

Game Commission Men Work To Make Oregon Finest Wildlife State

How would you like to farm a chunk of real estate the size of Oregon? It would make a pretty fair-sized piece of ground to hoe, wouldn't it. But that's the area the Oregon Game Commission works with in its efforts to make Oregon the finest wildlife state in the nation.

And this mammoth ranching operation is considerably more diversified than most of the largest private landholders' in the state, simply because of the great number and variety of wildlife under the Commission's care. Ownership of this myriad of birds and mammals rests with the people of the state; the Commission is the steward.

WINTER INVENTORY

And, like all ranch operations, an annual roundup and harvest is conducted. The roundup is primarily a winter function at which time a statewide inventory of the wildlife is made. Big game, upland game birds, waterfowl, and even the lesser animals are observed and tallied to determine the status of this vast array of wildlife.

FALL HARVEST

The harvest is a fall function -- the hunting seasons -- at which time any citizen who wishes may assist in harvesting the game crop. And assist they do -- almost 350,000 strong in 1967, and estimated to go well over that mark in 1968.

MID-YEAR PRODUCTION

Spring and summer is the time for production. At this time, Commission personnel are busy attempting to improve the habitat in which these birds and animals live -- the food, water, shelter -- so they can reproduce themselves and provide the surplus for the hunters to harvest. This habitat improvement work represents one of the largest farming operations in the state, including projects which during the last fiscal year cost the stockholders more than \$207,000.

To show you how widespread these farming operations are, projects of one kind or another were accomplished in 32 of the 36 Oregon counties during the year. Many activities are cooperative ventures with private landowners, timber companies, or federal and state land management agencies. Assistance is often obtained from sportsmen's groups or other interested individuals. An outstanding example of this cooperation is that of north coast sportsmen who, since 1953, have assisted in planting and reseeded almost 7,000 acres of elk and deer range in Clatsop and Tillamook counties.

Perhaps outdoorsmen would like to know just what kind of projects their \$207,000 went into. Also keep in mind that although projects are aimed primarily to improve habitat for game species, nongame

birds and mammals also benefit from the projects.

SEEDING DONE

During the course of the year 5,275 acres of big game range were reseeded or planted with various types of browse plants. These included legumes, grasses, and shrubs. The list of plants is too long to enumerate here, but some of the more important are bitterbrush, saltbush, sainfoin, burnet, alfalfa, clover, lotus, and various grasses. In many instances the planted areas are fertilized in an attempt to get the plants off to a good start.

An additional 32 acres of shrubs were planted on small tracts, mostly with cooperating landowners, and almost 750 acres of herbaceous plantings made to benefit upland game birds and waterfowl.

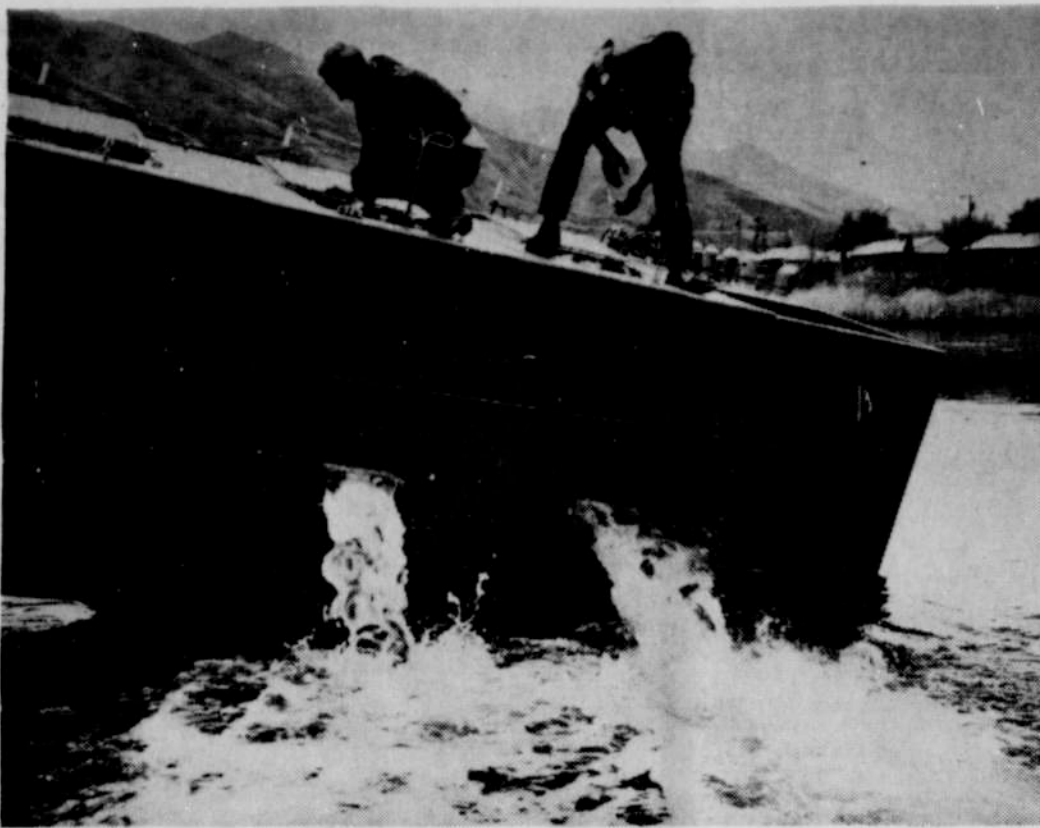
Fencing is often necessary, especially on big game ranges, to control movement of animals, in some instances both game and livestock. To control such movement more than 5,800 rods of fence were constructed, most of this on big game winter range management areas.

The beautiful wood duck, almost gone from the Oregon scene a few years ago, has made a remarkable comeback as the result of man-made nesting boxes in which it can nest and reproduce its kind. Last year alone, Commission habitat crews installed 437 nesting boxes in a continuing program of assistance for this beautiful duck. Sportsmen's organizations aided in this project.

Four new waterfowl ponds were built and developed, and in one area seven platforms were constructed to provide safe nesting sites for Canada geese.

WATER DEVELOPED

Out in the wide open desert country water is often the limiting factor in wildlife abundance and distribution. Water developments are an important part of the overall habitat improvement program. During the year 38 watering devices were constructed or installed for game use. Twenty-three of these were the upland game bird tank-type watering devices known as "guzzlers", and 15 were catch basin waterholes



SPLASHING INTO WATER FROM TRUCK-mounted tanks are some of the 19,000 rainbow trout recently planted in Oxbow and Brownlee lakes by Idaho Power company, under the utility's seventh annual stocking program. Men are pictured releasing lively

rainbows in Oxbow Lake at the mouth of the Wildhorse river, and are employees of Clear Springs Trout company of Buhl, from which the power company purchased trout for their newest plant.

Trout Released

mainly for the benefit of big game.

The foregoing is just a brief account of the important habitat improvement activities of the Commission in a single year. None of this work is spectacular, such as a hunter in the fall scoring on a record buck, but vital to that hunter nonetheless, if he is even to have the chance at that trophy.

If we were to summarize the variety and scope of habitat improvement work of the Commission in its farming operations over the past 15 years, it would go something like this: We find first of all that during the period the stockholders have pungled up well over 1 1/2 million dollars for home improvement for this vast array of wildlife. Projects of one kind or another have been accomplished in all parts of the state.

SUMMARY

About 28,000 acres of big game range have been seeded or planted with various types of browse; 36,900 acres tilled and seeded to herbaceous-type plants; 145 big game waterholes developed; 834 quail roosts developed; 834 upland game bird guzzlers built and installed; 3,900 wood duck nest boxes erected; 185 quail roosts built; 72 goose nesting sites constructed; and 20 waterfowl impoundments built and developed. Profits to the stockholders are measured by the annual sustained game yield and, equally as important, by the many millions of man-days of recreation spent in the pursuit of the game each year.

How Big Is "Big Game"

How big is the "big game" business in Oregon?

Agricultural economists at Oregon State University in cooperation with the Oregon State Game Commission are putting the "price tag" on Oregon's big game resource with the idea of being better able to predict optimum long-range needs for deer, elk and other big game.

With deer and elk season at its peak, Oregon hunters are playing an important part in the project by reporting current hunting expenses.

Nearly 3,000 Oregon hunters were selected several months ago to take part in the project being conducted by Dr. William G. Brown, professor of agricultural economics, and graduate student Farid Nawas.

Mail questionnaires have been sent to the hunters. When returned and tabulated, the OSU agricultural economists will

show just how important big game hunting is to the economy of Oregon.

Total price tag of big game hunting includes both equipment investment and trip expense. And the fact is that many Oregon hunters underestimate the extent of their hunting investment, Brown believes.

Few, said Brown, consider that hunting investment often includes camping gear, trailers, pickups, horses and sleeping bags--in addition to rifles, knives and shells.

To compute this investment, hunters are asked to estimate the proportion of this equipment usage going into big game hunting.

On a separate questionnaire, hunters are asked to record all expenses for hunting trips during the current season. In

addition, how much time did the hunter and his family spend on each hunting trip? Or, how many miles and hours were spent traveling from home to the hunting site and back?

Brown emphasizes that an accurate long-term estimate of Oregon wildlife needs depends, at least in part, on cooperation given by the hunters in completing and returning the questionnaires.

Completed questionnaires should be mailed to: Dr. William G. Brown, Department of Agricultural Economics, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331.

Cooperating in the big game research project are the Oregon State Game Commission, the Bureau of Land Management and the Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station.

Thanks TO VOTERS

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK RESIDENTS OF MALHEUR COUNTY FOR THEIR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IN MY RECENT RE-ELECTION AS COUNTY TREASURER.

- JEAN (PAT) BOND

Adv. Pd. For by (Pat) Bond, Vale, Ore.

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