

OUT-OF-DOORS STUFF

By Lans Leneve

Ducks in April. Thousands of 'em! And in the Coquille and Fish rap valleys at that! Never in the memory of the old timer can he recall such a variety and number of ducks as were apparent the latter part of April. In the old days and even during recent years there have always been a few mallards sticking around and nesting. During the month of March, the teal, the sprigs, the canvas back, bluebill, ruddies and widgeons pulled out for other climes, but during the past month all these species have been present here.

My old friend, Ithamer Robinson, reports hundreds of teal in the vicinity of his ranch, south of Coquille and another herd, Geo. Hampton, of Arago, reports hundreds of all sorts of ducks near his ranch. And with them were two birds that George couldn't dope out. In all his years in this county he had never glimpsed any such birds.

The question arises as to just why the ducks are lingering here so long this spring? There is no doubt of it but many of them will nest here. In fact, Jesse Robinson, of upper Fish-trap, states many of them are nesting near, or upon, his ranch at the present time.

Many have inquired of me as to why the birds are staying over and nesting to such an extent. I believe that I have the answer. During the past few years great tracts of marshlands that for uncountable years have been the nesting and resting grounds of migratory waterfowl, have been "reclaimed." (I get peeved each time I hear that word.) These government reclamation programs have been the means of draining these natural habitats of the wildfowl and forever ruining them for nesting or resting purposes. Each season has seen more such spots reclaimed, until today there is a marked shortage of such places. So, therefore, when the poor birds find such a spot as the lowlands of the Coquille valley they are loathe to depart and linger on and on. It is a haven to them, or almost a haven. There is just one thing that prevents it from being a perfect resting ground and that is the fact that despite the closed season, the birds in many spots in the valley are warred upon, even while they are nesting.

Not long ago, while fishing below town, I heard at least twenty shots fired at different intervals at a certain point in the marsh where the birds were coming to rest. I have been informed that in the China Camp district that shooting was indulged in throughout the winter, during closed season. The birds really have no protection under the present set-up of the state police patrol, for no man can tab traffic violations, be on the lookout for stolen automobiles, lend co-operation to various peace officers and at the same time catch game law violators—it just isn't in the books and not even a super-ace detective could do it. Game law violators come under a class all by themselves and the real violators will not be found along much frequented streams and nearby highways, where

the members of the state police carry on. Officers who are forced to ride about in their cars along roads bordering streams and tag people for their licenses and who spend up and down the rivers in their boats looking for violators aren't getting to act base in the enforcement of the game laws. Men who are forced to wear uniforms, big stars and six-guns are a walking advertisement of what they represent and what chance do they actually stand of apprehending the man who wades to his hips in the marshlands shooting ducks unlawfully, or the man who goes far into the timber, kills illegal meat, smokes it and disposes of it commercially, or the man who spots deer with a light many miles from the highway? One man, dressed as a woodsman and who really knows his stuff, would apprehend more real game violators within a short period of time than uniformed men who never stray far from the highways, would in ten years. When you come right down to it, supposing that a man hasn't a fishing license, is apprehended and fined. Just what has that accomplished? Usually it has placed a burden upon the taxpayers, for the man without a license is usually some poor devil who can't afford to buy meat for his family and is seeking to provide them with a little sustenance. Yet it appears that the state police specialize on checking licenses.

On the other hand, the man who is killing deer by the use of a spot light, killing nesting ducks, selling venison and blasting fishing holes, is a real menace and it is his type that should be concentrated on above all others.

While 300 fishermen along a stream that borders a highway are being checked on for licenses (ninety-nine times out of a hundred, they all possess one), back in the hills real violations are taking place.

I have been informed that practically the entire roster of a CCC camp in another county possessed guns last hunting season, but no licenses. Four dead does were found in one small clearing. Shooting was carried on from dawn until dark and nothing was done about it.

Perhaps the state police department of the game commission have their orders issued them and they follow them out. Perhaps they are not allowed to stray far from the beaten path by their superiors—the heads of the state police and the game commission. Perhaps as individuals they are not to blame for the lack of game law enforcement and I am not censuring them directly, for I realize only too well that they are working under a mighty bum setup as far as protecting game is concerned. Common law enforcement and game law enforcement cannot go hand in hand, regardless of statements to the contrary. After watching the game commission function in co-operation with the state police during the past few years I have formed the personal opinion that when the two organizations were "weeded out" a short while back that there actually wasn't enough "weeding" in evidence. What bothers me is this fact: when an army, a baseball nine or a football

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team falls dismally under the leadership of their captain, a new captain is elected, but when the game commission fails to please the sportsmen at large a new one is chosen and placed under the same leadership. In the past I was very outspoken, along with many other sportsmen, regarding the old game commission. For a long time I have withheld my comment concerning the new commission, hoping and trusting that same would be favorable as time went by. But a review of the past few months forces me to state that bad as the old commission was, in my opinion, they were a credit to the present commission. My opinion is based on the fact that out of two million dollars spent by the commission the past two years, I can't see where the sportsmen have derived much benefit from the expenditure.

And another thing how about closing Ten Mile Creek from below the bridge. Was that another Zane Grey deal? Was it done for the benefit of the poor sportsmen who caught their salmon at the mouth of the creek? Or was it done for the man who conducts a tourist camp upon the shores of the lake and who had boats for hire in which to fish? Of course, the closing of the stream would cause a big run of fish into the lake and prevent the poor fishermen from getting their salmon at the mouth.

Next week I am going to tell you of the poor rancher who killed a cougar on his own place and the present game commission failed (refused) to pay the bounty. It's the most unusual story yet—watch for it.

BREWSTER VALLEY

Albert Christensen took Mrs. Christensen to Eugene Wednesday to see a doctor about her eyes which have been nearly blind for several days. The trouble was found to be due to sinus infection and she is much improved now. They went to Roseburg again Saturday for medical treatment.

Tom Lawhorn, of Marshfield, was a business visitor in the valley Sunday.

The valley folks were shocked and grieved to hear of the death of Kenneth Taylor, who passed away at Bend, Ore., last Friday morning during an operation for ulcers of the stomach. The Taylors own a place in the valley and until recently have lived on it. His funeral was held in Bandon Monday. Those attending from here were Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Laird, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Laird, Mrs. Harold Shepherd, Mrs. Charles Oberman, Mr. and Mrs. Louis Laird, Mr. and Mrs. Rollie Alford and Mrs. Leslie Groat.

Mr. and Mrs. Grant Harry have moved back to their little house in the valley.

Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Westrope, Wm. Westrope's parents, and Mrs. Keller, his sister, and her husband, of Eugene, were week-end visitors at the Westrope home.

A jolly picnic dinner was enjoyed at the Christensen home Sunday. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Norleigh Alford and sons, of Coos River, Mr. and Mrs. Lendon Jenkins, also of Coos River, Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Westrope, Mr. and Mrs. Keller, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Westrope, Nathan and Verlin, Miss Cora Bullack and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Christensen, Christina and Donald.

Jack Mayse represented the sixth grade and Erwin Laird the eighth in the spelling contest at Coquille last Saturday. Elton Mayse took part in the fifth and sixth grade division of the music festival.

Forty of the men from Sitkum CCC camp have moved to the Spike camp, which is seven miles farther up the canyon.

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Carlborn Mr. Everett, of Marshfield, visited Saturday and Sunday at the Kirk home.

Miss Hazel Durrell left Tuesday to work in the dining room of the Westland Hotel at Bandon.

Perley Crowley went to Port Orford last Friday and returned Saturday.

Mrs. Ray Rookard and Florence Alma visited with her sister, Mrs. Frank Bates, of Bandon, all last week. James Crowley went to Coos River

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