

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## THE DISTRIBUTION OF LIVE FISH

Millions of fish are annually distributed by the United States Bureau of Fisheries and the various State fish commissions, for restocking wholly or partially depleted of the species once found so abundantly in our streams. Much has been said and written relative to the conservation of our natural food resources which has aroused the public to the necessity of conserving our supply of fish before it becomes entirely extinct.

Live fish are either distributed from a hatchery, where they are reared from eggs, or from a collecting station, where they are held for a short period, after being collected from shallow pools along our large rivers. It is the purpose of the writer to give the public some idea of the care and watchfulness required of the messenger in charge of the fish, which can be best presented by following him on one or more of these trips.

Each applicant is sent a circular letter several days before his fish are to be delivered, stating they will arrive at his town within a certain number of days, and also giving him instructions as to the manner of meeting the fish, and caring for them until they are deposited in his stream. He is also sent a telegram about twenty-four hours before the messenger will pass through his town. This telegram states the exact time of his arrival at a certain depot, and the number of cans, or barrels, required for his fish.

The day for starting the trip having arrived, the applications are carefully examined to ascertain how many cans are required for each variety. The cans generally used for carrying live fish are similar to the common ten-gallon tin milk can, and are twenty-four inches high, twelve inches in diameter, with sloping shoulders, a seven-inch mouth and two drop handles. These cans are also provided with round covers or tops, having four or five small holes to admit air to the cans. However, these covers are seldom used by the messenger, except when very small fry are being transported, as some of the small fish would be thrown from the cans with the splashing of the water.

The cans are filled to the shoulders with fresh water, and the fish counted into them by using a small net. The number carried in each can varies with the size of the fish; 100 from two to three inches long, fifty from three to five inches, and twenty-five from five to six inches long being considered about the right number per can. Fifteen cans is the average number for each messenger. After the fish are put into the cans, the messenger has them hauled to the depot, where the cans are loaded on a truck ready to be placed on the train. Each messenger takes the following equipment when starting on a trip: a pocket thermometer, dipper, ice pick and a supply of ice, if the weather is warm. He also takes a siphon and bucket if the fish carried are small fry.

If he has long to wait at the depot and the weather is warm, he runs the truck into the shade and proceeds to ice up the fish by placing a small piece of ice in each can. He must know how much ice to use, for if he uses too much and it melts quickly, the temperature of the water is reduced so rapidly that it chills the fish, causing them to turn over on their sides and lie motionless on the bottom of the cans. Should he find any acting thus, he takes out the remaining ice and gets busy with his dipper. He dips the dipper into the can, filling it, raises it two or three feet above the mouth of the can and pours the water back, repeating four or five times to each can. This carries air into the water of the can, and revives the fish. This process is also followed every few minutes as long as the messenger has fish in his care, the object being to recharge the water with air, which is so essential to preserve the life of the fish, as they cannot get air at the surface of the water.

When the train arrives, the truck is run up to the side door of the baggage car and the cans put aboard. The messenger jumps into the car and assists the baggageman in placing the cans where they will be least in his way. All hands work rapidly, so as to avoid delaying the train, which is probably started by the time the last can has been put aboard. He is now started on his trip, but his work and worry are just begun. Looking over his route list, he finds that he has an applicant a few miles up the road. He first looks over all his cans to see how his fish are doing, and then picks out the two, or three cans for his first applicant, placing them near the door to avoid any delay in delivering them. Before the train reaches the station, the messenger has his head out the side door looking for a man with a barrel, tub, or some cans. The man is there with his barrel as he had been instructed, but it is full of water, which is hurriedly turned out upon the station platform, much to the dismay of ladies getting on and off the train. The cans of fish are poured into the barrel, he gives the applicant instructions to get the fish into his stream as soon as possible, and the train is started.

Sitting down on a trunk, he again examines his route list, and finds he has a direct connection to make a few miles further on. He looks at his watch and notes they are a few minutes late, then he begins to worry about the connection. If he makes this train, he will have to wait many hours for another, he will have to wait many hours for his fish that much longer, and care for his fish that much longer, perhaps without ice. Even while these thoughts have been rushing through his brain, he has

found the conductor and asked him to wire ahead to hold the train, and have a truck ready for a quick transfer of the fish from one train to another. He has all the cans in the doorway by the time the station is reached. They are placed on the truck and hurried over to the waiting train. The messenger is first on one side of the truck pushing the cans into place, and then on the other side, for he is afraid some of the cans will fall from the truck and spill the fish. The cans are loaded into the baggage car and he is safe again. He sits down to regain his breath, while the train speeds on toward his next delivery point. Soon the baggageman tells him the next stop is the place, and he again sorts out the cans he wishes and places them near the door. When the train approaches the station, he does not see any one with barrel or cans, but at the far end of the platform he sees a wagon on which is a large iron stock tank. The man holding the charging team proves to be his applicant, and the cans are carried over to the wagon, where they are poured into the tank. The train starts up, and he has to run to get his empty cans in the baggage car door, and climbs upon the rear steps of the car.

Every few minutes finds him looking over the fish, aerating the water or adding some ice if the water is warming up. Perhaps the next stop his applicant will meet him with a barrel, as instructed, but the barrel is in the wagon at the back of the depot. He helps the applicant hustle the cans to his wagon and empty them, if the conductor is kind enough to hold the train for him, otherwise he is compelled to leave the cans to be returned to some junction or original starting point. The messenger dislikes to leave any cans, since he has to keep a record of all their numbers, and often has trouble in getting them back by the time they are needed. Some applicant may meet him with a small cream can, if he has been wired to meet him with a can, or some applicant may fail to meet, in which case he delivers his fish to the remaining applicants.

The messenger always cautions his applicants to get their fish into their streams at once, for he knows that if they are left sitting in the sun without any attention, while all the people from the town and surrounding country look at them, that there will be some dead ones which will likely be reported at headquarters.

Reaching his destination, he delivers his last fish, perhaps declining an invitation to ride some two or three miles into the country to see the fine stream where the fish are to be deposited. He stores his empty cans, etc., in the baggage-room, and goes up to the hotel to clean up and eat. The return trip is generally made without much excitement or worry, since it is not so important that he make his connections or return on schedule time. Perhaps the next trip will take him to some junction point where he will have to wait half or all the night for his train, and if this is a small town, he will find it very lonely after nine o'clock, when most of the inhabitants have retired. He cannot go to a hotel and rest until his train comes, but has to stay by his fish, aerating them every few minutes, thus the long hours drag by, till the first streaks of dawn appear or he hears the welcome whistle of his train.

While the elements of uncertainty tend to keep the messenger laboring at high tension most of the time, yet there are many pleasant features about the work, which create within him a fascination for it. Many amusing incidents happen on a trip, which causes him to forget how hard his labor is, and the strain which is upon him. He always has a large crowd around him, as he cares for his fish at the railroad station, and is called upon to answer many funny questions. No industry appeals more to the general public than the propagation and distribution of fish, which is especially true of a large percentage of railroad men, from whom the messenger receives so much valuable assistance.—W. F. Hutchinson, Superintendent Illinois State Fish Hatchery.

## SHORE SHOOTING IN A GALE

The equinoctial gales were overdue, and the signs of their speedy arrival were easy to read. Moreover, the fowl were feeding greedily and clinging to their favorite pastures long after the last bit of wigeon grass was under water. When the moon had risen I sallied forth, with the result that I secured a mallard and a wigeon, while a third bird which dropped to the shot made its escape in the darkness. In the racing fleecy clouds overhead it was plain to see that wind was not far away.

Next morning the promise of weather was amply fulfilled. Before the grey light of dawn had scattered the darkness I was roused by the creaking of branches outside the window and the deep-voiced roaring of a gale. "A fine morning for duck," I murmured as I donned an old shooting suit and put a handful of cartridges into one of the waterproof pockets, an idea of my own. Finding a cartridge bag too much in the way when stalking fowl along the shore, I had the two side pockets of my jacket lined with waterproof material, a most serviceable arrangement, for no matter how sodden the garment itself—and it is as often wet as dry—one's ammunition is always in good condition, and there is no trouble caused by cartridges sticking when hastily loading.

As I sallied forth in the grey light I decide quickly where the feeding duck of the previous

night are most likely to be resting. In such a wind it would be waste of time to search the more exposed portions of the shore, but there are two or three sheltered bays with pleasant grassy banks where the wigeon often gather when the tide is full and the ooze submerged. Towards the first of these I make my way with all speed, thinking regretfully of only a week ago, when suddenly a warning "whee-oh" from the shore brings me to a halt, and on its repetition I sink gradually to the ground. The whistle is sounded two or three times in quick succession, and I know that there must be some wigeon within a hundred yards of me, probably just about where the sea and land meet. It is too dark yet to distinguish birds,



Mr. Taggart, of the Genoa Bay mill, will doubtless hereafter be a believer in the axiom, "The bigger the bait, the bigger the fish."

Rowing across from the mill to the postoffice at Cowichan Bay, he trod for salmon and hooked a twelve-pounder. Before he could bring it to gaff, it was seized by a large cod of well over thirty pounds weight, which kept its hold until dragged within reach of Mr. Taggart's gaff, who succeeded in landing both fish. The photo reproduced herewith gives an excellent idea of the relative sizes of the fish.

but the light is coming. Unslung my game bag—an encumbrance when one is stalking—I begin a careful crawl on hands and knees in the direction of the sounds. There is little cover except for the marshy hollow of a ditch and a very gentle ridge of rising ground about twenty yards above high-water mark. Having used the ditch as long as I dare, I reach firmer ground and wriggle quite flat to reach the last foot of cover. Just as I gain it the gale brings up a driving shower of mingled hail and rain, and the light is temporarily obscured. It will be well to wait until the shower passes, so, lying prone, with the hailstones dancing merrily upon my back, I wish hard for better weather. The occasional "whee-oh," now sounding pretty close at hand, is comforting.

In a few minutes the shower has exhausted itself, and the light improves rapidly. It is now time to take the final step. With weapon ready, I rise very gradually on hands and knees, to see just in the water, not thirty yards from where I have been lying, a little bunch of ten wigeon floating. They are rather scattered for a good shot. Shall I wait? But the "whee-oh" sounds in sharp alarm. My presence is suspected, and no time must be lost. Aiming quickly at a pair which are almost in line, I fire my choke-bore barrel at the centre bird, then, almost instinctively get off my right as some of the fowl spring from the water. The survivors disappear as if by magic in the dim morning light, and I jump up to see the result. Four birds down, all hit so hard that no cripple-stopping cartridge is required, and all drakes. It looks as if I had disturbed a bachelor party. Shaking the sea water off their feathers, I carry them back to the spot where I had discarded the game bag, and pack them carefully away.

This is a good beginning, and lucky, too, for I never got a chance at this particular spot before. Where next? The wind is so strong that the sound of my gun cannot have carried far. However, it may be prudent to travel windward for a time, and a mile further on I reach one of the best haunts for fowl at dawn along the whole shore. The shelter here is excellent. A thick belt of rushes allows one to creep unseen within easy reach of possible victims, and I bless the wind, which rustles through the half-withered rushes and deadens every sound. Thinking I hear the faint croak of a hen wigeon, I unslung the game bag once more and prepare for action. Just at this moment the cry of a curlew coming shorewards attracts my notice. Presently it glides just within easy range, and, holding a little in front of it, I pull the trigger and see it fall with a thud on the shore. But scarcely have I fired when I realize what a silly thing I have done. Not a hundred yards away a big bunch of

wigeon, which had been resting on the grass, rise in alarm. I think ruefully as I retrieve the curlew how much it has cost me. Surely with ordinary luck my two barrels might have accounted for at least half a dozen, whereas I have only the curlew for my trouble. It is not yet sunrise, however, and with the wind increasing in force, the chances of adding to the bag are by no means exhausted. Though I am sodden from head to foot, my cartridges are dry, and the weight of the game bag imparts a general sense of warmth. The heavier the bag the better appetite for breakfast later on! At one part of the shore there is a broad belt of reeds, which the natives cut and use for thatching. Fortunately, a considerable amount is still standing, and I use it as a screen in examining the banks between it and the sea. Nothing appears to be sheltering here, and I am on the point of turning to try elsewhere when, with a flutter and a scurry, an old mallard rises noisily and heads into the wind. My right barrel, fired in far too great a hurry, is a claim miss. The left does better, and with a splash the drake drops dead into the sea and drifts towards a convenient point where I can pick him up without adding much to the amount of moisture already carried.

Continuing my movements, I find a company of wigeon at a very open part of the shore. There is no possibility of approaching them unseen, and the light is now quite clear. The shore is a dead level, and bare. While I watch and consider the situation, unwilling to leave, yet not seeing how to improve the occasion, the sound of wheels and the sight of a cart passing along the road, which at this point skirts the shore, suggest an expedient. I know the man in charge, and he readily takes me as a temporary passenger. So far as the birds are concerned, they take no notice of the passing vehicle. Such things they see every day. But when we have got abreast of the fowl—seventy yards away at the least—I slip out of the cart on the off side and run straight towards the birds. It is an experiment, and, for a wonder, it partially succeeds. Before they take wing I have actually got within long range of the nearest, and as they rise I fire both barrels. Three birds fall out, lively cripples all, and before I have stopped, the second third has flopped a long way out of reach, and I fail to recover it. But, as it happens, the couple which I recover are both ducks, and go to keep company with the drakes in my bag. There the morning's work ends, and I turn homeward, blessing the gale which has thus befriended me.—B. B.

## A DAY AFTER WILD GEESE NEAR PEKIN

One lovely morning in late autumn, I rode out through the western gate of Pekin accompanied by my "mafoo" (native groom), carrying gun and cartridges. Seven miles away, on the vast stretches of mud and sand, which constitute the bed of the Hun River, I hoped to find the wild geese I was in search of, although I was told it was too early in the year. The plain where the geese were usually to be found was absolutely level. Not a scrap of covert existed. A stalk was an obvious impossibility. Many fruitless visits during the previous winter had taught me the lie of the land, and the tactics of the birds when disturbed. This knowledge now helped me to evolve a scheme, which I hoped to carry into successful execution.

I soon left behind me the bustling markets, teeming with native life, and the narrow, evil-smelling streets of Pekin, and cantered out into the open country. The air was cool and bracing, and, high up in the cloudless sky, flocks of pigeons with wooden whistles attached to their tails made pleasing sounds with every turn of flight. Strings of camels laden with coal from the Western Hills passed me from time to time with a graceful easy stride, the only sound being the dull clanking of the leader's bell. Their beautiful coats testified to the benefit they had derived from a summer holiday in Mongolia.

An hour or so through flag and an uninteresting country brought me to the little bridge named after the celebrated Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, and proceeding to the neighboring village, I dismounted. Here my trusted coolie, Wong, with two other natives, one of whom was armed with a spade, awaited me. Notwithstanding the discouraging accounts received before starting, I was delighted to hear from Wong that the geese had already arrived in large numbers. This was good news indeed, and made me eager to be "at em."

About a mile from the village, sure enough, I detected with my glasses numerous "gagles" of geese on the mud flats adjoining the river. Making a wide detour, I came out at a point about half a mile below them without being noticed, and proceeded to dig a pit near the river. I did not take long to dig one sufficiently deep for concealment, and the coolies were then sent off with careful directions how they were to drive the birds towards me.

The waiting was tedious, and, to make matters worse, water kept pouring into my pit. However, at last the coolies succeeded in encircling the geese, and bearing down on them from the north, soon put them up. My excitement was intense. On and on they came in a seemingly never-ending stream straight towards me. When, however, within about a hundred yards of my pit, the leader suddenly swerved to the right, all the others following suit, and for the time being my chances of a shot were over. What aroused their suspicious goodness only knows; perhaps the freshly turned mud, or perhaps in my excitement I



"The First of the Season"

**Sportsman's Calendar**  
NOVEMBER  
Trout-fishing ends November 15.  
Cock Pheasant may be shot in Cowichan Electoral District only.  
Grouse (except willow grouse in Cowichan), Quail, Ducks, Deer, Geese and Snipe-shooting open.

may have betrayed my presence. They all alighted about a mile further down, and was nothing for it but to try again. A walk across wet sand on a hot day is a very trying thing for one's temper, and I began to think I was once more engaged in the proverbial "wild goose chase."

After another wide detour, I eventually came out on the river well below them. This time my arrangements were more careful. The pit was again dug near the river, which I knew they would not cross, as there was nothing to attract them on the other side. In addition I placed my coat and those on the coolies on sticks stuck in the mud at various carefully selected spots, to compel the geese, if possible, to follow the course of the river in their flight.

Then, sending the coolies around as before, I got into the pit, beguiling the time with a few sandwiches. Once more the coolies successfully encircled the birds. I could faintly hear the noise the birds made as they got on the wing. Down they came straight for my pit. Would they turn at the last moment? was the question. This time, however, success was to reward my efforts, for the leader seeing what he imagined to be men dotted about the plain, kept close to the river. As he breasted my pit, I rose and bowled him over with a well-directed charge of AA. The remainder of the "gaggle" turned immediately, but not before I had dropped another with my left barrel. Then followed a scene of the wildest confusion. The noise the birds made was deafening. They had, in fact, been outwitted. It took some time for the leaders of the flock to restore order, and before they had reformed ranks and turned about I had managed to add yet another victim to the bag.

Rising high in the air with indignant cackling, the geese, numbering several hundreds, headed straight away towards the hills, in search of some quieter retreat, in which to recover from their rude shock. I knew that my sport was over for the day, and, getting out of my pit, picked up the slain—three splendid fellows of the "grey lag" species. Slowly returning towards the village, I was rejoined by Wong, who was delighted at my success.

As I rode into Pekin, the old city walls were lit up by a sunset such as one only sees in the East, and at the various open-air restaurants the natives were discussing the doings of the day over their evening meal. Probably none of them were more satisfied with the day than I was.—J. W. Seigne.

The lake trout is a char, not a salmon trout, having the characteristic lack of teeth on the front of the bone in the roof of the mouth, this being the most striking difference in formation between the charr trout and the salmon trout. The lake trout is a charr—a large and coarse one, to be sure, when compared with the more familiar and finer-grained speckled brook trout, but, nevertheless, a charr. If your trout has teeth on both the front and rear of the bone in the roof of the mouth it is a salmon trout; if only on the rear of the roof of the mouth it is a charr.—Field and Stream.

Come, all jolly sportsmen, who rise with the sun,  
Seeking health, peace and joy, with a dog and a gun;  
Attend to my call, and place no reliance  
On hoarders of wealth or pretenders to science;  
But with innocence blest, learn their errors to shun,  
And jocularly sport with your dog and your gun.

By his threats and his groans and his gesticulation  
Cantwell fleeces his flock to ensure their salvation,  
Whom they weakly believing 'tis needless to seek  
Why the flock is so lean and the shepherd so sleek;  
Yet for once he speaks truth, "they are lost and undone."  
So are all who'er sport with a dog and a gun.

—Old Song.