

Scribes Combine Fishing And Hunting Jaunt

By GEORGE ALOTRICO
Pictures by Dick Briggs

Oregon... a sportsman's paradise or dilemma? This is the question fellow reporter Dick Briggs and I asked ourselves as we perused the fish and game regulation syllabuses. Fishing and hunting at the same time of the year? I couldn't believe it.

Both Briggs and I, newly arrived in the state, were trying to decide whether we would fish or hunt on the last weekend in October.

The trout season was nearly over, so we couldn't let it end with a whimper, but there were plenty of ducks in the area and that was too tempting to pass up.

It was a difficult decision to make and we were wondering if the opportunity the overlapping seasons gave was worth the trouble.

Then the idea of a combination trip dawned on me. We could pick a trout stream that would be floatable and likely to have some ducks on it to boot.

Carrying enough equipment for a hunting and fishing trip would be no problem. A couple of months before I purchased a 15-foot canoe for just that purpose.

Picking a river was easy too, we found. The Wood, Sprague and Williamson were all close to Klamath Falls. We settled on the section of the Williamson from the junction of Spring Creek at Collier Park to the bridge at U.S. 97 after the Sprague joins the Williamson. The trip would be about 12 water miles, easily traversed in a day, we thought.

We learned from the fishing syllabus that the Williamson could not be fished from a boat above the bridge at 97. We decided to beach the canoe at every pool that looked fishable.

We loaded our equipment and canoe at 7 a.m. and drove up to Collier Park, about a half hour drive early in the morning with no traffic on the highway. We left one car at Collier Park and the other at the bridge.

Some friends told us the Spring, Williamson junction pool was loaded with big rainbows. We decided to spend an hour fishing the pool before starting our downriver jaunt.

It was a bit brisk that morning and after an hour of whipping a variety of flies we found no sign of trout big or small. We decided to give up and start downstream thinking we probably weren't in paradise after all.

It was about 9 a.m. now and it started to warm up fast. We no sooner got around the next river bend and I spotted rising fish in the long run that coursed through a flat meadow being used by a small herd of grazing livestock.

We noticed at this spot that although we were about a mile from the junction the crystal clear water of the Spring had not mixed with the coffee colored Williamson. We would find later that it never mixed completely until it joined the Sprague. Then at the Sprague it was the same story again. The Sprague and Williamson refused to unite.

We learned later from government biologists that this was a common characteristic of all streams. The fish didn't seem to mind, however, since we found them feeding at either bank as well as at mid-stream.

We glided over to the bank and started fishing the run at separate ends. We both started fishing dry and went 15 minutes without a rise. I changed flies several times, but stayed with a size 14 hook. I was going nowhere so I went to a size 18 since we couldn't see any flies on the water.

No luck with the 18 so we both started fishing wet determining that the fish must be taking nymphs.

After about an hour, the fish



FIRST LAUNCHING — Near the confluence of Spring Creek and the Williamson River, Alotrico launches the canoe in which we were to spend much of our time during a 10-hour float trip down the river, through alternately still waters, swift currents, and rapids. Before embarking downstream we tempted trout with dry flies and on the sepia-colored portion of the river and its transparent section flowing from Spring Creek. Trout lurking in the darker waters rose more readily to the lure.

still rising, the creels still empty. I decided Oregon fish were nuts.

With some reservation, I went into my fly box and tied on a sure fire fish killer. I hated to do this because it didn't give the fish a fighting chance. Few trout that I know will resist a size 20 midge, especially with no insects visible on the water.

Results were immediate, but my strike was too immediate and I missed one fish after another. I finally settled down giving them time to get a good shot at the small fly and soon netted two nice 12-inch rainbows.

Dick was not having the same good fortune, however. The fish at his end seemed to be a great deal more selective.

The fish were still rising steadily when we got into the canoe and continued our downstream journey. We couldn't spend too much time in one spot or we'd never make our destination.

Gliding past more meadow land, we spotted the first ducks around the next bend. The mallards saw us first and swam out of range long before we got a chance to shoot. They stayed well ahead of us until we started to press them too closely. Then they exploded and downstream they went. When the mallards got up, they spooked a small flock of buffleheads that hadn't been seen.

They spotted us in time, however, and banked out of range just before I could get a good shot. After flying downstream a few hundred yards they turned and started up again as ducks sometimes do on a river. It seemed that they were going to fly right over us, but at the last minute veered off.

But it was too late this time and the last one fell as I touched off a load of number 4's.

Two trout and a duck, not a big bag, but I was elated. It was mixed and that's what we'd come for.

Dick and I stopped for lunch at about 1 o'clock at the head of another pool full of rising trout. Naturally it was a hurried repast. I flipped a couple of rising fish, but they apparently weren't take-

ing hard. I soon landed another fat rainbow and tried to beach still another, but he flopped off as soon as he touched a sandy bar.

The sun was sweltering by now. We watched muskrats bask-

ing in the sun, woodpeckers busily at work in trees overhead and later toward evening we drew close to a herd of deer feeding

on all quiet float trips.

We watched muskrats bask-

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TRIES DIFFERENT RIG — Most fishermen change lures when their efforts aren't producing, but Alotrico went one step further. He switched from a fly rod to a spinning outfit and began casting lures into waters where moments before he had been flicking dry flies. Alotrico's anticipatory smile quickly dissipated when his efforts continued to be unrewarded. Later, he switched rods again and caught several rainbows with a nymph dry fly mounted on a No. 10 hook.