

Eldridge Johnson Begins Work of Replenishing Supply of Quail

Big Estate on Drowning Creek Getting Beyond Experimental Stage in Development

By Bion H. Butler

An experimental piece of work is in progress at the Eldridge Johnson plantation on Drowning Creek which is of prime importance to the future of the whole Sandhill region. With the interest taken by northern visitors in the sports of the Sandhills the old attractions have been found necessary of enlargement, and new ones have grown to prominence. A striking feature has been the creation of rural estates, and especially some large ones some distance out from the villages, these big holdings attempting to establish within their areas those things that will serve to entertain their owners and such friends and guests as may come this way.

Bird shooting is an old sport in the Sandy region, with wild turkeys, quail and other birds the principal game. Because Nature picked Central North Carolina as one of its favored spots for quail a reputation has gone abroad that quail shooting in the Sandhills is of exceptional order, and so many men come this way for that purpose. Nature is a great economist, and year by year from the day of creation has maintained a certain relative equilibrium in most things. But man is a disturber, and is constantly upsetting that equilibrium. It has come to the point where quail do not multiply naturally as fast as the hunters desire to find them. So the skill and intelligence of the men who are establishing the big shooting reservations in the Sandhills has come to the help of Nature.

The Johnson farm has entered on a program of replenishing its hundreds of acres with game birds. Some time ago Mr. Johnson asked Burlington, King & Dunk, of New York, an agricultural engineering concern, to send a capable man to his big place in Moore county, and J. B. Lea, a man of wide experience and sound judgment was selected. He has been studying the conditions, and finally a few months ago plans were made to begin the breeding of quail on a considerable scale at the farm. W. A. Cook, who has been active in the management of the farm and forest and game sides of the place, receive plans for a breeding and hatching plant on the farm, and a considerable number of suitable buildings were erected, and now breeding quail are laying eggs, which are placed under bantam hens, and the creation of a flock of quail is under way. These birds when old enough to be turned loose will be separated into three classes. One class will be released in the fields and suitable forest sections of the place, one class retained for laying and breeding purposes, and some will be sold to others who want to replenish the flocks on their own premises.

The work has now begun. It is in the experimental stages of the game to some extent yet, for Mr. Cook and Mr. Lea have yet things to learn about raising and protecting the birds, but as Mr. Lea says, it is necessary to restore the flocks and necessity accomplishes nearly anything. His company specializes in the problems constantly arising in the handling of big country estates and he regards this problem as one that comes with the rest of their kind. The first question asked in tackling this job was why are quail scarce. Several answers presented themselves, but no certain reason seems to prove its case. Dry weather in summers for several years has reduced the feed supply, which probably has its influences. The big game estates are all planting grain and feed liberally in response. This started at Pinehurst some years ago, has now become a common practice. The Johnson farm is becoming a model in this respect. Field after field is now green with fine grain crops and little strips are here and there in out of the way places preparing for the crops that will feed the quail that will be raised naturally on the farm as well as those that will be reared in the brooding houses.

But men have been severe on the birds. Remorseless and ignorant war has been made on all wild life, and in many cases in foolish manner. For instance it is pretty well shown that the blue darter hawk is about the only one that catches a Bobwhite. But all kinds of hawks and owls are shot indiscriminately by men and boys, and in many places laws encourage such shooting by means of a bounty. The big hawks and owls kill snakes, the worst enemy of the quail. These hawks kill rabbits. Rabbits have been growing scarcer of late years and

46 Killed in April

North Carolina Has No Automobile Operators' License Law

More than one-third of the people killed in automobile accidents last month were pedestrians, according to the monthly report of the motor vehicle bureau of the State Department of Revenue. Of the 46 killed 16 were pedestrians, and of the 347 injured 74 were pedestrians, the report showed.

Four of those killed were children playing in the streets while 19 children were injured in this manner. Automobile collisions accounted for eight deaths and 162 injured, auto collisions with horse-drawn vehicles for one death and three injured, automobile-train collisions for one death and six injured; auto collisions with fixed objects for three deaths and 23 injured, and non-collision accidents for 17 dead and 69 injured.

Speeding was the most serious motorist violation judged by the number of resulting deaths—nine. Six died and 31 were injured from reckless driving; two died and 17 were injured from driving on the wrong side of the road; four were killed and 17 injured by drivers who lost control of their machines; two were killed and 15 injured by hit-and-run drivers, and four were killed and 36 injured by intoxicated drivers.

Ten fatal and 116 non-fatal accidents occurred within city limits, and 28 fatal and 101 non-fatal in rural sections, the exact location of the remaining five crashes which resulted in deaths not being given.

that means that the hawks and owls that kill rabbits have been driven to kill more snakes. Shooting the hawks that kill snakes encourages snakes to increase and that means more enemies of the quail. Another thing that affects the stock of quail is the extinction of the razor-back hog. He was one of the foremost snake-killers in the state. We have no more hogs running at large to pick off the snakes. But in looking for the reduction in the number of quail man must be considered. Better guns, better dogs, better powder, more of all of these, and more skill and persistence on the part of the increased number of hunters has had its part. So to preserve this foremost of game birds artificial raising is undertaken.

The plant at the Johnson plantation embraces a number of buildings, carefully enclosed in a safe wire fence that intruders of all sorts may be kept out, including dogs, cats, wild marauders, people, and anything that is likely to molest or to frighten the birds, for quail are not sociable. While human visitors to the plantation are welcome they are not permitted to go about the hatching quarters, as anything out of the ordinary frightens the birds to their detriment. In the wild, quail lay about thirty eggs. In the new surroundings, with the eggs taken from them to give to bantam hens, it is possible to increase the number laid to two or three times as many. It is hoped that 75 eggs to the laying quail will be realized in the enclosures. The experiment starts out with 30 pairs of birds. Three bantam hens are now setting, with others to follow as fast as eggs are available. It is figured that 40 per cent of the eggs should give birds, but that is not yet definitely determined. How many young ones will be realized this summer is conjecture. At about six weeks old the young birds can be put out on the range to look out for themselves, and curiously enough if their father goes along they will be well cared for, for the male bird in a covey of quail is the natural leader, and he looks after the young as well as the mother birds do.

The ambition of the management is to be able to raise the bird population to an average of one to the acre. This seems to be the standard number that experience shows can be sustained on the land, giving range, feed, safety, etc. While the Johnson plantation is leading in the work in this section the Mossigiel farm is in close touch and is working along similar lines, and Pinehurst has been for a long time trying out various projects to increase and maintain bird life. Intensive study is going on it quail production in various sections of the United States, in which work Mr. Lea is in close touch. State and Federal government are also studying the game birds from all angles, and an organization called "More Game Birds in America" is working on similar lines. So far on the Johnson place everything looks promising. More will be told about the progress of the experiment as it works along into the summer.

FIRE PAYS REPEAT CALL ON SWETT RESIDENCE

Fire was discovered in the shingles of the roof of the Webb house, Ridge street near Pennsylvania avenue, Southern Pines, now occupied by James Swett and family on Monday morning. A telephoned alarm brought out the chemical apparatus. Mr. Swett being out of town for the day, Mrs. Swett called his brother-in-law, Hugh Betterley, who responded with the Warehouse fire equipment. A second call to the fire company brought up the big pumper but the blaze was extinguished without recourse to this apparatus. Fire damaged the same house some six months ago.

MASCOTS ENTERTAIN FOR CARTHAGE SCHOOL SENIORS

Mrs. Charles Barringer and Mrs. Alexander Flinchum were joint hostesses at Carthage on Friday evening when little Betty Barringer and Kenneth Flinchum entertained the Senior class of Carthage High School, of which they are mascots, at a beautiful party given at the Women's club. The guests were met at the door by the little mascots and shown into the library. After two interesting contests Mrs. H. Lee Thomas gave a reading from Mark Twain, after which a series of games were played. In the advertising contest Miss Katherine Cagle and Elwood Snipes

were the successful contestants, while in the kitchen contest Miss Jimmie Cobber and O. T. Parks were the winners. Prizes were presented by the mascots.

Characteristic souvenirs of the

evening were given each senior by Mrs. Barringer. The special guests were: The high school faculty, Mr. and Mrs. H. Lee Thomas, Miss Janie McLeod and Mrs. Frank Hester of Charlotte, sister of Mrs. Barringer.

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