

OUT-OF-DOORS STUFF

By Lane Leneve

In Minnesota it is necessary that each duck hunter report his season's kill to the state game commissioner. In 1930 the kill was over 2,000,000. In 1934 it was 147,000. This is a shining example of the decrease in ducks. Throughout the United States the general supposition seems to prevail that drought and drainage have been the primary factors in reducing the number of waterfowl and that restoration of water will remedy the situation as far as it is remediable. The truth can only be grasped by realizing that close to nine-tenths of the ducks and geese have disappeared from vast breeding grounds untouched by drought or drainage. Think of it! Nine-tenths of the birds have disappeared from such areas!

Only one-tenth of the finest and real primitive breeding areas are now populated by waterfowl. Tragic as has been the effect of agricultural development and drought upon the supply of ducks and geese, the watered lands of the north, now almost empty in spite of ideal conditions, tell the true story of what has actually happened. The most powerful enemy the birds have ever known and ever will know is millions of hunters—that and nothing else.

Naturalists claim that waterfowl are diminishing at the rate of nine million a year and that there are only twenty million more left alive in the United States. In 1930 the number was estimated at a hundred million and that was a reduction from earlier billions. The vital question is: just how long are the poor birds going to actually survive as a whole and just how short a time will it be before some species will be totally extinct? Last season saw almost the complete extinction of the red-head duck.

One of the biggest jokes of all coming under the new law is eliminating certain species from being killed. This law would be o. k. if hunters really knew their ducks, but as it stands, a forbidden species may be killed just as well as any other species, owing to the fact that not one in a thousand hunters can distinguish the different species of ducks when they are on the wing. Not long ago in the state of New York at a sportsmen's meeting where there were hundreds of duck hunters present, the feather-

ed skins of 12 different species of ducks of the female of the species were shown and not one hunter present was able to distinguish between them or name them. It takes an expert who has studied the flight of ducks for years to be able to tell you just what sort of duck is flying past your blind.

I know that it took me many seasons, with my dad acting as instructor, before I was able to distinguish the difference between different species. It cannot be done in a day. Hunters are bound to shoot some of the forbidden birds. When they do, what occurs? Nine times out of ten, rather than risk being fined they will throw the bird away—thus wasting a lot of birds each season.

In the past I have been called to account several times by men who shoot over baited ponds, for remarks I have made concerning the practice of baiting, but I could never see their side of the question. Baiting is intolerable at any time, but it took the commercial duck clubs to expose its full hideousness, and its calamitous effect. In the commercial duck club, the owner of marsh land, or of an artificial pond, rents space in his blinds to all comers. He builds the blinds, baits the pond, maintains live decoys, furnishes hired men to superintend the shooting and runs the place with all the workmanship of a slaughterhouse. If the full legal bag limit is permitted each hunter stays in his blind until the limit is killed. Then he steps out and another "sportsman" take his place. On some of these clubs, hunters are allowed to shoot only five or six birds. This, it is pointed out, makes them valuable agencies for the conservation of waterfowl. Actually it increases the profits of the owner. He gets \$20 for twelve birds "sold on the wing," instead of \$10.00 and just as many are killed in a day. Nobody condemns the commercial duck clubs more than do the owners of private preserves who shoot over baited waters themselves. They do not condemn the practice of baiting, but the sordid commercialism of it, the alternation of hunters in the blinds. The commercial shooting clubs have "sanctuaries"—places where the surviving ducks can rest and forget their fears until it is time for more shooting, without going onto somebody else's

property to be shot by rival "sportsmen." The wealthy private club baiters want the commercial baiters put out of business. They wanted a law passed to forbid baiting wherever an admission is charged for shooting birds. As a matter of fact there is no difference between the two groups except the relative speed with which they destroy ducks. The distinction between baiting on commercial shooting grounds and on private clubs of wealthy sportsmen is merely one as to the rate of destruction. Commercial baiting has speeded up the process of extermination already begun by the gentlemen baiters. If baiting on commercial shooting grounds can be called "sale of game on the wing," baiting by wealthy sportsmen must be termed "purchase of game on the wing." In both instances, the decisive factor is ability to buy and pay for shooting grounds, corn and employees.

As a matter of fact, the real worry of the gentlemen duck baiters is not that the commercial baiters are shooting in an unsportsmanlike manner, but that they are killing birds which by right should be reserved for the gentlemen. They think that by speeding up the rate of extermination, the commercial baiters will, if unchecked, put an end to the sport of the gentlemen baiters in this generation, whereas the gentlemen baiters think that they should be allowed to put an end to it for the next generation. Aside from these two points, the commercial club shooters and the wealthy gunners are as much alike as the two barrels of a shotgun. What neither group realizes is that the end of hunting, under their system, is not a choice between this generation and the next, but this year and the next.

In view of all these facts set forth, I believe that the abolition of baiting and the use of live decoys is the greatest move ever made toward real conservation.

I am rather late in chronicling the death of another old sportsman friend but copy made up in advance prevented me from doing so. I refer to W. F. Bowron, of Lakeside, who passed away August 6th. "Dad" Bowron, as he was familiarly known to his many friends, was one of the real old timers of that district. Many an evening I have sat 'round the fire

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with "Dad" and listened to his stories of early days. He told me of how the elk once abounded in the little valley on his ranch. He told me of the trapping of bear, cats and cougar and of the wonderful dogs he had owned. "Dad" Bowron was a real true sportsman and a lover of dogs. If all the old timers and all sportsmen of the present day could have left and could leave behind them monuments of real conservation such as that erected by "Dad" Bowron, then game would be plentiful until the end of time. That old timer never killed wantonly. When elk and deer abounded on his place, he would kill only a small deer for food for his family. I shall never forget the story he told me of two of his friends, who in the old days, when elk were plentiful, packed back a few miles from his ranch and returned within a day or so with the hams from six elk upon their horses. "Dad" inquired as to where the rest of the meat was and they informed him that they had left it in the woods. "Dad" told them that never again did he want them to come upon, or go through, his place on a hunting expedition. How different from the attitude of a lot of the old timers towards hunters who slaughtered game! One was always sure of a hearty welcome at the Bowron ranch. His friends always knew that they were welcome there and one of the things that I shall always regret is the fact that I didn't take advantage of "Dad's" standing invitation to come and pay him a visit just anytime. The three weeks that I once spent as his guest some twelve years ago, while I was engaged in trapping for the government are recalled as real happy days and will live long in memory. I succeeded in catching seven coyotes that were killing Bowron's sheep and goats and "Dad" was more than grateful and never ceased, by friendly gestures, in showing his appreciation. I had planned at some time in the future on paying this old friend a little visit, but as usually happens in such cases, I delayed too long. Friendship is something golden, something we should all pay more heed to. And now "Dad" Bowron has bidden goodbye to his friends in this world and has forsaken the woods and trails he loved so well May his journey to unknown lands be a pleasant one.

Here is a late news flash for you: Grover Gouthier, that ardent archer from Philomath, in a letter just received, informs me that he is company with 199 other archers are the first of the season for eastern Oregon in pursuit of the big mule deer. The entire crowd will be armed with naught but bows and arrows. Through the courtesy of Mr. Gouthier a full and complete account of the hunt will be published in this column. An invitation is extended to all

hunters camped in the vicinity of the 200 archers, to visit their camp and get acquainted with this outfit of real sportsmen. I am sure that Grover's narrative of the hunt will prove mighty interesting reading. We are looking forward with a lot of pleasure to receiving it.

New Cases in Circuit Court

Supt. 6—A. A. Schramm, state superintendent of banks, vs. Coos County.
Sept. 10—John Paulson vs. J. A. Hatch and wife, George Byers and wife, et al.
Sept. 10—Mary D. Kronholm vs. Geo. W. McClafferty and wife.
Sept. 11—Dennis McCarthy vs. Central Avenue Co., C. P. Huntington et al.
Sept. 12—Ruth Evelyn Jones vs. Leonard R. Jones. Suit for divorce.
Sept. 12—Anna M. Rooney as executrix of the estate of Chas. Webb, deceased, vs. C. D. Walker et al.

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Annual Health Conference

The annual conference of city and county health officers will be held in Portland September 16th, 17th and 18th. The State Board of Health invites all physicians, dentists, nurses and others interested in the prevention of disease to attend this conference, and the laws of Oregon require all city and county health officers to attend this conference. Health problems as they concern the individual and the community will be discussed by well known specialists.

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