

# Oregon State GAME COMMISSION BULLETIN

Vol. IV

PORTLAND, OREGON, OCTOBER, 1949

No. 10

## Progress Report on the Public Shooting Program

By A.V. MEYERS, Chief Biologist

The Sauvie Island Public Shooting Grounds that will be opened for the first time this season is the fourth such area to be placed into operation in Oregon during the five-year period that this program has been underway. Literally, "a lot of water has gone under the bridge" since the program was materialized by the establishment of the Summer Lake Public Shooting Ground on October 14, 1944.

When Hugo Leyva, Summer Lake Manager, and the writer took possession for the Game Commission of the Summer Lake area on October 13, 1944, and started operation of Oregon's first public shooting grounds the following day, we were not aware of the size and complexity of the job nor that we were pioneering a field that would grow so rapidly and so quickly gain the hunting public's support. Since no one was available who had had any experience in operating a public shooting ground, we had to set up a management routine by the trial and error method. This, plus a lack of time for preparation, definitely put the early Summer Lake enterprise into a pioneering category. A batching camp was set up at a former hog ranch on an alkali mud flat, the only place available. Hunters were checked by lantern light on the kitchen table. As soon as stormy weather set in, supplies had to be brought in by pack horse. The public shooting ground idea, being new to Oregon hunters, provided a lot of questions, discussion and criticism, both constructive and otherwise. This all adds up to the fact that the first lesson in the operation of a public shooting ground was learned the hard way. The Summer Lake Public Shooting Ground was followed by the establishment of the Chewaucan area near Lakeview in 1947, Malheur near Burns in 1948, and Sauvie Island near Portland as previously stated, will be opened in 1949.

All agencies responsible for administration of the migratory waterfowl resources know the major problem that has resulted from the loss of habitat. In addition to this decline in production areas, as great a decline at least has taken place in the harvest areas available to the public. Private clubs, posted areas, and

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## Lockwood Elected President Western Game Association

C. A. Lockwood, Oregon state game director, was elected president of the Western Association of State Game and Fish Commissioners at an executive session held in Winnipeg, Canada, last week, where the game officers were attending the annual meeting of the International Association of State Game and Fish Commissioners.

Lockwood, who had been vice-president, was advanced to the presidency by the resignation of A. A. O'Claire of Montana, who had been elected president at the annual meeting of the Association last June in Seattle. The 1950 conference of the Western Association consequently will be held in Portland sometime during the month of June.

## ELK SEASON OPENS OCTOBER 25

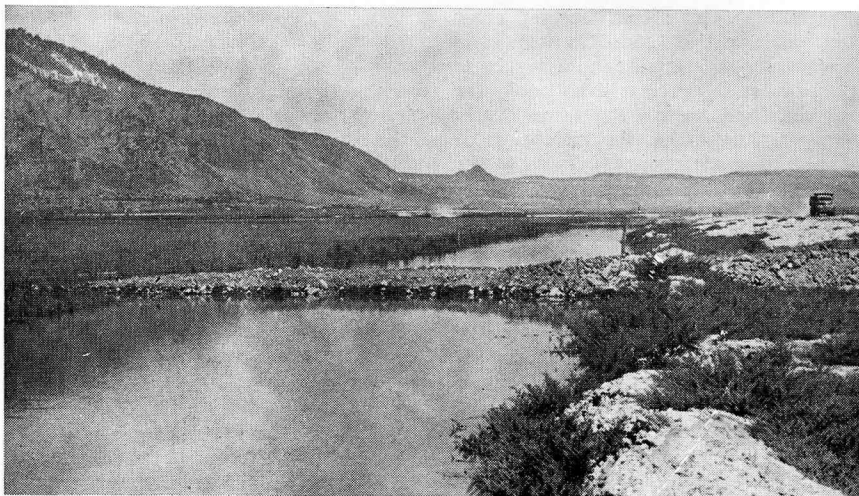
All counties of the state, except Washington, Tillamook and eastern Douglas county, will open to elk hunting on October 25. The season will close on November 3 in that portion of the state west of U. S. Highway 97. The bag limit in this western area is one bull elk having antlers with three points or more, including the brow tine.

Eastern Oregon will remain open to hunting until November 20. The bag limit is one elk of either sex except that only bull elk having antlers may be taken in a specified area between Baker and La Grande and in an area north of Joseph. Complete description of the bull elk area is given in the Oregon Hunter's Guide.

An extended season for elk of either sex is provided in a special area around Baker, hunting to be permitted until December 31.

Hunters may hunt elk in any of these areas under a general elk tag, which may be purchased from license agencies throughout the state. The Commission is not issuing any special elk tags this year. Elk hunters, like deer hunters, are required to file a report on their hunt within thirty days after the close of the elk season even if not successful.

## HAVE YOU RETURNED YOUR DEER REPORT CARD?



Many improvements have been made at the Summer Lake Management Area since acquisition by the Game Commission. On the right is one of the main water control dike installations with a cross-check to stabilize water levels in the marsh area on the left.

## ☆ THIS AND THAT ☆

District agents sampled big game summer ranges during the month of August to determine distribution, densities, sex ratios and current reproduction of the big game herds. Observations to date indicate a greater than normal fawn and calf crop this season with a high percentage of deer and antelope does having twin fawns.

Big game winter ranges in eastern Oregon are extremely dry and severe infestations of mice and grasshoppers threaten the survival of preferred winter forage plants on these ranges. In 1941 similar peaks of rodents and insects resulted in the destruction of approximately 80 per cent of the bitterbrush on some Grant county winter ranges and it is possible that similar losses in the few remaining stands may occur this year.

\* \* \*

Anglers took approximately 13,328 fish at South Twin Lake this season, at the rate of 1 fish per angler. The average length of time for the angler to catch a trout was 5.0 hours and the average weight of fish was 13.6 ounces. At East Lake it required 2.4 hours to catch one fish and the average angler took 1.95 trout. Total number of anglers checked was 5,809. At Paulina Lake, 2,811 anglers were checked who had spent 2.8 hours to catch 1.61 trout.

\* \* \*

Salvage operations on a small scale have been carried on in various sections of the state. From Dry Creek in Curry county, 17,000 salmon and trout from 1 to 9½ inches long were salvaged when the water became too low. Love reservoir was stocked with 1,000 largemouth bass fry taken from the sloughs of the Snake river. Approximately 3,000 catfish were seined in Wallowa county and distributed in Magone lake and various gravel pits in the Grande Ronde Valley where such plantings were indicated.

\* \* \*

Since the fishway and screen crew started work in the Lake-Klamath area some weeks ago, 18 screen boxes have been constructed which will be ready for screen installations in 1950. Practically all fish plantings with the exception of some pack operations, were completed for the year by the end of September. Many previously unplanted lakes were stocked this year. Most pheasant liberations also were finished last month.

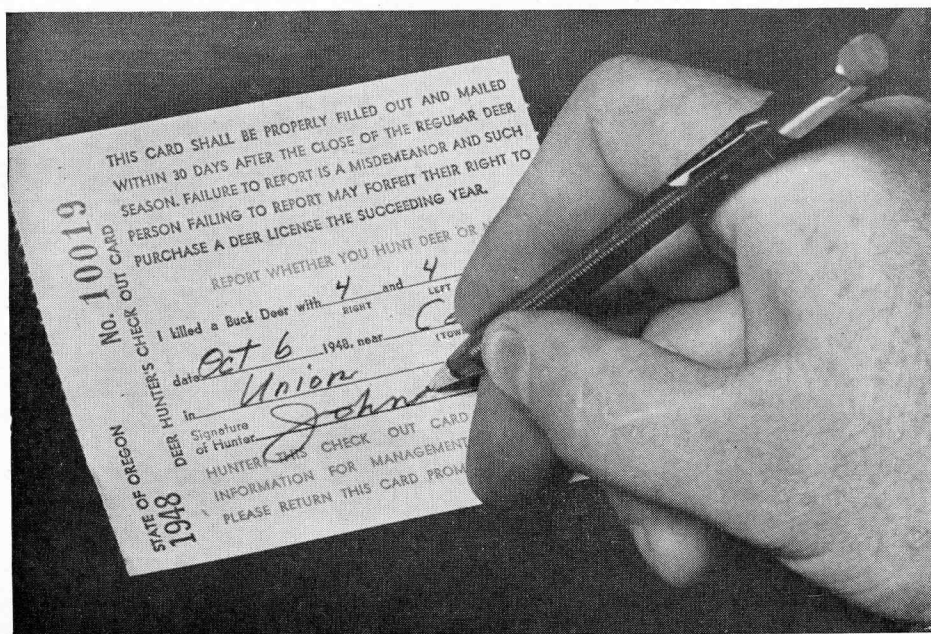
\* \* \*

Log dams and screens have been installed on several streams tributary to Miller Lake (Klamath county) in an attempt to stop the spawning migrations of the lake lamprey and eventually to reduce the number of this parasite.

\* \* \*

Reports from field agents indicate a good pheasant, valley quail and Hun crop in most districts as the crops are harvested and birds become conspicuous.

## DEER HUNTERS MAIL YOUR REPORTS!



### 1949 ANTELOPE SEASON

The 1949 antelope season was held from August 20 through 25. A total of 1,000 permits were issued and tag holders were determined by means of a public drawing.

The open area included those portions of Lake, Harney and Malheur counties east of U. S. Highway 395 and south of U. S. Highway 20. Only adult bucks with horns longer than the ears were legal.

A complete summary of the kill is not available as yet since all return cards have not been received. To date, an 817 return is available and 509 hunters have reported success. Of this total, 55 per cent were reported bagged in Lake county, 31 per cent in Harney county, and 14 per cent in Malheur county. The heaviest kill was in the Drakes Flat area of eastern Lake county. The remaining unreturned antelope cards will increase the kill to some degree.

An aerial patrol was maintained and two-way radio contact with automobiles provided for an excellent average of the more concentrated hunting areas. It is felt that violations were at a minimum. A total of 13 illegal antelope were verified. In addition, four more were reported by hunters. Since a dead antelope shows up clearly from the air and large sections of country were covered, heavy illegal losses would have been more obvious.

This was the first antelope season since 1945 and the second season in which bucks only were legal. An intensive effort was devoted to educating the hunters by means of printed information. A letter and a bulletin were distributed to all tag holders. These sources of information included maps of the open area, pic-

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## Progress Report on the Public Shooting Program

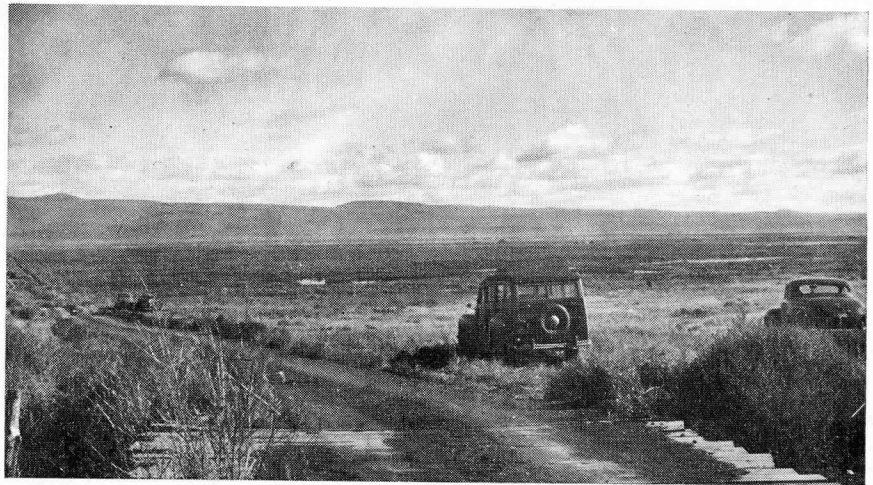
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refuges have removed much choice hunting area from general use. It is the general public, through license fees and taxes, that provides money necessary for game management. The Oregon State Game Commission feels it has a dual responsibility to the public, to produce waterfowl and to provide a place where the average hunter has an opportunity to participate in the harvest.

The public shooting grounds are set up and managed along certain basic principles to provide:

1. Game areas where hunters may go afield and enjoy hunting without any question as to their right and privilege to do so.
2. Systematic, well managed hunting conditions that furnish hunting opportunities to all and protect real sportsmen from the abuses of game hogs and other unscrupulous individuals, thus accommodating those who hunt for recreation and not primarily for the meat.
3. A balanced wildlife area in which the crippling loss and other abuses will be held to a minimum, and the necessary feeding and resting sanctuaries will be available to stabilize wildlife populations and protect the breeding stock required for future propagation.
4. A place where persons of moderate means in this generation and generations to come will be assured the right and privilege of participating in this outdoor recreation for a fee within their monetary limits.
5. Managing personnel capable of correctly advising or instructing those who may seek wildlife information.

Managing a public shooting ground has its problems and trying moments like any other endeavor that serves a large number of the public. Hunters as a group are fine people but there always is a small



Cars of hunters parked on the country road in the pheasant hunting area of Summer Lake. Grain crops in the fields were left standing to provide winter food for the birds.

troublesome minority composed of those who do not wish to conform to regulations or who expect special privileges.

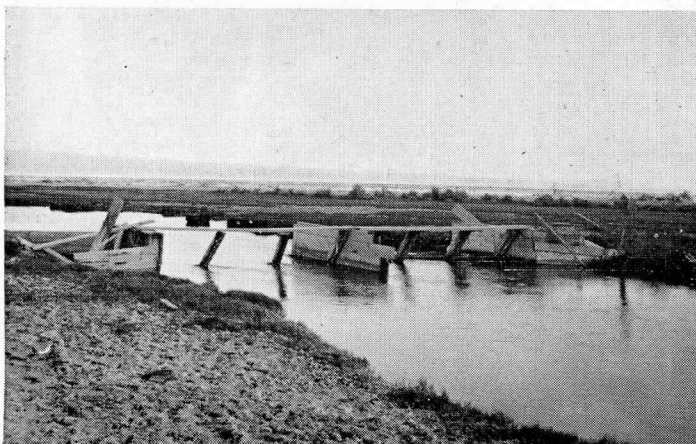
One serious problem vexing in its persistency, is the long-range shooting by some hunters who are either inexperienced or fail to realize the results of such hunting methods. Long-range shooting may be food for the ammunition business but the resulting crippling loss is very destructive to game and a constant disturbance to fellow hunters who are waiting for the chance to make "clean kills".

The lack of biological knowledge on the part of many sportsmen, while not necessarily a serious problem, does detract from the recreational value of the hunting. When some hunters can tell you in the finest details the ballistics on their firearms and fail completely to identify the species in their bag, it is evident that these individuals are more interested in "killing something just because it's alive" than properly participating in the hunt as a recreation. It is rather overwhelming to have hunters seriously argue that the "green head" and the mallard are separ-

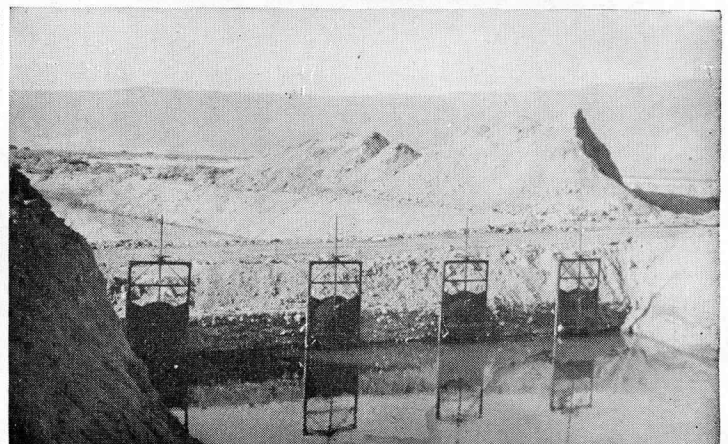
ate species, or bring to the checking station a whistling swan, avocet and cormorant, respectively identified as a "grey honker", "duck" and "brant". A brief search of simple biological literature that is readily available can prevent this. If a person takes up some other sport, as for instance, horsemanship, he certainly tries to learn something about horses and does not confine his search for information to saddles only. Likewise, it seems that all sportsmen should learn something about the game and not confine their learning to hunting equipment alone.

It is recognized that a very high percentage of a public shooting ground patronage is composed of beginners and occasional participants in the waterfowl hunting sport. The avid and persistent duck hunter usually has his "contact", leased area or privately owned pond whose seclusion he prefers to the public shooting grounds. This condition is responsible for the relatively low success ratios on all public shooting areas and makes our information centers located

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Old water controls on Ana River before acquisition of Summer Lake property.



New diversion dam and part of water control recently installed on the Ana River.

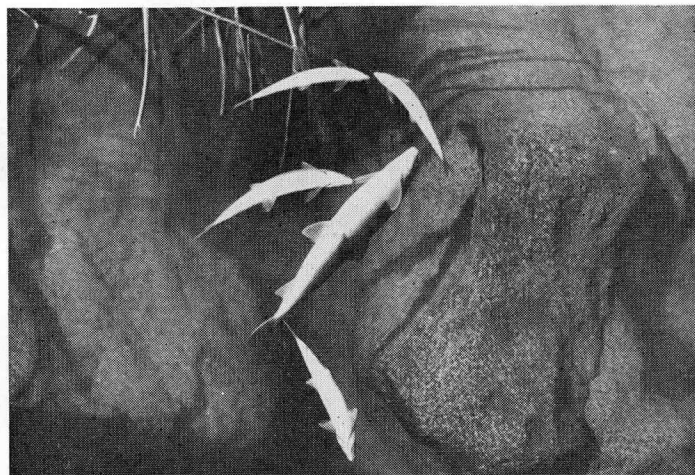
# GAME COMMISSION MAKES



Game Commission field men and assisting sportsmen start out to rid Big Lava Lake of trash fish. This 380 acre lake is the largest lake where complete trash fish control has ever been attempted in Oregon. Reclaiming trout lakes that had been ruined by large trash fish populations was started last month with the poisoning of Big Lava and Little Cultus Lakes. Several other lakes are scheduled this month.



Hand operated spray guns are used to spread the rotenone in shoal areas where vegetation is heavy. It is important to kill every fish in this type of lake rehabilitation.



Whitefish that have succumbed to the rotenone treatment. Big Lava Lake had a heavy population of whitefish and chubs. Only three trout were recovered from the lake.



# WAR ON TRASH FISH



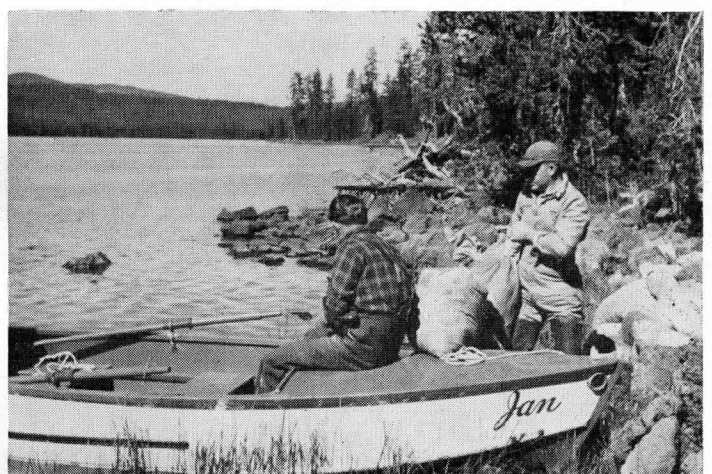
A ready-mix truck was used to mix the rotenone before the poisoning operation began. Rotenone kills fish and all gill-breathers but is harmless to humans and stock.



Bob Borovicka, district fisheries agent for the Commission, assigns sections of the lake to field men and cooperating sportsmen. Many sportsmen assisted in the work.



Rotenone in sacks is spread by towing in the deeper water. Big Lava Lake was marked off into twenty sections with field men and sportsmen being assigned to each section.



Re-loading one of the boats with rotenone. By surveying the area of the lake and taking the depth of each section, the needed amount of rotenone was calculated.



A motor driven spray gun is also used to treat sections that have dense vegetation. South Twin Lake, treated in this manner in 1941, has become an excellent trout producer.



Dead whitefish and chubs (roach) begin to show after a half hour's work. After fish food is well re-established, the lakes will be stocked with trout.

## Progress Report on the Public Shooting Program

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there of great importance. The most common questions asked about the public shooting grounds have to do with the hunting fees. At the present time, a daily fee of two dollars per person is charged on all areas except the federally-owned Malheur. This is not an attempt to make a profit, but rather to throw more of the annual operating cost of such areas on those sportsmen actually participating in their use. The operating policy of the Game Commission anticipates that the revenue from the hunting fees shall never exceed 60 or 70 per cent of the annual operating budget.

The public shooting program is relatively new not only in Oregon but throughout the nation. In 1947, the latest available complete record, 15 states and two Canadian provinces were operating public shooting grounds. Of these 15 states, Oregon and California were the only ones in the far west. Iowa, Arkansas and South Dakota were the other states listed west of the Mississippi.

Since 1947 many other states, including Washington, have instigated large public shooting ground programs. The California Fish and Game Department will receive about \$9,000,000 of the state's revenue from pari-mutuel horse racing to supplement its regular game funds and has allocated a substantial proportion to its public shooting ground program. Oregon's program is aggressive but due to financial limitations, is considerably smaller in scope than the California program.

Managing a public hunting area is a year-long operation. During the open season, most of the hunters notice only

the physical operation of the public shooting ground which of necessity is the major activity at that time. During the rest of the season, however, other activities are underway. Water levels must be controlled to protect nesting birds, produce the maximum amount of aquatic and semi-aquatic foods and prevent duck "sickness" or botulism outbreaks. Crop lands are cultivated and planted for wild-life foods. The muskrat population is carefully managed in marsh areas since the muskrat density is a very important factor in waterfowl production. Too many rats cause a competition for food. Too few rats allow the tules to close in to a point of discouraging waterfowl use and reducing the number of muskrat houses available for nesting and resting waterfowl. Law enforcement, predator control and grazing control also are year around activities.

The accomplishments to date can best be shown by a summary of each area.

### Summer Lake Area

The Summer Lake Management area established in 1944 now contains 13,345 acres, of which 7,687 acres are maintained as an inviolate sanctuary and 5,658 acres operated as a public shooting ground. In other words, the public shooting ground is only a part of the project, both as to area and operations. For the most part, the public thinks of Summer Lake only from the standpoint of a public shooting ground, but the Game Commission considers the public shooting ground as being secondary in importance to the protection and production phase of the total project.

Nesting studies, brood counts, weekly censuses, and other pertinent biological data indicate an average annual production of 12,000 waterfowl. The heaviest season kill to date, 1946, was 11,283 birds, which together with the crippling loss

that always accompanies hunting, makes the annual kill approximately equal to the annual production.

The area was acquired for approximately \$50,000 and will be developed for a total of about \$160,000. The approximate composition of the unit is summarized as follows:

Type	Original Area	Present Area	Completed Area
Shallow marsh . . . . .	4,000	5,500	7,500
Open lake . . . . .	1,500	500	500
Grassy meadows interspersed with ponds . . . . .	1,000	2,000	2,000
Grain land . . . . .	240	350	500
Alkali flats and sagebrush . . . . .	6,605	4,995	2,845

The Summer Lake Valley has proven to be good china pheasant habitat. Due to its isolation from other pheasant areas and concentration of hunters, it was chosen for a five-year experiment to determine the results of liberations of birds of different ages planted in different months and to compare artificial with natural propagation. Very liberal seasons on either sex were set in an attempt to remove all or nearly all the field stock. It is quite astonishing to see the large number of pheasants that escape the long season of intense hunting. This substantiates the high value placed on proper cover and good habitat. The results of this study have been reported previously so will not be further discussed here.

The annual revenue has varied from \$5,270 to \$7,578 per season. Grazing fees bring in about \$500 per season and muskrat pelts average about \$1,200, making an annual revenue of \$7,000 to \$9,000. The annual budget for the management area is \$17,500.

### Chewaucan Area

This 50,000 acre drained marshland in Lake County, owned by the Chewaucan Land and Cattle Company of California, came under state management in 1947. For years prior to 1947, the entire area was closed to the public by the company for the purpose of protecting the thousands of cattle grazed there during the late fall and winter months. The entire 50,000 acre area is from fair to excellent waterfowl habitat. The Company and the State Game Commission entered into an agreement in 1947 whereby at least 2,500 acres of the best duck land could be operated by the state as a public shooting ground in consideration for posting and enforcing the rest of the area as a refuge. This arrangement has been satisfactory to both parties. However, hunters have made but limited use of Chewaucan. The area has been closed for so many years that it is strange to hunters and must therefore build up patronage. The "non-duck" appearance of the approaches and its proximity to Summer Lake also are believed to be responsible.

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Aerial view of the Narrows in the Malheur refuge showing Mud Lake, Harney Lake, and Iron Mountain in the background. A portion of last year's shooting ground is shown in the lower right hand corner. It is probable that this year's shooting ground will be moved farther east to a more desirable location.



## Progress Report on the Public Shooting Program

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### Malheur Area

The 8,000 acre Malheur Public Shooting Ground is on a relatively small part of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's large Malheur Migratory Waterfowl Refuge in Harney County near Burns. This refuge was established in the early 1930's but not until 1948 had acquisition progressed sufficiently to justify opening a public shooting area.

The federal agency asked the State Game Commission to take over the administration of the public shooting ground and operate it along the same line as the other shooting grounds but eliminating the daily hunting fee. The Commission felt it should be permitted to charge the usual fee to defray administrative costs but finally agreed reluctantly to the federal proposal on the basis that assistance would be received from federal field personnel and that the State's obligations would involve only the period of the actual hunting season and the hunting grounds.

### Sauvie Island Area

This area of 13,000 acres located on islands in the Columbia River near Portland is now under process of acquisition. Although the project was started in March, 1948. State ownership is still small and scattered due to reluctance of the landowners to sell for the appraised valuation.

A limited public shooting ground operation is being set up for this season more as an experiment than as a substantial hunting area. With this coming season's experience many of the administrative "wrinkles" can be ironed out before we go into a large scale hunting program. The plans are to open one large tract to 100 hunters per day for the first four days of the season for pheasant and duck shooting. The rest of the hunting will be done on assignment to certain blinds or area. Hunting days will be:

October 21, 22, 23, 26, 29, and 30.

November 2, 5, 6, 8, and 9

December 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, and 31

January 1, 2, 4, 6, and 7.

The Sauvie Island shooting permits will be issued on a reserved basis. Written applications, preferably by mail and postmarked October 7 or later, will be accepted and filed in the order received. Each application should be submitted on the prepared form available at license agencies and be accompanied by the \$2.00 daily fee. The Commission encourages two persons applying together, as two hunters will be assigned to each double blind.

This project is in the early stages of development. Some field crops for winter bird feed have been sown and some transplanting of aquatic plants made. Considerably more land must be acquired before real progress in water stabilization

## Waterfowl Regulations by Flyways

	Atlantic Flyway	Mississippi Flyway	Central Flyway	Pacific Flyway
<b>Open Season</b> . . . . .	40 days or two 14-day periods	40 days or two 14-day periods	45 days or two 18-day periods	50 days or two 20-day periods
<b>Bag Limits</b>				
Ducks . . . . .	4 and 8	4 and 8	4 and 8	5 and 10
Geese . . . . .	5 (3 blue)	4	5 (3 snows)	6 (4 snows)

and food production can be accomplished.

Sauvie Island Management Area is the most extensive project yet undertaken. Acquisition will run about one million dollars and development a quarter of a million with an estimated annual operating cost of \$40,000.

Not more than half the area will be used as a public shooting grounds. Development of this unit will not only help the hunting on Sauvie Island but its effect will undoubtedly be seen throughout the Willamette Valley and the Lower Columbia area.

Another management area, the 6,500 acre Ladd Marsh unit near La Grande has been approved and acquisition started. As it is developed, a public shooting ground will be established there if hunting use is indicated as being probable.

Many other good waterfowl areas are under observation and the possibility of establishing other public shooting grounds on some of these is being considered.

## 1949 ANTELOPE SEASON

(Continued from Page 2)

tures of buck and doe antelope illustrating distinguishing characteristics, and data on the species, its future and management.

As a whole, the season was considered successful. The majority of hunters experienced no difficulty in distinguishing legal bucks and violations were at a minimum. Cooperation on the part of participating hunters is responsible for much of this success. Continued cooperation will insure future hunting seasons for acquiring prime antelope trophy heads.

## October-November Calendar

Trout, Salmon, Steelhead (12" minimum)

— Open both months.

Spiny-ray Fish — Open both months.

Predators — Open both months.

Deer — October 1-20.

Elk — Oct. 25-Nov. 3 (western Oregon).

Elk — Oct. 25-Nov. 20 (eastern Oregon).

Pheasants — Noon Oct. 21-26 (Area I).

Pheasants — Noon Oct. 21-30 (Area II).

Pheasants — Noon October 21-November 9 (Area III — Malheur county).

Pheasants — Same as waterfowl season (Area IV — Summer Lake).

Valley Quail — Noon Oct. 21-Oct. 30.

Hungarian Partridge — Noon October 21-November 9 (Malheur county).

Sage Grouse — October 1-5.

Silver Grey Squirrels — October 1-20.

Waterfowl — Noon Oct. 21-Nov. 9.

## Upland Game Seasons Open

All seasons provided for pheasant, valley quail and Hungarian partridge open concurrently with the waterfowl season at noon on October 21.

The longest pheasant season is allowed for Malheur county (Area III) where hunting will extend through November 9. Bag limit for this county is 4 cock pheasants a day and not more than 12 during the entire season or in possession. In Area I, including most of the western Oregon counties and Klamath county, the season is open from noon October 21 to October 26, with a bag limit of 2 cocks a day and not more than 6 during the entire season or in possession. Central and eastern Oregon counties as well as Jackson and Josephine counties (Area II) have a season from noon October 21 through October 30 with a bag limit of 3 cocks a day and not more than 9 during the entire season. The Summer Lake Pheasant Study Area (Area IV) will be open to pheasant hunting during the migratory waterfowl seasons and the bag limit is 4 pheasants of either sex per day and not more than 12 the entire season or in possession. The rest of Lake county is closed to pheasant hunting as are the following counties: Clatsop, Tillamook, Curry, and Lincoln.

Hungarian partridge hunting will be permitted in Malheur county only, the season coinciding with the pheasant season. Bag limit is 3 birds a day and 6 a season. Valley quail may be hunted from October 21 through October 30 in Josephine, Jackson, Deschutes, Crook, Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler, Morrow, Umatilla, Grant and that portion of Jefferson county outside of the Madras Irrigation Project.

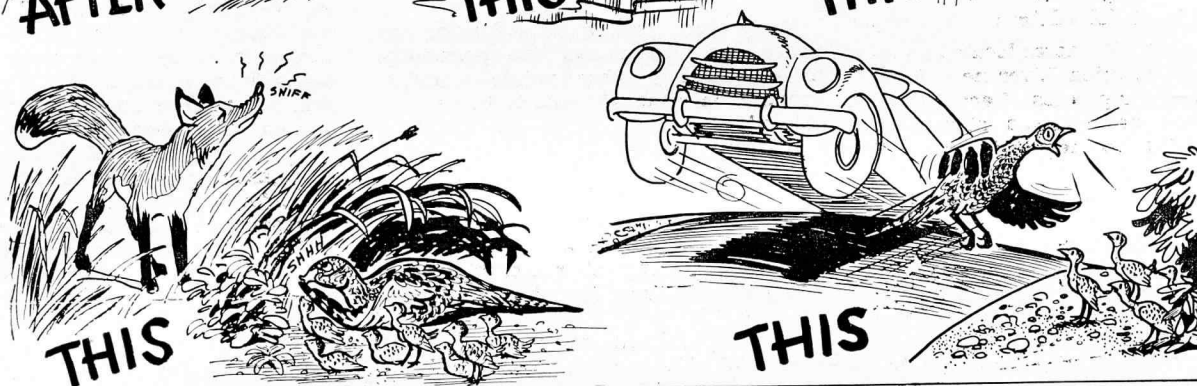
Any upland game birds that are to be transported through or possessed in a closed area or area where a lesser bag limit prevails must be checked by a state officer in the area where the birds are legally taken. The officer will record the date and county of kill on the hunter's license. It shall be unlawful to possess more than the legal limit of upland game birds in any area unless license is marked to indicate that the birds in possession were killed in an area where such a possession limit is legal. Limits may be checked at any Game Commission or State Police station or by any state officer in the field within the county or area where such bag limits apply.

**PROTECT PHEASANT HENS**

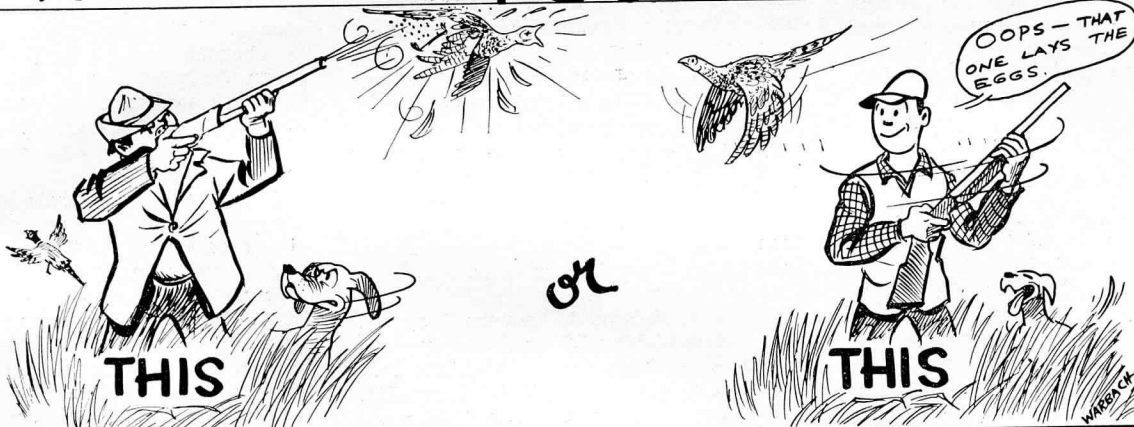
# Oregon State Game Commission Bulletin

1634 S. W. ALDER STREET  
P. O. BOX 4136  
PORTLAND 8, OREGON

Courtesy of "MICHIGAN CONSERVATION".



ITS STILL UP TO **YOU** WHETHER IT IS —



PHEASANT ARITHMETIC

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \text{10 HENS} & + & \text{10 COCKS} & = & \text{100 EGGS}
 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{ccccc}
 \text{10 HENS} & + & \text{1 COCK} & \text{STILL} & \text{100 EGGS}
 \end{array}$$

∴ YOU CAN SHOOT THE COCKS IF YOU SAVE THE HENS