering figures. Records of the duck kill show that it has risen from 16,000,000 in 1943 to 23,000,000 in 1945, while the duck population has dropped from the 125,350,000 estimate of January, 1944, to only 80,000,000 in January, 1946.

Lesser Snow Goose

The Lesser Snow Goose is one of the most abundant species of waterfowl to be found in Oregon. Unlike many waterfowl it is primarily a tourist in this state. It nests in the arctic and winters in California. Only rarely are snow geese seen west of the Cascade mountains.

This species is not easily confused with others. The entire body is white with the exception of black wing tips. Snow Geese usually fly high in long diagonal lines or V-shaped flocks, generally uttering a chorus of shrill falsetto cries. The birds probably mate for life. Six eggs are the usual number and a period of 22 days are required for incubation.

Oregon sportsmen can shoot 4 geese this year, providing that at least two of them are Snow Geese.

Scientific names of the Lesser Snow Goose is *Chen hyperborea hyperborea*.

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