



There's no mistaking this hunter. But these men take a great risk.

light. But when yellow is worn afield, it fairly leaps into prominence!

Dr. Art Heinsen, president of the California Optometrists Association, who has made an intensive study of this problem, says, "We have been working on this for a long time and are convinced that many accidents can be avoided by the simple expedient of changing the safety color in hunting gear from red to yellow."

Dr. Heinsen offers this safety scale of colors, rated from zero to a perfect score of 67: yellow, 64; orange, 38; plaid, 26; green, 20; red, 17; and blue, 11. Note the variance between yellow and the generally accepted safe color of red.

It's a proved fact that red is particularly confusing to a group comprising eight percent of our male hunter population: the color blind. They have no difficulty recognizing color under normal lighting conditions. However, with impaired visibility or poor light, they confuse colors.

At dawn or dusk, in a fog or deep shade, their ability to recognize colors fails dismally. Color-blind hunters are potentially the most dangerous because they often won't admit, even to themselves, that they suffer this deficiency.

Les Lahr, director of the California Fish and Game Hunter Safety Program, offers these recommendations, as a partial solution to hunting accidents: (1) By testing, make each hunter aware of his visual abilities, especially color perception. (2) Have all hunters wear a golden yellow that can be readily seen and recognized by other hunters. And to obtain maximum protection from this color, it should be worn in such size that the wearer will be unmistakably identified as a man.

Some state conservation departments are considering making it mandatory for all hunters to wear yellow afield. On the other hand, permissive wearing of either red or yellow (as some states allow) may increase hunting casualties. When no protective color is expected by the hunter, it can be assumed that he will take more time to recognize his potential target; if a large group of hunters is wearing yellow, however, and only a few wear red, it's easy to see that the latter are in increased jeopardy.

To illustrate dramatically the tremendous difference between red and yellow, remember that for every 25 visible shades of yellow, only one shade of red can be seen with the human eye. This applies to people with either normal or color-deficient vision. Finally, because of its high energy content, a hunter wearing yellow can be spotted at a greater distance.

Some hunters may object to wearing yellow because they claim it makes them too readily visible to the game they are stalking. That's nonsense! In the case of big game, the primary clues to a hunter's presence are movement and scent. The big-game animal possesses very poor vision and has no color perception.

With game birds, we have a different story. They not only have color vision, but amazingly keen vision. However, if you're an upland-game hunter, you know that your presence is well known to all birds the minute you step into the field regardless of what color you're wearing!

Let's face it. Hunting accidents are caused by carelessness and ignorance. As long as untrained and irresponsible hunters are allowed freedom of the range, we will continue to have hunting casualties no matter what color hunters wear.

"We do believe, however," says Dr. Heinsen, "that grounds for legal action against careless hunters would be strengthened if the victim were wearing a readily recognized yellow-colored garment. No hunter wearing yellow will ever look like anything other than a hunter wearing yellow. And anyone shooting at such a plainly visible target can never make the feeble excuse, 'I thought it was a deer.'"

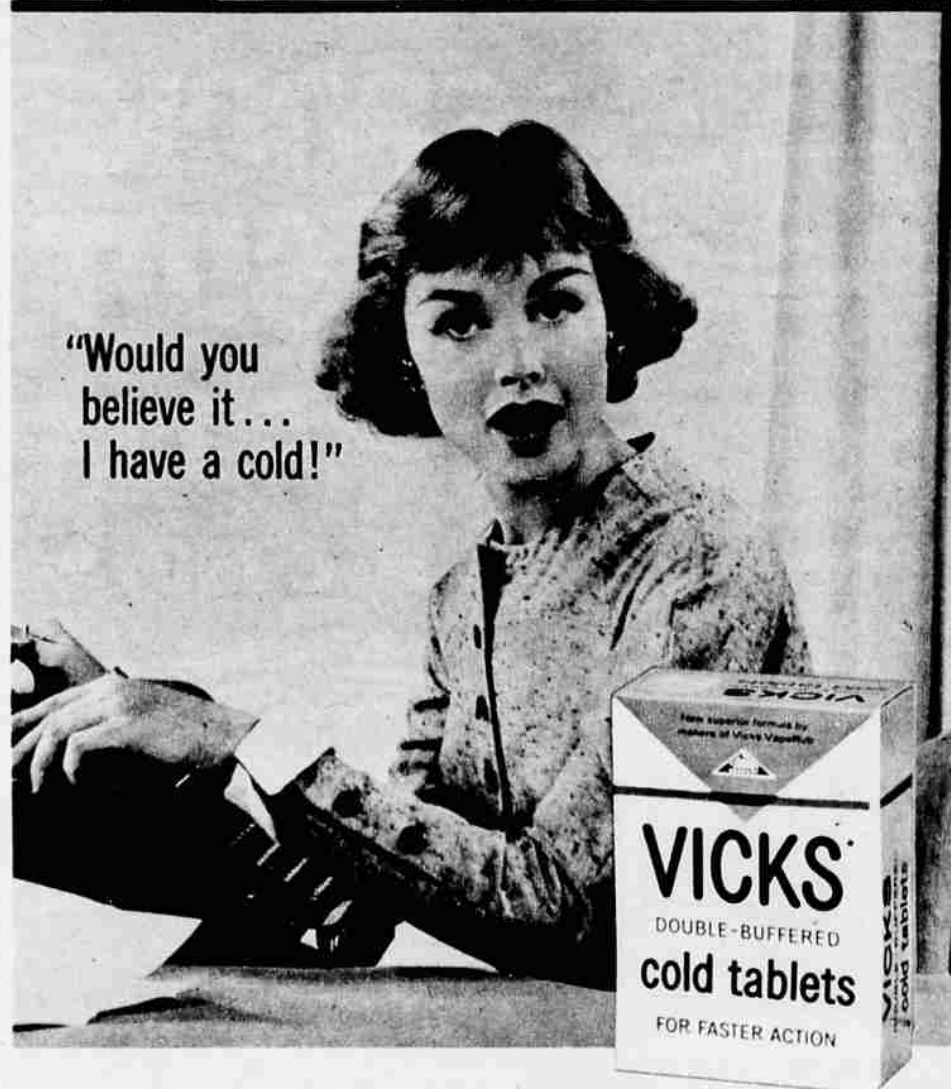
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