

## News From

By  
Charley Gillham

## WESTERN-WINCHESTER

Several of the more progressive state fish and game departments have been making a study of gun safety. Youth groups have been trained in the handling of firearms and their later progress in the field has been noted. The kids just don't cause much trouble.

Recently I saw a letter from Sweden in one of our national outdoor magazines. It stated that in a country of 7,000,000 inhabitants, 170,000 are active riflemen. Many of them are between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Every school has its own rifle club. The students compete with the teachers. There have been no accidents due to students handling their rifles carelessly. This has been reflected in the field.

I have long been an advocate of youth training in the use of firearms. In Alaska my kids shot on a school rifle team, and by telegraph or letter they competed with other schools. Girls were as proficient as the boys and one did not need be a muscle man to make the team. One year a girl was the champion.

Some states have recognized the importance of Youth training. In California a bill sponsored by the Associated Sportsmen was passed. It provides for training of young hunters seeking their first hunting license. New York state has had a similar law for several years. Maine had a bill introduced making it mandatory that students be taught the safe use of firearms. It required two hours instruction annually and this to include nomenclature, safe handling and firing of not less than 50 shots from a rifle at targets.

Why rifle training has been passed up in the high schools in the United States is a mystery to me. Most colleges have teams but the high school students have in most part been neglected in this most necessary training. Not only will hunting accidents be held to a minimum by such instruction, but equally important, we could retain our reputation as a nation of deadly riflemen. We enjoyed such an honor at one time. I think we could learn a lot from Sweden.

You have heard a lot about using retrievers to save crippled game that might otherwise have been lost. That's just part of their value. They are equally as good in finding those birds that fall in heavy cover. Because of the protective coloration of such game as hen ducks of all species and the various members of the grouse family, they are very hard to see.

Game birds shot down, even though centered in the shot pattern, seem to have the faculty of falling into the autumn foliage that conceals them almost perfectly. Here the dog is invaluable. Don't think for a minute a retriever needs to see the bird to find it. Often their noses are as keen as any of the pointing breeds.

If sportsmen only knew the value of a retriever, or any kind of a hunting dog trained to find fallen game the kennels of this country could not supply a tenth part of the dogs that would be in demand. Saving the game you knock down not only puts something in the pot but chances are better that you are leaving some for the other fellow. That person might be yourself, or, more important, it might be your own son when he grows up. Good dogs are a very important part in conservation.

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I often wonder just how many of the thirty odd million hunters and fishermen really appreciate the work that their respective state conservation departments are doing to keep game in the fields and fish in the waters. The average sportsman seems more prone to criticize his department for game and fish scarcity than he is to applaud them for the shooting and fishing that they do provide.

Gone are most of the silly rules and regulations that made up the so-called game codes of yesteryear. Today, seasons, limits and all regulations are based on facts—on knowledge gathered by competent men. The majority of them have made wildlife management their careers.

Fish and game departments have developed into the greatest sources of outdoor information that is available. They no longer deal chiefly with enforcement and the collection of fees for the taking