

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE SHAWNIGAN FISHING

Richard L. Pocock

Great things were expected by those anglers who frequent the Shawnigan waters from the work done by the Dominion Government in blasting out the fish ladders at the lower end of Shawnigan stream, and it seems practically certain now that their expectations are not doomed to disappointment. Last season reports came in at intervals of the catching of good-sized fish in the lake, supposedly fresh-run from the sea. Rumors are notoriously untrustworthy, and doubting critics are always numerous.

Last week I was privileged to see what leaves, no doubt in my own mind at least of the success of the work done. One of the best known anglers of the district, who has been in the habit of fishing Shawnigan for the last twenty years and more, kindly showed me the catch he had made in the lake in one day's fly-fishing, and I must confess that it came as a great surprise. I did not count the fish, there must have been eight or nine really good-sized fish, if not more, but among them was one which would by itself have made most anglers proud and satisfied with their day's work; a beautiful trout in first-class shape, evidently not many days out of the salt water, and weighing just three pounds and three-quarters. Shawnigan has gained the not very enviable reputation of late years of yielding merely catfish and very small trout, and the catching of these fine specimens is important news to all fishermen interested in the Island.

I understand that a serious movement is on foot to get permission to net the catfish out of Shawnigan lake. Those who have more knowledge of these objectionable aliens in a trout water than I ever hope to have, tell me that there is no reason why this should not be possible, and, that being the case, it is a movement which well deserves to be encouraged. Now that there is proof that the sea-run fish can get up into the lake, and are doing so now that the obstacles have been removed, those who are interested in our game fish should use every effort to help the good work along. It is no good helping the fish to get into the lake if their spawning beds and their small fry are to be at the mercy of vermin fish. Shawnigan is a lovely sheet of water, handy to town, and would be a still greater attraction to tourists and residents than it is at present if the trout-fishing in its waters were once more restored to its former excellence. I understand that systematic netting of the catfish, if carried out under proper supervision at the right time of year, even if it could never result in the complete extermination of the pests, would be effectual in keeping their numbers down sufficiently to give the trout a chance to hold their own and multiply. It has been proved often in the old land that, given a reasonably short close season, the most important thing for preserving lake fishing is to protect the spawning beds. A piece of water like Shawnigan lake would stand any amount of fair rod-fishing, if the spawning beds were protected from the catfish pest, now that the outlet to the sea has been cleared of anything that would obstruct the passage of a game fish.

I understand that a catfish will not ascend even a low fall, which would be a mere nothing to a trout, which would take it in its stride, so to speak, so that it seems that the construction of low dams at the mouths of the streams feeding the lake might help a little in providing safe spawning grounds to the trout out of the reach of the pirate cat.

THE OPENING OF THE SHOOTING SEASON

Last year admittedly there was too much delay in proclaiming the opening date of the shooting season. Sportsmen were waiting impatiently in order to make arrangements for their annual shooting holiday, and it was not until almost the last moment that we were informed when the powers that be in their wisdom had thought fit to let us loose at the game. It is to be hoped that they will see their way to arrange these matters a little more expeditiously this year. The breeding season is the best time to form an opinion as to when and what we should be allowed to shoot. It is then that it is easiest to size up the stock of birds, and sportsmen at least have been busy doing so. While out on fishing trips the blue grouse has made himself heard to us in every district, and is evidently with us in large numbers. He has practically enjoyed two closed seasons, as the number of blues shot lawfully in the last two years has been inconsiderable. There is agreement heard on every side with the suggestion that grouse-shooting at any rate should be opened in the middle of September. Blue grouse-shooting never lasts for more than a week or two, and, as the birds are enjoying a good dry nesting season, there is every reason to suppose that they will not be backward this season; so that, although they are usually not fit to shoot on September the First, there being too many easy young birds about then which are hardly strong enough on the wing for any but the pot-hunter and the lover of the easy mark, they should be quite ready for the gun by the middle of the month, and should be well able to stand the opening of the shooting season.

As for the pheasants, opinions seem to be divided. In some places they are very numerous, and the residents want to be allowed to shoot them; in others the prevailing opinion seems to be that a closed year would be bene-

ficial. There is no doubt that here on Vancouver Island the cry of the cock-pheasant is not at all a rare sound, and in the districts which I have visited lately, if for every cock which I have heard crowing in the woods there should be at a conservative estimate, then those districts should be well able to stand at least a fortnight's shooting. And by all means let us shoot off some of the old barren hens which are doing so much to deteriorate the stock.

In a country like this, where there is such an abundance of thick cover, it is a hard matter to exterminate Mr. Phasianus torquatus; he heap savvy, and, if he is a rare bird about a week or two after the shooting season has opened, he bobs up again in very fair numbers as soon as the noise of the hunter has ceased and his dog is tied up again in the kennel.

War against the vermin and against the poachers, and agitate in season and out of season for better small game protection, and there will be no need for pessimism in discussing the shooting prospects for future years on Vancouver Island.

FIRST PRINCIPLE AND A PRIZE TROUT

At the mouth of Fish creek, where it empties its icy waters into the Missoula river, but three miles east of the settlement of Rivulet, in western Montana, is a famous trout pool. Not only for the abundance of trout it has yielded is this pool celebrated, but also for the remarkable size of a few pulled from its depths from time to time. But the big ones are so wily no fisherman has ever been known to catch more than one of an exceptional size in any one morning or evening. This, of course, is but characteristic of all big trout.

On my arrival at Rivulet I heard stories of trout caught by the local anglers which, at the time, I was disinclined to believe. But I have since learned that out of the innumerable fish stories there are a few true ones, and I claim this distinction for the present one, of which I, sad to relate, am not the hero.

One evening a man came into Rivulet from Fish Creek with a bull trout weighing eight and one-half pounds. The mere sight of it set us all fish crazy. After he warmed up, and told us the story of his catch, the lucky angler hung up a ten-dollar prize for a larger fish to be taken out of the creek that season. Early the next morning my chum, Engle, and I slipped out of town, heading for the pool at the mouth of the creek. Engle had recently smashed his rod, but he was bound to fish and perforce carried a 15 cent cane pole. The bait commonly used for these big trout is the hellgramite, a many-legged bug somewhat smaller than a beetle, found under flat rocks in running water, and as Engle said he was going back to first principles, I said I would join him to the extent of turning bait-fisherman too. Secretly I wished I had the big cane pole.

On the way down the trail, I threw a stone at a chipmunk to scare it, but to my sorrow, killed it. I hung its warm little body on a ram-pike of a small dead tree. Engle promptly took it off and put it in his pocket, and when we arrived at the pool he produced a double hook and baited up with the chipmunk! I was entirely outclassed. So small and incapable did I feel, in the face of such competition, that I hadn't the heart to fish. I just watched Engle toss his bait into the water at the upper end of the pool, letting it float with the current down the centre of the pool to the ripples at the lower end. Then back through the air it came, up stream again. To reach the centre of the pool he had perched himself upon the end of a log extending out from the bank and about four feet above water. There was nothing doing.

I had gone down to the lower end of the pool looking for hellgramites, and was down on my knees turning over flat rocks in my endeavor to find some, when a terrible yell, followed by a loud splash, brought me to my feet.

Engle was sitting down in two feet of water, with both hands tightly clutching his heavy pole, which was bent in a real fish-rod curve and swaying to and fro in the most approved fashion. He yelled to me to come and take the "rod" while he got out of the water. When we had accomplished the transfer of the pole, Engle decided to let me play the big trout while he stayed out in the pool waiting for a chance to get his hands on it. The savage in him was come to the surface. I gave line or reeled it in as the fish tore up and down stream, and tried hard to remember that the "rod" was about ten times as strong as the line. On one of these runs the fish went half way down the rift at the lower end of the pool, which led me to believe it was tiring and making for the open river below. Back it came in a grand rush, and hurled itself up out of the water, shaking its head like a bass, in its effort to rid its jaws of the hooks. But Engle's double hook stayed put; in a few minutes it was an easy matter to tow the big fellow into Engle's hands. He threw it so high up the bank that it took us several minutes to find it!

We hurried to Rivulet with the prize, and when it was placed on the scales it pulled them down to a mite over ten pounds.

So nonchalantly did Engle gather in the X one might have thought he made a business of catching ten-pound trout.—Recreation.

BIG GAME FOR MR. ROOSEVELT

Having shot Africa, Mr. Roosevelt will soon be shooting Europe. In the sacred name of natural history he and Kermit have secured specimens of every African animal. They have

used every sort of rifle and every kind of bullet. They have bagged beasts of all ages and both sexes. They have skinned them and packed them and sent them home to be stuffed for the museum. Hippo and rhino and many other droll quadrupeds will moulder for generations in America, and Americans yet unborn will stare at Teddy's Trophies. It is a great service to humanity. It will link Africa to America forever. Africa has already given America the negro, her finest problem. But Mr. Roosevelt's captives are all dead. There is no risk of a rhino question or a hippo question or a warthog question. There are no rhinos in these hides.

I hope Europe will do her best to provide Mr. Roosevelt with sport. She must not be outdone by Africa. She must allow the mighty hunter to secure specimens of all her big game. It will involve some sacrifice, but posterity must be considered, and the Roosevelt Museum must have specimens of all our wild animals and beasts of prey. It would be impolite to hamper Mr. Roosevelt in his choice of victims. Let him have a free hand. It is true that we cannot offer him lions and hippo and rhino and warthogs, as we require these foreigners for our zoos; but we can let him range freely among our human curiosities. There is plenty of big game in the European jungles and forests and wildernesses. Our big game is very wild, for it is seldom hunted, and it is very wary. But some of it is very stupid, and specimens can be secured without any risk. Mounted on his good steed, Tranquility, the tender-hearted Teddy can put explosive bullets into our most interesting survivors. Some of them will die hard, but let him not be discouraged. It is our duty as hosts to see that he get some of every sport for the Museum.

I am sure that Greece would be willing to let him have one King, though Belgium, a few months ago, could have provided him with a really fierce specimen of this noble creature. It is a pity that Teddy did not arrive in time to collect Leo. He would have given him some excellent sport. But he must put up with an inferior specimen. Young Turkey will gladly give him one Sultan, slightly damaged, it is true, but nevertheless, a really remarkable example of a species now nearly extinct. Abdul would be a valuable inmate of the Museum, and I have no hesitation in asserting that he would be a very popular exhibit. He might be garished with a few Armenian bones wrapped up in, say, the Treaty of Berlin. Having bagged Abdul, the hero of San Juan might organize a diplomatist drive. The Museum would not be complete without specimen of a European Diplomat. When stuffed, he could be placed in a showcase with a set of musical instruments used by the Concert of Europe—one battleship, one cruiser, one torpedo boat, one destroyer, one submarine, and one airship. The exhibit would be quite perfect if Teddy could crown it with the skull and crossbones of Peace, and a few vultures disguised as doves.

Having brought down a Diplomat, Teddy could stalk a Politician. These curious animals are found in all parts of Europe. They are exceedingly tenacious of life, and they are not easily tracked down. They are gregarious creatures, and are usually found in herds. They are at their best during an election, for it is at that time that they are most magnificently coated with flies. At other periods their hides are generally bare and badly worn. The grandest kind of Politician is the Statesman, and I advise Mr. Roosevelt to bag at least one European Statesman either in office or preparing for it. He ought not to aim at the Head of the Heart of this animal. It would be better to keep both of these intact for the Museum, for the one is, as a rule, enormously swollen, and the other is inordinately shrivelled. The finest specimens have the largest heads and the smallest hearts.

In England Mr. Roosevelt will find a great many strange creatures who have become extinct in other parts of Europe. We have preserved our Big Game. For instance, we have an unrivaled Reserve known as the House of Lords. By a happy chance, Mr. Roosevelt comes in the nick of time to secure splendid specimens of every variety of Hereditary Legislator. He ought to lose no time in bagging one of each species, for these interesting creatures are threatened with instantaneous annihilation. Indeed, some of them are acting as decoy elephants, and are trying to lure their fellows out of their lairs, so as to save their own skins by sacrificing their more savage brethren to the huntsmen. In order to get at the wildest Peers Mr. Roosevelt will be forced to penetrate into the backwoods, where they roam at large. There are four distinct species—the Duke, the Marquis, the Earl, and the Baron—but they are all singularly ferocious. They are man-eaters, for their food consists of Liberal Bills. Sometimes they devour each other.

There are other kinds of Big Game which Teddy and Kermit ought to hunt. The Stock Exchange swarms with Bulls, Bears, and Stags, and at least one specimen of each ought to be secured for the Museum. At this moment they are in prime condition, owing to the Rubber Boom. Mr. Roosevelt ought to shoot them with half-crown Golf Balls. Road Hogs are also fairly plentiful now that the motor-ing season has commenced, but they must be stalked very carefully. They are very wily wherever Police Traps abound. Another dangerous but beautiful creature is the militant Suffragette. It is usually found near a Cabinet Minister when it is not in jail. The Scare-monger is a timid animal which dwells in Fleet Street. It is recognized by its piercing wail, but it is so easily frightened that it is very hard to catch it. It shudders at every

shadow. But the most savage animal in Great Britain is the Socialist. Mr. Roosevelt will find these creatures everywhere, for they were a majority of the voters in the recent elections. Everybody who does not agree with you is a Socialist. There are so many varieties of this prolific animal that no museum could house them all, but I hope Mr. Roosevelt will shoot them in his spare moments. Mr. Asquith, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Haldane, and Lord Morley are the chief Socialists. The most ferocious creature in this country is the Welsh Rarebit, otherwise known as Lloyd George. But we cannot spare our only specimen. Mr. Roosevelt must send a working model to the Museum. He will stagger America.—London Opinion.

RUFFED GROUSE AND WOODCOCK

Of all our upland game birds I consider the ruffed grouse the most sporting, but the woodcock, that little brown bird of the wet woodlands, runs the "partridge" very close for first place in my affections.

Both these birds are gamey in appearance, but there is something in the wild upward rush and unexpected roar of a flushed grouse that has a perfect fascination all its own.

The woodcock, perfect in coloring, and most uncertain in its habits, is a quarry worthy of any man, and I like to see one or two of them in the game-bag alongside the grouse at the end of a day's shoot.

It is a hard matter to say which sport is the best from a gunner's viewpoint, yet, personally, grouse and woodcock appeal to me irresistibly.

My own ruffed grouse shooting has been done for the most part in the unsettled and partially settled districts of Northern Ontario, where, as a rule, more grouse are killed with the rifle than the shotgun.

The average settler, at least from my own experience, is far more adept at cutting a "reed" grouse's head off with a rifle ball than killing the bird cleanly with a shotgun when on the wing. I have shot dozens of grouse with a 44-40 Winchester and quite as many, if not more, with a .22 rifle, but when out for sport pure and simple, with no idea of killing for the "pot," my weapon for choice is a hard hitting, double twenty gauge gun, and as assistant in the day's shoot, a working spaniel who knows his business and will retrieve. I know the average grouse shooter uses a steady pointer or setter, but I place reliance upon a spaniel of the working type, not too low in the leg, and not inbred from some monstrosity of the present day show types which are as a rule more fitted to follow a lady than to hustle grouse or rabbits out of the brush. A spaniel is a most companionable dog and can readily be trained to do almost anything but speak, and is equally handy on the duck marsh, the grouse covert, or when rabbit shooting in the fields and brushy pastures.

The art of killing ruffed grouse really well, especially when the cover is thick, or even where thick cover is handy for the birds to dive into, is as a rule slowly acquired, and nothing but steady practice will initiate you into the sudden and unexpected manoeuvres of this tricky game bird.

Ruffed grouse usually flush at the most unexpected moment, and unless in pretty open country, the shooting resolves itself into a series of more or less snapshots. The average shooter, in my humble opinion, misses a great many grouse through under-shooting, and also by not holding well forward on crossing birds. Grouse travel like a bullet, and seem to gain speed almost instantly as they shoot upward when first flushed.

The man who holds well forward on crossing and quarter birds will drop them neatly and well, for the shot charge reaches the head and neck, causing instantaneous death. It is better to make a clean miss or a clean kill than wound your game, and the forward policy in holding will insure you this. Incoming birds can, as a rule, be killed by holding dead onto them, though in many cases even an incoming bird, rising, especially if he has not flown far, and in a like manner a straightaway bird is always rising, and the gun should be held well forward and high, above the bird's back.

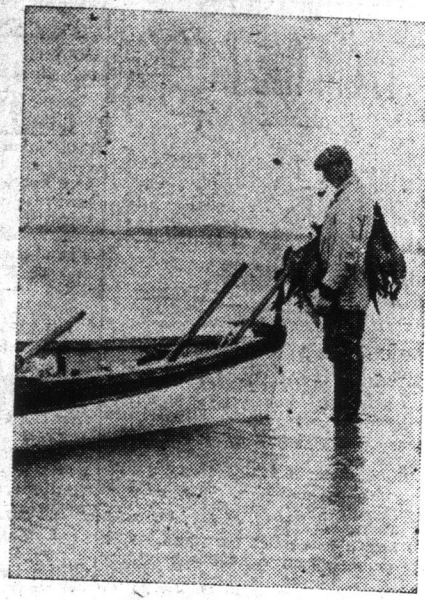
Personally, I like a light, double twenty gauge gun, full choke in one barrel and modified in the other, for grouse need quite a bit of stopping, especially when flushed at a distance in fairly open country. A twenty gauge, if properly handled, will kill grouse and duck handsily, and at the end of a long day one is not tired by the weight, as is usually the case when using a heavier twelve gauge.

It is almost impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules as to where grouse can be found, for they inhabit nearly every kind of country, from the heavy timber down to the swamps, briar patches and second growth.

Old and disused clearances, cedar swamps, beech ridges and especially along old logging roads are all more or less pretty sure finds for these birds, and the gunner soon becomes acquainted with the most likely places in his particular district after a few days' field. A rather fascinating form of shooting is when snow lies on the ground in the fall, and the birds may be tracked and flushed. Good eyesight and quick shooting are necessities for this phase of the sport, and it is needless to remark that the dog is better left at home.

Both trailing in the snow and working a dog are first rate methods for enjoying the very best of sport, and there is no greater pleasure than to cut down a fast flying grouse as he springs up with a disconcerting roar and rush of wings.

A very effective method of getting birds



Sportsman's Calendar

MAY

Trout-fishing good this month EVERYWHERE.

Steelheads still running in certain rivers.

A run of small silver salmon or cohoes comes in May.

Geese and brant may still be shot.

and also one productive of fast and difficult shooting is where two or more shooters can work through a small cover or rough ground, behind which is thick cover towards which the birds are likely to retreat.

A friend of mine, who is a particularly fine shot at driven grouse in England, often accompanied me some years ago in Northern Ontario, and we had some great shooting by driving the small covers and bunches of timber to one another.

Some good ground about a certain lake, which was surrounded by birch and poplar thickets, always kept us busy. One of us would stand in the open places while the other walked through the timber with the dogs, and any birds which passed over the waiting gunner required rather brilliant shooting to stop them, for their pace, by the time they reached the danger zone, was terrific, and, as a rule, there was none too much open space in which the shooter could "crumple them up."

Woodcock shooting, unlike sport with the grouse, calls less for woodcraft on the gunner's part, especially in summer, but shooting birds at this season is both unorthodox and cruel, so I cut it out of our consideration. It is in the fall months when the highly colored autumn leaves are falling from the trees that woodcock are at their best, and the shooting of them is sport indeed.

Moving ahead of the first frost, the birds are full feathered and in fine condition, and as they pursue their southward source they pitch at night in the dry thickets, often remaining for days in the one spot. No game bird is so uncertain in this respect as the cock, for it is always a case of "here today and gone tomorrow."

Autumn woodcock are very different birds to those lazy customers which can be flushed in summer, and when they rise with a whistling rush it takes quick shooting to cut them down in the middle of their fast twisting flight.

An October cock when flushed and missed, is likely to fly for half a mile or more before he touches ground again, so to save much trouble on the gunner's part, it is advisable to hold the gun pretty straight.

Dry thickets, amongst the oaks and maples of a southern slope, or near a spring amidst the timber, are all likely haunts of the autumn birds; and at this time of the year they will lie well before your dogs. Woodcock lie up in the thickets and close tangle of undergrowth during the hours of day, but towards evening and at twilight their dusky, ghostlike forms may be seen flitting from the cover out into the open, where they probe in the soft ground of plowed fields for the worms, which form their diet.

Once you have seen birds leaving a certain cover at dusk, you can be sure, if they stay for some days in the neighborhood, of their appearing at the identical place and following the identical air line every night. Secrete yourself along this line of flight and you will be sure of shooting, although a cock at dusk is anything but an easy mark in the bad light.

When first flushed a cock will swing swiftly above the tree tops, and it is at this precise moment that you ought to stop him, as he hangs for one short instant clearly defined against the sky. Flush him again, if missed at first, and he whirls away in a fast zigzag, corkscrew flight, which is most puzzling to the gunner.

Woodcock make a pleasing finish to a day's sport and when you walk through the last cover at evening, after a good day with the grouse, and with possibly a few rabbits in the bag, the whistling of a cock or two as they rise in the uncertain light, set your nerves tingling and almost make you over eager to cut them down as they flash over the treetops in the fading light. Uncertain though the woodcock may be, we love him for the glorious game bird that he is, and after all, what would any field sport be without its "glorious uncertainty"?—Richard Clapham in The Amateur Sportsman.

The

A story familiar to most told how an eagle once swayed a baby monkey; but before prey the older monkeys, parents, uncles and aunts members of the tribe, leapt and, holding it down, plucked it. They did their fly with, but otherwise as What the story-books never was that the eagle, when its nakedness in the woods lapped, since when it has gance; for it has lived of keys! The bird is in the now, Pithecopaga, the Mo the first of its kind that fly with, and it is a formid as it has to be, for even a not be easy prey. "I would red devils than little mo Breiman, it will be reme beamed German," who told ling the terrible tale of "B It may be that some dim sympathy with the monke look to our eyes even more is, with its un-eagle-like s adapted to quick movem branches, the ragged headd feathers on its crown, and, something more hooked tha necessary, and so keen Ma from in front it is seen to than a knife-blade. Eagles the grip of their huge talons sible not to believe that t eagle uses also that pitiless, and tearing the life out of its what purpose does the bird feathers on its head? As a tails especially adapted to at of their victims so that th when off their guard, is it conjecture that these feathe purpose and that the mor would, following its instinct waving plumes on the sto stabbed at its vital parts? T monkey-eating eagle has on science for a few years. We the American occupation of in fact, for the sequel to our whether by reason of its no most diabolical adaptation o its horrid way of life, the Pit gether the most interesting prev now in Regent's Park.

But one does not like "thunder-grasping eagle," the and of "love," eating monkey at nobler game—

when erst o she led The Roman legions o'e globe, Mankind her quarry.

In real life eagles, it is perhap say, do not attack mankind. Sometimes a baby, left expounded upon and carried off have been recorded where a upon the hillside has been a eagle, which doubtless mistook four-footed animal, as in exel as so soon as the intended o right. It may be that the onl ever killed by an eagle was whose bald head, under the ir was a stone, an eagle, we are tortoise. And, supposing the true, even that bird was more merceir, or bearded vulture, the former creature being equal been in the neighborhood, given, being the true ossifrage, the "quebranta huesos" of th carrying aloft and dropping o tortoises only but the bigger animals, in order that, when shattered by the fall, the bird marrow. Colonel Willoughby how he saw of a mule, and height of some 1500 ft. on 2000 of limestone rock whereon it s same authority, however, than has had a larger experience nests of the great birds of pre discredits the story that eagle attacks human beings who pl Once a griffon vulture showe to refuse to leave her nest on his once another griffon lying w ground resisted capture savagel often been asked," he says, great birds (eagles and vultur fight when their nest and youn As a matter of fact they never They are far too much alarme of man to attempt to attack h well for the man, because, balan ly, as he must often be who g ne at the mercy of the bird, wi the intelligence to know and act, could certainly send him to as eagles, seeing a chance at precipice are said to swoop striking it with their wing, to dashed to pieces on the rock Thomas Ward tells the same niciousness to human intruders tailed eagle of Australia; and M says that the imperial eagles i attempt to defend their nests, the female off hard-set eggs, and nest before the eyes of the pair,