Brief Chronology of
WILDLIFE IN TEXAS

By DANIEL W. LAY
Director, Division of Wildlife Restoration

THE history of wildlife, efforts to manage it, and the changing factors affecting it, largely determines that wildlife we have today and what can be done to increase it. The list of dates and events is not intended to be complete, but merely to serve as a background for more intelligent consideration of the present status and problems of wildlife management.

The first efforts in Texas, as elsewhere, were *prohibitive*. Seasons were closed, certain methods of taking game were outlawed. Similar legislation is still receiving a large part of the conservation effort in Texas: witness some 600 game laws on the books today.

Substitutions have been tried persisently. Carp, salmon, rainbow trout were introduced in the 1870's and 1880's, with the sad result that carp is now an established undesirable. Many exotic game birds have been tried, with the possible success of only one, the pheasant in the Panhandle.

The *cropping* of game as one of the products of the land is only beginning to be accepted. The 1944 antelope hunt is the first state-controlled cropping example. Landowners, who own most of the game range, are gradually recognizing this necessary advancement in the science of wildlife management.

Education as a potent factor in wildlife conservation received its first real impetus with the establishment of the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at Texas A. & M. College in 1935.

1821 Stephen F. Austin started the colonization of Texas.

1836 Population 50,000.

1844-53 One trading post near Waco shipped 75,000 deer hides to New York in addition to large numbers of buffalo, bear and smaller pelts.

1850 First railroad started in Texas.

1860 First game law in Texas, closed season on quail for two years on Galveston Island

1871 Indians few. Some tried for murder.

1873 First rail connection with a transcontinental system.

1874 First Texas law protecting fish and prohibiting seining in certain coastal waters.

1879 Enactment of law which required fish ladders to be constructed over dams, and provided for a commissioner to enforce the law to serve without pay, who was known as Fish Ladder Commissioner, J. H. Dinkins was appointed, serving from 1879 to 1880.

1879 First general game law was enacted in Texas with 83 counties claiming exemptions. In this Texas was one of the last in the nation.

1880 Population 1,600,000.

1881 First fish hatchery was constructed at Barton Springs for the propagation of German Carp.

1882-85 Barb wire introduced in Texas.

1882 By this year the U. S. Fish Commission had stocked in Texas two million herring, three million shad, one-fourth million California Salmon, four thousand rainbow trout.

1883 130 counties claimed exemption from all game laws.

1885 The buffalo had disappeared.

1885 The Fish Commission was abolished due to public opposition to carp introduction.

1890 Smokeless powder was just comin into general use in Texas.

1892 Dr. E. A. Mearns started a three-year survey of the wildlife of the Mexico border while serving as medical officer for the U. S. Boundary Commission.

1895 Office of Fish and Oyster Commission was created. I. P. Kibbe was appointed and served until 1906. Principal attention was devoted to marine fisheries.

1895 Exemptions to general game laws were claimed by only 77 counties.

1901 Spindletop gusher came in, starting oil developments which have led to problems of pollution control on every major watershed.

1903 Five-year closed season enacted on antelope, mountain sheep, pheasants and sale of these animals and deer and non-game birds was forbidden. Year bag limit for deer was six bucks in a two-month season and headlight hunting was outlawed.

1905 North American Fauna 25, by Vernon Bailey, on Texas wildlife, was published.

1907 A game department was added to the Fish and Oyster Commission, provided it could sell enough hunting licenses to pay its way.

1907 R. H. Wood became the first Game, Fish and Oyster Commissioner. This was the first enactment providing for administration of game and inland fish.

1908 O. W. Williams, Fort Stockton, was writing about gulches started by cow trails and excessive grazing and the increase of brush due to prevention of prairie fires.

1909 First hunting license law was enacted requiring licenses of those who hunted except at home and in adjoining counties. Five thousand licenses were sold the first year.

1912 The greater prairie chicken of the central Texas blackland prairies was last reported.

1915 The bag limit on quail and dove was cut from 25 to 15 per day.

1916 Migratory bird treaty with Canada.

1919 Waterfowl and shore birds were given their first protection, closed season and bag limit of 25.

1919 Turkey hens were protected by law.

1919 Only six game wardens enforced these laws.

1919 Spring shooting of waterfowl was prohibited in Texas following migratory bird treaty with Canada.

1921-27 Road building made the auto potent factor in wildlife conservation.

1923 Legislature turned over the entire game fund to the Department, with the authority to hire any reasonable number of game wardens. Forty-five were employed.

1925 The creation of state game preserves was started. Nearly 100 wardens were on the force.

1925 First law prohibiting sale of bass and crappie. Sand, shell and gravel funds allotted to fish hatchery construction and operation.

1927 First conviction for stream pollution was had.

1927 Artificial bait license law passed.

1927 Dan Moody was elected governor, and he appointed a new Game, Fish and Oyster Commissioner, Wm. J. Tucker.

1927 Guadalupe Mountains of Culberson county were stocked with 44 elk by J. C. Hunter.

1929 First overlapping non-salaried commission was authorized and six commissioners were appointed by the Governor. Tucker was appointed the first executive secretary.

1932 Deer restocking began, with the use of a concrete pit as a trap.

1933 Federal Government given permission to purchase land in Texas for national forests, resulting in subsequent purchase of more than five hundred thousand acres of forest land in east Texas.

1935 Establishment of the Texas Wildlife Research Unit, with A. & M. College, Bureau of Biological Survey, American Wildlife Institute and Game, Fish and Oyster Commission cooperating. Dr. Walter P. Taylor, senior biologist of the Biological Survey, was assigned unit leader.

1936 National Wildlife Federation was organized in Washington at a meeting called by President Roosevelt.

1936 A. & M. College appointed a full-time wildlife extension specialist and established a new department of Fish and Game under Taylor.

1937 Coastal Division was set up.

1937 Enactment of Pittman-Robinson Federal Aid for Wildlife Restora-

■ *Continued on page 13*

ROBLEM

'From our experience with deer herds ıt have grown too large for the natu- food supply, we . . . are . . . in agree- nt on the following points:

'1. If excess deer are not shot off they l starve off. When a herd starves ɯn the carrying capacity of the range :s with it.

2. A herd can be reduced effectively y by killing females. Where large ıges exist, they sometimes must be unk before a reduction can be made.

"3. The sooner excess deer are removed, the more deer the range will carry later. Reduction should be completed before starvation begins.

"4. The following experiences shed light on the degree of reduction needed:

"(a) A 90 per cent starvation on the Kaibab brought partial range recovery.

"(b) Pennsylvania has reduced 50 per cent by doe seasons, but cannot yet plant white pines. Some red pines are getting by.

"(c) On the Dixie Forest in Utah a 50 per cent reduction by shooting seems to have brought some relief, but this herd had not reached the starvation point. Other Utah herds are in process of combined shooting and starvation, but no conclusions can yet be made.

"(d) Michigan's deer are starving down because the legislature would not authorize killing females. The extent of the reduction is unknown. ge conditions are still getting worse.

e) Assuming a deer population of)00 Wisconsin has reduced its herd ɔorarily 26 per cent by shooting (66,- males and 66,000 females taken in 1943 hunting season) without relief ıe range.

') In average years annual losses of in overpopulated areas of Texas from 15% to 26%, and in dry years herds have suffered losses up %.

:) In Minnesota open seasons with- ıge or sex restrictions, in 4 of the 6 years have failed to check the in- e of deer. There have been starva- osses in some places in recent years range deterioration is becoming nt.

Delay in removing excess deer de- ates their physical vigor and pre- ses to parasites and disease.

Predators may be useful in break- ıp congestions, and in helping to ol deer in inaccessible areas, which rs cannot or do not reach. Excess are a problem in distribution as ıs numbers."

RADIO WAVES AFFECT PIGEONS

The Army Signal Corps may have found the answer to this question: "When is a homing not a homing pigeon, or at best a poor one?"

The Signal Corps reveals that it is trying to learn why radio waves mess up a homing pigeon's sense of direction. That pigeons are affected by radio waves has long been suspected.

Signal corpsmen report that three separate tests with different groups of pigeons had almost identical effects. Each group consisted of 10 birds, and each was subdivided in two groups of five. The tests were held at a radio station 10 miles from their home lofts.

The first wave of five birds was released in each test when the station was transmitting—the second, 15 minutes later, when the station was silent.

The birds released during transmission seemed completely bewildered. They circled erratically for 15 or 20 minutes near the station, then took off uncertainly for their lofts, taking up to 52 minutes for the 10-mile flight.

Birds released while the station was silent circled briefly and made off promptly for home, arriving there in 18 to 21 minutes.

Chronology

■ Continued from page 9

tion Act, which made available to the States their share of a ten per cent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition for game restoration.

1937 Universal hunting and fish license passed for 22 Hill Country counties.

1938 Game and fish wardens were uniformed.

1938 First project approved for Texas participation in Federal Aid restoration funds, a state-wide survey.

1939 Population 6,000,000.

1939 First general conservation course offered summer students by all State Teachers' Colleges.

1939 The peccary was elevated to status of a game animal.

1939 Antelope trapping for restocking was begun near Alpine, with 1651 animals moved between 1939 and 1943.

1940 Restocking with imported Mexican quail abandoned due to unfavorable results.

1940 Repeated stocking of fry in large numbers was determined to be the most desirable method of fish restoration, especially in large lakes.

1941 Spring turkey season closed in all counties.

1942 First issue of TEXAS GAME AND FISH magazine appeared in December.

1943 Complete regulatory authority for the Trans-Pecos counties was assigned to the Game, Fish and Oyster Commission by the Legislature.

1944 Deer trapped for restocking reached a record peak of 1500 in one season.

1944 First antelope hunt in 41 years in Trans-Pecos counties. Hunters were selected by lot and assigned to specific pastures, in order to regulate take in accordance with numbers and sex ratios of each band.

1944 Much evidence of general realization that conservation of all renewable resources (human, forest, water, soil, range, wildlife) is inter-related and will succeed or fail as one program.

Clocks Bear at 18 mph.

Don't annoy a bear unless you can run faster than 18 miles an hour! This advice is based on a test conducted by Jim Roa of North Carolina to determine a bear's speed afoot.

Jim, so Bill Sharpe of the North Carolina State News Bureau informs us, was driving his car along an old swamp between two deep canals, when he came upon a bear in the road. Apparently having an aversion to cold water, the bear trotted ahead. Jim speeded up and the bear increased his pace, which reached 18 miles an hour before the animal gave up the race and jumped overboard.

LEPTOSPIR

By R. D. TURK, D.V.M.

Icterus is a condition in which the skin and mucous membranes show a yellowish discoloration caused by some disease interfering with the normal flow of bile from the liver. The icteric condition is more commonly known as "jaundice," "the yellows" or "yellow jaundice."

Many gastric or liver disorders are characterized by icterus or jaundice. However, if the condition develops in your dog and is accompanied by high temperature, loss of appetite and bloody diarrhea, one should suspect canine typhus, an infectious disease technically known as canine leptospirosis, or Stutt-

gart disea: either of tw may be ca of particul: cause it m: fected dog recorded v recognized infection is erinarians ease is pre the sympto mistaken f meningitis covery is ception, u go unreco

Infectio been repo ent localiti of all bre occurs but months of characteri iting, blee tite, gastro While do originally rapidly fr is suspecte made by a narians a laboratori test.

Treatme satisfactor under the If kept a to prevent the infecti the urine, such as t other anin

The co clude mea it is kno spirochaet of the kid nated in t material s as a sou dogs. Th leptospiro why this tolerated. age done, seminator cient gro