

OREGON STATE
GAME COMMISSION

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The Cover

SEA OTTERS

Photo courtesy of Ed Klinkhart
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

Instructors Approved

Month of November 21
Total to Date 2,007

Students Trained

Month of November 723
Total to Date 163,566

Firearms Casualties Reported in 1970

Fatal 3
Nonfatal 47

1971 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Following is a brief summary of legislation the Commission intends to bring to the attention of the Legislature in the forthcoming session.

Taxation

Purpose of this proposal is to provide a more equitable formula in determining taxes on Commission-owned lands that are farmed to produce wildlife and public recreation. In recent years valuations on such lands, particularly those near urban areas, have escalated sharply as a result of residential, industrial, and recreational influences.

The Commission pays in lieu of taxes to counties on approximately 68,000 acres of fish and wildlife lands to help support schools and other county services. No other state agency is required to pay taxes in this manner. Legislation proposed by the Commission and to be introduced by the Legislative Fiscal Committee would limit valuations of Commission lands to farm or forest land use and would exclude consideration of other uses. The Department of Revenue would make the value determinations and tax payments would

be limited to wildlife management areas such as Sauvie Island, White River, Camas Swale, and Summer Lake.

Broadening of Commission's Responsibilities Over Wildlife

This proposal would spell out in the law that the Game Commission is charged with the responsibility of providing public recreation opportunities and that its regulatory and policy-making authority extends to wildlife species not classified as game animals. The principal thrust of the legislation is to give statutory recognition to a wide variety of presently unprotected wildlife species and to permit the Commission to exercise management responsibility in situations where regulations or other management practices may be desirable. Specifically, the bill would classify wildlife as "game fish, wild mammals, wild birds, amphibians, and reptiles."

Capturing, Transporting, Holding, Importing, And Releasing Wild Animals

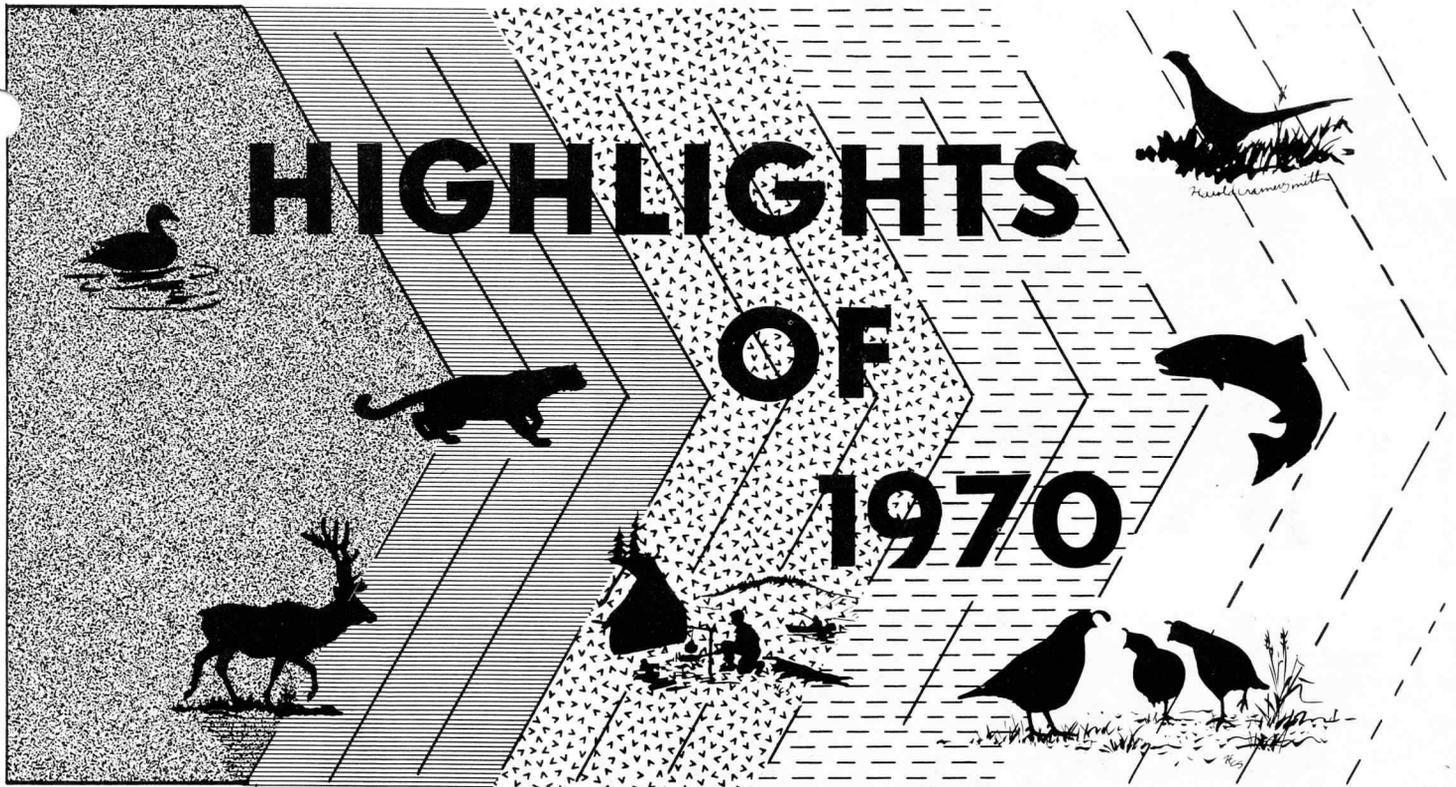
Here the intent is to put more teeth in existing law and to make new provisions to control such activities as:

(Continued on Page 8)



The Continuing Saga of Sauvie Island . . .

Latest act of abuse of the Sauvie Island Game Management Area was the dumping of some 300 to 400 old tires in the middle of the Gilbert River boat launching site parking area. The "Bold Ones" worked by night and Commission personnel discovered the addition during routine activities the next day. Oregon State Police are investigating to try to determine the source of the illegal litter.



By R. C. HOLLOWAY
Chief, Information & Education Division

The year 1970 started out much differently than the previous year when severe weather conditions throughout much of the state, particularly in the northwest section, placed an unusual amount of stress on wildlife. Wintering conditions were much more favorable this year and few losses were recorded. However, the impact of losses suffered in the winter of 1968-69 continued to be felt and the conservative hunting regulations in effect in 1970 reflected this.

Although figures are incomplete, the number of fishing and hunting licenses issued will exceed the number in 1969. Angling license sales have continued on an upward trend without interruption whereas there was a temporary reduction in hunting license and big game tag sales in 1969 due largely to fewer hunting opportunities. The 1969 Legislature provided for a free fishing license for persons 70 years of age or older who have lived in Oregon for five years. Many elderly residents took advantage of this opportunity and the number of such licenses issued will exceed 23,000. The impact of free and reduced fee licenses on potential income is of concern to the Commission.

Some interesting developments took place with the introduction and transplanting of game animals. Highlighting

the year was the release of 29 sea otter near Redfish Rock in the vicinity of Port Orford in July. The animals had been obtained off Amchitka Island in the Aleutians with the cooperation of the State of Alaska and the Atomic Energy Commission. Fourteen of these animals were observed in late October, all but one of which were within five miles of the release site. Plans are being made to obtain additional animals in 1971.

A total of 134 Roosevelt elk were captured in Coos County and transplanted to preselected sites in western Oregon. This was a continuation of a program designed to obtain a wider distribution of this fine game animal and afford more recreational opportunities. The program will continue in 1971. Two more mountain goats were obtained from the State of Washington and released in the Columbia Gorge to join the animals released there the previous year.

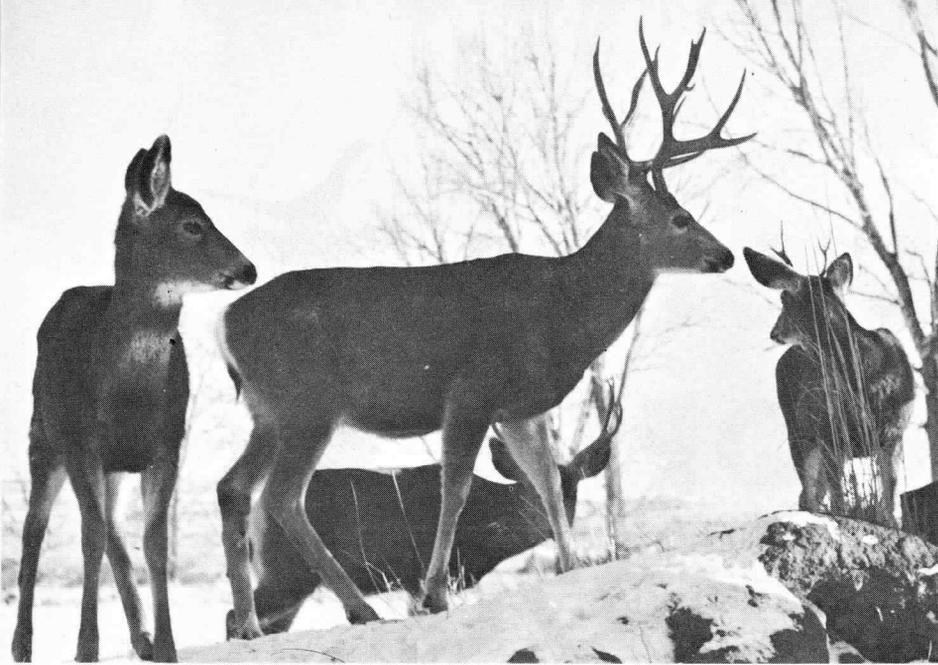
Tax assessments on Commission lands which are managed to produce wildlife and public recreation continued to be of serious concern. The 1969-70 taxes and assessments totaled \$102,094.25 compared to \$94,955.11 the previous year. Increased valuations and tax rates were largely responsible. Valuations of properties adjacent to urban areas have risen sharply. The Commission intends to ask the Legis-

lature in 1971, as it did in 1969, for some form of tax relief.

Two new fish hatcheries came closer to reality in the year. Ground was broken for the Cole Rivers Hatchery on the Rogue River, slated to be one of the largest fish production units in existence. Agreement was reached with Portland General Electric Company for a hatchery to be constructed at Round Butte on the Deschutes River. This station will have a capacity of 143,000 spring chinook yearlings and 180,000 summer steelhead smolts. The Commission will operate both stations. In addition, a 40-acre site on Crooked River was acquired for future hatchery construction.

Among recommendations made by the Management 70s Task Force team that studied Commission operations in 1969 was one to beef up planning and another to transfer data processing to the State Board of Health. The Commission is developing a fish and wildlife plan which will establish broad guidelines for management programs designed to maintain the wildlife resource to meet current needs and enhance it to satisfy future demands. Transfer of the data processing to the Board of Health was accomplished in February. Departure of this section made possible more efficient utilization

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WINTER DINNER TABLE...

The long, cold winter months are the critical time of the year for wildlife. Birds and animals will eat most anything that is available and palatable. On the facing page are some of the more common foods used by the three animals on the left.

You well may have tromped through some of these plants with disgust, perhaps thinking the "weeds" should be eliminated to make for a better landscape. In more and more places the elimination of these important plants that provide a winter food supply for wildlife has spelled the end of a wildlife population.

The names of the plants matched with the animal that feeds on them are found elsewhere in the Bulletin. These are but a few of the food plants. Winter walks outdoors can be made much richer by looking for other plants that provide winter wildlife food.





1—This plant's persistent "hips" are a rich source of Vitamin C and are often eaten by humans. The hips or fruits are valuable because they do hang on the limbs all winter. The dense vines and stalks provide valuable cover during winter months.



2—TO THE RIGHT—A source of food for man in the summer, this plant and its relatives provide needed browse above the winter snow line.



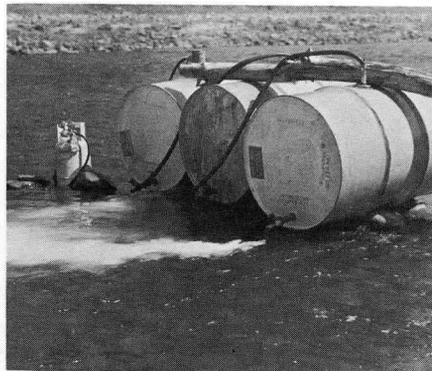
3—Long held as a key to the number of animals that can be carried through the winter, this plant supplies high concentrations of protein for hungry mouths.



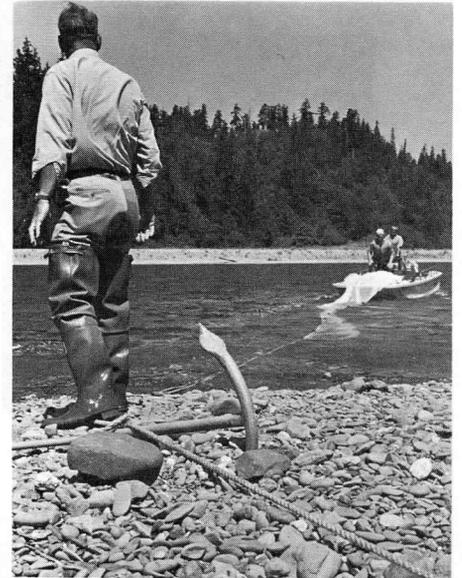
Angling license sales have continued an upward trend though there was a temporary reduction in hunting license and big game tag sales.



In cooperation with the U. S. Forest Service, the Crane Prairie Osprey Management Area was dedicated.



Several major chemical treatment projects were carried on. Use of propane to pressurize liquid rotenone drums has made for more even and efficient distribution of the chemical into the streams being treated.



One of the more interesting research findings of the year showed that Rogue River spring, fall, and "half-pounder" summer steelhead are all of the same race. Seining and marking of the fish was part of the project.

1970 Highlights . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

of space in the Portland headquarters building.

In cooperation with the United States Forest Service an Osprey Management Area was developed at Crane Prairie Reservoir. Visitors will have an opportunity to observe this spectacular bird in its natural nesting habitat. Work continued in developing Jewell Wildlife Meadows in Clatsop County into a natural area in which the public can observe and photograph wildlife.

A new public fishing impoundment went on the line with the dedication of Pine Hollow Reservoir in Wasco County in April. The lake, which filled during the winter of 1969-70, was constructed in cooperation with Pine Hollow Cooperative and other interests. It serves a dual purpose of irrigation and public fishing.

The 1970 winter steelhead count of 12,115 on the North Umpqua River at Winchester Dam was the highest record-

ed in 25 years of counting. A count of 15,886 winter steelhead on the Rogue at Gold Ray Dam was only slightly below the record count of 1943. Spring chinook counts on both streams were among the highest recorded. High returns of hatchery-produced fish have been observed in both streams.

Several research projects were continued to obtain basic biological facts for use in developing improved management techniques. One of the more interesting findings was made on the Rogue River where an in-depth study of summer steelhead has been underway since 1968. The study has revealed that spring, fall, and "half-pounder" runs constitute a single race of steelhead which should be managed accordingly. A management implication is that by altering the time and/or size at release, hatchery-reared summer steelhead smolts can be induced to return as the famous "half-pounders" or larger spring-run fish as the needs and preferences of anglers dictate.

Major land acquisition projects completed in the year include the addition of

335 acres within the boundaries of the Sauvie Island Game Management Area, 392 additional acres at the White River Management Area, and 110 acres added to the Jewell Wildlife Meadows project.

Problems associated with the upstream and downstream passage of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia continued to be of major concern. A serious fish passage problem developed in the powerhouse collection and Oregon shore fishway system at John Day Dam in April. After emergency corrective action was taken, fish moved through the ladder in reasonably satisfactory numbers. The need to relocate the major entrance to the south shore fishway is under study. Of even more concern were excessive fish losses from nitrogen bubble disease resulting from heavy spilling at upper Columbia River dams. Suspected losses of hatchery-released fish may have totaled several million. Wild smolts which migrated after spilling commenced last spring may also have suffered severe losses.

Early in the fall a survey was made to

(Continued on Page 7)



Trapping and transplanting of Roosevelt elk in western Oregon will continue in 1971. Over 100 of the big animals were moved in 1970.

(Continued from Page 6)

determine the impact of agricultural practices, including field burning, in the Willamette Valley on upland game habitat. Intensive agriculture has removed the amount and quality of game bird habitat by eliminating brush rows, swales, native vegetation, and wetland areas. For example, in Linn County approximately 200,000 acres of good pheasant habitat available in 1940 have been lost through changed farming practices. Field burning appears to be particularly destructive of game bird food and cover. Recent estimates place the area burned annually in the valley at 315,000 acres. This represents a potential loss of winter and spring habitat for 117,000 pheasants and 15,000 quail.

Negotiations continued with industries located at Willamette Falls in Oregon City to improve downstream migrant fish protection. Agreement was reached on protective plans with Publishers Paper Company and it is hoped that an accord will be reached with the other two companies at an early date.

There was a 33 percent increase in the fur harvest in the 1969-70 trapping season as a result of more trapping activity due to increased fur prices. A total of 52,399 fur animals of 16 species were taken, with

muskrat and beaver making up the greatest share.

Major chemical treatment projects in the year included the upper Owyhee River, approximately 76 miles of the John Day River, Cow Creek (South Umpqua tributary), Unity Reservoir, Ana Reservoir in Lake County, and Cullaby Lake in Clatsop County. Purpose of the treatment projects was to remove undesirable fish populations so that greater productivity of preferred species could be realized.

Hunting seasons commenced in August. Hot, dry conditions prevailed throughout the entire month. Antelope hunters enjoyed an approximate 58 percent success. Range conditions were dry prior to the start of the general deer season and continued dry weather during the season hampered hunter success. The total deer harvest is expected to be below that of 1969 when 101,500 deer were taken. The elk season ended with hunter success in northeastern Oregon above last year. Success in western Oregon appeared comparable to 1969. Pheasant hunting pressure and success were down from 1969 but waterfowl hunting success appeared to be above the ten-year average. Success on public shooting grounds was high. The number of firearms hunting casualties continued on a downward trend. There were 88 recorded in 1968, 67 in

Commission To Set Openings

The Game Commission will hold a public hearing at 10 a.m., January 15, to consider the opening dates for the 1971 big game and upland bird seasons. Only the opening dates will be discussed. The season lengths, bag limits, and other details will be considered later in the year when necessary biological data are available. The early setting of the openings is to assist hunters in planning their vacations.

The hearing will be held at Commission offices at Southwest 17th and Alder in Portland, and all in attendance will have an opportunity to comment. Suggestions may also be sent in by mail.

Winter Foods

PLANT 1 is rose utilized by pheasants for food and for cover by all kinds of small game animals and birds.

PLANT 2 is red huckleberry utilized by the Roosevelt elk at the bottom of the page and also by deer.

PLANT 3 is bitterbrush, one of the most important winter range plants for mule deer pictured at the top of the page.

CORRECTION

In our November issue we had a photo of the new waterfowl identification board at the Portland Zoo. Our information was that the Hubbard family had donated the board to the zoo. However, we have been informed by Dick Hubbard that full credit for the board should go to the Lewis and Clark Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, with donations from Pohlman Lumber Company, Oregon Brass Company, Empire Brick Company, and Gem Top Manufacturing Company. Our apologies for the mixup.

1969, and 50 in 1970. The latter figure may change slightly as late reports come in.

In this rather brief article it is not possible to cover all of the important wildlife resource developments that occurred in 1970. Perhaps of even more importance are the routine activities that take place on a day-to-day basis that provide the basic information needed to properly manage the resource. With adequate manpower, funds, and other resources, coupled with public understanding and cooperation, the Commission is confident it can meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Legislation . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

1. Removing live animals from their natural habitat.
2. Holding wild animals in captivity.
3. Importing wild animals into the state.
4. Transporting wild animals from one location to another.
5. Transferring ownership of or selling wild animals.
6. Releasing animals brought from outside the state or raised in a domestic state.

The Commission would have the authority to adopt rules covering the above mentioned activities, including traffic in wild animals raised in a domestic state or imported from foreign countries. Proposed rules envision prohibiting the importation or possession of wild animals that may be a danger to human health or which, if released, could endanger native wildlife.

Bow and Arrow License

This proposed measure has two primary objectives. One is to assist in defraying the cost of administration and enforcement of special bow and arrow seasons. The other is to get a handle on the number of bow and arrow hunters, what their preferences are, and how they can best be used in managing big game animals. There were eleven areas open specifically for bow and arrow hunting in 1970. Some of these were held prior to the opening of the general season; others were postseason hunts. A permit archery season commenced on January 1 and will extend through February 28 in a portion of southwestern Oregon. All of these seasons are set aside for the bow and arrow hunters only and are in addition to opportunities the rifle hunter enjoys.

This license would be in addition to the regular hunting license and would cost \$2 when purchased in combination with a hunting license or \$5 if purchased separately.

Off-Road Vehicle Use

The Commission is concerned about the impact of the growing use of motor-propelled vehicles in off-road situations where damage to wildlife habitat and harassment of wildlife may result. A wide

PIKA, CONY OR ROCK RABBIT



THE PIKA (OCHONTA)

The pika, known by mountain travelers as the cony or rock rabbit, is one of the few mammals rugged enough to spend its entire life in the high mountains of the west. They are found throughout the higher mountain areas of the Cascades and in the mountains of eastern Oregon.

Most other animals migrate from these areas or curl up in dens to sleep the long winter out. But the pika makes no change in its busy schedule and hustles about among the exposed rocks or under the deep snow. Its chosen home is among the great jumbles of rock of all sizes and shapes that have sloughed from the cliff walls or mountainsides.

Unlike the rabbits, the hind legs are as short as the forelegs. The furred feet and soles give perfect traction as it hops from peaked rocks to sharp ridge or slick slope.

During late summer and fall the animal is busy harvesting crops which it stores in miniature "haystacks" under slanting rocks for curing. Many hours are spent at this task for with the coming of winter it will be impossible to get beyond the jumbled rocks and food must be available if he is to survive. The little pika works only during daylight hours. When darkness falls he retires for the night.

The pika has few enemies for he lives in an environment where refuge is never less than a yard away. Only the weasel and marten are capable of pursuit into its rock passageways.

The pika, or "Little Chief" as he is often called, is a small tailless member of the rabbit family with short rounded ears. The buffy, reddish-brown fur is soft and dense. Seldom does he reach more than one-half pound in weight.

variety of recreational vehicles have made it possible for the public to go almost anywhere at any time of the year. Improperly used, the vehicles can and do damage ground cover and harass big game animals on their winter ranges. Proposed legislation would make it unlawful to operate motor-propelled vehicles in a manner and in places in violation of regulations of the agency administering the land or, in the case of private land, without the consent of the landowner.

Filling of Water Courses

Current law provides for regulating the removal of materials such as sand and gravel from stream beds and banks. A permit is required to remove more than 50 yards from any stream in any one year. The suggested legislation would establish a similar procedure for filling operations. This is particularly important in estuarine areas where, in the past, much of the natural productivity has been destroyed by filling.



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