

'Show-Me' Trip Gives Sportsmen First-Hand Look at Deer Herds

It was cold and blustery. Sticky mud hampered movement of around 200 sportsmen who attended the game commission's "show-me" trip to the Silver Lake big game winter range in Lake county April 6 and 7.

The primary purpose of the trip was to get a firsthand look at this important wintering area of the mules as well as to learn a little about the animals themselves in relation to their environment.

Despite the adverse weather the group did manage to visit three important key sites on the range. Weather itself precluded

the sighting of many deer but various sportsmen reported observing anywhere from 20 to more than 100 animals. This in itself was surprising since rain and snow squall put most animals into the shelter of the juniper thickets. As one sportsman put it, "The deer aren't dumb and only knot-heads like human beings would be out in such miserable weather."

Study Under Way
On this range the game commission is conducting a major research study aimed at filling the gaps in the knowledge about mule deer and their

proper management. The project began in 1958.

During the trip, sportsmen learned how actual deer counts are made, how winter mortality is determined, deer migrations, the effect of hunting on a deer herd, and what food must have if they are to survive the rigors of winter.

Sportsmen in this group had gathered from all parts of the state as far away as Baker and Troy in northeastern Oregon to the Gold Beach area on the south coast. Two legislators, Rep. Shirley Field of Portland and Rep. Edward Elder of Eugene, joined the group

for a show-me trip.

Fire Damage Seen

First stop on the tour was at a recent burn of several thousand acres which had almost wiped out a pure stand of bitterbrush reckoned to be the best stand on any winter range in the state. The area is slowly coming back into grasses and herbs, but shrub survival is nearly nonexistent. Deer use in the area is heavy.

No trouble will occur here this winter, sportsmen were informed, since there has been no snow to cover grasses, herbs and other ground cover plants. But it was apparent to

most in the group what would happen in this area during even a moderate winter when snow would cover completely all available forage.

The second stop took sportsmen to a good stand of bitterbrush on another part of the range. An enclosure here illustrated the long leader growth of untouched shrubs within the enclosure, compared to the cropped condition of the plants on the outside area.

Even though a moderate winter prevails, Vern Max, resident biologist at Summer lake, reported almost 50 per cent utilization of the annual shrub

production. Also shown here were the various trapping and tagging techniques where the animals are tagged and banded to determine migrations and distribution.

The third stop was in a sage area of the range where deer use of this less palatable plant is heavy. High skirting of juniper was also apparent to most observers.

Deer Marked
Of interest to the entire group was the migration and hunter kill studies of the Silver lake deer herd. Observations, both hearings and sightings, indicate that the Silver

lake wintering deer herd has a wide dispersal, and range over a wide summer range territory.

A total of 1,260 summer range observations were obtained from 610 deer marked and released prior to the winter of 1962-63. An additional 142 animals have been trapped and marked during the past winter.

Retrapping of the marked deer gave some information of individual movement. A total of 127 deer were re-trapped from one to ten times, and 112 were retaken in the same trap.

A total of 31 deer were re-trapped on the winter range in subsequent years, 22 being retaken one year later at the same trap site. Six deer were retaken no farther than 1/2 air miles from the original trapping site.

RUMMAGE SALE

The Valley View Extension Unit, will have a rummage sale, April 26, at the annex of Pleasant Valley Baptist church, 17625 SE Foster Rd., beginning at 9 o'clock in the morning. Coffee and doughnuts will be served.

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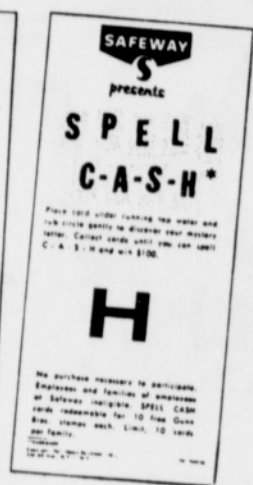
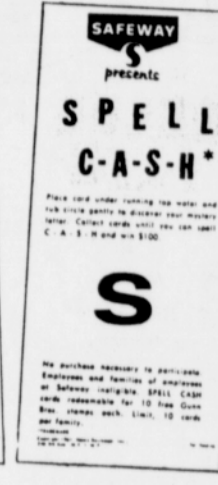
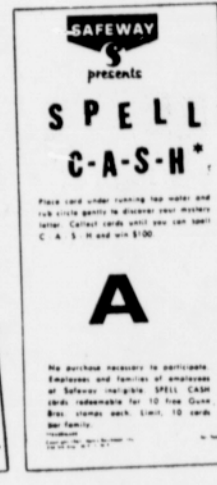
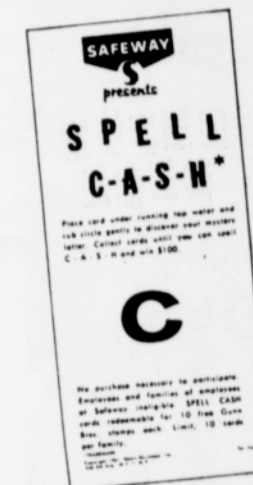
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