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Larry C. Parks Listed From ECU

GREENVILLE — Larry C. Parks of Edenton is among 37 East Carolina University seniors who have been selected for the 1970-71 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

Parks is the son of Edenton Fire Chief Luther C. Parks, 817 Cabarrus Street, and the late Mrs. Parks.

Selections for this honor are determined by the student's citizenship, leadership, academic records, contributions and service to the university and other factors.

Study Of Squirrels In Western North Carolina Is Revealing

By **JIM DEAN**

In the handsome, rolling hills and mountains of Ashe and Alleghany counties in western North Carolina, an interesting experiment has just been completed.

The idea was to find out some hard facts about gray squirrels, particularly facts which might have some bearing on future hunting seasons.

Tom Monschein, a wildlife biologist from Elkin, started the probe about two years ago. The N. C. Wildlife Resources Commission wanted to know whether an earlier season for squirrels might be a good idea.

The first step was to set up a special early season opening in mid-September in Ashe and Alleghany counties. (The

normal season in the rest of North Carolina opens in mid-October). During the 1969 and 1970 hunting seasons, Tom inspected 307 squirrels which were brought in by cooperative hunters.

The results are revealing, and it might be interesting to point out those which are most significant.

For one thing, it was found that although none of the squirrels killed in mid-September was pregnant, a whopping 46 per cent of the adult females were still nursing helpless young.

By mid-October... when the season normally begins... no adult females were pregnant, and the number still nursing dependent young squirrels had dropped to less than 10 per cent.

The implications are fairly clear. Early hunts in Ashe and Alleghany counties leave a lot of helpless young squirrels to die in the nest. That, in turn, means fewer squirrels to hunt.

Other less obvious findings show how early squirrel seasons might further decrease the squirrel population.

It is well known that squirrels have two families each year; one in the spring and another in the summer. Those squirrels unlucky enough to be born in the spring have a rough time of it. Failures in the mast crop (nuts) often limit the number of survivors.

On the other hand, the summer crop of young squir-

rels usually has plenty to eat, and far more squirrels survive to become part of a huntable adult population.

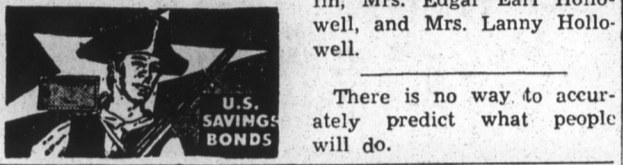
If this is so, then it makes even less sense to leave large numbers of summer-born young squirrels to die motherless in the nest. And yet, that is apparently what happens when the squirrel season is opened much earlier than mid-October.

There are several other unfavorable aspects to early squirrel seasons. One concerns the loathsome botfly larvae — called warble or "wobbles" by many hunters. The warble is a parasite which imbeds itself under the skin of the squirrel. Over 10 per cent of the squirrels checked in mid-September were infested with warbles, while only 4 per cent had warbles by mid-October.

Surprisingly, perhaps, it was also found that hunters generally had greater success hunting in October than in September. Tom points out that this probably indicates that there are more squirrels mature and ready for harvest by mid-October. He also believes that improved hunting conditions in October increase the hunter's chances of success.

The upshot, Tom feels, is that early seasons aren't best for the squirrel population. And that, of course, goes for the hunter population since "as squirrels go, so go their hunters."

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