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The KEY DEER

Dear Sir:

To see the "Deer Stalkers" by Eric Wahl-then like "Abstract Art" in the National Gallery. It does not belong there. Then to think that your magazine made no mention of the efforts of Congresswoman Benenson's gloves found to protect the Toy Deer, is hard to understand.

Emye Avant
Washington, D.C.

The Key Deer has long been protected by laws set forth by Florida and the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Congressman Benenson was instrumental in winning favorable action in Congress this year for a Key Deer Refuge which has been sought for many years by conservationists throughout the nation. The Bill provides that land be obtained in a specific area for the eventual establishment of a National Key Deer Refuge.

HUNTING AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

By HORACE LOFTIN

Florida crackers who hunted 50 to 75 years ago, shake their heads about modern times. Theirs was a gun and every day was real back then, then they got a lot of fish and every year they really started to see when it was raining down. It was a big enough to swallow a cow.

Hunting old-timers should have hunted in Florida ten to twenty years ago. Then they would know what the thousand years ago? Then they would know what the thousand years ago looked like.

Free fishing pamphlets can be obtained from the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, 1160 Bankhead, Jacksonville, Florida.

Three More Years

Dear Editor:

I just received your December issue of Florida Wildlife and am especially interested in the article about the Sunshine State at some time during each winter season. A fair representation of birds from the Mississippi Flyway further increases the state's wintering duck population, especially in that section along the northwestern Gulf Coast.

Dear Sir:

In your November issue, you give me a new and very good. I have a lot of work to do, and was happy to let the weather keep me out. I now keep the farm going, and several others on the same farm as me. I also liked the story of the Duck In Your Pocket. I have a lot of work going up here and would love to have a hunter who can give us a full length article in one of your future issues on the methods of using corniels. Such an article should cover at least all the following:

1. Can it be used in the field, or is its uses confused to administering in a doctor's office or hospital?
2. How is it to be administrated, and how much should be needed?
3. If it be necessary (probably), is it to be injected at the site of the wound or intravenously?
4. What are the precautions to be observed in its use?
5. What "side effects," if any, are to be expected?
6. Stress the need for "supportive treatment" (best aid) even when cortisone is available.

An article in good, plain, simple language that everyone can understand is what we need. It may save the lives of some of your readers next year.

Y. M. Watson
Penacola, Florida

The COVER

Mallocks, blocks, pintails, canvasbacks — Whatever your preference in waterfowl, you can find it in Florida. Three-quarters of the Atlantic Flyway's ducks enjoy the abundant hospitality of the Sunshine State at some time during each winter season. A fair representation of birds from the Mississippi Flyway further increases the state's wintering duck population, especially in that section along the northwestern Gulf Coast.

Cortisone for Snake Bite

Dear Sir:

In your November issue, the most significant new fact that you have turned up in a long time is the second section of Chuck Schiling's Flight. The Government is the enemy of cortisone in cases of snake bite. I tell it a great joy to all your outdoor readers—which means all your readers—by giving us a full length article in one of your future issues on the methods of using cortisone.

Mr. McWhorter's article in the November issue is excellent. He describes the best prescription that provides the best assurance of success. The hunters on this month's cover obviously made a good choice in picking their hunting area. Good shooting put down their limits of mallards.

Cortisone is used to treat the swelling caused by snake bites. It is a corticosteroid, a hormone produced by the adrenal glands. Cortisone is used to treat a variety of conditions, including arthritis, allergies, and asthma. It works by reducing inflammation and swelling. Cortisone is often used to treat snake bites because it can help reduce the swelling and inflammation caused by the venom.

Florida Wildlife

January, 1958

FLORIDA FISHING

Gentlemen:

Enclosed is a check for $10 to Florida Wildlife. I am a daily fishing near your area, have heard about your fish, and I want to get Fish twice a year but you have never said when nothing more comes fishing. I have no books on fishing in Florida. My books are out of date.

C. R. Shackleford

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The first staff meeting of the Florida Wildlife Federation was held Nov. 3 at the office in DeLand with Dr. H. R. Wilber, Federation president, as chairman. Attending were Hubert Robertson, executive vice president, Doris Southwell, secretary; Fred Gill, treasurer; Tommy Anderson, Sam DuBon, Kenneth Friedman and John Griffin, executive vice presidents; Mr. and Mrs. Cleve Baggett, representing the third region; Eric Watson, legislative chairman, and Bob Dahne, information and educational chief for the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. The executive vice president was appointed chairman of the executive committee composed of the five regional vice presidents.

Treasure Fred Gill reported a bank balance of $1,056.40 and $44 in cash as of Nov. 1. The Federation expects about $400 more from the Fish and Wildlife Service and some repayment from Sears Foundation and Sears donations.

It was voted to form a trusteed of the educational fund of the Federation in accordance with Tax Law 501 C-3, the trustees being to be prepared by an attorney representing the trustees. Necessary legal filings in conjunction with the charter or application forms are to be prepared by an attorney.

Directors at the annual meeting in Clearwater had requested of the Federation to create the possible statute in accordance with Tax Law 501 C-3. Dr. Wilber explained that the tax program through the state of Florida and Stanford and Stanley Taylor in the Dade County area will serve as trustee for C-3 Corporation or trust fund with either The Nesbitt Realty Co. or a separate bank account to be established for the fund.

Bob Dahne reported that the Federation is buying bargains in sale of fishing licenses and suggested that the Federation distribute them to local organizations for "sale" as a donation basis. Ten percent could be put into a revolving fund to be used by the federation on its own account.

Dr. Wilber read "Let's go Fishing" and "A Sportsmen's Club." It was voted to accept the Game Commission offer. It was suggested that Federation officers be extra-bansom in support of the sportmen's fund against state constitutional revision. These would be provided by Kenneth Friedman at cost and would be paid by the Federation and distributed along with those from the Game Commission.

Dr. Wilber presented a plan for admission of farmers' clubs and garden clubs to the Federation. Dr. Wilber and Robert Southwell were named to work out the details.

The group outlined a plan of cooperation in combating the proposed constitutional revision.

Sam DuBon was appointed chairman of the committee for the selection of the committee's membership.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.30 P.M.

BROWARD AIRBOATS

ONE OF THE MORE ACTIVE sports-men and conservation clubs within the Everglades Region, the Broward County Airboat Association, recently held a wild hog barbecue at Gian's Camp in Conservation Area 43. (The bugs, incidentally, were legal hogs taken in another area of the state where they are not protected by closed season, and the Commission was notified that wild hog going to be "qued") The purpose of the event other than to have a fine time, had by all, was to get the feel of the hunting season. Highlights in addition to the wonderful barbecue and trimmings prepared by the wives, included a frog jumping contest, the record-breaking jump measuring 46 inches.

The Broward County Airboat Association meets every third Tuesday at the Davie Chamber of Commerce Building, Davie, Florida. This club, throughout the year, is planning many outstanding events for its members, including races, barbecues, and other social and field activities. The members of this club are continuously working with and assisting Wildlife Officers and other Commission personnel within the Sawgrass area.

Officers of the Broward County Airboat Club are Bill Raben, President, K. L. Dunworth, Secretary, and Wes Sarvis, immediate Past President.
Muzzle Flashes

By EDMUND MC LA UR IN

Answer: The Florida Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission correctly sent you the regulations concerned within its legal scope of operations. It does not also enforce the general gun laws, as covered in Section 791 of the Book of Florida Statutes, nor does it have the authority or responsibility for enforcing the salt water fishing and boating regulations.

For copies of regulations, or specific information on salt water fishing and boat licensing, address the Dept. of Conservation, Tallahassee.

For an excerpt of the Florida Statutes—Section 791—applying to firearms, their general possession, transportation and use, write the Attorney General’s office, State of Florida, Tallahassee. Each named department of our state government has its own specific duties and set of regulations. You have to write each individually to assemble a complete file of information on existing Florida hunting, fishing, general firearms and boating laws. It is your responsibility to keep informed on current laws.

Question: Why do Iauloting shotgun rounds and rifles jam more often than others?

Answer: Autoloaders are primarily mechanical weapons—that is, after the first round of ammunition is fed into the chamber and locked of the breech block, action and ejection of the second round of a fresh round is independent of any action by the shooter. Any or all of the modern autoloaders, which are rifle, shotgun or pistol, are designed for easy disassembly or parts of the firearms that interest me. Are there any scale operations that specialize on those subjects?

Answer: There are several. THE ARMED AMERICAN COLLECTOR, 307 Colonial Court, Towson, Md. and THE GUN REPORT, P.O. Box 111, Alco, Illinois, are two of the slick-paper publications that put particular emphasis on old guns, parts, and famous firearms personalities.

In addition, THE AMERICAN RIFLEMAN, 1700 Island Ave., Washington, and GUNS MAGAZINE, 310 N. Central Park Avenue, Skokie, Illinois, seldom publish an issue that does not contain at least one article about firearms of the past.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE will shortly publish an article on old and unusual guns owned by members of the Florida Gun Collectors Association with a shirt button.

Question: What is the grip on your shotgun and how do you load it? I am sure that I missed getting my first 30-30 cartridges in my hunting coat pocketed regularly as I attempted a stalk that put me within sure killing range. What practice are you and I followed in doing this? Do you have an explanation for this?

Answer: Let’s consider these basic facts before you venture an opinion: You both are getting the same foot pounds of recoil from the respective rifles—approximately 171/2 foot pounds from each shot fired from the 30-06 rifle and about 24.5 p.f. of recoil from the 12 ga. shotgun (if you are using field velocity slugs). The difference is that you are obviously feeling the recoil more than your friend. So much for facts!

My belief is that stock fit is different for you from that enjoyed by your friend; in brief, due to differences in physique, the gun stocks may fit him more naturally than in your case, with the result that gun recoil is better distributed throughout his arms and body than yours.

Also, your friend may be properly positioning the butt plate firmly against his shoulder and cheek, whereas you may be supporting both rifle and shotgun only lightly at contact points of shoulder, stock comb and trigger-guard grip, to the degree that rifle and shotgun tend to have more freedom to recoil harshly. The recoil is a fixed factor—just like gravitation on a pull, whether dropped from the hand or simultaneously fired from a rifle barrel; the idea is to make it less effective.
The Tube Knot

If there was ever a knot that needed to be developed, it was this one. Joining a leader butt to the end of a fly line has always been one of the most vexing problems between line and leader. In fact, I'm not happy about joined loops as a connection any time or anywhere.

One used to sit up nights, splicing leader butts to the ends of fly lines, after pushing the leader thru the center of the line for half an inch or so and then out thru the side of the line. This connection is then finished off with a whip finish and varnish. For several years, I used the patented metal eye on a pin with barbs that go into the hollow line, and while I never had any trouble with this gadget pulling out, I was always afraid it would come out, and I didn't like it.

For years, I settled on splicing a small loop in the end of the fly line and tying my leader into this loop with a jam knot. This loop is made by fraying out the fibers in about half an inch of the end of the fly line and binding these frayed fibers back into the line with a whip finish and a whip finish. This should be as small as it will pass thru the guides. This connection was satisfactory, required a good deal of time and effort to tie.

In the tube knot, I think we have the perfect answer. All you need is a small, 2-inch piece of soft tubing. The inside diameter should be just large enough to accept the heaviest line you are likely to use (see illustration).

When tying this knot, be sure to leave ample tying ends so you have something to pull on to bring the loop up tight after finishing the tube. The tube is held parallel with the axis of the fly line, and the knot is tied with the monofilament end thru both tube and fly line. The purpose of the tube is to get the loop of the monofilament back under the line after the knot is tied.

Like all friction knots, the strength of this one lies in the number of wraps. Fewer wraps have less strength—more wraps greater strength. Five or six wraps are ample and are generally adequate. If the tackle is going to see extreme usage, the tube is then removed. Now, in holding the loops in place with the thumb, pull the knot up tight, working the loop out of first one side and then the other. If you tie the knot correctly, properly, the completed knot will look like a perfect hawthorn, with each turn neatly in place, and if you pull it up really tight(bb), it is ready for use. (Continued on next page...)

Special Waterfowl Section

Ducks and Dunes

By Morris H. Shaw

There was a faint splash as the sinker and the dung-baited hook hit the surface of the Gulf somewhere out of sight in the swirling grayish white swirling fog. Allowing a few seconds for the weight to carry the line to the bottom, I tightened the weight, pulled up tight on the leader, and dropped down on the hard packed sand to puff disconsolately on a cigarette and mull over the situation. Ordinarily an enthusiastic fisherman, my heart just wasn't in it. It was not in pursuit of that late November morning. Late November? According to the weather, this could have passed for the opening of fall's spring season—a late spring that, as is after most of the ducks had pulled out for the north.

Now there is nothing wrong with surf fishing, in the right place and at the right time. But to a dyed-in-the-wool waterfowl hunter, late November is the time when you sit in a duck blind, or wade the pot hole and marsh country, or drift a likely jump shooting river. Fishing is fine; good healthful, restful outdoor recreation. But what scattersnapper gives a boost to the legions coming kiting down the airways toward the

(Continued on next page)
A trout (Deep South for weakfish), a small channel bass and three or four cigarettes later, I noticed boggling up the beach toward me through the thick fog. He dropped a pair of redfish beside my catch and suggested that we hike up to catch a morning snack.

We sat in the station wagon munching a couple sandwiches and reviewing the miserable state of the duck hunting season. My partner reached for his thermos jug of coffee and started floating a cup. He paused with jug half filled and looked out the head of the car window. His mouth hung open and a glazed look crept over his eyes. It dawned on me that the duck season had been closed off the deep end, I too caught the despairing wind of winnowing through rapidly beating pajamas.

I had heard that sound borne on the fall wind many places, from the pot hole country of the Aleutian peninsula to the rice fields of the San Joaquin. As the Bear River marches to the labyrinth of the Bear River marshes and the Brawley sloughs when the bird wing sweeps through hundreds of thousands of flocks of fast flying ducks.

I jambled open the door and scrambled out. Through a break in the cotton gray canopy we caught sight of a flock of scaup, the pearly gray under surface of the wings flashing the reflected light of early morning. The flock was hardly out of hearing when another, then yet others. Once in a while there drifted down to us a wild plaintive whinny whine, the tritone call of a male baldpate. There was occasionally the low mellow whistle of a pintail, the highpitched squark call of a greenswim, but mostly the trilled, courting symphony consisted of the winnowing of unseen wings punctuated by an occasional piep-piep of the scapula.

We glanced at each other across the hood of the station wagon. Bill clipped out, "Let's go." I nodded, and in silent assent. We propped in the jumble of gear in the station wagon and extracted case of shotguns and shells brought along more than in hope than in faith that anything resembling a duck would be forthcoming from this fishing tour to the summer playground.

The fog was thinning noticeably by this time as we split up and sought some sort of cover on the outer side of the billowing line of sand dunes which paralleled the shore. I was just getting settled behind a thump of beach rye grass when Bill's 16-gauge pump cranked up three times in rapid succession. From a hundred yards down the beach the solid thump of a bird hit hard on the packed sand was clear. It was followed seconds later by a splash in the water farther offshore and almost immediately by another shot. "Got two," Bill whooped. "Bluuuhills." Under the rays of the climbing sun, the fog was blowing off rapidly but even at that the flock of twenty or so noisier wading webfoot was almost on top of us before I saw them. The Winchester 12 swung up from behind the flock, the muzzle climbing up the ranks until the leader was bluffed out of view. The blast rocked me off balance from my clumsy squatting position but the lead bird folded. His momentum carried him on a slant over the beach to thigh down at the edge of the water with a satisfying thump. The others seemed to follow him down until at the last moment they volplaned upward, cut a short nailing circle out over the water and came barking back in tilting, rocketing flight. The ounce and a quarter charge of slacks punched a hole in the ether somewhere to the rear of that jet-propelled squadron of broadbills then they were out over the briny with the spectatorable, scintillating drops of shimmer coruscating them from the bite of the 12-bore.

There was a slow down in the cross peninsula flight but it was only temporary. A half hour later the scaup began trading back and forth up and down the beach. We could see them, compact, hobbling knots of black and white scattered along the surf line close to shore with larger rafts gathered farther out in the Gulf. The rising sun had burned off the remnants of fog as Bill and I sat on a drift log talking over this latest turn of events.

For myself, I had always had a soft spot for the scap, or bluebill as we used to call them back in my boyhood days on Northern California's Humboldt Bay. Perhaps it is out of gratitude to the chunky bay. Bill, whistling a blueshine dropped along Bull's Slough when that was then my pride and the single barrel 30-gauge that was brought nearly always to waterfowl work and almost immediately by another shot. "Got two," Bill whooped. "Bluuuhills." Under the rays of the climbing sun, the fog was blowing off rapidly but even at that the flock of twenty or so noisier wading webfoot was almost on top of us before I saw them. The Winchester 12 swung up from behind the flock, the muzzle climbing up the banks until the leader was bluffed out of view. The blast rocked me off balance from my clumsy squatting position but the lead bird folded. His momentum carried him on a slant over the beach to thigh down at the edge of the water with a satisfying thump. The others seemed to follow him down until at the last moment they volplaned upward, cut a short nailing circle out over the water and came barking back in tilting, rocketing flight. The ounce and a quarter charge of slacks punched a hole in the ether somewhere to the rear of that jet-propelled squadron of broadbills then they were out over the briny with the spectatorable, scintillating drops of shimmer coruscating them from the bite of the 12-bore.

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back and forth. There would be a small flock hobbling in the light surf close to shore or riding the gentle swell just beyond the surf. Suddenly a bunch of birds, swell just beyond the surf to ride the gentle swell. We would take off and fly down the beach a few hundred yards or perhaps they would swing out to land in with one of the main rafis off shore.

It did not require any brain-storming to see that there were some mighty good possibilities for a scrap shooting set up. There were some problems to be sure. For one thing, in this particular area, the closest draws were back away from the water too far to offer anything in the way of concealment and still be within good shooting range. Lifting a stunt from the open field goose shooters, we figured that a pit blood bank could be placed above the normal high tide mark on the open, sloping beach offered the best possibility. Tied in with a small set of scap blocks, if we could get them to ride properly just behind the surf line, sounded like a promising prospect, though definitely smoother, at least in this neck of the woods. The way the birds were traveling back and forth, at least a few of the usually decy- nounceable bloods would certainly drop in to a set of phases placed within shooting range of the pit.

Before dawn the next morning we were on the spot with shovel, decoys, and shotguns. This was more like it; this was a more activity for the pre-dawn darkness of a November morning. Adding a good bit to our prospects, though definiyly smoother, at least in this neck of the woods. The way the birds were traveling back and forth, at least a few of the usually decy- nounceable bloods would certainly drop in to a set of phases placed within shooting range of the pit.

The shovel bit in the moist, packed sand with never so much as a sea shell to impede the progress of the excavation. I savored the ease with which we carved a "sit-down" pit, complete with bench and ample leg room. With satisfying smoothness I remembered back to another November when a buck and shovel session of three hours had hardly been enough to scratch out a lay-down pit on a gravelly ridge on a pass between a couple of ridges and a broad, shadowy, eastern Oregon oil.

The first run tinge in the eastern sky, I turned out a dozen scap decoys in the trap waters on the edge of the Gulf. Then came the freshly excavated sand of the pit with the drift piles ricked on the beach by the morning storms.

We settled down on the sand bench. Smoked a cigarette, dozed a spell from the thermos and listened to the morning come to life. From somewhere off in the distance came the coarse complaining croak of the Blue Heron. Answered by the gossip, hispada quack of a smaller relative, the Black. Down from the velvety blue-gray sky west drifted the faint rustle of wings and the soft articulate whispering of sandpipers on the way to their morning feeding grounds.

As we listened and watched the day unfold, but we had in mind the big four-deck question, "If I fly above the beach today and was footed and my head showing, the weather has taken a turn for the better. A calm wind north wind was sweeping across the duneland, rattling the dried stems of the beach reed and bearing with it the scents of fall. The sky was clouded with thin, straggling clouds. There was none of the fog of our visibility on the previous morning. The sea was calm, bobbing in the water, now rolled lightly by the breeze. We became more closely in our site. I was starting another idle scene of a spread where from the pincking grey skin out of the sun to the north driftin the winnowing wind the cadence that spells quackswingers swing.

By the time we had the flock spotted we were directly overhead and already with a couple of decoys were dropping toward the open waters of the Gulf. So engrossed were we in watching the dun, stump undulating flight of this first flock that a bad surprise.

A couple of bloodhounds, Morris Show and nuevo walked into the water of the Gulf to retrieve a pair of ducks.

(Continued on Page 4)
DUCK DECOYS

Their Repair and Maintenance

By PAUL MacALESTER

When the weather's wet, cold and gray (as it gets that way in Florida now and then) the decoy hunter should like the writer like a man who loves his money with a minimum amount of spasms of worry. For my money that's the hollow plastic duck. Two of the finest lines in this category come from Herter's and Victor. Prices start as low as $17.50.

There are less expensive, paper-mache hollow decoys, which are a few cents cheaper — but the hunter is constantly faced with the worry of waterlogging and shot damage. A well-constructed hollow plastic duck can take an amazing amount of pellets and shot without any drastic damage.

And the better plastic models are real scale replicas of the birds they imitate — unlike some of the cheaper models. In fact, the better-grade plastic decoys even have feather detail moulded into them. At least one model I know of has a moulded-in, weighted lead. You can throw these babies into the water as far as you can heave them, and they'll always come right back.

The beginner should give thought too, to the decoy of sexes in his decoy spread. Many old-time hunters lean a little toward an overbalance of hens. The brilliant-colored drakes are unmistakable in their various species, but there are many female species of a drab brown color, which will mix better and serve a wider variety of uses.

The mark of a rank beginner usually is a possession of brilliantly-plumed drakes — due to their puggers all mixed together.

To begin with, there's no such thing as a warm duck hunter. Invariably, he's fanatic on anything with a bill and webbed feet that whistles or has a homing jet. In short, he is crazy about everything connected with the water sport. He has to be — who else will need a half-dozen black ducks or a half-dozen sparrows in wintry swamp or lake water for hours and hours?

Perhaps one of the finest aspects of the duck-hunting scene is the business of luring them in with duck decoys. There's nothing which gives a greater thrill than the sight of ducks cupping into a well-placed spread of water, and possibly getting snared.

The care and grooming of decoys and a slow, long thought of a thoroughly-chose collection of well-made wood decoys can be a source of continuing joy to the waterfowl hunter. Many think of decoy care as a thankless chore. But many's the long evening that's been whiled away — fitting out the blocks for the coming season and reminiscing about the last good shoot over them. When the weather's wet, cold and gray (as it gets that way in Florida now and then) the decoy hunter should like the writer like a man who loves his money with a minimum amount of spasms of worry. For my money that's the hollow plastic duck. Two of the finest lines in this category come from Herter's and Victor. Prices start as low as $17.50.

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The beginner should give thought too, to the decoy of sexes in his decoy spread. Many old-time hunters lean a little toward an overbalance of hens. The brilliant-colored drakes are unmistakable in their various species, but there are many female species of a drab brown color, which will mix better and serve a wider variety of uses.

The mark of a rank beginner usually is a possession of brilliantly-plumed drakes — due to their puggers all mixed together.

Duck decoy tackle. This plastic hen ringbill decoy is oil set to be wetted with a length of hakiy cotton fishing twine and the feathers paired to match your decoys of the same species. Mallards and canvasbacks roam the marshes, lakes and ponds for a snug haven. A well-kept stow of decoys can bring them in — panting for company.

To begin with — what should the wildfowler buy for his decoy? I'd like the writer to think it over, since it's the only way he can get his ducks for his money, with a minimum amount of spasms of worry. For my money that's the hollow plastic duck. Two of the finest lines in this category come from Herter's and Victor. Prices start as low as $17.50. There are less expensive, paper-mache hollow decoys, which are a few cents cheaper — but the hunter is constantly faced with the worry of waterlogging and shot damage. A well-constructed hollow plastic duck can take an amazing amount of pellets and shot without any drastic damage.

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Duck hunters of the open waters don’t shoot small marshes and swamps. They can find excellent
Ducks

Duck hunting

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The decoys were old and hand made, but they were the main attraction for many of Cape Canaveral's 8,000 Redheads.

By GEORGE X. SAND

Overhead the leader, rain-stung sky had suddenly filled with ducks again... hundreds of them... that sent me crouching even lower into the uncomfortably wet grass of my camera blind. I could hear the soft gabbling that came from almost a thousand sandhill geese that made a high tide in the face of the rising norther. Even as I watched with pounding heart and quivering eyes a new aerial armada joined the first big milling group overhead, adding to the confused congestion as the newcomers tipped and turned, balancing precariously on the gusty air currents.

"Glory, it just can't be..." I muttered foolishly through suddenly stiff lips. "There just aren't big flocks like that left any more... particularly not down here in Florida." Not since my boyhood when I used to hunt excitedly from sneak-boats on the eel-grass-abundant flats of New Jersey's broad Barne-gat Bay had I heard this great flutering sigh of disturbed air close overhead that can come only from hundreds of simultaneously descending wildfowl.

The leaders had made up their minds. With stiff pinions they were slanting their followers down to the protected surface of our tiny pond—and disaster. About a hundred yards to my left, when Dick Macomber and the three others in our party likewise crouched inside carefully built blinds, a gust suddenly went off. Instantly, it was joined by other faint pop-pop sounds—barely audible above the ever-rising rush of the biting north wind—were getting results. I saw a plump drake leap upward with typically beating wings... once... followed next time by a fresh probing charge of 7½ chills... and suddenly be crumpled and slumped lifeless to the brown marsh below.

A sleek brown and white, twisting and dodging with what seemed to be the suddenly unloaded power of a runaway jet at the nearby Cocoa Condensed Milk Base, easily eluded several futile salvos and successive low over my blind—less than a yard above my head—but that I heard clearly her startled cry and feel the full impact of her angry, round-eyed stare as the baffled pass to safety and the brown marsh below.

A flock of ducks shown in over the decoys for a crucial look before dropping in.

There were about twenty-five other boats in addition to ours and we watched these fishermen pull in trout, mostly two and three-pounders, until—like us—their arms grew tired. Joe, Dick, and I released over a hundred such fish between us.

The limit on the snipe was eight apiece—and I shot at least that many holes into the air with my new over-and-under Browning 12 gauge before I managed to correct the lead and bring down one of these erratic fliers that seem to jump up from out of nowhere and disappear again almost as quickly with a squeaky, derisive cry. These were Wilson's or Jack snipe and it may have been that I was bestowing too long in aiming, for it is easy to confuse them with other non-game birds. Shortly, however, I learned to look for the long bill (which hangs down at an angle during flight, much like the woodcock) and accurately identify the peculiar wing beat.

"Now that you've become an expert we'll go to a place where it's just a little more sporting to hunt where everything's 'em," Dick Macomber announced, winking significantly at the other party members. "In this place the grass grows higher than your head—which means fast shooting."

I groaned silently at the thought of what a move to a new locale would mean here in this sweep-

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fast for me—but when it ended every one had the limit of these Gallinago delicacies. When it ended, every man present found himself facing the somber prospect of the long and hard back trail to the vast marsh. For the last gun had been fired in time to meet the legal curfew at sundown, and the rapidly settling twilight warned that dusk would soon be overtaking us.

Yet there was obviously no question that everyone present would gladly have done it all over again in such snipe shooting as we’d enjoyed.

And now, well before dawn on the morning of the last day, we’d launched a couple of skiffs along the causeway that runs eastward from Titusville to the broad Indian River toward Wilson and Ormond, Merritt Islands. It was raining and blustery and a fine duck hunting weather—but rather hard on the nerves when the toasting night is pitch black and you are left with no alternative but to race at full speed across several miles of tricky shoals in order to keep up with the lead boat, hoping all the while that should it run aground you would somehow sense the same and manage to stop in time—without smashing it into a thousand pieces. Reese and I had only the intermittent glare of a flashlight from the others in their 35 horsepower skiff somewhere in the swirling night. Top of our bow. How Dick Macomber managed to pilot us erringly through that inky wet void I’ll never know.

When we reached it the island seemed low against the charming water like a vague, mysterious rum in an uncertain black outline against the already dark night. “Every man take one of the decoy bags—divide up the load,” Macomber whispered hurriedly as we secured the skiffs. “We’ve got a bit of walking ahead of us and it’ll be getting light soon.”

A restless wind rustled through the marsh grass and scrub elder bushes as we moved quickly onward through the rainy night; a procession of silent forms in single file, with ears attuned sharply to each small startled squeak of disturbed night birds and not too busy with the promise of what lay ahead. Merritt Island, I knew, was still platted into thousands of lots from the Florida boom and crash era of the 20’s. I muttered a silent prayer of thanksgiving now that the land boomers had never managed to complete their selfish work of carving the place up.

We came to a pond and the surrounding brush seemed to crash noisily—too noisily—as we pulled carefully through it until we could make out the faintly starlit water. Dark forms jumped up suddenly from the surface and above the wind we could hear the white-whoop-whoop of rapidly departing wings. Hardly had we got the decoys out when the first rainbow-hued colors of a new day came steaming toward us from behind dark clouds that remained behind.

Author, left, comes back to base port of homemade "Yankees"-decked where high white sides, visible for miles, were credited by others for bringing in huge flocks of shore-hunting ducks.

(Continued from Preceding Page)

out here, one that paralleled a drainage canal somewhere west of Wabasso and Fellsmere. We’d bounced over a badly rusted and cratered grade with our trailered boat following respectfully behind, until even this had petered out. Whereupon the five of us had lifted bodily the 16-foot Aluma Craft hull to carry it off in search of the nearest water—no mean trick, particularly since an 18-horsepower outboard happened to be hanging at the stern. When the water had suddenly given out we’d had no choice but to portage over a high canal bank and find new water . . .

“Don’t look so glum,” chided Joe Reese, reading my thoughts. “This could go on all day, sure, but think of the snipe shooting fun we’re having!”

“Sure, that’s probably why it’s so good,” Bob Montgomery added with a chuckle. “Nobody else is crazy enough to tackle this paradise of Macomber’s!”

This time, after a somewhat longer cruise through the slumbering metallic-gold sawgrass, whose dozens of sweet water sources secretly combine to start the mighty St. Johns on its way, we moored the aluminum boat close to a big section of marsh that was thickly grown with tall reeds and weeds. Hardly had we stepped onto the muddy bank when several big snipe exploded upward and zoomed off.

Dick pointed approvingly to the moist earth at our feet. “Good bottom here—you can see where they were feeding,” he said, indicating with one rubber- booted toe the telltale small holes left in the mud by the long bills. They like to probe for the tiny worms, crawfishes, insects and other natural foods that are found in marshes like this.

The snap shooting here proved to be every bit as fast and furious as had been predicted—almost too
THEY'VE GOT TO BE GOOD

By ED LEMACK

Last hunting season in a duck hunter, concealed in the stalkers have made a killing of birds decoy to them readily apparent. Among these top decoy manufacturers are remaining the only ones who are building these decoys in a different manner and shape. Today, quite a number of the old-time decoy makers have become famous as wood sculptors, and where their creations no longer are active sporting their new designs are now highly valued as collectors' items. Among the more prominent decoy makers were Charlie Wheeler of Connecticut, Nathan Cob, of "Shaker" Wheelock, of Connecticut, Harry Schauder, of New Jersey, and George Harvey, Henry Grant and Emler Crowell, of Virginia, Massachusetts, and George Harvey, Henry Grant and Emler Crowell, of Virginia.

Here in Florida, Richard Moeller, 2817th Avenue, Bradenton, owns about 40 to 50 of the finest decoys. He has kept a record of each decoy for 20 years and has a complete set of old decoys and is widely recognized as an authority on the subject. Until recently, Mr. Moeller had approximately 400 decoys, all of them handmade and some more than a collection of the best decoys. However, he was unable to secure them without a great deal of effort and expense. But before coming to Florida to live, he had a collection of his own, which included some of the most famous and critically carved models. These decoys are given frequent public exhibition at Bradenton and are part of the owner's collection. They are regarded as the best decoys for the money.

Highly prized are the wooden decoys, particularly those made by the well-known gunners. But the decoys have to be good! Highly prized are waterfowl & green-winged teal, merganser, rafter and winter, and most rare of all, a seagull decoy.

As Moeller recalls from his own collection, waterfowl hunters are not likely to return with the usual story of a successful hunt. They are quite likely to return with a collection of waterfowl decoys. This is not surprising, as many of the decoys are well-made and beautifully carved. The decoys are not only a means of attracting waterfowl, but they are also a means of showing skill and craftsmanship. The decoys are a true test of the gunner's skill.

A U.S. Fish & Wildlife official once some of the illegal weapons confiscated from waterfowl hunters. The big guns, as their taunters came to be known, were usually mounted on a tree in the small skill and fired by hunters sneaking into the backwater. These guns have been bodybuilders.

And so, the story of the waterfowl hunters and their decoys continues to evolve. The decoys are not only a means of attracting waterfowl, but they are also a means of showing skill and craftsmanship. The decoys are a true test of the gunner's skill.
Richmond, Moeller, of Andover, owns 40 to 50 of the finest examples of glass, Airbrushed ducks, some more than a century old. A collection, he at one time had many more, but gave 40 to the Shal- bus family, Portland, leftover before he moved to Florida.

(Continued from preceding page)
of Harve de Grance on the Opening day of the season of 1878. On that day William Dobson killed more than 500 ducks. He started out to avoid shooting two guns, two breaching doubles of 10 gauges, but during the early hours of the morning one gun burst and was thrown overboard.”

Moeller says he has authentic records in his collection of waterfowl hunting history that show the daily bag of a market hunter averaged 200 ducks, or more. Moeller says an aged market hunter in Manas- hawkin, New Jersey, showed him an old ledger in which his waterfowl kills shipped to the Philadelphia market were recorded. One item recorded 278 yellowlegs shot in one day by him. At the time, broad- heads brought 25¢ a pair, while canvassack kills sold for a little more. The tales Moeller has heard first-hand of unregulated market hunting and personal experiences of the old guides, market hunters and decoy-makers would fill a book.

Practically all of the old market hunters loaded their own shells, and in many cases made their own short and decoys.

As Moeller’s contemporary, Ralf Cokendall, an avid duck hunter points out, ducks can be divided into two basic groups—the diving ducks and the shoal-water ducks. The diving ducks have body outlines that appear high forward and low aft, and the shoal-water species are low forward and high aft. Cokendall emphasizes that duck decoys, like the birds they are intended to ride, should have the same visible characteristics. Moeller agrees.

Also important in a good waterfowl decoy is duplication of natural postures. A sleeping or semi-sleeping position of the head and neck, and a normally relaxed poise, are undoubtedly best. An upright neck means alertness and will usually frighten away any birds about to steal. Most decoys, as made by men who know ducks, are shaped to appear relaxed in posture.

However, ideas about the proper size of decoys used, and how they should be painted, vary widely. Some of today’s decoy-makers are favoring oversize decoys, about twice as large as the itself and others—decoys—adding a few colors—adding a few sizes of scoop decoys, to the combine in waterfowl, sig- nally.

Moeller, to examine and when making decoys, says, “The American art that dates back to the 18th century, can Indian first time, what is, making of a lure which imita- waterfowl and cause it to light on the water” chase enough a hunter to be killed with a present- bow and arrow.

“Our first known Anheul decoy was of reeds and grass, paint of crude colors made from rust and lime. Feathers were added to make the decoys more realistic created decoys were anchored in pond or lake bank with stones, with the ready home piec- ly waiting close by.

“From these early days is the use of decoys to the present the succeeding generations of colored ducks” were sought to create improved, more effective decoys, and the types of materials and methods used in making the decoy line.

“The early makers’ products were made of solid wood and were crude at best. Some makers, ever used naturally bent roots for legs and heads with the name—wooden. The most common was cedar, the solid black for- ed heavy and unsafe.

“Some inventors mind coming in the shape of the hollow decoy, the burden of carrying a barrel of water, filled with cedar, or painted with cedar, square sunken, and it wasn’t long before we were talking about baits. Nat- this reminded me of the Swamp-cat so I was up on the mantle and handed it to him. He was very much impressed. So much, that I said to him, “Take it along and give it a try; maybe you can come on good with it.” He agreed.

About a week later he came up and in excited voice demanded to know where I got the bait. It seems he had been having his roof repaired and the contractor, after putting his crew to work on the roof, had summoned down to my friend’s lake to make a few rents. As he started to leave the house my friend had handed him the Swamp-cat and told the contractor to try it out, that it was new and he personally didn’t know whether or not it would catch fish. About two hours later the contractor dashed up at my friend’s house, talking excitedly and waving the boat like a man who had just seen a ghost. My friend calmed him down and finally extracted from him the fact that on the first cast of the Swamp-cat the fisherman had snagged a 1½ lb. bass and that on his second cast he had caught a big one which immediately whirled- around a snare and broke the line. The contractor had taken off his clothes and swam out to the boat but couldn’t find the Swamp-cat and he was desolate.

He kept urging upon my friend the immediate neces- sity of getting another Swamp-cat or a dozen more.

My friend told him, “I got the kit from Plato Winder. I don’t know where he got it but I think it came from Atlanta, Georgia.” “Wherever it came from,” said the excited fisherman, “I’ve got to have some more.”

Well, Mister Editor, the darndest chase you ever heard of for an elusive bait got underway. My friend had a friend in Atlanta who was a fisherman as he called him, and he phoned and described the bait and its name. The Atlanta man called every sporting goods house in Atlanta and none had the bait but every one of them wanted at least a dozen Swamp-cats as they heard the story of the contractor and his luck.

When the word came back to my neighbor that all possibilities had been explored and he knew of or had the bait, my neighbor phoned me and told me, “I’m sending in the order, wading up with the question, me the entire shop.”

“Where did you get that bait?”

Well sir, I thought, scratched my head, and thought some more but to save my life I couldn’t remember where the bait came from. The only semblance of an idea I could conjure up was the impression that I had seen a description of the bait in your FLORIDA WILDLIFE. I said to my friend, “I’ll call Bill Hanes and see if he can recall where the Swamp-cat was manufactured.”

(Continued on page 21)
A AS THROUGH THE FINE hand of the state Chamber of Commerce had arranged it to coincide with the Florida tourist season, thousands of fighting shad every winter pour into the St. Johns River to spawn. Like the throngs of northern cliff dwellers who change scenery in the winter, the shad scurry out of their regular salt water habitat of the Atlantic Ocean to winter in the north-flowing fresh waters of the St. Johns.

Eager sportfishermen discovered several years ago that the shad, feeding on muscles along the bottom of the river, were suckers for a man-made bait. Since then many of the shad's age old secrets have been exposed; thousands of shad have been pulled from the St. Johns, and resident and visiting Florida fishermen are in a state of ecstatic joy. And shad roe, the costly delicacy which was once a rare treat indeed, is to be had for the asking—or taking—during shad season.

Teg Grason, my friend-lawyer who will close his law books at the drop of a bait, first lured me to the St. Johns for shad.

"I promise you'll catch shad, and lots of them," he persuaded with deft conviction, "and you'll have the fightingest time of your life."

I did not need too much persuasion, however, because the word about the fabulous shad had gotten around. In practically every fishing spot throughout Central Florida during the months of January and February fish stories center on the tremendously thrilling experience of trolling for shad.

The next morning our party, including Grason and his brother, Louis, Orill Fontaine, a mutual friend who is adept with a camera, and myself, took off from Orlando for the St. Johns. We made up our fishing gear with fresh water rods and reels. For bait we used a tandem rig with number O Reflecto silver spoon plus a yellow feather with lead head alto.

The tandem rig was fixed to the line with a large bear's claw swivel. To make it run deep we added shot sinkers on the line above the swivel. We tied a nylon feather because the color holds well, and sometimes bucktail or chicken feathers are used instead.

Driving to a launching point on the river a few miles below Sanford we hoisted our boat into the water. As we eased our way through the hypnotic that carpet and plague the waters so much of Florida's inland ways, I was enlightened about the shad.

In Florida shad begin their spawning run up the St. Johns River early in January and continue throughout February and part of March. They begin out of the salty Atlantic and form small groups of males and females.

The male shad jostle and jolt the females until she secretes her eggs. This same action causes the male to deposit his sperm at the same time, and so nature does complete the cycle of fertilization. The spatged eggs cascade to rest on some obstacle and remain there for hatching unless they are devoured by some other fish. With their 150 or more miles miles up the St. Johns accomplished, the shad leave fresh water to return to the brine.

It is during this spawning cycle that the Florida fishermen are on the alert. The shad are playing havoc with the shad. Before the shad secrets were exposed, little was known about their feeding habits but today it's common knowledge.
An animal of extreme
majesty and wisdom, the Big Buck
deserves a noble death.
I, personally, like to believe he
was... BORN to be BAGGED

By EDMUND McLaurin

Even though the episode had taken place a year prior to the conversation, there was retaining the lasting excitement in Wright’s voice. I did not tell him he wanted that big buck. So did I; that’s why I went to Ocala two weeks prior to the opening of the deer season, to look things over and build my wish list at choice hunting spots. I wanted a trophy kill as just another deer.

“Where and when did you see the Big Buck?” inquired innocently. For a few seconds, Wright looked at me silently as if pondering a decision of great importance. I knew he was asking a lot of him in requesting specific information but, unlike many hunters, he was not selfish. He is always ready to give a help to any hunter who takes his deer hunting seriously.

“Come with me and I’ll show you,” Wright said. He saw the Big Buck only yesterday. I was experi-...
My own curiosity aroused, I did something I rarelyever do during a hunting period — and for the day I don't exactly know why I did it. Perhaps, if I have said, it was curiosity; again, perhaps it is merely a physical act to break the monotony of long hours of almost motionless vigil. I slowly got locked and partially opened the bolt of my 30-30 for a safe carry, packed my camera and camera and walked down the trail to examine the carcass myself.

Just as I knelt in the trail on one knee, a loud disturber of me with camera, canteen and unrolled the Big Buck suddenly broke from the timber, turning down less than fifteen feet away! Three or four feet had bowing with each stride, and he was again concealing cover, leaving me surprised and chap, excited about the whole episode and the signiﬁcance of his twelve point (estimated) rack of antlers.

He had been there all the time — right in front of my eyes and not more than forty yards away! I was carrying binoculars and using them, but I had not seen him hiding.

Wisely, he had bedded down that morning, kept before daylight, after escaping the hunting of Ocala. Day and feeding undisturbed during the Big Buck had almost before he had left our two hunters stop almost beside him without his natural nervousness overcoming his presence, I am convinced that he got up only because he suspected that I had discovered his hideout. For a minute or two afterwards I felt pretty well established the approximate whereabouts of the Big Buck and his two occasional cronies.

I set the date and time for the joint try for the morning before Thanksgiving.

Wright, his wife (who has since passed away), son Dick, grandson Richard, John Tien and I drove three miles in a Jeep against icy-tasting wind to meet hunters and equipment from the camps of Harold Fogate. In the yard of an abandoned turreathome there were numerous signs of feeding deer. Sometimes during the night, a buck visited the spot where we set up a camera with foam snare to stop us if a feeding deer touched on salt in the broken road. The burs into a club.

Carter Harrison, Luther Penuel and Fred Waldron.

When we consolidated our parties, re-joined both groups, and climbed aboard two of the available trucks we looked more like an armed press seeking an escaped murderer than deer hunters. In two other trucks the dogs of all groups alternately whined impatiently and occasionally a few of the more discontented fought among themselves. Although it was a sunny Florida day, it was so cold that some hunter facing the icy wind in the truck I occupied asked the driver to stop so he could go back and retrieve his frozen, broken off and dropped ears! It was glad when the truck pulled to a stop and Wright called out, "This is your stand, Mac. Good luck!"

I climbed over the truck's tail-gate and headed for a partially concealed small wood platform cradled amid a cluster of young trees. The river wind cut through my hunting clothes like an icy knife as I climbed up to the platform, loaded my rifle and settled down for what proved to be a long wait, marked only by the brief appearance of four does nosing around.

However, Fred Wallrond, of Wildwood, on the stand next to me, got a quick glimpse of the little — and very fast — almost black buck with the Christmas-tree-like rack — but only a teasing, momentary glimpse.

Others in the party were more fortunate. Luther Penuel, of Ocala, occupying a stand atop a road fence-post shot a beautiful seven-point buck that came from the brush behind him, crossed the road and paused just long enough for a shot.

Carter Harrison, bearded hunter from Williston, who had sworn not to shoot until he had bagged his deer, got the second buck of the morning — an animal believed to be a part-time crony of the Big Buck. (Continued on Page 30.)
CONVICT HIM? "Come on, you bastard," yelled Fred, turning his head, elbows still on the bar.
Fred was an old-timer in the woods and could tell better than most people how many county had heard of a Florida Forest Service Investigator. Fred couldn't fashion the long arm of law accusing just because if he had to scare up some genuine.
Andy, who moved here after he came back from Korea in '45 from around, his feet slaving clear, not counted on his fingers. For something two witnesses saw him they have definite evidence that he was intentionally set. The trial being as if the next week a clinger, he continued, "And the story he trumped up, why in as much as admits it's guilty of starting the fire. They could not can him for this one."
A bit of past county history was then quoted to Andy who knew he couldn't hope to be conviction said, "Now all that went meant to a hill-o-beans. I've got to see in day that in that court when a fire pits a man behind bars."
Both Andy and Fred are aware of the problem of intentionally set woodfires in Florida. Not everyone has the attitude of Fred, but that again not many consider. Outside of Andy's get it strictly right here. There is no in between attitude. Any will fire is a violation of Florida's Fire Laws whether care less or intentionally set.
Arson, or incendiarism, is paramount in importance when placing blame for Florida's infamous fire records. The arsonist must feel the heavy weight of the law. But before getting into this problem, let's clear the sportsman of his part in our fire record with only a slap on the wrist.
Of the more than seven thousand fires that occurred on Florida's protected land last year, only 122 were unattended or various other reasons. Obviously the campfire and hunter are not guilty for the more casual fires in Florida. Sportmen in the woods are generally very careful with fire. They therefore need only be admonished to continue use fire wisely.
The out-of-doors man knows well what is meant by Florida is made an example of as the state with 1959. He knows the worst fire record in the nation. He knows the was not unattended or various other reasons. Obviously the campfire and hunter are not guilty for the more casual fires in Florida. Sportmen in the woods are generally very careful with fire. They therefore need only be admonished to continue use fire wisely.
A contact may be made later by a member of the Florida Forest Service, and what you tell him can be extremely important. How many fires were there? Did you see any strangers in the vicinity? What about ground or weather conditions? Did you see any evidence of arson?
These questions can be answered by being observant. No matter how well placed your intentions may be, you are strongly advised against picturing yourself to be a famous television detective. To be more emphatic, by all means do not move or touch anything that might be considered evidence. Be sure of what you see so that positive identification can be made.
As a citizen you are asked to do very little. But what little you do is so highly prized that cash rewards are offered when information leads to the conviction of an arsonist.
There are three different reward systems that have been set up with many thousands of dollars to help stamp out intentional woodburning. The Florida Board of Forestry offers up to $500 under Florida Statutes in the case of each conviction. The Florida Bankers Association offers $1000 a year of this purpose, and a recently created Forest Arson Fund has an initial amount of $10,000 set up for rewards. This fund is contributed to by landowners and industry and administered by a rewards committee.
The gravity of the problem is quickly realized in the seriousness of the rewards. But the problem of conviction is many fold and you can have a part in its solution just by being openly against intentional woodburning. The past has shown that juries would not convict a man for woods arson for the simple reason that they didn't believe it was a serious offense.
This is so true even when evidence unmistakably points to a defendant's guilt as in a case tried twice in 1955. A Fire Service pilot in an aircraft noticed a man on horseback stringing fire through the woods. After descending to a lower altitude, he made identification and notified the ground crews stationed in

(Continued on Page 37)
Duck Hawk, Falco peregrinus eustachum

The dashing duck hawk is the most majestic of the birds of prey. Its qualities of fearlessness, power, speed and beauty command widespread admiration and respect.

Its long, pointed wings and the rather long compressed tail identify the bird as one of the falcons. The body size is approximately that of the red-tailed hawk. The total length varies from 13 to 20 inches and the wingspread from 43 to 46 inches. The female averages considerably larger in size than the male. The bold head pattern and the heavily barred underparts are very similar to the markings of the closely related Peregrine of Europe and parts of Asia. As a matter of fact, the duck hawk is often called Peregrine in this country.

The duck hawk is primarily a bird of prey, preying on a great variety of species ranging from small warblers to birds the size of ducks and herons. The usual method of hunting is to attain a position above and slightly behind the intended victim. The hawk then pitches into a dive, driving downward at a steep angle and striking the bird with folded talons. At an estimated speed of between 150 to 200 miles an hour, the blow from the falcon's "fist" kills outright, or at least puts the prey effectively out of action. Small mammals and insects make up a small portion of the duck hawk's diet.

Although the species is a winter resident throughout the state, it is nowhere seen in any great numbers.

Pigeon Hawk, Falco columbarius columbarius

The dashing little Pigeon Hawk is another of the high spirited falcons. Its appearance, both in the air as well as on the perch, is very similar to that of a pigeon. This fact, rather than any special inclination to prey on pigeons is the reason for its common name. The Pigeon Hawk is sometimes known by that name in this country. It is another commonly used name by hunters, recognizing the status of this small counterpart of the Duck Hawk.

An indication of its speed and skill in the air is the fact that birds, such as swallows and bats, noted for their speed, are not uncommonly outdistanced by the Pigeon Hawk. Small hawks up to the size of meadowlarks and large insects are slain, and at times the pigeon hawk attacks an insect in the air, catching it on the wing. The pigeon hawk is a little favorite food but many, if the weather is fair, will hunt small birds and butterflies and are often seen taken. The boldly barred tail tipped with dark brown and white feathers makes it a bird to be respected. Its flight is so direct that it is easily identified. The bird has a short rounded tail and its color is brownish. It can be seen in the wild in any part of the state.
HUNTING AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

(Continued from Page 5)

possibly 25,000 years ago. There are several cases of
recorded human-made artifacts being found in the
association with the remains of long-extinct animals.
There is one report of an arrowhead being found
bedded in the skull of a mastodon.

The effect these early hunters exerted on the
existence for the Ice Age mammals can only be
guessed at. Did the first Floridians kill them with
their spears and traps? Did they ruin their feeding
grounds by fire and axes?

Man's progress today if often the equivalent of de-
struction for wildlife. This could have been true 20,000
years ago.

Florida with lions and tigers, elephants and rhino
peccaries and tapirs! Hunting ain't what it used to
be.

MAD FOR SHAD

(Continued from Page 2)

about 3:00 P.M. the shad went to
rent again. We decided to head for
the launching point up the river.
On the way we took pictures of our
successful day and the total take
ran to about 24 shad. They averaged about
half a pound with the larger ones
getting up to almost six.

Back in Orlando we set about the
business of separating the men from
the girl fish, which contained the
real loot of our catch—the roe. Less
than half of our shad were with roe
but we did have several pounds.

As the wonderful day drew to
its close I had to admit my friend had
kept his promise. And it was very
obvious why sport shad fishing has
become so phenomenally popular
in Central Florida.

This season will undoubtedly
bring more and more anglers to the
St. Johns River because the
epidemic is spreading. Certainly
shoedled fishermen and novices alike
will again be joined in the great
project of hoisting thousands of shad
out of the bottom of the river. And
why shouldn't they? The thrills are
terrific, and few wves can complain
about being a fish widow when she
brings home a favorite delicacy,
shad roe.

BORN TO BE SAGGED

(Continued from Page 13)

Carter made a nice long shot
Savage model 99 .30 caliber.

But, so far, no one has killed
Big Buck. Unsuccessful hunter, pulled down by one of
the few panthers inhabiting the Central
county, or fatal injury
at the crossing a road at night.
Big Buck will probably
be 20 years old.

An animal of the majesty and
size of Big Buck deserves a
noble death. I, personally, would like
to believe that Big Buck will
be born to be bagged.

Perhaps you'll kill him. The
current season is not yet ended...you'll have to compete against
eagles and vultures and Big Buck too.

TEY'VE GOT TO BE GOOD

(Continued from Page 26)

fattened together and a rough body
shape. Then the two pieces were
separated and each gouged out,
then purfled, cut into lines, and then
the pieces were separated and each
fattened together. Neck and head were whittled
with a penknife and fastened to the
piece with a piece of string, according with standard
ideas. The decoy was the same size as the
original with a rap-foil and painted
with a prime coat to prevent
weathering and, finally, given a
finishing coat. A feather-effect was
created by using a comb on the
front of the face before it was
entirely dry. All the paints were
usually used by the true artizans.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE

15 LB. TEST
CASTING LINE

10 LB. TEST MONO

KEY KNOT

The Key Knot
Here is one that really fills a bill
for the plug casters who want to
try braided nylon as a casting line. We
ought to be very thankful that a leader is a good
job, but just getting it tied onto the
braided nylon has always been a
more than six years although
tested captive specimen may live
to be 20 years old.

An animal of the majesty and
size of Big Buck deserves a
noble death. I, personally, would like
to believe that Big Buck will
be born to be bagged.

Perhaps you'll kill him. The
current season is not yet ended...you'll have to compete against
eagles and vultures and Big Buck too.

I can expect a slight pull with my
thumb and forefinger.

After enough loops are in place
(make them small and neat) pass
the turning end of the braided nylon
thru the loop in the mono. Now,
still holding the loops in place with
thumb and forefinger, pull the knot
up tight, working a little at a time from
both ends. Set by stretching.

If you have tied the Keys knot
properly, it will be small and neat.
It will hang straight. It's a wonderful
knot.

Reading back over the column,
it sounds complicated even to me,
but try as I might, I can't see how
I can make it simpler. Believe me,
it only sounds complicated.

These knots are really not very
hard to tie, but don't say I didn't
warn you.
If you participate in Florida's two annual broodwhites, or engage in field archery practice between the dates of the scheduled hunts, you'll find plenty of practical use for this Howard hunting arrow quiver.

Product of Howard Enterprises, 415 W. Lamar Ave., Altadena, California, the quiver is of lifetime grade black rubber construction, designed to hold arrows so that points are protected, so that held arrows cannot rattle or give off feather rustle sounds and cutting edges of broadheads.

Hung from one’s back, the quiver can be drawn from their quiver with a minimum amount of effort. The broadhead is easily exposed for movement that is not too fast. If there are no bulky snaps, Howard quivers are made of the bowmen’s standard, may be carried from the pocket, or in the case of the big arrows, a fighting belt and a shoulder strap are provided.

The Howard product is an archery equipment in one of the most utilized and popular with field archers. It has been a major contributer to the enthusiasm of field archers and has proved itself in the field.

The quiver is made in two models—described version that hangs from the user’s belt, and the special type for those who do not want to depend on the bowstring around a full 180 degrees, passage through thick brush.

Price of the standard model is $42 while the deluxe, velvet-lined style rotates a practical 180 degrees or a 360 degrees circle, if desired. This price tag includes a wide leather or not fastened with the standard (10) model.

When ordering, size, color, and any size and weight that you would like for your arrows, please be sure to include such information when ordering the standard model.

Both models come equipped with a carry bag.

An ideal Christmas gift for a bowman

I hadn't seen in years. One of these pitched dives and I was directly behind the island where we’d left the boat and I observed a large number of birds at this big raft of windmill, wildfowl. It seemed obvious to the USFWS man that we were doing a lot of thinking, yet he noted with amazement through the camera lens that nearly arriving ducks continued to plane ahead toward us, despite their daring maneuver.

A heavy drizzle had landed, hard alongside my blind. Another, coupled, struck the water right behind me with a skittering splash that was sufficient to raise upward from the surface bow, momentarily attracting more ducks. I was more fighting gamely for the surface grass and ducking only to tumble abruptly to earth over and over into the bushes at my back.

Suddenly, at my back I felt ducks coming in. One, two, three dozen . . . no, I could see them above. Suddenly, there were a half dozen. Suddenly, then more as they flew by with a great rustling whoosh and a great sound. Immediately, they changed their flight and landed, firing them, they climbed for air.

At the moment the air had been cleared of “old timers” talk—about and younger men dream about.

And then, all too soon, it was over. I saw Dick Mackey stand up and stare thoughtfully at the bright cloud of departing wildfowl, not much as he had at those fish which first had arrived out in the river.

"Well, what do you make of it, Mac?" I asked, waving toward the action as I reloaded with fresh film. "I still can’t believe I saw what I did." The big USFWS man shook his head slowly in a wondertment that had matched my own. "As nearly as we could tell those were the redheads which have been raftering up on the Cape Canaveral ocean flats. The Service just completed a survey of them a few days ago. They estimated them to be over 8,000 in number. I was standing on the other end of the deck instead of being credited in the pocket and curve of the shoulder, and suffering from recoil with each shot.

Straight shots tend to put recoil directly in line with the shooter's shoulder, for distribution over a wide area. Sticks with too much drop at heel, crooked stocks and small stocks with narrow butts, on the other hand, can be more palatable.

In your particular case, I suggest that you first make sure that you have good stock fit in both your rifle and shotgun, each weapon should fit right and feel right when you should shoulder it.

Second, substitute a rubber or neoprene recoil pad for the metal butt-plate of each gun, being certain to maintain a proper butt-plate angle and length of pull (distance from butt-plate to trigger).

Considering having a muzzle-brake installed on your rifle and a combined selective choke and compensator device on your shotgun, these will tend to dissipate recoil, but it will amount in a small way.

If you're still sensitive to recoil after taking these steps, I can only suggest that you change to a rifle caliber and shotgun gauge of lesser recoil. For example, the 300 Savage with 13-inch grain bullet would give you only 11 foot pounds of recoil, and the 16 gauge shotgun would also be very much aable to withstand, although not entirely adequate for all Florida hunting.
DUCKS AND DUNES

(Continued from Page 13)

heads in addition to a beattering of millards, pintails, ringnecks, teal, and other ducks usually considered essentially the fresh water marsh hunters' meal.

The results looked impressive; the combination of ducks and dunes had paid off in widely scattered locations along a big chunk of the Gulf Coast. The following year, that is the season of 1955-56, conditions on some of the inland marshes were such that the improved but neither of us gave them much attention. We were too wrapped up in a follow up of the previous season's beach gunning. Nor were we disappointed. Naturally, every trip was not a smashing, limit-bag success but compared with the results displayed by our fresh water marsh bound friends, we had made this effort. Some of the few cranes we introduced this unorthodox type of ducking show signs of becoming true converts. Others to whom we passed the word were too skeptical to make even a feeble stab at it, which is all right with us.

Most of the beach hunting we do involves a quickly dug pit blind and a stool of blueblacks. In any case there are days on the coast when not even the ordinarily eager bluebills will tumble to the most carefully laid set of decoys, or cock a head to the most seductive notes of the call. At such times they seem to have their own ideas about where to land, or feed, or loaf. It is then that stalking may bring the pay off.

Our method is to select a section of coastline where there are sand dunes, brush, or timber within shotgun range of the water's edge. Then, slipping up to the best vantage point, we glass the beach and close in waters with a pair of binoculars. When a bird, or flock of them, is spotted in a place where a snare is possible, we size up the situation, circle accordingly and begin the stalk. It is not what you could call a cinch method, unless you can overlook catbirds, nutes, and sandspurs, one or a combination of these well-armed hazards are sure to be encountered on practically every stalk.

It is a simple matter, in retrospect, to look back to beaches in other parts of the country and to imagine how the pit and block or the dune stalk would have paid off, if only someone would have thought of it or had stumbled upon the idea sooner. There are spots on bays, lagoons, wide open sandy-shored sloughs, as well as on the open beach itself, which are neglected by hunters but not by the hunted. I can think of a couple of dozen such spots I have visited for other purposes scattered here and there around the country. I am convinced that many of the bathing and surf fishing beaches of the country offer one of the few practically unexploited duck possibilities.

Give it a bit of thought, happen to live or to have a driving distance of coastal areas. A trip to good duck hunting grounds, made, of course, when the birds are well gathered up in your part of the country is better. The opportunities are not all in the better and minority; I know of at least one that I'm sure you would take in the fact that some stretches of beach are a lot more than just maybe spots.

Perhaps you do not think much of the idea now; I probably wouldn't neither. Two or three years ago I didn't think of going fishing one season, when we should have been duck hunting. Now the pair of us is more than ever impressed by the fact that traditional methods and places are not always best in every situation. We know now there is a hunting season payoff to be gained along what used to appear mere a strip of sand and water if interest only to bathers in the summer or to surf casters in the fall and spring.

Should you happen to be hunting in the right situation it may be for after looking into this deal you will get so that the approach of fall never brings the right looking into this deal you will get so that the approach of fall never brings the thinking, as it does us, to think of ducks and dunes.

AJAX, FLORIDA

(Continued from Page 27)

Well, you must have done your part, Mister Editor, because about a week later the bait arrived but not until I had been to the post office every day together with a delegation of eager fishermen and had met every train coming into Ajax. By the time the package arrived the following Saturday, the entourage accompanying me to the post office and to the mail trains looked for all the world like Cocoy's army getting ready for an encampment.

Finally the important parcel arrived at Ajax. It was hurriedly opened and the baits given to the contractor and a number of the original dozen were dispensed among the excited mob. We all went our respective ways.

The following Monday we gathered as usual at my store and took stock. Seven different fishermen had used the Swamp-crat in seven different ponds. Not one had landed a fish. You would think, Mister Editor, that there would have been considerable discouragement in an organization like this but such was not the case. "Did anybody catch anything?" I asked. "Oh yes," said the contractor, "I caught three or four on a new bait called the Purple Pop."

Respectfully,
Plato Winter,
Storekeeper

FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S SCRAPBOOK

1. Florida Ducks Drop Their Antlers Some Time During February, March, or April.

2. About Two Weeks After Shedding Of His Antlers, Duck Begins To Gain Weight For Upcoming Soft Velvet Growing.

3. By Late August Or September Antlers Are Nearly Full Grown. But Still Are Soft And In Velvet.

4. One Of The Most Remarkable Phenomena In Nature Is The Annual Shedding And Regrowth Of Antlers By The Buck. White-Tailed Deer - These Drawings Show The Various Stages Of Development Of The Antlers At Different Times Throughout The Year. A Young Buck Born In April Will Have One Inch Long, Velvet Covered Antlers During His First Winter. At About 1 1/2 Years Of Age He Will Have Spoke Antlers. 5 To 6 Inches Long, Size Of Antlers From Then On Is Determined By The Health Of Each Buck And The Quality Of The Habitat In Which It Lives. At Age 4 He May Have 8 Point Antlers. Very Old Bucks Decline In Vigor May Revert To Spike Antlers.

DEER ANTLERS

Antlers now mature, the buck becomes aggressive and ready for combat, especially during the breeding season from November to April.
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