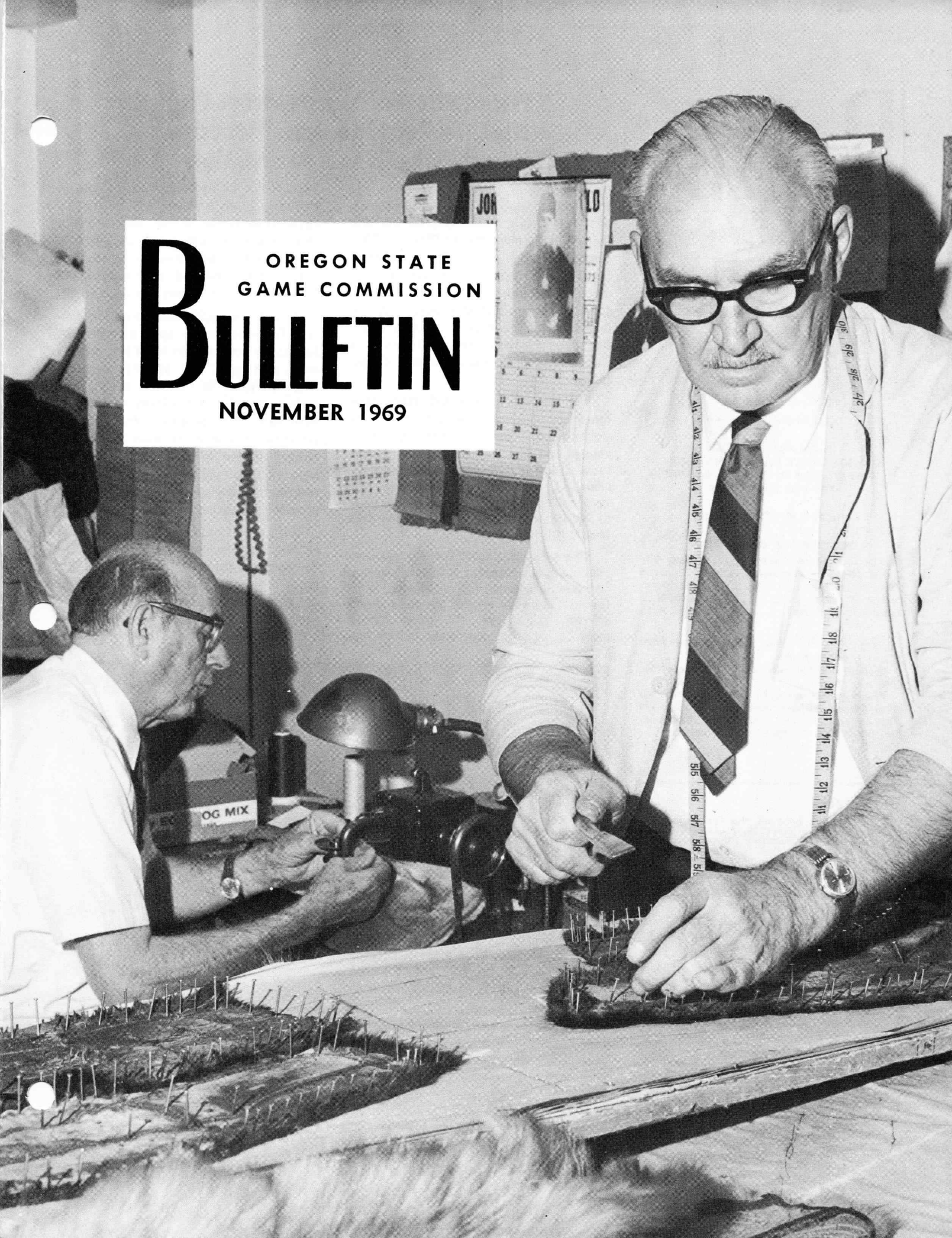

BULLETIN

OREGON STATE
GAME COMMISSION

NOVEMBER 1969

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BULLETIN

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The Cover

What happens between the fur trapper and the finished product? In the foreground Lester Lansing of Hamilton Furs stretches and fits sections of mink to form parts of a coat while Charles Lynden sews the various parts together.

Photo by Al Miller

HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

Instructors Approved

Month of September	71
Total to Date	3,760

Students Trained

Month of September	6,231
Total to Date	146,556

Firearms Casualties Reported in 1969

Fatal	0
Nonfatal	13

Willamette Falls Industrial Complex Asked to Provide Downstream Salmon-Steelhead Protection

The Oregon Game Commission and Fish Commission have formally requested the principal water users at the Willamette Falls near Oregon City and West Linn to abandon or modify certain existing hydro turbines. Those asked to take steps to minimize the serious losses of juvenile salmon and steelhead at the industrial complex were Publishers Paper Company, Portland General Electric Company, and Crown Zellerbach Corporation.

The request culminated more than ten years of investigations by the Game Commission. These included extensive studies and documentation of the magnitude of downstream mortalities, time periods of downstream migrations, the study of all known methods and devices to rectify the problem, and engineering feasibility studies.

The greatest single fisheries problem existing at the complex is the serious loss of juvenile salmon and steelhead. With the new fishways now in the final stages of completion, plus the great strides made in pollution abatement in the Willamette system, upstream adult migrants should have no problem in reaching the upper river in the future. However, the downstream problem involving juvenile salmonids must be solved before the full salmon and steelhead potential of the Willamette River system can be realized.

The two agencies along with the federal fisheries people have already embarked on programs to build the anadromous fish runs. The agencies envision large increases in the runs of fall and spring chinook, coho salmon, and winter steelhead. The potential for summer steelhead is also great, with small runs already started in the Santiam, McKenzie, and upper Willamette. These goals cannot be achieved until protection is provided the juvenile migrants.

All three companies were commended for their cooperation and direct involvement in the long, intensive, and difficult investigations, as well as making upstream fish passage possible, and for their efforts in water pollution abatement.

A giant net is lowered into place below the outlet of a turbine to catch downstream migrant steelhead and salmon. This operation was part of a study carried out by Game Commission biologists to determine mortality on these young fish.

FASHIONS & FURS

by Chester E. Kebbe
Chief Biologist - Small Game

In these days of shrinking wilderness frontiers it might seem strange to suggest that a once valuable and seriously depleted resource could ever become a detriment because of renewed abundance. Yet some of the elements involved in management and use of Oregon's furbearing animals have brought some reality to that suggestion.

There are several factors in management of furbearers which are quite different from management of other wildlife species. Fur animals are taken primarily for the commercial value of their skins but trapping does provide a great deal of outdoor recreation. Relatively few fur animals are taken by hunting or for food. As pelt prices of the various species fluctuate the value of each animal to the trapper also changes. Thus a species that is considered a prime furbearer this winter may be condemned as a serious pest or predator next year. In management, therefore, two main variables must be considered: the population status and demand for each species.

Today the fur resource which was so important in early day history has been relegated to a rather insignificant role in the state's economy. Where it was once a leading industry it now provides only part-time employment to a few individuals and returns less than a quarter of a million dollars in revenue. The present day trapper, in general, runs a trapline as a sideline to other employment while in pioneering days trapping was often his only source of income. The animals he traps as a hobby today—beaver, otter, mink, muskrat, and raccoon — are the same furbearers sought by the professional trapper a century and a half ago.

During pioneer days the quest for beaver pelts to satisfy a strong European demand led to exploration and settlement of much of the west. Every stream was densely populated with beaver but with intensive and unrestricted trapping this vast resource, which was thought to be inexhaustible, was brought to the brink of extinction. Only prompt legislative action late in the 19th century preserved the animal as part of our natural heritage.

Changing trends in the world of fashions strongly influence the cropping of fur animals. In the past 30 years mink pelts have been the principal fur used by fashion designers, and as a result they have been in great demand. Throughout this period prices have remained high for ranch mink and top quality wild mink while many other plentiful but less desirable furs have been neglected.

Currently, several species of long-haired furs have gained popularity as trim for women's coats. Foremost in demand is the bobcat which last winter brought the trapper an average of $17 per pelt, with top quality skins selling for as much as $40. This animal, classified as a predator with a bounty on its head seven years ago and worth only 50c per skin, has suddenly become a valuable fur animal.

(Continued on Page 5)

It hardly resembles a beaver, but that's what it was. This soft and luxurious natural beaver coat would be the pride and joy of any woman.

FUR CATCH REPORT

1968-69 TRAPPING SEASON

COUNTY AND NUMBER OF TRAPPERS' REPORTS	OTTER Av. Price $25.21		MINK Av. Price $8.28		MUSKRAT Av. Price $0.91		BEAVER Av. Price $15.11		RACCOON Av. Price $3.91		*SKUNK		†FOX		BOBCAT Av. Price $17.21		COYOTE Av. Price $6.82		NUTRIA Av. Price $1.63		‡MISCELLANEOUS	TOTAL AMOUNT
	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.	No.	Amt.		
Baker 21	....	$	37	$ 306.36	159	$ 144.69	150	$ 2,266.50	42	$ 164.22	6	$ 6.48	....	$	54	$ 929.34	15	$ 102.30	....	$	$ 17.09	$ 3,936.98
Benton 23	4	100.84	4	33.12	58	52.78	306	4,623.66	80	312.80	28	27.01	26	92.06	1	17.21	4	27.28	469	764.47	1.52	6,052.75
Clackamas 27	9	226.89	43	356.04	150	136.50	310	4,684.10	43	168.13	2	2.33	22	61.74	10	172.10	8	54.56	137	223.31	60.04	6,145.74
Clatsop 41	7	176.47	80	662.40	705	641.55	468	7,071.48	101	394.91	7	8.41	....	....	6	103.26	3	20.46	39	63.57	35.67	9,178.18
Columbia 29	2	50.42	20	165.60	620	564.20	386	5,832.46	53	207.23	3	2.73	1	4.63	25	430.25	4	27.28	55	89.65	55.31	7,429.76
Coos 27	38	957.98	7	57.96	363	330.33	501	7,570.11	49	191.59	25	26.83	....	....	13	223.73	5	34.10	....	....	17.91	9,410.54
Crook 9	....	....	3	24.84	58	52.78	160	2,417.60	4	15.64	....	....	....	....	6	103.26	3	20.46	....	....	4.58	2,639.16
Curry 3	2	50.42	2	16.56	6	5.46	39	589.29	4	15.64	....	....	....	....	1	17.21	6	40.92	....	....	8.33	743.83
Deschutes 22	7	176.47	73	604.44	190	172.90	38	574.18	8	31.28	4	5.17	....	....	37	636.77	20	136.40	....	....	31.22	2,368.83
Douglas 41	33	831.93	23	190.44	68	61.88	952	14,384.72	72	281.52	9	11.25	10	27.42	11	189.31	10	68.20	6	9.78	1.25	16,057.70
Gilliam 1	....	....	2	16.56	2	1.82	11	166.21	5	19.55	1	1.42	....	....	1	17.21	4	27.28	....	....	....	250.05
Grant 19	....	....	153	1,266.84	221	201.11	421	6,361.31	53	207.23	....	....	....	....	87	1,497.27	5	34.10	....	....	58.38	9,626.24
Harney 9	....	....	13	107.64	64	58.24	174	2,629.14	31	121.21	....	....	....	....	135	2,323.35	61	416.02	....	....	25.02	5,680.62
Hood River 5	....	....	3	24.84	4	3.64	20	302.20	14	54.74	7	7.39	....	....	9	154.89	8	54.56	....	....	.41	602.67
Jackson 19	6	151.26	19	157.32	525	477.75	150	2,266.50	88	344.08	5	6.08	5	11.35	15	258.15	19	129.58	....	....	6.24	3,808.31
Jefferson 2	5	126.05	2	16.56	285	259.35	14	211.54	23	89.93	3	3.75	4	9.08	2	34.42	2	13.64	....	....	....	764.32
Josephine 15	....	....	....	....	158	143.78	133	2,009.63	7	27.37	1	.91	3	6.81	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	2,188.50
Klamath 43	45	1,134.45	244	2,020.32	11,460	10,428.60	267	4,034.37	229	895.39	13	12.85	....	....	70	1,204.70	20	136.40	....	....	4.58	19,871.66
Lake 8	....	....	8	66.24	42	38.22	99	1,495.89	20	78.20	3	2.73	....	....	19	326.99	10	68.20	....	....	8.34	2,084.81
Lane 67	23	579.83	37	306.36	517	470.47	1,214	18,343.54	212	828.92	154	208.48	18	66.82	47	808.87	11	75.02	475	774.25	9.56	22,472.12
Lincoln 27	22	554.62	20	165.60	80	72.80	397	5,998.67	136	531.76	14	19.88	....	....	67	1,153.07	19	129.58	2	3.26	....	8,629.24
Linn 33	4	100.84	8	66.24	37	33.67	535	8,083.85	58	226.78	7	6.88	49	148.99	22	378.62	1	6.82	970	1,581.10	4.56	10,638.35
Malheur 27	....	....	6	49.68	2,738	2,491.58	124	1,873.64	30	117.30	2	2.84	1	4.63	76	1,307.96	88	600.16	....	....	30.01	6,477.80
Marion 19	4	100.84	17	140.76	45	40.95	372	5,620.92	69	269.79	9	8.19	18	71.54	....	....	1	6.82	204	332.52	64.60	6,656.93
Morrow 3	....	....	8	66.24	20	18.20	38	574.18	7	27.37	....	....	....	....	3	51.63	2	13.64	....	....	....	751.26
Multnomah 29	9	226.89	14	115.92	540	491.40	81	1,223.91	21	82.11	6	5.46	5	18.43	6	103.26	....	....	13	21.19	6.49	2,295.06
Polk 4	....	....	....	....	19	17.29	71	1,072.81	47	183.77	....	....	18	83.34	4	68.84	7	47.74	154	251.02	....	1,724.81
Sherman 1	....	....	2	16.56	....	....	2	30.22	32	125.12	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	171.90
Tillamook 31	30	756.30	45	372.60	256	232.96	673	10,169.03	69	269.79	4	5.68	....	....	66	1,135.86	5	34.10	2	3.26	4.97	12,984.55
Umatilla 15	....	....	18	149.04	289	262.99	192	2,901.12	37	144.67	....	....	....	....	25	430.25	17	115.94	....	....	4.17	4,008.18
Union 12	1	25.21	6	49.68	287	261.17	86	1,299.46	19	74.29	1	1.42	....	....	8	137.68	2	13.64	....	....	.82	1,863.37
Wallowa 29	4	100.84	101	836.28	815	741.65	74	1,118.14	102	398.82	1	1.42	....	....	94	1,617.74	40	272.80	....	....	17.09	5,104.78
Wasco 6	4	100.84	16	132.48	80	72.80	90	1,359.90	24	93.84	39	35.49	....	....	18	309.78	1	6.82	....	....	....	2,111.95
Washington 19	....	....	3	24.84	224	203.84	194	2,931.34	30	117.30	11	10.01	16	55.20	....	....	....	....	181	295.03	57.76	3,695.32
Wheeler 5	....	....	5	41.40	....	....	140	2,115.40	10	39.10	....	....	....	....	29	499.09	10	68.20	....	....	....	2,763.19
Yamhill 14	3	75.63	4	33.12	79	71.89	356	5,379.16	61	238.51	3	3.24	14	36.50	17	292.57	3	20.46	375	611.25	41.98	6,804.31
TOTALS 705	262	$6,605.02	1,046	$8,660.88	21,164	$19,259.24	9,238	$139,586.18	1,890	$7,389.90	368	$434.33	210	$698.54	984	$16,934.64	414	$2,823.48	3,082	$5,023.66	$577.90	$207,993.77

*Includes 173 striped skunks @ 91c and 195 civet cats @ $1.42.

†Includes 116 gray foxes @ $2.27 and 94 red foxes @ $4.63.

‡Includes 8 martens @ $8.33; 45 weasels @ 41c; 424 opossums @ 76c; 44 badgers @ $4.17; and 3 ringtail cats @ $1.25

Over 260 river otter pelts were taken last year for a total value of over $6,600. Otter fur ranks tops in value per pelt in Oregon.

Not classed as a furbearing animal, the coyote ranks eighth in importance to trappers. The 414 trapped and sold last season brought an average of $6.82 per pelt.

Fashions & Furs

An excellent example of the effects fashions and fur prices play on management can be shown with the raccoon. During the 1930s the animal was so heavily hunted and trapped that a closed season became necessary to protect it from extinction. Shortly thereafter coonskin coats and caps were no longer in vogue and the pelts became practically worthless. As a result, trapping for raccoons ceased and the population increased. Instead of a program calling for protection and management it became necessary to initiate control measures to curb predation on farm crops, poultry, and game birds.

Immediately following World War II muskrats were still in good demand and brought an average return of $2.06 per pelt to the trapper. Muskrat fur, however, was fast losing its popularity as a fashionable item and by 1968 had decreased in value to 65c. The price decline also resulted in a sharp drop in trapping pressure, with less than one-third of the available crop being harvested.

Beaver prices, too, dropped sharply during the period, but at $15 per skin last winter the price still remained sufficiently high to stimulate a strong trapping effort.

The rapid advancements in the manufacturing of synthetic furs have enhanced their popularity and brought the products in direct competition with many native furs. These substitutions, too, have had a strong influence on the fur market and the cropping of the state's fur resources.

Although trapping is fast becoming a lost art, 700 hardy outdoorsmen still found pleasure and profit last winter in harvesting Oregon's fur crop. They succeeded in catching 39,175 animals of 17 species whose pelts had a commercial value of $208,000. In spite of the low price paid for muskrats more of these animals were trapped than any other species. The beaver, however, was much more valuable and brought in over half of the trappers' revenue.

One of the primary objectives in wildlife management is to provide for an annual harvest of a species without decimating the breeding stock necessary to sustain the population in future years. To accomplish this goal it is necessary to learn as much as possible about the requirements of each species and design regulations which will provide for an annual cropping of the surplus.

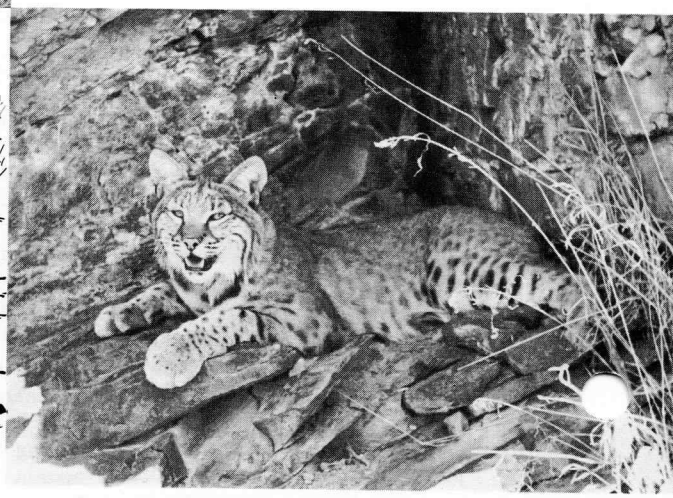
During periods of high fur prices most fur animals are heavily trapped and populations held at a low level. The amount of damage or predation during such periods is negligible. But with low prices and light trapping pressure animal populations increase and may become pests or predators. Harvesting a valuable fur resource today may become a job of controlling a destructive animal tomorrow.

The thin line which separates a nuisance animal from an economic asset may be determined by what today's fashions decree.

The finishing touches on fur coats are done by hand. Each coat is carefully inspected and then the linings are expertly sewn so that the stitching cannot be seen.

Oregon's number one furbearing animal, the beaver, was made the official state animal by the 1969 Legislature. Last season trappers took nearly 10,000 animals worth $140,000.

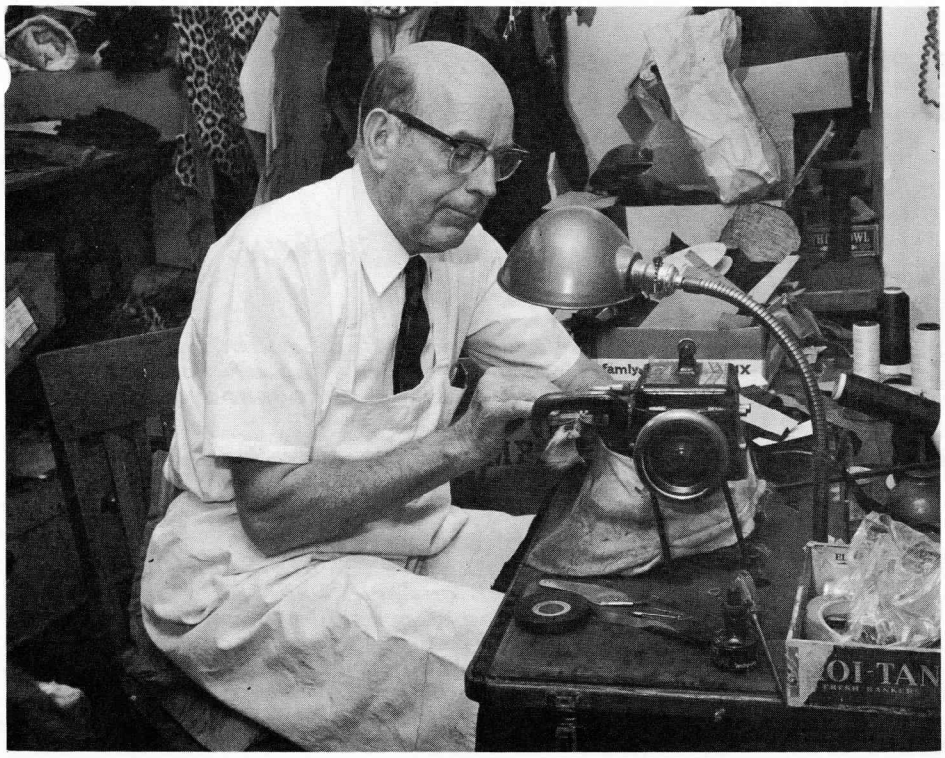
Still the most abundant, more muskrats are trapped each season than all other furbearers combined. Second only to the beaver in revenue, over 21,000 muskrats worth $19,250 were taken in the 1968-69 season.



The bobcat ranks second in value per pelt among other furbearers. Oregon trappers took nearly 1,000 in the past season worth $17,000.

Mink often lead the fashion parade but rank only fourth in value among Oregon's furbearers. Just over 1,000 mink were trapped last season and brought $8,660 on the fur market.

Past fads for raccoon coats and caps nearly exterminated this animal from many areas. Raccoons have again become numerous and the 1,900 pelts taken last season brought a total of $7,400.



Miles and miles of thread go into each fur coat. Great care must be taken to match the hair patterns and color of each piece of fur with that of its neighbor in a finished coat.

Wildlife Federation Poll

Ninety-seven per cent of the American public favors reallocating federal spending to provide more money for improvement of the natural environment, according to a national public opinion poll conducted for the National Wildlife Federation.

Although segments of the public differed on areas where they would reduce spending to free money for conservation, the major targets were national defense, the space program, and international affairs.

When supplied with information on current federal expenditures, the under-30 generation particularly favored taking money from defense and international affairs budgets. A full 71 per cent of the college educated favored reducing the defense budget.

The pollsters concluded, ". . . the American people in 1969 appear to desire the focus to be on the solving of domestic problems and the improvement of the quality of life at home. The high concern of younger adults and late adolescents may well indicate an important shift in the general population's priorities."

Earlier this year the National Wildlife Federation sponsored a national poll which found more than 85 per cent of the public concerned about the state of the environment. So concerned, three out of four said they would willingly pay increased taxes earmarked for conservation, including 63 per cent of those with family incomes under $5,000 per year.

Ironically, in spite of the obvious overwhelming public desire for solving the country's environmental problems, the Federation's recently completed Index of Environmental Quality found the U.S. is still losing the battle against pollution and natural resource depletion.

BENDER BOAT LANDING READY FOR USE

Bender Boat Landing, located on the North Fork Siuslaw River about four miles upstream from the mouth, is now available for use.

Purchased by the Game Commission in early summer, the one-half acre site is under development by Lane County through cooperative agreement with the Commission. Completed to date is a one-lane concrete ramp poured over the old gravel launching area. The county will also improve the existing parking area and sanitary facilities.

The main use of Bender Landing is expected to be by boat fishermen seeking sea-run cutthroat trout during July through October and chinook and coho salmon during September through December. The site also offers good bank angling possibilities for these fish as well as winter-run steelhead.

ROGUE SUMMER STEELHEAD TELL LIFE STORY

The Game Commission's summer steelhead research program on the Rogue River which began last year is beginning to pay off. Preliminary data indicate much overlapping of the summer races of steelhead but generally show an early run of large fish followed later by a large movement of the popular "half-pounders."

Through late August research workers tagged more than 1,200 summer steelhead, 350 at Gold Ray Dam and the remainder on the lower river below Lobster Creek. On the lower river 53 per cent of the catch was composed of half-pounders; the remainder were large fish in the five and six-pound class.

Hatchery-produced steelhead show a significant contribution among the captured fish. At Gold Ray Dam 40 per cent of the fish tagged are returns from the Commission's Bandon and Butte Falls Hatchery smolt releases.

Some steelhead migrate rapidly upstream while others linger along the route. Repeat spawners are numerous. Two such fish tagged at Lobster Creek in July of 1968 were recaptured in July of this year, apparently on their second spawning migration. Both steelhead had grown about three inches in length between the first tagging and recapture. Another steelhead on a repeat spawning migration, a 15-inch half-pounder tagged in McNeil Creek last winter, was recaptured at Gold Ray Dam in late July at a length of 18 inches.

Four Bighorns Taken

Four bighorn rams for six sheep hunters. This was the score for the tag holders who worked the rugged Hart and Steens Mountains in southeastern Oregon during the six-day bighorn sheep hunt September 27 through October 2. Two of the rams were taken on Hart Mountain and two on the Steens.

Game biologists report all four bighorns were mature rams in excellent condition.

The largest ram was taken on Hart Mountain by Roy Harris of Grants Pass and judged to be 11 years of age. The other ram from Hart Mountain was a nine-year-old taken by Bruce Wolfe of Sheridan.

Mike Rodegerdts of Lake Oswego took a six-year-old ram from the Steens and the fourth ram, estimated at five years of age, was killed by David Hanifen of Bend.

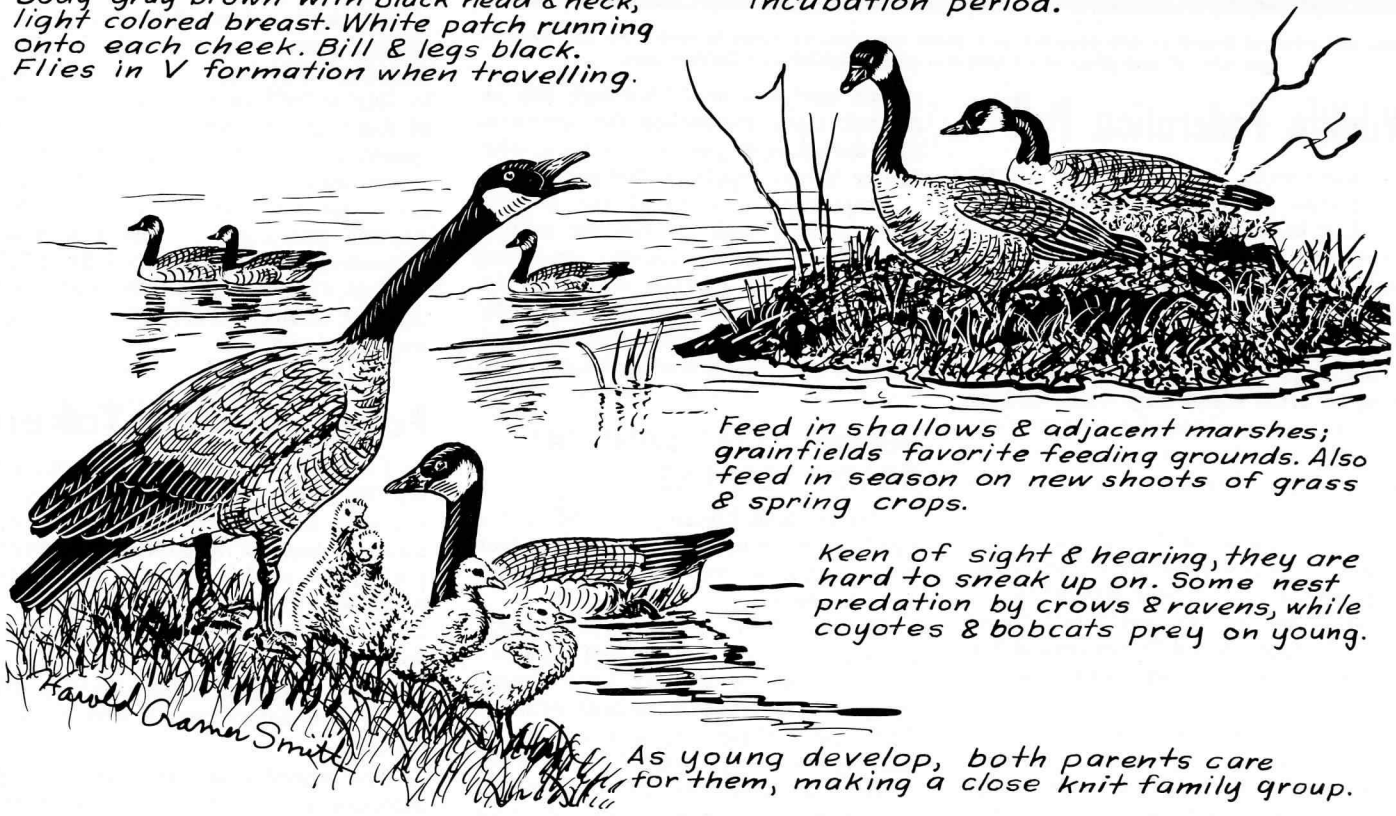
WESTERN CANADA GOOSE

Branta canadensis moffitti

Breeds from British Columbia, Alberta, South Saskatchewan south to northern California. Winters throughout western U.S.

Canadas mate for life, & nesting begins in March or April. Preferred nesting sites are depressions in small islands or muskrat houses. Occasionally cliffs, hawks' nests or platforms are used. Two to eight creamy white eggs are laid. Gander stands guard during 28-30 day incubation period.

Body gray-brown with black head & neck, light colored breast. White patch running onto each cheek. Bill & legs black. Flies in V formation when travelling.



Feed in shallows & adjacent marshes; grainfields favorite feeding grounds. Also feed in season on new shoots of grass & spring crops.

Keen of sight & hearing, they are hard to sneak up on. Some nest predation by crows & ravens, while coyotes & bobcats prey on young.

Harold Cramer Smith

As young develop, both parents care for them, making a close knit family group.

OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION

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