

Colorado, Arizona Wild Turkeys Released in Oregon Areas

Membership Drive Planned by YMCA

In preparation for the annual Membership Round-up, "ranch owners and range bosses" held their first meeting Saturday at the Medford YMCA.

Purpose of the round-up is to interpret the YMCA programs to attract some 700 new members, using a ranch theme. Some seven ranches

have been organized, each mortgaged for 100 new members or \$1,000; thus, a total of 700 new members or \$7,000.

The round-up will begin March 6, and extend through March 17, St. Patrick's day, according to local YMCA officials. A chuck wagon barbecue and "mortgage-burning" ceremony will conclude the drive.

Included in the membership committee are Thomas Teutsch, chairman; Wayne Struble, sustaining team; Paul Doe, firm plan team; Terry Green, publicity team; Floyd Baker, Bob Balk, and Ken Wright, men's membership team; and Mrs. Ronald Bean, women's membership team.

Commission Sees Good Hunting If Most Birds Survive

By MILT GUYMON
State Game Commission

Portland—Wild turkeys—the big game of upland bird gunners—may some day prove an exciting challenge to hunters if some 51 birds released in two wilderness areas recently by the game commission survive and propagate.

Release points were in the White River game management area to the west of Tygh valley and on the east side of Green Ridge in the Metolius area.

But Oregon gunners are cautioned not to let their gunning fever get carried away for it will probably take a number of years before populations build to

where hunting will be allowed. In addition, the success of these plants remains a big question mark, and the entire project may prove a complete fizzle.

Negotiations by the game commission with several western states have been in progress for a year or more, and word was received from the Colorado game department and the Arizona game department of fish and game that trapping attempts had been successful.

All birds were trapped in the wild and are of the Merriam's race, native to west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California. It is the only race of wild turkey that the western states have

had any degree of success in maintaining wild flocks. Because of the proximity to air terminals in Denver, the Colorado department of game shipped the 20 trapped birds via United Airlines.

John McKean, chief of the game division, Ron Shay and the writer of the information division picked up the birds in Portland by truck, and took them to the White River release site. Here they were liberated from their individual crates into the white oak and ponderosa pine ridges adjacent to the management area headquarters.

The Arizona birds were too far from airlines for aerial shipment without several long layovers, so Clark Walsh, assistant game director, and Bob Mace, chief of the upland game bird section, made the 2,000-mile round trip to Tonopah, Nev., by truck. Here they were met by game officials of the Arizona game department who had hauled the birds from Flagstaff near where the birds were trapped.

Haste is paramount in any trapping and transplanting attempt of wild turkey. Experience in the western states shows that these great game birds cannot be held much more than 48 hours without disastrous results. Colorado birds were released in the wilds of Oregon within 24 hours after capture. The Arizona turkeys were released just a few hours under the 48-hour maximum. Already one bird had succumbed to the long period of captivity.

All remaining birds appeared alert and in good health at the time of release. The 20 Colorado birds all flew strong of wing, much in the fashion of a large Canada goose. Each bird catapulted itself into the air from its crate, airborne with a single majestic sweep of its wings.

Some flew close to the ground, maneuvering among the oaks and pines without a break in flight. Several gained altitude to disappear over the pine tops. Three of the big birds flew to tall pines several hundred yards in distance where they landed in the top branches to look back at their would-be capturers.

From all appearances the Merriam's turkeys liked their new home. They were calling to each other within the hour and several birds were observed actively feeding in late afternoon. A total of 13 birds was released in the Metolius area, while the remainder was released on two ridges at White River.

The Merriam's turkey prefers timber rather than dense underbrush. It chooses open branching trees for roosting. Oak supply mast for food and is important to the bird. Grasshoppers and other insects are favorite food during the summer, but plants supply most of the diet at other seasons. Major foods are leaves, grass and weed seeds, and a variety of fruits, nuts, and cereal crops.

This new resident of the state looks much like the domestic bird but is more streamlined with a longer neck and a smaller, greenish-blue head. Gobblers will weigh about 16 pounds when full grown while the hen will average about 10 pounds.

Sportsmen in states where this bird is hunted hold the wild turkey in high esteem. It is considered the most wary and alert of wild game birds. To these sportsmen these majestic birds offer a challenge unmatched in upland game bird gunning.

It has these attributes as long as it remains wild. Semidomesticated it becomes just another barnyard fowl. No artificial feeding will be conducted by the game commission and residents in the area are asked not to feed the birds since this may tend to make them less wary.

The chances of success depend entirely on the interest and protection afforded by people who come across these birds in their new home. Given protection from hunting and from becoming tame through artificial feeding the Merriam's turkey should become established as a wild bird of the state.

And some day Oregon hunters may be testing their skill against this great game bird, the big game in upland game bird gunning.

Medford Man To Speak

Clyde E. Chamberlain, 3130 Old Stage rd., Medford, will speak at a Western Life Insurance company's regional sales conference in Gearhart Feb. 27 and 28.

Chamberlain, a general agent for Western Life, will discuss the importance of estate planning to a life underwriter's career. He will address the two-day meeting along with R. B. Richardson, Helena, Mont., the company president.



TURKEYS UNLOADED—Load of 20 Merriam's wild turkeys from the forests of Colorado being unloaded in Portland for transit and release in the White River game management area near Wamir. Native of the southwestern states, this upland game bird lives in the ponderosa pine country intermixed with oak and other hardwoods. Speed is paramount in the transplant of wild tur-

key since they cannot be held for more than 48 hours in captivity without disastrous results. These Colorado birds were trapped, transported, and released within 24 hours. Thirty-two Arizona birds, trapped in the Kiabab national forest, were transported and released just under the 48-hour maximum with the loss of one bird while in transit.

Exam Announced

An examination for surveying aide and technician has been announced by the civil service commission for filling positions in the coast and geodetic survey. Jobs are available in mobile field units in the United States.

Information and application forms may be obtained from the civil service representative in the Medford post office or at the civil service commission, Washington 25, D.C.

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WILD GAME BIRD—Strong wing beats lift this Merriam's wild turkey straight up from its captive crate as it heads for freedom in the ponderosa pine and scrub oak on the White River game management area west of Tygh valley. Big tom turkeys will weigh up to 16 pounds while the hens will reach 10. The Merriam's turkey is considered the most wary and alert of all upland game by those who hunt the wild game bird.

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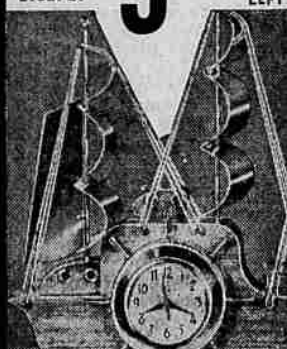
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