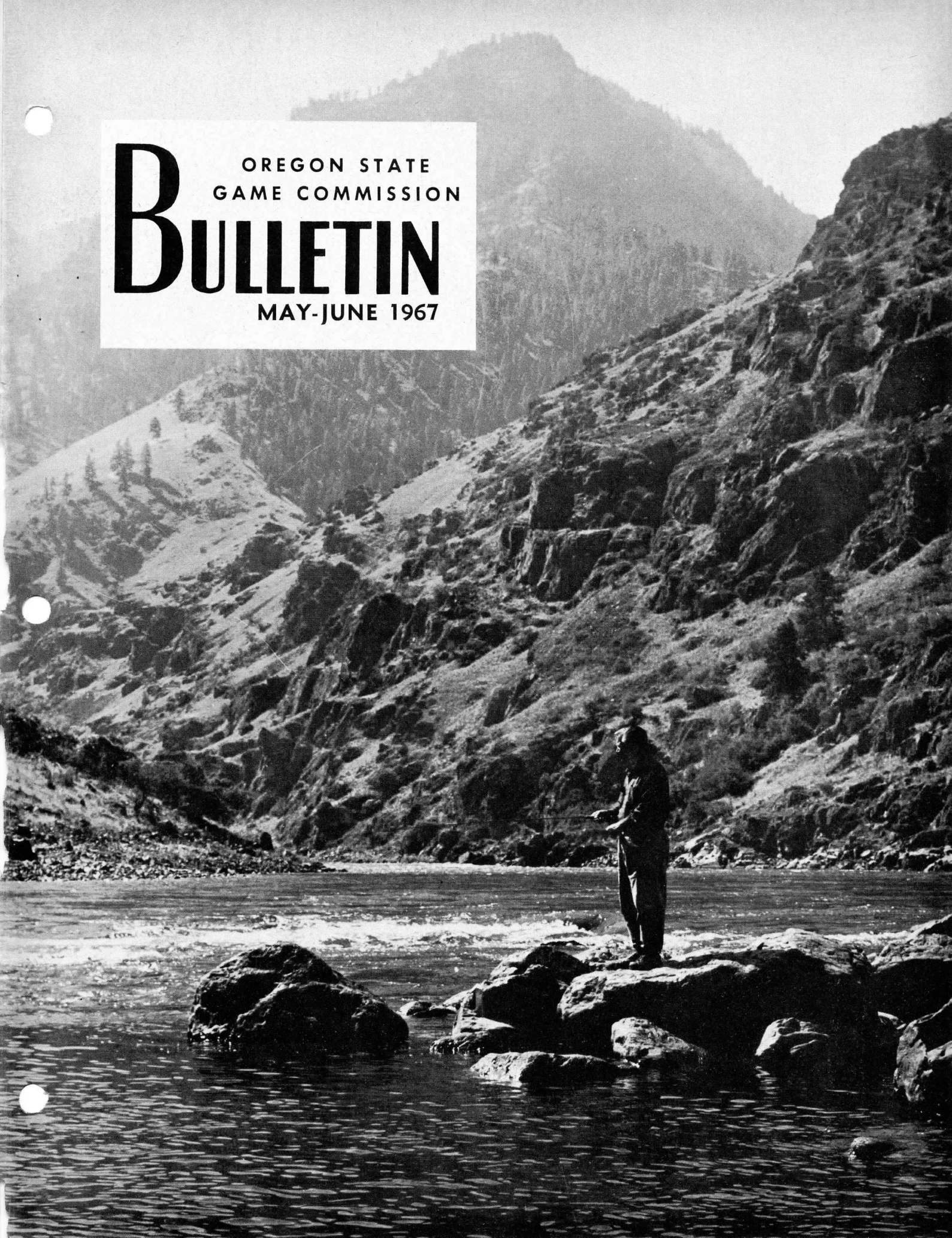


OREGON STATE  
GAME COMMISSION  
**BULLETIN**  
MAY-JUNE 1967



# OREGON STATE GAME COMMISSION BULLETIN

Number 3, Volume 22  
May-June 1967

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## The Cover

Fishing for smallmouth bass in Hells Canyon area of the Snake River. (Photo by Milt Guymon)

## BULLETIN HUNTER SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM

### Instructors Approved

Months of February and March ..... 46  
Total to Date ..... 3,973

### Students Trained

Months of February and March ..... 1,478  
Total to Date ..... 106,326

### Firearms Casualties Reported in 1967

Fatal ..... 0  
Nonfatal ..... 8

## BIG GAME REGULATIONS HEARING IN PORTLAND

The Oregon State Game Commission's hearing on big game regulations is scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday, May 19, at its Portland headquarters, 1634 S.W. Alder Street.

Seasons, bag limits, and methods of hunting will be considered by the Commission. After hearing recommendations from its technical staff and the public, the Commission will announce tentative regulations.

The hearing will be recessed for two weeks and final rules adopted on Friday, June 2.

## MARCH AND APRIL GAME COMMISSION MEETINGS

At its last two meetings on March 22 and April 24, the Game Commission took several actions that will result in increased fishing for Oregon anglers.

Low bids were accepted in March for the following construction projects: Cedar Creek Hatchery ponds, \$23,897; Butte Falls Hatchery ponds, \$29,478.50; and Jubilee Meadows impoundment, \$152,972. The last item involves creation of new trout fishing lake of about 100 surface acres to a maximum depth of 50 feet. Jubilee Meadows is located at the head of Mottet Creek in the northwest corner of Union County. The site, under consideration for some time, was selected because it is in an area lacking in public fishing lakes or reservoirs.

In April the Commission authorized the purchase of Yellow Jacket Lake in Harney County at a cost of \$23,500, plus about \$5,000 for improvements. This impoundment covers 34 surface acres and is already stocked with trout, which should provide anglers some good fishing this season. The lake is 30 miles northwest of Burns.

The Commission also discussed with a group of Wasco County landowners possible cooperation in construction of the proposed Pine Hollow impoundment. This lake would cover 230 surface acres and have a minimum pool of 119 surface acres. The lake would be open to public fishing if Commission decides to participate in the project. The Commission delayed action pending more information on cost of the project.

## FROM OUT OF THE PAST

"The law prohibiting the killing of elk expires September 15, 1907. The Oregon elk should be protected for 10 years or longer."

Report of State Game &  
Forestry Warden 1906

In 1933, hunters took 579 elk. In 1964, they took 17,157.

\* \* \*

"A law enacted in North Carolina prohibits hunting game with flying machines."

"Skunk and mink farming is being tried in Oregon by a number of persons who hope to establish a profitable industry."

The Oregon Sportsman  
January 1918

New innovations continue to cause alarm . . . little is new under the sun. There are a number of profitable mink farms in Oregon, but we wonder if low fur prices or increased population and

## PIGEON AND DOVE SEASONS

Dove and pigeon season dates will be considered by the Game Commission at its meeting to be held on Friday, July 14, at 10 a.m. The Commission has authority only to select dates within the framework established by the Department of the Interior.

Waterfowl seasons and dates will be considered the latter part of August after the framework of regulations is received from the federal government.

## SALMON-STEELHEAD CARDS DUE

Anglers are reminded that the deadline for returning their 1966 salmon-steelhead punch cards was the first of May. Those who have failed to send in their cards are urged to do so at once to help obtain an accurate appraisal of the sport fishery.

Attention also is called to two changes in the 1967 salmon-steelhead license. This year anglers need not punch their cards but are asked to enter their catch in two separate columns, one for salmon and one for steelhead. The back of the license has full instructions.

Gifts of easements along the Coquille and Santiam Rivers were accepted.

Coos County will receive from the Commission a tract of about 20 acres of land for park development at Tenmile Lakes as well as an easement for road construction.

An old mill pond available near the town of Vernonia in Columbia County will be acquired for development of a fishing lake.

lack of space spelled the doom of the skunk farms.

\* \* \*

"It is always unlawful:

"To cause or allow sawdust or any other lumber waste, dye, chemical, decaying substance or to use dynamite, powder, or poisonous substance in any waters of the State of Oregon.

"For unnaturalized persons to angle without having in possession an alien gun license in addition to an angler's license.

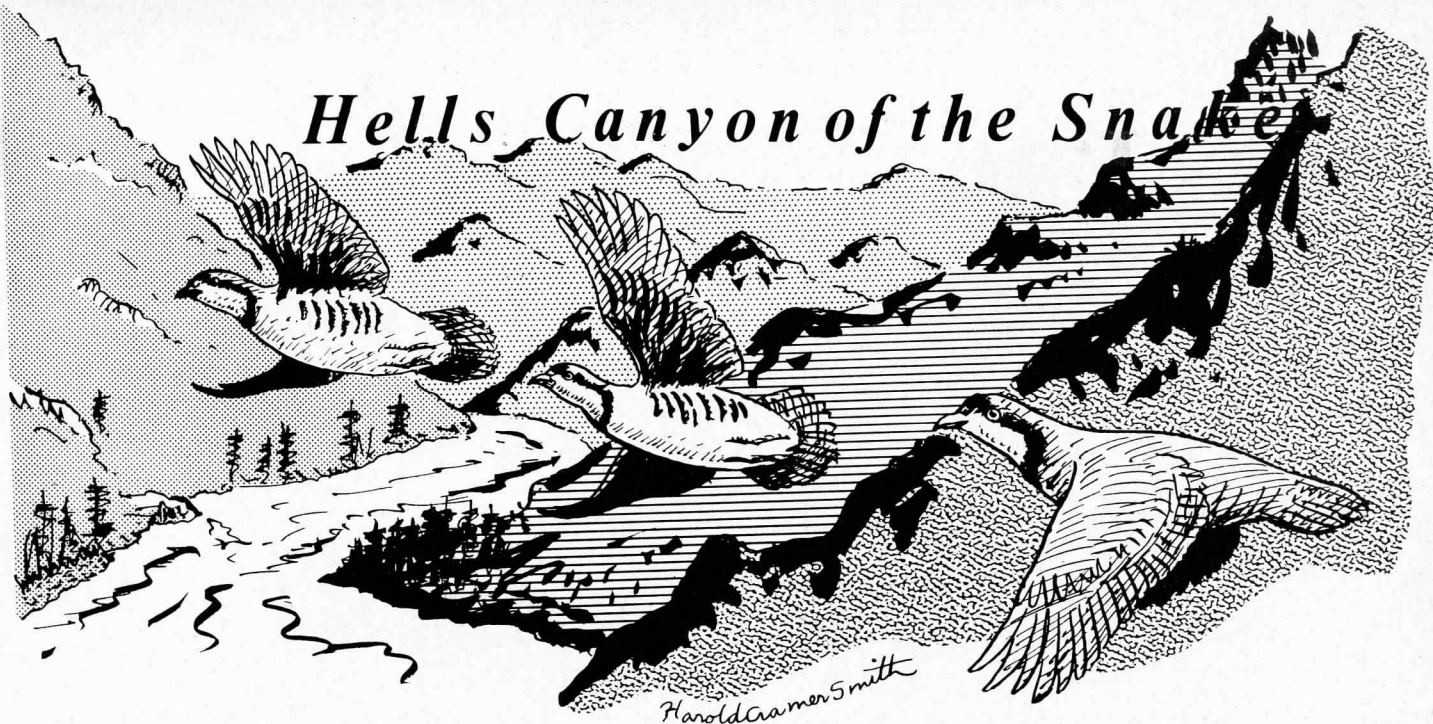
"For a woman to fish without an angling license."

Synopsis of Oregon Fishing Laws  
Effective May 28, 1925

Resident Hunter's License \$3.00  
Resident Angler's License \$3.00

We still haven't won the battle of stream pollution. However, the alien gun license was eliminated during the 1965 legislature and the gentler sex has to have a license to angle.





By Milt Guymon

**I**F THE GODS TRULY HOLD a kingdom for deserving hunters and fishermen in the Great Hereafter, a place where game abound and mighty fish swim in clear waters, I am sure such a place might well be the deep, imposing Hells Canyon of the Snake River and the rugged ramparts which form its sides. It is here in the wild, primitive land that the gods saw fit to carve from the earth the deepest and most awe-inspiring fluvial gorge on the North American continent. They, too, dotted the landscape with game and filled the great river with fish.

Now, coming from a practical man, the foregoing eulogy may sound a bit farfetched or perhaps even poetic. Yet, these are fitting words for the great Hells Canyon of the Snake, its steep escarpments, its swift rushing waters. And down through the years it was visited only by a rugged breed of outdoorsmen who sought its solitudes, its beauty, and quiet.

It requires a stout heart to reach Hells Canyon. Access at first was by foot or horseback over steep, tortuous mountain trails, and then in recent years by high-powered boat up or down river. It is no place for those who want the luxuries of deluxe trailer life or the catering services of a lodge. Nor is it a place for the casual or amateur boatman for it requires powerful craft and keen river knowledge to run its surging rapids,

probably the most powerful flow of any river in the state. Nevertheless, this primitive canyon is there for anyone who wishes. So are its fish and game. So are its magnificence and its solitudes.

What the future holds for Hells Canyon is mere speculation. Man has begun to tame this wilderness area, stemming the rushing river with high dams and building roads and campgrounds for mass public use. Two dams on the Snake are already complete—Brownlee and Oxbow. A third now under construction—Hells Canyon—will place the first stopper within the jaws of the canyon. In the planning stage is 670-foot High Mountain Sheep Dam, which will impound the remaining portion of this wild canyon and bring an end to its primitive values. Vast changes in the fish and wildlife ecology undoubtedly will take place. Some species may disappear altogether and some not already there will invade the area or be introduced. The carrying capacity may be increased for certain species and impaired for others.

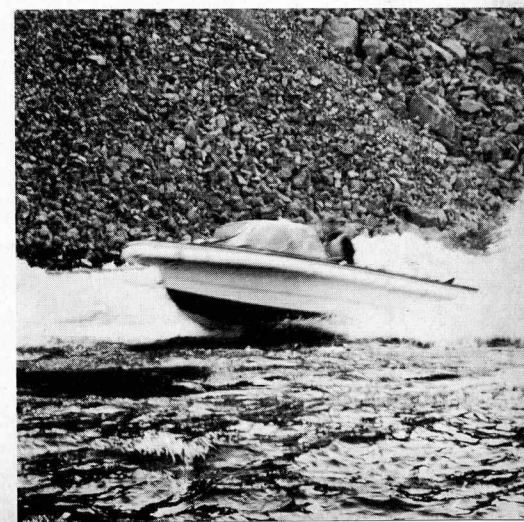
**At present Hells Canyon** of the Snake and the adjacent Oregon mountain range—called the Snake River Divide—hold a vast array of fish and wildlife mostly native to the area. Only two game birds have been introduced here, the chukar and Hungarian partridge; and two species of game fish, the smallmouth bass and channel catfish.

The mule deer is the dominant big

game animal in the area; and although populations have fluctuated wildly over the years, excellent buck hunting is available for the hunter who packs into its remoteness. A unique feature of many Snake River bucks is the heavy antler beams, often with pronounced palmations at the forks, and shovel or spade-like points. Hunters often comment on this unique, trophy quality of the antlers and the large mule bucks which produce them. In recent years hunters have been taking about 1,000 mule deer from the Snake River unit, with numbers about equally divided between the Imnaha and Snake River sides. Hunter success is normally quite high with 70 percent of the hunters working the area in 1965 reporting success.

(Continued on Page 6)

*To many the biggest thrill of all is riding the rapids of Hells Canyon.*





## The Killdeer

**T**HE KILLDEER IS ONE of the most common and widely distributed shorebirds in North America. Its summer range extends from coast to coast and from the Canadian Arctic south to central Mexico. In winter it remains in much of this territory until snow and ice cover its feeding grounds and force a retreat to warmer climates.

In Oregon, the killdeer is a common breeding species in every county in the state wherever suitable nesting habitat occurs. Unlike other members of the plover family, its activities are not restricted to beaches and shorelines but include pastures and cultivated fields several miles from the nearest water.

The killdeer is a medium-sized plover, readily distinguished from other shorebirds by two prominent black bands across a white breast and by a rufous patch on the rump and tail. The common name is derived from its distinctive alarm call, "kildee," which it utters at the first sign of danger and continues to repeat until the intruder has passed.

The salt flats and gravelly areas of eastern Oregon and the plowed fields and sandbars of western Oregon are favorite locations for killdeers to nest. A slight depression is selected as a nest site and four protectively marked eggs are laid. No attempt is made to add nesting material although a few pebbles or wood chips are scattered in and about the nest

to provide camouflage. In approximately 25 days the eggs hatch and the precocial chicks immediately follow their parents to safe feeding areas along the nearest shoreline.

Like many other ground-nesting birds, the killdeer often feigns injury to decoy an enemy from its nest or young. When a coyote, fox, or cat prowls nearby, the bird runs screaming from its nest, with one wing held high and the other flailing the ground. This broken-wing act usually succeeds in attracting the attention of the predator, which pursues in anticipation of an easy meal. However, when the invader has been lured far from the nest, the "injured" killdeer suddenly gets well and flies out of danger.

When a grazing animal approaches the nest, the tactics are entirely different. The killdeer straddles the nest with outspread wings and scolds vigorously. If this act fails, the bird may even run or fly into the face of the horse or cow to startle and frighten it away.

The diet of the killdeer is composed almost entirely of animal matter, with beetles, grasshoppers, weevils and other insects and invertebrates constituting over 97 percent of the food consumed. These food preferences have established the killdeer as one of the farmer's best allies in his constant battle with farm pests.

C. E. Kebbe

## HEARING TO CONSIDER COLUMBIA RIVER CHINOOK ANGLING RESTRICTION

The Oregon Game Commission has scheduled a public hearing at 9 a.m. May 19 at its Portland office to consider possible restrictions of the sport fishery for summer chinook salmon in the Columbia River. Summer chinook salmon in the Columbia River are defined as those chinook salmon which pass over Bonneville Dam in the months of June and July.

Columbia River summer chinook have experienced a general decline beginning about 1957. Loss of spawning and rearing areas and dam construction have adverse effects on these fish. Unexplained high mortalities occur between dams when these fish are on their upriver migration.

It is believed that the inter-dam losses, not fully understood but under investigation, are a significant factor in the general decline of summer chinook.

Escapement goals of 80,000 to 90,000 summer chinook past Bonneville Dam have not been met in recent years. These goals are established by fishery regulatory agencies and represent the numbers of fish needed past Bonneville Dam to reproduce and maintain the run. Restrictions were placed on both the commercial and sport fisheries in 1965 and 1966, yet this action failed to provide an adequate escapement past Bonneville Dam.

The Commission has no basis to predict anything but a small run this summer, and stringent restrictions may again be necessary if escapement goals are to be reached. With this expectation, the responsible agencies anticipate no commercial season for chinook salmon this summer. In addition, the spring commercial season has been sharply restricted to only the forepart of May to curtail the catch of summer chinook taken later in May, particularly in the lower river.

It is the intent of the Oregon Game Commission to take whatever action is required to halt the decline of summer chinook in the Columbia River. Restriction of the sport fishery may be a necessary, although unpopular, step to take to protect this run.

The purpose of the public hearing on May 19 is to explore the possibilities open to the Game Commission for providing protection for Columbia River summer chinook. The meeting is open to the public, and those interested in the perpetuation of these endangered fish are invited to attend.

Hunters interested in a successful fall hunt are urged to help protect the spring nesting birds by curbing their hunting dogs during May, June and July.

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY RANGE AVAILABLE TO SHOOTERS

The Multnomah County Sheriff's office range again will be available to the public on Saturdays and Sundays until the end of the hunting season. The range is

located at S.E. 95th and Powell Boulevard and is open from noon until 6 p.m. A charge of 50 cents per shooter per gun is made.





*Just dozing . . . the great profile.*



*I thought I heard a photographer.*



*Whew! I'm down wind from him now.*



*Maybe he'll go away if I ignore him.*



*Nope, he's still coming . . . I'll remain casual by crossing my paws.*

## This Bear's Watching

By Ron Shay



*Enough is enough! A snort and bristling hairs ought to do it.*

Of all our wildlife, bears are probably the most human-like. This bruin was photographed at Crater Lake Park with the use of a short telephoto lens. Your photographer made sure there was a clear path for retreat, though it was difficult at times to keep track of all the bears in the area.



*Now that I'm up, might as well see if there's anything to eat here.*



Hunter Dan Cole of Homestead and guide Ralph Page use boat to carry back to camp buck deer taken in the escarpments above the Snake River. Palmations at antler forks are unique characteristic of deer in this area.

Take your choice. A day's catch for one pair of anglers includes a six-pound steelhead; two channel catfish each weighing between five and six pounds; and eight smallmouth bass, the largest weighing five pounds. No bag limit for channel cats nor for black bass in the Snake River.



## Hells Canyon of the Snake

(Continued from Page 3)

A unique trophy for the area is the white-tailed deer, which is found in limited numbers over much of the area especially the northern drainages. Although few in number, the whitetail provides an added challenge in this wilderness area.

The Snake River Divide has long supported a wintering elk herd, but until recent years most of these animals summered high in the upper Imnaha country. During the past ten years or so, more and more elk have remained in the area to summer. The continued migration of elk from the Imnaha, plus local herds, has resulted in a relatively high density of wintering animals the past few years. Elk hunting is considered fair to good by the pack-in hunter willing to endure the elements of weather and hardships of roughing it. Even so, cold weather and deep snow frequently force the elk hunter from this high divide. During 1965, just over 1,000 elk hunters packed into this wilderness area and reported taking 361 animals for a success ratio of 35 per cent.

The remaining big game animal in Hells Canyon is the black bear, and it is present in good numbers. It is taken incidentally by deer hunters but generally is in hibernation by the time elk seasons get underway. Few outdoorsmen pack into the Snake specifically to hunt for bear. To illustrate its prevalence, however, the author observed two black bear in a single day during the heat of last summer. Both animals were swimming in the fast-flowing river and were being carried downstream by the rushing water, their buoyant bodies bouncing down through the turbulent rapids. They seemed to enjoy the wild swim and temporary escape from the heat.

A vast array of smaller animals populate this primitive region. Otter are numerous and often entire families may be observed frolicking in the swift water. Mink and marten run the timbered ridge tops, raccoon are ever present, and Canada geese and other waterfowl nest and winter along the Snake. The yapping wail of coyotes is a nightly serenade.

If for no other reason, the gods might preserve this great canyon for the upland bird gunner; that is, if he has sturdy enough legs to climb among its ramparts. The timbered ridge tops are favorite haunts for blue grouse, and here too is one of the last strongholds in Oregon for the Franklin's grouse. Ruffed grouse strut proudly through the brushy draws,

(Continued on Page 7)



# Hells Canyon of the Snake

(Continued from Page 6)

and the melodious whistling of valley and mountain quail can be heard from every ravine and hillside pocket. Although not abundant, Hungarian partridge frequent the more open prairies and sagelands. A summer resident in large numbers is the mourning dove which nests and rears its young within the canyon walls. In recent years the chukar partridge has found a stronghold here and is now the most abundant upland game bird present. Large coveys frequent every livable space from the river's edge to the high rimrocks and grassy slopes.

Only a few ardent upland bird hunters take the time to pack into Hells Canyon for the great shooting available. During the fall seasons, a few outdoorsmen may combine an upland bird hunt with fishing or deer hunting. In the main, all upland game birds are hunted lightly. In some areas entire coveys may go through life without sighting a human being or hearing the bark of a hunter's gun.

In this Great Hereafter, the gods would indeed be kind to the fisherman. Among the few anglers who fished it over the years, the Snake was noted for its large rainbow trout, steelhead, and the greatest sea-goer of all, the spring and summer chinook. In addition, Hells Canyon is the last stronghold for the great white sturgeon of the Snake River, some going nine feet or more in length. These are the game fish that drew inveterate anglers to Hells Canyon for years. These are the game fish that made the long, arduous trip by trail or boat well worth the time and effort.

Up until recent years, Hells Canyon, as well as other areas of the Snake, was a vast holding area for large rainbow trout. These fish moved into tributary streams to spawn, then returned to the river for the remainder of the year. At one time it was difficult for the angler to find rainbow trout in these swift waters under the 12-inch mark.

The Snake is actually fished very lightly for trout and always has been as far back as this writer can remember. Probably the size of the river deterred most fishermen. Furthermore, anglers enjoy fine fishing for trout—which are also much easier to catch—in the smaller tributaries such as Burnt River, the Imnaha, Powder, Eagle and Pine Creeks. The large fish are present in the tributaries in good numbers at certain times of the year. Anglers often wonder where

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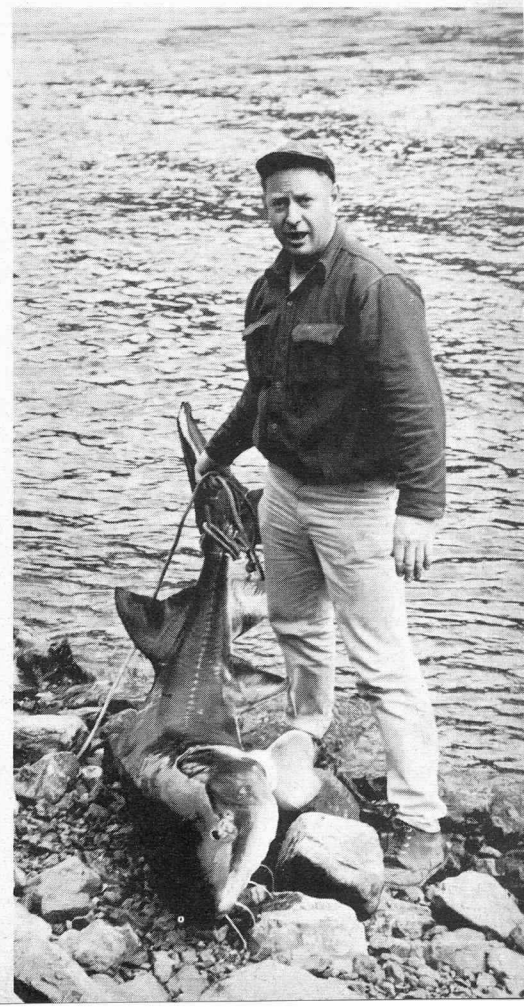
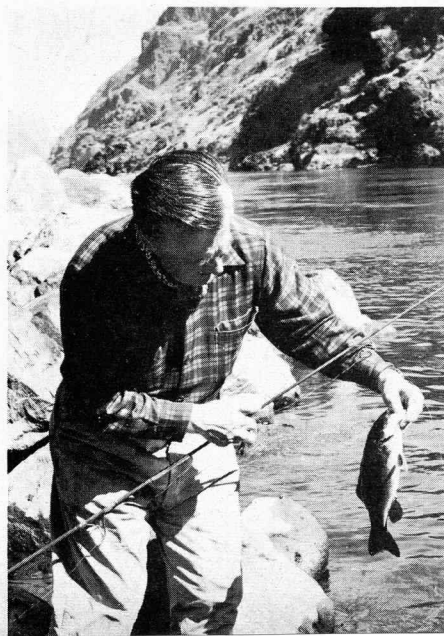
GAME BULLETIN



Guide Ralph Page and Fen Royal starting run down the river. Takeout is just below Hells Canyon Dam.

Dismay shows on Portland angler Fen Royal's face when he discovers his sturgeon is too big to keep. Fish turned out to be 86 inches long. With a legal maximum length limit of 72 inches for sturgeon, back into the river went the fish to tantalize some other fisherman.

Dr. Ed Haas of San Francisco lands a smallmouth bass from the Snake River.



# Hells Canyon of the Snake

(Continued from Page 7)

these big trout suddenly came from and where they disappeared just as quickly. The few fishermen in the know were not about to reveal their jealously guarded secret.

The steelhead trout is another spectacular game fish found in Hells Canyon, and he runs to large size. Fifteen to 20-pound fish are no exception, but most will run from 6 to 10 pounds in weight. Like the rainbow, few anglers knew of the Snake River steelhead until fairly recently; fewer still fished for him. Today many anglers flock to the Snake and its tributaries to try their luck for the big sea-goers. Most steelhead fishing takes place in the lower canyon near the mouths of the Imnaha, Salmon, and Grande Ronde Rivers. Access is a problem in the main canyon upstream, and, of course, there is no steelhead fishing of any consequence today above Oxbow and Brownlee Dams.

Spring and summer chinook also provided excellent fishing for the few fishermen who knew of its presence, but now it is enjoyed by more and more anglers who work the Snake River and its tributaries. At one time this large game fish spawned throughout the Snake River and most of its tributary streams.

**These three game fish**—rainbow trout, steelhead, and chinook salmon—are found throughout Hells Canyon, although in reduced numbers from former years simply because vital spawning areas have been eliminated. Nevertheless, they continue to furnish fine fishing for anglers willing to make the trip.

Probably the most spectacular game fish in Hells Canyon is the great white sturgeon, still found in relative abundance throughout this remote area. At one time, this huge fish reigned in all regions of the Snake, but again impoundments slowly constricted its living space.

Early settlers recounted hairy tales about this goliath. Reportedly, fish were caught weighing up to 2,000 pounds or more, and, according to stories, requiring teams of horses or winches to drag some of the mammoths from the swift waters. One authentic record for the Snake River is a sturgeon of around 1,200 pounds taken many years ago near Weiser, Idaho.



*This big elk was bagged on the Snake River Divide. The antlers, rated at 356 points, lacked just 4 points of making the Boone and Crockett big game records.*

The author has never seen a sturgeon of this size but has observed several caught on hook and line which measured around 8 feet in length. Since these huge fish were landed many miles from civilization, it is impossible to obtain accurate weight measurements. Rough estimates, however, would place a fish of this size in the vicinity of 400 to 500 pounds, or perhaps more. Numerous sturgeon are caught each year in Hells Canyon weighing in excess of 300 pounds.

This is the most unique sport fishery to be found in Oregon today, and one of the most exciting. The sturgeon is a spectacular fighter in the fast waters of the Snake, and he gives in slowly, grudgingly. A leaping 6 to 8-foot sturgeon catapulting its slate gray body skyward is a thrill never forgotten. Weary-armed anglers view him in wondering awe if they are lucky enough to bring one to beach. Present regulations provide that keeper sturgeon must measure from 3 to 6 feet in length; all others must be returned unharmed to the river.

**Smallmouth bass and channel catfish** are two fine game fish which have invaded Hells Canyon in recent years. In fact, the smallmouth has found this remote area so much to his liking he is now the dominant game fish present. It is an easy chore to make fine catches of smallmouth bass daily, and on peak angling days as many as 60 or more may be brought to creel.

In this writer's opinion, Hells Canyon of the Snake produces some of the finest

smallmouth bass fishing to be found anywhere. Two anglers from Georgia last fall were amazed at the quantity of smallmouths in the river. They agreed that Georgia never had smallmouth fishing like this, but claimed that their smallmouths were somewhat larger and fought a little harder than the Oregon breed. Hells Canyon smallmouths will probably weigh in the vicinity of 2 pounds, but bass to 4 and 5 pounds are frequently taken.

Channel catfish also are found in abundance with fish up to 5 pounds common. Much larger channels are taken and occasionally one is pulled from the river in excess of 20 pounds. The crappie is another game fish that has moved into the canyon from upriver impoundments but for the present is found in limited numbers. This infiltration has taken place within the past two years.

These are the fish and wildlife of Hells Canyon and the adjacent Snake River Divide, truly a kingdom for the hunter and fisherman. As mentioned previously, development of this remote region is causing vast changes to take place. But for the present, the wild river continues to surge through basalt canyon walls, dropping boisterously down in foaming cascades. The imposing mountains alongside are glistening ramparts which seem to defy and challenge the intrusion of any traveler. Hells Canyon is rough, it is primitive, it is inspiring. And, the gods decreed a bounty if hunters and fishermen wish to seek it out.

## Oregon State Game Commission Bulletin

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