

OREGON STATE
GAME COMMISSION
BULLETIN
MARCH, 1954





THIS and THAT

The Department of State Police's 1953 annual report on game law enforcement shows a total of 2,730 arrests made and 2,878 warnings given. Of this number 196 were acquitted. Fines imposed for game law convictions totalled \$110,-373.10 of which \$17,725.50 were remitted. Officers checked 135,392 licenses and bag limits. Searches totalled 17,877.

The most common violations were angling or hunting in closed areas or by prohibited means, exceeding the bag limit, failure to sign deer tag properly, and angling or hunting without license.

A live and apparently healthy banded fur seal was found on Rockaway Beach on January 30, 1954 by C. M. Rue of Rockaway. The animal was turned over to Game Commission field agent Wesley M. Batterson, who recorded the band information and released the seal back into the sea.

According to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service this fur seal was born on St. Paul Island, Alaska, during the summer of 1953. It is the largest of the Pribilof Islands, the breeding ground for most of the fur seals. By the most direct water route this seal covered a distance of at least 2,300 miles. The normal wintering area of these valuable fur animals, which at one time were near extinction, is along the Pacific Coast as far south as southern California.

Waterfowl hunters killed a total of 26,722 birds at the four public shooting grounds operated in 1953, Sauvie Island, Warner Valley, Summer Lake and Malheur. The previous season's kill was 32,217. More birds were taken in 1953 than in 1952 at Warner Valley and Malheur and only a few less at Summer Lake but Sauvie Island accounted for the big drop with its 1953 kill of 8,332 birds compared to 14,269 in 1952.

Goose hunters fared much better than the duck hunters. At Summer Lake goose hunting was very good, the kill of 6,544 geese exceeding that of any previous season since operation of the shooting ground. Warner Valley hunters bagged 2,604 geese, also the highest number taken since the Commission has been managing the area.

SEA LICE ON FISH

The attention of fishermen is often called to the presence of sea lice on salmon and trout. These small, clinging gray surface parasites, which are usually found at the base of the fins, are often used as a basis for determining whether or not the fish is freshly in from the sea.

Such sea lice, however, cling to the fish for considerable periods of time and have been documented as having been on the fish for at least 13 days after the fish have entered the river, as in the case of a fish entering the mouth of the Columbia and later taken in the Toutle in Washington.

On several occasions chinook salmon in the Clackamas have been found to have sea lice clinging to them. Salmon in the Columbia and Willamette travel at about four miles per day and the fish would have been in the river approximately 30 days.

The 1954 synopsis of angling regulations is expected to be available for distribution from all license agencies by the middle of March.

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FEBRUARY MEETING OF THE GAME COMMISSION

The Game Commission met in Portland on February 19 and considered the following matters.

With reference to suggestion made that the mouth of the Sandy River be dredged, the Director was requested to advise those concerned that from investigations made by the fishery and engineering staff, it was not felt that dredging would be the solution to keeping the mouth of the river open; and that the Commission was conducting a study of the Sandy River in an attempt to gain all information possible for the future management of this stream.

Following the staff's recommendation based on a study of upland game and big game tags used in other states, the Commission decided not to make any major changes in its existing tagging system.

An increase of \$737.50 in the appropriation for a deer damage fence in the Cove area was approved.

As title to certain buildings on the Camp Adair property had been cleared, the Commission authorized remodeling of the buildings for use of the Northwest Region headquarters, now located in Albany.

It was decided to sponsor a show-me trip for representatives of sportsmen's groups into the Lake country deer area on March 20 and 21.

Authorization was granted to take up two land options in the Furber Marsh area, totalling 173 acres, and one option in the Wenaha area for 400 acres.

The Commission accepted an easement at the mouth of the Clackamas River from Oregon City and Clackamas county and authorized the initiation of a Dingell-Johnson project for development of the site.

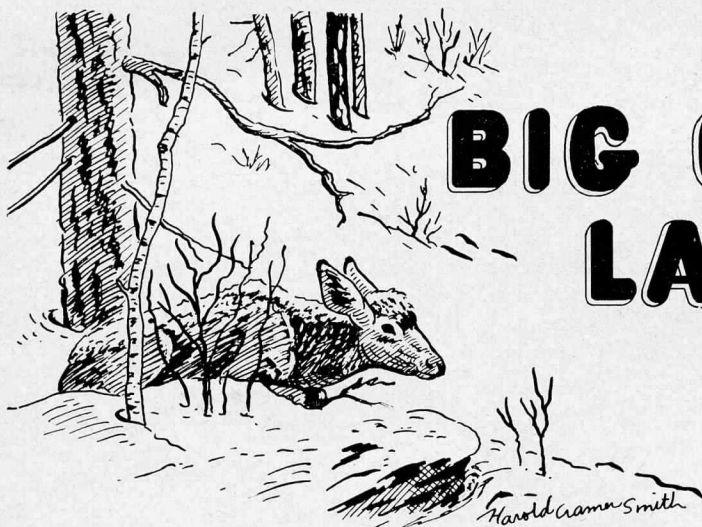
Application for a preliminary Dingell-Johnson project was approved for obtaining information as to need for and cost of fish ladder at Steamboat Falls on the North Umpqua River.

Approval was given to construct a combination building at Hood River Hatchery to house cold storage plant, hatchery facilities and meat cutting room, estimated cost being \$45,000.

The next regular meeting in Portland was scheduled for Thursday, April 29.

COVER

January scene showing brood pheasants being held at the Wilson Management Area. (Photo by Ron Shay)



BIG GAME LANDS



By C. B. WALSH, Assistant Director

HOW IMPORTANT is it to maintain an elk herd in the Wenaha district of northeastern Oregon?

How important is it to maintain a fairly large deer herd close to the center of population of the state of Oregon on the east slope of Mt. Hood?

These were two questions confronting the Oregon State Game Commission several months ago. The answers probably seem obvious to the hunters of the state. In fact many readers may wonder why such questions should be a matter of concern, especially when the steadily increasing demand for elk and deer is considered. The Game Commission certainly agrees with this line of thinking, but obtaining the ends desired presents complex problems. These problems were complex primarily because the program to effect these ends called for land purchases. A land acquisition program by a governmental agency is rarely popular and conceivably if carried to extremes could seriously affect some of the economies of the state.

Perhaps before we get into a discussion of these two specific projects, it would be well to review the general activities of the Oregon Game Commission as far as land ownership is concerned. First the Game Commission is not and probably never will be a large public land management agency. Viewed in per cent of the total acreage in the state, that owned or controlled through leases and agreements is insignificant, being slightly less than one-tenth of one per cent. From time to time, however, since its inception the Commission has acquired some lands. There have been three reasons for acquiring lands. The first reason and the most

obvious one has been to establish propagation facilities for game, fish, and game birds. These units of ground are small and are highly developed for intensive propagation programs. The land area required for the Commission's sixteen game fish hatcheries and three bird farms totals slightly more than 800 acres.

The second purpose for land acquisition has been to provide public access to hunting and fishing areas. The access problem along our major sport fishing streams is steadily becoming more acute each year and for this reason the Commission has started a program for purchase or lease of access points and streamside strips to be developed to accommodate heavy public use. Access is also a serious problem in waterfowl hunting. As every duck hunter knows it is almost impossible to find good duck and goose shooting areas that are not leased to private individuals or shooting clubs. Private leases are often beyond the means of the average hunter. This problem, while not the entire reason, was a part of the consideration for the acquiring of waterfowl areas in Multnomah, Columbia, Lane, Klamath, Lake and Union counties totalling 27,287 acres.

The third purpose for land acquisition and the one that applies to the districts mentioned above is to resolve land use conflicts. In the case of private lands the owner makes the sole determination as to how the land is used. Some land uses and changes in land uses obviously clash with wildlife uses. For this same reason the Game Commission has been forced to consider the acquiring of certain lands for the protection

of key game producing areas.

The first of these clashes resulted from wet land drainage and its effect on waterfowl. These projects have been discussed in past Bulletin articles and will be only mentioned here. More recently, big game has received attention in this field.

Big game animals are found statewide in Oregon and it is obvious that all land use conflicts could not be resolved by land acquisition; in fact, programs of this nature have not been and probably will not be applied except under most unusual circumstances. Occasionally a specific problem develops where land purchase seems to be the most feasible solution for all parties involved. This was the situation in the case of the Wenaha elk problem near Troy, Oregon, and in the case of the White River deer herd on the east slope of Mt. Hood.

In the northern part of Wallowa and Umatilla counties in the extreme northeastern corner of the state of Oregon we find our finest summer elk ranges. One of these summer ranges outlined in the accompanying sketch covers approximately 250 square miles. As winter sets in, the elk summering on this large range follow down the slopes to lower elevations along with some elk coming across the state line from Washington. The extent of this movement varies depending on the severity of the winter, but during an average winter this movement leads to a heavy concentration in the comparatively small area near the junction of the Grand Ronde and Wenaha Rivers. In this district there are a number of ranchers whose

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E. E. Wilson Game Management Area



Don Kirkpatrick, superintendent of the E. E. Wilson Management Area.

CAMP ADAIR! A name that brings back memories of obstacle courses, GI barracks, and Oregon rain to many ex-servicemen scattered throughout the nation. If they were to return to the area now, however, most of them would be pleasantly surprised to find most of the olive drab buildings gone, and the area being used for conservation instead of teaching the ways of destruction.

At the end of World War II, the government was authorized by the 80th Congress to dispose of lands no longer needed in the nation's armament program. At this time, the Oregon Game Commission filed application for 1,610 acres of the land in the cantonment area and in due time was granted a deed to the property. Approximately 600 acres were tillable and the remainder had the resemblance of a well-bombed city since the army had removed the buildings and left old foundations and various other remnants of the camp.

Natural foliage soon began to cover over the debris from the old buildings, but unfortunately the covering included several noxious weeds. This situation was remedied when the Game Commission's program went into effect and control measures were taken.

The Game Commission's objectives in

acquiring the area can be listed in three general points. (1) To provide an area on which surpluses of game animals and birds could be produced for stocking of western Oregon habitats; (2) To provide a field laboratory for testing management and development practices and studying potentials of exotic species; and (3) To provide public recreation.

After the program was under way, the Commission voted to name the area after Mr. E. E. Wilson, long-time member of the Game Commission and one of the men responsible for many of the advances in game management that have been put into effect in the state. Mr. Wilson is a resident of Corvallis.

Manager and guiding hand of the area is Don Kirkpatrick. Don started with the Game Commission in 1936 at the since-abandoned Pendleton Game Farm, transferring subsequently to the Hermiston farm, and finally to the Lewisburg farm where he worked until transferred to the new area. Though his service for the Commission was interrupted during the war years, Don's experience has well suited him for directing the propagation of pheasants at the area in addition to the over-all land management program. Seven other

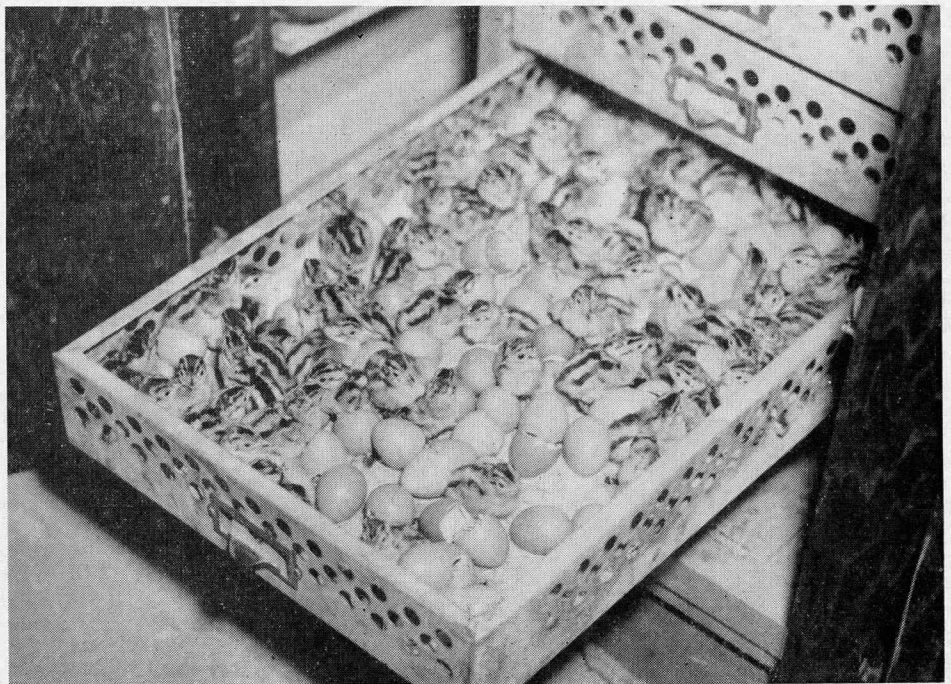
men work with Don on the area and are responsible for many of the improvements put into effect there.

During 1953, the Wilson area released 19,326 pheasants in western Oregon counties, 12,678 of which were adult birds. Hens were planted in the spring and cocks were planted in the fall prior to and during the hunting season. The station also produces a limited number of partridge and quail.

As studies revealed more information about the area, it was obvious that poor water distribution would be one of the limiting factors for game populations. Part of the habitat improvement has been the building of water storage facilities for the wildlife. In addition, various types of cover plants have been planted on the area, and some of the more successful ones propagated for distribution to other areas in western Oregon.

One of the more interesting projects going on at the area is the cooperative agreement between the Game Commission and the Department of Fish and Game at Oregon State College. Students studying game management at the college use the area as a field laboratory and in so doing obtain information usable both by them and the Commission. Their censuses and analyses of various trends have added much to the knowledge of the department. At the present, Bill McCaleb, a graduate student, is doing full-time

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A drawerful of newly hatched pheasants in the 9,000 egg capacity incubator used at the Wilson Management Area.

SEVERAL years ago members of the Clatsop Rod and Gun Club began seeding lotus major on Elk Mountain to determine its value as a food plant on deer and elk ranges. The plantings were very successful and game animals grazed them heavily. At that time some farmers growing lotus in the county were complaining of extensive damage by elk, and local sportsmen's groups were interested in seeding lotus in the foothills for the primary purpose of holding these animals away from such cultivated areas.

This legume, sometimes called Big Trefoil, is a long-lived, vigorously spreading, introduced pasture plant somewhat resembling alfalfa. It is adapted to acid soils of low fertility. Two important features are its high protein content and its ability to withstand heavy utilization. According to an experiment station bulletin it has shown more promise than any other legume for seeding cutover timber lands in northwestern Oregon.

In Tillamook County the series of fires occurring over portions of the



Lotus major seeded for deer in the Tillamook Burn.

Big Game Range Reseeding

several hundred square miles known as the Tillamook Burn has been followed by extensive salvage logging operations. While a good growth of brush and weeds now exists on the burn, there are local areas, particularly along the streams, where deer tend to congregate in winter and where some losses have occurred during severe periods. The Game Commission, hoping to alleviate this condition and to assist in holding the animals above the valleys by increasing the quantity and quality of available forage, was readily granted permission by the State Forestry Department to seed the desired areas. As an activity of the habitat improvement program, 33 test plots were seeded to various species in 1950 with technical assistance provided by State Extension Service and Experiment Station personnel. In addition, the J. J. Astor Branch Experiment Station at Astoria donated more than 800 pounds of non-commercial lotus seed for further trials. The lotus has proved to be the most productive plant tested and deer grazed it the first year.

As a result of these trials a small crew now spends several days each winter broadcasting lotus seed on sites

recently disturbed by fire or logging operations. Wes Batterson, game agent in the North Coastal District, locates sites to be seeded during the course of his other work with big game. They are principally in the Wilson, Trask and Nehalem River drainages in Tillamook County and on Big Creek and Nicolai Mountain in northeastern Clatsop County at elevations of from 500 to 1,000 feet. Seed of non-commercial grade containing a small percentage of white clover has been purchased direct from the growers. Last year, 400 pounds were donated by one farmer in the vicinity of Astoria.

For the past three years members of the Westport Rod and Gun Club have assisted the project on Nicolai Mountain. A fire in 1952 destroyed most of the browse in one section and last March twenty club members participated in broadcasting lotus on an estimated 300 acres. Previous plantings had matured satisfactorily and were well utilized by deer and elk.

The 4-H Forestry Club of Knappa and several members of the Brownsmead-Knappa-Svenson Sportsmen's Club accompanied Batterson to the head of Big Creek one day last Febru-

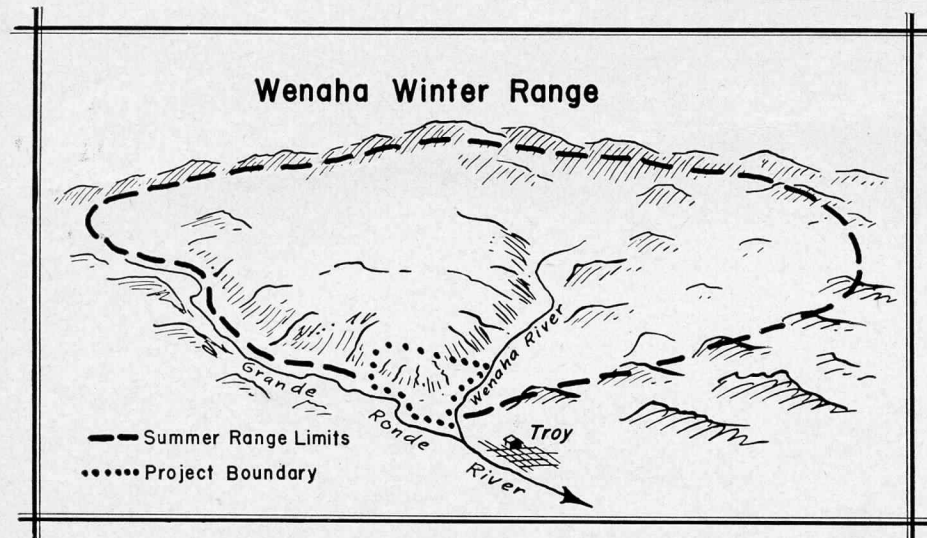
ary and seeded 300 pounds of lotus along bulldozed fire trails and other favorable spots on a 1952 burn. The party observed 53 elk and 5 deer on the trip.

Inspection last winter of eight sites in the Tillamook Burn showed all had good stands of lotus. Utilization by big game was reported as moderate on four and heavy on four old sites.

The accompanying table presents a summary of this project to date.

Year	No. of Sites	Estimated Acres	Pounds of seed
1950	11	215	867
1951	12	540	1,880
1952	14	310	820
1953	15	870	2,125

This activity became part of the game habitat development project beginning with the 1953 season. Plans call for seeding approximately 400 acres this winter. A request has already been received from a group of about 20 boys and their dads to join the crew for a day. The Commission welcomes such opportunities to acquaint interested groups with its work. It is particularly pleased to demonstrate to youth groups ways and means at their disposal for aiding in the conservation of the wildlife resource.



BIG GAME LANDS

(Continued from page 3)

operation, in part at least, is dependent upon small acreages of grain. The problem that has resulted has been recognized by the Commission for a number of years. The elk herd has been held down in numbers by liberal hunting regulations. Hazing and other damage alleviating methods have been attempted each year. None of these methods have proven satisfactory for either the landowners or the game animals. At the present time a rough estimate of the number of elk summering on this range and moving in this direction in the winter is about 1,700 animals. Modest increases could well be effected without detrimental effects on the summer range. But with the present land use pattern on the winter range, the present small elk herd is not compatible. This in general was the problem. Either the numbers of elk had to be held down to their present levels and possibly further reduced or some solution to the land use conflict on the winter range had to be achieved.

A project was planned to acquire 17,000 acres of this wintering area. This acreage contained about 2,000 acres of tillable land and approximately 4,000 acres of grass land breaks, the remainder being in timberland. After the land is acquired, the long range program is designed to change the tilled land into grasslands. With this accomplished an effort would be made to gradually bring the elk numbers up to around 2,500 head.

In the case of the White River project the problem was entirely different. The White River deer herd is made up of mainly blacktail deer but includes a few white tail and mule deer. The range is in the watershed of White River and its many

tributaries, including Badger Creek. During the summer, the deer are widely scattered over more than 300 square miles of forest land. During the winter, the herd moves to lower elevations, spending the bulk of the winter months in the fringe timber between Badger Creek and the Wapinitia highway. The area of winter range covers approximately 70 square miles. Normally, through the winter months the deer stay in this fringe timber area but early in the spring, usually in late February and during March, they move out onto the open fields lying to the east. The early spring growth of agricultural crops attracts the deer, for the young crops are tender and succulent and more palatable than the browse that they have subsisted upon during the winter months. Scattered alfalfa seem to attract the deer so that numbers of them remain all summer instead of returning to the higher ranges.

The Game Commission and certain of the landowners in this area have searched for a solution to this recurrent problem since 1935. A number of special seasons have been held but although

the herd has been reduced in size the problem has remained the same. The herd is healthy and productive and in addition to providing hunting close to the city of Portland, it also has a high aesthetic value as they are enjoyed by many thousands of summer visitors to the Mt. Hood recreational area. A look toward the future revealed two probable trends. A program of selective logging that is being carried out on a sustained yield basis on the summer range will undoubtedly improve the summer range for deer. At the same time in the problem area possible future increases in irrigation would encourage agricultural expansion and the problem would become more and more acute. To meet this situation, the following plan was formed.

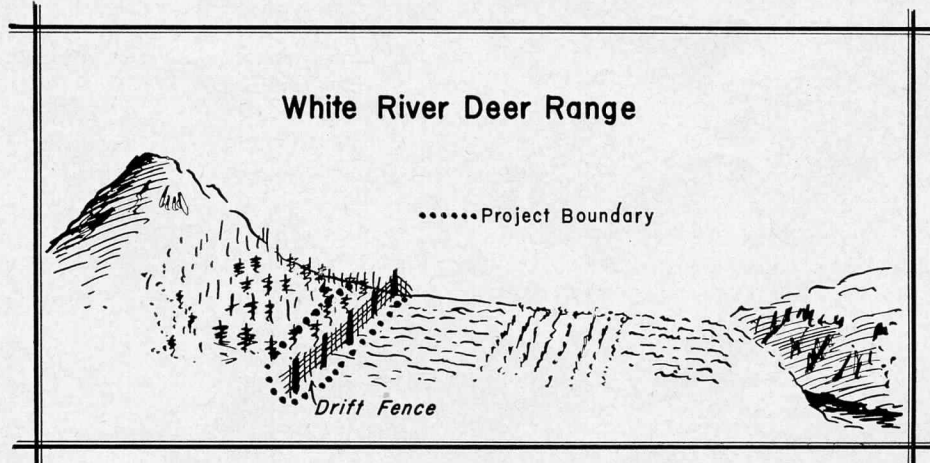
The Commission would acquire through purchase approximately 17,000 acres of grazing and cut-over timber land in a narrow belt between the National Forest boundary and the main agricultural lands. The Commission would then fence the lower boundary of this range with a deer-proof fence and develop the acquired lands for maintenance of the deer herd. This plan cuts the area used by the wintering deer herd in half, but in view of range information it is believed that it will support a stable herd of around 5,000 deer.

Most of the land is in private ownership and of the 17,000 acres only 845 acres is cultivated land. The main crops are wheat and hay.

The plan is ambitious and is one that cannot be completed in a year or two. In fact all projects of this type are based on the long range view with an eye toward benefits that will accrue to future generations of Oregon citizens.

The procedure followed by the Commission in these two projects in general

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WILDLIFE WEEK

Theme of National Wildlife Week, which is being observed the week of March 21 to 27, is clean-up of water pollution, according to the National Wildlife Federation. Six specific objectives are being promoted: (1) promotion of adequate water pollution laws in every state; (2) adequate appropriations for state pollution-control agencies; (3) adequate sewage treatment facilities in every community; (4) adequate waste prevention or waste treatment by every industry; (5) prevention of silt pollution through soil conservation practices; (6) adequate appropriations for research and cooperative programs of the Water Pollution Control Division of the Public Health Service.

BIG GAME LANDS

(Continued from page 6)

is standard practice for any such projects. After a careful study of the problem, a program is developed. The Commission then weighs the benefits of the proposed project against the anticipated costs and the effects upon other interests. If the project is determined to be worth while, as it was in the cases of the projects mentioned, the staff is authorized to proceed. The first step is the holding of a meeting with the county land use planning committee, landowners and other interested local citizens. The problem is discussed and the proposed solution is explained. Meetings are also held along the same line with any other agencies or groups that might be affected. If a majority concurs that the proposed solution is feasible, the plan is set up as a formal Federal Aid project. If this is approved the lands are appraised and negotiations

for purchases or leases may proceed. Once again it may be well to point out that these are long range plans and the purchasing of the lands could possibly be and often is spread out over many years.

The primary purpose of these projects is for the maintenance and management of the wildlife, but on many of the projects certain multiple uses are quite compatible with the primary purposes. For example on the two big game projects, selective logging and controlled grazing will not only be compatible but may prove to be quite beneficial to the big game herds. This policy of multiple use has worked well on the Game Commission's waterfowl areas. In fact on the Sauvie Island Game Management area there is almost as much use of the area by local ranchers and dairymen as there was before the Commission acquired the lands. The main difference is that this use is now controlled so that it is not detrimental to wildlife and the public also has access to the lands for recreational purposes.

In general it has been felt that the most opposition to such projects has stemmed from the fact that people did not understand the reasons for the projects. Probably the greatest of these misunderstandings is that many people believed that the Commission was embarking on a program of removing huge sections of private land from any use but wildlife. This, we hope we have pointed out, is certainly not the Game Commission's intent. A second common misunderstanding is the fear that huge acreage will be taken off the tax rolls and thereby throw an excessive load on the remaining landowners in the district. This also is not the case as properties in projects such as have been

mentioned are taxable under two different statutes and the Commission is at present paying in lieu of taxes on existing projects of this type.

In summary the Game Commission will never be a large land management agency. Projects of this type will be relatively few and will be developed only to meet intense problems that appear to be feasible both financially and on a basis of benefits to the citizens of the state. Lastly in all projects of this type, although the wildlife benefits are the primary purpose, a policy of multiple use will be followed wherever possible.

WILSON MANAGEMENT AREA

(Continued from page 4)

work on the area in an attempt to completely evaluate the wildlife production and potentials. His work is in conjunction with the Oregon Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit.

Finally, the recreational value has been realized with the juvenile pheasant hunts and the use of the area for dog training and trials. In turn, these activities aid in making the facts gathered more applicable to other areas.

Plans call for further development, and starting this month, the Commission's regional headquarters will be moved from Albany to buildings that were a part of Adair Village owned by OSC. The deed to this land has just been received, and the move will help consolidate facilities and make for more efficient operations.

As hunting pressure increases in Oregon, the information obtained through work on this area will become more valuable as a guide to good game management elsewhere in the state.



One of three humpback (pink) salmon seen last October on spawning redds in Beaver Creek, tributary of Nestucca River.



Nest making action of another of the humpback salmon. This species does not commonly occur in the Oregon coastal streams.

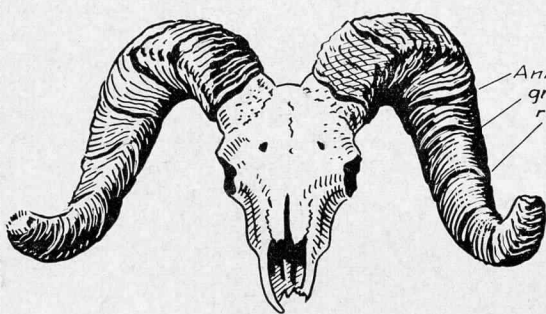
Bighorn Sheep*

*The Rocky Mountain Bighorn was found in the high country of the Wallowa Mtns. The last reported seen were two adults and a lamb in 1941 near Steamboat Lake.

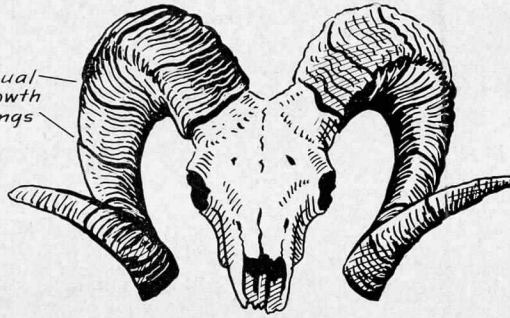
The range of the California Bighorn was generally east of the Cascades in the Deschutes Canyon, John Day country south to lower Klamath Lake, and east to Warner Mountains and Steens Mountain. Last recorded bighorn was killed in 1911 in the Steens Mountain area.



Bighorns are dainty feeders. Browsing on flowers, wild parsnip, grasses; buds of aspen, spruce, willows, mountain mahogany, currant, rose, and juniper. In the winter, they paw through 8"-10" of snow to reach grass, sage, and rabbitbrush.



Head of ram of the California (Rimrock) Bighorn showing typical low, wide horns.



Rocky Mountain Ram's head showing heavier, upright horns with tighter curl than his California cousin

Annual growth rings supposedly represent years growth. Ring is caused by the horn not growing during breeding seasons.



Ewes and yearling rams have short, slender backward curving horns similar to a domestic goat. Old ewes' horns may grow to 8" or 10".



In the mating season of October and November, bighorn rams always engage in individual battles or large free-for-alls. The terrific crack of the hollow horns may be heard for a mile.

Lambs are born in May and June. After about a week, the ewe and lamb join others to form loose-knit groups for summer foraging. Golden Eagles, perhaps, take the greatest number of lambs, with cougars, bobcats and coyotes adding their toll. In winter, snowslides prove to be an even greater enemy of the bighorn.



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Commission Bulletin

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