

USED INCREASINGLY BY N. C. SPORTSMEN

Hunting Preserves Draw Interest

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N. C. Wildlife
Resources Commission

A sport once limited primarily to royalty and the wealthy is now being enjoyed by many untitled, working Tarheels, usually for about the price of a day's wages. The income received today by the average wage earner puts him in a position to enjoy many

things that were considered to be out of his reach a generation ago. The growing number of sportsmen taking advantage of the facilities of commercial hunting preserves is a good example of this situation.

Preserve hunting has been considerably modified, as it is known in the country. The horse and lance have been replaced by the jeep and shotgun. The game found on today's preserves is well-suited to the guns and type of shooting the modern sportsman appreciates. Shooters can line up their sights on bobwhite quail, or exotic game species introduced from other continents.

Time Element
The time element receives great priority in most endeavors these days, even

hunting. The shooting preserve offers a package that is hard to beat for the man who has to squeeze his hunting in between business appointments or work schedules. The shooting is there, no worry about that. From October through March, you can count on good wing shooting every day the weather permits. Many people keep one or several bird dogs and only get to hunt a few days out of the year. Preserve shooting can provide the place to hunt, dogs, and birds to shoot, saving this type of hunter considerable time, work, and probably money. Piedmont sportsmen may spend several days time and wages on a trip to shoot waterfowl, which may or may not put something in the game bag. Right at their back door they may find equally desirable game birds, at much less expense in time and money. Most preserves have facilities for relaxing, changing clothes, refreshments, and overnight lodging can be furnished or arranged. If walking is not your long suit, a ride to the shooting fields is usually available.

Licensed by State

Preserve operators are licensed by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. The extended season is permitted if they meet requirements relating to size of preserve and number of birds available for shooting. Shooting fields are inspected and approved by the Wildlife Commission personnel, who also check the birds for disease before a permit is issued to operate the preserve.

Pen-raised bobwhite quail can be shot from October 15 to March 31, under the extended season provisions, without regard to sex or bag limits. Pen-raised wild turkeys could be shot in the same manner; however, no preserve in North Carolina offers turkey hunting to the public at present. Pheasant, chukar, and other non-native game birds are fair game from October 1-March 31.

With the exception of an occasional wild covey of quail you may find, all the birds are pen-reared. But don't let that lead you to assume they can't fly. Flying pens keep the birds in good condition. They have plenty of speed, with perhaps less stamina than wild birds. In other words, they probably can't fly as far, but this helps hold them on the preserve, and they may taste better for many people.

Systems of Charging

Most shooting preserves will have dogs capable of taking honors at field trials. It's almost worth the price of a hunt just to watch a really good dog hunt, point, and retrieve. Speaking of price, several systems of charging for hunting are being used by preserve operators. They may use a flat fee, charge for the number of birds released, or sell memberships, with members paying a fixed price for a specified number of hunts or birds. But anyway you slice it, the price revolves around the number of birds involved.

The price for a hunt will vary, depending on whether you are a member and whether you furnish your own dog. The average price for a hunt in North Carolina seems to be in the neighborhood of \$25, with the operator furnishing the dog and guide. This is based on eight quail, six chukars, or four pheasants. Extra birds beyond these numbers are usually at a lower rate.

Reports filed with the Wildlife Resources Commission show a total of 1,238 people using the facilities of shooting preserves last

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season. Most of them will go back this year and bring other people. The number of licenser preserves will probably increase by about one-third for the 1964-65 season. The Piedmont section, with its burgeoning population of landless industrial and white-collar workers, represents a great potential for commercial recreation. Most of the preserves are located near this sports-minded group, although the idea is growing in the east.

Prediction

Who can say what will be the case 20 to 50 years from now? Many prognosticators on these matters predict that much of the hunting in the year 2000 will be commercial. For the present at least, commercial preserves are filling a need—one that will certainly increase over the years.

Reservations are necessary for a hunt. A list of licensed preserves can be obtained from the N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission, Box 2919, Raleigh. Two preserves lie wholly within Moore County—The Pinehurst Hunting Preserve and the Pine Lakes Shooting Preserve, between West End and Eastwood. Numerous others are within easy driving distance of the Sandhills.

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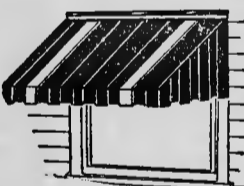
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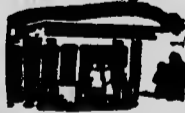
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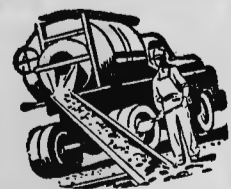
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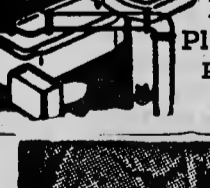
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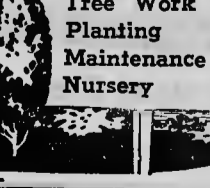
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