

West Virginia Conservation



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STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
CLARENCE W. MEADOWS, Governor

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Cover Photo—

Netting one in Laurel Fork of Holly River.

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Chief DeGarmo explains

New Hunting Season Policy

By W. R. DeGARMO
Chief, Division of Game Management

Every year soon after January 1, letters begin arriving in the Charleston office of the Conservation Commission, from sportsmen throughout West Virginia, asking for information as to when the various game seasons will open the next fall. These letters are from men who must make application for their annual leaves as much as nine months in advance. Due to the past policy of not establishing these seasons until the July meeting, we have never been able to give definite answers to these requests.

Accordingly, at its regularly quarterly meeting on April 6, the Conservation Commission established a policy which, if followed in future years, will undoubtedly meet with approval from many sportsmen. Briefly, it may be stated as follows: So far as the present Conservation Commission is concerned, it shall be a permanent policy each year to open the hunting seasons on squirrel, ruffed grouse and wild turkey on the Saturday nearest October 15; the rabbit and quail seasons on November 11; and the antlered deer season on the Monday nearest December 1. By application of this policy in 1948, the squirrel, grouse and wild turkey seasons will open on October 16; those for rabbit and quail on November 11; and that for antlered deer on November 29.

This action on the part of the Commission does not, of course, influence the lengths of the open seasons. There will remain to be worked out at the July meetings such matters as the lengths of the various seasons, the open hunting territories, together with the sea-

sons for such other species as the fur animals, black bear and antlerless deer. Much of the above will be determined after we have compiled information on prospects for the supply of game, mast crops and hunting pressure.

There is nothing really new in the above opening dates. For years those on rabbit, quail and antlered deer have followed closely along the dates as have been set for 1948. There have been variations during the past three or four years in the opening dates for squirrel, grouse and wild turkey during which the squirrel season has been opened as early as September 27 in 1947.

During the six sectional meetings held in January throughout the state, many sportsmen voiced objections to the 1947 seasons in which separate opening dates were set for squirrel, grouse and wild turkey. Yet, when a squirrel season is set as early as September 27, it is not advisable to attempt to legalize hunting of grouse and turkey. Both the grouse and turkey hunter will tell you that neither of these fine game birds is really ready for hunting until around November 1. A majority of the recommendations from 67 sportsmen's organizations were for some kind of common opening date; thus it becomes a matter of seeking some sort of compromise date which will at the same time offer the best opportunities to the hunter who desires to hunt each species, but which will not result in too much harm to the game. If we consider that a reasonable opening date for squirrel is October 1, and November 1 for grouse and wild turkey,

(Continued on page 14)

Opening of season finds

Many Anglers On Trout Streams



Scenes like this are common along the trout streams of the state.

Opening of the 1948 trout season on April 24, found a record-breaking number of anglers ready for the streams. And the streams were ready for them—to the extent of about 150,000 newly-stocked legal length trout.

The stocking, which began early in March after being delayed somewhat due to weather conditions, was hurried as much as possible in order to have a good supply of trout ready for fishermen on the opening day. According to Chief E. A. Seaman of the Conservation Commission's Fish Management Division, the trout placed in the streams this spring were in excellent condition.

Early season anglers, Seaman pointed out previous to the opening of the season, faced the possibility of finding some of their favorite streams shy of trout—not because of less stocking but due to high water resulting from the April

rains. Fear was expressed that many fish would be washed out of the streams.

Two instances supporting this view were given. Around the middle of April, said Seaman, several trout were caught from the Kanawha River at Marmet. These apparently had come from Babcock State Park. Seaman also received a reliable report that trout were taken from the mouth of Middle Island Creek at St. Mary's. These, he said, evidently had been washed down from Pennsylvania.

The two cases were cited as evidence of what high water can do to fish.

Stocking operations this year were expedited considerably as result of a new method being tried for the first time. It was developed after a study of about two years. It is proving not only a big time saver in placing trout

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Technicians studying

Deer Mortality Problems

By LARRY WARD
Project Assistant

According to the Conservation Commission records derived from reports of county conservation officers for the fiscal year July 1, 1946, to June 30, 1947, inclusive, 428 deer reported killed throughout the state by various methods other than those legally killed during the open hunting season.

Deer mortalities were reported from 38 of the 55 counties of the state, and in the overall total nine different causes were listed. Table 1 shows the distribution of the kill by causes in the eight counties having the greatest number. Table 2 gives the mortality by month. Automobiles, dogs, and various illegal methods are the three greatest causes of known deer mortality—taking 68.4 per cent. The remaining 31.6 per cent was caused by hunting season wounds; mechanical means—such as fences; by trains; old age; unknown causes; and one was reported killed in Pocahontas county by a bobcat.

These records consist of fatalities definitely known and do not include those due to illegal hunters for family consumption or market—a number which is impossible to estimate; or by automobile in which the deer were taken and not reported. Neither do they include those taken by legal permit given for deer damage to crops.

The greatly increased lumbering operations throughout the state the last few years will provide conditions for more and better deer browse, and this, in addition to the present deer management program, will influence the rapidity at which new areas will be populated with deer. As these deer herds expand

over additional counties, it is important that the people of the state cooperate with the Conservation Commission to keep the deer mortality at a minimum in order that the deer management program can go forward without undue setbacks—other factors being equal.

An examination of Table I gives an indication of the deer-chasing dogs as a factor in reducing or keeping at a minimum deer herds in many sections of the state. There is an ever-increasing need for concerted action against the stray dog, and for legislation which will effectively keep deer-chasing dogs under control.

The attention of motorists should be directed to the dangers of deer crossings, and any deer struck by automobiles should be reported immediately. With full cooperation of everyone, especially the farmer, the Law Enforcement Division of the Conservation Commission can keep to a minimum the greatly increasing menace to our deer—the unprincipled market hunter—the old-time cattle rustler of the west with modern methods. The underhanded operation of these gangs have increased tremendously in the last few years.

With a reasonable control over the causes of deer mortality as listed in table 1, which is really a part of game management, the deer population in present territories can be maintained to correspond with food conditions; and a steady increase in deer population in new areas can also be expected—depending, of course, on food, cover, and land use.

TABLE I Eight Counties Having Greatest Number of Mortalities from July 1, 1946 to June 30, 1947

	SEX		CAUSES										Total
	F.	?	M.	Dogs	Illegal	Car	Train	Mechanical	Old Age	Hunting Season Wounds	Wildcat	Un-known	
Monongalia.....	31		23	6	6	28	5	8				1	54
Tucker.....	28		12	2	11	14	2	2	1	7		4	43
Randolph.....	14	1	16	5	5	10		8		2		1	31
Grant.....	10	6	12	3	15	4		2		3		1	28
Hampshire.....	17	1	10	1	9	10		8		4		3	28
Harrison.....	7	1	16	4	6	7		4		4		4	24
Peachontas.....	11		9	6	5	2	1	2			1	2	21
Preston.....	14		6	1	1	9	8	3		1		2	20
Totals.....	132	9	104	28	58	84	11	37	1	13	1	16	249

TABLE II — Deer Mortality by Month

	SEX		CAUSES										Total
	F.	?	M.	Dogs	Illegal	Un-known	Car	Train	Mechanical	Old Age	Hunting Season Wounds	Wildcat	
1946													
August.....	8	1	5	4	3	1	5	1					14
September.....	18	8	9	5	14	1	9		5	1			35
October.....	46	3	33	8	24	12	20	10	8			1	82
November.....	23	1	44	5	28	5	18	3	3				68
December.....	34		16	4	6	2	12	3	7	1	15		50
1947													
January.....	19	1	10	6	2	4	13	1	4				30
February.....	14		8	9	3	2	2	1	5	2			22
March.....	23	2	32	18	6	7	15	3	8				57
April.....	15	3	14	6	4	2	16	1	3				32
May.....	10	4	4	4	1		8	1	1				14
June.....	11		13	4	3		10	4	3				24
Totals.....	221	19	188	73	94	36	126	28	52	2	15	1	428

Conservation agency's

New Director "Airs" Views

Acting Director of Conservation R. S. Harris, who took office March 1, gave his views on conservation in a radio interview on March 16 over Station WCAW, Charleston. He was invited to participate by Roy Lee Harmon, who conducts a 15-minute rod and gun club program over WCAW twice a week. Minus the introduction, following is the program with Harmon doing the interviewing:

HARMON: Scotty, I know you are a little new in your present job as acting head of the conservation department. You are not new in conservation work, though . . . Suppose you tell us just when and where you started.

HARRIS: Well, Roy Lee, that was 13 years ago when I was made county game protector for my home county of Ritchie. . . .

HARMON: Are you a native of Ritchie?

HARRIS: Yes, born and reared in Ellenboro. It was in Ritchie I did my first hunting and fishing.

HARMON: Well, after serving as county game protector, what did you do?

HARRIS: I was appointed district game protector. And I might explain here that up to last year the commissions law enforcement officers were known as game protectors, but the 1947 legislature officially designated them as conservation officers. . . .

HARMON: By the way, how many such officers are there? These

men enforce fish, game and forestry laws, don't they?

HARRIS: Yes, they have that triple duty. There are six district officers. Under them serve county officers. One or two of the larger counties has two each . . . the others one each. When in full force the group is made up of approximately 60 men.

HARMON: Good, and these men have to cover the entire state. I think we all must realize this is quite a job. But now, getting back to yourself. . . . From district head where did you go?

HARRIS: Well, in 1942 I was appointed chief game protector.

HARMON: Just a moment, Scotty. . . . This job actually is that of head of the commission's enforcement division, is it not?

HARRIS: That's right.

HARMON: Then, on or about March 1 last, what happened?

HARRIS: To my surprise, I was appointed by Governor Meadows as acting director of conservation.

HARMON: Well, Scotty, with your background of experience and knowledge of conservation work, I, for one, feel that you can do a good job. I want to, here and now, offer you my full cooperation, and I believe the majority of West Virginia sportsmen stand ready to

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Seneca Forest once in

Great White Pine Section

By R. H. HOLDERBY
Seneca State Forest Custodian

It seems strange now and somewhat incredible when we talk to some of the old timers in this neck of the woods, and hear their stories about the log drives that once took place in this section of the state, particularly in the area that is now called Seneca State Forest.

The section around here was at one time the greatest white pine lumber producing country in the world. White pines grew at least four to five feet in diameter and sixty to a hundred feet tall. Evidence of these forest giants can be found, as the stumps are still here.

At first, the height of these stumps might give you the impression that a lot of lumber was left in the woods, and so there was. However, this was the result of their being cut in the dead of winter while the deep snow was on. There is one place in the county, where the snow was so deep that in the spring after the thaw, the stumps reached to a tall man's chin. However, this is just hearsay and no definite proof could be found.

The first locomotive in this part of the country was used to haul logs out of the woods. This was before the railroads had branched into the upper Greenbrier Valley. This engine was affectionately called "Little Jim", and was hauled in by wagon teams.

Persons not knowing the Greenbrier river may not think of the difficulties in floating logs out on it even though it is one of the largest rivers in our state it is also the shallowest. To float logs on this river, the white pinner's, as they were called, would have to wait for the spring freshet. Even then, log

drives would sometimes start, and be stranded three or four days, until a new rain or thaw would start the river to rising again.

The men, giants of their time, had to follow these log drives in order to break up log jams that frequently occurred. Capt. Dave Smith seems to have been the Paul Bunyan of these men. A book could be written on his exploits alone. One of these men was later the Secretary of State, another a judge. These men grew with the times.

Sleeping quarters, a kitchen and horses followed the drives in "arks". An ark was a raft of logs pegged together, with a shanty built on top, and with sweeps fore and aft, to steer with. Every night this would tie up to the bank, and resume their hazardous journey at the crack of dawn.

The key log, or the head log on the drive, almost always had a pet name and always this was the biggest in the drive, and at the bottom of every jam.

There is the tale of one of these huge trees that the butt log was so big, it had to be split. In order to split this log, a man bored holes in a parallel line and poured gunpowder into these. He set the charge off, and bang, the log split right down the middle. This log was floated out on the last pine drive and one half was last seen stranded on the bank just below Marlinton. The other half must have reached the mill.

The last pine drive took place in the late 1890's, although there were other drives made in later years, they were mostly spruce. This drive originated in the headwaters of Knapps creek and in order to get enough water, a huge

Fayette Protectors In Reunion



PHOTO BY E. N. WRISTON

The above picture was made at the Fayette county forest protectors' reunion held at the Fayette 4-H camp at Beckwith. Hosts were the New River Coal Operators Association and the Fayette County Bankers Association. Speeches, shop talks and a square meal featured the gathering.

splash dam was built of logs. When the time came to start, the dam was blown out and away went the logs to the mill.

Today, this land of ours can still produce pine. Seventy percent is owned by the government and about five percent is state-owned. On this land, your government, federal and state, is working to get the best results by combating fire and disease, so that one day this section will again be one of the best producers of white pine lumber in the world.

The world's largest rodent is the Capybara rat. It often grows to a length of four feet and sometimes weighs as much as seventy pounds. It is web-footed.

Kansas is the one state having no deer in the wild state. What deer it has are confined in parks.

Opening of Season Finds Many Anglers on Trout Streams

(Continued from page 5)

in the streams, said Seaman, but promises also to be beneficial to anglers by resulting in a more even distribution of trout throughout the streams in which they are placed. Instead of being dumped in pools, as had been the former practice, the fish are put mainly in riffles.

With exception of a few thousand fish obtained from the federal hatcheries at Leetown and White Sulphur Springs, all of the trout stocked were raised at West Virginia state hatcheries, of which B. D. Wills is supervisor. Distribution is continuing and will be kept up until the hatcheries have been emptied of their fish for stocking purposes. The total distribution last year, including all sizes, was slightly less than 800,000. This figure will be equalled if not exceeded this year, in the opinion of Supervisor Wills.

In The Good Old Days

by E. A. Seaman, Chief, Division of Fish Management

Often we wonder how good fishing might have been many years ago. We hear all kinds of stories of fishing by the "old timers", but not often do we have at hand the actual catch records.

Through the kindness of W. F. Dunkin of Bridgeport, we have had the privilege of copying trout fishing data from the old deer-hide covered log book of the former Sportsmen's Association of Cheat Mountain, at Cheat Bridge on the Shavers Fork of Cheat River.

These records reveal some amazing information. They begin in the year 1894, and run up through 1929.

The biggest catch of brook trout was by a party of three fishermen who caught 275 fish in one day in 1903. The records say that the fish ran between ten and eleven inches, some thirteen inches. In 1900 four men in a single party took 145 brooks. Way back in 1894 two men from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, took 115 trout. Their remark on this catch was "none large". In most instances the fishermen were pleased with eleven-inch brooks. When they caught thirteen-inch trout they were quite pleased.

Even back in the "good ole days" fishermen complained when they had a bad day. On July 13 in 1917 a party of two men caught 100 trout. The following day, a couple fellows must not have caught much, for their complaint was: "We want more fish in the stream!" We wonder what their complaint would be nowadays when one can't make the catches that were possible years ago. One year from when the above complaint was registered in the log book some fellows wrote in the remarks: "fine fishing". We guess that fishermen

just don't change down through the years.

On August 21, 1918, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, John Burroughs and Thomas Edison camped on the Shavers Fork. Their signatures appear in this Cheat Lodge Log Book. However, it is unfortunate that they did not write notes about fishing (if they did fish), for it would have added considerable value to the records for such prominent men to make comment.

One party of five persons were well pleased with their fishing in 1903. They wrote this comment in the log book: "Had a royal good time and caught barrels of fish!" Some folks fished and fished the river at times without success. In fact, on some days parties took only a few fish now and then. This should be somewhat heartening to those who are disgusted with poor trout catches now days. If it was often hard to catch them in those "good ole days", it shouldn't surprise us that fish are still tricky fellows now days.

In July, 1914, an interesting comment was written in the log book to this effect: "Only few trout—many ("oh thousands") of chubs. Ye little fish". Then in June, 1917, another individual makes record of catching "a barrel of chubs". These facts are quite valuable to a fishery biologist. It may mean that the stream was warming up considerably because of intensive logging operation, and thereby creating ideal conditions for the increase of the creek chub population. This may be a similar biological change which may occur in beaver ponds on trout streams. Further

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Good results given by

New Trout-Stocking System

By E. A. SEAMAN

Chief, Division of Fish Management

The new system of stocking trout this year in and adjacent to the Monongahela National Forest was a success. Sportsmen were pleased with this more efficient distribution method. Trout were hauled from the hatchery to five different trough locations at the following places: Thornwood CCC Camp grounds, Gladly CCC Camp grounds, Hendricks in Tucker county, Kumbra-bow State Forest, and Webster Springs.

The troughs, as shown in the accompanying photographs, were set off in pairs. Fish were placed from the hatchery truck into the wooden troughs. They were kept in the troughs for several hours, and when necessary over night. From the troughs they were hauled in smaller tanks on field vehicles to the streams. With the assistance of Game and Fish Division field staff members, some National Forest personnel, and sportsmen, the conservation officer was able to distribute the fish to all parts of the various trout streams.

Inaccessible dirt roads and fire trails were traveled by jeep and the Dodge power-wagon, and by this means the trout were stocked better than ever before. In several instances railroad motor cars were used in stocking inaccessible areas down certain rail gradings. The trout were released in small numbers in riffles, not pools.

This new system is believed to be unique, for it is doubtful if the system has been used elsewhere, at least in this fashion. The system will be improved in following years, and may be extended to cover larger areas. Fingerling trout to be stocked later in the season will be

distributed from these troughs, as will be the legal adult fish to be released for our second stocking after the trout season opens.

CACAPON CLUB MEMBERS DOING GOOD WORK IN HARDY

Although only a little more than one year old, the Cacapon Valley Rod & Gun Club of Wardensville, Hardy county, has accomplished much along conservation lines, according to Secretary C. A. Merriman. With cooperation of the Conservation Commission, it has stocked 6,000 trout, 12,000 bass and 500 channel catfish; 120 cottontail rabbits, 11 raccoons, and 60 pairs of quail.

In addition, says Secretary Merriman, the organization has planted 500 Chinese chestnut trees and put out 3,000 pounds of game food.

HOW IT'S DONE

Pictures on the opposite page show different steps in the new trout-stocking system:

1. Troughs 10 feet long, 3 feet wide, 24 inches deep are placed in pairs.
2. Close-up view of troughs.
3. Unloading fish from hatchery truck (right) into one trough and loading field vehicle with trout from trough on left.
4. Pick-up truck loaned by U. S. Forest Service equipped with small trough for hauling fish to stream.
5. Field vehicle, a "Powerwagon Dodge", and jeep, also used for hauling fish up and down old dirt roads to reach all parts of stream.
6. Releasing a few trout in a riffle.



IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

(Continued from page 11)

investigation into this log book, and into other sources of literature may well reveal facts which will give us a better idea of the biological changes that have come about in this stream. Something has happened, we are sure, for the stream does not provide the trout fishing as of the year 1900.

CHIEF DeGARMO EXPLAINS NEW HUNTING SEASON POLICY

(Continued from page 4)

then a common opening date of October 15 is a logical choice. Sportsmen generally favor a Saturday opening day, hence the policy of opening on the Saturday nearest October 15.

There are other arguments in favor of selecting definite dates for opening the various game seasons. When a change is made each year, it inevitably results in confusion among the hunters who do not obtain copies of the printed regulations. Over a period of years, the amount of illegal pre-season hunting should be materially reduced, a factor of great concern to the average sportsman who foregoes entering the woods until the opening day. Admittedly, the fact remains that the squirrel seasons in such neighboring states as Ohio, Virginia and Kentucky have opened consistently earlier, yet the writer feels that if we can wait until October 15 to hunt for a few years, we will see more squirrels in the woods. We're not certain what brought about the sharp decline in the squirrel crop last fall, but the writer is inclined to believe that the early 1945 and 1946 seasons with the heavy kills had something to do with it.

The Commission has always endeavored to select a date near December 1 for the opening of the deer season. This is due to a large extent to the fact that it is desirable for law enforcement purposes that the seasons be concurrent

in so far as possible with those of neighboring states. Both Maryland and Pennsylvania normally open their deer seasons on December 1. Biologically this is a logical choice as it represents a period at the end of the rutting season. To open the deer season in October prior to the rutting season would permit deer hunting both prior to the breeding season and during a period when leaves would greatly obscure the vision of the hunter.

It is the sincere hope of the writer that these opening dates will meet with approval of a majority of the hunters and that in future years they will result in better hunting in West Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA MAY GET FOREST RESEARCH CENTER

Strong possibility of a forest research center being established in West Virginia is seen by State Forester Wilson B. Sayers who has received information that the U. S. department of agriculture appropriation bill containing such a provision had received committee approval.

The department informed Sayers that the bill, in addition to carrying \$50,000 for an Alaska research center contains an additional \$240,000 above the budget for eight new stations, the latter to be established in West Virginia, Delaware Basin, Ohio, Michigan, Oregon, Washington, California and Missouri.

The conservation commission, said Sayers, has been trying for several years to obtain a station for West Virginia. The state forester explained that a research center conducts research into all phases of forestry. Where the West Virginia center would be located, he said, remains to be determined in case the proposed appropriation receives final approval.

There are 10,000 miles of fishing streams in our national forest.

Paragraphs from Field Notes

by Clay W. Messinger, Acting Chief Conservation Officer



Last summer George T. Wilson, member of the Conservation Commission, accompanied by Mrs. Wilson and their 8-year-old son, was visiting in the farm home of Luther Harmon, midway between Romney and Moorefield. Glancing out of a window about 6:30 one morning, Mrs. Wilson saw the scene pictured above—a wild deer making friends with her son. Quickly she obtained her camera and made a "shot" although a slight drizzle of rain was falling. The antlers on the slab are from deer which had been shot in that section over a period of years.

Conservation Officer Everett V. Price sees indications that Wetzel county farmers and sportsmen are beginning to realize that, in order to have more game, more food and cover must be provided. He says he is receiving more requests this year for food patch mixture than ever before.

As an indication of the amount of leg work involved in performing the duties of a conservation officer, the following is taken from a weekly report of District Officer Wayne Stalnaker:

"On my patrol Sunday from the head

of Cheat River down and up Black Run above Spruce, around two miles; returned back down by Spruce and up Beaver Creek across Cheat Mountain and down Windy Run to car, which was up Windy Run about three miles. The walk was approximately 20 miles or a little more. I really enjoyed this trip. I found where there had been plenty of illegal fishing."

A doe deer recently killed by a car on Jackson's Mill road in Lewis county was carrying twins, says Officer Max W. Casto. The carcass was taken to the

Weston State Hospital. Driver of the car involved was unknown.

Warm weather had caused snakes to begin moving in Mineral county the latter part of March, according to Conservation Officer Claude E. Rice who said he killed a copperhead on March 27.

Officer F. H. Kyer of Tucker county reports that Cpl. Pratt of the state police recently told him of seeing 14 wild turkeys crossing the road on Backbone Mountain.

Twelve deer, three grouse and one groundhog recently were seen by Conservation Officer W. M. Rutherford of Wyoming county while on a patrol trip.

Monroe county red foxes seem to be feasting on groundhogs. Officer V. L. Crosier says he was told recently by Isaih Kidd of near Union of the finding of bones and hides of seven groundhogs at a red fox den.

Conservation Officer F. H. Kyer, of Tucker county, recently while driving along Elk Lick Run road, saw a deer kill itself in a jump across the road. The animal broke its neck, said Kyer, at the end of a 35-foot leap. Kyer also reported recovering the body of a 30-pound beaver killed by a car near Davis. The beaver was turned over to Kyer by Stanley Scott, of Pierce, who picked it up after seeing it killed and then called the conservation officer.

Officer E. K. Holsberry of Randolph county says that on March 30, while on patrol duty, he killed nine snakes in a space of four square feet.

Keeping count of all the game he saw during one week of patrol work recently, Conservation Officer F. H. Kyer of Tucker county listed 50 deer, 45 grouse, one raccoon and one opossum.

Pocahontas county turkeys and grouse apparently came through the winter in good condition, according to Officer John L. Casto, but few coveys of quail seem to have been left.

Deer poaching of a kind rarely seen in West Virginia is reported from Harrison county. In a report filed before his recent resignation, Conservation Officer Max Edgell said he had come across a deer snare in the woods of Harrison county. The snare, made by bending down a 25-foot hickory, was fashioned like a rabbit snare. It was baited with corn. Edgell, who destroyed it, expressed doubt if it would have held a deer.

Officer E. L. Anderson recently found the remains of three deer apparently killed by dogs in three sections of Wood county. Only bones were left. They were found on Cow Creek, McKimm Creek and near the head of Ben's Run.

Officer James R. Kyer says that while on patrol recently in Anthony's Creek district of Greenbrier county he saw more pheasants and signs of pheasants than he had seen for a long while.

"We have one doe deer up here on Watson's Island near Cedar Grove," reports Officer Noah Payne.

Bass were beginning to feed in Hampshire county streams the middle of March, Conservation Officer S. A. Saville reported. A sucker fisherman told him, said Saville, of catching a bass measuring between 24 and 25 inches and which would have weighed five or six pounds. It was a female small-mouth.

Officer J. S. Hubbard of Mingo county reports that the Fairview Game Club purchased 17 dozen rabbits and released them.

Our Readers Write

THE FOX CHASER'S SIDE

To the Editor:

I am sending you a list of the fox hunters organizations in West Virginia. I may have missed some, and, out of all of these, nine have protection on red fox. Our county is one of the lucky ones.

Tyler County Fox Hunters Association; West Virginia State Fox Hunters Association, Inc.; Middle Island Hunt Club; Harrison County Red Fox Chasers Association, Inc.; Lewis County Fox Chasers Association, Inc.; Leading Valley Fox Chasers Association; Red Fox Chasers Association of Marion County; Mannington Fox Hunters Association; The Monongahela Fox Hunters Association, Inc.; Daybrook Fox Chasers Association; Upshur Fox Chasers Association, Inc.; Wetzel County Fox Chasers Association; True Blue Fox Hunters Association; Jackson County Fox Hunters Association; Ritchie County Fox Hunters Association; Calhoun County Fox Hunters Association; Roane County Fox Hunters Association; Cabell County Fox Hunters Association; Wayne County Fox Hunters Association; Raleigh County Fox Hunters Association; Braxton County Fox Hunters Association; Mingo County Fox Hunters Association; Kanawha Valley Fox Hunters Association; Butcher Hill Hunt Club, Inc.; Butcher Hill Fox Hunters Association; Elk Valley Fox Hunters Association; Little Kanawha Valley Fox Hunters Association of Gilmer county; The Mercer Fox & Game Protective Association; Pine Grove Sportsman's Club of Wetzel county; McDowell County Fox Hunters Association; Preston County Fox Hunters Association; Central West Virginia Fox

Hunters Association; Tri-State Fox Hunters Association.

These clubs are made up of thousands of hunters and hounds and there are many thousands that do not belong to any club and our hunting licenses cost the same as any other sportsman, but we never ask the conservation commission to buy us red foxes. We buy them ourselves. We do think we should have more consideration from other sportsmen. We take a "beating" from them all. First, the squirrel hunters, then the rabbit hunters and then the deer hunters. We find them shot up and hanging in bushes. Even in the protected counties. When we go out to listen to our hounds, we don't carry guns. Fox hunters have always been good sportsmen and have as much interest in hunting as others and spare no effort to aid others to enjoy good sports afield. And aren't we entitled to the same consideration by other hunters?

Those who constantly attack the fox must know Reynard could never be responsible for all the crimes charged against him. I would suggest these folks to be fair and to take into consideration the many causes for lack of game, such as the following: Owls, skunks, weasels, snakes, wild cats, house cats, rats, crows, hawks, automobiles, disease, parasites, fires, floods, droughts, heavy rains, snow, lack of cover, lack of food, trappers, mowing machines, accidents, lack of fertility, better fire arms and ammunition, better roads, more cars and other causes. Excessive killing of game by hunters and then blaming the fox, the gamest little animal in the world, for the lack of game, shows poor sportsmanship.

Just a word to Mr. H. C. Spradling of Quincy. No better shot than you



Former Fayette County Forest Protector G. O. Martin takes home a nice string.

are, why don't you trade your shotgun for a fox hound and have some real fun?

I think a state wide sportsmen's organization will solve our problems.

Mrs. Wilmah Whitehill,
Secy. & Treas. Middle Island
Hunt Club and Chairman of the
Dodd. Co. Fox & Fox Hound
Protective Assn., Inc.

NEW ASSOCIATION FORMED

Organization of the Eastern Panhandle Conservation Association was effected at a meeting held at Romney on April 2. With representatives present from various counties in the Panhandle, John C. Ailes, of Romney, was elected president. Other officers are: Chester Merriman, Wardensville, vice president, and D. T. Albanese, Piedmont, secretary-treasurer.

FOREST CAMP CENTER IS MADE READY FOR SEASON

A group camp center in Cabwaylingo State Forest in Wayne county capable of accommodating 75 campers will be ready for use on June 1. It consists of buildings formerly used by the CCC. These have been given new roofs, windows have been screened and other improvements made, including installation of electricity for lighting purposes. Well water is available.

The rates will be 50 cents per week, per person, according to Hays Helmick, assistant state forester in charge of state forests. Reservations can be made through the Parks Division of the Conservation Commission in the capitol at Charleston. The equipment includes cooking ranges using coal and wood.

The center is less than two miles from a fire tower. Nearby flows 12-Pole Creek, in which good fishing may be had in season. The forest provides excellent hiking trails.

Occupancy of the Camp, available June 1 to October 1, is limited to two weeks. Users will need to bring their own blankets, bed linens, pillows and towels. Helmick said the Forestry Division is prepared to make additional improvements whenever an evident demand for these develops. The Camp is particularly suited to the use of Boy Scouts, 4-H members and similar groups.

After the large feathers have been picked from waterfowl or game birds, soak the bird in well salted water for a short time and the pin feathers will come out easily.



by
E. A. Seaman

- This time of year makes one think of the spawning of fish. Many fishermen probably don't realize how different fish eggs may be. The eggs of trout are pretty much non-adhesive. That is, they aren't very sticky. The walleyed pike perch has eggs which are very adhesive. Some eggs, like those of smelt, are on a small stalk; while the eggs of skipjacks are in threads. Then, there are eggs found in masses; such as those of perch.
- The numbers of eggs a species of fish may produce varies greatly. The brook stickleback generally will produce not more than 100 eggs. This contrasts widely with the carp which may produce up as high as 500,000 at times. A two-year-old brown trout may have between 50 to 400 eggs. One four years old will often reach 1,500 or more eggs. The small-mouth bass will produce, on the average, 5,000 eggs, and this may reach a total of 10,000 eggs. The largemouth-bass will produce about the same as the small-mouth. What about muskies? Well, those big fellows may produce as many as 150,000 eggs in a season. Spawning brook trout do well in producing 2,000 to 4,000 eggs. We can't miss mentioning the tremendous egg output of the codfish of ocean waters. This fish will often produce as many as 7 million eggs!
- It is quite interesting to note that the fewer eggs a certain species of fish produces, the more care is given to the nest and the eggs by that fish.

The brook stickleback will make a covered nest of grass and debris in small springs and brooks for tending to its eggs; while the carp and wall-eye which put out thousands of eggs don't even bother to build a nest, but merely broadcast the eggs free in shallow water areas.

- Temperature of water is a very important factor in the spawning of fishes. In West Virginia we have noted quite a variation in the spawning of small-mouth bass. Bass of the Potomac drainage spawn at least two weeks earlier than do the ones of the Ohio River drainage.

CONSERVATION AGENCY'S NEW DIRECTOR "AIRS" VIEWS

(Continued from page 8)

do this. Working together sincerely, I think we can accomplish something really important. . . .

HARRIS: I certainly appreciate your offer, Roy Lee, and I want to assure West Virginia sportsmen that my goal is to serve and to work for and with them in improving fishing and hunting. I invite and shall welcome their cooperation and help. . . . And they can be of much help in many ways . . . there is much to be done but we can do it if we work together for improvement of conditions. That's my main objective . . . the one thing which interests me in my present position.

HARMON: Well spoken, Scotty, and luck to you and to all who put their shoulder to the wheel with yours. But now with the fishing season almost on us, I'd like to know something about the pros-

pects this year. I believe the trout season begins April 24. Will there be many trout to be caught?

HARRIS: There will be at least 130,000 spring-stocked legal size trout, according to the stocking program now being carried out. . . .

HARMON: When did the stocking begin?

HARRIS: On March 4 the first distribution was made. It has been and still is our policy to begin spring stocking as near the first of March as we can. Sometimes weather conditions, however, delay the start. . . .

HARMON: That reminds me . . . some of our sportsmen think stocking should begin earlier . . . how about that?

HARRIS: We'd like to begin earlier, too, if we could get good results. But we can't. The weather is responsible. Our technicians tell us . . . and they are supported by other authorities . . . that if trout are placed in streams when the latter are high and the water swift, a large portion of them are lost. Due to snow and rain our streams normally are high until around the first of March. Often now rains cause the streams to raise after we begin stocking and this always results in a loss of trout. There is another thing, too, and it is equally important. Country roads over which fish trucks must pass in carrying trout to the streams usually are impassable until around the first of March. Even then many can not be used. But

we stock where we can and leave other areas till later. That's the situation and only the weather man can improve it.

HARMON: Thank you, Scotty, I believe many sportsmen now will have a better understanding of the problem. . . . Where do you get the trout that are stocked?

HARRIS: Most of them come from our state hatcheries at Marlinton, Ridge and Petersburg. Through an arrangement with the federal government, we also get some trout from the federal hatcheries at Leetown and White Sulphur Springs.

HARMON: Will stocking continue after the opening of the season?

HARRIS: Yes, Roy Lee, we'll continue until our supply for this year is exhausted.

HARMON: How many legal size trout, altogether, will be stocked?

HARRIS: It's impossible to say exactly. . . . I think I'm safe in saying, though, that the total will be between 225,000 and 230,000. . . .

HARMON: You mean adult trout—legal size and ready to be caught?

HARRIS: Yes, all are legal size.

HARMON: How about young trout—fingerlings as they are called? Does the commission stock any of these?

HARRIS: We certainly do; every year. This year we expect to put in the streams between 600,000 and 700,000 fingerling trout.

HARMON: That's fine. But, now, Scotty, is there any way of telling just how many of these fingerlings which you stock yearly live and reach ma-

turity or, at least, the legal length size?

HARRIS: No, Roy Lee. There is no way to tell accurately. Studies made by our own technicians, though, and by other experts indicate that a good many of them perish before reaching legal size. We are convinced, though, that enough of them do survive to justify our stocking them, but just how many no one can say.

HARMON: No doubt a good many of them do live to grow up and become frying pan material. Naturally, many are eaten by other fish and some die from various causes, but those that do survive add just that many more trout to our stream supply and provide that much more fun for the angler. And now, Scotty, I'd like to get on another subject—game animals. Just what do you stock in this line?

HARRIS: Well, Roy Lee, for the past several years we have been stocking cottontail rabbits, quail and raccoons. The same program is being carried out this year.

HARMON: How many rabbits did you release this year—I suppose they have already been stocked?

HARRIS: Yes, the stocking was completed last month. We released in all 7,000 cottontail rabbits. We wanted and tried to get 5,000 more but couldn't find anybody who could fill the order.

HARMON: That's a lot of rabbit meat. Where did these bunnies

come from and how do you get them?

HARRIS: They all came from Missouri. We buy through a commercial dealer who wild-traps them. The Missouri rabbit seems better suited to our environment than any others we have been able to find. So we get most of our rabbits from Missouri, which usually has a good supply. They seem not to have been so plentiful this year, though.

HARMON: Well, now, just what plan do you follow in releasing them? How many counties received rabbits this year?

HARRIS: Every county in the state received a share. Not one was overlooked.

HARMON: Good, I think our sportsmen . . . and we have many rabbit hunters . . . will be glad to hear that, I'm sure. But on what basis do you make county allotments?

HARRIS: We try to be absolutely fair in dividing up the rabbits we have for stocking purposes. Some counties, of course, are much larger than others. Some have a much better environment—food, shelter, etc., — than others. All of these factors are taken into consideration each year in formulating our stocking programs. Of course there will be some complaints, but so far the plan seems to have worked very satisfactorily. The rabbits are shipped direct from the dealer to the respective county conservation officers. The latter release them in areas where

- cover and food conditions seem most promising.
- HARMON: How about the condition of these cottontails on their arrival? Do many of them die en route?
- HARRIS: Generally, I'd say they are in good condition. Not infrequently, of course, a crate may contain one or two dead ones. This is to be expected, but, on the whole, the mortality rate is low.
- HARMON: Do you pay for those which arrive dead?
- HARRIS: No, we pay only for those which are able to hop away from the crate when the latter is opened in the field. The seller takes a loss on the dead ones and any which may be too weak to make for the bushes when the crate door is opened.
- HARMON: Thank you, Scotty, for your information on rabbit stocking. Now will you tell us about quail—a game bird which several thousand West Virginians like to pursue?
- HARRIS: Our program this year calls for stocking 8,000 birds. Of these, 5,000 will have been raised at the Huttonsville quail farm. The others will be purchased.
- HARMON: When will you begin releasing them?
- HARRIS: We plan to make the first release about April 1 . . . as near that date as weather and other conditions favor. The first stocking will be in the southern counties. From there we will move into the other quail counties. Each county will receive a quota based generally upon factors similar to those considered in making rabbit allotments.
- HARMON: Where will you get the 3,000 quail which are to be bought . . . those that are not raised at the quail farm?
- HARRIS: We buy from commercial dealers . . . anybody who raises them for sale and who has good stock on hand. There are a few quail raisers in West Virginia. We expect to buy some from them . . . others may come from out of the state.
- HARMON: Do farm-raised quail do well when released for stocking purposes?
- HARRIS: Experts seem to be agreed that on the whole they do quite well . . . not as well, though, of course, as would birds hatched and raised in the fields in the wild state. Quail of this kind, though, can not be obtained. So, we have to be satisfied with what we can get.
- HARMON: I'm sure we all understand that. And we are hoping for some good quail hunting next fall.
- HARRIS: And I certainly hope you get it. The conservation commission will do what it can to help.
- HARMON: I'm sure of that. Now, Scotty, tell us something about the ringtails. . . . How many 'coons do you plan to stock this year?
- HARRIS: That's a question that can't be answered just yet. We intend to stock all that our 'coon farm, which formerly was the French Creek game farm, produces. Not until later will we know

how many we shall have for stocking purposes. All indications, however, are that we should have quite a number. We are devoting special efforts to 'coon farming.

HARMON: I don't believe you stock deer any longer?

HARRIS: No, we haven't stocked deer for the past few years. Our herds have become so large there is no need for stocking. In some areas there are too many. Our present big problem is to thin them out in these sections . . . get them scattered into areas which at present have few or no deer. We are now working on this task.

HARMON: Scotty, is the commission paying any bounties this year in an effort to reduce the number of predators?

HARRIS: Oh, yes. We are paying \$4 on adult gray foxes and \$2 a head on sub-adults. The sum of \$25,000 was made available for this purpose by the legislative interim committee. The bounties will be paid until this sum is exhausted. We also pay a \$4 bounty on wildcats. The wildcat bounty is paid the year round.

HARMON: Do you think bounty payments are effective in reducing the number of predators and preserving our game for hunters?

HARRIS: I am convinced they do good. Just how much I can not say with certainty, and some experts are divided in their opinion on this question.

HARMON: Just what does a trapper or a person who kills a

gray fox or a wildcat have to do to collect the bounty.

HARRIS: He or she should take the pelt to a conservation officer or a justice of the peace. A printed form supplied by us for the purpose must be filled out and certified by the officer. That form then is sent to the commission's offices in the capitol, and a check is mailed to the trapper or hunter.

HARMON: Well, our time is about up. I want to thank you, Scotty, for myself and for those who have been listening in, for your kindness in participating in this program. I believe we all know more about conservation now than we did before, and we are counting on you to give us a successful administration of the office of conservation director. Thank you.

BIG INCREASE SHOWN IN MARCH ARRESTS, FINES

Fines and costs totaling \$4,235.69 were levied against violators of the state's fish, forestry and game laws during March, according to the report of Chief Conservation Officer Clay Messinger of the conservation commission. The total represented an increase from \$992.42 in February.

Convictions were obtained in 130 of the 141 cases brought to trial. Charges were dismissed in seven cases and the cases of four juveniles were referred to juvenile authorities. These figures compared with 51 arrests in February and 44 convictions.

Fishing law violations were charged in 53 cases listed in March, hunting violations in 20 and forestry law violations in 18. Fifty miscellaneous charges were listed.

BAD WEATHER IS BLAMED FOR SMALL BEAVER TAKE

A total of 129 beavers were trapped during the Feb. 5-16 season, according to final official figures announced by the Conservation Commission. Trappers had been given until March 17 to have their pelts sealed.

Chief W. R. DeGarmo of the game management division expressed the opinion that the take would have been considerably larger if weather conditions had been more favorable.

He said that 53 pelts from West Virginia sold through the New York Auction Company brought \$5 more per pelt than pelts sold there last year. They were said by buyers to compare favorably in quality with pelts from northern beaver states and be only slightly inferior to those from Maine.

A longer season next year is under consideration by the commission.

OVER 8,000 BIRDS RELEASED IN QUAIL STOCKING PROGRAM

Approximately 8,500 quail were released in the Conservation Commission's spring stocking program, which was completed early last month. The first stocking was made on March 29 in southern counties, after which operations moved into the northern counties.

Most of the birds came from the Hutonsville quail farm from birds raised there and others purchased last fall from out-of-state breeders. A few of those released this spring were bought from state breeders. The price paid for spring birds was \$6 a pair, which compares with \$5.50 last year. Pre-war prices ranged as low as \$1 a pair.

Even at \$6 a pair, according to Chief W. R. DeGarmo of the Game Management Division, breeders are finding profits slim. One state breeder was said to be selling his brood stock because of rising costs in feed and other items.

BRUSH BURNERS BOMBED WITH PRINTED REGULATIONS

Spotting brush burners and "bombing" them with the brush burning laws and regulations are taking up much of the time of Edsel France, pilot of the Conservation Commission's airplane. These combined operations are believed by officials of the Forestry Division to be having beneficial effects.

France carries in the cockpit of his plane a supply of "bombs" in the form of small tin cans to which colored paper streamers are attached. In each can is a printed folder containing the brush burning laws and regulations. When he sights a brush burning operation within 300 feet of forest land, the pilot circles until he attracts the burners' attention. Then from the window of the plane he drops a can. The latter hardly hits the ground before it is picked up by one of the brush burners.

That the operation is having a good effect was seen in a recent incident described by the pilot. Among the regulations is one prohibiting burning before 5 p. m. Sighting a brush fire early one afternoon, France dropped a "bomb". About an hour later he returned over the same place. The burners were making strenuous efforts to extinguish the fire.

Crayfish eyes are dark at night and light in the daytime.

Raccoon gets its name from the fact that it washes its food before eating it. The name raccoon is a derivation of the Indian name "arathcone" meaning "the washer."

FISHIN' THAT IS FISHIN'

Working his way upstream without any luck, a fisherman came across an old Negro stretched on the bank in such a position that he could keep an eye on three cane poles.

"Been fishing around here long, uncle?" he asked.

The Negro gave the question due thought and finally nodded. "Ah guess I'se been fishin' heah always."

I am a newcomer myself and"—he looked at his own expensive rod and reel in disgust—"I could use some good advise."

"De bes' way is to git yo'self sum cane poles like I'se got. Don' git dem too long or dey hang up in de limbs oberhaid w'en you jerk."

"Cane poles about as long as yours, eh? And your lines."

"Dey is jus' old cotton lines. Git white ones an' let de mud color dem like de water. Dey's got to be strong, or dey bust w'en de hook grab a root an' you try to pull."

"Strong cotton lines, eh? What size hooks?"

"Ah uster use de big size, but de big size is bad. Git de little size hooks, so dey don't tangle up in de underbrush."

"Little hooks, eh? And sinkers?"

"About six tenpenny nails on ev'ry line. De current pretty swif' and de line got to go to de bottom—dat's the best."

"And bait?"

It ain't reportant. Evah since Ah kin remember dey's been a oil field 'bout fo' mile up f'om heah dat kill out all de fish."—Exchange.

EXTENSIVE WORK

Extensive stocking of small game in Mineral county is planned by the Mineral County Wildlife Protective Association, according to Secretary L. L. Blackburn. Stocking of trout also is on the club's program, and the building of

small dams in New Creek for bass-rearing purposes. Other proposed activities include erection of a rifle range for the education of young shooters and conducting campaigns for the extermination of predators.

In addition to Secretary Blackburn, officers of the club for the new year are: L. C. Shuck, president; J. D. Emmart, first vice president; G. M. Michael, second vice president; Chas. A. Bobo, treasurer, and E. E. Combs, business manager. Trustees are: N. H. Rogers, R. O. Martin, J. E. Combs, J. E. Blackburn and H. D. Snyder.

OFFICER EDGELL QUILTS

Resignation of a veteran county conservation officer and the filling of a vacancy in another county have been announced by Acting Conservation Director R. S. Harris. Max Edgell resigned as conservation officer for Harrison county after being with the commission since 1941. He is a veteran of the last World war. He quit to enter other employment. The vacancy in Putnam county, caused some weeks ago when Daniel Asbury was killed in a railroad crossing crash, was filled by appointment of Kenneth K. Caplinger, of South Charleston, to the post. Caplinger is a war veteran. His headquarters will be at Winfield.

IRON CURTAIN LIFTED

The Soviet iron curtain recently was lifted sufficiently to permit a request to come out of Romania for "detailed literature on West Virginia". The request, received by the conservation commission, was signed, "Professor A. G. Stino, writer, member Rom. Geographical Society, President Touring Club." Specifically mentioned subjects on which information was sought were touring, state parks, history, botany, mineralogy, agriculture and education. The letter was mailed in Fonticeni, Romania.

'Possum-Head Pete and His Hour' Dawg, Snafu' --by Betty Warner



From: The Conservation Commission, Charleston, W. Va.

HELP KEEP
WEST VIRGINIA
GREEN
PREFERENT FOREST PAPER



HANS W. DIECKMAN
191 SPRINGDALE AVE
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