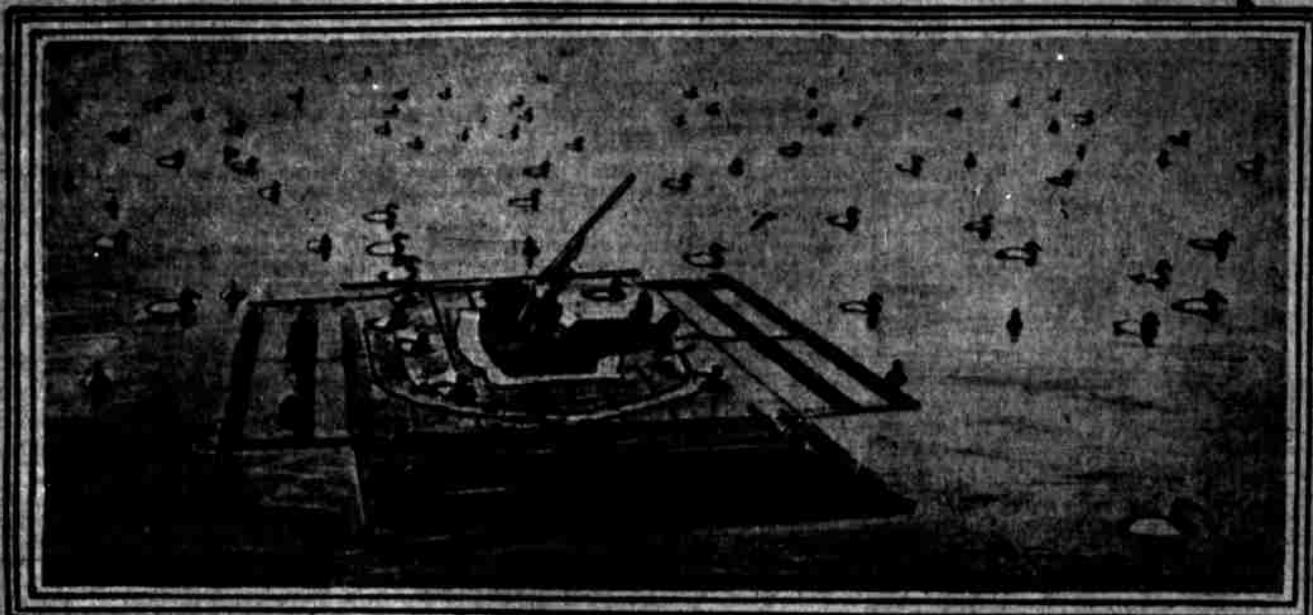


# DUCK SHOOTING—THE VARIATIONS OF THE SPORT IN DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE COUNTRY.



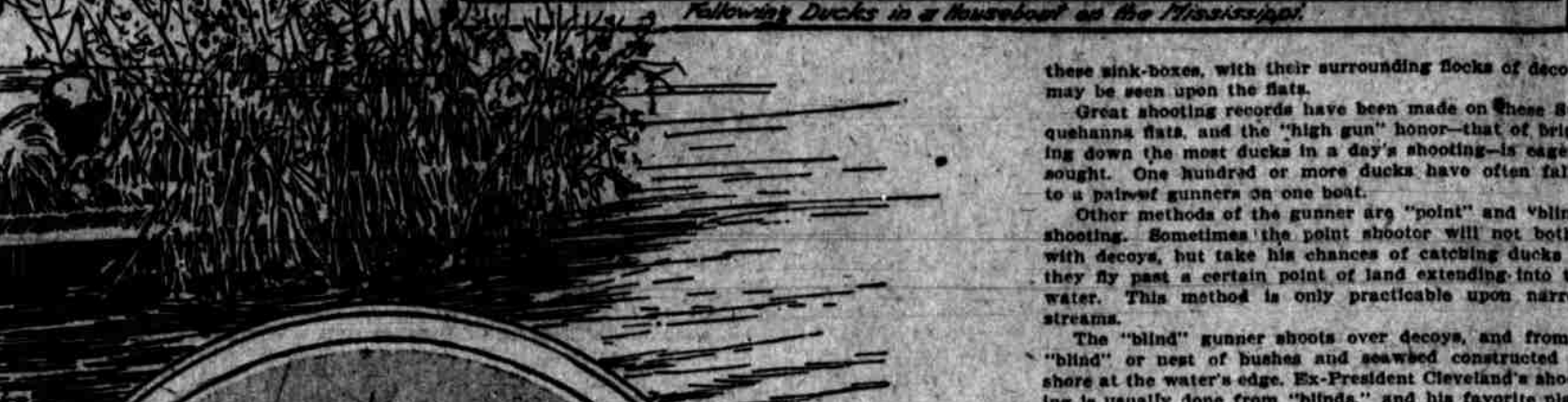
Shooting Ducks over Decoys in the Susquehanna River.



Following Ducks in a Houseboat on the Mississippi.



The Kind of Boat Employed to Shoot upon Swimming Ducks.



Shooting from a Canoe in the Southern Bayous.



The Blind in which former President Cleveland shot ducks near Norfolk, Va.

**"MARK, coming in!"**  
Crouching low in your brush-sheltered "blind," your blood leaps at the low, tense exclamation. Ducks are coming.

Forgotten is the raw, sweeping breeze that stings your face with its icy pellets of spray; forgotten the damp, cramped nest of brush and seaweed in which you have huddled

while awaiting the dawn, and forgotten the half-frozen, aching hands and feet. Here are ducks at last.

Afar off to leeward are dark objects high in the air, like straggling bees hustling along. On they come with double the speed of an express train, rapidly growing larger as they draw nearer. At last even the inexperienced

eye can make out a flock of those superb waterfowl, canvasback ducks.

They have seen the decoys; no they haven't—yes they have, and are heading straight for them. How the blood of the hiding hunter bounds at the sight!

A rush of many wings, the swish of swift-moving, heavy bodies, and they pause just

above the decoys. One look tells them of the deception, but as they wheel off in startled flight there is the triumphant roar of a gun.

Two fall to the first barrel, and one, probably, to the second, and as the frightened birds skurry out of reach you reload with trembling fingers and watch the retriever bring in the silver-back prizes.

**F**EW other branches of sport afford more excitement or keen enjoyment than shooting wild ducks, when game is plentiful and conditions are right.

In a few weeks the roar of duck guns will be heard in the North, and the deep-mouthed but dangerous salutes to the king of wild waterfowl will gradually sweep southward with the season.

Beginning about the many estuaries of the St. Lawrence, the sound of fowling pieces will work its way down the Atlantic Coast, booming from New England shores, from the inlets of the Jersey coast and over the rippling waters of the majestic Chesapeake Bay, creeping on with southward flight of game until the bayous of Mississippi finally take up the volleying echoes.

Upon the rivers and lakes of Manitoba, and in Puget Sound, too, man's warfare upon wild ducks will begin, and as the season advances sportsmen along the Mississippi and the Pacific Coast will arm for the fray, until finally the blaze of firearms will startle the denizens of Arkansas and Louisiana swamps and the streams of southern California.

Harried from Hudson's Bay to Central America, are these unfortunate birds, whose sole fault is in forming a dish fit for a king's table and providing sport that is a royal recreation.

From May to July wild ducks nest in the Northern waters that lie anywhere between Vermont and Labrador; in the Dakotas, the countless lakes of Canada and the wild Northwest.

As autumn comes on, and the young ducks grow stronger, the southward migration begins. This follows the coast or the water courses, with stops here and there that are governed by conditions of food supply and the weather.

Reaching a rich feeding ground, such as may be found along the New Jersey coast or in the Chesapeake Bay, the ducks usually remain until driven away by gunners or cold weather. Sometimes, if permitted, they will remain in a favorite locality all winter, but this seldom happens.

Along the Jersey coast duck shooting does not begin generally until October is well under way, but from the middle of that month to the first of January, varying according to the season and the supply of game, shooting is generally more or less good.

## WHERE THE BIRDS ARE FOUND

All along the Atlantic seaboard methods of shooting are practically the same.

Canvasbacks—those kings of the wild duck tribe—are scarce and growing scarcer. In the early part of the season the broadbill is found in considerable numbers in Maryland Bay and vicinity. Blue and green-winged teal, a small but finely flavored duck; redheads, brant, and, at times, even geese appear.

The black mallard, an excellent table duck is the autumn, also appears early, but is difficult to kill because of its wariness. At first it is found in the fresh-water ponds and brackish streams along shore, but later takes to salt water.

Mosquito Cove, near the head of Barnegat Bay, in New Jersey, has the reputation of being the best place for redheads, which are ranked next to the canvasback by sportsmen.

Great Ledge, a marshy island near the inlet, is probably the best spot for sport; but it is private property, and access to a New York club, Loveland's Island, farther to the south, is also prohibited territory.

Forced river and Tom's river, N. J., afford a number of good gunning points, and there are many unreserved areas along the beach that may be taken advantage of, where are generally found in numbers around Little Egg Harbor.

Nearly the entire Chesapeake Bay, with its many and tributaries, forms a vast field for the duck gunner. In its most famous section for such sport is located at its extreme northern end. From the first of November to about March 15, ducks are crowded with

Here the regal canvasback, the succulent redhead, the fast-flying blackhead, mallards and other varieties are to be found in abundance, if anywhere.

In this very variety of birds lies the principal reason why the upper Chesapeake is the Mecca of the man with the fowling piece and decoys. Then, too, there is plenty of room for hundreds of gunners to engage in the sport at the same time.

During plentiful seasons, ducks may be had in considerable numbers at other points along the bay, in the Gunpowder, Back, Bush, Magdalen, Severn, Potomac and Rappahannock rivers, on the western side, and in the Elk, Sassafras, Chester, Miles, Choptank and Nanticoke rivers, Eastern Bay and Tangier Sound, on the Eastern Shore. But the fame of duck shooting in the Chesapeake rests principally upon the sport to be found about its headwaters.

There the bay is ten or twelve miles across, is shallow, with flat, marshy shores, wide expanses of smooth water, singular tides and acres upon acres of its bottom covered with the submarine grasses that ducks love to eat. The water clarity that is so attractive to the canvasback is there in plenty.

Favorite food and the protection of spacious, quiet waters appeal to the wild duck and will lure him to his doom if anything will. Such enticing conditions exist to

perfection in the upper Chesapeake.

At the beginning of each season Havre de Grace and vicinity are crowded with gunners from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Pittsburg and other places. Boats, guides and decoys are often engaged a month ahead.

When the law lifts its protecting hand from the ducking flats on November 1, the surrounding waters resemble those about some big yacht club.

Craft of every kind may be seen anchored along the shore lines. These range from the palatial yacht of the millionaire to the humble oyster punga of the lower bay. Often more than a hundred boats are counted, many of them with large and jolly parties of rich men from various cities.

When gunners get busy on a still morning, the sound of firing along the Susquehanna flats resembles that of a battle.

Shooting on these flats is done principally from sink-boxes, which resemble coffins sunk to the level of the surface and supported by plank and canvas wings.

A wooden float about ten feet long and six feet broad contains in its centre a box, just large enough to accommodate a man lying on his back. The upper edges of the box are flush with the platform. Beyond the plat-

form extend wings of canvas to break the wash of the waves and help support the float.

Seaweed is scattered carefully about the box when it is anchored upon the shooting ground, and a few decoys are placed upon the wings and platform, while others—sometimes seventy-five or a hundred—are scattered about the float to simulate ducks feeding.

Full of curiosity and also of greed is the wild duck. When he sees what he imagines is a flock of supposed fellows feeding peacefully and happily he jumps to the conclusion that a duck banquet is on, and immediately prone in the sunken box, with a couple of No. 10 double-barreled guns beside him.

It is no child's play, this shooting from a sink-box. Hour after hour, perhaps, the occupant lies there, in strained expectancy, cramped, cold and uncomfortable. Often the best shooting is when a cold breeze is blowing driving rain before it is out of the sheets.

When a flock of ducks settles over the decoys, the man in the box must be clever at rising to a sitting position and at aiming away. He aims to empty both barrels of both guns if he can. Then, while he reloads, his attendant, or guide, rows out from his nearby station, and picks up any ducks that have fallen.

Upon a day when ducks are plentiful, hundreds of

these sink-boxes, with their surrounding flocks of decoys, may be seen upon the flats.

Great shooting records have been made on these Susquehanna flats, and the "high gun" honor—that of bringing down the most ducks in a day's shooting—is eagerly sought. One hundred or more ducks have often fallen to a patient gunner on one boat.

Other methods of the gunner are "point" and "blind" shooting. Sometimes the point shooter will not bother with decoys, but take his chances of catching ducks as they fly past a field.

North Carolina methods are similar to those of Northern waters, and these grounds attract many sportsmen whose appetites have only been whetted by successful forays North.

The "blind" gunner shoots over decoys, and from a "blind" or nest of bushes and seaweed constructed on shore at the water's edge. Ex-President Cleveland's shooting is usually done from "blinds," and his favorite place for sport is the shore of Joseph Sellinger, near Norfolk, Va.

Fine sport is also to be had along the coast of the Carolinas, as the ducks journey southward from the Chesapeake. Hundreds are slain in the rice fields of South Carolina, where the gunners catch them as they fly from field to field.

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Last December the yacht Sabilla, of John F. Betz, Jr., took a party of that gentleman's friends to North Carolina. They returned to Philadelphia reporting the slaughter of 80 ducks, geese and brant, besides quantities of other wild game.

Southern Louisiana is sought in winter by hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese that make their way down the Atlantic Coast or the Mississippi river. Many of these swing westward over Texas.

## ALONG THE "FATHER OF WATERS"

Splendid sport is to be enjoyed in the country lying below New Orleans and extending westward to the Sabine river.

Like the "point" shooting of the North is bayou gunning in Louisiana. The gunner does not need to construct "blinds," for nature has provided plenty of them; neither, as a rule, does he bother with decoys, as the ducks fly up and down the passageways usually within reach of his gun.

All the gunner requires is a corduroy suit, stout shoes, a slouch hat, gun, shells and a boat. Some of the streams are not more than twenty yards wide, hence the ducks are brought close to the gunner.

Here the cleverest sort of "snap" shooting is required, as the ducks flash past with terrific speed. A beginner will probably have twenty misses to each kill; one more expert may get a bird in six shots; while the seasoned gunner will average one in three.

Another method of shooting, although not so generally practiced, is from a "sneak" boat, the true nature of which is disguised by brush, seaweed or straw. In this the gunner steals upon the feeding ducks.

In bayous where the water is of sufficient depth, canoes and decoys are sometimes employed, the gunner paddling behind undergrowth to await the arrival of his quarry.

Ducks of the Louisiana bayous, when killed between the first of December and the middle of February, are in prime condition, the flesh being of delightful nutty flavor.

Drifting down the Mississippi river in a shanty-boat is a favorite method of following game with Western gunners. A shanty-boat may be bought at almost any price from \$10 to \$100. Four or more sportsmen occupy each boat.

After passing the mouth of the Ohio river the best sport begins. Approaching a feeding ground, the gunner digs a pit on one of the numerous little sandy islands of a riverine swamp, puts out his decoys in the night and awaits until the pit to await the morning flight.

## THE GAME BECOMING SCARCE

The flight generally continues for about two hours, during which time the sport is fast and furious. The evening flight, lasting from 4 o'clock until sunset, also affords good shooting.

Down the river, sometimes for hundreds of miles, the shanty-boat men will follow the southern trend of the waterfowl.

Good shooting grounds are found at intervals all the way from Cairo to New Orleans, but one of the best is Reelfoot Lake, near Tiptonville, Tenn. Here the flight of wildfowl is amazing. There are ducks, geese and cormorants, called water turkeys; as well as cranes, water hens and snipe.

Early in October flight duck shooting begins in the Northwest, in upper Dakota, Minnesota and Manitoba. Lake Manitoba is a favorite resort of the Northwest flight gunner.

In this locality decoys are used, the gunner hiding on the shore, or in a boat concealed in the tall grass of the lake. Mallards, teal, canvasback and redheads form the bulk of the feathery victims.

Shooting continues about two hours in the early morning and about the same length of time in the afternoon. Birds being caught as they fly from feeding grounds to their sleeping quarters.

The best sport is to be had at dawn. Just starting for their feeding grounds, the birds are usually less wary at that hour.

Put Sound and along the Pacific Coast the methods of shooting ducks are practically the same as in the East.

It is with genuine regret that the duck gunner, whether in the Chesapeake Bay, the Louisiana bayous, or the Canadian lakes, notices the gradual diminution of the supply of game. There are few canvasbacks now, and gunners will gladly take bonanzas and redheads that fifty years ago were considered scarcely edible.

Breach-loading magazine guns, an enormously increased body of sportsmen, a greater demand on the part of hotels and restaurants, with the cold-storage system of transportation making distribution easier—these things, coupled with the ravaging of nests in the Northern States, have made the sport more difficult, more costly and far less productive of big bags.

## In China It's the Comprador

**A**MONG the peculiar business customs of China with which Americans dealing there must acquaint themselves is the comprador system.

Business houses deal with the Chinese through a Chinese agent known as the "comprador." Originally this agent was simply a man engaged servants and bought supplies in the native markets.

For years the system has developed, however, until now practically all the business of foreigners with Chinese is done through agents of this sort, whether it be in buying or selling, in lending or in borrowing money.

In many firms the comprador is a partner; in many instances he is in reality the owner of the business, furnishing the capital, managing it, and using the name of a foreigner to secure foreign protection from the many abuses which obtain in commercial circles.

The real comprador is a cashier, handles all money received by a firm and makes all payments. In many foreign business houses bills are paid by the representative of the business office in so order on the comprador of the firm, and this order is backed as a bank check or draft.

All servants are engaged by the comprador of the firm, and he is responsible for them. In short, there is no limit to what a comprador does not do under the present way of doing things in China.

## Wild Turkey, Cooked in Sand Pit, a Feast for Hunters

**N**OTHING in all the world is better, epicures assert, than the South Carolina wild turkey, cooked in the South Carolina way—in a sand pit.

Placed in the cooking pit at night, and allowed to remain until the next morning—shades of the old Roman gourmet, what a feast is there!

It is said that a wild turkey was once prepared in this way for a famous New York financier, who is known on two continents. He imagined that he had sampled almost everything worth while in the line of delicious cooking.

When the primitive cook arose in the sand and uncovered the next morning, the financier, it is said, almost fainted at the savory aroma that arose from the pit and ruined an international appointment on the plea of sudden illness in order to get another turkey cooked in the same way.

But everybody cannot go to South Carolina; and, besides, there are wild turkeys elsewhere. In order to get the best results, after one of these noble birds has been captured, an expert gives the following directions to produce a savory and tasty dish:

"You don't need a sand pit, particularly. Any kind of earth is good enough, though a sandy, light soil is the best."

"It's simply the primitive oven which the Indians used, and the Spaniards, and the English, too, in Robin Hood's time, and which came down to us, no doubt, by inheritance from primitive man of the Stone Age. It's the simplest method of cooking imaginable."

"You dig a hole anywhere. The back garden will do if you are not out in the woods. Then you pile brushwood in it and make a big fire."

"On top of the wood you put a few large flat stones. As the fire dies down these stones sink with it, and finally you have a layer of hot embers in the bottom of your pit and a layer of hot stones over this."

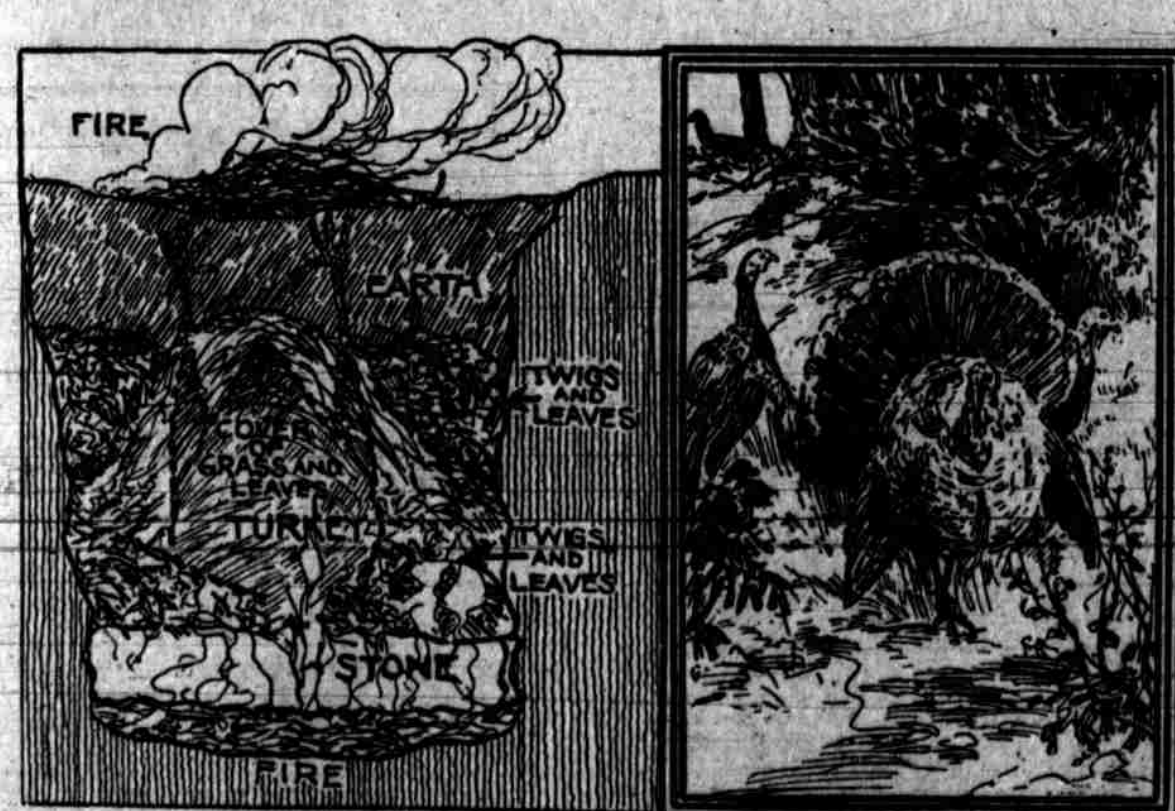
"Over these you put a layer of twigs and leaves. Then you take your wild turkey, wrap him well around with grass and leaves, put him on the bed you have prepared for him, put more leaves and twigs upon him, then fill in the earth over him, build a fire over the place to keep up the heat, and then you may leave him till morning."

"When you open the pit and unwrap the bird, you will have an aroma which will stir the bones of any hungry man."

"As to dressing your turkey, you may remove his head and entrails and the uneatable rest of him before you put him in the pit, if you want to. It isn't necessary, and though to some people the notion of cooking him viscera and all, may not seem pleasing, it really won't hurt the flavor to leave them in."

"In the cooking the entrails shrivel up into a solid ball, which is easy to remove when you cut the bird open, and in the same way as the flesh laces tender, the skin becomes so loose that you simply slit it open and peel it off feathers and all."

"You may cut off a few of the tail and wing feathers



HOW THE BIRD IS COOKED IN SOUTH CAROLINA

and the head, too, to make your turkey fit the oven better and make a more convenient parcel to handle; but for the rest, leave him just as he is till after the cooking. He will be good, I'm assured for it."

"Now, if you don't care to try the primitive method of turkey cooking, an old-fashioned Dutch oven will serve just as well. In that case you had better wrap him up to

keep his skin moist, or pluck him and dress him before you cook him. And you'll have to turn him on the other side to the fire after one side has been baked through."

"So you can see, very simply, before an open fire. He's a good thing, and if you dress him first, a stuffing of boiled chestnuts will make him all the more succulent. He's a tasty bird, whichever way you cook him."