

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

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SHOOTING PRESERVE ACTIVITIES
Summary Report for First Three Months of Operation
October-December, 1958
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This is a summary for the first three months of shooting preserve activities--October through December. The main activity has been with pheasants which all of the preserves are releasing and shooting; mallards are flown at 5 preserves, 3 public and 2 nonpublic. The season opened for the one preserve in the Upper Peninsula on October 1; it opened for all others on October 20. The preserves fall into the two main categories, those that are open to the public in one way or another--daily fee shooting or club membership--and those which are open to shooting only by invitation. Separate tables of this report cover each of these two types.

The preserves made a modest start in October, increased their activity in November, but unfavorable weather--cold temperatures and deep snow--discouraged hunting and the release of birds dropped off in December to the October level once again.

	Pheasants released	Pheasants shot	Per cent recovery
1959 October	2692	878	32.6
November	5270	2734	51.9
December	2638	1495	56.7

A look at the total releases for the three-month period for the various preserves indicates that prospects for a profitable season for any of the preserves are poor. Only the one preserve has gone above 1,000 birds released, this one turning out somewhat over 2,000 birds. Other total releases through December on preserves open to the public range from 135 to 760 pheasants.

Some clubs have sold memberships which have given them at least a basic income regardless of the amount of shooting, and they may approach breaking even on their investment. Certain licensees are in the favorable position of operating the preserve supplementary to a normal farming operation and thus have had a minimum of expense. It appears that some of these can write off this first year to experience with a small, if any, monetary deficit.

The recovery rate of birds has been rather good. It has increased each month and in fact the snow cover in late November and December has permitted a high recovery to bring the total rate for the three months to 54 per cent on public preserves and 44 per cent on those not open to the public. Several of the commercial preserves have brought their recovery rate right up to the maximum allowable limit of 70 per cent. Some of these could have gone beyond this percentage had they been allowed to do so.

The kill of wild birds on preserves has been relatively low. On the public preserves, of the birds shot, 6 per cent were unbanded or wild, while on the nonpublic 10.6 per cent were wild. On the latter, of the 195 wild birds shot, 48 were taken on 3 preserves in very poor pheasant range where the owners have been releasing pheasants over the years and the wild birds undoubtedly were the

result of the sparse population maintained by their constant releases. If we eliminate these, the shooting of wild birds on the nonpublic type would amount to about 8 per cent. It is of interest that on the public preserves the take of wild pheasants is equal only to 3.2 per cent of the total release of pheasants; on the nonpublic preserves this percentage is only 3.5 per cent.

Returns to the Department of bands recovered from birds recovered off preserves have totaled only 33. Preserve operators have said that they know of more banded birds being taken in their vicinity but we have no information about them. Of the 33 birds reported, 25 were shot, 5 were killed by cars, 1 by a train, 1 was found dead, and another had flown uninjured through a home window. The average distance these birds had moved from the preserve upon recovery was 1.8 miles, excluding one that was taken 28 miles distant. These recoveries would indicate a low take of preserve birds by outside hunters. An earlier opening of the season undoubtedly would result in more preserve birds ending up in the outside hunters' bags. Weather and food and cover conditions in September and early October are such as to give released pheasants an optimum chance of survival and fair numbers of the birds turned out at such times should still be available for hunters when the regular season opened.

The shooting of mallard ducks on preserves has been a rather small total operation. As the table shows, somewhat less than 2,000 birds have been shot on the 5 preserves with flighting towers. These 5 preserves had mallard flocks totaling about 6,000 prior to the opening of the shooting season.

The attitude of the operators to date is good. A great majority of them are not complaining about the regulations or administration of the Shooting Preserve Act but many are suggesting that they should have an earlier opening in order to shoot at a more favorable time of the year and thus stimulate business so that their chance for a fair profit would improve. There is some pressure for higher allowable take of birds turned out.

All licensees, with one exception, who have been operating during the present season have renewed their licenses. This was expected since re-licensing was necessary if they were to finish the first shooting season which extends into next March. The exception was a group licensed for a nonpublic preserve which lost their lease temporarily at least because the farm changed ownership. Practically all licensees have plans for continuing operation next fall although there may be one or two which will not continue at the end of the present shooting season.

To my knowledge there has been only one mild letter expressing criticism of preserves, this from a person who had heard on TV how the ducks were trained for flighting. To her mind it was not a sporting proposition.

Attachments

FNS:vd

SHOOTING PRESERVES OPEN TO PUBLIC

Summary for Oct., Nov., and Dec., 1958

Pheasants Released			All Pheasants Shot				Wild Pheasants Shot				Name
Cocks	Hens	Total	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of those released	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of total shot	
311	241	552	217	135	352	63.8	9	12	21	6.0	Allison
201	205	406	168	115	283	69.7	17	19	36	12.7	Babeck
217	63	280	177 180	17 11	194 191	60.2 68.2	18	6	24	12.4 12.6	Cohagen
1221	845	2066	547	397	944	45.7	0	0	0	0	Coller
94	75	169	68 44	44 112	112 52.8	66.3	3	0	3	2.0 2.7	Enders
149	124	273	86	64	150	54.9	0	2	2	1.3	Fayerweather
76	92	168	59	15 11	74 70	44.0 41.7	33	5	38	51.4 54.3	Ferris
83	52	135	48	17	65	48.1	0	0	0	0	Garrison
192	191	383	99	81	180	47.0	0	0	0	0	Godfrey
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Hagan
426	220	646	201 172	172 159	373 360	58.7 55.7	12	25	37	2.2 10.3	Hasson (Ward)
48	33	81	27	4	31	38.3	0	0	0	0	Lenke
383	377	760	242 256	242 242	498 498	67.1 65.2	17	22	39	7.6 7.8	Mann
526	488	1014	219	153	372	36.7	0	1	1	1.3	Metz
158	125	283	53	30	83	29.3	1	0	1	1.2	Penrod

SUMMARY TOTALS

Pheasants Released			All Pheasants Shot				Wild Pheasants Shot			
Cocks	Hens	Total	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of those released	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of total shot
3559 4085	2643 2131	6202 7216	2010	1336	3346	54.0	109	91	200	6.0
			2228	1463	3691	51.2	110	92	202	5.5

MALLARD SHOOTING ON PRESERVES Summary for Oct., Nov., and Dec., 1958

Mallards Shot			Name
Drakes	Hens	Totals	
494	408	902	Coller *
239	196	435	Enders *
33	14	47	Fayerweather *
102	98	200	Detroit Harvester **
194	156	350	Ford **
Totals	1062	872	1934

* Public
** Non-public

WCH-PUBLIC SHOOTING PRESERVES

Summary for Oct., Nov., and Dec., 1958

Pheasants Released			All Pheasants Shot				Wild Pheasants Shot				Name
Cocks	Hens	Total	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of those released	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of total shot	
97	58	155	21	31	52	33.5	1	16	17	32.7	Barker
161	92	253	56	37	93	36.8	4	12	16	17.2	Buhl
71	95	166	32	21	53	31.9	12	12	24	45.3	Corcoran
106	76	182	51	34	85	46.7	0	0	0	0	Detroit Harvester
112	109	221	66	51	117	52.9	5	10	15	12.8	Ford
43	63	106	11	1	12	11.3	0	1	1	8.3	Garside
275	25	300	52	19	71	23.7	6	16	22	31.0	Gray
86	58	144	46	32	78	54.2	0	6	6	7.7	Koopman
62	62	124	22	6	28	22.6	9	2	11	39.3	Laidlaw
157	152	309	88	65	153	49.5	1	2	3	2.0	Light
22	26	48	13	11	24	50.0	0	1	1	4.2	Lockshore Farm
54	42	96	36	10	46	47.9	1	0	1	2.2	McKinney
40	60	100	25	25	50	50.0	2	0	2	4.0	Ferry
80	55	135	23	4	27	20.0	1	1	2	7.4	Phelan
140	140	280	71	59	130	46.4	2	3	5	3.8	Ranney
502	312	814	356	187	543	66.7	6	9	15	2.8	Risk
150	130	280	49	48	97	34.6	8	14	22	22.7	Sheldon
147	126	273	98	26	124	45.4	4	16	20	16.1	Smith
52	53	105	22	14	36	34.3	3	3	6	16.7	Stiles
35	53	88	12	45	17	20.5	4	1	5	27.0	Warner

SUMMARY TOTALS

Pheasants Released			All Pheasants Shot				Wild Pheasants Shot				
Cocks	Hens	Total	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of those released	Cocks	Hens	Total	% of total shot	
2392	1787	4179	1150	607 686	1837 1836	44.8 43.9	70 69	125	195 194	10.6	