

Duck Season's Opening



A Tennessee River duck hunter. Note the green cane blind on the bow of the boat.

By DICK WOOD

The opening of the duck shooting season is a major event in the lives of over a million sportsmen. Ducks are widely distributed and popular game with all shotgun users.

Migrating ducks often light and tarry for days on ponds, sloughs and creeks, providing sport and duck dinners alike for the farmer lad with his single barrel "Long Tom" and the crank sportsman with his automatic.

Jump shooting on rivers requires considerable skill and provides more real sport than deer hunting. The usual procedure is to engage a local riverman to paddle his skiff on a float down river.

Thrills Around Bend

The start should be made on a considerable 'tide' (freshet) which keeps the ducks near the banks, and the colder the morning, the better. The hunter invariably follows the convex bank, and the skilled boatman keeps the craft hugging drooping foliage, and paddles quietly, from the stern. One or two shooters sit in the bow and bang away at ducks along the banks, within range.

This sort of hunting is far more enjoyable and sportsmanlike than sitting in a cold blind, firing into the occasional flock that drifts into a bunch of decoys.

The river duck hunter anticipates thrilling action around every bend. When the ducks come out or rise per-

pendicularly, skill is required to hit them from a moving boat. Sometimes a small bunch of ducks will be sighted far down the bank and a long stalk by boat begins. If a straggler or brace of mallards are kicked up on the way down, the hunter has to make a hasty decision on taking the bird in hand or trying for the two in the bush. It usually pays to pass up no fair shots. Sometimes ducks are not frightened by shooting beyond half a mile.

Conservation Problem

It is illegal to use an automatic shotgun of more than three shots. Since wild ducks were diminishing rapidly, something had to be done by the conservationists. I contend it is not the gun, but the man back of it, who hogs the game. My idea would be to restrict hunters in areas where ducks are abundant, such as on the marshes of Maryland, to single shot arms; the river duck hunter will seldom kill the legal limit with the five shot automatic, and the extra shots do save a lot of cripples.

The 12 gauge is almost universally accepted as the best duck bore, but the 20 makes clean kills at slightly shorter ranges and is a more sportsmanlike gun where ducks are abundant. If using a single barrel, I prefer a 30-inch full choke. If a double barrel, 28-inch, right modified, left full choke. None but the best grade duck loads should be used.



JEST A-WHITTLIN' AN' A-THINKIN'

BY PETE GETTYS

about say that the farmer ain't progressive—that he's operating small producing units wastefully, while industry, puttin' together the efforts of thousands of workers under a single roof, has swept by him and left him hopelessly in the lurch.

The man who believes these things is no closer to the farmer than the caricatures in the funny papers would make him. Those who have worked with the American farmer know that he has set a new record in the history of man in contact with the soil by the quickness and intelligence with which he has assimilated the results of invention an' scientific research, an' made the changes in his daily practice which new appliances and new methods indicated.

Bookkeeping on the farm of course ain't the exact science it is in case of many other commercial businesses—but there are some reliable cross section statistics of our country's successful farming—

But these are gross incomes—still they ain't the total gross, an' every radish pulled, every quart of milk used by the family an' its labor, every chicken an' hog butchered an' every day of housing enjoyed must be added to make a true gross.

Agriculture's more than a profession for makin' a living. It's the life of families workin' at it. There's no other vocation which requires the entire family as does the business of farming. Men who make their livin' farmin' have never prospered to the same degree that some men in other trades and professions have, even with the same or even more capital invested an' the same muscle and brains applied to their business, an' it's doubtful if they ever will.

The farmer can't control the weather, the rain, insects, disease an' other factors enterin' into the cost of production an' the price at which the product is sold, with the same degree of accuracy as the man runnin' a factory. However, for one that likes farmin' there's other compensations. There's an independence an' down right pleasure in workin' in the open an' with growin' things that only people thoroughly familiar with the farmin' business can understand.

This Summer there was a moon-vine growing' on a stump in our side yard. We sat out on the porch about dark an' looked at the buds and waited for 'em to open. As long as we watched, they didn't seem to stir, but take our eyes away for a few minutes, an' lo an' behold! there they were in full bloom just a smilin' up at you.

"Listen, Honey"—said the old Black Mammy—"Look over yonder, in de cawn-fiel.' See dem tall stalks move an' quiver? Yet there's nary a fiel'-hand near 'em. Hear dem big blades rustle? Yet ain't 'ary breath of wind to stir 'em from their sleep. Some one what comes to see sure, that our corn don' blight, that sun don' parch, nor rain don' mildew. Somebody is makin' sure that his children have corn for the winter, corn an' to spare!"

FOR ALL NIGHT EVERY NIGHT SOMEONE WALKS IN THE CORN.

Yes, some one walks in the corn—some unseen power, makes those moon-vines open.

Maybe there is and maybe there ain't somethin' that God made that's prettier 'n a Jersey heifer—but whatever it is, I ain't never saw it—and evidently there's some who don't share in this opinion for out in Kansas they had a "Beauty Bovine Contest"—open to all the breeds and not judged on the regular points—any cow—scrub or pure-bred, with sufficient "it" could enter the race, and the pickin' of winners was made strictly on the grounds of charm and beauty—artificial beauty aids, of course, were allowed, an' beauty shops did a landoffice business. Rouge, lipstick an' mascara were freely painted on, hoofs were carmined an' eyebrows penciled an' curled, bovine coiffures were baked an' frizzed into permanents that'll be the envy of the barn lot for many months." But the judges selected a registered Holstein as "Miss Bovine America," an' left out the Jersey queens.

Like the old feller who jumped a ten-rail fence—he said he had to 'cause a bear was after him. A lot of us fellers have done a lot of things durin' the last few years that we thought we couldn't, "'cause we had to—the old she-bear depression was crowdin' us." Now along comes the Dept. of Agriculture an' says when sufficient pressure of hunger an' heat is put on some species of grasshoppers, an' they can't get around fast enough a-hoppin', they can change into fliers so they can get places quicker an' the young turkeys can't catch 'em. Crown at high temperatures, an' deprived of choice green food, grasshoppers in test cages grew longer wings, got slimmer, an' took on brighter colors.

Yes sir—hard times'll evolve a lot of things—an' make necessity the mother of invention with a vengeance.

When two fellers, both apparently about equally mentally equipped, an' one seems to get along better than the other, a reason's sure to crop out sooner or later. Over in the adjoining county there's a number of good farms and good farmers—all seemin' to get along pretty good—until the drought came this Spring an' their hay crops an' pastures dried up, an' they had to go to town for hay—except one—"just like a lot of other insurance I carry, I always have an extra silo to fall back on that carries me through, an' it has paid for itself many times over this Spring."

The feller who can't afford fire insurance is the one who can't afford to be without it, an' it's the feller who thinks he can't afford an extra silo that needs it worst.

"Neighbor, this shorely must be God's country around here—walnut an' hickory nuts an' chinky pins an' wild grapes and chestnuts, and a whole wagon-load of stuff that just growed. Now, if a feller just had a yaller hound dog that'd tree ginseng, an' shary nosed razor-back hog to root it up—wouldn't he be fixed?"

It's mighty aggravating to hear some feller who doesn't know what he's talkin'

FRANK FARMER

Says ---By A. B. Bryan

The worst of all bad eggs is the non-laying hen.

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The road through the one-crop cotton farm leads to the poor house.

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Selection is the solution of successful selling.

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Splitting farm yields with bugs and plant diseases is mighty poor business.

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Home-grown feeds fed to home-grown livestock make home-grown profits.

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After all, the real basis for a better and happier rural life is greater earning capacity for farmers.

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Now, more than ever, it is apparent farmers who won't cooperate block their own progress.

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More and better family cows would mean a higher standard of health and

happiness among Southern farm people.

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The test of the scrub hog is on the meat scales, when he is weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

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A pretty stream through the farm adds usefulness to beauty when harnessed to a little home power plant.

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Club boys and girls who live up to their slogan, "Make the best better," also set a fine example to their parents.

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Yes, business before pleasure, but why not business and pleasure in a see-and-learn tour among the best farmers you can find?

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Since we learned from our agricultural college that green foods keep bodies strong and well, with needed minerals and vitamins. It is easier to get our garden work done.