

INFORMATION SERVICE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

WILDLIFE TIPS AND BRIEFS

A CLIPSHEET ISSUED MONTHLY BY THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Note to Editor: Items with a local slant are arranged by States, beginning on page 4, but many of these may also be of some general interest.

PUTS FISH AND WILDLIFE NEWS SERVICE ON A WAR-TIME BASIS

Adapting its information service for outdoor writers and the press to war-time conditions, the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, is reducing its output of material and curtailing its mailing lists but for the present will continue to meet demands for this service as far as possible, according to Director Ira N. Gabrielson.

"The attention of the public must now be focused on war-time problems," Dr. Gabrielson said. "Our information personnel has been reduced, and our entire program is being adapted to the new conditions.

"However," he added, "we do not wish to see outdoor departments in the papers discontinued, for knowing the experiences of the British people we are convinced that outdoor sports contribute to good morale. Writers who conduct outdoor departments look to this Service for material, we know, and many sportsmen and outdoor enthusiasts are deeply interested. We hope to be able to meet their needs."

Dr. Gabrielson outlined three changes:

1. Reducing drastically the number of special statements issued, by making releases of individual items only when these have a definite time value or are of outstanding importance.
2. Using Wildlife Tips and Briefs as a medium for furnishing outdoor writers with material once a month and for providing the press with a coverage of the Service's activities.
3. Dropping all names from the mailing lists for Wildlife Tips and Briefs except those that are known to be using the material.

For the sake of economy, said the Director, this mailing-list cut is being made without circularizing those on the lists. Those who do not receive an issue of Wildlife Tips and Briefs in April should request the restoration of their names if future issues are desired.

**WARNS AGAINST PROPAGANDA
ADVOCATING BIRDS AS FOOD**

Wildlife has emergency food values, but Americans will make a grave mistake if they try at present to include song and game birds in their war-time larder, Ira N. Gabrielson, the nation's No. 1 wildlife administrator, said recently in commenting on an Associated Press London report that "sparrows, starlings, crows, larks, curlews, and even swans are helping to feed Britain at war."

Dr. Gabrielson, who is director of the Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, declared that the song birds would make a much better contribution to the food-for-freedom cause by making war on the insect pests of crops.

It is a fact, he pointed out, that game which is taken for sport becomes a part of the nation's food supply, but he suggested that the relief from war-time stresses and strains that such recreation affords may be even more important than the meat from the game.

We have the British people's war-time experience in meeting their recreational needs to back up this suggestion, also, he said. "At first the British thought they would have to give up their traditional outdoor sports, but they came to the conclusion that they needed the relaxation and inspiration of their excursions in order to keep themselves fit. Now they are going ahead with their hunting and fishing every chance they get."

We have been waging an up-hill though successful fight in this country to restore our wildlife populations after disastrous exploitation in the past, Dr. Gabrielson said. Existing game laws have been as liberal as the game could stand, and conservationists, he emphasized, should be alert to see that selfish interests do not use war conditions as a pretext for making futile but disastrous inroads into a resource that has a tremendous long-time importance but might not survive the effects of pot hunting or market hunting.

In some areas, according to the Service director, deer and other game animals may at times be abundant enough to permit large takes, but in general the amount of meat that could be obtained in the wild would not justify its slaughter from any economic point of view.

If it ever becomes necessary we can fall back on this meat supply, but you can be sure that anyone advocating this at present is either misguided or else is thinking more about his own privileges than he is about the war-time needs of the nation, he said.

**THREATENS JAIL SENTENCES FOR
VIOLATORS OF U. S. GAME LAWS**

Warning violators of Federal game laws that he would give jail sentences if necessary, Federal Judge Ben C. Dawkins, of the Western District of Louisiana, cracked down heavily at January and February sessions of

Federal Court in Opelousas and Alexandria, La., reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

At Opelousas, 42 Federal game law violations were disposed of as follows: In 32 cases, a fine of \$50 each was imposed; 2 defendants received 60-day jail sentences, and 2 received 90 days each; 2 cases were dismissed upon motion of the U. S. district attorney; and 4 cases were dismissed because of insufficient evidence.

At Alexandria, Judge Dawkins meted out two sentences of 60 days in jail, or a fine of \$100 each, for hunting wild ducks after 4 p. m.

Reiterating a statement made at the last term of court, Judge Dawkins said: "I warned that the game laws must be observed and that the minimum fine at the next session of court would be \$50 for casual violations and I would give jail sentences of not less than 60 days, and for aggravated cases from 90 to 120 days.

"If this does not have the desired effect, I am then going to resort to the same measures I have used in liquor cases--I am going to give jail sentences in all cases of violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. I am going to see that we break up this illegal hunting, and if it takes jail sentences to do so, then jail sentences it shall be," Judge Dawkins emphasized in conclusion.

NEARLY SIX MILLION BIG-GAME ANIMALS IN U. S.; DEER LEAD

Nearly 6 million big-game animals of 15 groups and races were estimated to be in the United States in 1940, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

An aggregate of 5,964,000 big-game animals was reported in all States, Delaware excepted. An apparent increase of about 2 percent over the 1939 estimates was discounted by Service officials as numerically insignificant.

Leading big-game animal in the country was the white-tailed deer with an estimated population of 3,526,000. Mule deer were second with 1,523,000, and Columbian black-tailed deer third with 323,600. Elks were fourth with 207,700, while the prong-horned antelope ranked fifth with an estimated 176,600. Trailing in sixth place was the black bear, which had 106,900 individuals to its credit.

Lowest population was credited to the woodland caribou, with a total of 15, in Minnesota. Second lowest was the grizzly bear with a population of 1,250, in 6 States.

Pennsylvania led all States with an estimated 777,300 animals of 5 species. Others in the "big ten" were Michigan, 743,500; California, 535,800; Wisconsin, 507,700; Minnesota, 406,000; Colorado, 313,300; Oregon, 306,700; Texas, 295,000; New York, 251,200; and Utah, 210,500. Idaho ranked 11th with 205,700.

Though more than 3,442,000 of the 5,964,000 big-game animals in the country were found on State and private lands, it was pointed out that 2,963,000 of the animals on State and private areas were deer. Federal wildlife refuges, parks, and forests had the majority of the country's rarer animals, including elks, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mountain goats, grizzly bears, and buffaloes.

The estimates were compiled by Fish and Wildlife Service officials with the cooperation of the U. S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Grazing Service, Indian Service, and State and private agencies. Such inventories have been made annually since 1937 as an aid in conservation programs.

ARIZONA

Sheep Losses by Predators Lower in Arizona District

Losses to sheepmen from predatory animals in Arizona during the quarter ended December 31 were not as great as usually expected, reports District Agent E. M. Mercer of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Mohair growers and poultrymen, however, reported serious losses from predators in widely scattered areas.

Predator hunters were assigned to sheep driveways to trap bobcats and coyotes before sheep commenced to move along the driveways to winter pastures. During November, for example, a hunter took 64 coyotes and bobcats along the Beaverhead-Grief Hill sheep driveway between the Verde River and the driveway's entrance to the mountains west of Camp Verde. In recent years sheepmen along this trail have experienced serious losses, but this year they were reduced to a minimum.

Altogether, 903 coyotes were taken in the State during the 3-month period.

CONNECTICUT

Mussel Growing To Be Developed as War Food

To increase food resources during wartime, the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, has initiated an investigation on the biology, cultivation, and utilization of the common mussel, Mytilus edulis, at the Milford fishery biological laboratory. Mussels, like all shellfish, have a high nutritive value.

In order not to compete for growing space with other sea-food industries, the cultivation of mussels, according to present plans, will be

carried on in areas where no other shellfish are grown. In northern waters mussels are ready for market in about 18 months, while oysters require 4 or 5 years.

According to observations on oysters of Long Island Sound, carried on for several years by Dr. Victor L. Loosanoff, Service biologist in charge of the Milford station, the edible portion of these bivalves usually constitutes less than 15 percent of their total weight. In mussels, however, the edible portion constitutes about 50 percent. When oysters are shipped, almost 90 percent of the total shipment is waste material, but in the case of mussels it is only about half the shipment.

Because of a new device recently developed at the Milford Laboratory, a comparatively small body of water may yield an exceedingly heavy output of mussels, says the Service. These devices are so constructed and will be used in such a way that the entire mass of water below the mean low water mark may be utilized for the collection of seed, and for growing mussels to marketable size.

MARYLAND

"V for Victory" Muskrat Trapped Near Drawbridge

"V for Victory" markings on a muskrat trapped near Drawbridge, Md., were recently reported by a fur expert of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

The animal, a mixture of black and brown, had white bars blazed on each side of the head, extending forward from the ears through the eyes and converging at the tip of the nose to form a distinct "V."

Trapped by Herbert R. North on his father's marsh in the Drawbridge district of the Chicamaconico River, the Victory muskrat was described as the first of its kind by Dr. Herbert L. Dozier, director of the U. S. Fur Animal Station at the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Cambridge, Md.

The station, established in 1937 to develop better methods of muskrat management, makes the information obtained available to muskrat producers throughout the country. The muskrat, Dr. Dozier points out, is one of the country's principal fur animals, about 20,000,000 skins being taken annually.

MASSACHUSETTS

War Time Increases Need for Rat Control Program

"More cities are showing an interest in rat control, because of the war-time necessity of conserving food and the need for preventing sickness and combatting the eastward spread of bubonic plague in rodents," advises

District Agent George B. Lay, Boston official of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

"There was more rat control work during the quarter ended December 31, 1941, than in any previous quarter over a period of three or four years," Mr. Lay emphasized.

Six counties in Massachusetts put on county-wide rat baiting campaigns, with considerable emphasis on rat-proofing, sanitation, and other long-term phases of rat control.

In Ohio a new type of rat campaign, begun in East Cleveland and Lakewood, resulted in the sponsoring of a long-term rat program in the Greater Cleveland area by various agencies within that city.

The Service, says Lay, has been participating in the drawing up of plans for rat control in feed storages in New England and New York. Such projects are designed to save feed and food in the Government's storage and loan program to farmers in the region, which includes the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland.

Mackerel Purse Seine Vessels Get Nearly 30,000,000 Pounds

About 30 vessels were active in the mackerel purse seine fishery during the 1941 season, producing nearly 30,000,000 pounds of fish, reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Final landings by mackerel vessels were made on December 24. Half a dozen seiners prepared to operate in January, but bad weather made this impossible.

Boston and Gloucester were the most important ports for fresh mackerel in 1941; about 780 trips were landed at these points out of more than 1,060 landings by purse seine vessels along the Atlantic coast.

Compile 22-Year History of New England Fishing Fleets

Data on the history, development, and relative fishing intensity of the New England fishing fleets for the past 22 years have been brought up to date at the Cambridge biological laboratory of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

This material, which covers the period from 1920 to 1941 for Boston, Gloucester, and Portland, provides information on the annual intensity of the fishery which is needed in interpreting the data on catch per unit of effort.

Such information on the fishing fleet will be of value in following the effects of restrictions or shifts in the fishery resulting from Navy

regulations and in determining the effect of management returns. It also will indicate the potential fishing capacity that can be shifted from one species to another as prices and abundance change.

MISSOURI

Pittman-Robertson Program . Provides Pond Construction

Drought insurance on more than 1,000 Missouri farms is provided in an expanded pond-construction program for wildlife restoration announced by the Missouri State Conservation Commission. Pittman-Robertson funds available under the act providing Federal aid for wildlife restoration will be used, officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, said.

Construction on approximately 700 farm ponds was started last year, and the results were so encouraging, officials said, that 500 additional ponds will be constructed this year.

A shortage of available water was shown in surveys of 6,000,000 acres and 44,000 farms in Missouri. Only one farm in ten had a pond that would hold water throughout an average summer. In the drought years of 1934 to 1937, many farmers had to sacrifice their livestock because of this condition. With the farmer's war effort to boost production as an incentive, Missouri officials said that work will be expedited.

The ponds are at least 8 feet deep, which is sufficient to withstand severe drought. They are fenced, and water is piped through the dam to a watering tank below for livestock. The pond area is planted for wildlife food and cover. Soil conservation practices are followed.

In addition to providing water for livestock, the ponds are a source for irrigation of gardens and truck patches, and havens for fur and food animals as well as migratory waterfowl and other birds.

Because of priority restrictions on the pipe necessary for dam construction, participation is limited to one or two ponds per township as demonstration areas. The Soil Conservation Service, Extension Service, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, and other agencies are cooperating in building the ponds.

NEW YORK

Seize \$5,000 Worth of Beaver Pelts and Fine Violator \$200

Largest seizure of illegal pelts on its records was reported by the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, when 288 beaver pelts valued at more than \$5,000 were confiscated and their illegal shipper fined \$200 in Federal Court at New York, N. Y., on February 26.

Marked "rugs," the packages containing the pelts had been shipped from Denver, Colo., in violation of the Federal Lacey Act which prohibits inter-State shipments of furs contrary to State laws. Contrary to Colorado laws, the beaver pelts were labeled incorrectly and were not covered by required permits.

Robert Hawkins, of Craig, Colo., the violator, pleaded guilty before Judge Alfred C. Coxe. Previously he had also stated that the pelts were unlawfully obtained.

Southern Winter-Trawl Fish Landings Increase

There were increases in the January landings of fishery products at New York City by boats engaged in the southern winter-trawl fishery, reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

During January, 22 trawlers in 43 trips landed a total catch of 1,070,000 pounds of the four principal species--butterfish, fluke, porgies, and seabass--as compared with January 1941 when 16 boats landed 972,000 pounds of these four species in 34 trips.

The catch per trip of each boat for the month averaged about 10 percent less in January 1942 as compared with January 1941, that for butterfish showing an increase of 78 percent, but the other species showing decreases.

NORTH CAROLINA

Plan to Increase Areas for Oyster Production in State

A program outlining the practical steps necessary for increasing the production of oysters in North Carolina is being prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

The coastal waters of this State contain 200,000 acres of favorable oyster producing bottom which at present are not being utilized.

By planting old shells and transplanting seed oysters to these areas the production of this shellfish can be increased from about 500,000 bushels to over 2-1/2 million bushels after a period of two years, says the Service. Such a program would not only increase the production of this valuable seafood but would aid materially in providing employment for fishermen after the war.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Prairie Dog Infestation
Under Control in State

Prairie dog control in South Dakota during the fall months of 1941 was especially effective in forestalling destruction of cattle forage essential to the nation's war effort, reports Assistant District Agent Tom J. Turner, Mitchell official of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

A total of 1,750 acres--Federal, State, and private--was treated to eradicate the rodent. This work was conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with State agricultural and livestock organizations.

A cooperative prairie-dog control project was carried on in Butte County under Service supervision. This rodent, so destructive to cattle forage, once infested about 20 percent of the total area of this county, greatly reducing grazing capacity. During the past 20 years, however, this infestation has been brought to a minimum.

The present campaign was necessary to control numerous small infestations of prairie dogs that were making their appearance and threatening to become a problem of major importance.

TEXAS

Predator Coyotes
Trapped in Texas

Nearly 5,000 predatory animals, 3,902 of which were coyotes, were taken by predatory animal hunters in Texas during the quarter ended December 31, reports District Agent C. R. Landon of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

The Texas predator control program is financed through Federal and State appropriations, supplemented by funds from local sources disbursed through the Texas Predatory Animal Control Association.

Coyote control still continues to be by far the major project in the Texas program. Trapping was the method used to take nearly 94 percent of the coyotes. In the areas primarily devoted to sheep, goat, and poultry raising, coyotes are now well under control, says Landon, and the number of counties in which they have been eliminated is increasing year by year.

TENNESSEE

Reelfoot Guides Bootleg
Ducks to Undercover Men

Seven well-known Reelfoot Lake hunting and fishing guides, "doubling in brass" as wild duck bootleggers, were prosecuted in January under the

Migratory Bird Treaty Act and fined a total of \$650, plus 120 days in jail, reports the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior.

Charged with the sale of wild ducks to Federal undercover agents, all the men pleaded guilty when arraigned in U. S. District Court at Jackson. Elbert Spicer headed the list with a fine of \$150; Johnnie Vancleave, Jack Baggett, and Amos Spicer, brother of Elbert, were assessed \$100 each, while Charlie Brooks and Nathan Parker were fined \$50 each. Austin Fish was fined \$50 and 60 days in jail on each of two counts.

R. C. Donaldson, Jr., a farmer of Tiptonville, pleaded guilty and was fined \$25 for failure to possess the required migratory waterfowl hunting stamp.

VERMONT

Battenkill Anglers Fill Creels with Marked Trout

Anglers who fished the Battenkill River in Vermont during the 1941 season recaptured 28.9 percent of the adult rainbow and 24.4 percent of the adult brown trout that had been marked and planted in the fall and early winter prior to the opening of the season.

A somewhat larger percentage (30.8 percent) of the yearling trout planted during the open season was recovered, reports Russell F. Lord, aquatic biologist of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, stationed at Pittsford, Vt.

Continuing his report on the results of the creel census in the Vermont test-waters now under study by the Service, Mr. Lord estimates, "If Battenkill anglers overlooked the customary number of marked fish in their creels, the actual percentages can be doubled. In any case, the recovery of marked fish was much greater than in any previous experiment in Vermont streams."

WASHINGTON

Farmers Planning to Share Water Supply

A share-the-water program has been adopted by ranchers and farmers near Waterville, Wash., so that both livestock and wildlife will benefit, the State Game Department recently announced.

With funds provided under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, a series of springs, wells, and ponds will be developed to give all forms of life a fair chance at the available water.

Eight springs, a stockpond, and two wells will be developed in the Douglas Soil Conservation District, says the Fish and Wildlife Service. The areas will be fenced against livestock and planted for wildlife food and cover. Grouse, migratory waterfowl, and fur animals will benefit. Livestock will have special watering troughs provided.

Six winter feeding stations will be established on nearby farms to help wildlife through severe weather conditions.

Seventy-five percent of the cost will be met with Federal funds, and 25 percent with State game funds, the Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Continue Studies on Silver Salmon

Experiments to determine the ability of young coho salmon to tolerate various concentrations of sea water when transferred directly from fresh water are being conducted by Dr. James L. Wilding, aquatic biologist of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, at the Seattle fishery biological laboratory.

From these experiments fishery scientists expect to learn the proper time to release hatchery-reared coho salmon so that the release and consequent migration of the fish into sea water will coincide with their ability to adjust themselves to the environmental change, and thus increase the rate of survival.

The coho or silver salmon is one of the five species of Pacific salmon. An important commercial fishery product, it is also the object of intense sport fishing along the entire Pacific coast from northern California to Alaska.