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SIXTH REPORT

OF THE

PROVINCIAL GAME AND FOREST WARDEN

OF THE PROVINCE OF

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

1910.

PROVINCIAL GAME WARDEN'S OFFICE,
VANCOUVER, B. C., January 14th, 1911.

To the Honourable the Attorney-General,
Victoria, B. C.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith my Report (as required by section 37 of the "Game Act") for the year ending December 31st, 1910.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,

A. BRYAN WILLIAMS,
Provincial Game Warden.

REPORT FOR 1910.

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In making the Sixth Annual Report, the same satisfactory progress can again be submitted. Not only is it generally admitted that our game is an asset and worth protecting, but the public is at last becoming alive to the fact that it is a very big asset and that the possibilities in regard to it, in future years, are almost unlimited. As long as the world goes round there will be a great desire to obtain sport with rod, gun, or rifle; every year more people are looking for it and every year it is harder to obtain. Game is on the decrease almost everywhere, and the cost of sport becomes greater. Now, there are few places on the face of the earth where such good all-round sport can be got, combined with such a healthy climate as we have. Let us only progress as we have done and we shall undoubtedly reap great benefits. What kept the State of Maine prosperous during the great depression of some years ago? It is, or was, a State very rich in timber, and yet, at that time, the timber, like all other industries, suffered severely. It was simply the enormous amount of money put in circulation through the game that kept them going; and though this is a rich Province in many ways, and extremely prosperous, in years to come the history of Maine may be repeated here.

This year alone the game exhibit sent to Vienna and subsequently to Glasgow has attracted more attention to the Province than any exhibit or all the advertising ever done. Practically every paper, both illustrated and otherwise, in Europe has had articles on it; these papers have gone all over the world and have occupied the attention of people of every class of life. Beneficial results must follow; wealthy tourists will come, possibly only attracted by the sport, but, as is constantly happening, will see our natural resources and invest money, making openings for those in the humbler branches of life.

That we could hope for such advantages would not be possible had game protection not been taken in hand six years ago, nor can we hope for them unless we continue a similar progressive policy. Considering the fact that at any rate for two years after a start was made, owing to a variety of circumstances, but little was achieved, we can congratulate ourselves on the results. In the southern part of the Province we have brought a few scattered beaver up to a stock large enough to necessitate trapping, while in almost every district all species of big game are not only holding their own, but are increasing. The protection and fostering of our game birds is still a matter needing more attention, but infinitely more has been done in the past year than hitherto, and while there is still much to be desired, it is satisfactory to know that a good breeding season, combined with greater protection, has resulted in a large increase of several species. (The state of the game is dealt with under separate headings.)

The several suggestions and recommendations made in the Fifth Annual Report were acted upon and will be a great advantage, especially the raising of a number of pheasants for the purpose of distributing new blood. Also what will prove a great blessing is the consolidation of the "Game Act," which before, owing to its many complications, was in an almost unintelligible condition, and while it may yet be far from perfect, will certainly be more easily understood and in a fairly workable condition.

The special vote for game protection which, while not actually larger than the year before, allowed the employment of more Wardens, owing to the fact that a large sum was spent in the previous year on the purchase of a launch.

The demand for additional Deputy Game Wardens has greatly increased ; in fact, it may be said that every district in the south, as well as on the north coast, has applied for their appointment. This in itself shows what a difference of opinion there is now to what there was a few years ago. On the institution of this department, Game Wardens were by no means popular, and there was undoubtedly resentment in many places against their appointment. It is now simply a question of a short time when every district will have to have a Game Warden. The country is settling up so fast and railway construction going ahead that the demand for their services must be recognised.

The gasoline launch for the coast Warden did not give satisfaction at first, as her engines were not working well, and alterations in the hull of the boat, so as to make her capable of being conveniently handled by one man, were necessary. These alterations were made early in the summer and the manufacturers changed the engines for an entirely new set. Since then the boat has given thorough satisfaction in every respect and has been running steadily ; not only has there been a most marked improvement in the observance of the game laws on the coast, but some assistance has been furnished the Provincial police.

The following is a statement of receipts and expenditure up to date, with an estimate of expenditure for the financial year :—

EXPENDITURE ON GAME PROTECTION FROM APRIL 1ST TO DECEMBER 31ST.

Salaries :		
Permanent men	$ 8,455 00	
Temporary men	1,080 85	
		$9,535 85
Travelling expenses :		
Staff	$ 2,423 34	
Gasoline	124 04	
Horse allowance	735 00	
Purchase of bicycles, etc	148 30	
		3,430 68
Government launch :		
Insurance	$ 210 00	
Alterations, repairs, etc	365 22	
		575 22
Office :		
Rent	$ 245 00	
Telephone	47 10	
Telegrams	38 44	
Stamps	50 50	
Office-cleaning	20 00	
Incidentals (express, etc.)	63 87	
		464 91
Pheasant-rearing		202 32
		$14,208 98

ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE ON GAME PROTECTION FOR BALANCE OF FINANCIAL YEAR.

Salaries	$ 4,100 00	
Travelling expenses	850 00	
Launch	100 00	
Importation of game birds	425 00	
Incidentals	100 00	
		$ 5,575 00

Receipts for 1910.

Licence money	$8,085 00	
Fines	926 00	
Sale of Government property:		
Beaver pelts	83 85	
Spare portlights (not used in reconstruction of launch)	45 00	
		$9,139 85

To continue our present rate of progress, an increased expenditure will be necessary next year. Is there any intelligent person who will question it? With the Province in a depressed condition and no results attained from money already expended, it would be another thing, but such is not the case; never were the prospects so bright, and nobody can deny that the money already expended has not brought ample returns. Such being the case, a few thousands more added to our vote can easily be spared towards fostering what, if not already, will some day be our greatest asset.

Enforcement of the Law.

Never before in the history of the Province have the game laws been so well enforced as they have been during the past year. There have been more salaried Game Wardens, and these men have been carefully chosen for their ability to fill the position, the amateur being carefully eliminated and only men thoroughly fitted for the work employed. In addition, the Provincial police have shown renewed activity, and in most districts are working in perfect conjunction with the Game Wardens, who have also been rendered assistance in several cases even by city and municipal police. In addition, there has been a greater desire on the part of the private individual to give assistance. Still, in spite of the above facts, the number of prosecutions is considerably below that of last year. That this should be the case can only be accounted for by the fact that there is a far greater respect for the game laws by a certain number, and that the others are aware that the risk of being caught is too great to be worth taking. Of course, the laws have been frequently broken, and always will be to some extent, in spite of anything that can be done, but this is the case with all laws. It was foretold that, with an entire close season for pheasants on the Mainland and part of Vancouver Island, great difficulty would be experienced in enforcing it and numerous prosecutions would follow. As it is, the reverse has been the case; there have been but few prosecutions and the excessive tameness of the birds in most districts is the best proof that the close season has been fairly well observed. The worst offenders in this respect have been Orientals, some of whom have been trapping in the immediate vicinity of their houses, and have carried on their operations in such a way that, in spite of the vigilance of the Game Wardens, they have not been caught.

One point that must be commented on is the way numbers of complaints have been made without any justification. Some of them have been absurd in the extreme, and much valuable time that could ill be spared has been spent on them.

There is a vast difference on the coast now that the launch has been keeping up a constant patrol. Not only is a strict look-out kept for non-residents and a number of anglers' licences collected from them, but the laws in general are respected to a far greater degree. In addition, on several occasions assistance has been furnished to the Provincial police.

In addition to the regular salaried deputies, more steady assistance has been furnished in the neighbourhood of Vancouver. This was most necessary, as the large increase of correspondence and other office work made it almost impossible to attend to complaints.

Victoria and Vancouver Island have received greater care than hitherto; in fact, it has occupied more attention than any other part of the Province, and an additional deputy was put on for a month or two at Victoria, in hopes of being able to cope with the numerous reports received. The result was most satisfactory, as a number of prosecutions followed, in spite of the fact that much time was wasted in finding out that many of the reports received were without foundation. That the extra help was necessary was, however, fully demonstrated, and several more prosecutions would have been obtained had the complainants been a little more willing to give details. A permanent man has been put on at Nanaimo, while the launch gave a good deal of time to the east coast of Vancouver Island.

The wapiti on Vancouver Island were much better looked after, and the prosecution obtained at the north end of the Island should have a most salutary effect. Owing to the defendant not being found, this case did not come up until nearly three months after the offence; but the fact that the Department finally, after persistent efforts, secured the conviction will be a lesson to others. Probably more time was spent on this case than any other conviction ever obtained under the "Game Act."

Additional temporary deputies have been put on at Fort George, Kamloops, and Princeton.

The usual rumors of Stony Indians coming over from Alberta were as much in evidence as ever; as a matter of fact, some few did come over to trade horses, but they were only allowed in on the condition that they left their rifles behind. All the passes in the South-East Kootenay were visited, and if any Indians did come over they must have done so on foot.

The appointment of an Indian Game Warden amongst the Kootenay Indians seems to be very satisfactory. He appears to take a keen interest in his work and has given the local Game Warden assistance in visiting the game reserve, and has also been responsible for one or two convictions.

PROSECUTIONS.

From the 1st of January until the 31st December, fifty-four informations under the "Game Act" have been laid. In addition, one prosecution took place for resisting an officer in the execution of his duty. Of the informations under the "Game Act," one only was dismissed through lack of evidence, that being a case of the use of a "sunken punt"; in the other two dismissals the evidence was absolutely clear, but the Magistrates who tried the cases thought fit to let the defendants off.

There are still three cases to come up for trial That for having a fawn in possession out of season is against a Chinaman who got away, but as some information as to his whereabouts has lately been obtained, a warrant has been issued for his arrest. The other two cases will probably come up in the near future.

CONVICTIONS.

No of Cases.	Description of Case.	Penalties imposed.
7	Deer in possession out of season	$ 20 ; two suspended sentences.
1	Killing deer out of season	25
3	Exposing deer for sale without head on	21
1	More than legal limit of deer	25
1	Exposing fawn for sale	5
1	Unlawful sale of deer	25
5	Ducks in possession out of season	90
1	Selling ducks out of season	15
1	Game in cold-storage	20
1	Exporting goat-hide	20
1	Pursuing mountain goat out of season	50
1	Attempting to trap beaver	10
1	Beaver pelts in possession illegally	25
3	Grouse in possession out of season	30
3	Shooting grouse out of season	65
1	Selling grouse illegally	10
3	Killing prairie chicken out of season	45
1	Prairie chicken in possession out of season	10
5	Pheasants in possession illegally	175
1	Pheasants on premises of restaurant	25
1	Shooting pheasants out of season	15
3	Killing bear out of season	25 ; one suspended sentence.
1	Killing game on game reserve	50
1	Killing wapiti out of season	75
		$876
1	Resisting an officer	50
		$926

DISMISSALS.

1—Using sunken punt in non-tidal waters.

1—Killing bear out of season. Let off with warning.

1—Killing mountain sheep out of season. Let off with warning.

CASES NOT YET BROUGHT UP FOR TRIAL.

1—Having fawn in possession.

1—Illegal sale of deer.

1—Illegal possession of beaver-skin.

NOXIOUS ANIMALS.

Placing a bounty of $3 on the golden eagle has had a good effect, as a large number of these birds of prey have been accounted for. There has been a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst men who have spent a good deal of time in killing what they took to be golden eagles, but which proved to be immature bald-headed eagles. The golden eagle is very similar in plumage to the bald-headed eagle, until the last-named is over three years old, when he gets his bald, or white, head ; the feathers coming completely down to the toes in the golden eagle is the most distinctive feature in the young birds.

A large number of big-horned owls have been killed, and this may have had some effect on the increase of the grouse in the interior. This owl is not nearly so plentiful on the coast as it was two years ago.

The question of what to do about the wolves is a troublesome one. In spite of the bounty being $15, they seem to be increasing in numbers everywhere; even in the East Kootenay, where an odd wolf was about all ever seen or heard, quite a number are now

reported. It is, however, on Vancouver Island that they are doing the most damage. They have practically exterminated the deer on the north-west coast, and are now turning their attention to the wapiti calves in the spring, and even to the full-grown animals if there happens to be a crust on the snow.

There is an idea that wapiti can withstand the attacks of wolves at any time; this is a mistake. They may be able to do so when the bulls have their horns and there is no deep snow, but in the deep-crusted snow not even the bull moose can stand them off. Now that the deer are decimated, the wapiti will soon follow suit, in spite of the entire close season and an army of Game Wardens. It is useless turning out red deer, or any other animals, on Vancouver Island until these brutes are got rid of; how to do this is a hard question. The ordinary trapper does not make a specialty of trapping wolves, as they are too hard to get; and, anyway, it is doubtful, even if they know how, whether any of them go about it systematically. It would be well worth a few hundred dollars to pay a couple of good men to experiment under a proper system in one particular district. If they made any sort of a success of it, then there would be hundreds ready to follow their system on their own account in other places.

Unless something is done, the deer in the south of the Island, where at present wolves are only in fair numbers, will go as soon as the wolves migrate from the northern end, which they will surely do when they have cleaned out the wapiti.

Cougar also seem to be increasing, especially in the Lillooet District, where they were hardly known until a year or two ago. They are liable to do a great deal of damage amongst the sheep if the increase continues, but their destruction is nothing like as difficult as the wolves.

NON-RESIDENTS.

The revenue from licences for this season, as far as returns have been received, is larger than any other year, and this in spite of the fact that the $25 monthly licence, and also the $5 weekly bird licence, were cancelled, and also that business and other troubles only allowed a very limited number to come here from the United States, from which country we generally get the majority of big-game hunters. We are now getting an increased number of sportsmen from Austria and Germany, and with the successful exhibit at Vienna, combined with the good sport obtained by those who have come here, their number is likely to be considerably augmented.

Owing to a misunderstanding on the part of some of the Government Agents, eight limited bird licences of $5 were issued to non-resident aliens, and also three $25 monthly licences.

The number of licences issued is as follows: General licences, $100, 70; spring bear licences, $25, 7; monthly licences (issued in error), $25, 3; bird licences (season), $50, 4; bird licences (weekly), $5, 14; anglers' licences, $5, 113.

The number of anglers' licences is shown to be 113, in comparison with 80 last year. The collection of this fee received more attention than last year, but in spite of this quite a number escaped payment.

The cancellation of the $25 licence for one month to hunt deer, bear, and goat has caused a good deal of adverse comment and criticism, as it is argued that it is hardly fair to charge a man $100 who only has a week or two to spare, and would like to go out for a short hunt. The experience gained when this licence was in force was so unsatisfactory in the interior that its abolishment was only right. It has, however, worked somewhat of a hardship on the coast, not only on the men who want to hunt, but on the guides, several of whom had just

begun to work up a tourist business. It is, however, impossible to adjust these matters to everybody's satisfaction, and its renewal cannot be recommended at present. Possibly later on, when there is an improvement of game conditions on the coast, such a licence might be introduced again, simply for the coast, but the matter should be very carefully considered before action is taken.

GAME RESERVES.

A new game reserve has been established in the Fort George country, comprising a large area between the North and South Forks of the Fraser River and including the valleys of the Clearwater and Little Smoky Rivers. Part of this area abounds with moose; there are also caribou on the higher ranges of the Clearwater, a few goats on the northern side, and in addition numbers of beaver.

The Yalakom Reserve, in the Lillooet District, has been extended from Junction Creek down to Four-mile Creek, as well as including the whole valley of the North Fork. The latter was necessary to insure protection of the thriving colonies of beaver. The game on this reserve is increasing and is certainly tamer than elsewhere. With deer this is most noticeable, and in time the sheep will become the same.

Game is reported to be doing well on the Elk River Reserve, and goats are again frequenting the portion that was pretty well shot out a few years ago.

INDIANS.

A few years ago Indians, at any rate in several districts, were practically exterminating the game, and there are many of them yet who will at any and all seasons of the year kill anything in sight if they happen to be armed. Yet, during the past year, they have given but little trouble, and it must even be acknowledged that, considering everything, they are pretty good. As a matter of fact, the Indians in this Province are, on the whole, a law-abiding people. They could not understand the game laws at first and resented the restrictions placed on them, but now they see that they are made to be enforced.

THE FUR TRADE.

With the exception of the beaver, fur-bearing animals have so far received but little attention; in fact, there has only been one solitary conviction, apart from beaver, for trapping during the close season. It is not generally known that the fur trade of the Province is still of big value and well worth looking after. It is almost impossible, under existing conditions, to make an exact estimate of what its value is, but it must amount to anywhere from $300,000 to $500,000 per annum, and with an open season for beaver next year will be considerably increased.

A great many fur-bearing animals, such as mink, raccoon, wolverine, musk-rat, and skunk, are destructive near settlements; lynx are also destructive to game birds; but others, such as marten, fisher, fox, and beaver (except near farms), should have the close season better enforced.

The value of a marten a few years ago was so enormous (it is still fairly high) that they were rapidly decimated, being trapped both in season and out. When the beaver season opens, though the price of these pelts is still low, the same thing will happen. At present, except in a few districts, trappers being scattered far and wide, Game Wardens cannot keep a close watch on them, and it is almost impossible to catch a man actually in the act of trapping out of season; so, under present conditions, but little can be done. There are, every year, quantities of unprime pelts exported. They do not bring a quarter of what the prime pelts fetch; the fur-bearing animals are decimated at a much greater rate, and the Province gets about a quarter of what it should.

The worst offenders in this respect are to be found amongst a certain class of Indians and amateur white trappers. Some of the Indians trap too early, as they prefer to stay at home after the weather becomes severe; others trap the beaver for food in the early fall. Trapping marten in the winter is too hard work for any one but a regular trapper who makes it a genuine business, but there are many would-be trappers who trap in the early fall when no hardship is entailed. If, however, there was a law in force making it unlawful for a person to have unprime pelts in their possession, there would be an improvement, as traders would not buy them to the same extent. As such a regulation as this would be hard to enforce, to make it more effectual, no pelts should be allowed to be exported out of the Province without a permit.

It has also been argued that if not only trappers, but fur traders as well, were licensed, trapping out of season would be prevented; that the amateur who gets more beavers' legs than the animals themselves and ruins the genuine trappers grounds would be eliminated; that the Department could then get a better idea of the increase or decrease of fur-bearing animals and the advisability of close seasons, the value of the fur trade, and, in addition prevent encroachments of non-resident fur traders and trappers.

That these arguments in favour of such a law properly enforced sound reasonable cannot be denied, but the question arises whether at present, with the staff of Game Wardens now employed, such a law could be properly enforced. And, in any case, such a radical change should receive mature consideration, not only as to its advisability, but also as to its framing, so as to attain the desired result without seriously interfering with the fur trade.

BEAVER.

After a close season for six years, the beaver season becomes an open one throughout the Province on November 1st, 1911. The increase of the beaver during this close period has been remarkable, and with a few more years' close season, with the present stock increasing in the same proportion, the valleys of the Province would be in a fair way to become a mass of beaver-dams, and a good deal of damage would be done to farm lands; and while we can always issue permits for their trapping, the ordinary farmer has not the necessary knowledge to do it. Already a great many such permits have been issued (it being always stipulated that the pelts be sent in to this office for sale, the farmer receiving a percentage of the amount received from such sale). But, owing to the reasons above stated, but few pelts have been received, and in one instance a trapper had to be employed to prevent further serious damage.

While the increase of the beaver is eminently satisfactory, it is hardly advisable to extend the close season; there certainly are numbers of beaver, and the results already attained from their protection have amply demonstrated the fact that danger of their extermination can easily be avoided. The question is for how long, and under what conditions, they should be trapped so as to get rid of them when they are doing damage, and keep up a good stock everywhere else. To answer this is not altogether easy. Licensing trappers (*see* "The Fur Trade") has been suggested, but no other workable scheme has been formulated so far. It seems the only thing that can be done at present is to allow trapping to come in on November 1st, and that as close a watch as posssble be kept on the stock, and as soon as there is any danger of extermination to again declare a close season. In the meantime the subject will be thoroughly gone into, with a view to future recommendations for legislation in this respect.

MOOSE.

A great many moose were seen all through the Cassiar District this season, and, although owing to the late spring it was a poor season for big heads, some beautiful trophies were obtained.

They seem to be still increasing in the Columbia District of the East Kootenay, in spite of the open season, and a good many have been killed.

In the Fernie District they are also gradually coming back. There is now a small band not far from the Crow's Nest Railway, and an odd moose or two farther up the Elk River, where none have been seen for years.

WAPITI.

The wapiti are in a bad way on Vancouver Island, and, in spite of a continuous close season, there is not much hope of an increase unless the wolves are got rid of. These pests, having cleaned out the deer, are now killing off the wapiti calves in the spring. An effort will, however, be made to reduce the number of wolves in one of the principal wapiti grounds, and it is to be sincerely hoped it will prove successful.

In the East Kootenay the wapiti are still doing well, and are probably in sufficient numbers to warrant a short open season. If it were assured that nothing but the old bulls would be killed, an open season would be beneficial, but the chances are that the rush to kill them would be so great that many of those out would kill the first young bull they saw; so that, on the whole, it would be safer to give them another year's close season, and before it is opened to make it law that nothing but one mature animal of not less than four years of age may be shot. The wapiti is easy to get near, and there is no reason why a man should not take a good look at his game before shooting; and any man who does not know enough, or will not take the trouble to find out, what a mature bull of shootable size is like before he goes out, had better stay at home The range of the wapiti in the East Kootenay is of a limited area, and after again getting up a stock it is not advisable to take any chances of a lot of irresponsibles racing through the range, killing young bulls, or even cows, and doing as much damage in one year as we could repair in a series of close seasons.

DEER.

Coast Deer.—With the exception of the northern portion of Vancouver Island, where wolves and cougars have almost exterminated them, coast deer have been extremely numerous, especially so in the country round Victoria. Even close to Vancouver they are on the increase.

Mule Deer.—There is an undoubted increase of these animals everywhere; in many places where a few years ago a man might hunt for a week and never see one, he can now go out for an afternoon with a reasonable certainty of getting a shot. In East Kootenay, especially in the Columbia Valley, there are more mule deer now than for years past; in fact, many say there never were so many. In the Lillooet there are still plenty of deer; the long summer again kept them scattered over the range until very late, but when a man can see as many as eighty-seven head in one day's hunt, as one person did this fall, there cannot be much cause for alarm. The mule deer of the Lillooet District are one of it's greatest attractions, and no stone should be left unturned to insure their future protection. The majority of these animals winter along the Fraser River, principally between Watson Bar and Churn Creek. If this range is ever fed off in the summer by domestic sheep, the days of the mule deer in that section of the country are numbered. Considering the rapidly decreasing numbers of this magnificent deer all over this continent, and that this district to-day produces the finest heads and moreover is the best stocked on the continent, it would be a wise policy to put a Government land reserve on the section above mentioned, as the value of this land to the country is far greater for the mule deer than for the domestic sheep that could be raised there.

White-tailed Deer.—A few years ago this species seemed to be doomed, but there has been a most extraordinary increase in numbers, and this year in the South-East Kootenay, all along the lower waters of the Elk River, the country simply swarms with them. That it is a natural

increase, consequent on careful protection, seems most likely, but, on the other hand, the forest fires south of the boundary-line may have had something to do with it.

CARIBOU.

More caribou have been seen in the Kootenay than for many years past, and several were killed close to the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In spite of the poor year for heads, some magnificent trophies were obtained in the Cassiar, and everybody reported seeing numbers.

BEAR.

Black bear have increased all through the interior and in some places are reported to be a nuisance. They are harmless, inoffensive creatures, except for their desire for pigs or campers' bacon, but in such cases as this they are tame and can easily be got rid of.

Grizzly are reported to be on the increase in several places. Contrary to the general supposition, the grizzly bear is one of the shyest of all game animals. He seldom lives near any settlement, but prefers to roam higher up the mountains, except during the salmon season, when, along the coast and uppers waters of the Fraser River, he comes down to get fish. That he is a menace to people in the outlying settlements is an absurd idea; ninety-nine grizzly out of one hundred will run even when wounded.

SHEEP.

In the Cassiar the sheep have been fairly plentiful, though the Sheslay and Nahlin River Ranges, once the pick of the country, were practically deserted. They were more south of the Stikine, but the only place where there seems to have been an increase is in the country towards Atlin Lake, where large numbers are reported.

No cases of "lumpy jaw" have been reported, though there is no doubt that three or four years ago there was an epidemic of this disease.

The Lillooet sheep are increasing beyond a shadow of a doubt. For the past two years hardly any sheep have been killed except by tourists, as the majority of men who understand hunting them, Indians included, act as guides and find they are worth more alive than dead. In addition, a great many golden eagles and other pests have been killed off, and this, combined with little interference during the rutting season, has resulted in a large increase of lambs. Five years ago you could sometimes see a band of from ten to as high as forty ewes, with from one to four lambs amongst them; to-day you can see bands of up to one hundred and forty ewes, with four times the old proportion of lambs.

In East Kootenay the sheep are doing well. Now that the Stony Indians are kept out, but few are killed, as it is too arduous work for the ordinary man.

In the Ashnola country, the Game Warden sent in there especially to look after the sheep reports more favourably than was expected; and even from the Okanagan, where the number of sheep was thought to have diminished down to about twenty head, at least one hundred and forty have been seen.

PHEASANTS.

Unless there is a very heavy snowfall this winter, the prospects for pheasant-shooting next season are good. The breeding season this year has been one of the best ever known, and this, combined with the new blood introduced by turning out a number of the Mongolian pheasants, must have a marked effect. In many districts there are getting to be so many hens that the question of their being allowed to be shot must be seriously considered. To keep up a good stock of birds, the right proportion of sexes should be maintained, as a large surplus

of barren hens is most undesirable. To throw open the season for hens, even for a short period, might result in a perfect slaughter of the young birds; yet to open the season for cock birds next year and allow a further increase of the hens might result in even greater harm. It is to be hoped that before the Orders in Council have to be passed some feasible plan to meet the difficulty may be devised.

The raising of Mongolian pheasants was undertaken by the Government this year, and was, in a great measure, a success. Not as many birds, however, were reared as expected. This was due to the fact that it was found impossible to catch up enough Mongolian hens, and, in addition, those kept up started to moult earlier than usual and, consequently, stopped laying.

The possibility of acclimatising pheasants in the interior has been given a good deal of attention this year. The experiment has been tried before and was not a success. However, investigations show that the attempt has never been seriously undertaken, and that in some districts, such as the Okanagan, it is well worthy of a good trial.

The following is a brief statement of the birds raised and their distribution during the past season:—

Number of eggs laid	1,415
Eggs broken, etc.	65
Eggs put under hens	1,140
Number birds reared	615
Number eggs distributed	211

Of the eggs distributed, no account of success, or otherwise, has been received, except from Mr. Thompson, of Victoria, who received two sittings and raised a good proportion of birds.

Birds distributed from Chilliwack.

Saanich	50	
Esquimalt	50	
Victoria (vicinity)	27	
Victoria (James Island)	16	
Comox	6	
Nanaimo	25	
		174
Mainland:		
Delta	150	
Mission	25	
Agassiz	35	
Langley	25	
Port Kells	25	
Matsqui	18	
Chilliwack (strays)	67	
		345
Texada Island	16	
		16
		535
Birds on hand		80
Total birds raised		615

In addition a number of birds were raised by Dr. MacKay at the Westminster Asylum; the exact numbers have not been kept, but about 250 were turned out, the majority being put on the Government Farm and some also on Lulu Island.

The majority of the birds still in hand were kept up, in case of it being necessary to breed more birds next year, but fifteen at least are being held for distribution on Vancouver Island. All the three-quarter-bred birds were turned out and nothing but pure-bred birds kept up. In all, since this breed of birds were imported, about 1,400 have been turned out that were hand-bred on the Mainland; and with those raised from eggs sent out, and raised by private individuals near Victoria, the number should at least reach 1,500 birds.

PARTRIDGES.

The good breeding season has had a wonderful effect on the partridges, and all reports received, except from Langley, have been of the most encouraging nature. They have not done as well as expected on Vancouver Island, where by this time there should have been a large increase; but still quite a number of coveys have been seen, and it is to be hoped that at last they have really made a start.

Around Chilliwack and Ladner there are good strong coveys everywhere, and with one more favourable breeding season, one or two days' judicious shooting to break up the coveys would be desirable. At Agassiz, too, the birds turned down are reported to have had broods. With the interest the farmers take in these birds, provided no disease gets among them, there will be good shooting in a few years.

The birds in Langley are, however, not doing well; in fact, the coveys are few and far between, and it is doubtful if there are as many as there were a few years ago. The reason is not hard to find—they are being shot by irresponsibles. Repeated efforts have been made to obtain convictions, and, while once or twice they have been nearly caught, we have never quite succeeded. There are a few people at Langley who are really keen on the preservation of the game, but until the community in general takes the interest they do in other places, it would take a small army of Game Wardens to protect them properly.

Last summer fifty pairs of partridges were ordered, but up to the present time the order has not been filled, though the last advice received stated they might be shipped any day. There seems to be a great deal of difficulty in obtaining these birds, but it is hoped that this order will be filled, as new blood is needed in the Delta, and a few birds should be turned down on the Government farm near Westminster, where they would probably do well.

GROUSE.

Taking the Province as a whole, the grouse season has been a most successful one. Almost every district on the Mainland reports a better stock of both willow and blue grouse than for years past. The blue grouse, however, left for the hills very early this season, and in spite of the season being opened on September 1st, in the interim but few of this species were shot. Excellent bags of willow grouse have been the rule all over the Mainland.

With regard to Vancouver Island and the vexed question as to the opening of the season, events have proved that the opening of the season on September 15th was justified. Blue grouse were more plentiful than for years past, and, considering the number of people shooting nowadays in comparison with previous years, when enormous bags were made, excellent sport was obtained for a few days before the birds scattered; nor was there the excessive slaughter prophesied by a few pessimists, who foretold dire havoc amongst the grouse if the season was opened before the 1st October. There has been so much discussion over the opening of the grouse season on Vancouver Island that a plain statement of the case may be desirable.

Willow grouse live and breed on almost entirely the same ground throughout the year, and are principally confined to bottom lands and the gulches at the foot of mountains; they are not often in a condition to shoot before September 15th, and could be better left until October.

Blue grouse are migratory to a great extent; they come down from the mountains in the spring to breed, and stay down until the broods are either entirely, or almost, full-grown.

In the interior the blue grouse start to migrate into the mountains earlier than on the coast, generally beginning about the last week in August; on Vancouver Island and the coast they stay down a fortnight or so later, according to the season. When they start they go quickly, so that where numbers of birds may be found one week, hardly any are to be seen the next. Before the migration starts they are congregated on the lower lands and foothills, and are easily found and shot. Later on they scatter more and more as they ascend the mountains, and as the weather becomes severe they take to the spruce-trees, until late in the year many of the birds hardly ever go on the ground; and, in addition, after living on the spruce-buds for some time, their flesh becomes unpalatable.

As soon as the migration starts, finding the blue grouse becomes a matter of difficulty, except to a few experts who have sufficient local knowledge to follow their migration. To men who have this knowledge there is always the possibility of fair sport, but otherwise the chances are poor. It was thought that possibly the opening of the shooting season started the birds on their migration, and if this date were delayed that they would remain; this, however, has not proved to be the case. It is the nature of the bird to migrate, and they would do it just the same if they were never fired at again. Of course, every locality varies a little according to the different conditions, but that the blue grouse move off from their breeding-grounds is, and always will be, an unalterable fact.

The old date for grouse-shooting was September 1st, but for two seasons prior to this year the season for grouse did not open until October 1st, and this has, to all intents and purposes, been equal to having a close season on Vancouver Island, as the men who have the necessary local knowledge and energy to follow these birds are few in the extreme. This has undoubtedly resulted in the stock of birds becoming quite large again.

Under such circumstances as the above, surely the opening of the season on September 15th was justifiable. What is the use of getting up a stock of birds if they are always going to be protected? They will only increase to a certain number, and then disease will decimate them much more rapidly than the shooting. Even in the old days, when shooters were few and grouse plentiful, there were frequently years when the birds almost disappeared, and it was nothing but disease that caused it. Let us close the season for grouse and enforce it rigidly for ten years, and it is quite possible that there might not be more birds than there are now; disease might get among them just the year before the close season expired; but with moderate shooting every year such would, probably, not occur.

The first principle of game protection is to get up a good stock of birds and shoot off just a sufficient number to leave a good breeding stock for the next season. It was in pursuance of this principle that it was thought advisable to open the season earlier; birds were reported plentiful, and the reports have proved correct. It might have been put off another year and fewer birds found than this season. As it is, a number of men have enjoyed a few good days' sport, no harm has been done, and possibly some good.

Taking into account, however, the number of men shooting, it would not be advisable to open the season on the 15th of September every year. Much will, of course, depend on the breeding season, but the chances are that September 15th and October 1st could be taken as the opening dates on alternate years. In any event, reports and recommendations should be sent in at an earlier date, and will then be given due consideration, and the Department will then open the season on the date it considers most advisable to give an opportunity for fair sport without danger of allowing the breeding stock to become too low.

As a matter of fact, reports of diseased grouse on Vancouver Island have reached this office. Many of the birds killed have had a species of worm in the back. This is said by many not to be a fatal disease, but it is a fact that the disappearance of the willow grouse on the Mainland occurred shortly after the birds being thus affected.

PRAIRIE CHICKEN.

There has been a big increase of these birds nearly everywhere that any of these birds are left. In Kootenay they are more numerous than for many years. In the Okanagan they are even reported to have done damage to the fruit-trees. There are still a very few birds left in the Nicola, but not enough to restock that district; it is hoped, however, that a few birds from the North-west will be obtained next spring to help.

QUAIL.

Quail have been as numerous as ever on Vancouver Island, though before the season opened they were said to be scarce.

The birds turned out on Texada Island have done very well, but, as usual, on the Mainland they have disappeared from many places where last year there were a good many. Quite a number made their appearance this year in the neighbourhood of Point Grey, near the city limits of Vancouver, but everywhere else on the Mainland they do not increase to any appreciable extent.

A few have been reported in the East Kootenay, close to the boundary-line, but what breed or where they have come from seems doubtful.

BLACK GAME AND CAPERCAILZIE.

No authentic reports have been received, though there are still a few capercailzie near Westminster Junction.

WILDFOWL.

Snipe have been conspicuous by their absence; it has been the poorest season for these birds for many years. Probably mild weather in the north delayed their migration and then they passed right through.

With the greater restrictions on market hunting, it was hoped there would be improved duck-hunting, but these hopes have not been fulfilled. There have been very few good days, though probably the few there were would have been scarcer had there not been greater restrictions on market hunting.

In the interior the northern ducks did not come in until very late, and then, as most of the lakes were frozen over, did not stay. In some places there were a great many more locally bred geese and also a fair number of locally bred ducks. Most of the locally bred ducks on the coast left a day or two before the season opened.

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