

ENLIST SNAKES AND BIRDS TO SAVE CROPS

Hawk, Owl and Reptiles Will Devour Many Gophers and Mice If Given Chance.

By JAMES H. COLLINS.

A Kansas farmer recently printed in the *Abilene Register*, that state, the following advertisement:

"Notice—I have put a bull snake in my alfalfa field north of town to catch the gophers. Please do not bother him or shoot at him, as he is a good, well-behaved snake and harmless except to gophers and mice."

Whereupon eastern newspapers clipped it as a piece of humor.

But there is a very definite food-saving idea here. All over the country we have harmless snakes, capable of rendering the utmost service provided they are left alone. But even country people find it difficult to let harmless snakes follow, unmolested, a snake's legitimate business.

There is a certain big black snake throughout the east common in fields and around farm houses. It is not only harmless, but whenever one sees him about the premises he is diligently at work catching mice or cleaning up refuse. But he looks deadly enough to the inexperienced eye, and, moreover, has an unfortunate curiosity. When he hears a horse coming down a field row hitched to a cultivator, guided by a boy, his leads him to raise a quarter of his length natural desire to know what is coming from the ground and take a look, and nine times in ten the boy stops the horse and virtuously slaughters Mr. Snake, thus killing a mouser capable of catching far more rodents than any lobby cat.

It is the same with hawks and owls. The owner of a flock of hens sees an enormous hawk sailing over the barnyard and brings it down with a rifle, believing that he has destroyed an enemy. But only two varieties of hawks in this country prey upon hens, and neither of them sails over the barnyard in that manner, for their line of attack is stealthy, through trees and brush.

Likewise, with owls, which are most persistent destroyers of small animals harmful to crops and foodstuffs. There was a campaign of owl and hawk killing through the east some years ago which went far enough to upset the balance of nature locally and bring on perfect plague of mice. When disease reduced the number of coyotes in the northwest some years ago the farmers' joy at what they considered relief from a pest was soon turned into alarm, as a plague of jackrabbits and gophers followed, the chief food of the coyote.

In the conservation of food we need these helpers, not merely in war, but permanently, in the production and conservation of food.

If the snakes, owls and hawks were able to write and vote, they would probably undertake a "campaign of education" on their own behalf, for better public understanding, or seek protective laws in congress. As man is the only writing and voting animal, it is clearly his duty to understand the snakes, owls and hawks. With understanding will come intelligent protection.

HINTS ON WAR GARDENS

By B. W. TALCOTT.

Gardens Are Needed.

The demand for war gardens in 1918 is going to be just as urgent as it was in 1917, if not more so. Many who fought to save their gardens from the unusually dry season last summer, will no doubt be discouraged about attempting one this year. They should remember, however, that the season was an abnormal one and gardens will in all human probabilities be much better next year. Again, many the past year worked gardens where sod had been turned under and where weeds had thrived for years. With even an unfavorable season as last year, a second season of til-

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lage of the same results would bring better results, as the ground would be pulverized better.

Prepare Plans Now.

Secure the ground now and prepare the plans for the garden during the unpleasant weather. In many instances two and even three crops may be raised on the same ground. Where early radishes, lettuce, turnips and spinach are planted, the ground will be cleared in ample time to plant potatoes or cabbages. After early cabbages, late peas may be planted, and throughout almost every month of the season some crop can be taken off and another replaced on the same ground.

It used to be believed that land had to rest. Now it is known that what it wants is food instead of rest, and if the proper food is given it needs no rest. Rotation of garden crops, like rotation of field crops, in part supplies that food, but only in part, and when several crops are grown in a year it is necessary to feed the land either with good barnyard manure or commercial fertilizer.

Put Early Crops Together.

Plan your garden so that crops maturing about the same time will be placed together. For instance, an inexperienced gardener is apt to plant beets, parsnips and carrots, along with early radishes, lettuce and spinach, because they are all planted the same time. If show that the more times a crop of the beets, carrots and parsnips are corn is cultivated the less is the cost of

planted with radishes, lettuce, spinach, early peas or turnips in alternate rows, the late vegetables will prove a nuisance in putting in a second crop after the early ones are taken off.

It is also possible to save room in a small garden by setting tomato or late cabbage plants between the rows of peas and early beans. It requires a little care to avoid stepping on them in picking the peas, but the plants will have been well started and will make vigorous growth after the first crop is removed.

Wheel Hoe is Profitable.

If your garden is small it is well to plant the rows crossways, with a path in the center. If large, plant the long way and wide enough to cultivate with a wheel hoe. The wheel hoe or even a heavy hand hoe which can be drawn between the rows, are better implements for gardening than the common hoe. They leave the ground in better shape. A good one-wheel hoe will be a big saving of time, and if the gardener is a busy man one of the inexpensive sort will usually pay for itself, because it is possible to go through a common kitchen garden in an hour if done often, so that the soil is kept loose. If this is done at least once, or better, three times a week, the garden will be a success.

It was stated at the Eugene corn cultivation per bushel, and the same is true of raising garden stuff. Few crops can be cultivated too much.

NO MORE DRAFT CALL UNTIL FEBRUARY 15

Except to Fill Vacancies No More Men Will Be Ordered Out Earlier.

Portland, Ore., Dec. 31.—Except to fill vacancies in calls already made, no more men will be drafted from Oregon or other states before February 15. As all questionnaires will be completed before that date, this will give men taken hereafter, except such few as may be needed prior to February 15 to fill vacancies, the advantage of the new classification system.

Very few men would have been taken from Oregon in any event prior to the next draft, which it is now announced will be not earlier than February 15. This is one of only 10 states that have already filled their quotas in the first draft, barring a few vacancies caused by rejections at the training camps.

Future draft quotas are to be filled

first from class 1, comprising men without dependents. They will be drafted from deferred classifications only when class 1 is exhausted, thus making it necessary to go to the next class for enough men to fill up the quota.

An exception to this will be made in the case of experts and men highly skilled in agriculture or industries. It is announced that the government soon will call for a large number of men of this special class. They will be taken as needed for such special work from whatever classification they may have been granted.

A limited number of officers not now in active service, and retired officers of the Oregon national guard, who are physically fit and between the ages of 23 and 47, are eligible for enlistment as privates first class for attendance at the next officers' training camp, which begins January 15. Official word to this effect has just been received by John M. Williams, acting adjutant general, from the chief of the bureau of militia affairs at Washington, with the request that it be given publicity.

Applications for the camps by such officers must be approved by the bureau. Those qualifying at the camps, which will be held in southern California and the southern states, will receive commissions.

Try a Eugene Special for a good cigar.

LANE MAKING GOOD RECORD

Clatsop county leads with total thrift stamp sales for the last week, outside of Multnomah, with \$1505; Lane county is second, with \$2830. Other leaders are: Marion, \$2597; Jackson, \$1663; Clackamas, \$1577; Baker, \$1430, and

Josephine, \$874. The total for the state is now \$148,540.17.

In feeding hogs for the market, as also any other class of meat animals, large returns are obtained when the stock is as nearly uniform as possible.



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