

Habitat, Numbers Determine Amount of Game, Writer Notes

By MILT GUYMON
Oregon State Game Commission
You can't stockpile game. It would be nice if we could so every hunter would find a bull elk on every ridge, a beautiful buck deer behind every mahogany thicket, or a bag limit of pheasants every time he went afield.

There is little doubt Oregon is one of the finest hunting states in the nation and will continue to be so. But hunters should remember that game numbers will fluctuate from year to year with the amount of game produced depending on the quantity and quality of habitat.

In addition, as the hunting pressures and competition between hunters increase - and it has at about 3 per cent annually - the individual hunter's chance to score will decrease proportionately.

Most game birds and animals are geared to heavy annual losses, whether hunted or not. Small game is especially so, with spring populations winding up at around the same levels. Big game, because of slower reproductive potentials, are a little slower in bouncing back following a disastrous winter. But come back they do, providing the habitat is there in which they can live.

Game habitat is the complex of soil, water, and plants commonly called cover in which game birds and mammals exist. It is the life range that must include escape cover, winter cover, food and water, cover to rear young, and even cover to play. A lack of one or more of these cover requirements will materially reduce the harvestable game numbers an area will support.

One of the most important concepts in both fish and game management is that of carrying capacity. Sportsmen, and even fish and game departments, too often forget that a given piece of land or body of water can support and maintain from year to year only so many pounds of animal life.

Constantly On Alert
The fish and game manager must be constantly alert to avoid overstocking and to recognize the danger signals of overpopulation.

When he examines the fish population of a lake and finds that a large per cent of the specimens are too small for their age, his first suspicion will be that there are too many fish for the carrying capacity of the lake.

Similarly, he will be more concerned about finding too many deer in an area than too few, since he knows that the excess deer will reduce the food supplies to the extent that in future years that same range will have a lower carrying capacity for deer. On the other hand, a smaller number of deer would have meant larger animals and these would produce more fawns per year.

Unfortunately, most hunters remember only the bumper years in the production of game, be it bird or mammal, and use this as a yardstick from season to season.

Look Back to 1958
In Oregon, pheasant gunners look back on the sudden mushrooming bird population of 1958 and the heavy bag of birds brought home during that season. This is the yardstick by which they measure succeeding seasons, and anything less results in grumbling.

Last year Oregon deer hunters recorded a record breaking harvest of almost 165,000 deer and in the future will undoubtedly accept anything less as being a poor season and evidence of depleted deer herds. However, mild winters of the past eight years failed to take its annual toll, allowing herds to build beyond the carrying capacity. They forget that in 1952 more than 105,000 deer were taken - considered by all to be an excellent season - and that in 1948 less than 40,000 animals were taken, also considered a good season at the time.

The peak in Oregon's mule deer herd population was probably reached in 1955 while the blacktail herds continue to climb. Data gathered on all ranges show these trends.

Average Deer Density
In 1947 on the blacktail ranges of western Oregon the average deer density overall was 1.1 deer per mile as recorded on the permanent sample route. The trend has been generally upward since, reaching the highest ever recorded at 4.8 deer per mile in the 1962 census.

Mule deer herd trends show a similar pattern, peaking in 1955 at an average density of 14.5 deer per mile on the winter ranges of eastern Oregon, compared to 1947 census of 9.9 deer per mile, and the 1962 census of 11.3 deer per mile.

Fluctuations have occurred on all ranges during the years,

but the general trend was up until 1955, followed by a tapering trend to the present. For the first time in eight years, eastern Oregon game populations suffered a severe winter, with temperatures dropping to 35 below. It remained cold for two weeks or more, and snow in some areas was heavy.

Castro Tightens Controls Over Consumer Goods

Havana - (UPI) - Premier Fidel Castro's revolutionary regime tightened controls on consumer goods today to halt a wave of panic buying apparently inspired by the U. S. arms blockade.

Storekeepers were instructed to limit sales of emergency lighting supplies to one quart of lamp alcohol and three candles per family with infant children. Even in these limited quantities, storekeepers were allowed to sell only to their regular customers.

Neighborhood vigilante committees were alerted to help enforce the order. Ration List Extended
The new restriction extended a ration list which already included milk, many foods, soap and other staple household goods in shortage-ridden Cuba.

Housewives flocked to supermarkets and neighborhood groceries Wednesday to stock up on lighting supplies despite President Kennedy's statement that the blockade would not affect the necessities of life and Castro's statement that his regime could furnish the people's needs.

The buyers apparently feared that the blockade might soon be extended to cut off the oil imports needed to run the power plants which supply electricity to Havana's homes.

Shelves Almost Bare
Grocery shelves also were swept clear of unrationed foodstuffs despite government broadcasts warning against hoarding.

Even coffee was unavailable in this coffee-growing country.

The general pace of military preparations in Havana accelerated Wednesday, with the emplacement of machine guns and other anti-aircraft weapons on rooftops in many parts of the city.

A Russian-made tank which had been stationed outside armed forces headquarters was moved elsewhere, and the patrol boats which had been operating about a mile off the waterfront disappeared.

Quail populations were hard hit in southeastern Oregon, destroying entire coveys in some areas and in general reducing bird numbers to a bare minimum. However, this season brood production was good and hunters are finding good numbers of quail, illustrating how populations snap back with determination.

Other game was equally hard hit. Frigid temperatures took a toll of pheasants and partridge. Even rabbits in some areas had a hard go of it. Deer, too, were hard hit on several winter ranges. Some winter losses were felt in central Oregon and in the Klamath area, but hardest hit were the ranges in Malheur and Harney counties of southeastern Oregon and on some ranges in the northeast part of the state.

Hunters were advised of these losses late last spring when they were informed that forked-horn deer and yearlings would be found in fewer numbers on these ranges this fall.

Not Without Disaster
You can't stockpile game without disaster. A combination of favorable circumstances resulted in the stockpiling of deer on all ranges in eastern Oregon for the past eight to ten years.

The stockpiling began a severe winter on some of these ranges may have accomplished what game managers have been trying to accomplish for a number of years.

Habitat and carrying capacity being what they are the bumper crops are the exception rather than the rule. If any species could stockpile, the accumulated annual gains would produce a plague within a few year's time. But it doesn't happen that way for the annual fall surplus, except under unusual circumstances, cannot survive to the following spring. And hunting does no more than take part of the annual surplus. As a result, hunting success will vary.

BREAKS RECORD
London - (UPI) - Shin Keum Dan of North Korea cracked the existing record for the women's world 400 meter run Wednesday with a time of 51.9 seconds. The clocking, which eclipsed the 53.4 seconds held by Russia's Maria Iikina, will not be officially recognized because North Korea is not a member of the International Amateur Athletic Federation.

Low Accident Rate Noted Last Year

Salem - (UPI) - Oregon recorded the second lowest accident frequency rate in its history in the fiscal year which ended in June, the Industrial Accident Commission said today.

The rate was 36.3. The lowest rate on record was 36.1 in the 1960-61 fiscal year.

The frequency is based on each one million man hours worked. The low figures are more significant coupled with the fact that Oregon has expanded industrially, the commission said. It added that "industry and labor have caught the significance of planned safety procedures."

The accident frequency in 1932 was a high 72.2 per million man hours, and has been declining since.

Oregon's biggest industry, lumber, records the largest number of industrial deaths, but the commission noted that in the 1961-62 fiscal year fatalities totaled 48. Ten years ago the total of lumbering fatalities was 86.

Total fatalities in 1961-62 were 116, compared to 143 a decade ago.

Police Check Two Accidents in City

Vehicles operated by Robert Leroy Larson, 30, of 1024 East Jackson st., and Kay Louise Saffell, 26, of 524 Pearl st., collided about 7:55 o'clock this morning on Jackson st. between Hawthorne ave. and Genesee st. No injuries were reported, police said, and no citations were issued.

Richard Douglas Larson, 16, of 3278 Madrona ave., was cited for failure to yield the right of way after his car collided with a vehicle operated by Keith Gordon Thompson, 29, of 531 Haven st., about 2:55 p.m. Wednesday at Oak and Haven sts. No injuries were reported, police said.

Short on Agriculture 'Hall of Fame' Board

Salem - (UPI) - Oregon Agriculture Director James F. Short has been named to the board of governors of the proposed agricultural "Hall of Fame" near Kansas City, Mo. Purpose of the facility, not yet constructed, is to memorialize U.S. agriculture.

Chairman of the board of governors is Oliver S. Willham, Kansas City, Mo.

Key West Outpost Ready for Attempt To Run Blockade

Key West, Fla. - (UPI) - This small but lethal U.S. outpost only 90 miles from Cuba was wrapped in a watch-and-wait atmosphere today with the Army, Air Force and Marines in apparent readiness to halt any attempt to run the Cuban blockade.

The city baseball stadium, under preparation for the past four days, was occupied by a large convoy of Army trucks which rolled in Wednesday night with weapons and equipment - but few troops.

The Air Force and Marines were hidden behind high fences and tight security at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station and the Navy seaplane base here.

Photographers Retained
Security tightened even more than during the first part of the week Wednesday when news photographers were retained at a Navy security building in front of the seaplane base and released after they were told not to take any more photographs of the area.

The Federal Aviation Authority has clamped down on all civilian flights in the area and required flight plans be approved by military authorities before takeoff.

Armed Forces in France on Alert If Crisis Spreads

Paris - (UPI) - France put its armed forces on alert today to be ready for action should the Cuban crisis spread to Europe.

No. 2 alert orders went out to French forces after a half-hour meeting of the Defense Council Wednesday night under the chairmanship of President Charles de Gaulle.

No. 2 alert is the final stage before general mobilization. It includes preparing lists of key reserve officers who would be recalled to the colors at once in case of general mobilization.

French air force units, particularly those in the Rheims and Dijon regions of eastern France, were ordered to stand by for a possible full alert. Similar orders were flashed to airborne troops and marine units.

Ordered as Precaution
French government sources said none of these moves could be considered as spectacular and that they were ordered simply as a precaution.

The sources said De Gaulle has voiced optimism that a nuclear conflict is unlikely. He was said to have told the cabinet that he is hopeful the Cuban crisis ultimately will be settled without war.

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