

OREGON STATE
GAME COMMISSION
BULLETIN
NOVEMBER, 1954





A SUCCESSFUL HUNT

Anglers will have improved access to the lower Clackamas river and the Willamette as a result of a cooperative agreement between Oregon City and the Game Commission. On a city-owned area located on the south bank of the Clackamas river by Highway 99E, the Game Commission has constructed a 100-car parking area and a boat launching facility with funds made available under the Dingell-Johnson program. The area is open to the public without charge. The local highway maintenance crew also cooperated with improvement work on two access roads on state highway right of way.

* * *

During the five month period from April through August, 56,167 persons made recreational use of the Sauvie Island management area facilities. Over 80 per cent of the use was by anglers. Other recreational use included boating, picnicking and dog trials.

* * *

This season's study of the use of the 350 wood duck nest boxes installed on Sauvie and Government Islands shows that 261 boxes were used by wood ducks and 81 by other species. Altogether 4,043 wood duck eggs were laid in the boxes used, of which 2,178 or 53.5 per cent hatched successfully. Hens abandoned 1,390 eggs. The largest successful hatch was 30 young in a nest which held 37 eggs, and the largest complete hatch (100%) was 22 young.

* * *

The mud flats of Fern Ridge Reservoir and Dorena Reservoir were aerial-seeded with rye and oats in September to provide green food for waterfowl. Approximately 90 acres were seeded.

* * *

Trumpeter swans, nearly extinct 50 years ago, now show a population of 642 birds, an increase of 65 over the 1953 count, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Last summer 452 of the birds nested in Montana and 130 in Wyoming. Idaho accounted for 45, Oregon 8 and Nevada 7. Oregon's small population is located at the Malheur migratory bird refuge and hunters are asked to be on the look-out for them.

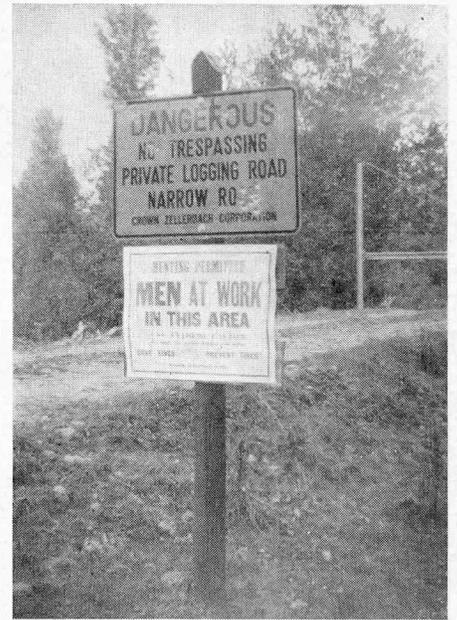
"Things had been rather slow as far as hunting was concerned during the first few hours of opening day. I had hunted along the road quite thoroughly and hadn't seen a thing to shoot—not even a rabbit. Naturally, I didn't want to get off the road and into the brush, because I might get wet or lost.

"Finally, my heart jumped with excitement! Down the road a short distance, say thirty feet, I managed to spot a worthwhile target. It didn't quite have the rack I was looking for, but its peculiar markings intrigued me.

"I steadied the gun across a limb and sighted right between its O's—carefully squeezed the trigger and WHAMMO! You should have seen the paint and splinters fly. Just like a shell ripping into an old tin can.

"Just to be sure that I could really shoot, I emptied all of the shells from my rifle into this tricky target, and sure enough, I hit it every time. From thirty feet too.

"Then I eagerly ran up to examine what I had done. Those soft-point bullets really do a good job on signs. So the company has to put up a few more



Shot-up signs like the upper one do not promote better landowner-sportsmen relations.

signs, what the dickens, they're loaded anyway."

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At the present time the Bulletin is circulated free of charge to anyone forwarding a written request.

NEXT MONTH . . .

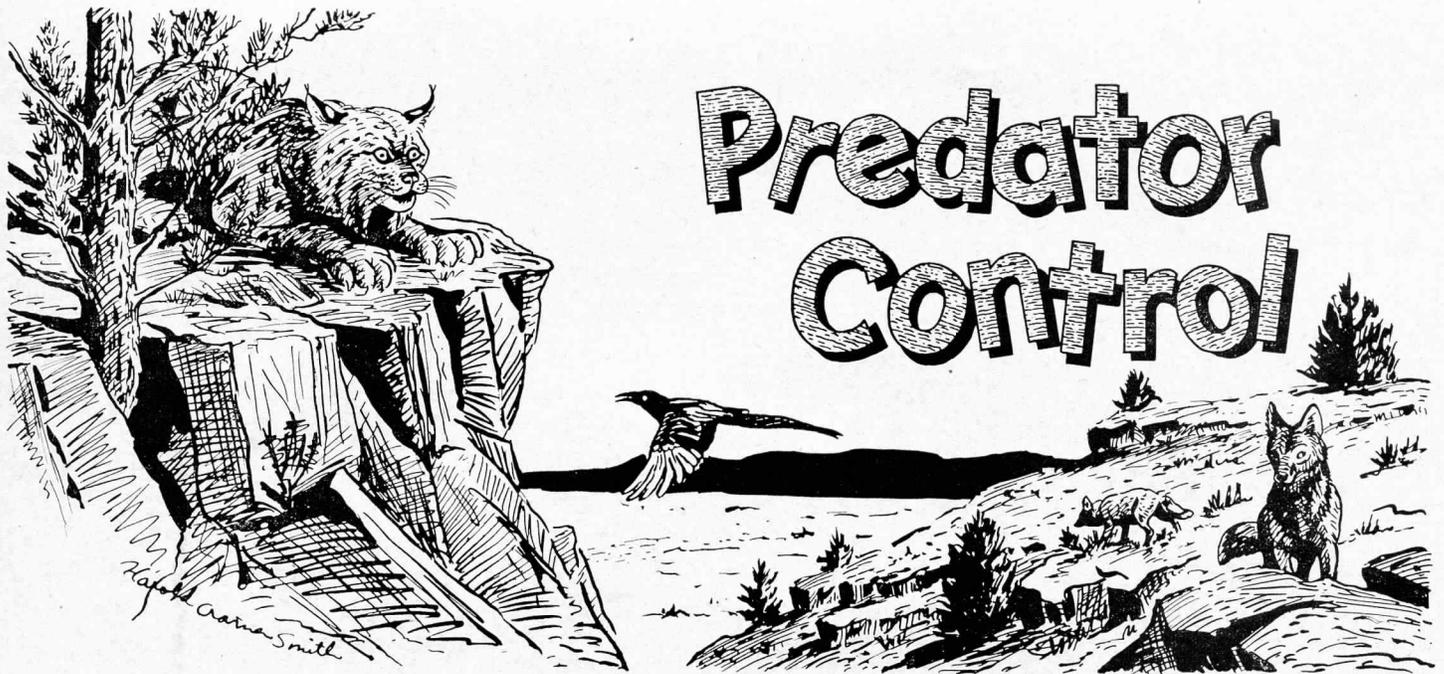
We will have the whole story up to date on the Diamond Lake restoration.

Diamond Lake became nationally famous, fisherywise, when on September 21 it was chemically treated to destroy the trash fish population in its waters. While this was not a new procedure, the scale on which it was conducted was extraordinary. The operation involved 100 tons of rotenone, 100 Game Commission personnel, 150 volunteer helpers from sportsmen's groups, and a large amount of varied equipment—plus innumerable side line spectators. Among interested observers from out of state were Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, president of the Wildlife Management Institute, Dr. R. W. Eschmeyer, executive vice-president of the Sport Fishing Institute, and Lloyd Swift, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service's wildlife management division.

Since September 21, the fishery staff has been conducting further tests and studies, the results of which will be included in the story to appear in the December issue of the Bulletin.

COVER

Canadian honkers at rest on an eastern Oregon pond. (William L. Finley photo)



A Part of Game Management

By G. H. HANSEN, *District Agent*
United States Fish and Wildlife Service

THE wise management of our wildlife resources in the state of Oregon is, in our opinion, one of the most important responsibilities existing today, since it affects the lives of practically all of us now, and will no doubt affect the lives of all future Oregonians either directly or indirectly. Since predatory animals are considered one of the decimating factors in game management, those of us in the Branch of Predator and Rodent Control of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service are very proud to be considered a part of the group particularly interested in conservation.

Predatory animal control is not new in Oregon. An effort to get relief from such predators as the wolf, the coyote, bobcat and mountain lion was first inaugurated by the early settlers who suffered livestock and poultry losses to these predators. And as early as 1843 control measures were inaugurated in the form of bounties in an effort to obtain relief. It was in 1915 that the federal government was asked to appropriate funds and assist in the predator control program in this state. This was brought about because of an outbreak of rabies in coyotes in southeastern Oregon. These rabid coyotes had caused the loss of a considerable number of cattle and horses. Also they were a very serious hazard to persons living in that locality. Federal funds were provided and thirteen men were put to work under the supervision of the U. S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, and by 1916, sixty-four full time hunters were employed from federal funds to control predatory animals in the rabies area of Oregon.

In 1919 the State Legislature appropriated the first state funds to be used in cooperation with county livestock and sportsmen's associations, and with the federal government in an organized predator control program, state funds have been available continuously for this work since that time. Today the state funds available come from two sources: \$30,000.00 per year from the State Department of Agriculture, and \$30,000.00 per year from the State Game Commission. In addition to this the State Game Commission provides funds for predator bird control and bounties on bobcats and mountain lions.

In Oregon the cooperating counties, livestock associations and sportsmen's groups provide approximately three-fifths of the total amount spent per year, with the federal government and state providing the remaining two-fifths. During this past year 40 full-time trappers have been employed, working under the supervision of the District Agent and four assistants. One assistant is headquartered at Baker; one at Bend; one at Medford; and one at Portland. All of these men are trained and experienced in the control of predatory animals, and all are extremely interested in conservation.

One of the important requirements of a trapper is to have a knowledge of wildlife, particularly a knowledge of the life histories and food habits of the animals on the predator list. In our experience we find that this knowledge of wildlife comes mainly from first-hand experience. A highly proficient hunter or trapper must have developed a keen sense of observation. This comes quickly to some individuals, while others can wander through the woods or fields time after time and still miss the many little tell-tale things or signs that are essential in carrying out predatory animal control work.

Generally speaking we have an excellent group of men working in Oregon, and we are very proud of their accomplishments.

Many of us can remember when all trapping of any kind was done either on foot or horseback. In about 1926 or 1927 a few of the trappers started to operate their lines with Model T Fords, and today nearly all trap lines are run with cars, with a few side trips on foot. With few exceptions the saddle and pack horses have passed out of the picture as far as the present day trapper is concerned, and have been replaced by pickups and jeeps.

Methods of predator control have continually advanced, with the major improvements occurring in the last twelve years. For example, back in the

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Pelts of coyotes and bobcats taken during the winter months when furs are prime. Formerly these pelts were of high market value. Now because the demand for them is so low, only the choicest pelts are saved. (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo)

PREDATOR CONTROL

(Continued from page 3)

late 1930's and the early 1940's we employed from 80 to 90 men in Oregon, while at the present time we are doing a better job with from 40 to 50 men. This has been brought about largely through improved methods, techniques, and equipment, such as traps, lures, more efficient and selective lethal agents, the invention of the coyote getter, and the use of the airplane in localities where it can be used economically.

In eastern Oregon all of these improved methods have been put to use, and as a result coyote numbers have been reduced by 70 to 80 per cent. This reduction occurred mainly from 1948 through 1950, and with few exceptions coyotes have been kept to about this same level during the last four years.

This reduction in predators is not true of bobcats. During this same period they have increased in eastern Oregon by about 50 per cent. We are spending considerably more time on bobcat trapping now than we have in the past, in an effort to cope with their increase.

Although we have no way of measuring the benefits accruing to game birds and game animals as a result of reduced coyote populations in eastern Oregon, we do feel that a great deal has been accomplished in providing

more hunting for the sportsmen. In the case of livestock such as calves and sheep, we have fairly accurate information as to what has been accomplished in reduced predation. For example, sheep losses due to predation in the early 1940's averaged about 15 per cent annually, and during the past four years sheep losses have been around 2 per cent annually.

This predator picture, which is greatly improved in eastern Oregon, is not true in all areas in western Oregon, since we are handicapped in the use of new lethal agents and new devices due to precautionary measures that must be taken in using these new devices and lethal agents in populated areas.

We feel that the red fox population in the Willamette Valley has been reduced materially through the use of traps, coyote getters, and dogs, but in some areas in western Oregon the coyotes are still too numerous and are doing considerable damage to both livestock and game.

We sincerely believe that this is partly due to our not being able to use all of the new methods and devices as much as is possible in eastern Oregon, and another reason is that all counties in western Oregon are not cooperating and choose to operate their predatory control programs solely on a bounty basis.

While a bounty on predatory animals does remove some of the predators, we have never found that it would reduce them to the point desired by both livestock people and sportsmen, simply because the bounty trapper cannot afford to operate after the predatory animals have been reduced to a certain level. Then, too, we have never been able to accomplish the desired control of coyotes with just traps, and a bounty hunter cannot afford to use anything but traps. In order to reduce coyotes as low as desirable, we have had to use everything available to cope with this cunning animal.

Our success in eastern Oregon has been largely due to the whole-hearted cooperation of sportsmen and livestock organizations, as well as county courts, and, as a result, without exception every county in eastern Oregon is participating in the control program. We hope that in the very near future this same condition will exist in western Oregon, so that we will be working the entire area and not leaving some localities blank due to no cooperation on the part of a few counties.

We are very fortunate in Oregon in having individuals at the heads of state, county, and government land management agencies who are familiar with the need for the control of predatory animals, and who are doing all they possibly can to assist us in our endeavors, providing we exercise good judgment in conducting our program. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly express our appreciation to these people for their confidence and for their support, particularly the officials of the State Game Commission, the State Department of Agriculture, and the State Extension Service.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



G. Hammand "Ham" Hansen has been in predator and rodent control work with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 1931, having started his career as a trapper and district supervisor in Idaho.

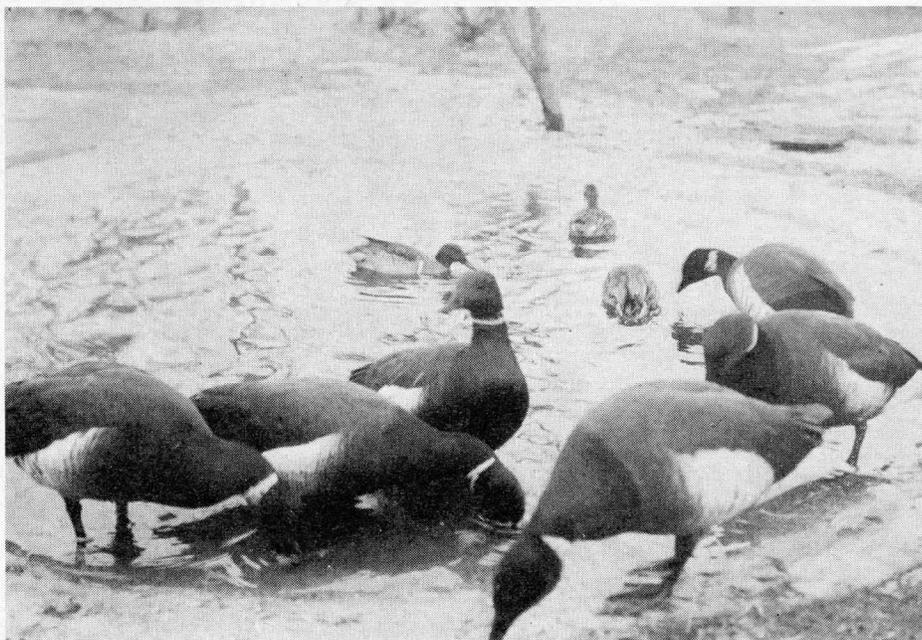
He was transferred to Nevada as a district agent in 1939, where he remained until promoted to his present job in Oregon in 1945.

Mr. Hansen is a native of Idaho and attended Utah State Agricultural College. He has always been interested in conservation work, having assisted Idaho with its beaver management

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ALL ABOUT BRANT

By WES BATTERSON, *Field Agent*



Black brant that have been raised in captivity.

THERE is a time by the sea when all manner of Nature's elements are in joyous play. The green sea is churned to white beauty and the tide casts great drifts of debris upon the vacant beaches. The drifting sand and scudding clouds, the waving beach grass and unfiltered wind, the sight and sound and feel of the winter storm become a symphony of happiness and loneliness, of sorrow and joy and perception of life's meaning. The sounds that mingle in confused array occasionally separate and out of the song of the wind and roar of the sea emerges the calls as well as the songs of the birds of the sea. Among these calls in early winter on the Oregon coast one may be fortunate to recognize that belonging to a unique and beautiful species—the Pacific brant. He brings with him from the vast areas of the Bering Sea something of this wildness and the beauty of the Arctic summer which he has only recently left. He is a bird apart among our important migratory waterfowl and a species rarely seen far from the restless sea, marine estuaries or coastal meadows.

The black brant (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) is the smallest and the darkest colored of our geese, and one that is probably the least known and hunted by the sportsmen of our state. Its coloration, as the name implies, is mostly black. The head, neck and breast are black with a narrow striped ring of white running around the neck. The body is a dark grayish-black and the sides are streaked with white. The

flanks and upper tail coverts are white. Juvenile brant have whitish stripes across their backs and wings and are browner in color than the adults.

Black brant will weigh about 3 pounds, males averaging 3 pounds and females 2½ pounds. In size they are smaller than the Ross's geese or cackling geese, but usually are found in good flesh therefore weighing at times more than some individuals of these two species.

The name "brant" is erroneously applied to the small cackling goose which is a miniature of the Canada goose and has a white cheek patch instead of the white streaks around the neck as does the brant. At times even other species of geese are called "brant" by sportsmen.

Although black brant usually stay in the bay waters, feeding on eel grass and seeds that float with the tide, during the spring months when the eel grass gets scarce they will leave the bay waters several times a day for the adjoining meadow lands to feed on the growing green grass. Flocks of thousands gather on the grass lands and graze across the meadows like a herd of sheep.

Black brant come to our bays from the north around the middle of November. The largest populations are found on our bays during December, January and February. Flocks of mated adults begin leaving in March on their northward flight to their nesting areas, but flocks of juvenile brant are found inhabiting our bays as late as May and

some have even been observed around the middle of June straggling northward. On August 14, 1954 a flock of five black brant were seen on the ocean beach near Arch Cape in Clatsop County. Whether these five brant were migrating north, south, or just summering along the ocean is a question, but it is the first instance of these geese being seen on the Oregon coast in summer.

Black brant have never been known to nest in captivity although they live well in confinement for many years feeding on grasses, green food and grain. They become very tame and will eat from one's hand but having that instinct to go north to nest they refuse to lay eggs regardless of the conditions under which they are kept.

Occasionally a few of the American brant, inhabitants of the Atlantic Coast, drift across in the far north and come down to our coast to winter. About five years ago two of these American brant were obtained on Tillamook Bay. This species of brant differs from the black brant by having much whiter bellies and backs, also there is no neck ring but only a small patch of white stripes on each side of the neck.

Contrary to what you might expect of a bird that feeds almost entirely upon eel grass, you will find that brant rate very highly as a table bird. The eel grass imparts a fine flavor and keeps the brant in excellent condition. Eat one and you will find that it excels all other bay waterfowl as a hunter's repast.

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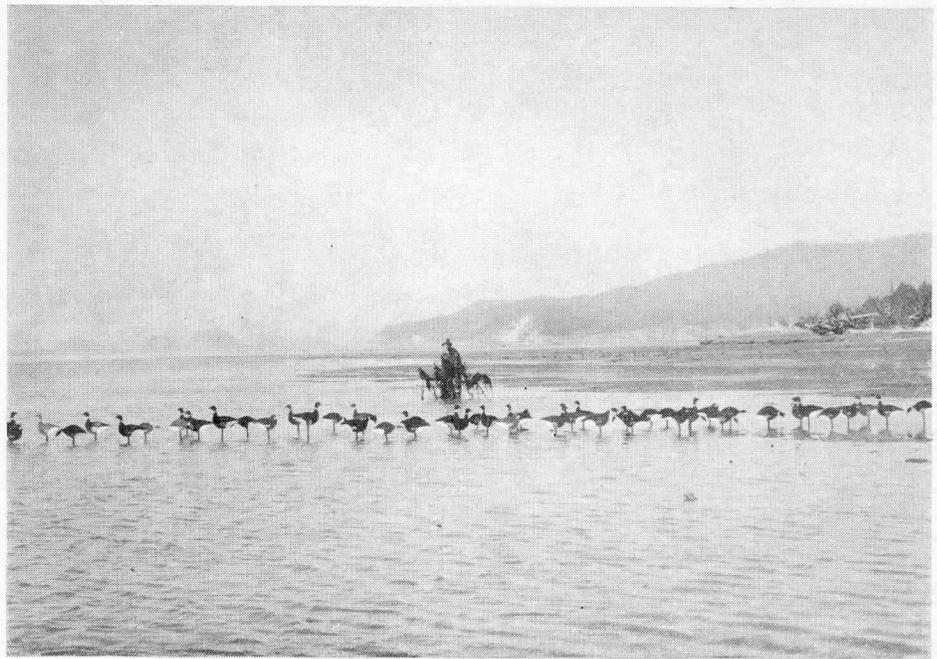
ALL ABOUT BRANT

(Continued from page 5)

Brant hunting is great sport indeed, but very few hunters are successful unless they know how to hunt them or have the proper decoy setup.

The most successful way to hunt brant is through the use of decoys on their favorite resting areas. Remember to put out your decoys on an outgoing tide when the sandbars become exposed. Brant will come to these sandbars to get out of the water to oil and preen their feathers. They have to oil their feathers at least once a day and do this while they are out of the water so as to get the oil on the undersides of their bodies. During high-tide periods in stormy weather, the brant must battle out the rough water and they are anxious to get on the first appearing sandbar when the tide starts out. Flocks of brant roll into these bars following a storm and success is yours if you have a good setup of decoys. The more decoys the better, 50 or more are best. Put your decoys on the outer edge of the sandbar and move out with the outgoing tide. Keep your decoys at the edge of the water; don't let them get back too far on dry land. Brant seldom light on an exposed sandbar but their habit is to settle down in the shoals and then walk up to the bar. Regardless of wind or weather conditions, brant usually fly low over the water. They will come dive-bombing into your decoys from in front, or circle out from them as the case may be. Rarely will brant circle inland of the decoys or over the hunter's blind. Bear this in mind and be sure to have your blind in range of your decoys.

Probably the best brant decoys to use are full bodied, floating blocks but these are difficult to make and expensive. If floating decoys are used, anchor them just off the sandbar. Next best decoys are profiles which are quite easy to make from masonite or water-proofed veneer. Masonite is light and durable and really preferable, also it is least expensive to buy. Draw a profile of a brant on your material, preferably in several different poses such as standing, feeding, and preening, and then cut out with a jigsaw or key hole saw. It pays off to have your decoys in several positions as they make a more natural looking setup. It is not necessary to make your decoys any larger than a live brant would be and keeping them small will cut down on space and weight and allow you to have more decoys since it is numbers that count in brant hunting. Paint your decoys as natural looking as possible, using a



Brant decoy set up on Netarts Bay (Photo by Alex Walker)

picture of a brant or a dead bird to get your color pattern. Black and white are the only paint colors needed. Best results will be had by using a flat black so as to keep down the shine if the sun comes out. Any outside white paint will be satisfactory. Paint both sides of the profile. Be sure to have the leg, or stake, on your decoy extend 18 inches from the bottom of the body as the bay sand is loose and requires a long stake. Also, the stake should be of hardwood to stand the gaff. A fair size for your decoy body, from top of head to underside, is 12 inches, and about 14 inches in length from tip of tail to end of bill for standing position.

In staking out your decoys, put them out in the water as far as possible as the tide will soon recede and leave them on dry ground. Set them out in a fairly long string, flat sides toward the way the brant are likely to come in. Off-set them, and mix standing decoys, feeders, and preeners; in other words, make them look as much like a natural flock of brant as possible. Build your blind back toward the shore within shooting range of your decoys. A blind is best built of the material at hand such as chunks of brush scattered over with eel grass. Next best are dead or even green boughs stuck in the sand. Keep your blind as small as possible, and yet have it large enough to break the man look. Often when the weather is stormy, flocks of brant will come to a good decoy setup with practically no blind at all, but it is best to be on the safe side by having some kind of a

blind. If you can call brant, all the better for your chances of success, but do not use a goose call or a duck call. Brant make a rolling *errrunk*, *errrunk* sound and it's better to stick to this. You won't be in the hunting area long until you will be hearing brant calling in the distance and you can try imitating their call. It is advisable never to use large goose decoys for brant hunting as the brant will usually stay clear of them, but a few duck decoys seem to help out.

Do not think that you can have someone drive the brant toward your decoys with any kind of a boat, especially a motor boat. Brant become easily alarmed and any chasing with a boat will make them stay clear of the area. Too much hunting pressure, especially with hunters traveling back and forth along the bay shores and shooting, also will cause the brant to flock up and fly oceanward where they will stay until the tide starts in again.

When the weather is calm, it is best to take every precaution in keeping behind the blind. Brant have good eyesight and are more wary when the weather is calm as then they can wait out the low tide to preen and oil their feathers. When the tide get low, sandbars are out all over the bay and they need not come to the one you have chosen. The morning outgoing tide is best to pick for your brant hunt. There are only a few hours of the day that will be good hunting time so make the best of it, and good luck.

Resolutions Adopted by the International Association

Conservation problems of national and local interest were covered in resolutions adopted by the International Association of Game, Fish, and Conservation Commissioners held at its 1954 conference in Seattle last September. A summary of some of the more important resolutions follows.

Water Supply Study Program: Petitioned Congress to appropriate additional funds to enlarge present programs for water supply studies to include not only studies of existing underground water conditions but also provide for experimental studies to discover ways and means of replenishment and conservation of the supply. In much of the country an emergency exists because the demand and annual requirements for underground water supplies far exceeds the annual replenishment.

Waterfowl Refuge Program: Committee is to be appointed by president of International Association to study waterfowl refuge program and make recommendations for action to Congress and Fish and Wildlife Service. The waterfowl refuge program outlined in 1934 by President's Committee is less than half completed and more funds are needed than are available from duck stamp revenues and other sources.

Mining Laws: Endorsed principles of Regan Bill which would make mining on national forest lands of sand, stone, gravel, pumice and cinders subject to regulated leasing system rather than to mining claims and patents; also urged enactment of law to prevent acquisition under mining claims and patents of valuable stands of timber and other resources and at the same time provide for the miners' actual needs in claim development.

Forest Service Lands: Reiterated its endorsement of bill pending in Congress which would make available for the development and maintenance of recreational public use facilities 10 per cent of the national forest income on Forest Service lands. Favorable report on the bill by the Forest Service was urged by the resolution.

Fish and Wildlife Service Survey: Complimented the Secretary of the Interior and his Survey Committee for their sound approach to the reorganization of the Service and urged that the basic recommendations be carried out as expeditiously as possible.

Wildlife Management on Federal Refuges: Because the upland game birds and big game animals now located on federal refuges belong to the state and because establishment of refuges for protection of certain species prevents the harvest of other species for which protection is not required, often resulting in overutilization of the range, the Association commended the Fish and Wildlife Service for its present attitude with reference to proper management of wildlife on these lands and requested that studies be continued in cooperation with the states looking toward development of harvest plans for this refuge system where such programs are not now in operation.

Browse Range Research: Urged Congress to appropriate funds for the specific purpose of browse range research by the U. S. Forest Service, to be conducted in cooperation with the several states. Public lands contain important big game ranges and there is an increasing need for big game range research.

Survey of Wildlife Economics: In view of previous action recommending an international survey of wildlife economics by the United States, Canadian and Mexican governments, the Association urged that in the United States the national survey be carried out by the Fish and Wildlife Service and paid for out of Federal Aid Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds.

Surplus Pittman-Robertson Funds: Urged legislation providing for distribution within and over a five-year period of accumulated surplus of Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Funds amounting to approximately \$13,500,000.

Dedication of Funds: Because under the stimulation and financial support afforded by the Federal Aid Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson funds great advances have resulted in wildlife research and management and because continued financial support is needed by the state programs, the Association reaffirmed its approval of these two acts and specifically of the

dedication for conservation and restoration purposes of the excise taxes and of state hunting and fishing license contributions by the users of the resources and opposed efforts to eliminate these provisions from the Federal Aid acts.

Extension of Water Pollution Control Act: Urged Congress to extend and increase the authorization of this act, which declared it to be the Policy of Congress to recognize and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of the states in controlling water pollution, to support and aid technical research to devise and perfect methods of treatment of industrial wastes and to provide general technical services to state and interstate agencies and municipalities in the formulation of their stream abatement programs.

A SUCCESSFUL HUNT

(Continued from page 3)

Each year, both the State of Oregon, and private companies are forced to spend hundreds of dollars replacing signs shot up by individuals like this one.

The accompanying picture illustrates just one such incident. Every time a hunter partakes of such doubtful enjoyment he is not only robbing himself, but also making it a little more difficult for the sportsmen of the state.

In the case of highway department signs, the money to pay for them comes directly from the hunter's pocketbook.

When signs of private companies are ruined by "Trigger Happy Harrys," access to the area is threatened. Landowners cannot be blamed for not appreciating malicious acts of vandalism to their equipment.

Final touch of irony to the situation is the fact that many of the signs are for the hunter's benefit.

Only one person can prevent this situation from occurring. By respecting the rights of the landowners, and encouraging others to do likewise, the true sportsmen of the state can help insure access to privately owned hunting and fishing areas of Oregon in the future.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

(Continued from page 4)

program and Nevada with beaver transplanting and the initial introduction of the chukar partridge.

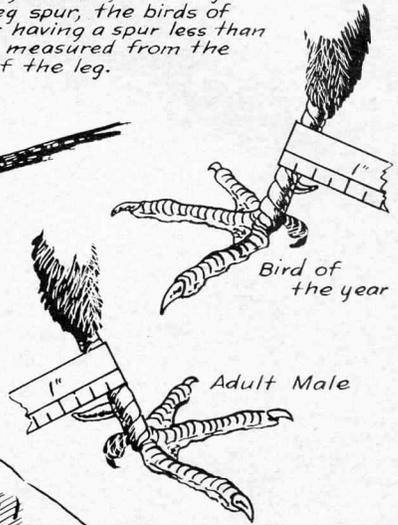
Oregon is indeed fortunate in having "Ham" head the federal predator control program. The manner in which the program is administered and the results obtained are gratifying and has resulted in an excellent relationship with the Game Commission in carrying out a sound game management program.



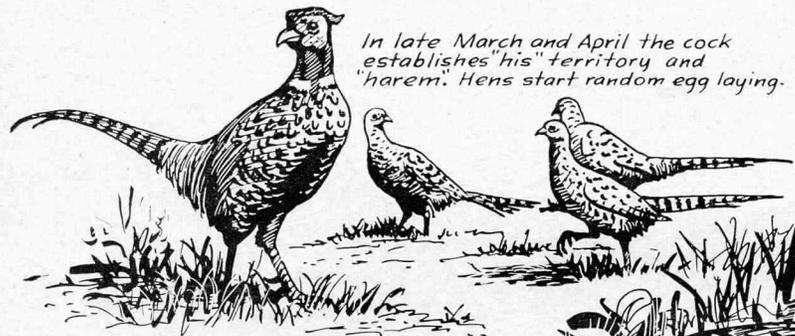
Ring-necked Pheasant



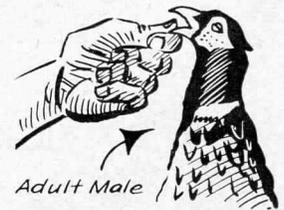
In the fall of the year, young and old male birds can usually be distinguished by the length of the leg spur, the birds of the year having a spur less than $\frac{3}{4}$ " long, measured from the front of the leg.



Introduced into Oregon from China in 1881, the ring-necked pheasant thrived in the Willamette Valley. They have been transplanted to all suitable parts of our state, but seem to like best the areas near the base of the Blue Mountains in eastern Oregon. Pheasants are birds that prefer farm land. They have great adaptability, living from our humid west coast to the dry, desert-like valleys of central and eastern Oregon.



In late March and April the cock establishes his territory and "harem". Hens start random egg laying.



Lower bill usually supports weight of cock without bending at base.

In April and May hen builds nest, lays average of 12 eggs in 15 days. Starts incubation. If nest is destroyed, hen may re-nest several times. Raises only one brood a year as this takes about 17 weeks.



Chicks hatch in 23 or 24 days. They leave the nest with the hen soon after hatching. After about two weeks the chicks can fly fairly well. Hens stay with young until they are 12 to 14 weeks old.



When pheasant chicks are young mortality is high. Skunks, raccoons, ground squirrels, crows, and magpies are destructive to eggs. Hawks, owls, cats, dogs, and other predators take a heavy toll of young.

Pheasants are ground dwelling birds, fast runners, and strong fliers. Normally they roost on the ground but take to trees if continually disturbed.



Pheasants are seed eaters, rarely eating buds of shrubs and trees as many of the grouse do. Young chicks start out on an insect diet. When waste grain is abundant in mid-summer young change to a grain diet.



Oregon State Game Commission Bulletin

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