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WYOMING

Wild Life



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WYOMING

Wild Life

No Trapping Fur Bearers

1941-42

THIS season, for the second consecutive year, no "fur-bearing" animal may be trapped or hunted in any manner whatsoever in Wyoming.

The fur-bearers, as defined by law in this State, are the mink, fisher, marten, fox, and otter. All other *actual* fur-bearing animals—those classified legally as "predators" and those which are not classified at all—may be taken by hunters or trappers, except under certain extraordinary circumstances. The muskrat may be taken when it is causing damage to landowners. Quoting Section 45 of the Game Law: "provided when any muskrat . . . is doing damage it may be immediately taken and killed by the owner or employee of said owner or lessee of said property." The wolverine is unclassified and may therefore be taken anywhere at any time, except on the National Forests. On forest land, it is considered a fur-bearer, and is therefore protected in those areas.

The wolverine, of course, occurs only in forest regions, and there but rarely; and thus it must be considered entirely protected. The bear is legally a game animal, but it may be taken at any time where doing property damage. The beaver is a protected animal in all circumstances. It may not be taken except under supervision of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and then only when doing actual damage to property.

Animals classified as predators by the Wyoming Game and Fish Laws include the bobcat, lynx, wolf, mountain lion, coyote, skunk, little spotted skunk, ring-tail cat, badger, weasel, stray cat, and raccoon. These, by virtue of their designation, may be trapped anywhere on State or private grounds, without license or regulation. A special permit is required to trap predatory animals on forest lands, however. Application for such permit should be made to the nearest Deputy Game Warden. The warden will refer

the request to the supervisor of the forest concerned, and, if approved, the warden will then forward it to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for final consideration. If approved there, the permit will be sent directly to the applicant. For this reason, the amount of the permit fee (\$1) should accompany the application when it reaches the Department office.

Dogs may not be used to take any predaceous animal on the National Forests, except where the State Game Warden or one of his deputies may grant special permission for their use in pursuing mountain lion or predatory bear, *while the regular hunting season is closed.*

A fur-dealer's license (\$10) is required of every resident person or corporation who engages in the business of buying, collecting, or shipping raw furs either within the State or on an inter-State scale. The dealer's license charge is \$20 for non-residents. Dealers are required to keep daily records of all furs purchased, collected, sold, or shipped; the name and address of the consignee or purchaser, the date of the transaction, and, in the case of handled beaver pelts, the serial number of all tags attached to the pelts.

WYOMING, in closing the season on fur-bearing animals during the present troubled times, is cooperating in a far-sighted conservation policy adopted by most States of the Union for the duration of the current World War; and the closed season might possibly extend until the end of that war. For, strange as it may seem, the disruptive influences of war are

felt most keenly in the ranks of our fur-bearers.

To illustrate: The value of all furs marketed in the United States during 1939 (exclusive of those supplied by fur-farms) was estimated at \$50,000,000. This harvest supplied about half the national fur demand, and the remainder of the need was met by importations from foreign lands. The war has cut this country off from commerce with Northern Europe and Scandinavia, sources of much of our imported fur. Thus, according to these computations, demand for native furs has increased greatly, and the drain on our fur-bearing animals has increased in proportion to this demand. It is evident that if trapping were not restricted in this country during the shortage, many fur-bearing species would undoubtedly be depleted or, possibly, exterminated.

And, war or no war, there has long been need for more effective control in this division of American wild life. So little headway has been made in conserving the fur bearers that adequate and reliable information is rarely available for planning the work. It has not, therefore, been possible to obtain an exact record of the animals taken each year from our forests, streams and lakes. Every indication, however, points to a continuation of an apparent decline in numbers of fur-bearing animals, which has been in progress for a long time.

The closed fur-bearer season in Wyoming during this year and last is the first planned step in this State toward formulation of a long-range program to conserve and safeguard the depleted ranks of these valuable creatures.



REMOVING BEAVER from live trap (left), preparatory to transporting it elsewhere for stocking. Beaver in live trap (right).

The Wyoming Beaver Project

GAIL M. THOMAS

Coordinator, Wyoming Pittman-Robertson Projects

AN ATTEMPT to formulate a management plan for Wyoming beaver has given rise to a multitude of unanswered questions. The mechanics of trapping and transplanting are well enough understood, but the theories and techniques of propagation are yet nothing more than feeble shoots sprouting in the dim light of first discoveries.

Wyoming's Beaver Project, carried on under the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid to Wildlife Program, is an endeavor to arrive at solutions to these many unanswered questions, while at the same time conducting the fundamental study on a practical basis. The project thus functions primarily as a trapping and transplanting program, but the aim of studying the beaver under field conditions while the rehabilitation work is in progress is not lost sight of. Studies thus far have been completed on 24 creeks in six counties.

The rehabilitation project has occasioned some controversy concerning suitable beaver areas.

The question has arisen: "What is beaver habitat?" And the admission must be made that it has never been defined. Water and food naturally are two primary requisites, but trends are beginning to manifest themselves which indicate that the picture is much more complex than just that. Soil types, for example, may be a factor dictating the length of residence of beaver in a certain area. Survey workers also suspect that there are definite limits of gradient within which beaver habitat must be classified.

Before any transplanting activities are conducted, each stream is surveyed thoroughly, and the number of beaver present is estimated. Probably more work has been done by investigators on census taking than in any other single phase of beaver management. No method of census taking yet evolved is infallible, however, and the Beaver Survey has as one of its objectives the development of a sound and accurate method of counting beaver in their natural environment.

The Survey to date has approximated the number of beaver by a combination of four indicators: Feeding areas, scent heaps, resting and sunning areas, and by activity and fresh sign. In three localities, the entire populations were removed. The number of beaver taken in two cases correspond exactly with the number of feeding areas observed, while in the third instance, the number of beaver taken exceeded the number of feeding areas by one. In this case, it was assumed that one of the beaver taken was feeding with another, or, more likely, that it was a migrant. This method of population estimation should be examined more thoroughly before being accepted, but thus far it has proved to be the most reliable of any tried.

During the course of the census, observers are also noting other factors which will probably contribute to a knowledge of beaver habitat. These are soil types at the location of the dams and houses, stream-bed ingredients at pond sites, the amount and types of available forage, and animal life present—both aquatic and otherwise. It might be noted here that moose have often been seen feeding in beaver ponds. This would seem to indicate the value of the beaver as a contributor to the food supply of the moose.

An accurate card index of all data collected by the Survey is being kept, and it is expected that as this information accumulates, it will be possible to read from it a precise definition of beaver habitat.

Where concentrations of beaver are found, the excess animals are live-trapped and transplanted to

areas where beaver once thrived but are now non-existent. The animals are held during trapping operations in a cage constructed of angle iron and cyclone wire. The beaver are not transported until a number sufficient for a feasible plant has been accumulated. As the animals are taken from the trap, their sex is noted and their ears are tagged. Sex information is necessary to insure the proper ratio in planting, and it is hoped that by ear-tagging, information may be gathered in the future on beaver migrations. Old males and others that may accidentally drown in the live traps are pelted and the stomach contents preserved for use in food-habits studies.

Many ranchers, realizing the value of the beaver as a soil and water conservation engineer, have signed cooperative agreements with the Soil Conservation Service, and are requesting that beaver be planted on their places. The Survey Party is complying with these requests, where possible.

A good many barren streams on National Forest lands have been restocked by Survey workers, thus far. This often necessitates a trip of many miles by auto; and in the inaccessible areas it is often necessary to transport the animals in pack panniers by horse, or, even by man power alone. Under this system, nearly a thousand beaver have been transplanted to new areas since Wyoming's beaver-restocking program was begun (before and since the inauguration of the Pittman-Robertson Project).

The value of the project is being recognized throughout the State, and the Department is well

pleased with the cooperation it is receiving. The Game and Fish Commission hopes that with the information collected by this endeavor it can eventually place the beaver on a sustained yield basis, maintaining numbers sufficient for practical land and water management, and at the same time allowing the surplus to be harvested as an annual crop.

Ancient and Modern

Modern philosophy is but a recapitulation of the wisdom of the ages, dressed up in streamlined garb to conform to present-day conventions.

In the field of wild-life conservation and the general practices constantly urged for the protection of the resources this fact is patent. Here, for example, are a few paragraphs from a "Treatysse on Fysshing," by Dame Juliana Berner, published in 1475. Despite the quaint diction and spelling, our readers will recognize in them the principles of conservation and sporting ethics.

"... Solomon in his parables sayth that a glad spirit maketh a flourishing age that is a fayre age and a long, and since this is so, I ask this question—which be the means and causes that enduceth a man into a merry spirit? Truly to my best discretion, it is a good sport and honest games in which a man joyeth without any repentance after. . . .

"Also that ye breke no many laws in going about your sports; nor open no mens gates but that ye shut them agayn. Also ye shall not use this foresaid crafty sport for covetous sense to the increasing & sparing of your money only,

WILDLIFE is an organic resource, a product of the soil, inseparable from the land. It depends on the land for its nourishment, its protection and its very existence, and these essential requirements can be produced only through the wise use of land and water resources. Fortunately, wild life is one perishable natural resource which readily responds to sound management, and many practices which are beneficial to the soil provide the very things needed in a wild life conservation program.

Today the great need of wild life restoration is to take the results of research and pass them on to the public in a form that the average citizen can understand.—*From The Status of Wild Life in the United States, Senate Report No. 1203, 1940.*

but principally for your solace and to cause the health of your body, and specially of your soule. For wherever ye purpose to go on your sport in fishing, ye will not desire greatly many persons with you which might lette you of your game. Also ye shall not be too ravenous in taking of your said game—as too much at one tyme, which ye may lyghtly do.

"If ye do in every point as this present treatysse showeth you, as when ye have a sufficient mess, ye should covet no more at that time, also ye shall busy yourself to nourish the game in all that ye maye and to destroy all such things as be devourers of it, and all those that done after this rule shall have the blessing of god and Saynt Petyr."

—Ontario Department of Game and Fisheries Monthly Bulletin.

Wyoming's wild life resources are, for the most part, unspoiled. Let's not spoil them.

The Sage Grouse

Centrocercus urophasianus



SAGE GROUSE HEN guarding young.

THE sage chicken, sage cock, sage hen, or cock of the plains, as it is variously called, is potentially the most important of Wyoming's native upland game birds. It is sadly reduced in numbers as compared to its former abundance, but four years of closed season have done much to "bring it back." A restocking program, now in progress, also promises much toward the replenishment of Wyoming's unparalleled sagebrush habitat with this remarkable bird.

The sage hen is native to the sagebrush plains of the West. It formerly ranged from the western Canadian provinces south to cen-

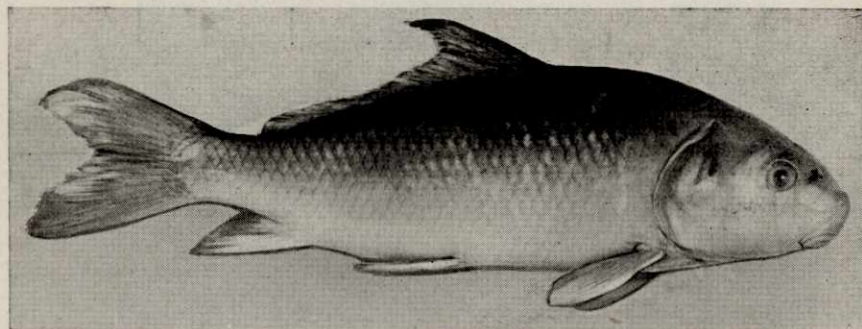
tral California and northern New Mexico; also east to western Nebraska, always in the sagebrush. At present it is rare over much of its former range, and Wyoming is fortunate in still having comparatively large numbers of these birds.* In no part of the State where *Artemesia*, the sagebrush thrives is the sage hen entirely absent.

The sage hen is the largest of the grouse and is second only to the turkey in size among the American fowl-like birds. The palatability of old chickens is very low, but young birds are highly prized for food. These do

[Continued on Page 18]

* Sage grouse were so numerous in earlier times in the vast Green River Valley that the stream was known among the Crow Indians as the Siskadee or Siskede-Azzeah, meaning Prairie Hen River, and having reference to the sage grouse rather than the prairie chicken.

Wyoming Fishes, No. 32



RIVER CARPSUCKER

Carpionodes carpio

THIS large-scaled sucker is readily distinguished from the carp which it resembles superficially by the absence of barbels or whiskers around the mouth. It is distinguished from other suckers by means of its long dorsal fin and very large scales.

The river carpsucker ranges throughout the waters of the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys and southwest to central Texas. In Wyoming it is found in the Big Horn, Platte, Belle Fourche Rivers, and in some of their tributaries. It is not abundant in any of them.

The color of the river carpsucker is most often a dull silvery, sometimes a brassy hue. It feeds upon insect larvae, crustaceans, vegetation and molluscs. Although edible and often used as food, the carpsucker is considered a food fish of low grade. It spawns during the spring. Large adults may reach a weight of three pounds.

Another species of carpsucker, *Carpionodes forbesi*, has been collected from the lower North Platte River in Wyoming. It resembles the river carpsucker in appearance and habits.

PREDATORS AND VERMIN—

One of the most difficult problems with which the Department of Fish and Game and the sportsmen have to deal with is the control of those predatory species which prey on fish and game for 24 hours a day, every day in the year. We, therefore, appeal to every sportsman of the State to help keep the vermin down—in season and out of it—so our fish and game can survive and propagate.

One of the worst of these species is the ordinary house cat that has gone "wild" and makes its living by hunting. It is equally as destructive as the real wild cat. Many times the cause of the house cat's leaving its home to roam the woods and fields is directly due to those thoughtless people who move away from their homes and abandon their cats, forcing them to live by hunting. There are thousands of these wild house cats in the coverts of the State that should be destroyed on sight as they are the worst menace to our game with which we have to deal.

—The Backlog.



WITH THE BIG GAME hunting in full swing over most of the State, word welcome to the sportsman comes this month from United States Forest Service Officials in Washington, D. C. These authorities announce that a game census covering all forest lands last winter reveal that the big game animals over the nation are staging a blitz-like comeback. Should these animals continue to increase at their present rate, these officials say, they would double their present numbers by 1951; and by the end of this century, they would outnumber the human population. While explaining that inadequate feed supplies, disease, and natural competition of the species would temper further increase, the officials pointed out that the number of big game animals in forest areas had risen from 693,000 in 1924 to 2,100,000 in 1941—more than tripling itself in 17 years. The count was taken when the animals were concentrated in winter feeding grounds, and included deer, elk, mountain lion, black bear, grizzly and Alaskan brown bear, moose, wild boar, bighorn sheep, antelope, mountain goat, and peccary.

THE HUNTING is mighty good in Wyoming at present, according to reports from the big game fields, and it is expected that several of

the national trophy records bagged by Wyoming nimrods last year will be surpassed this season. The Wyoming State Museum at Cheyenne, incidentally, is seeking outstanding Wyoming big game trophies, (heads, etc.) for display; and full credit will, of course, be given the donors. Interested sportsmen should contact Mrs. Gladys Riley, Wyoming State Librarian.

FISHING was good in Wyoming last month also, as October wound up the regular angling season for another year. Among those reporting extra-special catches was C. V. Tourtelot of Riverton, who experienced the incomparable thrill of landing a 39-inch, 13-pound Mackinaw trout with a five-and-a-half ounce rod and No. 6 black fly. Trolling Brook's Lake in Fremont County for two hours with no luck, Tourtelot decided to fly fish closer to shore. The fly hit the water, the fish hit the fly. And the hour-long battle that followed was one of the longest and most dramatic ever witnessed on the lake, according to reports. Tourtelot was assisted in his struggle by Jay Echman, also of Riverton; and it took both men a full sixty minutes to "halter break" the big one. Tourtelot finally left the boat and landed the big "mac" on the beach.

BUT the fish story of the month came from Mr. and Mrs. O. F. Rector and Mr. and Mrs. Lee Pierce of the Wertz oil field, north of Rawlins. This foursome was fishing in Lewis Lake when Rector put down his pole to bait his wife's hook. His hook dangled in the water, and while the fisherman was thus gallantly occupied, the proverbial big one came up, swallowed the hook, and made off for deeper places with hook, line, and pole. Rector resumed fishing with a borrowed pole. And eight hours later came the payoff. His new line fouled the line he had lost hours before, on a particularly long cast. He tried to reel in, but lost the retrieved line. Pierce cast out then and hooked the vagrant line solidly. The catch: Rector's lost rod, line, and hook, plus a 20-inch, three-and-one-half-pound Mackinaw trout—on the hook!

A NEW TYPE of regulation was tried successfully during the past summer, in management of an important Wyoming spawning lake—Shoshone Lake near Lander, on the Washakie National Forest. This lake, which contains about 24,000 valuable brook trout spawners, was opened for seven days to reduce the trout population by 2,000 fish. Game Wardens were on the lake during the entire time to count the number of fish taken, and when the desired reduction had been accomplished, the lake was closed again by special order.

THE WYOMING 1942 Hunting and Fishing License will be available by November 15 this year. This early issuance will permit sportsmen to continue fishing all winter, in open waters. 1941 licenses will be good for winter fishing until

January 1. The 1942 license will then be required. Ever thought of what an ideal Christmas gift a Wyoming Hunting and Fish License would make?

FOUR WYOMING Game and Fish Department officials attended the annual Crow Indian buffalo hunt on the big Crow Reservation in Montana this fall, upon special invitation of agency officials. The four—Warren Allred, range specialist for Pittman-Robertson Projects, and Deputy Game Wardens H. B. Sanderson, Howard N. Snyder, and J. A. Underwood—helped round up the lumbering beasts prior to the slaughter. Spectators report that Indian hunting methods have changed greatly during the last 50 years. At the last Crow "hunt", white men spent the day rounding up the bison, much as they would have rounded up cattle, and drove the herd to the waiting Indians, on an open flat. The Indians opened fire from trucks brought along to transport the meat to their homes, killed what they wanted, and the hunt was over.

JAMES E. GRASSE, former Wyoming Deputy Game Warden stationed at Rock Springs, is now a battery commander with the 76th Field Artillery at Fort Ord, California, but he still finds time apart from his warring activities to write us occasionally and to do an interesting article once in a while in the field where his major interests still seem to lie—the wild life of Wyoming and the inter-mountain West. One such article appears on Pages 10-14 of this magazine, and another will follow shortly.

HUNTERS, it's cheaper to buy a license than to pay a fine.

Wyoming Furs and Fur Bearers

JAMES E. GRASSE

FUR has long been a highly valued item of apparel with man. It was worn in prehistoric times because, presumably, no other satisfactory raiment was available; and its beauty, its warmth and durability have preserved its popularity until the present.

Centuries before Sewell Newhouse invented the steel trap at Oneida, New York, in 1823, the fur industry was a major world enterprise. Most of the earlier European explorers in the New World had an eye to the fur-trade, before any permanent colony had been established in this hemisphere; and this trade was the real foundation of mercantile and commercial enterprise in North America. The huge fur-trading companies brought many of the first white residents to this continent, and provided a hardy type of pioneer who moved westward constantly in the van of the colonist and planter, preparing — unconsciously — new frontiers for transplanted European civilization. Many parts of North America knew no government other than that of the fur companies for several centuries after the coming of the whites to the continent.

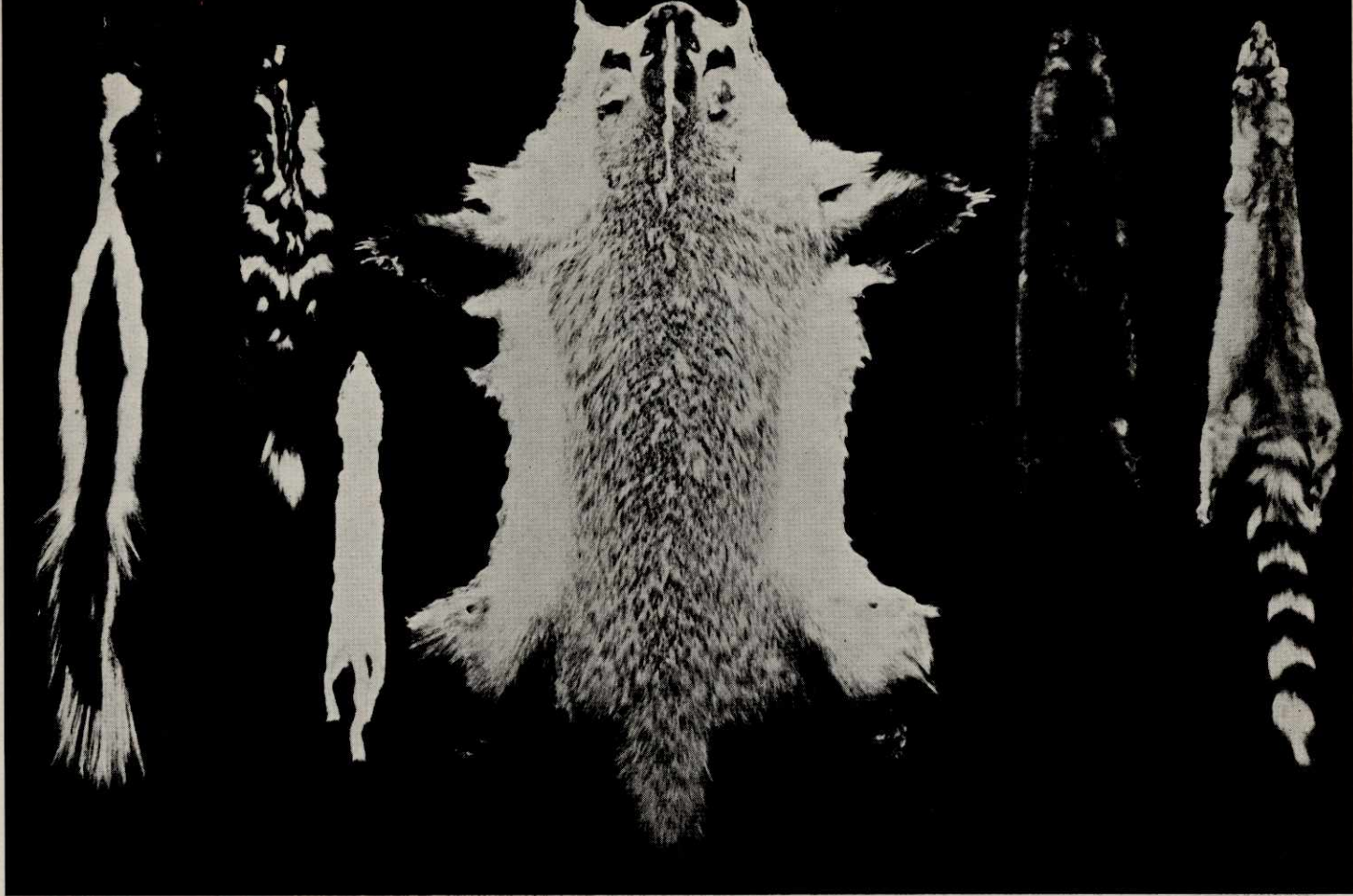
The fur industry does not now occupy so impressive a place among our industries; but this decline has been chiefly relative rather than actual. It has been surpassed in scope and importance by other industries, but within itself, the American fur industry today is probably larger and more remunerative than at any time in the past. The modern trapper must still be a hardy soul, and, contrary to

popular belief, he must be a hard and skillful worker. The more valuable fur-bearing animals have always been hard to catch; and with encroachment of civilization upon the trapping grounds, the fur-bearers have become depleted in some instances, and more difficult to catch in all.

In addition, the trapper and trader have been supplemented by numerous others within the industry: the fur-farmers who propagate and market furs as annual crops, the fur-dressers, who by skillful combing and dying can "manufacture" commercially numerous types of fur from the coats of inferior animals, such as rabbits and cats—creatures whose coats were spurned by the old-time professional traders and trappers alike. The latter, also, were limited in function to taking prime furs alone, whereas the highly-developed fur dressing techniques of today permit widespread use of unprime furs. These often are marketed to unsuspecting buyers under fictitious names.

With fur dressing and marketing techniques thus advanced, the consumer must increase his knowledge of furs proportionately, else risk being bilked by unscrupulous dealers, or dealers who themselves are ignorant of furs. It is wise, therefore, to examine bargain furs critically, before buying. In furs, as in most other products, the consumer gets pretty much what he pays for.

For example, the consumer may either give \$100 or \$300 for genuine muskrat coats today. The two coats may appear identical to the



WYOMING FURS (left to right): Skunk, little spotted skunk, weasel (ermine), badger, mink, and ring-tailed cat. The spotted skunk and ring-tailed cat are referred to erroneously in the Wyoming Game law as "civet cat."

casual observer. But very likely the fur in the two articles will differ widely. The aquatic rodents from which these coats are made may be trapped in any of our 48 States. Fur from a muskrat trapped in the South will be characterized by thick leather, short hair, and very thin fur. A northern pelt will show thin leather, long hair, and thick, warm fur. Both are "genuine muskrat."

Bargain coats may also be made from northern animals whose coats are not prime. (Since furs are grown primarily to protect their original wearer from cold, they are lighter and thinner and often of coarser texture in warm weather.) Unprime furs may also be, technically, "genuine."

Texture, depth of fur, length of hair, thickness of leather, and similar factors should be considered when buying furs in any form. The coat of the much valued chinchilla, for instance, is so soft and fine of texture that a blindfolded person may brush it lightly with his hand and never know he has touched anything. The hair of a dog, on the other hand, is very coarse and stiff, has neither beauty nor durability, and offers little comfort to the wearer.

Below, the more popular types of furs, and the animals that produce them are considered:

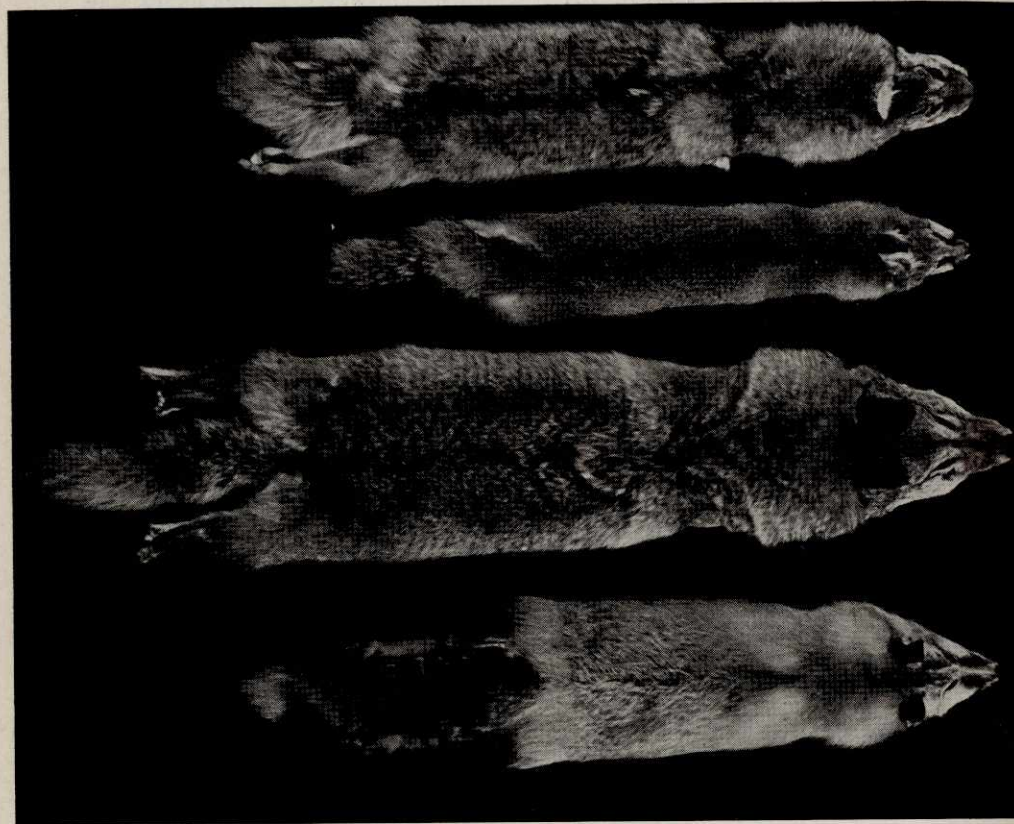
BEAVER, *Castor canadensis*: Thick heavy fur, webbed hind feet and broad flat tail fit this, one of the largest members of the rodent family (30 to 60 pounds) to a life in and about water. Early demands for beaver by the fur market once almost brought about its extermination. Now, the various States having realized the beaver's tremendous value in water conservation and flood control, it may be

taken only under extraordinary conditions. This protection has resulted in large increases in beaver populations in many localities. Unfortunately, however, this protection came too late for some areas, and these may never again know the benefits derived from this industrious engineer of the wild.

MUSKRAT, *Ondatra zibethica*: Like the beaver, the muskrat is adapted to life in and around water. It has webbed hind feet and a long laterally-compressed tail which it uses as a rudder in swimming. Its valuable coat is probably the most widely used fur on the market. When the guard hairs have been plucked, it is dyed black and becomes the highly prized "Hudson seal". Fortunately, the muskrat is very prolific and has been able thus far to withstand the heavy drain imposed on it by market demand. The female will have as many as five litters ranging from three to 12 young each, every year.

WEASEL, *Mustela striator*: Ounce for ounce, the weasel is the most vicious and blood-thirsty creature on earth. It lives chiefly upon the warm blood of its victims, and seems often to kill for the sheer joy of slaying. It does not hesitate to attack animals many times its own size, and it is known to have killed as many as 40 domestic chickens in one night. In summer, the weasel's coat is dark chocolate brown, and in winter changes to pure white, with a black tip on its tail. It is easily trapped because of its curious, inquiring nature. It is sold on the fur market as ermine.

MINK, *Mustela vison*: A large weasel of semi-aquatic habits, the mink possesses a fur which is of high quality and durability. Its



WYOMING FURS (bottom to top): Red fox, coyote, gray fox, coyote. Red and gray foxes are distinct species. Red fox is the most valuable fur-bearer. The cross and silver foxes are color phases of the red.

texture is fine and of good natural color. While the mink is capable of catching such active fish as trout, it is not as specialized for aquatic existence as is the otter.

OTTER, *Lutra canadensis*: A large, lithe member of the weasel family, the otter is admirably adapted for living in the water. Fore and hind feet are webbed, and the tail is long and muscular. It is one of the rare animals fortunate enough to have no natural enemies, except man; but since its coat is one of the most beautiful and serviceable furs available, it has

been pursued by trappers until it is now quite rare. In Wyoming, the only appreciable numbers of otter occur in Yellowstone Park and along the Snake River drainage.

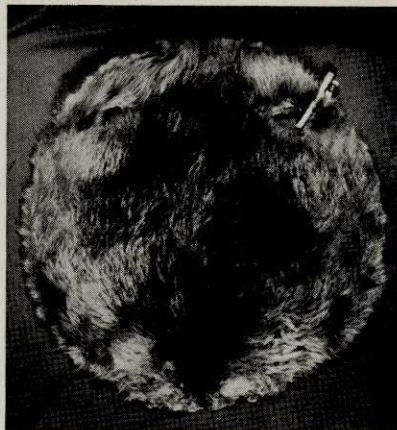
MARTEN, *Martes americana*: The arboreal member of the weasel family, the marten spends much of its time in the tree tops, where it is sufficiently agile to prey upon tree squirrels. It dislikes civilization, and has now retreated to the most remote areas of our evergreen forests. Its fur is soft and velvety, resembling the famous Russian sable.

FISHER, *Martes pennanti*: A large powerful marten with a fondness for fish, the fisher is a capable hunter in the tree tops, on the ground, or in the water; and is one of the few animals which can prey upon the porcupine with impunity. It turns the porcupine over with its nose and attacks the unprotected underside. The fur of the fisher is long and soft, a beautiful blend of grey and brown. The animal was never very numerous, and this factor together with its elusive nature makes the annual fisher kill very small and its fur very rare.

WOLVERINE, *Gulo luscus*: The wolverine is the largest member of the weasel family, and has one of the worst reputations among animals for savageness and cunning. It is a powerful, aggressive fighter, and does not shrink from combat with any of the larger carnivores. Trappers who encounter the wolverine report it as being a decided nuisance. It will follow a trapper day after day and seems to take delight in breaking up trap sets, stealing baits, and robbing the trapper's cache, and destroying animals caught in the traps. It has been known to break up the steel traps themselves. For this reason, and because of the value of its fur, the wolverine is very rare in this region today. Only two have been reported seen in Wyoming during recent years. Its fur is used chiefly as trim, and is especially prized as trimming around parka hoods because it is the one fur which will not hold moisture or frost.

AMERICAN BADGER, *Taxidea taxus*: A large, powerful animal, the badger makes its home on the prairies and plains of the western states. Its food consists generally

of rodents which it digs out of the ground. Its fur is coarse, a grayish-brown in color. It is used chiefly for trimming, for shaving brushes, and for pointing other furs. There is not much demand at present for badger fur. Formerly worth as much as \$25 on the market, badger pelts bring from \$2 to \$3 today.



BEAVER PELT, properly stretched and tagged.

STRIPED SKUNK, *Mephitis mephitis*: All members of the weasel family have musk glands capable of secreting a powerful disagreeable odor, and in this gentle art, the skunk excels. The scent of the skunk is contained in two anal glands which are discharged through a duct at will. This duct usually occupies an internal position, but it protrudes when the skunk is angered or frightened. Skunk fur is becoming increasingly popular because of its beauty and durability.

RED FOX, *Vulpes fulva*; GRAY FOX, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*: No article on fur or fur-bearing animals would be complete without—
[Continued on Page 19]



AS HAS BEEN remarked previously in this column, the professional soldiers assigned to frontier duty constituted the first important group of sportsmen-hunters in the West; and among the more enthusiastic of these warrior-nimrods was Captain Jesse A. Gove of the 10th Infantry, United States Army. Captain Gove, a typical hard-headed New Englander Yankee, made the long trek to Utah from the States with Colonel Albert Sydney Johnston's army in 1857, to quell the so-called "Mormon Rebellion." After fretting for three years because of the lack of military action in that "war of nerves", Captain Gove was recalled east at the outbreak of the war between the States, and was killed in the battle of Gaines' Mill in 1862.

Captain Gove, in good frontier-soldier fashion, sought occasionally to escape boredom in the West by taking to the chase. At Fort Laramie, on the outward march, he purchased for the hunt a puppy whose mother was "half of Sir George Gore's celebrated liver-and-white and half Major Johnson's—an elegant cross." (Sir George, the celebrated Irish peer-sportsman who wintered at Fort Laramie in 1854-55, included in his hunting entourage six wagons, 21 carts, 12 yoke of oxen, 112 horses, 14 dogs, and 40 servants.) Gove's puppy was too young to

wean, so the redoubtable captain purchased a cow to supply it milk, and trailed the cow to Utah. The only cow available had a small calf, so the captain purchased the calf as well, and presented it to his company, via the butcher—as veal.

"Bennet also has a sister of mine," Gove reported, somewhat ambiguously, "and I keep them in my tent and feed them. Ned and Mary are the pets. I think they will both be dark liver and white as they grow up. Perfect beauties."

Captain Gove was a talented raconteur, and his report of his first buffalo hunt is very interesting. Said hunt occurred along the Platte River, several days east of Fort Laramie. His account of it as well as that concerning his blue-blood dog, appears in his collected letters, published in 1928 by the New Hampshire Historical Society, under the heading, *The Utah Expedition*.

Excerpts from his letters (to his wife) follow:

THE PLATTE is a very singular river, full of islands, sandy bottom lying in drifts all along the bed of the river, and in sight much of the way at this season of low water. It is a quicksand. In crossing, you must keep moving or your feet are embedded at once; there is consequently much danger from crossing with

wagons and horses. . . The only wood we get is found on the islands. Buffalo chips are the last resort, and tonight, my dear Maria, my supper was cooked by means of buffalo chips. They resemble that of the ox or cow. . . .

When I got in camp yesterday a buffalo hunt was projected by several of the officers. It was what we all had been looking forward to with great anxiety, to see thousands of these monarchs of the plains, in herds varying from 3 to 30 thousand, yes, innumerable. We had no experienced hunters, there was the rub. Capt. Gardner and Lt. Kearney had on the Dembena march rode into two or three herds, but no great experience. Again, we had no trained horses. Everything seemed to be against us.

I had Dandy, but everybody said, "Gove, don't you ride him. I advise you not to ride him and shoot off him."

. . . Kearney on an Indian pony had run buffalo before; Armistead on his horse; Thompson on a pony had run also; six then composed the party. Each man had his revolver and some two. I had two, navy and army size, in my holsters. Now when I went out I had not the slightest intention of using my pistols. I remarked to the party that I merely wanted him, Dandy, to make the acquaintance of the "animal."

Off we started. Bets were laid in camp that we would not get any buffalo. I took along my bay horse, Charlie, with Michael on his back, with rifle on his shoulder, to learn him the "ways of the world," as I intended when I bought him that he should be learned to stand fire.

We went down the river about

2 miles; struck a trail. You have heard of buffalo trails, let me describe it. It is a mere foot path like what you will see in a country where sheep are raised. These trails are made by the buffalo coming to the river to drink, usually twice each day. These trails near fords are very frequent and run from the river back to the bluffs. These trails serve the emigrants materially. The instinct of the animal conducts it to points of the river that is fordable, and hence these trails all have a culminating point and a point across the river to correspond, as they almost invariably cross the streams as they come down to drink. We struck the point of the river by following down the trails, and Williams led off to cross the river, as we saw a large herd on the opposite bank as we came up on the march. One after another, like Indians, did we splash, dash, across to an island, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile, horses sometimes nearly swimming, other times on sand bars out of the water. . . .

Capt. Gardner led off; we followed and at last got across the villainous old river. It was getting already late in the afternoon. Buffalo could be seen a long way off, some six miles. To get them was to gallop, so we struck out . . .

Here begins and marks an era in the history of most of us; and, you naturally ask, did you ride in? Didn't I! Ere I was aware of it, I had my pistol cocked and in hand, Dandy all bounds and jumps. I had him well gathered, however. I fell a little behind in getting ready to go in, the rest of the gentlemen riding abreast with the left herd pouring into the front one and getting that under way. I kept Dandy behind Capt.

Gardner, for I knew that if he followed, he would go in. I knew it was an experiment I had undertaken contrary to the advice of almost everyone. I knew that ordinarily he would not stand fire, not from fear, for he is the bravest horse I ever saw, and has more intelligence, also, but from sheer nervousness and excitement.

We had now run our horses at full speed about a mile, and was now close upon them all in a drove, like so many cattle, running at full speed. Gardner said, "Fire a random shot and cripple one and make him fall out." I fired, Gardner also. Armistead fired and the next moment he was thrown from his horse and narrowly escaped being badly hurt. It was a wild affair; he was thrown just across my path, and I just cleared him as I dashed by. At the time I fired, I was on Gardner's right. When he fired, his horse reared, and he did not dare ride him further. I passed his front like lightning, as he remarked he saw a red streak and that was all. Williams and his mule were off a half mile, looking on. Kearney and Thompson were on my left. Now we were on them. I had Dandy gathered closely and holding him with my left hand with all my power. I had cocked my revolver again, and for a moment Dandy would waver then dash up to them, then waver again, backing and filling. I reserved my fire all this time. I was in the very midst of the herd. At last I spoke to Dandy sharply, "go on," gave him the bit, and, how shall I describe it, his boldness, his courage, his conception of his duty?

He rode at them with the fury of a mad horse. I selected my buffalo and fired. I crippled him beautifully; he fell out at once. I

cocked my pistol again and dropped out another one. I had five shots at them in passing through the herd, for Dandy carried me straight through them. I drew up to go back and kill one of my wounded buffaloes, changed pistols and dashed at the old chap. Soon he came at bay, and, believe me, he was the most villainous looking creature I ever expect to see. He was shot so badly that he could not run much. He made some desperate attempts to get on Dandy, but the little rascal would walk around him and I would wait for my chance and then shoot him. Dandy paid no more attention to my shooting than the most staunch horse in the world. I killed my buffalo, nevertheless. Rode Dandy; his fierce and desperate charge was the admiration and wonder of everyone. Such an expression as he had on during the fiercest of the chase was too splendid to be lost to art. If he could have been painted then, what a picture!

Deputy Game Warden Floyd Pipher of Torrington reports the rescue of 9,044 black bullheads from under the outlet headgate at Hawk Springs Reservoir. The Hawk Springs Irrigation Company furnished four men to help in the work; people of Hawk Springs also aided. The fish were returned to the reservoir. Fortunately good water conditions this year have made unnecessary the extensive fish rescue work of past years.

According to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials, 28 bears were killed in the State during August of this year by their predatory animal hunters, within 15 days of the big game season on bear.

THE SAGE GROUSE

(Continued from Page 6)

not have the marked sage flavor of the older birds. This fact has, in the past, worked to the detriment of the sage chicken flocks of the State, because the young birds, needed for sustaining the numbers through breeding, have been heavily slaughtered during the brief open seasons.

The sage grouse seems to depend to a great extent on its protective coloration in escaping its enemies. Its general color is grayish brown mixed with a dull yellowish white, which blends nicely with the ground and vegetation in areas inhabited by the bird. Like most of our native grouse, however, it is truly a "fool hen" in its relations to the human race; no amount of contact with man seems to make it suspicious and shy. Whole flocks can be destroyed by a single hunter. The gun-and-dog combination it cannot possibly survive through more than a very limited open season.

Bird hunters do not prize the sage grouse highly as a game bird because of its slow steady flight and lack of "field sense."

Much folklore has grown around the sage chicken in the West. One myth has it that the bird has no gizzard; another tells us that the sage chicken does not breed as other birds do. Both contentions are easily disproved. The courtship display and mating performance of this bird has attracted wide attention and the

procedure has been recorded on colored movies by various interested naturalists in recent years.

The courtship performance, like similar performances of most of the grouse, consists of a series of dances and struttings.

Courtship dances and the accompanying change in the plumage of the male begin early in the year, often before the snow begins to melt. Mating activity is often in full swing by April 1. Mating grounds are selected and all the male birds of the area collect there. On these grounds the cocks stay almost continuously until the breeding season is over; females go to and from the strutting grounds daily; usually early in the morning.

The food of the sage chicken consists mostly of sagebrush leaves and insects, in season. The red ant of Wyoming's desert



SAGE GROUSE COCK, in courting plumage.

areas is eaten readily. Where present in large numbers near man's farm crops the sage grouse may do damage. But, fortunately, while not adverse to civilization, the sage hen thrives in areas remote from human habitation.

WYOMING FURS—

(Continued from Page 14)

out reference to the fox. Considering the intense demand for fox fur, this cunning little animal has done very well to escape complete extermination, although the establishment of commercial fox farms has lessened pressure upon the wild species considerably. It is alert and wary, equipped with keen eyes, ears, and nose; its cunning is heralded by fable. Fox fur, with the exception of the gray and kit fox pelts, command good prices on the market. The color phases bring the best prices and are always in demand. Red, cross, silver, black, and silver-gray foxes are all color phases of the red fox.

The pelts of many other animals are more or less important also to the fur trade. The coyote, wolf, lynx, bobcat, raccoon, spotted skunk, cacomistle, and bear are extensively used. Even domestic cat and dog pelts are dyed and combed for use extensively as collars and trim. But, in the latter classification, the lowly rabbit is most important. It is reported that jackrabbit fur alone is combed and dyed into 60 different types of "fur"—and at least that many different names have been devised to replace the prosaic term "rabbit fur." This product is made up into beautiful wraps which, if they were as durable as those made from the more expensive furs, would be priceless.

Most "bargain furs," called anything from seal to sable, are nothing more and nothing less than rabbit.

When buying, it pays to know.

WYOMING SPORTSMEN purchased 7,510 migratory bird stamps during 1940, according to United States Fish and Wildlife Service announcements. A total of 1,257,313 stamps were purchased over the entire nation last year. Minnesota led all other States in purchases, with 118,931. Montana ranked 12th with 28,645. Nebraska was 14th, with 26,745; and Colorado was 18th, with 24,453. Wyoming ranked 35th.

Attractive jackets can be made from deer, elk or antelope skins. Tanning costs are low, from \$1.00 to \$3.00 while tailoring costs run from \$2.50 to \$12.00. The chrome process of tanning gives a smooth finish to the leather; it is not easily soiled yet is washable. Colors of gray, yellow, tan, and brown may be had in the chrome process.

Canada geese and many species of shore birds aroused the interest and the hunting instincts of Cheyenne citizens on the night of October 13. Flight after flight of high-flying migrants passed over Cheyenne. For an hour the feathered travelers filled the air with their calls.

MONTHLY ARREST REPORT FOR GAME AND FISH VIOLATIONS

September, 1941

Arrests	45
Convictions	38
Cases pending	2
Cases Dismissed	2
Cases Lost	3

Questions to the Editor

Send questions concerning Wyoming wild life to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, Cheyenne, Wyoming

Q. What is meant by the cartridge designations ".30-30", ".25-3000", ".45-70-405", etc.?—T. S., Riverton.

A. The first number is usually given in hundredths of an inch and refers to the caliber or the diameter of the bullet, in inches. The second number (when not indicating muzzle velocity) in a series, as in ".30-30", refers to the weight of black powder *formerly* used in this cartridge. It does not necessarily apply today when smokeless powder is used. In the ".25-3000", the second number refers to muzzle velocity in feet per second. The third number in a series, when given, indicates the weight of the bullet—as in ".45-70-405", the bullet would weigh 405 grains.

Q. When a beaver pelt is legally tagged in Wyoming, does the State of Wyoming have jurisdiction after it is taken out of the State?—J. P., Cheyenne.

A. No. The State has no jurisdiction over a beaver pelt once it is outside its boundaries, provided, of course, it was taken legally and bears the Wyoming beaver tag (see picture on Page 14).

Q. Is it possible to cook suckers in such a way as to eliminate the numerous tiny bones which prove so troublesome?—D. T. A., Casper.

A. Sucker bones need not be objectionable, if the fish is properly cooked. After cleaning a sucker, deep vertical cuts should

be made at half-inch intervals along each side of it. Corn meal may then be rubbed into these cuts, and the hot cooking grease will then dissolve the bones.

Q. Are the gray fox and the red fox the same animal? Are there any gray fox in Wyoming?—C. W., Cheyenne.

A. Three distinct species of fox occur in Wyoming: the red, the gray, and the kit fox. The red is by far the most common of the three, and it occurs in three color phases—red, cross, and silver. The cross fox, a color phase of the red, is often mistaken for the gray fox in Wyoming.

Q. What changes were made by the last Wyoming Legislature in the State Game, Bird, and Fish Laws?—B. R., Dubois.

A. Few Game Law changes were made by the Legislature in the 1941 Session. Boundaries were changed, however, on two State Game Preserves, and there was legislation dealing with installation of screens in irrigation ditches and with installation of fish ladders at dams. Formerly irrigators were required by law to install fish screens in their ditches. Under the present law, such screens may be installed by the State Game and Fish Department. Fish ladders were required under the old law in dams less than 50 feet high. At present, no ladders are required in dams, but they may be installed by the Game and Fish Department.

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