



The Deer Come Back

HOW promptly wilderness animals return, when wilderness itself is given a chance to return!

Deer, for example, have increased so rapidly in some parts of New England and Pennsylvania that farmers are complaining of them as pests. When conservationists in some other part of the country undertake to re-stock empty woods with deer, they are very likely to send to one of these regions for some of their surplus animals.

Among the factors making for this return of wildlife, three are outstanding. First, the short open season, coupled with the fact that a dead deer or other large animal is rather difficult to hide, has cut down shooting to a fragment of what it once was. Second, the merciless war which farmers and stockmen have waged on wolves, wildcats and mountain lions, as killers of their young livestock, has greatly reduced another cause of death among the wild animals. Perhaps this factor is even more important than the restrictions on shooting.

The third factor is a positive one: the large-scale abandonment of farms and their return to brushland, affording increased food and shelter to the larger game animals. Deer and their antlered kin are not primarily grazing animals, but browsers. They like the leaves and young shoots of bushes and saplings, and in winter, when snow lies too deep for them to find nature-cured hay on the ground, they can tide themselves over by gnawing bark off aspens and other trees.

All this has happened without any particular encouragement, except in such officially protected areas as the national parks and national forests.

But now the federal and state governments are turning attention to the matter, with the deliberate expectation of getting more out of the so-called sub-marginal lands by using them as game-producing areas than as poverty-stricken (and chronically tax-delinquent) farm lands.

As a rule, the land so reclaimed for wilderness should never have been taken out of wilderness, at least for plowland. Almost always, the slopes are so steep that clearing and plowing them only invites disastrous water erosion, that strips the hills to barren clay subsoil or even to the naked bones of their rocks. Frequently also, the soil is not good enough for grain or truck crops, though still able to support the brushy growth that makes good browsing for the deer.

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ZOOLOGY

Bullsnake Halfway Ready To Hatch When Egg Is Laid

GOOD thing for the egg-consuming public that hens do not conduct their business the way bullsnakes do. If such were the case, finding chicks in soft-boiled eggs would no longer be a monopoly of the professional joke-smiths. For young bullsnakes are halfway ready to hatch by the time their mother lays her eggs.

At the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Prof. E. P. Churchill and J. A. Harris of the University of South Dakota told of opening a number of newly laid bullsnake eggs, and finding a young snake in every one. Other eggs from the same batch, left to develop in the normal way, produced their snake-lings at the end of eighteen days.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Prisoners Up For Parole Given Personality Tests

ILLINOIS is giving personality tests to prisoners applying for parole, it was revealed by Dr. Ferris F. Laune, of the Division of Pardons and Paroles of that state, in an address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

At present, the results are being used experimentally to "test" the test, but it seems so far as though such a test may eventually serve to show parole boards what prisoners may be expected to make

good and which ones are likely to get into trouble again if released.

Inordinate desire for fine clothes, lack of love for relatives, interest in the "White Lights," tendency to sharp practices, argumentativeness: these are some of the personality traits which appear to make prisoners fail to make good on parole, Dr. Laune reported.

A prisoner at Joliet penitentiary whom one can call Jack Blank was described by Dr. Laune as an example. Johnnie had made up his mind firmly to "quit the racket" and was entirely sincere in this. But Johnnie was a "snappy dresser." He had excellent taste, and longed to have clothes made by a tailor who charges a minimum of \$125 for a suit. He never paid less than \$10 for a hat.

So Johnnie, despite his good intentions, was back in the hands of the law in just two months.

These and other significant attitudes of the prisoners are determined indirectly through questions that have been found experimentally to evoke truthful answers.

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