

EFFECTS OF WAR ON GAME

The experiences of World War #1 seem to have relatively little to guide us in what we can expect under conditions of the present war. The greater mechanism of the army and navy, the rationing of gasoline and tires make the situation entirely different.

Last year gasoline rationing did not go into effect until after the deer hunting season. The fact that rationing was imminent shortly after the deer hunting season probably encouraged some men to take a last fling before they settled down for the duration. It is felt, however, that the drop in hunting licenses for the fall of 1942 is not a clear indication of what we can expect for 1943 or subsequent war years. The drop in game licenses was small, averaging 8%. Small game licenses dropped from 615,334 in 1941 to 576,604 in 1942; deer licenses from 248,544 in 1941 to 218,813 in 1942; trappers licenses dropped from 25,000 in 1941 to 15,000 in 1942.

We are inclined to think that this drop was due largely to many people being too busy to go hunting, some of the younger men were in the army and some felt that it was not the proper thing to do in an emergency. Certainly the pressure to refrain from hunting trips will be greater this fall than last. The effect of taking younger men into the army can be shown from the age classes of those who purchased deer hunting licenses:

12-15 years old,	1.7 per cent
16-20 years old,	8.8 per cent
21-25 years old,	7 per cent
26-30 years old,	11.5 per cent
31-35 years old,	14 per cent
36-40 years old,	14.6 per cent
41-45 years old,	12 per cent
46-50 years old,	10.5 per cent
51-60 years old,	12.8 per cent
61-70 years old,	5.8 per cent
over 70 years old,	1.3 per cent

You will notice that there are fewer in the 21-25 and 26-30 year old groups than in the 16-20 or the 31-35 group, clearly indicating, I believe, the effect of drafting of the younger men into the armed services. This will be still greater this fall.

While the total kill of birds and mammals in general was down slightly, this apparently was due largely to a decrease in the number of hunters in the field but still more in the number of man days spent in hunting. Apparently the bag per day was higher than in 1941 but time spent was less. For example, the number of days spent in deer hunting in 1941 averaged 23.46, in 1942 averaged 16.36.

Guns and Shells - While there was some curtailment of shooting last fall due to a shortage of shells, I doubt whether there was any material decrease in the number of days spent in the field on this account. You will recall that 30-30 shells were selling as high as 50¢ apiece but there were probably enough to go around. This shortage may be still more drastic in the fall of 1943. This may not be true because there has been talk of manufacturing some shells but no final, official action has been taken to insure that shells in reasonable quantities will be available for hunting, so far as I know.

Gas and Tires - We are all familiar with the restrictions and use of gas and tires. There is every indication that considerable gas reserves have been used up and that the needs of gas for invasion purposes may likely effect Michigan. So the situation will probably be more strenuous in the future. You recall the recent discussion by Governor Kelly and Prentiss Brown for cutting down short trips by ganging up, and the failure to get extra gas for regular war workers' vacations. This will, in my opinion, be a restraining influence on those who are not so interested or those who are beginners or occasional hunters, but I doubt whether it will restrain so many of those who have the hunting bug in their blood.

Probably sentiment will be an important factor. As casualties come in and effect more and more families, the public may feel that it is unpatriotic to spend rubber and gas

on trips of this kind which require essential materials.

The interest in game as food certainly has increased but it is doubtful whether the use of game for food can justify the use of critical materials. Likewise, the use of material and time for game hunting on a sport basis can be questionable. It does not mean that there will be less use of beaver, muskrat, opossum and deer as food, items which in many cases have not been fully used in the past. We hope that the work by the Department and Michigan State College on this problem will help to insure that no good flesh is wasted.

Some people are raising the question as to whether or not law enforcement would be more difficult. It is my opinion that we need not fear proper use of any flesh which is taken under any sports program and that proper utilization and complete utilization of all carcasses and skins taken in sport should in no way jeopardize or influence the sports program or smear it by commercialism. Certainly some aspects of the law enforcement problems will be changed. For example, the springing up of thousands of Victory gardens in subdivisions where shooting is prohibited and where a good supply of pheasants find a good habitat will cause situations where owners of Victory gardens will be justified in removing the pheasants no matter what happens. Law enforcement will be necessary in order to keep the war needs and fervor from overwhelming the present game laws but at the same time the game laws must adjust to the war needs. Meat rationing and venison illustrate such a problem in the North.

We already know about the heavy rains this year and the clamor for more drains. Of course, these drains are bound to effect wildlife, particularly in Southern Michigan. Certainly there will be more and more tendency to drain eventhough it is detrimental to wildlife in some places because the food needs of the country are greater and we will need to put more of the productive lands to greater use.

On the game areas considerable timber is being harvested for the war effort. Need of oak for ship planking, which can be supplied by smaller trees, might well be left for a few years, is great. However, as far as wildlife is concerned, it will be beneficial rather than detrimental to cut earlier than the most favorable board and log

forestry program would indicate. Such trends probably will enhance wildlife rather than decrease it. It will mean, however, that perhaps some money, some overhead paid by hunters will go into war production but I believe hunters will not object to that so long as it helps the war effort. Construction and development work will continue at a standstill for the duration. All but the most necessary development work will be taboo. Even maintenance will be cut down as far as possible because shortage of labor and materials and probably because such work should be stored up for those returning after the war. Perhaps one of the most drastic effects of war on hunting will be on personnel. The personnel is being depleted rapidly. Research is practically on the shelf, the Game Farm is down to three men. For example, no deferments are asked for Game Division employees except for men who are supervising timber tracts and those who are actually bona fide farmers. Production of pheasants is at a standstill since man power is not available and it would be using materials critical to the war effort. Salaries for public employees have not kept pace with comparable jobs in defense industries, making replacements more difficult. Construction work and buying equipment is greatly reduced at this time so it may be difficult to spend the money which has been appropriated. To do so, a shift to land purchase will need to be made unless revenues drop considerably. You might think that it would be perfectly easy to shift to land purchase but because of good work and plenty of money, many people have purchased farms and other lands and will not sell them. There is the threat of inflation. A piece of land seems to be a safe place to keep money. This is especially true near the industrial cities. Any house within driving distance of an industrial area has taken on new value. So prices are up, sellers are fewer, and land acquisition will not be nearly so easy as in the past.

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